

10.11. Caryl Clark (Toronto)

Performing Parisian Style: Joseph Bologne and his Contemporaries c.1780

In this presentation, I revisit my recently published article on composer-violinist Joseph Bologne (1745-1799) and the 'symphonie concertante' environment in 1770s Paris, foregrounding the role of this preeminent interracial violinist in fostering this uniquely French genre. I begin by tracing Bologne's biography and title Le Chevallier de Saint-George before turning to an exploration of the concertizing milieu in which he worked and prospered. The best-known public concert organizations in Paris at this time were the Concert spirituel, founded in 1725, the Concert des amateurs founded in 1769, and the Le Concert de la Loge Olympique that replaced the latter in 1781. After assuming leadership of the Concert des amateurs in 1774, Bologne used this dynamic ensemble as a platform for cultivating his virtuosic music-making. As a leading composer and executant of violin concertos and 'symphonies concertantes' for two solo violins, he pushed the boundaries of performance beyond those of his contemporaries – Giuseppe Cambini (1746–1825), Jean-Baptiste Bréval (1753–1823), Jean-Baptiste Davaux (1742–1822), and François-Joseph Gossec (1734–1829). In contrast to many of his peers, who wrote in a light galant style, Bologne increasingly made more technical demands on his 'concertante' soloists, taking soloistic string writing in this uniquely French genre to new virtuosic heights.

We will explore examples of Bologne's repertory for solo and duo violins and hypothesize about his working environments. Together we will examine changes in orchestral performance practice in Parisian musical ensembles in the 1770s (including internal organization and experimentation in leadership styles) and the changing relationship between performers and audiences in an era when broader democratizing trends were emerging. Ideas of liberty and equality rubbed up against political currents aimed at curtailing individual freedoms. Counterparts to these broader socio-cultural movements are found in the musical environment of 1770s Paris, where the changing social status of musicians in society was on full display.

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As a musicologist specializing in 18thC music and the Enlightenment, I primarily study the social-political contexts, performance practices, and reception history of vocal, theatrical, and instrumental music of Haydn and Mozart. I taught at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, from 1991–2023, and continue to serve the community as a doctoral advisee, Fellow of Trinity College, and Senior Fellow of the university's graduate college, Massey College.

I have published three books with Cambridge University Press: *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn* (2005); *Haydn's Jews: Representation and Reception on the Operatic Stage* (2009); and *The Cambridge Haydn Encyclopedia* (2019).

My most frequently cited article is "Forging Identity: Beethoven's 'Ode' as European Anthem," *Critical Inquiry* 23/4 (1997).

Recent publications include “Writing Joseph Bologna into Musical History vis-à-vis Mozart: the ‘Symphonie Concertante’ from Paris to Salzburg,” *Journal of the Royal Musicological Society* 149/1 (2024); and “The Premiere of Haydn’s Orfeo in Florence (1951) – a Cold War Story,” *Haydn Studies* 2, ed. Nancy November (Cambridge UP, 2025).

A highlight of my career was producing the North American stage premiere of Haydn’s last opera, *Orfeo* (London 1791) at the University of Toronto in May 2023, with the McGill Baroque Orchestra conducted by Dorian Bandy. Three doctoral candidates recount their experiences in “Labours of Love,” *Eighteenth-Century Music* 21/1 (2024) <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478570623000386>. Dorian and I have written about our imaginative, apocalyptic production in “Reassessing Haydn’s Orfeo in the Theatre,” *HAYDN: Online Journal of the Haydn Society of North America* 15 (2025) <https://remix.berklee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1131&context=haydn-journal>.