

SUNDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

JSBACH
GOLDBERG
VARIATIONS
JEAN RONDEAU
HARPSICHORD

SUNDAY 7 SEPTEMBER at 7PM

**J S BACH
GOLDBERG VARIATIONS
BWV 988**

Jean Rondeau — Harpsichord

“Suddenly the quarto leaves spread out to a gigantic folio, on which a thousand imitations and developments of the theme stood written, which I had to play. The notes became alive, glimmered and hopped all around me - an electric fire flowed through the tips of my fingers into the keys, the spirit, from which it gushed forth, spread his broad wings over my soul, the whole room was filled with a thick mist in which the candles burned dim... And thus it came to pass that I was left alone with my Sebastian Bach ...

- E.T.A Hoffmann, *Kappellmeister Johannes Kriesler*

Supported by Scops Arts Trust and the Continuo Foundation.

The Harpsichord, built by Keith Hill in Manchester, Michigan, US in 2010, is based on a French instrument built by Pascal Takin in Paris in 1769, now housed in the Raymond Russell collection of musical instruments at Edinburgh University. The Harpsichord is kindly supplied by Simon Neal.

PROGRAMME

Aria

Variatio 1. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 2. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 3. Canone all'Unisono.

Variatio 4. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 5. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav.

Variatio 6. Canone alla Seconda. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 7. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav. al tempo di Giga

Variatio 8. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 9. Canone alla Terza. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 10. Fughetta. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 11. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 12. a 1 Clav. Canone alla Quarta in moto contrario

Variatio 13. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 14. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 15. Canone alla Quinta. a 1 Clav.: Andante

Variatio 16. Ouverture. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 17. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 18. Canone alla Sesta. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 19. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 20. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 21 Canone alla Settima

Variatio 22. a 1 Clav. alla breve

Variatio 23. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 24. Canone all'Ottava. a 1 Clav.

Variatio 25. a 2 Clav.: Adagio

Variatio 26. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 27. Canone alla Nona. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 27 a 2 Clav

Variatio 28. a 2 Clav.

Variatio 29. a 1 ô vero 2 Clav.

Variatio 30. a 1 Clav. Quodlibet

Aria da Capo

Composed (according to the title page) “for the soul’s delight of music lovers”, Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* fascinate every generation of musicians and listeners. This music reflects the world it finds itself in: past, present and future; 75 minutes of wildly virtuosic keyboard music: demanding, exacting, filled with glittering, intricate ornaments, but equally liberating for player and listener both. The *Goldberg Variations* are one of the peaks of Bach’s output, reflecting ingenuity, technical skill and exuberance in perfect combination.

Published in the autumn of 1741 under the title ‘Aria with diverse variations for the harpsichord with 2 manuals’, Bach himself wrote that they were “composed for music-lovers to refresh their spirits” (reportedly in particular for warding off insomnia). Comprising an Aria and a set of 30 variations, unusually for the composer the work was published in Bach’s lifetime. 19 versions of the first edition survive, including the *Handexemplar*, Bach’s own personal

copy of the score, now housed in the
Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris.

We are thrilled to welcome Jean Rondeau, celebrated contemporary ambassador for his instrument, to play the *Goldberg Variations* on the harpsichord – just as they would have been when first performed by Bach’s student, 14-year-old harpsichordist Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. Jean Rondeau first heard the harpsichord on the radio when he was five years old, and was instantly struck —captivated—by the sound of the instrument. He recalls: “I didn’t know what it was, who was playing, or what was being played, but I have a very vivid memory of immediately asking my parents if I could play *that*.”

Speaking of the feeling of truly understanding complex pieces of music such as those we are hearing tonight Rondeau says: “I believe there are infinite degrees of understanding. To truly grasp a musical text, one must first accept that knowledge and analysis are shrouded in layers. One may choose to

specialize in one component—for instance, to pursue an in-depth harmonic analysis of a work. But I believe it is through the multiplicity of pathways taken that a broader, more enduring understanding of the text is achieved. Some works have been central to such a process of deep engagement for me—Bach’s *Goldberg Variations*, for example, or the oeuvre of Louis Couperin. In the case of the *Goldberg Variations*, I could say this: the more one delves into the text, the more one thinks one has found answers, the more new questions and mysteries emerge. So perhaps understanding a work is, above all, to embrace a non-linear mystery.”

Tonight concludes Back to Bach, Bold Tendencies’ cross-season celebration of J S Bach, with his music played on cello, harpsichord, synthesiser, organ and piano. We hope these five distinct events have offered a view of this special and supremely music through exceptional musicianship, celebrating the composer’s work as a source of ever-renewing inspiration for all.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) was (by far) the most gifted and celebrated member of a great musical dynasty in Germany, of over 50 musicians and composers. Admired by his Baroque contemporaries primarily as an outstanding harpsichordist, organist, and expert on organ building, Bach remains, for many, the greatest composer to have ever lived. Over 1,000 known compositions are attributed to Bach. Spanning concertos, suites, sonatas, fugues, cantatas, masses and Passions, these numerous masterpieces of church and instrumental music include renowned works such as the Brandenburg Concertos, Goldberg Variations, the Mass in B Minor, and *The Well-Tempered Clavier*. In 1723 he moved to Leipzig to be Kapellmeister (one responsible for music-making) at St Thomas Church. Composing groundbreaking compositions for the organ that still form the core of the instrument's repertoire, he occupied the role until his death.

