

The Western Early Keyboard Association Presents

Flores de Música

Elisabeth Wright, Harpsichord

Friday, March 16, 2018 - 7:30 p.m.
Reed College, Performing Arts Building, Room 320

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| Toccata IV (1615) | Girolamo Frescobaldi |
| Canzona III (1637) | (1583-1643) |
| Partite sopra l'aria di Ruggiero (1615) | |
| From <i>Toccate e Partite per Cimbalo</i> | |
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| Fantasia | Tomás de Santa Maria |
| | (c.1515-c.1570) |
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| Diferencias sobre el Canto de "La Dama le Demanda" | Antonio de Cabezón |
| Pavana con su Glosa | (1510-1566) |
| Diferencias sobre el Canto "llano de Caballero" | |
| Diferencias sobre la Gallarda Milanesa | |
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| Temblante estile italiana | Anonymous |
| From <i>Colleciones Martin y Coll</i> | |
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| Tiento de quarto tono | Joan Cabanilles |
| Xácara | (1644-1712) |
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| | <i>Intermission</i> |
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| Suite en Re majeur | Louis Couperin |
| Prélude - Allemande - Courante - Sarabande - Chaconne | (1626-1661) |
| From <i>Manuscrit Bauyn</i> | |
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| Passacaille de Signor (Luigi) Rossi | Anonymous |
| From <i>Manuscrit Bauyn</i> | |
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| Fantasia and Fugue in a minor, BWV 904 | Johann Sebastian Bach |
| | (1685-1750) |

Elisabeth Wright

Harpichordist and fortepianist **Elisabeth Wright** is noted for her versatility as soloist and chamber musician, and for her expertise in the art of basso continuo improvisation. Following graduate studies with Gustav Leonhardt at the Amsterdam (now Sweelinck) Conservatory, she has maintained a distinguished career performing in such noted venues as Boston and Berkeley Early Music Festivals, Mostly Mozart, Tanglewood, Aston Magna, Lufthansa of London, Vancouver Early Music, Tage alter Musik, Sydney Festival, Santa Fe Festival, Festival Cervantino, Musica Antica Bolzano, Festival de Estella, and Festivals in Belo Horizonte and Campinas, Brazil.

She has performed and recorded with violinist Stanley Ritchie as *Duo Geminiani* for several decades, with *Música Ficta*, an ensemble founded in Colombia that is dedicated to Spanish and Latin American Baroque vocal and instrumental repertoire, with *Bloomington Baroque*, and has collaborated with many artists of international renown, most recently with Jacques Ogg, performing double concerti and two harpsichord repertoire. Appearances in the Pacific Northwest this past season included solo recitals in Portland and chamber recitals throughout the Puget Sound region with Ingrid Matthews and Jeffrey Cohan in the Salish Sea Festival. She has given concerts throughout the United States, Canada, Australia, South and Central America, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Ms. Wright has performed as a soloist with Tafelmusik, Lyra, the Portland, Seattle, Bloomington and Indianapolis Baroque orchestras, as well as the CBC (Vancouver, B.C.) and ABC (Sydney, Australia) chamber orchestras. She has been broadcast on four continents and has recorded for Classic Masters, Milan-Jade, Focus, Arion, Arts Music and Centaur labels.

Ms. Wright is Professor at the Historical Performance Institute of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington. She is in frequent demand for master classes and seminars pertaining to performance practices of music from the late 16th to the 18th century. A perpetual student of languages and interested in the relationship between music and text, she has done extensive research about musical settings of poetry by Giambattista Marino, a chapter about which was published in *The Sense of Marino: Literature, Fine Arts and Music*. She is translator of part of Max Sobel's scholarly edition of the *Complete Works of Francesco Bonporti* for Indiana University Press. Ms. Wright is a founding member of the Seattle Early Music Guild and Bloomington Early Music. She served on the board of Early Music America, and as panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, PEW and PennPat.

WEKA Events 2017-18 - www.wekaweb.org

Sunday, November 12, 2017, 1:00-4:00pm : **Celebrating the Clavichord with Carol lei Breckenridge**

Friday, March 16, 2018, 7:30pm: **Celebrating the Early Keyboard: Recital by Elisabeth Wright.** Co-sponsored by American Guild of Organists, Portland Chapter.

Saturday, March 17, 2018, 10:00am-noon: **Celebrating the Early Keyboard: Continuo Workshop with Elisabeth Wright.** Held at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 147 NW 19th Avenue. Co-sponsored by AGO, Portland Chapter.

