



JONATHAN WOODY WORLD PREMIERE

**SUITE FOR STRING ORCHESTRA AFTER THE
WORKS OF CHARLES IGNATIUS SANCHO**

Apr 18 + 20, 2021

HANDEL+HAYDN SOCIETY

JONATHAN WOODY WORLD PREMIERE

SUITE FOR STRING ORCHESTRA AFTER THE WORKS OF CHARLES IGNATIUS SANCHO

April 18 + 20, 2021
Cary Hall (Lexington, MA)

Streamed Online
2,530th Concert

PERFORMERS

Emily Marvosh, *host*
Aisslinn Nosky, *director*
H+H Orchestra

PROGRAM

Concerto Grosso in G Minor, after Corelli, Op. 5, No. 5 Francesco Geminiani
(1687-1762)
Adagio
Vivace
Adagio
Allegro

from Concerto Grosso in C Minor, Op. 6, No. 8 George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)
Allemande
Adagio
Allegro

**Suite for String Orchestra after the
works of Charles Ignatius Sancho** Jonathan Woody
(b. 1983)
Ouverture: Grave
Allemande: Andante moderato
Courante: Adagietto
Sarabande: Andante
Gigue: Allegretto

*These performances mark the world premiere of the piece.
Jonathan Woody's Suite for String Orchestra after the works of Charles
Ignatius Sancho was commissioned by the Handel and Haydn Society
with support from Jim and Cathy Stone.*

Concerto armonico No. 2 in B-flat Major Unico Wilhelm van Wassenauer
(1692-1766)
Largo andante
Da Capella. Presto
Largo affetuoso
Allegro moderato. Meno forte

**This program is made possible in part by the
generous support of Deborah and Robert First.**

**Aisslinn Nosky, director, is sponsored
in part by John J. Winkleman Jr.**

PROGRAM NOTES FINDING INSPIRATION

With the music on today's program, we encounter four works, all of which were inspired by or inspired other music. Two of the works, concerti grossi by Handel and Geminiani, are indebted to music by Arcangelo Corelli. Geminiani's Concerto grosso after Corelli op. 5, no. 5, as the title acknowledges, uses a solo violin sonata by his teacher as the basis for his work. Movements from Handel's Concerto in C minor, op. 6, no. 8 pay homage to Corelli as well even as they rework music from Handel's own earlier compositions. The Concerto armonico No. 2 by the Dutch composer Count Unico Wilhelm van Wassenauer, was adapted in the early 20th century by Igor Stravinsky for his ballet *Pulcinella* which marked the beginning of what is commonly called that composer's neoclassical period. Jonathan Woody's Suite for String Orchestra was inspired by the music of Charles Ignatius Sancho who, born into slavery in 1729, became a merchant and composer in London. In some instances, why a composer chose to reference music composed earlier—whether their own or that of another composer—might never be known with certainty. Still, whether homage or inspiration, the act itself establishes a connection with the past that enriches the present.

Concerto Grosso in G Minor after Corelli, Op. 5, No. 5 Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762)

The music of Arcangelo Corelli inspired the concertos by both Handel and Geminiani. Corelli's music was reprinted more often than any other composer of his day: his opus 1 and opus 5 were reissued some 81 times in the 18th century, not including the numerous arrangements of his music for other instruments.

In 1714, Geminiani moved to England, where his reputation as a student of Corelli was soon superseded by the merits of his own compositions. A member of several musical societies, Geminiani's importance to cultural life in London was acknowledged when the Philo-Musicae et Architecturae Societas organized the publication of his concertos based on Corelli's Sonatas for Violin, op. 5. Dedicated to the king and subscribed to by nobility, the first six concertos published in 1726 were a commercial success. More importantly, they are an homage from a student to his teacher. In the Concerto grosso in G minor, after Corelli op. 5, no. 5, Geminiani deftly interprets Corelli's original sonata for solo violin, highlighting his teacher's own compositional subtleties. In the first movement, Adagio, Geminiani divides the original solo violin line between first and second violins, exposing the contrapuntal possibilities inherent in Corelli's melody. Not all of the movements are elaborations, however. In the final movement, Allegro/Gigue, Geminiani is content to leave his model virtually untouched.

from Concerto Grosso in C Minor, Op. 6, No. 8 George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Corelli's legacy endured long after his death in 1713; there were some 17 editions of his music published between 1714 and 1790. His reputation spread throughout Europe; his music was imitated directly or used as source material by his contemporaries and successors. In England, Corelli's opus 6 concertos remained popular—sometimes even more popular than Handel's—well into the 19th century.

