

BACH MEDITATION

Maya Homburger – baroque violin, Barry Guy - double bass

An experiment with sound colours and transparency

As opposed to “performing” in a normal concert situation, I would like to explore Bach’s wonderful solo pieces TOGETHER with the audience, who is free to come, stay, and go during the three to four hours. My hope is, to reach deeper into the music and experience transformations, revelations, which result from a particular concentrated LISTENING on both sides.

MEDITATION is also the practise of peacefulness and gentleness.

Whilst practising in my studio, I had the revelation that if EVERY SINGLE NOTE in the Bach Solo Sonatas and Partitas is played, as if a whole world would be enclosed in it, the whole “soli deo gloria” not just in the music as a composition, the harmonies, the structure, the relationship of each bar to the next, but in EVERY single note itself - in its colour, its length, sound, depth, its floating in space - then I might reach an even more meditative space and a place where time seems to stop and one gets to the core of the music or perhaps existence itself.

From time to time, I will also play with Sordino (Mute) in order to experience some of the movements in an even more relaxed and subtle way. An approach which is very close to what Bach seems to have done himself, since he often played these works on the clavichord, which is one of the softest and most intimate instruments in the world.

For this project I will be joined by my husband Barry Guy on double bass who will occasionally insert a short improvisation between the Sonatas and Partitas and also add colorations to several solo pieces composed by György Kurtág which will fit beautifully into this meditative approach to Bach.

Wherever I will play Bach’s Sonatas and Partitas in this way, we all together will hopefully discover new dimensions of this deeply spiritual music.



Maya Homburger and Barry
Guy make meditative magic in
Vantaa

By David Karlin, 16 August 2016

I had not been planning on reviewing this concert, which closed this year's [BRQ Vantaa Festival](#). The idea of a three hour [Bach](#) "meditation", people encouraged to come, go and eat during the proceedings, yoga mats provided, and the Bach "explored" by mixing it with [Kurtág](#), various other modern pieces and free jazz improvisation all sounded a bit radical for me. Worth a try – after all, if push comes to shove and I get given one piece of music to take to my desert island, it would probably be the D minor partita – but all a bit too weird for a review.



© [David Karlin](#)

But I feel I have to, because the concert worked its magic on me in ways that I completely failed to expect. Including the free jazz and the yoga

mats – and may I just point out that I'm a fan of all sorts of jazz but have generally loathed the free variety, and that I don't do yoga.

There were some fundamentals working here. [Maya Homburger](#) played the Bach sonatas and partitas quite superbly on Baroque violin. My favourite performances in the past have been the modern violin, romantic, slightly folk-dance infused variety: I've often found the strictly Baroque HIP versions a bit dry. Homburger blew me away with her commitment: when she went for a phrase, she mounted a vivacious attack on it, followed by exquisite care over the precise shape of the phrase. And she went for most of the phrases in the whole very long evening. It redefined my understanding of how you can get intensity out of a violin without using a big, romantic sound.

The second fundamental was the acoustic of St Lawrence's Church. I chose to sit up in the gallery, where the timbre of the violin was about as good as I've ever heard a violin sound, a seductive mixture of warmth and clarity. The double bass, played by Homburger's husband and long time duo partner Barry Guy, sounded just as good and, of course, the registers are so different that they didn't get in each other's way. Having decided not to review the concert, I stopped following the programme pretty early on, and also went off to lie down on one of the yoga mats and close my eyes. I couldn't tell you which of the fill-in pieces were Kurtág, which were Cage, which were Guy's own compositions or improvisations (in all honesty, I don't know much Kurtág anyway). What I can say is that the way the pieces were assembled worked on me completely. I entered the sort of trance like state that when the familiarity of the Bach came, I was utterly spellbound. And I found Guy's bass playing simply joyful, as he used every trick in the jazz player's book to conjure different soundscapes from the instrument. I left the concert two and a half hours in (it was getting late and it had been a long day), having reached a state of utter bliss. I'm told that it went on for another hour, including audience request encores. I cannot begin to imagine how Homburger has the stamina. And I now want to listen to some Kurtág.



possible flow for a c. three hours “Bach Meditation”

BACH MEDITATION

Maya Homburger, baroque violin and Barry Guy, double bass

Veni Creator Spiritus

Hymn 9th century

H. I. F. Biber
(1644 - 1704)

“Annunciation” from the first Mystery Sonata

György Kurtág
(* 1926)

Hommage à J.S.B.

J.S. Bach BWV1004

D minor Allemanda

György Kurtág

"Thus it happened"

J.S. Bach BWV1001

G minor Adagio - Con Sordino

Barry Guy

"Peace Piece"

H. I.F. Biber

Mystery Sonata Nr 9 with Interlude by Barry Guy

J.S. Bach BWV1003

A minor Sonata : Grave, Fuga, Andante, Allegro

short interval

Barry Guy

Bass Improvisation

J.S. Bach

BWV1002 B minor Partita Sarabande

Barry Guy

Bass Improvisation

J.S. Bach

Sarabande / Double

Barry Guy

"Aglais" for violin and improvising bass

H.I.F. Biber

Passacaglia for Solo Violin "The Guardian Angel"

short interval

Bass Solo

"Still"

J.S. Bach BWV1023

Präludium und Adagio aus der Sonate in e Moll

György Kurtág

"...féerie d'automne..."

Veni Creator Spiritus

Hymn 9th century

György Kurtág

"Perpetuum Mobile"

J.S. Bach BWV1004 D minor Partita : Allemanda, Corrente, Sarabanda, Giga,
Ciaccona

short interval

Barry Guy
Bass

"Celebration" for Solo Violin with improvising

"Whistling" from "Tales of Enchantment"

György Kurtág

"Elegie" and "Roundelay"

FINALE....
wishes from the audience