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JORY VINIKOUR
HARPSICHORD

Saturday, April 25, 2015 ~ 2 pm
Coolidge Auditorium
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building

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The Library of Congress
Coolidge Auditorium
Saturday, April 25, 2015 — 2 pm

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JORY VINIKOUR

HARPSICHORD



Program

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)

Suite in A major, HWV 426 (c.1720)

Präludium

Allemande

Courante

Gigue

Suite in F-sharp minor, HWV 431 (c.1720)

Präludium

Largo

[Fugue] Allegro

Gigue

INTERMISSION

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Ouverture nach Französischer Art, BWV 831 (1733-1735)

Ouverture

Courante

Gavotte I/II

Passepied I/II

Sarabande

Bourrée I/II

Gigue

Echo

About the Program

By Jory Vinikour

Most music lovers most readily associate the name of George Frideric Handel with his operas (*Giulio Cesare*, *Rodelinda*, *Ariodante*, et al.), oratorios (*Messiah*, above all!) and perhaps orchestral works (*Water Music*, *Royal Fireworks* suite). But Handel was a supreme virtuoso of the harpsichord and of the organ, the rival (and admirer) of Domenico Scarlatti. That taken into account, Handel did not take as much care as certain of his contemporaries where publication of his keyboard works was concerned. The publisher Walsh produced, in 1719, a book of varied keyboard works by Handel, who in turn responded by publishing his own collection in 1720 of eight suites (commonly known as the “Great Suites”). These are not always suites, as we have come to think of this term, following a set sequence of dance movements (namely: *allemande*, *courante*, *sarabande*, and *gigue*), such as one finds in J. S. Bach’s works. The influence of previous generations of German composers—Böhm, Reincken, Buxtehude—is felt very strongly.

In the suite in A Major, Handel begins with a free prelude, *arpeggiato* (we find many such pieces in Handel’s oeuvre). The tradition of this type of prelude would seem to derive from early 17th century *préludes non mesurés*, such as those of Louis Couperin, coming to Germany through Froberger. Handel leaves much to the whim of the performer, marking *arpeggio* in front of chordal sections expressed in long note values. In Bach’s keyboard music, the *Chromatic Fantasy* (BWV 903) is the best known example of this type of piece. Three fairly straightforward dance movements follow—an *allemande* in the French style, a particularly lyrical *courante* (It should be noted that there is no sarabande, to follow the courante), and finally, a very jolly *gigue*. Here again, Handel is not as strict a polyphonist as is Bach, and is more interested by the gesture and the overall affect of each movement. If the giges almost always contain fugal elements, they are rarely, purely stated, fugues.

F sharp minor—an unusual tonality in Handel’s time—imposes a dark and somber tone over the entirety of this unusual suite. The austere *präludium* would hardly seem out of place set into an oratorio, with its chromaticisms and dotted-rhythms. The subsequent *Largo* is a type of *Ouverture* movement, but in triple meter. The keyboard texture is unusually dense. The *Allegro* is basically a *fugato*, freely treated. This is almost entirely the same piece as the second movement of the *Concerto Grosso*, op. 3, no. 5. Even the closing *gigue* maintains a surprisingly dark character.

Johann Sebastian Bach published the *Ouverture nach französischer Art*, BWV 831 in 1735, as part of the second volume of the *Clavier Übung*, along with the *Italian Concerto*. This *Ouverture*, really a partita, shares a kinship with the four orchestral overtures in many respects. It may very well have been intended for publication as the seventh keyboard partita. Bach produced an earlier version of this work in C minor. Transposed to b minor, the key signatures of the works comprising the 1st and 2nd volumes of the *Clavier Übung* follow a logical order: the six partitas are in B-flat major (“B” in German parlance), C minor, A minor, D major, G major, and E minor. The *Italian Concerto* is in F major, and finally, the *French Overture* is in B minor (“H” in German).

The work begins with the overture proper—a noble movement of rather tragic character. The opening section features the dotted rhythms associated with the Lullian style overture, one of Bach's rare uses of this style in his keyboard oeuvre (the opening movement of the D-major partita being the other principal example). An extended fugue, in 6/8 meter follows. As in the Italian Concerto, Bach indicates the changes of keyboard with *forte* and *piano*. As in a *concerto grosso*, these dynamics create the impression of alternation between the tutti and solo groups. After the fugue, the opening material returns.

In all of Bach's suites (the six French suites, the six English suites, the six partitas), Bach follows a predetermined order of movements: the principal movements are the *allemande*, *courante*, *sarabande*, and *gigue* (although the partita in C minor does not have a *gigue*). Extra movements—*gavotte*, *bourrée*, *menuet* (amongst others) usually appear between the *sarabande* and the *gigue*, which will generally end the suite.