Handel composed his set of Twelve Grand Concertos between September 29 and October 30, 1739. He published them as his opus 6 concertos, connecting his set with Corelli's opus 6. Although other concertos in the set reference the music of other composers, in the Concerto grosso in C Minor, op. 6, no. 8, Handel borrows material from his own earlier works. The first movement is an Allemande, the standard opening movement in a dance suite. For the opening of this movement Handel references his 1739 Suite in G Minor, HWV452, which may have been inspired by another keyboard piece by Johannes Mattheson. The fourth movement of the concerto, Adagio, recalls the opening gestures of Cleopatra's aria "[Piangerò la sorte mia](#)" from *Giulio Cesare* (1724). In both of these movements, Handel explores the musical possibilities that each of these openings suggest. In the final Allegro, structural clarity offsets the continually changing instrument pairings, creating an internal tension between motion and stability.

A note from Jonathan Woody appears on pages 6-7.

Concerto armonico No. 2 in B-flat Major Count Unico Wilhelm van Wassenauer (1692-1766)

Count Wassenauer studied at the University of Leiden before making a Grand Tour of Europe between 1714 and 1718. He made two trips to Paris as an ambassador extraordinary of the General States in the 1740s. His music was played at the court of Louis XV and the French praised him as a "great composer," and compared his music to that of Corelli. In The Hague, Wassenauer spent time composing and organizing private concerts in his home and that of his friend and fellow musician Count Willem Bentinck.

Written between 1725 and 1740, Wassenauer's Concerto armonico No. 2 in B-flat Major was composed for these concerts, which featured the violinist Carlo Ricciotti, also known as Bacciccia. Ricciotti funded the publication of Wassenauer's six *Concerti armonici a quattro violini obbligati, alto viola, violoncello obbligato e basso continuo* in 1740. There was no composer attribution, but there was a dedication to Count Bentinck that said they were composed by an "illustrious hand which your Excellency esteems and honours, and to which I am bound out of respect." When the concertos were published in London, Ricciotti was incorrectly named as the composer. A score from the 19th century names Handel as the composer; this attribution was covered over with a label on which Italian composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's name was written. Another score — from the 20th century and possibly a copy of the 19th century one — also gives Pergolesi as the composer. It was under this last misattribution that the 20th century Russian composer Igor Stravinsky encountered this music, adapting it for [his 1920 ballet *Pulcinella*](#), which, in turn, inspired instrumental suites. In 1980, Dutch musicologist Alfred Dunning found a score of the concertos at Twickel Castle near Delden, Netherlands, one of the homes of Wassenauer's prestigious and influential family. A note had been written by Wassenauer explaining that he did not want the works published nor to have his name on the publication, but his friends prevailed.

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A NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

JONATHAN WOODY



What did you find particularly interesting or impactful when researching Charles Ignatius Sancho?

It was particularly poignant to me that he was the first Black Briton to have voting rights in a parliamentary election. The power of a voice, whether musical or political, is deep, and something that reflects the humanity of all people, including and especially when those people are marginalized or “othered.” I’m inspired by Sancho’s refusal to silence his own voice, and also by the pragmatism and practicality with which he went about his life; after all, the search for equality isn’t always about heroes who fight

defining struggles against power. Sometimes it’s the small heroism of simply insisting on one’s own value and having the courage to live a complete life. That Sancho did so, and that we have the historical record of it, is inspiring and humbling for me.

What was it like to create this music?

I was very excited about this project because I love the orchestral music of the mid-18th century and I was thrilled to make my own attempt at the genre. It was a little intimidating, as the players of H+H are very familiar with the masters of the era, and I wanted to do the works of Charles Ignatius Sancho justice in fleshing them out into something enjoyable for everyone to play. But it was also a challenge that was fun to sink my teeth into, and I think it pushed my creative skills a little bit toward the next level.

How would you describe the piece?

It’s a suite, an orchestral work based on European dance forms that by Sancho’s time had been set to music for about 200-300 years, and which was actually starting to fall out of favor while he lived. It has five movements: Overture, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue, each of which have an “A” section and “B” section which both repeat. The whole thing is about 10 minutes long. It features the whole orchestra, and each movement is a sort of morsel in a different mood, with a melody inspired by various smaller works by Sancho.

