



Saturday | February 11 | 8pm
Calderwood Studio at GBH Boston

Emi Ferguson and Ruckus
Fly the Coop

Emi Ferguson baroque flute

Ruckus

Clay Zeller Townson baroque bassoon

Anthony Albrecht baroque cello

Doug Balliett baroque bass

Paul Holmes Morton baroque guitar

Adam Cockerham theorbo

Elliot Figg harpsichord, organ

All works are by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750),
realized and reimagined by Emi Ferguson and Ruckus.

Today's program, which will run approximately 75 minutes
with no intermission, will be announced from the stage.

Emi Ferguson and Ruckus appear by arrangement
with Alliance Artist Management

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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Written by Emi Ferguson and Clay Zeller-Townson

The transverse flute underwent a major redevelopment in the 1680s thanks to musicians in the court of Louis XIV. While it became hugely popular in French aristocratic circles due to its sweet and pleasant tone and the ability to play both soft and loud dynamics, it took several decades for the instrument to develop widespread use across Europe. Bach was well into his thirties before he was introduced to the flute by the visiting French flute virtuoso Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin. This meeting is widely believed to have inspired Bach's first composition featuring the flute, his Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 (perhaps intended for Bach and Buffardin to play together), followed shortly thereafter by his Partita for unaccompanied flute. While most of Bach's secular instrumental chamber music was written between 1717 and 1723 during his time in Cöthen, he wrote six* sonatas for the flute over the course of his adult life in Leipzig in addition to featuring the instrument in other chamber music works and many sacred cantatas.

Bach's three flute and continuo sonatas, BWV 1033, 1034, and 1035, distill his most wonderful musical qualities down to just a two-line texture: treble (flute) and bass. While the flute part is obbligato (the composer writes out all the notes they want performed), the bass part is a continuo line, an open-ended accompaniment part used in 17th- and 18th-century music consisting of a bass line melody along with numbers that indicate chords, similar to the chord changes that jazz musicians use, allowing performers to contribute unique improvised performances. Many composers, including Bach, understood that a composition was not complete until the performers had added their own interpretation to the piece. The use of continuo in a composition is an open-ended invitation from composers that allows ensembles the freedom to orchestrate, to shrink and grow from one person (most often keyboard or cello or guitar) to large groups of a variety of bass instruments like Ruckus. The epic forces of Ruckus—baroque bassoon, cello, viola da gamba, theorbos, baroque guitars, baroque bass, harpsichord, and organ—give a wonderful array of possibilities that allow us to explode Bach's bass line into a rainbow of colors.

The three sonatas, and their accompanying preludes (arranged by Emi and Ruckus) each inhabit their own artistic world and represent three distinct stages and aspects of J.S. Bach's life.

THE CRAFTSMAN

Bach's E minor Sonata, BWV 1034, written in 1724, is musical architecture at its most grand. Possibly written during his early Leipzig years (during which he also composed more than 60 cantatas), this sonata has the weight of his larger musical sermons, and its technical sophistication shows the hand of a seasoned craftsman. The first movement, *Adagio ma non troppo*, features a constant push and pull between the treble and bass, reminiscent of Sisyphus and the rock, that

* The exact number of sonatas Bach wrote for the flute is hotly contested with many scholars disagreeing on the authenticity of BWV 1020, 1031, and 1033. While we may never know how many sonatas he wrote for the instrument, what we can agree upon is that hearing the instrument for the first time around 1720 inspired Bach to write secular chamber music for the flute for the rest of his life.

unfolds into a tour de force *Allegro* of the second movement that features running 16th notes that do not let up until the ecstasy of the third movement arrives. This *Andante* is one of Bach's most sublime, simple, and beautiful movements, and the perfect respite from the intensity of the other three movements of the sonata—a welcome break before the roar of the fourth movement *Allegro* that features all of Ruckus at their most intense.