Sunday, May 20, 2018, 2:30-5:00pm: **Spring Soirée** at the home of a early keyboard enthusiast, with refreshments and informal performances by Barbara Baird, Julia Brown and Owen Daly on his copy of the 1681 Vaudry harpsichord. RSVP to weka@wekaweb.org

Elisabeth Wright - Program Notes for “Flores de Música”

The title of this program comes from the name of an extraordinary four-volume anthology of Spanish keyboard music - over 1500 pieces without attribution, though many have been identified by scholars who recognized works by major composers - copied and compiled between 1706 and 1709 by a Franciscan friar, Antonio Martín y Coll whose labor of love was intended as “a delightful garden of tender musical flowers” to be enjoyed. I have chosen music that has captivated me over the course of many decades, such as the Bach *Fantasia and Fugue* that I performed in my debut solo harpsichord recital in 1973, after returning to my hometown of Portland from three years of study with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam, and other repertory such as the Cabezon and Cabanilles that I only discovered during the last sixteen years as a result of my collaboration with *Música Ficta*, a Colombian ensemble devoted to 16th and 17th century Latin American and Spanish music. The menu of this program includes improvisatory genres such as Frescobaldi's *toccata* and Couperin's unmeasured prelude, variation settings of well-known tunes and ground basses, many of which have literary associations, dances from street to court, and contrapuntal fancies such as the *canzona*, the *tiento* and the *fantasia*.

From 17th century Italy

Girolamo Frescobaldi was born in Ferrara and worked for the important noble Este family, whose patronage of the arts was celebrated, before becoming organist and Maestro di Cappella at St. Peters in Rome where his virtuosic and charismatic playing drew exceptionally large crowds. Sometimes referred to as “The Monteverdi of instrumental music,” he was highly influenced by the vocal style he heard during a sojourn in Florence and, though he composed some beautiful pieces for voice, he devoted most of energy toward writing for organ and harpsichord. He is the Italian Baroque composer who is responsible for elevating the stature of the harpsichord since, with the title, *Toccate e Partite d'intavolatura di Cimbalo*, 1615, it was clear that he believed that it was equal to the organ as an instrument capable of conveying rhetorically persuasive emotion. His preface to this work is one of the best sources of information we have about performance practice of his music, especially his remarks about the improvisatory nature of *toccatas*. It is in this genre that he is most progressive and daring and full of operatic drama (*toccare* “means to touch” versus *cantare* which means “to sing”). He confirms agreement with Galilei that instruments could express the passions, *gli affetti*, independently of the words, advising the reader “to move now languidly, now fast, according to the words, as is the present style in madrigals...to suspend movement, to change the rhythm of written note values.” He also gives us permission to be virtuosic, to show off the agility of the hand! His *Canzona III* is a witty, playful treatment of a simple descending chromatic motif that is a masterful piece of contrapuntal writing. His *Partite sopra l'aria di Ruggiero* is a theatrically contrasting set of variations on a very popular theme, the tune “Fra Jacopino” that appears as an incipit to his *Capriccio on the Ruggiero*, which suggested an accompaniment that became known as the Ruggiero ground bass upon which everyone improvised, along with the Romanesca, the Bergamasca, the Folia, La Monica, and many others. Ruggiero (Roggiero) is also a heroic figure in well known epic dramas in 16th c. literature, the Saracen knight in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, lover of Bradmante, but bewitched and captured by Alcina who figures into other musical settings such as operas by Handel. I like to think that these variations depict contrasting adventures that this hero experienced!