Can you walk us through the creative process for this project?

I spent a lot of time listening to Sancho’s songs, minuets, and dances, and I spent more time listening to examples of dance forms from the Baroque and Classical periods. I selected a few of Sancho’s melodies that I thought were particularly interesting, then it was a matter of envisioning how the Sancho melody might get extrapolated into one of those dance forms. I also had to think about keys and how they would relate to one another from one movement to the next, and I paid attention to how each orchestral section: violin, viola, cello, and bass, got shown off in the other Baroque works. I tried to write something that would be fun to play for each section even as it sounded good and stayed true to the character of Sancho’s music.

How did you settle on the themes for the piece?

I did so rather organically, choosing the source melodies from Sancho’s admittedly limited surviving works that sounded the most tuneful and had a bit of character to them. I chose the format of the suite because it’s a form that I have always loved in pre-1800s music, as it provides at once a familiar constraint (the particular dance rhythm) and yet seemingly limitless creativity in how that parameter can be explored and realized.



Baritone and composer Jonathan Woody singing with Reginald Mobley, countertenor; Cassandra Extavour, soprano; and Stefan Reed, tenor, during H+H’s *Nigra Sum Sed Formosa* performance at Roxbury Community College in April 2019. *Nigra Sum Sed Formosa* was commissioned by H+H from Jonathan Woody.

CHALRES IGNATIUS SANCHO AND THE WORLD BEYOND



Charles Ignatius Sancho

Portrait by
Thomas
Gainsborough



Eva Ekeblad

Portrait by Olof
Arenius



Cover of a manuscript by Charles Ignatius Sancho

- 1721** Onesimus, an enslaved West African man, introduces the idea of inoculation to combat a smallpox outbreak in Boston. The technique, credited with saving hundreds of lives in an outbreak that killed about 14% of Boston's population, led to a viable smallpox vaccine in 1796.
- 1744** Muhammad ibn Saud begins the expansion of power that will lead to the establishment of Saudi Arabia many years later.
- 1748** Eva Ekeblad becomes the first woman elected to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Her work on making alcohol and flour from potatoes, until then a delicacy of the aristocracy, helped to establish potatoes as food staple and reduce the frequency of famine in that country.
- 1752** The French seize or evict every English-speaking trader in the upper Ohio River region.
- 1758** Sancho marries Anne Osborne. They have seven children, four of whom survive into adulthood.
- 1769** Sancho's *A Collection of New Songs Composed by an African, Humbly Inscribed to the Honorable Mrs. James Brudwell by Her Most Humble and Obedient Servant* is published.
- 1774** Sancho establishes a grocery store in London. As a property owner, he votes in the 1774 general election, "the first known person of African descent" to vote in England, according to election records.
- 1774** Fire destroys the opera house La Fenice in Venice. It will reopen in 1792.
- 1787** Ottobah Cugoano, baptized in London as John Stuart, publishes his autobiography *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Human Species*, demanding the abolition of the slave trade. Cugoano was also a member of the Sons of Africa, a Black abolitionist group in Britain.
- 1780** Sancho dies in London. His obituary is the first known obituary of a person of African descent in the British press.
- 1782** *Letters of the Late Charles Ignatius Sancho, An African* are published in London.

INSPIRATION BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT GEMINIANI + CORELLI

Geminiani pays tribute to his teacher Corelli in the opening Adagio of the Concerto grosso in G minor by using the same notes from Corelli's Violin Sonata in G minor, op. 5, no. 5 in both the first and second violins.



Corelli: Violin Sonata in G Minor, Op. 5, No. 5, Adagio (1700)



Geminiani: Concerto grosso in G Minor after Corelli Op. 5, No. 5, Adagio (1726)

In the Vivace, Corelli's single violin line is slightly altered and then shared between the first and second two violins, highlighting the imitative texture.



Corelli: Violin Sonata in G Minor, Op. 5, No. 5, Vivace (1700)

Geminiani: Concerto grosso in G Minor after Corelli Op. 5, No. 5, Vivace (1726)

In the second Adagio, Geminiani initially sets Corelli's single violin line as a conversation between the first and second violins.