Jean Rondeau is at the forefront of the movement to bring the harpsichord into the 21st century. The 2025/26 season will be characterised by his latest project: the complete works of Louis Couperin. Marking the 400th

anniversary of the composer's birth, Rondeau will release the composer's oeuvre on 10CDs and 1 DVD (Warner Classics / Erato); perform recitals at venues including London's Wigmore Hall and Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie; tour in Japan; and undertake Couperin "marathons" – back-to-back recitals of Couperin's complete works – at the Philharmonie de Paris and Utrecht Festival. Following its successful launch last season, he will present his improvisatory programme *Sisyphus* at De Bijloke (Gent), KKL Lucerne and Klavier Festival Ruhr; and will perform *UNDR*, a co-composition with drummer Tancredi Kummer inspired by the Goldberg Variations, at Bachfest Schaffhausen. Rondeau will also reunite with longstanding chamber music partners including the Ricercar Ensemble, cellist Nicolas Altstaedt, and his baroque quartet Nevermind.

The **Continuo Connect** website shines a light on both established and emerging artists in the UK's vibrant Early Music scene, showcasing their concerts, research and recordings. This digital initiative is part of Continuo Foundation's mission to open access to Baroque and Early Music for people of all ages, everywhere in the country. By bringing together curated concert

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and festival listings, artist profiles and interviews, Continuo Connect opens the door to discovering 800+ years of music in one place. Head to ContinoConnect.com and sign up for the free newsletter.

Bold Tendencies is a not-for-profit arts organisation established in the rooftop spaces of Peckham's Multi-Storey Car Park in 2007. It has transformed a disused building in the heart of South London into an iconic, much-loved place of culture and assembly with spectacular views out over the city and pioneering architecture project Frank's Cafe. Supporting a new generation of creative voices alongside acclaimed international artists, it delivers an ambitious annual programme of Visual Arts, Creative Learning and Live Events open to the public, offering access, participation and enjoyment of the arts for everyone.

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FINAL LIVE EVENTS & CREATIVE LEARNING

Saturday 13 September at 2.30pm

Rachmaninoff — Public Rehearsal

Experience Rachmaninoff's music in a new way with a public rehearsal featuring Ryan Wang, Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, Boris Giltburg, Junyan Chen, and the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Charlotte Corderoy. This relaxed session invites you to move freely, listen closely, and share in the process of music-making, perfect for those who prefer an informal space to enjoy live performance. Free tickets available, with optional £5 donations supporting free creative activities for the local community

Saturday 13 September at 7pm

Rachmaninoff — Complete Piano Concertos

Spanning 50 years of **Sergei Rachmaninoff's** 69 year life, the composer's four Piano Concertos are enduringly popular, famous and much-loved in popular culture. We are thrilled to welcome acclaimed Rachmaninoff interpreters – **Ryan Wang, Jeneba Kanneh-Mason, Boris Giltburg** and **Junyan Chen** – for back-to-back iterations of the four Piano Concertos: rarely performed in this complete form, and never before in the UK. The soloists are joined by the **Philharmonia Orchestra**, returning for a fifth consecutive year of performances, conducted by **Charlotte Corderoy**.

Sunday 14 September 1-5pm

Bold Family Day

Enjoy free, drop-in activities inspired by this year's theme, *Déjà Vu*. Families are invited to take part in collage and poetry workshops, flag making, create wire sculptures inspired by the Derek Jarman Garden, and contribute to a reimagining of the London skyline through the Skyline Stories activity. Sensory materials and SEND resources will be available. Free ice cream will be available from Franks Cafe upon completion of all activities!

Thursday 18 & Friday 19 September at 7.30pm

Oliver Leith – *Garland* (World Premiere)

Commissioned by Bold Tendencies, *Garland* is new work by **Oliver Leith**, visionary British composer of the new generation. A spectacular procession of sound, music and singing, Leith's most ambitious work to date gathers an orchestra and chorus of more than 120 performers: the amassed forces of **12 Ensemble**, **GBSR Duo**, **EXAUDI**, soprano **Patricia Auchterlonie** and **The Bold Chorus** directed by **Oli Kitching**; conducted by **Naomi Woo** and **Jack Sheen**; with choral refrains written by **Charlie Fox** and costumes designed by **Ellen Poppy Hill**.

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Thanks to the 2025 Live Programme Commissioning Circles and the Déjà Vu Founding Friends.



More and better!

We cannot do the work we do without our supporters. Your generosity allows us to bring a world-class Visual Arts, Creative Learning and Live Events programme to Peckham. If you'd like to join the Founding Friends please ask at the Kiosk or info@boldtendencies.com.

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