



# The German Society of Pennsylvania

proudly presents

## Musica Capricciosa



Sunday, December 13, 2020 at 3:00pm

The German Society of Pennsylvania  
[www.germansociety.org](http://www.germansociety.org)

611 Spring Garden Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19123

# Calendar of Events

## December 2020

Sat. Dec. 20 GSP Wellness: Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am

## January 2021

Sun. Jan. 3 GSP Wellness: Gentle Yoga, 11:00am

Sat. Jan. 9 Buchclub: *Neujahr* by Julie Zeh, 1:30pm

Fri. Jan. 15 Friday Film Fest: *Der Fall Collini*, 6:30pm

Sat. Jan. 20 GSP Wellness: Wandern at the Willows, 11:00am

## February 2021

Sun. Feb. 7 GSP Wellness: Gentle Yoga, 11:00am

Wed. Feb. 10 Konversationsabend: Zoom Carnival, 7:00pm

Sat. Feb. 13 Buchclub, 1:30pm

Fri. Feb. 19 Friday Film Fest: *Atlas*, 6:30pm

Sat. Feb. 20 GSP Wellness: Wandern at the Willows, 11:00pm

Sat. Feb. 27 10th Annual Philly Bierfest, 2:00pm

## Save the date for our next "Wister and More!" concerts:

Sun. Jan. 3 **Xiaopei Xu, piano**  
Ms. Xu's program will include favorite pieces by Bach, Shostakovich, Musto, and Chopin.

Sun. Jan. 31 **ESTrella Piano Duo**  
Svetlana Belsky and Elena Doubovitskaya will perform pieces by Beethoven, Hummel, and Mosheles.

Sun. Mar. 21 **Duo Parisienne**  
Nancy Bean (violin) and Anne Sullivan (harp) will present selections by Piazzolla, Corelli, Debussy, and Massenet.

Sat. Apr. 10 **Claire Huangci, piano**  
Ms. Huangci's program will include favorites by Bach and Beethoven.

All of our events are open to the public.

We welcome members and non-members alike.

Most events require tickets. Please call or email the office to inquire about purchasing:  
215.627.2332 | [info@germansociety.org](mailto:info@germansociety.org)

# Musica Capricciosa

## PROGRAM

The Carman's Whistle  
William Byrd (1540-1623)  
Joyce Chen, harpsichord

Lullaby, My Sweet Little Baby  
William Byrd  
Joyce Chen, harpsichord  
Augustine Mercante, voice

Cello Suite No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1009  
*I. Prelude*  
*VI. Gigue*  
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)  
Elena Smith, cello

Chaconne in D minor  
Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre  
(1665-1729)  
Joyce Chen, harpsichord

Sonata for Unaccompanied Viola da Gamba  
in G major, WKO 155  
*I. Adagio*  
*II. Allegro*  
*III. Minuet*  
Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-1787)  
Elena Smith, cello

Prélude à l'imitation de Mr. Froberger  
Louis Couperin (1626-1661)  
Joyce Chen, harpsichord

Cello Sonata in E minor, RV 40  
*I. Largo*  
*II. Allegro*  
Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)  
Elena Smith, cello  
Behamin Katz, harpsichord

Lachryme  
(from The Manchester Lyra-Viol Manuscript)  
Richard Sumarte (d. ~1630)  
Elena Smith, viola da gamba

Fantasy and Fugue in A minor, BWV 904  
J.S. Bach  
Joyce Chen, harpsichord

## Program Notes

**William Byrd** is one of the most celebrated Elizabethan composers with a prolific output of polyphonic choral music, keyboard works, as well as consort music. Byrd was a devout Catholic, and many of his controversial acts (and associations) were pardoned by the Tudor authorities because of his musical gifts and contribution (although he still got into trouble on several occasions...). **The Carman's Whistle** refers to the whistling of a carman, or carter, and it is an exemplary work of Elizabethan keyboard literature. This setting has been included in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* as well as *My Ladye Nevells Booke*. Davitt Moroney notes that surviving sources of the work include fingering (or the so-called 'early fingering') and suggests that the piece also had a pedagogical purpose. Lullaby, My Sweet Little Baby was originally a well-known five-voice madrigal, published in *Psalmes, Sonets, and Songs* (1588). This madrigal paints the picture of Mary comforting the infant Jesus with "Lullaby, my sweet little Baby/What meanest thou to cry?"