Corelli: Violin Sonata in G Minor, Op. 5, No. 5, Adagio

Geminiani: Concerto grosso in G Minor after Corelli Op. 5, No. 5, Adagio

ARTIST BIOS



Jonathan Woody, *composer and baritone*

Jonathan Woody is a versatile and sought-after musician who works primarily as a performer of early and new music. An accomplished bass baritone, Jonathan performs regularly with the Grammy®-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street, and with such ensembles as TENET Vocal Artists, the Clarion Music Society, the Washington Bach Consort, and Spire Chamber Ensemble. In recent seasons, he has been featured as a soloist with leading historically-informed orchestras, including Portland Baroque Orchestra, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, the Boston Early Music Festival, and Apollo's Fire.

Pre-pandemic highlights include Handel's *Samson* with Pacific MusicWorks (2019), Handel's *Acis & Galatea* with Opera Idaho (2019), a recital of French Baroque cantatas with Byron Sherkman & Friends (2020), and the development of *Carmen Variations* at Baryshnikov Arts Center with Paul Pinto and Gisela Cardenas (2020). Established in the world of new music as a performer and composer, Jonathan has premiered or performed new works in recent years by Ellen Reid, Missy Mazzoli, Ted Hearne, and Du Yun, among others. He has appeared with Beth Morrison Projects, American Opera Projects, PROTOTYPE Festival, MATA Festival, and the Opera America New Works Forum.

As a composer, Jonathan draws inspiration largely from music of the Renaissance and Baroque eras, as well as contemporary minimalism. His works and arrangements have been performed by the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, Lorelei Ensemble, the Handel and Haydn Society, the Cathedral Choral Society and the Uncommon Music Festival.

Jonathan is committed to racial equity in the field of the performing arts, and currently serves on Early Music America's Task Force for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access. His first commission from the Handel and Haydn Society, a 2018 premiere, was presented in collaboration with *Castle of our Skins*, and featured a work detailing the experiences of artists of color in classical music; his second is inspired by the works of Charles Ignatius Sancho, 18th-century Black-British composer and writer. Jonathan is dedicated to a belief that the arts have the power to effect great change in society, and that equitable representation of the diversity of American life is tremendously important in achieving such change.

Currently based in Brooklyn, NY, Jonathan holds degrees from McGill University and the University of Maryland, College Park and is represented by Miguel Rodriguez of Athlone Artists.

PHOTO BY LIZ LINDER

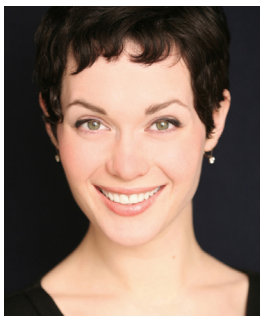


Aisslinn Nosky, *director and violin*

Aisslinn Nosky was appointed Concertmaster of the Handel and Haydn Society in 2011. With a reputation for being one of the most dynamic and versatile violinists of her generation, Aisslinn is in great demand internationally as a soloist, leader, and concertmaster. Recent collaborations include the Thunder Bay Symphony, the Lameque International Baroque Festival Orchestra, Arion Baroque Orchestra, the Calgary Philharmonic, Collegium Musicum Hanyang, and Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra.

Aisslinn is also a member of I FURIOSI Baroque Ensemble. For over a decade, this innovative Canadian ensemble has presented its own edgy and inventive concert series in Toronto and toured Europe and North America, while drawing new audiences in to Baroque music. With the Eybler Quartet, Aisslinn explores repertoire from the first century of the string quartet literature on period instruments. The Eybler Quartet's latest recording of Haydn's Opus 33 string quartets was released to critical acclaim in 2012.

Since 2005, Aisslinn has been a highly active member of Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and has toured and appeared as soloist with this internationally renowned ensemble.



Emily Marvosh, *host*

Emily Marvosh has been a frequent soloist with the Handel and Haydn Society since 2011. She has also received praise for her “plum-wine voice,” and “graceful allure,” on the stages of Carnegie Hall, Jordan Hall, Disney Hall, Lincoln Center, Prague’s Smetana Hall, and Vienna’s Stefansdom. Recent solo appearances include the American Bach Soloists, Charlotte Symphony, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Phoenix Symphony, Chorus Pro Musica, Princeton Festival, Music Worcester, and Cantata Singers.

She is a member of the Lorelei Ensemble, which promotes innovative new music for women. With Lorelei, she has enjoyed collaborations with composer David Lang, BMOP, and the BSO.

She supports Common Cause and Rosie’s Place as a member of Beyond Artists, a coalition that donates concert fees to organizations they care about.

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