



French evening with German spices



BAROQUE CONCERT by
Markku Luolajan-Mikkola
(viola da gamba solo)
with Alejandro Marías
(viola da gamba continuo)

**SEMINAR SPANISH AND ITALIAN REFORMERS:
NETWORKS, LETTERS, MEMOIRS**

19th January 2023, 18.30h

University of Seville, Facultad de Filología
Capilla de la Hermandad de los Estudiantes



FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA
Universidad de Sevilla





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Programme Notes

Johann Sebastian Bach doesn't perhaps need an introduction. We all know his music and many details about his life. I would like to comment about the music performed tonight.

It was a common practise in the 18th Century to arrange music originally composed for certain instruments for other instruments, and Bach is one of the greatest examples of such practise. For instance, he arranged his solo violin works for both lute and harpsichord, or Vivaldi's violin music for organ. This encouraged me to transpose down his Partita for flute and play it with viola da gamba. Although the format of this piece is a French Suite, the style is a typical amalgam of Bach's unique style of mixing Italian, French and German influences. Poliphony is present in his composition even when he is using a single voice of a solo instrument.

Forqueray's exceptional talents as a player led to his performing before Louis XIV at the age of ten. The king was so pleased with him that he arranged for Forqueray to have music lessons at his own expense and then, seven years later, in 1689, named him musicien ordinaire of La chambre du Roy, a position Forqueray held until the end of his life. To supplement his official income he gave lucrative private lessons to members of the royal family and the aristocracy.

At the time of Forqueray's appointment the most renowned viol player at court was Marin Marais, who was famous for his sweet and gentle musical style. Forqueray in contrast became renowned for his dramatic, striking and brash style. According to Hubert Le Blanc Marais played like an angel, and Forqueray like the devil. The Mercure de France of 1738 chided both Antoine and his son Jean-Baptiste-Antoine for writing pieces 'so difficult that only he and his son can execute them with grace.

Few details of the life of Monsieur Sainte Colombe are known; neither the names of his parents, nor his precise dates of birth and death are known. Recent research has revealed that his first name might be Jean. He performed publicly in the Parisian Salons, as did most of his colleagues and Parisian music masters such as Le Sieur Dubuisson. Amongst the extant works of Sainte-Colombe are sixty-seven Concerts à deux violes esgales, and over 170 pieces for solo seven-string viol, making him perhaps the most prolific French viol composer before Marin Marais.

Markku Luolajan-Mikkola



CONCERT PROGRAMME

- **Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750): *Partita for solo viol in D minor BWV 1013* (org. for flute in A minor)**

Allemande

Corrente

Sarabande

Bourrée Anglaise

- **Antoine Forqueray (1672-1745): *Pieces from the Suite in G minor***

La Marella

Sarabande La D'aubonne

La Bournonville

- **Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe (c. 1640-c. 1700): *Pieces from the Concert XLVIII for two bass viols***

Le raportée - le raportée

Chaconne raportée

- **Antoine Forqueray: *Pieces from the Suite in D major***

La Ferrand

La Regente

Chaconne La Morangis ou La Plissay



Markku Luolajan-Mikkola, viola da gamba solo
Alejandro Marías, viola da gamba continuo



Markku Luolajan-Mikkola



Markku Luolajan-Mikkola is one of the leading performers, educators, organisers and innovators on the Finnish early-music scene. He plays various viols and historical cellos and has been appearing in recitals and chamber ensembles since the 1990s. Thanks to him, the majority of the works in his repertoire ranging from the 16th century to the present day have received their first performance in Finland. In the course of his career, Luolajan-Mikkola has already given over a thousand concerts in various parts of the world. In addition to his native Finland he can, in 2022, be heard in Germany, the UK, Spain, Switzerland and Estonia.

In 2015–2017, Luolajan-Mikkola performed music by Marin Marais and Antoine Forqueray at five concerts in the Sibelius Academy's prestigious Soiva akatemia series. At the same time he saw the completion of a Peregrinatio tour project during which he performed Bach's complete cello suites as well as his transcriptions for cello of the violin sonatas and partitas at each of Finland's medieval stone churches. The Finnish Broadcasting Company (Yle) honoured him with its Musical Act of the Year award in 2003 for a series of concerts entitled Gambia! focusing on French Baroque music.

