

CHATHAM BAROQUE
The Art of the Trio

Andrew Fouts, baroque violin
Patricia Halverson, viola da gamba
Scott Pauley, theorbo and baroque guitar

Sonata Op. 3 No. 2 "La Cesta" Giovanni Antonio Pandolfi Mealli (fl. 1660-1690)
from *Sonate à violino solo*, Op. 3 (Innsbruck, 1660)

Recercada Settima Diego Ortiz (c. 1510-c.1570)
from *Tratado de glossas* (Rome, 1553)

Partite variate sopra la folia aria Romanesca Alessandro Piccinini (1566-1638)
from *Intavolatura di liuto, et di chitarrone* (Bologna, 1623)

Greensleeves to a Ground John Playford (1623-c.1686)
from *The Division Violin* (London, 1684)

Sonata in D Major Op. 5, No. 1 Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)
from *Suonati a violino e violone o cimbalo* (Rome, 1700)

Preludio from *Ayres for the Violin*, Book II (London, 1679) Nicola Matteis (fl. 1670-1713)

Sarabanda

Capriccio

[Ayre] for guitar from *The False Consonances of Musick* (London, 1682)

[Giga] for guitar

Giga "Al Genio Turchesco" from *Ayres for the Violin*, Book II

Intermission

Sonata in G Major (BWV 1021) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Adagio - Vivace - Largo - Presto

Sonata in A Minor BWV 272 Dieterich Buxtehude (c1637/9-1707)

Ciacona Heinrich Biber (1644-1704)
from a manuscript in Kroměříž, Archbishop's Castle Library

Notes on the Program

Many of Chatham Baroque's favorite pieces from the Renaissance and Baroque periods are built on repetitive patterns. These pieces were set again and again by composers representing diverse countries, spanning a period of over 200 years. A work based on a repetitive pattern is often called a "ground bass." This includes forms like the Romanesca, Folia, or Ciacona or almost any piece that is composed over a reiterative bass line, chord progression, or melodic line. But what exactly are we talking about here? Is the defining characteristic the bass line, a chord pattern, the melody, or rhythmic gesture? The answer, as it turns out, is complicated.

Think for a moment about some popular rock 'n' roll tunes you might know. Hum to yourself the opening of the quintessential 1950s rock tune "Louie, Louie" as performed by The Kingsmen and countless others. That's a ground you already know – a song built on a repeated chord pattern. Think also about "La Bamba," originally a Mexican folk song (a Jarrocho from Veracruz, to be more precise), made popular in 1958 by Ritchie Valens and later by Los Lobos. Both songs share very similar, but subtly different patterns, the second with a decidedly Latin feel. But the basics are the same – in musical terms, a repeating chord pattern based on the building blocks of I-IV-V-I.

The same was true in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Repeating patterns, the same melodic or harmonic building blocks, were used to define certain pieces with the same title. But it's not always clear what came first or what was the defining characteristic: the tune, the bass, the chords, or the dance and rhythm. In fact, many grounds were used to improvise songs over a repeating pattern, and instrumentalist composers used grounds to write melodic variations.

Our program opens with a sonata by Italian violinist-composer **Giovanni Pandolfi Mealli**, who spent his career north of the Alps in the service of Archduke Ferdinand in Innsbruck, Austria. His works appeared in the 1660s and represent a middle ground between the early seventeenth-century sonatas of composers like Cima, Castello and Fontana, and the later Baroque sonatas of Corelli and Vivaldi. The sonata "La Cesta" has metrically distinct, quickly elided sections, more developed and extended than his predecessors, but not yet the separate movements of his successors. Like all the sonatas in his Opuses 3 and 4, "La Cesta" features some very wild, rhapsodic, and virtuosic writing for the violin which is characterized by a decidedly unique melodic language. Its central section is based on a mesmerizing ground bass line defined by a woeful descending chromaticism. Listen too for Pandolfi's trademark final cadence (well, in fact a device stolen from Dario Castello), in which he really hammers home the final V-I chord progression!

We continue with a series of pieces based on the Romanesca, one of the most common grounds of the Renaissance and Baroque. The Romanesca versions performed here come from Spain, Italy, and England. It's possible to hear this pattern two ways – as the Romanesca chord pattern with melodic variations (see the version by **Diego Ortiz**), or much more widely recognized today as the perennially popular English tune "Greensleeves", as in the late 17th-century version found in **John Playford's** *The Division Violin*. The variations penned by **Alessandro Piccinini** explore the possibilities of what was in 1623 a relatively new plucked instrument, the theorbo. Making use of the theorbo's extended bass strings as well as fast notes that are slurred with the left hand, these six variations over the Romanesca ground represent a clear departure from the Renaissance lute style. Here the actual ground bass becomes a bit more obscured and harder to hear within the context of more complex variations.