Here, as with the orchestral suites, Bach frees himself from this routine. After the overture, he dispenses with the *allemande* altogether, beginning with a rather grave *courante*. Then follows a *gavotte* with trio. As in the overture, Bach notes a *forte* for the first of the *gavottes*, of a robust character. The trio, in D major, is marked *piano* and is of a much more delicate character. Then follows a pair of *passepieds*. Again, the first of these is of a rich, orchestral texture. The second *passepied*, in B major, is of a nearly crystalline delicacy. An exquisite *sarabande* follows, composed in four-part chorale-style writing. A rather unusual pair of *bourrées* follows: the first (as with the other similar movements, carrying the notation *forte*) is a very lively, two-part texture. Its partner, remaining in the home key of B minor, features fleeting sixteenth-note groups. The *gigue* is very much in the French style (like the seventh variation of the *Goldberg Variations*—the fourth book of the *Clavier Übung*). The great majority of Bach's *gigues* are fugues. This *gigue* takes its inspiration from the French masters before Bach, especially François Couperin. The closing movement, unique in Bach's oeuvre, is entitled *Echo*. Of a rustic nature, the contrast between the lower (tutti, with the three registers of strings engaged) keyboard, and the upper (solo 8' stop) creates the effect suggested by the title.



About the Artist

Jory Vinikour is recognized as one of the outstanding harpsichordists of his generation. A highly diversified career brings him to the world's most important festivals and concert halls as recital and concerto soloist, partner to several of today's finest artists.

Born in Chicago, Jory Vinikour went to Paris on a Fulbright scholarship to study with Huguette Dreyfus and Kenneth Gilbert. First Prizes in the International Harpsichord Competitions of Warsaw (1993) and the Prague Spring Festival (1994) brought him to the public's attention, and he has since appeared in festivals and concert series throughout much of the world.

A concerto soloist with a repertoire ranging from Bach to Poulenc to Nyman, he has performed as soloist with leading orchestras including Rotterdam Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, MDR Symphony Orchestra, Cape Town Symphony Orchestra, Moscow Chamber Orchestra, and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, with conductors such as Stéphane Denève, Martin Haselböck, Marek Janowski, Armin Jordan, Benjamin Levy, Fabio Luisi, Marc Minkowski, John Nelson, Gordan Nikolic, Constantine Orbelian, Victor Yampolsky, and others. He participated in a recording of Frank Martin's *Petite Symphonie Concertante* with the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra under the direction of Armin Jordan (Suisse Romande, 2005).

Well-known as an accompanist, he has worked extensively with artists such as David Daniels, Hélène Delavault, Vivica Genaux, Magdalena Kozená, Annick Massis, Marijana Mijanovic, Dorothea Röschmann, and Rolando Villazón. He has accompanied legendary Swedish mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter in recitals in Sweden, Norway, Spain and Paris and at Milan's Teatro alla Scala. With lutenist Jakob Lindberg, their programme of English and Italian music of the 17th Century, entitled *Music for a While*, was released by Deutsche Grammophon in early 2005.

As an active exponent of contemporary repertoire for the harpsichord, he has given the premieres of works written for him by composers such as Harold Meltzer, Frédéric Durieux, Stephen Blumberg, Patricia Morehead, and Graham Lynch. He has also given important performances of works by Ligeti and Michael Nyman, as well as several 20th century concerti, including Cyril Scott's 1937 Harpsichord Concerto, which Vinikour prepared and edited for Novello Editions. Sono Luminus released his recording of 20th century (and beyond) American harpsichord works in late 2013.

Vinikour appears regularly as harpsichordist at the finest opera houses and festivals in Europe: Paris Opera, Netherlands Opera, Salzburg Festival, Teatro Real de Madrid, Baden-Baden, and Glyndebourne, in Baroque and Classical repertoire, as well as in more contemporary works (notably Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*) and is heard on many recordings by Deutsche Grammophon, EMI, Erato, Sony Classics, and more.

His recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, released on Delos International in 2001 received excellent reviews throughout the world. John von Rhein of the *Chicago Tribune* named it as one of 2001's top ten classical CDs, an honor that was also accorded to Vinikour's recording of Bach's toccatas in 1999. Vinikour's 2009 Delos release of Handel's 1720 Suites for Harpsichord has received wide critical acclaim (*American Record Guide* named it the finest recording of these works). Partnering with flautist Joshua Smith, Vinikour's recording of Bach's sonatas for flute and harpsichord is garnering attention from around the world. His debut recording for Sono Luminus, the complete harpsichord works of Jean-Philippe Rameau, was nominated for a GRAMMY award, in the category of Best Classical Solo Instrumental Recording in 2012.

Recent appearances include his debut as conductor/soloist with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, as well as an appearance with the Chicago Lyric Opera in Handel's *Rinaldo*—earning exceptional praise from the press. He performed Poulenc's *Concert Champêtre* with the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra, under Benjamin Levy's direction. Vinikour directed the Korea Chamber Orchestra (Seoul) in an all-Bach programme in May 2012, and was guest director of MusicAeterna (based in Perm, Russia) in a mixed program, and has co-directed (with violinist Monica Huggett) Juilliard415 Baroque Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, accompanying soprano Dorothea Röschmann and counter-tenor David Daniels. Vinikour has given master classes for the Rocky Ridge (Colorado) Music Center, the Austrian Baroque Academy in Gmunden, Austria; the European Academy at the Palazzo Ricci Montepulciano; the University of Chicago; the Gnessim Academy; and the Tchaikovsky Conservatory.

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