From 16th century Spain

Fr. Tomas de Santa Maria is best known for his magnum pedagogical opus, *Arte de tañer fantasia*, 1565, a treatise on compositional techniques and how to improvise *fantasias* that reflects the expectation of musicians of the day to be highly skilled at composing *extempore*. This short *fantasia* will serve as a prelude to the set of pieces by Antonio Cabezon. At the age of 16, blind organist Cabezon was appointed by Charles V to be organist to the Empress Isabel. After her death, he entered the service of Phillip II, future king, and accompanied him on extended tours to Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and England where he came into contact with leading composers of the day. Phillip apparently regarded him more highly than any other artist in his employ, with the possible exception of Titian. Cabezon was the most important and famous composer of keyboard music in the so-called Spanish Golden Age at the time of Cervantes, Velasquez, José de Ribera, numerous composers of vocal music such as Morales, Victoria and Guerrero, and lute composers, Luis de Milan and Narvaez. Since so much music was improvised for the purpose of service at church or court, we are fortunate to have two notable publications of his keyboard works that were probably intended for pedagogical use. One source is Venegas Henestrosa's *Libro de cifra nueva*, 1557, and the other is Antonio's son, Hernando Cabezon's posthumous publication of *Obras de música para tecla, arpa y vilhuela*, 1578. The term *tecla* could mean any keyboard instrument of the time, organ, clavichord or harpsichord. There is also considerable confusion over the use of the terms, *manichordio clavichordio*, *clavo*, and *clavicymbalo*, so with the exception of pieces composed expressly for divided register Spanish organs such as many *tientos* and the *temblante in estile italiano* clearly intended for organ with a tremolo stop, I feel justified in choosing to play these pieces on the harpsichord! Besides the organ, harpsichord and clavichord, the harp and the vilhuela, a Spanish guitar, were the other instruments of choice to play this music. The *Diferencias sobre el Canto de La Dama le Demanda* is based upon a beautiful French chanson, a love song with the text, "Belle qui tiens ma vie," which Arbeau used in his *Orchésographie* as an example of suitable music for dancing the pavan. Cabezon uses the same tune for his embroidered variations on the *Pavana Italiana*. Thomas Morley also was familiar with this melody and set it as a *coranta* in his 1599 *First Booke of Consort Lessons*. The *Pavana con su glosas* (ornaments) - the title is not Cabezon's - is an early version of the dance and harmonic pattern known as the Folia, similar to the *Recercada quarto* included in Diego Ortiz's *Tratado de glosas* of 1553, and frequently encountered in contemporary books of music for vilhuela. Interestingly, pavans from the same time period in England, France and Italy are usually in duple meter, not triple, as this one is. The *Diferencias sobre el canto llano del Cavallero* is probably Cabezon's most famous set of variations. The tune - attributed to Nicholas Gombert - appears in *Villancicos di diversos autores*, 1556, and was the theme in a mass by Cristobál Morales, *Desidle al cavallero*. The text is a medieval *cantiga* about a girl asking her mother to tell the handsome knight not to grieve, because she promises not to leave him! The *Diferencias sobre la Gallarda Milanesa* is based on the Italian version of the dance characterized by jumps and virtuosic ornamental gestures of the feet, midair!

From 17th century Spain

We have no doubt lost a treasure trove of music from 17th century Spain. It was a period of war and loss of power, austerity and restrictions, and the role of the Church in the arts and literature became more pronounced. Yet, the school of Spanish organ playing based at the cathedral of Zaragoza in the northeast was well established. Although born a year after Frescobaldi's death, Joan Cabanilles is, to me, his Spanish equivalent with stunningly virtuosic, harmonically bold writing for keyboard. And yet, one can hear in all his pieces a strong foothold in the compositional traditions of the Renaissance - sequences, imitations in modulation, use of "false" or "cross" relations that typify many Spanish pieces where spicy, dissonant clashes abound - and yet the counterpoint is extremely logical and well-written, each line following a careful path. The term, *tiento* (like *toccare* in Italian), has to do with "touching," "endeavoring," "groping towards," and

is closely related to the *ricercar* in Italy, another contrapuntal genre which comes from the verb “to seek,” “to look for again.” Cabanilles’ *tientos* seem to combine features of both the contrapuntal *fantasia* and the *toccata*. **Tiento XIII** is typical of the dark and extraordinarily rich juxtaposition of strongly contrasting elements - a simple, sober contrapuntal subject being spun out with alternating affects, virtuosic (lots of runs and use of thirds and sixths), sorrowful versus festive and playful sections, *toccata*-like flashes of improvisatory passages, and *bayle* (dance) rhythms. Forgive me, organists, for stealing **Temblante estilo italiano**, the piece clearly intended for your instrument with tremolo stop, but I find it hauntingly beautiful, simple but poignant with its suspensions and pulsating heartbeat. The **Xacara** is a song and dance that maintained its totally folklike, wild origin. It took its name from the popular culture rogues and thieves known as *xagues*, and unlike the *passacalles* or *chacona*, or *folia*, this dance did not go beyond the Spanish Empire borders. It was very popular within the borders, however, with its strong rhythmic character and syncopations, and was adapted to sacred music in *tonos divinos* and *villancicos*. This one has shameless virtuosity and cross rhythms and very identifiable Spanish use of dissonance. It seems *à propos* to quote Cervantes who wrote in his work *La Sultana*. that “there is no Spanish woman who would leave her mother’s womb without being a dancer!”