**Johann Sebastian Bach's** suites for unaccompanied cello are some of the most famous works ever written for the instrument, although their fame is largely due to the legendary cellist Pablo Casals, who revived, performed, and recorded the works in the early twentieth century. Before then, Bach's cello suites were little known and sadly, performed only rarely in public. Bach most likely composed his cello suites between 1717 and 1723, when he served as the Kappelmeister in Köthen. Unlike many of his other instrumental works, no autograph manuscript of the cello suites survives, and so performers and scholars alike are dependent on the notationally inconsistent, and sometimes, conflicting handwritten copies of the suites that survive today. The Prelude opens with a simple, somber minor chord which Bach ornaments, transposes, and continually returns to throughout this powerful, yet introspective movement. The final Gigue is an energetic dance complete with resonant chords and double stops and dexterous passagework.

**Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre** was one of the most prominent female composers in 17th-century France. Born into a family of musicians and instrument makers, Jacquet de la Guerre was considered a child prodigy and performed in front of King Louis XIV, which led to her acceptance into the French court at a young age. Jacquet de la Guerre was most known for her chamber music and solo harpsichord works, and she published several volumes of compositions and maintained an active career even after her marriage. **Jacquet de la Guerre's work has received growing attention in the past few decades with the rising awareness of female composers.** Her work stands out in the baroque repertoire and her acceptance into the canon should not be due to her gender alone. This particular chaconne is from her D minor suite published in 1707.

A student of J.S. Bach, **Carl Friedrich Abel** was a renowned performer and composer who lived during an age when musicians began to reject the florid Baroque style of

composition in favor of the lighter, less complex textures of the Classical Era. Aside from his performing and composing career, Abel was well-known for his very successful subscription concert series (one of the first of its kind), which he established in London with Johann Christian Bach (the eleventh son of Johann Sebastian). The combination of intricate ornamentation and elegant, clear harmonic writing found in this unaccompanied sonata in G major illustrates the dichotomy of the two compositional worlds that Abel balanced throughout his career.

As a master of early seventeenth-century keyboard literature, **Louis Couperin** introduced many inventive writing styles in his dance suites as well as solidified the tradition of unmeasured preludes. Unmeasured preludes invite the performer to explore the sonic and temporal possibilities by allowing the sound to decay naturally while striking another wave of timbral resonances. *Prélude à l'imitation de Mr. Froberger* is a quintessential unmeasured prelude. Couperin pays tribute to his colleague, Froberger, by imitating the Italian tradition with a French twist. The piece is divided into three short sections: the outer sections are free and improvisatory with a metrical movement in the middle.

**Antonio Vivaldi** was one of the most prolific composers who ever lived, having composed over 500 concertos as well as many other instrumental and vocal works. Vivaldi was also a virtuoso violinist, teacher, and priest, and he spent over thirty years working as the "master of violin" at the Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage in Venice. Many of his compositions were written for the students at the Ospedale. Vivaldi wrote a set of six sonatas for cello and continuo between 1720 and 1730, and they were published in Paris in 1740 without an opus number. His fifth sonata in E minor opens with a lamenting Largo full of rich harmonies and piercing dissonances. The following Allegro begins with a short, spirited theme that reappears throughout the movement.

The Manchester Lyra-Viol Manuscript is the largest single, seventeenth-century source of works for solo viol. It contains 246 pieces (many of which are based on familiar folk tunes of the day), which are notated in tablature and staff notation. In addition, the entire collection comprises twenty-two different tuning systems for the instrument. **Richard Sumarte** composed many of the works in the Manchester Lyra-Viol Manuscript, but other than his association with this collection, very little is known about his life. His *Lachryme* is a solemn, reflective piece in the style of a pavan (three separate, repeated sections, each with its own theme and character).

**Johann Sebastian Bach's** Fantasy and Fugue in A minor is one of the most emotionally moving works in *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. The fantasy has an insistent sense of forward motion throughout its three contrasting developments. The fugue adopts a bipartite structure, where the first half is led with an initial motive that is quickly complemented with a contrasting chromatic motive in the second half.

