

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday May 4, 2023 1:15 pm
St Malachy's Church – The Actors' Chapel in New York City
Live Streamed to midtownconcerts.org and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/)

House of Time *Angels and Demons*

Gonzalo X. Ruiz ~ oboe, recorder, guitar Tatiana Daubek ~ violin
Matt Zucker ~ violoncello Elliot Figg ~ harpsichord

Trio Sonata Op. 4, No. 1 Largo ~ Corrente ~ Adagio ~ Presto	Ancangelo Corelli (1653–1713)
Sonata in A minor for Violoncello Op 4, No. 5 Poco Allegro ~ Adagio ~ Allegro	Jacob Klein (1688–1748)
“Damnation Sonata” in C minor, RV 53 Adagio ~ Allegro ~ Largo ~ Allegro	Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)
Sonata in G minor “The Devil’s Trill”	Giuseppe Tartini (1692–1770)
Suite from <i>Alcyone</i> Air des faunes et driades ~ Marche en rondeau ~ Sarabande ~ Chaconne	Marin Marais (1656–1728)
Jupiter	Antoine Forqueray (1672–1745)
Trio Sonata Op. 1, No. 12 “La Folia”	Antonio Vivaldi

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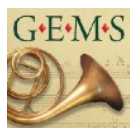
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ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Angelic inspiration and demonic possession take turns driving some of the most dramatic works of the Baroque. Tartini claimed that his fiendish "Devil's Trill Sonata" was played to him by the devil himself sitting at the foot of his bed and in Vivaldi's "Damnation Sonata" the oboe becomes a wayward soul dragged down to hell. Trios by Arcangelo Corelli, and Marin Marais, who "played like an angel", contrast with works by Antoine Forqueray, who "played like a demon". House of Time explores these mythic extremes in Baroque music, capped by a special edition of La Folia (The Madness of Spain).

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

House of Time, known for its "fluency and command" (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) and "fine playing, cohesiveness and creativity" (*Early Music America*) is dedicated to both well-known and underperformed repertoire of the 17th through the 21st centuries played on period instruments. Members and guests include faculty and alumni of The Juilliard School, as well as prize winners of major international competitions. Using the instruments and techniques of the past to express the vivid passions in the music, House of Time has moved audiences and keeps them coming back for more.

By performing quality concerts showcasing world-class musicians on period instruments, House of Time presents our classical music heritage in a way that not only entertains but also allows greater understanding of its cultural context. By replacing the traditional pre-concert lecture with personable and accessible remarks from the stage, the ensemble breaks down the barrier between performer and audience and gives casual listeners as well as experts the opportunity to understand the intersection between musicology and performance. By committing to performing its series in the Washington Heights as well as Lincoln Center neighborhoods and making tickets available and affordable through a variety of outlets, House of Time seeks to bring the musical jewels of the past and the thrill of live performance available to all New Yorkers.

Currently in their 9th season, House of Time is ensemble-in-residence at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New York City. The ensemble has been presented by the Berkeley Early Music Festival, Czech Center New York, Early Music Festival: NYC, Music Before 1800, Michigan State University, San Diego and San Francisco Early Music Societies, The University Club in New York City, the Yale Collection of Musical Instruments, Early Music Now. House of Time is a continuous recipient of the New York State Council on the Arts grant, and is on the roster of GEMS Live! Artists.