THE ECCENTRIC

At the other end of the timeline, written in 1741, is the E major Sonata, BWV 1035. It is sensual, simple in form, and perfumed with luxurious harmony. There's a *galant* breeziness throughout, yet the harmonic twists and melodic interplay between flute and bass reveal Bach's love for thorny, contrapuntal music. A delicate *Adagio ma non troppo*, the yin to the yang of the BWV 1034 movement of the same name, is followed by a bawdy *Allegro*. The third movement *Siciliano* features Bach's original melodic interplay between flute and cello / bassoon with a newly added bass line, unique to *Fly the Coop*, providing a rhythmic groove alongside dueling baroque guitars and fantastical harpsichord—a true Baroque rhythm section that takes the listener to an exotic land of unusual sights and sounds. This raucous nighttime music is followed by the morning light haze of the fourth movement *Allegro assai* that brings the sonata to a gentle conclusion.

THE TEACHER

Falling somewhere in between the poles of the E minor and E major sonatas is the slightly more anachronistic C major Sonata, BWV 1033. Open-hearted, inviting, full of grace and generosity, this sonata features an unusually simple continuo line that may have been composed by a young C.P.E. Bach as part of his studies (possibly 1731) in response to an existing solo flute work by his father (possibly 1721). This collaborative compositional process invited us to join the Bach family fun. Using C.P.E.'s baseline as a springboard, we interwove other music by Bach, rewrote bass lines, and added newly composed material. The opening *Andante* is full of warm, almost romantic chord progressions that unfold into a *Presto* featuring a single pedal bass note with the flute dancing merrily above. The second movement of the C major sonata bears uncanny similarities to the sixth variation from Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and so, we felt that a mash-up of the two would show (in addition to our keyboard prelude arrangements) how Bach used material and instruments interchangeably and repeatedly throughout his career. We start our mash-up with the A section of the flute sonata, transitioning to the *Goldberg* sixth variation at the beginning of the B section, then returning to the flute sonata for the final B to round things out and get us back home to C major. A newly composed bass line, based on the octave-jumping left hand of the *Goldberg* sixth variation, accompanies the flute throughout, with CPE Bach's original bass line now found several octaves higher in the baroque guitar—a playful homage. The third movement, *Adagio*, is a true aria in A minor, with the flute soaring above an intense and powerful bass line that mines the depths of the instruments on hand. Ending things are two spirited and joyful *Menuetts*. The first a more traditional dance, with the second borrowing its accent from French dances.

These sonatas are often introduced to flute players at a young age and while they are beloved standards in the repertoire, they continue to challenge and inspire with their capacity for individual interpretation. The way that we share them today is by no means the only way to play these pieces, and is our unique take on them, but we think our interpretation shows and augments all the characters and colors that these sonatas are naturally imbued with, turning them into true ensemble pieces.

FLY THE COOP

The album, *Fly the Coop: Bach Sonatas and Preludes*, was recorded in idyllic southern Vermont where we convened to live, work, rehearse, and record together in July of 2018. All of us involved with the album have been close friends and collaborators for many years, and so the evolution and creation of *Fly the Coop*, was one that felt very natural and organic both personally, and musically. Rehearsing for long days in a beautiful old barn with views of the Green Mountains was wonderful inspiration for us as we experimented with ways we could bring these pieces to life. All of the instruments and techniques used in today's performance are learned from historical treatises and practices, yet we are distinctly aware of the fact that we are influenced by the centuries between our time and Bach's. It was natural for some of these influences to sneak into our interpretations of these sonatas, in the same way that Bach himself was influenced by the music of his own time. It is our own attempt to take them out of the museum, and breathe life into them from a historically informed, yet personal and contemporary perspective.

Peppered throughout the program are our arrangements of iconic and obscure keyboard works by Bach. Movements from the *Well-Tempered Klavier*, addenda from his French Suites, and early drafts of pieces found in the Anna Magdalena and Wilhelm Friedrich notebooks are all featured. Bach's love of family and friends is evident in his writing, and our arrangements of these keyboard works are our love letter and homage to the sense of community imbued in his writing and work.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Emi Ferguson baroque flute

Hailed by critics for her "tonal bloom" and "hauntingly beautiful performances," English-American performer and composer Emi Ferguson's unique approach to the flute can be heard in performances that alternate between the silver flute, historical flutes, and auxiliary flutes, playing repertory that stretches from the Renaissance to today.