## About the Artists



A native of Taiwan, **Dr. Joyce Chen** (harpsichord) is a recipient of the 2018 Individual Artist Fellowship from the Delaware Division of the Arts. As a solo harpsichordist, Joyce has been gaining recognition both nationally and internationally. From 2015-2016, Joyce performed extensively with Brandywine Baroque on the regular concert series as well as Harpsichord Heaven at the Flint Collection of Antique Keyboard Instruments. In March 2016, Joyce was one of the six finalists at the Eighth International Juror Harpsichord Competition in Oberlin. In 2018, Joyce made her international debut at the Musica Antiqua Festival and Harpsichord Competition in Bruges, Belgium as well as the International Normandy Baroque Music Competition in Rouen, France. In May 2019, Joyce performed as a soloist of the Emerging Artist Showcase by Early Music America at the Bloomington Early Music Festival. Joyce is a PhD candidate in Historical Musicology at Princeton University, where she is also Graduate Student Director of Early Music Princeton. Outside of her academic career, Joyce has been Minister of Music at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Glenside, PA since November 2018.



Described by The New York Times as a "glowing countertenor," **Augustine Mercante** enjoys an active career performing repertoire from the Baroque to the newly-created. This season he will be heard in Handel's Messiah at Delaware State University, Mendelssohn's Elijah with the Delaware Choral Society, Vivaldi's Stabat Mater at St. Patrick's Rittenhouse Square, Copland's Old American Songs with Delaware Choral Arts, Thomas Linley's The Duenna with Brandywine Baroque, as a featured artist with the Serafin Summer Music Festival, and in recitals throughout Delaware and Pennsylvania.

Gus is a frequent soloist with the American Spiritual Ensemble, with which he has toured Ireland, Spain, France and the United States, including his debut in New York's Lincoln Center and made his debut with Opera Philadelphia last season. He works regularly with instrument maker and composer Aaron Grad and premiered Grad's Old-Fashioned Love Songs for countertenor and electric theorbo, a performance praised by the Washington Post for "full-bodied sweetness, exemplary pitch, and a reliably musical imagination." As a Vocal Fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center, his performance in the American premiere of George Benjamin's Written on Skin was described by the Wall Street Journal as "riveting" with a voice that "soared above the texture, lining the text with the haloed elegance of gold-leaf inscription".

He is also a fellow of the Delaware Division of the Arts, most recently being awarded an Individual Artist Fellowship in 2013.

Augustine Mercante completed his Artist Diploma in Germany as a Fulbright Scholar studying with soprano Edith Wiens and performing at the Prinzregententheater in Munich and for the International Gluck Festival for the Nurnberg Opera. He holds degrees from the University of North Texas and the University of Delaware, where he was honored to be the inaugural recipient of the Robert King Memorial Scholarship.

Gus and his husband, Justin, live in Wilmington, Delaware where Gus maintains a private teaching studio and is on the voice faculty at Wesley College, Delaware State University, and The Music School of Delaware. Learn more at [www.augustinemercante.com](http://www.augustinemercante.com).



A Philadelphia native, cellist **Elena Smith** maintains an active career as a performing and teaching artist. She is the cellist and manager of Blue Line String Quartet, and she performs frequently with Fairmount String Quartet, Elysium String Quartet, and many other chamber ensembles in the Philadelphia area. She is principal cellist of the Wayne Oratorio Society, and she has appeared with the Pennsylvania Ballet Orchestra, Reading Symphony, Bay Atlantic Symphony, West Jersey Chamber Orchestra, and other orchestras.

In addition to her career as a modern cellist, Elena has a passion for historical string instruments, and she performs regularly on baroque cello and viola da gamba. She has appeared on tour with Venice Baroque Orchestra, and she was the viola da gamba soloist in New York City Opera's production of *Los Elementos* by Antonio Lites. She has participated in the American Bach Soloists Academy in San Francisco, the International Masterclasses Festival in Gaming, Austria, and Juilliard at Piccola Accademia in Montisi, Italy. Elena is a founding member of Muse Camerata, Musicivic Baroque, and Filament, and has appeared as a guest with Bach Collegium Philadelphia, Gamut Bach Ensemble, Crescendo Period Instrument Orchestra, Ex Umbris, Elm City Consort, and The Musick Art. In 2018, she made her Canada debut performing with *l'Extase d'Ornace* in Montréal. She has studied with Sarah Cunningham, Phoebe Carrai, and she has performed in masterclass for Thomas Fritzsch and Paolo Pandolfo.

A dedicated educator, Elena maintains a private studio and is the Operations Director and Cello Teaching Artist at The Common Place Orchestra, an arts education program that provides musical instruction to children in underserved communities in Southwest Philadelphia.

Elena is a graduate of Temple University, where she studied with Jeffrey Solow.

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We also wish to acknowledge with thanks the generous support received from **The Philadelphia Cultural Fund** for this season of our music program.