

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday, June 13, 2024 1:15 pm  
St. Malachy's Church – The Actors' Chapel in New York City  
Live Streamed to [midtownconcerts.org](http://midtownconcerts.org) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

## The Academy Players

### *Running the Gamut*

*Jeremy Rhizor ~ violin Arnie Tanimoto ~ viola da gamba*  
*Marc Bellassai ~ harpsichord*

***La Gamme – En forme d'un petit Opéra (1723)***

Marin Marais (1656–1728)

Ut-Ré-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Si-Ut-Si (Gravement-Rondement)

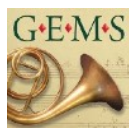
Si (Un peu plus gay)-La-Sol-Fa-Mi-Ré-Ut

This performance is made possible in part by a donation from Teri Noel Towe in memory of the late Charlene Magen Weinstein, a generous supporter of early music in New York City.

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Harpsichord Provided by Rebecca Pechefsky



[www.gemsny.org](http://www.gemsny.org)

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

*La Gamme – En forme de petit Opera* is a seldom heard masterwork of Marin Marais (1656–1728), published in 1723. Of Schubertian length, *La Gamme* offers the dramatic and expressive palette of his operas in the form of the viola da gamba-focused instrumental chamber music for which he is well known.

Published late in his career (only the 5<sup>th</sup> book of viol pieces was to follow), Marais composed *La Gamme* as a series of vividly contrasting vignettes for instrumental trio starting on Ut, proceeding through Ré-Mi-Fa-Sol-La-Si, and returning to Ut with a triumphant flourish. The work moves through a series of ground basses, contrapuntally imitative sections, and brilliant passagework for harpsichord, viola da gamba, and violin. At times, Marais turns to familiar material from the opera, including dance movements and textures reminiscent of speech-like vocal recitative.

Today, Marais' most familiar works are among the finest extent examples of chamber music of the French Baroque. However, at the peak of his career, his primary effort was the opera. He was the *batteur de mesure* or conductor of the Opéra orchestra directed by the eminent composer Jean-Baptiste Lully, and he also wrote four operas for the Paris stage. He could effectively manipulate dissonances and timbre for dramatic effect, and he used the virtuosic possibilities of various instruments to illustrate the action of the libretto.

*La Gamme*, as an opera without words, does not follow a set libretto. However, the vividness of its contrasts and gestures make it seem as if an opera comes to life – purely through music. Seemingly heedless of the lighter melody-driven trajectory of the galante, *La Gamme* is a work of decorated effervescence that embraces Rococo musical forms.

## ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE AND ARTISTS

The Academy Players is the instrumental ensemble of the Academy of Sacred Drama, an organization inspired by Baroque academies that champions the performance and research of sacred drama. Jeremy Rhizor (violin) and Arnie Tanimoto (viola da gamba) first met at the Eastman School of Music and started to collaborate at The Juilliard School. With their colleagues Chloe Fedor (violin) and Elliot Figg (harpsichord), they performed concerts at Calvary-St. George's in New York City, brought a program to Minnesota through the Lakes Area Music Festival, were presented by Pegasus Rising in Rochester, NY and Michigan State University, and performed on a tour of Colorado presented by Off the Hook Arts' Summerfest. The harpsichordist Marc Bellasai is now a core member of the ensemble. The group has performed repertoire from a variety of French, English, German, and Italian composers including Carlo Ambrogio Lonati, Antonio Vivaldi, Nicola Porpora, Marin Marais, Dieterich Buxtehude, Tobias Hume, Orlando Gibbons, Matthew Locke, Christophe Simpson, Henry Purcell, John Jenkins, and Nicola Matteis. As members of the Academy of Sacred Drama, they specialize in accompanying voices through the expressive shaping and realization of bass lines as well as matching and enhancing the timbre and emotional contrasts of vocal lines.

**Jeremy Rhizor** plays the Baroque violin and founded the Academy of Sacred Drama. Noted for playing “virtuosically but with fluid grace” by *The New York Times*, Jeremy performs with early music organizations throughout North America including Aureas Voces in Nova Scotia, Alchymy Viols in Indiana, Mountainside Baroque in Maryland, the Washington Bach Consort in Washington, DC, and Bach Vespers in New York. He recently was the guest concertmaster of the Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra, Lyra Baroque Orchestra, and The American Classical Orchestra. Jeremy is currently exploring the relationship between music and prayer and enjoys gardening at his home in North Salem, NY.

Gold medalist and first-ever American laureate of the International Bach-Abel Competition (2018) **Arnie Tanimoto** has established himself as one of the foremost viol players in the United States. He has performed and recorded in venues across North America and Europe with Barthold Kuijken, the Boston Early Music Festival, and the Smithsonian Consort of Viols among others. Alongside harpist Parker Ramsay he co-directs A Golden Wire. His principal teachers include Paolo Pandolfo, Sarah Cunningham, Christel Thielmann, and Catharina Meints. As a teacher, Arnie serves on the faculty at Princeton University and maintains a private studio.

**Marc Bellassai** earned degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory (BMus 1985, Harpsichord), Indiana University (MMus 1989 and Artist Diploma) and, as a Fulbright IIE scholar from 1994–1996, studied at the Civica Scuola di Musica and at the instrument collection of the Castello Sforzesco in Milan, Italy. He was a student of harpsichordists Lisa Goode Crawford, Elisabeth Wright, and Laura Alvin and now performs with a number of ensembles from Baltimore to New York. His interests include early keyboard performance practice, basso continuo, organology, art history, and the music and literature of the Italian sixth and seventh centuries. He currently teaches harpsichord, art history, and directs the Early Music Ensemble at Towson University.

**Next Concert, opening the 2024–25 season:**

**Edson Scheid**  
*Solo Bach*  
**September 12, 2024**