The violin sonatas and trio sonatas of **Arcangelo Corelli** are the paragon of sonata form in the high Baroque. His Opus 5, written for one violin and continuo, was first published in Rome in 1700 and rapidly came to epitomize the contemporary Italian style. The first six of the twelve sonatas in Op 5 follow the *sonata da chiesa* form, with sumptuous Adagios contrasting with vibrant Allegros, full of virtuosic passagework, challenging arpeggios, and chords. The second half are *sonatas da camera*, comprised of Baroque dance movements (The final sonata of the collection is one of the most famous settings of the popular Folia ground). Opus 5 was an instant success and was quickly disseminated across all of Europe. An integral part of the performance tradition of these sonatas is the addition of ornamentation to the slow movements, a skill for which Corelli was highly revered and emulated. So praised were his extemporaneous and florid additions that another edition was issued in 1710 by Etienne Roger that contains ornamented renditions of the *adagios* composed by Corelli himself. The virtuosic writing for the violin in his Sonata 1 in D Major reveals many textures--- excruciatingly beautiful melodies, fugal imitation, and passages of arpeggiations that expertly utilize the violin's natural idioms and capacity for vocal like expression.

Nicola Matteis was born in Naples in the first part of the seventeenth century, and eventually made his way to England "on foot with his violin under a full coat at his back." He published five books of *Ayres for the Violin*, the first of which appeared in 1676. His *Ayres* can be described as something between sonatas and suites for solo violin and continuo. Short dances are mixed with fugato and more serious Italianate movements. To each of his four books he later added a second violin part, effectively making them into trio sonatas, and cashing in on the new demand for this type of music. As a performer on the violin, Matteis was admired for his ability to perform "wonders upon a note." He was also a guitarist and published a manual on composition and continuo playing for the guitar called *The False Consonances of Musick* (London, 1682).

In the long history of the works of **Johann Sebastian Bach**, his Sonata in G Major for violin and basso continuo (BWV 1021) is a relatively new arrival. Rediscovered in 1929 in a collection in Eisenach, it was performed the same year in Leipzig by Adolf Busch (violin) and Rudolf Serkin (piano). The sonata is based on an almost identical bass line to Bach's *Trio Sonata in G Major* for violin, flute and continuo (BWV 1038). Scholars have dated the autograph copy to the year 1732 and have determined it was a family collaboration. The sequence of movements, alternating slow, fast, slow, fast, is a pattern favored by Bach in his chamber works. The expressive writing for the violin in the two slow movements perfectly balances the lively energy of the Vivace and Presto movements

Dietrich Buxtehude likely received his first musical training from his father, who was organist at St. Olai Kirke in Elsinore, Denmark. His first post was at St. Maria Kyrka in Helsingborg and by 1668 he had been appointed organist at the Marienkirche at Lubeck, one of the most important musical posts in northern Germany. Buxtehude published two collections of seven sonatas for violin and viola da gamba and continuo (Hamburg, 1694 and 1696) in which each of the two solo lines compete to achieve new heights of expression. The Sonata in A Minor (BuxWV 272) performed here, however, is a separate work that did not appear in these two publications. This sonata is built over two separate ground bass patterns, at the beginning and end of the piece. These patterns frame a slower, transitional organ-like section in F Major that utilizes double stops for the violin. Throughout, the viola da gamba and violin toss melodic lines to each other in an imitative game of one-upmanship.

The ciaccona is one of the most widely popular grounds of the Baroque. But compared to others, it is more variable depending on the time and place it was written. Depending on the country of origin, it might be called chacona (Spain and Latin America), chaconne (France), chaconny (England) or

ciacona (Italy), as well as few other variants. The differences are found not only in the national spellings, but in the variety of actual bass or chord progressions used, as well as the national character of each country's version of the form.

The chacona, for one, is thought to have been introduced first to Spain via Latin America in the 16th century. It quickly became popular throughout Europe, taking on its different forms. Its variety spans from a joyous vocal version by Juan Arañes ("Un sarao de la chacona") to J. S. Bach's epic masterpiece, the final movement of the Partita No. 2 in D Minor for solo violin. Other famous versions include Monteverdi's "Zefiro Torna" and Arcangelo Corelli's Chaconne, the trio sonata, Op. 2, No. 12 for two violins and continuo. The ciacona is also a dance type, with many surviving choreographies, particularly in the operas and ballets of France.

The ciacona we play here is attributed to the Austrian violinist **Heinrich Biber**, though some scholars believe this attribution is doubtful. The piece does not appear in any of Biber's published works for the violin, and its only source is from a manuscript in Kroměříž, Czech Republic, at the Archbishop's Castle Library. Like several famous paintings thought for centuries to be the work of Rembrandt, but now proven by scholars to be not Rembrandt, it leaves us scratching our heads and wondering, "If not Rembrandt, then who?"

The quality of melodic variations in this piece is staggering – not only in number, but in the imaginative melodic variations and virtuosic use of the violin. Each of the four-bar phrases of the ground is repeated dozens of times in the bass line – at least, that's how it's written in the score. The challenge of the continuo team is to match the variety of the violin variations with different ways of playing the same four bars. Like the *not* Rembrandt paintings, we wonder the same thing with this ciacona: "If *not* Biber, then who?" Whoever it was, we'd love to meet for coffee!