Emi can be heard live in concerts and festivals around the world as a soloist and with groups including the American Modern Opera Company (AMOC*), the New York New Music Ensemble, the Handel and Haydn Society, and the Manhattan Chamber Players. She has spoken and performed at several TEDx events and has been featured on media outlets including The Discovery Channel, Vox's "Explained" series on Netflix, Amazon's *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, and Juilliard

Digital's TouchPress apps talking about how music relates to our world today. Her debut album, *Amour Cruel*, an indie-pop song cycle inspired by the music of the 17th-century French court was released by Arezzo Music in September 2017, spending four weeks on the Classical, Classical Crossover, and World Music Billboard Charts. Her 2019 album with continuo band RUCKUS, *Fly the Coop: Bach Sonatas and Preludes*, debuted at #1 on the iTunes classical charts and #2 on the Billboard classical charts, and was called "blindingly impressive...a fizzing, daring display of personality and imagination" by the *New York Times*. In addition to her solo recordings, Emi has also been featured on recordings for New Focus Records, Old Focus Records, Canteloupe Music, National Sawdust Tracks, Brontosaurus Records, Coro, and MSR Classics.

Emi was a featured performer alongside Yo-Yo Ma, Paul Simon, and James Taylor at the 10th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony of 9/11 at Ground Zero, where her performance of *Amazing Grace* was televised worldwide. Her performance that day is now part of the permanent collection at the 911 Museum.

Emi is passionate about developing new music and has premiered works by many of today's leading composers. Emi has been a featured performer at the Marlboro Music, Lake Champlain, and Lucerne festivals, Portland Bach Festival, Bach Virtuosi Festival, June in Buffalo, Twickenham Fest, and Chamberfest Dubuque, and has performed and taught with Juilliard Global in Brazil, pianoSonoma in California, Juilliard Baroque in Germany, and Les Arts Florissants in France, and has been featured as a soloist and ambassador for Elliott Carter's music in China and Japan.

As a historical flutist, in addition to her appointment as principal flute of the Handel and Haydn Society, Emi is thrilled to be a frequent guest artist with period ensembles including Tafelmusik, Voices of Music, the American Classical Orchestra, and Trinity Baroque Orchestra. She was the only flutist accepted to Juilliard's inaugural Historical Performance class, and has performed alongside William Christie and Les Arts Florissants, and with Christophe Hammer, Masaaki Suzuki, Christopher Hogwood, and Nicholas McGegan.

Emi is currently on the faculty of the Juilliard School and the Bach Virtuosi Festival, and has taught on the faculty of the University of Buffalo. Emi was the first person to have graduated from Juilliard with undergraduate and graduate degrees with scholastic distinction in flute performance, as well as a second graduate degree in historical performance as a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellow.

Her principal teachers have been Carol Wincenc, Sandra Miller, Robert Langevin, and Judy Grant. Born in Japan and raised in London and Boston, she now resides in New York City.

Ruckus

Ruckus is an emerging baroque band with a fresh, visceral approach to early music. The ensemble's debut earned widespread critical acclaim: "achingly delicate one moment, incisive and punchy the next" (*New York Times*), "superb" (*Opera News*). Ruckus' core members form a continuo group, the baroque equivalent of a rhythm section: guitars, keyboards, cello, bassoon, and bass. The ensemble aims to fuse the early-music movement's questing, creative spirit with the grit, groove, and jangle of American roots music, creating a unique sound of "rough-edged intensity" (*New Yorker*). Ruckus' first album, an acclaimed collaboration with Emi Ferguson of *Bach Sonatas and Preludes*, debuted at number two on the Billboard Charts. Through an annual summer residency in Vermont, Ruckus is continually mining new repertoire and creating new programs.

Clay Zeller-Townson (baroque bassoon): Founder of Ruckus. Plays with the leading period instrument ensembles in North America including Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Boston Baroque, Trinity Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, and Musica Angelica. Masterclasses at Eastman School of Music, UCLA, and University of Missouri.

Anthony Albrecht (baroque cello): Australian cellist who plays with New Vintage Baroque in New York and enjoys an international performing career. He is a graduate of Juilliard's Historical Performance program and is founder and director of the Lapwing Music Festival in the UK and co-director, with violinist Simone Slattery, of the Bowerbird Collective, based in Australia and devoted to forging stronger connections to the natural world.