The significance and future of historical instruments will not, Luolajan-Mikkola believes, be restricted to the performance of music by composers from ages past; they will also increase our understanding of our own era and revitalise the instruments' expressive potential. The majority of the numerous works premiered by him are ones he has personally commissioned.

Markku Luolajan-Mikkola has an impressive discography: nearly 50 discs of solo and chamber works, many of them in world premiere recordings. They have won him a Finnish Janne Award, an Yle (Finnish Broadcasting Company) special honour prize and a Classical Emma (2007), and been singled out as Best Record of the Year by the leading Finnish daily Helsingin Sanomat. Luolajan-Mikkola is a founding member of the Phantasm viol concert that has garnered such major accolades as three Gramophone Awards (1996, 2004, 2017), a Diapason d'Or de l'année (2017), and Limelight Magazine's Best Chamber Music CD (2015). Phantasm's releases have also won numerous other distinctions, such as a Gramophone Editor's Choice (five times), a BBC Music Magazine Record of the Month (three times), a Diapason d'Or (twice), a Gramophone Critic's Choice, a Choc du Monde, a Presto Classical Editor's Choice and Rondo magazine's Record of the Month. Its recordings have also had some twenty or so nominations for major prizes.

In 2010, Markku Luolajan-Mikkola founded Finland's leading early-music event – the BRQ Vantaa Festival (originally the Vantaa Music Festival) of which he is still Artistic Director. He has been teaching at the Sibelius Academy and other music colleges since 1976. From 2005 to 2015 he was an Honorary Member of the Senior Common Room during Phantasm's residence at Magdalen College, Oxford.

Markku Luolajan-Mikkola graduated in modern cello from the Sibelius Academy in 1983 and earned postgraduate diplomas in both viola da gamba and Baroque cello at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague in 1992.

Home page: www.luolajan-mikkola.fi



Alejandro Marías



Born in Madrid into a family of artists and intellectuals, Alejandro Marías knew at an early age that his vocation was to be a musician. He began his studies with Enrique Correa and Maria de Macedo and obtained the Advanced Degrees in Cello and Viola da gamba at the Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid. He moved to France to specialize in the historicist interpretation of classical and romantic repertoires and later to Switzerland, where he studied, at the Haute École de Musique de Genève, for a performance Masters in Baroque Cello and Viola da gamba, with Bruno Cocset and Guido Balestracci, respectively. He has received classes from cellists such as Christophe Coin, Anner Bylisma or Jaap Ter Linden and from gambists such as Wieland Kuijken, Jordi Savall or Hille Perl.

Alejandro Marías is a teacher of viola da gamba and baroque cello at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Sevilla, artistic director of the La Spagna ensemble, a member of the Francisco de Goya Quartet and a collaborator with groups such as Zarabanda, Forma Antiqua or Accademia del Piacere. He has performed in a score of countries with various chamber ensembles; as a soloist, he often performs recitals and concerts, and his interpretations of the solos for viola da gamba of Bach's passions have been particularly acclaimed. In orchestras, he has worked with conductors such as Philippe Herreweghe, Marc Minkowski, Ton Koopman, Bruno Weil, Sigiswald Kuijken, Herv. Niquet and Enrico Onofri. His recordings include quartets by Manuel Canales and quintets by Boccherini with the Goya Quartet, as well as the album A Tribute to Telemann leading La Spagna, of which Norman Lebrecht wrote: "La Spagna plays this music as brilliantly as one could wish for under the leadership of the virtuoso Alejandro Marías." In 2019 Brilliant Classics published their recording of Jacques Morel's complete work for viola da gamba, which no one had recorded until that year. This work has been unanimously praised by international critics, who have come to say: "The performance is frankly superb, to the point that many, in a blind tasting, would call to mind the Jordi Savall of the glorious times" (Ritmo).

Home page: <https://laspagna.es/alejandro-marias/>

