



Brandywine Baroque
presents
Harpichord Heaven at the Flint Collection

GWENDOLYN TOTH
SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2021 AT 3:00 PM (EDT)

Harpichord inscribed "ALF", attributed to Antoine Lefebvre, [Toulouse? c1680?]

Brabanschen ronden dans ofte brand (<i>Susanne van Soldt manuscript, 1599</i>)	Anonymous 16 th c.
Ballett & Variatio in F (<i>Celler Klavierbuch, 1662</i>)	Heinrich Scheidemann
Französischer Allemande in d (<i>Lüneburg Tabulatur KN 146, c.1660</i>)	(c.1595-1663)
Französischer Courant & Variatio in d (<i>Lüneburg Tabulatur KN 146, c.1660</i>)	
Chaconne in F (<i>Bauyn manuscript, c.1690</i>)	Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (c.1601/2-1672)
Sarabande in C (<i>Bauyn manuscript, c.1690</i>)	Germain Pinel (c.1600-1661)
Ioannes Ruckers (Antwerp, 1627)	
Sarabande in C (<i>Bauyn manuscript, c.1690</i>)	Germain Pinel (c.1600-1661)
Allemande in g (<i>Bauyn manuscript, c.1690</i>)	Johann Jacob Froberger
Courante in g (<i>Bauyn manuscript, c.1690</i>)	(1616-1667)
Sarabande in g (<i>Bauyn manuscript, c.1690</i>)	

Recognized as one of America's leading early music performers, **Gwendolyn Toth** is a conductor and early keyboard artist based in New York City. "Her interpretive skills are sensitive and intelligent, and she clearly has a gift for program conceptualization." (The New York Times). She has conducted at Sadler's Wells Theater in London, BAM in New York City, Skylight Theater in Milwaukee, Astoria Music Festival in Oregon, Carmel Bach Festival in California, Washington Bach Consort in Washington DC, and for the German Radio network in Cologne, Germany. Opera News has honored Ms. Toth as an "Outstanding Young Conductor" and she was the recipient of the Newell Jenkins Prize for excellence in early music performance. In February, 2020 she received a feature profile on VAN, the prestigious international classical music magazine.

Ms. Toth is the founder and director of New York City's period instrument ensemble, ARTEK, specializing in music of the early baroque. Under her direction, the ensemble released the first North American recording of Monteverdi's opera, *Orfeo*, to outstanding critical acclaim. Other CDs include *Love Letters from Italy*, *I Don't Want to Love*, Monteverdi's *Madrigals Book 5* and *Complete Madrigals Book 7*, and *Solo Cantatas of Rosenmüller*. Ms. Toth and ARTEK have appeared at Lincoln Center, the Metropolitan Museum, and major churches in New York City; at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC; and at the Regensburg Tage Alte Musik Festival in Germany and the Boston, Berkeley, Bloomington, and Indianapolis early music festivals in America.

As a soloist on historical organs, Ms. Toth has performed on the 1434 organ in Sion, Switzerland; the 15th-c. organ in Oosthuizen, Netherlands; the 1655 organ in the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam; the 1509 organ in Trevi, Italy; the 1531 organ in Krewerd, Netherlands; the 1649 organ in Zeerijp, Netherlands; the 1696 Arp Schnitger organ in Noordbroek, Netherlands; and the 1714 organ in St. Michael's Church, Vienna among many others. Her numerous CD recordings of Renaissance and baroque music have been recorded on historic Dutch organs in Noordbroek, Zeerijp, Oosthuizen, Eenum, and Krewerd. Ms. Toth also has a solo recording of J.S. Bach's *Goldberg Variations* performed on a *lautenwerk*, a reconstruction of Bach's lute-harpsichord, strung in both gut and metal strings.

Ms. Toth holds the Doctor of Musical Arts in organ performance from Yale University and did post-graduate study with Ton Koopman at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In addition to being the director of ARTEK, she is currently Adjunct Professor of Historical Performance Practice at The Graduate Center, CUNY; Orchestra Director at Manhattan College; Choir Director at Mount Saint Vincent College; and music director at Immanuel Lutheran Church in New York City.

Harpsichord inscribed "ALF", attributed to Antoine Lefebvre, [Toulouse? c1680?]

This tiny harpsichord is pitched a fourth high of a^1 392. A key that looks like a G actually plays the pitch C above it. Its tuning note a^1 is the same frequency as a modern pitch ($a^1=440$) c^2 (523 Hz). The instrument was most likely made circa 1680 by Antoine Lefebvre, a prominent organ builder working in the southwest of France between the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth century. The attribution is based on the presence of engraved paper, found around the rim above the soundboard, bearing the initials "ALF" which is also found on a bentside spinet, signed "FAICT A TOLOZE PAR ANTOINE LEFEBRVE 1678". Other similarities between the harpsichord and the spinet make it very likely that Lefebvre made both instruments.

Lefebvre was born in Saint-Omer en Artois possibly on August 24, 1644. He became established in Toulouse about 1667, where he worked on organs there until about 1677. Lefebvre then moved to Bordeaux where he worked from about 1681 until 1701. His final organ construction was at the parish church of St. Vincent Gagneres-de-Bigorre from 1707-1709. His death on May 10, 1709 kept him from completing that instrument.

This harpsichord has two sets of strings at the unison (here 5 foot) pitch and a keyboard of 50 notes BB-c³—certainly tuned to the normal 17th century French short octave GG/BB-c³. The soundboard is decorated with a rose in the form of a sun, parrot-like bird, and scattered flowers. The case painting may date from the 18th century. It was almost certainly originally presented in plain walnut, as is the signed spinet.

The Lefebvre harpsichord was first restored by Miles Hellon of London in 1981 and again by John Phillips of Berkeley, California, in 2019.

Ioannes Ruckers (Antwerp, 1627)

Ioannes Ruckers (1578-1642), the most famous member of the illustrious Flemish family of harpsichord makers, built this two-manual instrument in Antwerp in 1627. Ioannes was the son of Hans Ruckers (c.1550-1598), founder of the Ruckers dynasty. The 1627 Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord was in the Château de Villebon for many years. This chateau in the Loire Valley was once the seat of the Duc de Sully (1560-1641), the great minister of Henri IV.

Originally the instrument had two registers with non-aligned keyboards sharing one 8-foot and one 4-foot choir, pitched a fourth apart. The instrument was almost certainly ravallé (rebuilt) by Nicholas Blanchet in Paris in 1701, who installed a whole new action with new keyboards and jacks, and added a second 8-foot set of strings. He also made a new stand, a new lid and had the exterior painted black. The range is GG/BB-c³, with a bass short octave and a split key for E-flat. This exceptionally beautiful Villebon Ruckers was restored to its early 18th-century state by John Phillips of Berkeley, California in 2009.



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