From 17th century France

Louis Couperin was the first notable member of the famous Couperin dynasty of musicians. He was overshadowed by his celebrated and wonderful nephew, François, known as *Le Grand*, probably in large part because Louis had the misfortune of dying at 35 and his music for solo harpsichord and for viol from manuscript sources, the Bauyn and the Parville, was not published until centuries after his death. A viol player as well as organist and harpsichordist, there is an account of Louis and other musicians serenading Jacques Chambonnières - father figure of the *clavecinistes* and the first person to compose solo pieces for the harpsichord in France - on his birthday! Chambonnières, known for his elegant and beautiful manner of playing, became his teacher. Later, Chambonnières was forced to sell his position at the court of Louis XIV, purportedly because he could not improvise accompaniments upon a *basse continue*, but more likely because Lully, famous, powerful composer of opera and dance music, was jealous of Chambonnières’ reputation, and did not want any competition! It is documented that Louis was offered the position, but that he declined in deference to his teacher. Another of his brilliant students was less noble and could not resist accepting the position - Jean Henry D’Anglebert! Louis might have invented the genre of unmeasured prelude for harpsichord, a free piece based on the lutenists’ tradition of improvising preludes before they played their dance suites. He is certainly the first to notate them. Though this one in D does not, a few have measured sections in the middle. These pieces have a kinship with the Italian *toccata*. The *Allemande* in this suite is representative of a contemplative, poignant type known as *memento mori* - such as Johann Froberger’s *Allemande, méditation sur ma mort future* from his suite in D, probably not a coincidence, since the two were friends while Froberger was in Paris, Couperin wrote a prelude in imitation of Froberger, and both wrote *tombeaux* for their lute player friend, Blancrocher. The dance movements that follow are typical of the most popular dances of the time, and the entire suite is influenced by the lutenists *stile brisé*, broken, arpeggiated style, full of graceful ornaments. Also from the Bauyn manuscript, I am including a short anonymous setting of a **Passacaille de signor Rossi**(Luigi) who was living and working in France when the premiere of his opera, *Orfeo*, took place in Paris in 1647. This elegant dance evolved from one that was popular, not court, and its name came from the Spanish *passar calle* which means “to cross the street.” Its bass-line here is the so-called “lament bass,” a beloved descending tetrachord that was used in varied ways by all composers in Europe, including Johann Sebastian Bach who uses this harmonic formula as the foundation for this **Fantasia and Fugue in a, BWV 904**.

From 18th century Germany

Johann Sebastian Bach needs no introduction! Unlike the free, rhapsodic, capricious kind of *fantasia* that is associated with *stylus phantasticus*, such as the one in his more famous *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*, this one seems to derive from the contrapuntal “fancies” of the English virginalists and the Northern European school (Sweelinck), the sober ones of Frescobaldi and Froberger, and the *tientos* of Cabezon and Cabanilles. Bach pays homage to the *passacaglia* and *chaconne*, and the “lament bass” is clear and enhanced by its chromatic treatment throughout the second subject in his extraordinary double fugue. Thus the important tradition of improvisation upon favorite tunes and formulas served a multitude of purposes both in extempore improvisation, and notated compositions in practically all Baroque genres.

A Personal Note About My Portland Roots

When I was very young and was attracted to music, in particular the piano, it was in large part thanks to my parents and other relatives who loved and played music and nurtured that interest by taking me to concerts. I never imagined that I would play anything in front of anyone besides my dear teachers - Nell Givler at Catlin, Nell Tholen and David Campbell! I was terrified to play in front of other people, and music was my personal emotional outlet, preferably behind closed doors. This changed when I went to Sarah Lawrence College, thinking I would focus on my love of French and become a translator! I should say that this love of literature and language was also nurtured by my book-loving family, and my marvelous French teachers at Catlin Hillside, later Catlin Gabel School, Mme. Griswold in elementary school, and Mme. Cathery in high school who was one of the best, most thought-provoking teachers I ever had, and a role model for me! As fate would have it, my freshman year at Sarah Lawrence, I was placed in a section of “Materials of Music I” with Joel Spiegelman, a fine pianist and composer who had studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, and who had a fondness for the harpsichord. When I was having a miserable time with my piano teacher there and mentioned I was going to quit music, Joel said, “Why?” and, though he was hired to teach theory and composition, he said he would take me as his piano student if I could extricate myself from André Singer’s studio. I did so. The next fateful thing was that I was playing the fifth *French Suite* of Bach on the piano, and Joel said, “Why don’t you try it on my harpsichord?” I did, begrudgingly because I said, “Well it is a cute toy, but you cannot do anything expressive on it!” I have had to live that comment down for half a century! Joel lured me into chamber groups playing Monteverdi, took me out of my comfort zone and put me onstage in all manner of contexts, and then said that I should go study with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam. I listened to his early recording of Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* and asked why he would want me to go study with such an intellectual, rather cold sounding player. (I have had to live that comment down, too!) He had heard that there was a fantastic new movement in early music with period instruments and that much of the best activity was in Amsterdam! So, I sent off a tape, was accepted for three months’ study since Leonhardt had no openings for the next three years, ended up staying three years, was totally inspired, and the rest is history. My love of language, text and music and the relationship between the three has grown and been supported by my career as teacher at Indiana University, allowing me to take sabbaticals to learn Italian and research musical settings of Italian poets’ texts, and later to revive my French. So the childhood paths of interest have intersected and come full circle, informing each other in all facets of my career and life, for all of which, I am extremely grateful.