

# Bach and his Successors



Session Two: Rediscovery

A LIFE Institute Course

2014.10.14

# Plan for Session

- Appeal: Counter to Modernity
- Rediscovered -
  - Mendelssohn
  - Reger
  - Stokowski
  - Casals
  - Gould
- 1930's – Cello Suites
- 1950's – Goldberg Variations

# Modernity

- Two Malaises
  - Growth of individualism
  - Growth of instrumental reason

Charles Taylor – *The Malaise of Modernity*

- Free of community, free of shared values
- Everything is measured quantitatively
- What happens to our inner self?
- We need to ground our self

Bach helps

# 1750

- Bach dies on July 25, 1750, age 65
- Mourned as great organist
- Lutheran service evolves
  - Bach's music is no longer appropriate
- Musicians study his work; unheard in public
  - But Mozart listened and learned
  - And Beethoven listened and learned

# Time Line

- 1829 – Mendelssohn mounts a “first” performance of St. Mathew Passion
  - Heavily edited, but critical success
- 1800's – Bach's music edited and transcribed to meet popular tastes
  - Interesting two piano versions offered
- 1900's – Bach made spectacular and dramatic
- 1930's – Cassals and Cello Suites
- 1950's – Gould and Goldberg Variations

# Mendelssohn-Bach

- Matthäus Passion, Kommt ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen
- Campus Cantabile & Sinfonietta Potsdam
- Chor und Orchester der Universität Potsdam
- Dirigent: Kristian Commichau
- Potsdam, Nikolaisaal, 2010

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziGHGPYec4w>

# Bach – St. Mathew Passion

- "Matthäus Passion, BWV 244: Chori, "Kommt, ihr Töchter, helft mir klagen"" by Ton Koopman
- Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Soloists
- Authentic, HIP Concert (as it was?)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M\\_LLFFFXaUA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_LLFFFXaUA)

# Reger-Bach

- JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
- TROISIEME CONCERTO  
BRANDEBOURGEOIS
- transcrit pour piano à 4 mains par MAX REGER  
( 1905 )
- Evelinde TRENKNER et Sontraud SPEIDEL,  
piano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzHPJ0UnU18>



# Stokowski-Bach

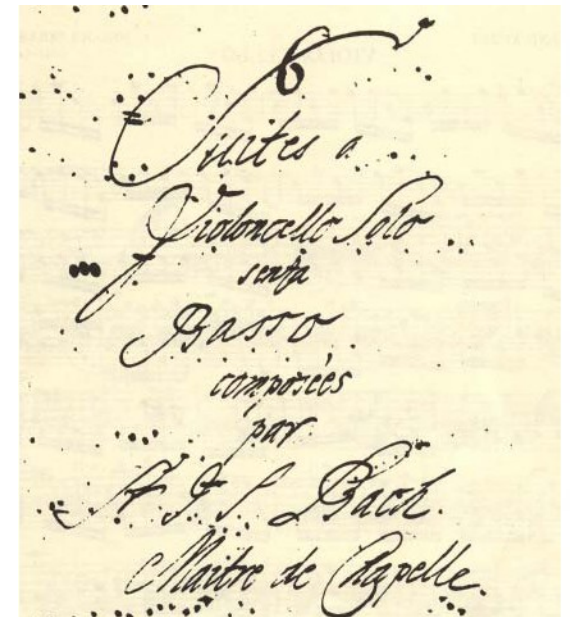
- Passacaglia & Fugue in C minor
  - In 1969, during one of his annual summer trips to Europe, Leopold Stokowski gave a televised studio performance of his own orchestration of Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor with the Saarbrücken Radio Symphony Orchestra.
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9Sbk3E8-ws>

# Cello Suites

- Composed in 1717-1723
  - While Bach was Kapellmeister in Kothen
- Normal Bach “mystery”
  - No definitive copy
  - No necessary order
  - No obvious instrument
- Pablo Casals convinced the world that these were great and profound performance works
  - First recorded in 1936

# Anna Magdalena Bach

- Bach's second wife and mother of 13 of his children
- An accomplished, well-paid singer
- Her manuscript copy is considered the primary source for the suites
- Was her role much more than just copyist?
  - Mrs Bach & the Cello Suites - [www.cdu.edu.au/sites/default/files/mj-april.pdf](http://www.cdu.edu.au/sites/default/files/mj-april.pdf)