Paul Holmes Morton (baroque guitar): Member of Ruckus, The Chivalrous Crickets, and the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. Recent Recordings: *Orphea* by Majel Connery, Emi Ferguson's *Amour Cruel*, and *Arcangelo's Circle* by the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. Paul is an active performer and recording artist of music ranging from historical resurrections to his own creations.

Doug Balliett (bass): Bassist, composer, and poet based in New York City. The *New York Times* has described his compositions as "vivid, emotive, with contemporary twists." The new music blog *I Care if You Listen* has critiqued Mr. Balliett's work as "weird in the best possible way" (*A Gnostic Passion*) and "light-hearted yet dark...it had the audience laughing one minute and in tears the next..." (*Pyramus and Thisbe*). Member, ACRONYM, Ruckus, Oracle Hysterical, AMOC. He teaches double bass and violone at the Juilliard School, as well as classes in historical performance and the Beatles.

Adam Cockerham (theorbo): As an accompanist and continuo player, Cockerham has performed with numerous ensembles in New York and San Francisco. Beyond chamber music, Cockerham concentrates on 17th-century Italian opera and has been involved in numerous modern world premiere performances with companies such as Innsbrucker Festwochen der Alten Musik and Ars Minerva. Cockerham holds a doctorate from the Juilliard School.

Elliot Figg (harpsichord/organ): Keyboardist, conductor, and composer from Dallas. Member: Ruckus, ACRONYM, New York Baroque Incorporated, and New Vintage Baroque. Recent engagements include: conductor and harpsichordist for *L'Amant Anonyme* with Little Opera Theatre of New York; assistant conductor and harpsichordist for Vivaldi's *Farnace*, and Cavalli's *Veremonda*, both with Spoleto Festival USA; and assistant conductor and harpsichordist for *Dido and Aeneas* with L.A. Opera. BM, MM, composition, University of North Texas. Graduate Diploma, Juilliard.




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Alexi Kenney violin
Shifting Ground

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2022/23

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Berklee Performance Center

What Makes It Great?

with Rob Kapilow
Copland's *Appalachian
Spring* with *A Far Cry*
Sun | Feb 5 | 3pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

Jessica Vosk,
My Golden Age
Sun | Feb 5 | 5pm
Symphony Hall

Circa, *Sacre*

Thu – Sat | Feb 9 – 11 | 8pm
Boch Center Shubert Theatre

NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS
Sandeep Das & Mike Block
Where the soul never dies
Sat | Feb 11 | 4pm
Harvard-Epworth Church

Emi Ferguson and Ruckus
Sat | Feb 11 | 8pm
GBH's Calderwood Studio

Jason Moran and the
Harlem Hellfighters
*James Reese Europe
and the Absence of Ruin*
Fri | February 17 | 8pm

DEBUT SERIES

Alexi Kenney, violin
Wed | Feb 22 | 8pm
Longy's Pickman Hall

Dreamers' Circus

Fri | Feb 24 | 8pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

NEIGHBORHOOD ARTS

Sandeep Das: *Soundscapes
of India* - Suhail Yusuf Khan
with Boston City Singers
Sat | Feb 25 | 3pm
Multicultural Arts Center,
Cambridge

MARCH 2023

Igor Levit, piano
Sat | Mar 4 | 8pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

Lawrence Brownlee, tenor
Kevin Miller, piano
Rising
Sun | Mar 5 | 3pm
GBH's Calderwood Studio

KODŌ, *Tsuzumi*

Sun | Mar 12 | 5pm
Symphony Hall

JAZZ FESTIVAL

(Mar 8-11, 7pm)
at Artists For Humanity EpiCenter
Melissa Aldana Quartet
Hiromi
Nnenna Freelon
Ambrose Akinmusire

Aoife O'Donovan

Fri | Mar 17 | 8pm
Sanders Theatre

Chineke! Orchestra
Andrew Grams, conductor
Stewart Goodyear, piano
Wed | Mar 22 | 8pm
NEC's Jordan Hall

Terri Lyne Carrington +
Social Science

Fri | Mar 24 | 8pm
Berklee Performance Center

DEBUT SERIES

Fatma Said, soprano
Rafael Aguirre, guitar
Thu | Mar 30 | 8pm
Longy's Pickman Hall

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