Gonzalo X. Ruiz, oboe, is one of America's most sought-after historical woodwind soloists. In recent seasons, Gonzalo has appeared as principal oboist and soloist with leading groups in the United States and Europe including The English Concert, Sonnerie, Wiener Akademie, Philharmonia, Trinity Wall Street, The Boston Early Music Festival, and Musica Angelica, under conductors including McGegan, Savall, Manze, Antonini, Huggett, Goodwin, Pinnock, Hasselböck, Rattle, Hogwood, and Egarr. He has been featured in numerous recordings of orchestral, chamber, and solo repertoire, and his reconstructions of the original versions of Bach's *Orchestral Suites* received a Grammy nomination in 2010. Critics have declared Gonzalo "one of only a handful of truly superb Baroque oboists in the world" (*Alte Musik Aktuell*) and "a master of expansive phrasing, lush sonorities, and deft passagework" (*San Francisco Chronicle*). For years, he has taught at Oberlin Conservatory and the Longy School of Music, and most recently he was appointed professor at The Juilliard School. Gonzalo has given master classes at Yale University, Indiana University, and the New World Symphony, and his former students now fill the ranks of many top groups across the country. Equally accomplished on the modern oboe, he has been principal oboe of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic and the New Century Chamber Orchestra, with recent performances including the concertos of Mozart, Vaughn Williams, and Strauss. For many years, Gonzalo led the ensemble American Baroque, specializing in new music commissions, for which he received the 2000 ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. He is an acknowledged expert in historical reed techniques, and examples of his work are on permanent display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Tatiana Daubek, violin, is known for her “sleekly elegant” playing (*Gazettes Long Beach*) and “soloistic precision” (*Early Music America*). In a recent performance of Bach’s famous Chaconne, Tatiana’s “flawlessly lyrical rendering filled the cavernous, gold-leaf cathedral with splendor and gave the music the fluidity it wants” (*Bachtrack*). She is concertmaster for New York’s oldest Bach cantata series, Bach Vespers Holy Trinity. In addition, she performs frequently with the American Classical Orchestra, Carmel Bach Festival, Handel and Haydn Society, Musica Angelica, and Trinity Baroque Orchestra. Tatiana is a founding member of House of Time – a chamber ensemble with a thriving series in Manhattan dedicated to performing music on period instruments. Tatiana has taken part in multiple tours across North and South America with Musica Angelica/Wiener Akademie of *The Infernal Comedy* and *The Giacomo Variations* starring John Malkovich. An active member of her Czech heritage, Tatiana helped start the Festival Jarmily Novotne, a festival in the Czech Republic commemorating the life of star soprano and grandmother, Jarmila Novotna. She has collaborated abroad with the Czech ensemble, Musica Florea and was a featured soloist broadcast live on Czech Radio. Tatiana holds degrees from the University of North Texas, Boston University and The Juilliard School. Aside from music, Tatiana is also a photographer specializing in portraiture and street photography. She is mother to her daughter Sofia.

Described as “mesmerizing” (*Seen and Heard International*), **Matt Zucker**, violoncello, appears internationally as a collaborator and soloist specializing in historical cellos and viols. His orchestral career has taken him around the world with ensembles including Boston Baroque, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Les Arts Florissants, and Washington National Cathedral Baroque Orchestra. His 2023 performances as viola da gamba soloist in J.S. Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* with the New York Philharmonic were lauded as “stellar” and “a delight” (*Financial Times*). Matt has also recently been featured in solos with Trinity Baroque Orchestra and New York Baroque Incorporated. Equally at home as a chamber musician, he performs with House of Time, the Boston Baroque X-tet, TENET Vocal Artists, the Sebastians, and Sonnambula. He has spent his summers at the Boston Early Music Festival, *Dans les Jardins de William Christie*, and Teatro Nuovo, a festival dedicated to historically informed performances of *bel canto* opera. He can be heard on *Brilliance Indéniable: The Virtuoso Violin in the Court of Louis XV* with Alana Youssefian and Le Bien-Aimé on Avie Records. Matt graduated from the Historical Performance program at The Juilliard School and was awarded a Benzaquen Career Advancement Grant. He holds additional degrees in violoncello performance and music theory from the Eastman School of Music and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

Elliot Figg, harpsichord, is a keyboardist, conductor, and composer from Dallas, Texas. He is a graduate of the Historical Performance Program at The Juilliard School, where he studied harpsichord with Kenneth Weiss. He also studied with Arthur Haas at the Yale School of Music. Elliot is an active member of several New York-based early music and contemporary ensembles, including ACRONYM, Ruckus, New York Baroque Incorporated, and New Vintage Baroque. Recent engagements include Conductor and harpsichordist for Death of Classical’s production of *Dido and Aeneas* in the catacombs of Green-Wood Cemetery, Conductor and harpsichordist for *Piramo e Tisbe* and *L’Amant Anonyme*, both with Little Opera Theatre of New York, Deputy Music Director and harpsichordist for *Farinelli and the King* on Broadway, assistant conductor and harpsichordist for *Il Farnace* and *Veremonda*, both with Spoleto Festival USA, and assistant conductor and harpsichordist for *Dido and Aeneas* with L.A. Opera.

