Arke, Harke

Viola da Gamba recital

Margaret Little

(photo © Julien Faugère 2025)

Passionate about the viola da gamba since childhood, Margaret Little takes you on a musical journey spanning six centuries, passing through the British Isles, Italy, France, Germany, and Quebec.
The viola da gamba originated in the 16th century on the Iberian Peninsula, spread throughout Europe, and arrived in New France in 1640 with the Ursuline nuns. It reached its peak in Europe in the 17th century, only to decline gradually over the following century in favor of the cello, the new favorite. The viola da gamba has left us a rich solo repertoire and is once again attracting the interest of contemporary composers.

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PROGRAMME

Ricercata per Viola Bastarda — Aurelio Virgiliano (16..-17..)

Harke, Harke! — Tobias Hume (1580 -1645)
A Soldiers Resolution
A Pavin
(The First Booke of Ayres)

Prélude — Sieur de Sainte Colombe (17th century)
Chaconne

Fantaisia n° 6 in g — Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)
Scherzando – Dolce – Spirituoso

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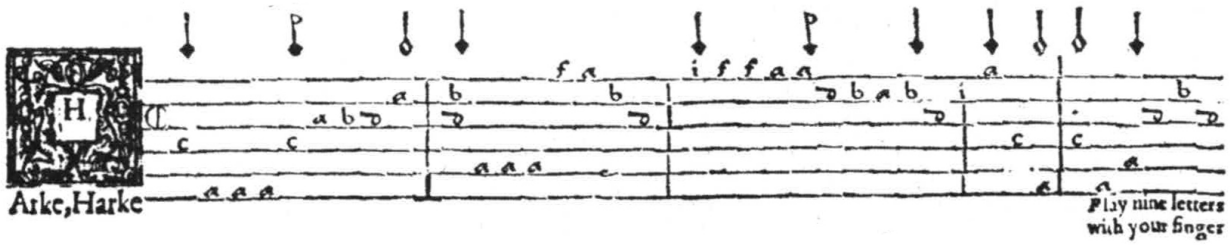
Les Voix humaines — Marin Marais (1656-1728)
Badinage

Suite in d — Carl Friedrich Abel (1723-1787)
Prélude – Adagio – Allegro

La Volia — Grégoire Jeay, Montreal (2010)



MARGARET LITTLE

Margaret Little is one of the leading figures on the viola da gamba scene in Canada and internationally. Renowned for her deep artistic commitment, musical intelligence, and expressive clarity of playing, she has devoted her career to promoting the viola da gamba, both as a soloist and in ensembles. She also plays the baroque viola.

In the 1990s, Margaret founded the viola da gamba ensemble Les Voix humaines with Susie Napper. Together for more than thirty years, they have redefined the art of the viola duo, recording over forty albums and performing on stages around the world. Their musical complicity has made them outstanding ambassadors for the viola repertoire. They have earned critical acclaim and several prestigious awards (Prix Opus, Adisq, Diapason d'Or, etc.).

More recently, Margaret has been playing in a duo with Christophe Gauthier (harpsichord), Sylvain Bergeron (lute), and Antoine Malette-Chénier (harp). She has explored the dialogue between music and dance with Stéphanie Brochard and contributed to the creation of the show Atempor/elle. She performs frequently on both sides of the Atlantic, either as a soloist or with ensembles such as the Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal, Clavecin en Concert, Les Violons du Roy, Les Boréades, Pallade Musica, Les Idées Heureuses, the Spinoza and Poiesis ensembles, and Capriccio Stravagante. She has performed in concert with renowned soloists such as Skip Sempé, Jordi Savall, Wieland Kuijken, Barthold Kuijken, Charles Daniels, Suzie LeBlanc, and Daniel Taylor. She is regularly invited to perform the viola da gamba solos in J. S. Bach's Passions with various orchestras.

Margaret has recorded over a hundred albums (mainly on the ATMA label), including three solo albums, the most recent of which is devoted to J. S. Bach's sonatas for viola da gamba and obbligato harpsichord with Christophe Gauthier.

She has taught viola da gamba at Concordia University, Cegep Saint-Laurent, and Université de Montréal, where she has trained several young up-and-coming violists. In the summer, she teaches at the CAMMAC Music Centre. She gives workshops and master classes in Canada, the United States, Australia, Japan, and Mexico. Margaret regularly serves on juries for the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec, the Conseil des Arts de Montréal, Musicaction, and the Mathieu Duguay Competition in Lamèque.

Margaret Little plays a seven-string bass viol made by Judith Kraft and Bernard Prunier in Paris (1982) based on Colichon. Her bows are made by Quebec bow maker Louis Bégin.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

- *Access to the rehearsal room: three hours before the concert*
- *A straight-backed chair with a flat seat, or an adjustable piano bench*
- *I will bring my own music stand*
- *If possible, adequate stage lighting so that I can see my sheet music (I can also bring a music stand light)*
- *Light lighting in the hall so that I can see the audience.*