

# EARLY MUSIC VANCOUVER AT GREEN COLLEGE

## Mr. Goldberg and His Variations

Wednesday,  
September 25, 2024

5:00 pm

Coach House,  
Green College at UBC



### Alexander Weimann

HARPSICHORD

(Photo credit: Mark Mushet)

A PRESENTATION OF

**emv:**

Early Music Vancouver

IN COOPERATION WITH



### Programme

J.S. Bach (1685-1750):

Excerpts from the Goldberg Variations

### Alexander Weimann harpsichord

The internationally renowned keyboard artist Alexander Weimann has spent his life enveloped by the therapeutic power and beauty of making music. Alex grew up in Munich. At age three he became fascinated by the intense magic of the church organ. He started piano at six, formal organ lessons at 12 and harpsichord at university (along with theatre theory, medieval Latin and jazz piano.) He is in huge demand as a director, soloist and chamber player, traveling the world with leading North American and European ensembles. He is Artistic Director of the Pacific Baroque Orchestra in Vancouver and teaches at the University of British Columbia where he directs the Baroque Orchestra Mentorship Programme.

Alex has appeared on more than 100 recordings, including the Juno-award-winning album "Prima Donna" with Karina Gauvin and Arion Baroque orchestra. His latest album series "The Art of Improvisation" (Volume 1: A Prayer for Peace; Volume 2: Ad libitum; and Volume 3: Caravan Variations, released on Redshift, 2024) unites his passions for both baroque music and improvisation on organ, harpsichord, and piano.

### Lecture/Recital Description

For all of his life, but particularly after retreating from his official duties in the 1740s, Bach was concerned with encyclopaedic and comprehensive answers to any given compositional challenge. He had started publishing his music quite late in life, in his mid 40s, way after he had already secured his position as a prolific composer and undisputed player.

In 1741, he released the 'Aria with 30 Variations', better known as the Goldberg Variations, as one of several volumes in a series called 'Clavier-Übung', which means both, keyboard exercise and keyboard practice.

What is the story behind this marvellous composition? Where does the theme (Aria) come from? Why 30 variations? How are they structured? And what does it mean to arrange this intrinsically keyboardist piece? Which instruments to pick and why? Finally, which role does Goldberg play in all that?

This lecture/recital explores some of the behind-the-curtain questions coming upon when studying, practicing, performing and arranging Bach's immortal cycle.

French double-manual harpsichord after Pascal Taskin (1723 - 1793)  
by Edward R Turner of Pender Island and Craig Tomlinson of West Vancouver,  
from Early Music Vancouver's collection of historical instruments