NEXT WEEK: Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble
The Musical Murder Mystery of Gesualdo

Program Notes:

Humans have always looked to the supernatural to help explain all manner of things, and music is no exception. Long before Marlowe and Goethe penned their version of the Faust myth, listeners suspected that some ecstatic performances involved demonic possession, the player having made some corrupt bargain that granted such powers. Players who displayed a certain uncomplicated calm, on the other hand, were described as angelic, and their music was thought to derive in some way from the same heavenly beings that adorned artwork, and that were often depicted explicitly as musicians. This program explores works and composers whose appeal depended in part on this suspicion of supernatural influence, whether for good or evil.

Arcangelo Corelli seemed destined to live up to his name, and his music indeed sounded to listeners in the early 18th century as if it came in part from that choir of angels. Corelli seems to have spent years polishing his trios and then his *concerti grossi* before publication, and the result was a style so natural and inevitable, the play of consonance and dissonance so satisfying, that it triggered the same feelings that led a later generation to label Mozart's music "Classical". The implied connection was not only to the stable forms of antiquity, but also to the eternal heavenly values that inspired them. What critics of his music today hear as a certain normality, or lack of exoticism, is precisely what made it transcendent in its time.

In the early eighteenth century, the virtuosic and dramatic style that had been pioneered by violinists was taken up by other instruments, notably the flute and oboe, but also the violoncello, which had until then mostly been used in a supporting role. Dutch composer Jacob Klein's collection of sonatas makes extreme demands of performers, often requiring fingerings and techniques thought of as modern. His fifth sonata in A minor certainly would provide fodder for listeners inclined to suspect demonic assistance was involved.

Antonio Vivaldi's own violin performances certainly suggested some kind of possession. When lost in performance, he was said to throw his head back, his eyes rolling back into his head while his fingers crawled up the violin in increasingly complex ways. It certainly sounds like some type of trance, whether real or feigned, and it must have been enormously appealing given the dichotomy that he was also a priest.

His sonata RV 53 was probably written for the Dresden oboist Cristoph Richter, who traveled to Venice in 1726 with the Elector of Saxony as well as Vivaldi's own former pupil, Pisendel. While lacking any explicit program attributable to the composer, the great James Caldwell of Oberlin once had a vision of this work as a portrayal of a soul in peril, and it has been known by many since as the "Damnation Sonata".

"La Folia", also known as the "Madness of Spain", was a sequence of chords that had proved fruitful for improvisation for decades when Vivaldi wrote his version. For a brief time, it functioned as the "12 bar blues" of the Baroque, a harmonic structure all musicians knew and which could serve as common ground in the absence of written music. The sequence of variations could induce a headlong momentum that suggested impending madness in performers and listeners alike. Vivaldi divides the fireworks among the treble instruments and the bass in a way that expertly manipulates the excitement as it wanes and then waxes to a thrilling conclusion.

The Faustian bargain is most explicitly on display in Giuseppe Tartini's famous sonata, "The Devil's Trill". According to the composer, the devil himself appeared to him in a dream, sat on the edge of his bed and showed him the complex sequence of trilled double stops in the last movement. The entire work seems to depict some kind of torment or agitation, but it was probably the fantastic story that made it one of the few Baroque works to find a place in the repertoire of 19th- century violinists.

Marin Marais' music, as well as his manner of performing, and his simple presence, must have been enormously calming to Louis XIV, who was frequently an audience of one for the late-night private concerts that ended days usually filled by affairs of state and the public pomp of Versailles. It is said that Marais played the viola da gamba "like an angel", surely the highest qualification for a job that today could be described as "music therapy".

He may have played like an angel, but Antoine Forqueray played the very same instrument "like a demon", according to the classic "Defense de la Viole" by Hubert Le Blanc. The *Mercure de France* complained in 1738 that he wrote music so difficult that only he and his son could play it. Adding to the perception that dark arts were involved, Forqueray never published or circulated any of his music, so that the public never actually heard anyone else attempt it nor could see it in writing. We only know some of his music because his nephew later transcribed some of it to perform himself on keyboard. All the original gamba music is lost, probably part of the devil's price.