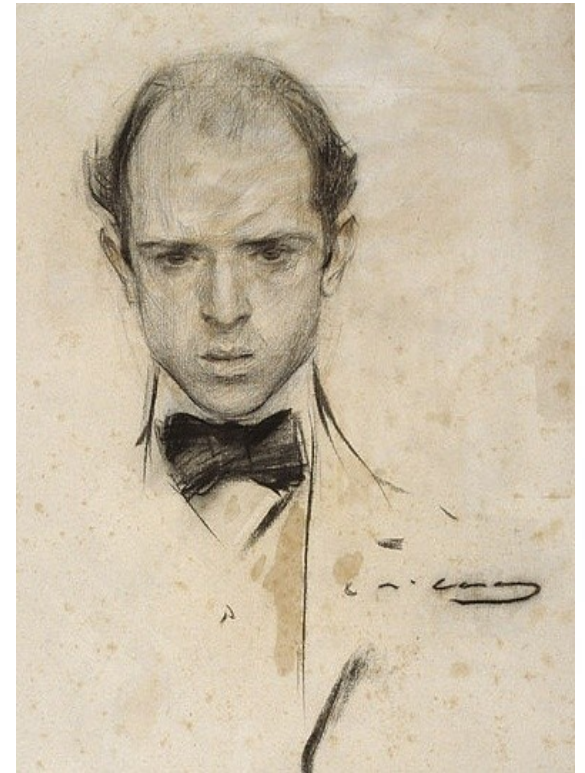


# Casals – Suite One

- In August 1954, at age of 77 Pablo Casals (1876-1973) performed Bach's G-Major Cello Solo at Abbye "Saint-Michel-de-Cuxa", a Catholic monastery located south of the small border town Prades in France (Catalonia of Spain is on the other side of border). Pablo Casals settled in Prades in earlier 1940's after the Spanish civil war in 1930's, and he came back to Prada as the conductor and cellist at "Prades Festival" in 1950's.
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KX1YtvFZOj0>

# Pablo Casals

- Born December 29, 1876
- Spanish Catalan cellist and conductor.
- Regarded as one of history's greatest cellists
- In 1890, when he was 13, he discovered in a second-hand sheet music store in Barcelona a tattered copy of Bach's six cello suites
- January 15, 1904 played in White House



# The Appeal

- Recognized as some of the most profound music for a single voiced solo instrument
- Example: Sarabande from Suite 5
  - Rostropovich: The essence of Bach's genius
  - Tortelier: An extension of silence
  - Played by Yo-Yo Ma at 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of 9/11
- Transcribed for: violin, viola, double bass, viola da gamba, mandolin, piano, marimba, classical guitar, recorder, flute, electric bass, horn, saxophone, bass clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, tuba, ukulele, and charango
- Everyone wants to play the suites!

# Bach Cello Suite #1

- Menuetto 1 & 2, played by Ben Greenberg on the French Horn
- From the Wendel Hoss transcriptions...  
recorded live at the Jerusalem Theater in Israel  
in March 2010
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwoBAmChPj0>

# violoncello da spalla

- Cello Suite no. 1 in G major BWV 1007
  - Prelude
- Sigiswald Kuijken, violoncello da spalla
- Live concert at the Museo Diocesano in Reggio Emilia. The concert was played 21-3-2012 in memory of Gustav Leonhardt
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKaZovUmxVU>

(Spalla:Shoulder // Gamba:Legs)



# Goldberg Variations

- Published in Bach's life, in 1741
- Aria; 30 Variations; Aria da Capo
- Keyboard exercise, consisting of an ARIA with diverse variations for harpsichord with two manuals. Composed for connoisseurs, for the refreshment of their spirits, by Johann Sebastian Bach, composer for the royal court of Poland and the Electoral court of Saxony, Kapellmeister and Director of Choral Music in Leipzig. Nuremberg, Balthasar Schmid, publisher.



# The Name

- [For this work] we have to thank the instigation of the former Russian ambassador to the electoral court of Saxony, Count Kaiserling, who often stopped in Leipzig and brought there with him the aforementioned Goldberg, in order to have him given musical instruction by Bach. The Count was often ill and had sleepless nights. At such times, Goldberg, who lived in his house, had to spend the night in an antechamber, so as to play for him during his insomnia. ... Once the Count mentioned in Bach's presence that he would like to have some clavier pieces for Goldberg, which should be of such a smooth and somewhat lively character that he might be a little cheered up by them in his sleepless nights.

Fokel, 1802 biography

- Maybe, but Goldberg was a young teenager when the variations were written. And not exactly soporific music.

# Bach/Busoni - Goldberg

- Busoni's edition for the piano (circa 1900)
- "J.S. Bach: Aria mit 30 Veränderungen, BWV 988 "Goldberg Variations" - Var. 24 Canone all'Ottava a 1 Clav." by Wilhelm Kempff

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3CvoDLh2bU>



Busoni ~ 1895

# Bach/(Gould) – Goldberg I

- Released in 1955 (Gould was 23)
- An interpretation of Johann Sebastian Bach's Goldberg Variations (BWV 988), the work launched Gould's career as a renowned international pianist, and became one of the most well-known piano recordings. Sales were "astonishing" for a classical album: it was reported to have sold 40,000 copies by 1960, and had sold more than 100,000 by the time of Gould's death in 1982.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQONN8ZSZac>

# Glenn Gould

- Born September 25, 1932, Toronto
- Spectacular early career on concert stage
- Last public performance: April 10, 1964
- He reinvented the music that he performed
  - Amazing architectural clarity
- His 1981 Goldberg sold over 1,000,000 copies
- He died in 1982 at age 50



# Comparison

- A Comparison of 6, plus 2 Interpretations of Variation 18 of Bach's BWV 988 (Goldberg Variations)
- Played by:
  - Claudio Arrau
  - Daniel Barenboim
  - Glenn Gould (1981)
  - Wilhelm Kempff
  - Andras Schiff
  - Rosalyn Tureck, plus
  - Pierre Hantai
  - Wanda Landowska!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqIHGhm0XxE>

# Conclusion

- Each generation has found a way to rediscover or reinvent a Bach for their time
- The undergirding architecture is strong enough to support multiple interpretations
- Especially in today's uncertain times, Bach provides a comforting grounding

# Next Session

- Music for Hire
  - Bach's music was put to immediate service
- Bach's music played a fundamental role in Lutheran service
- Bach's writing was used to train his sons and his apprentices
- Focus on organ works and the Magnificat
  - Compare to works by Kuhnau and Buxtehude