

Expanded MVO Liner Notes

Multiple Voices for One

DAVID GREENBERG — Baroque & Octave violins

"To be truly in your heart you have to be a little out of your mind." ~dg



MULTIPLE VOICES FOR ONE was born during a winter forest walk just before the pandemic. It came from a conversation about the many layers that are built into Bach's music and which are also present in folk music. 'Multiple Voices' refers not only to playing more than one musical line at a time (melody, harmony, or bassline), but also to the intermingling of different musical aesthetics--Baroque, Cape Breton, and my own tunes. The transitions help tie together these different voices, including preludes I created to introduce several of the sets. My musical intuition adds its own voice, inspired by feelings arising in each moment.

What I especially love about these baroque-folk pairings are the surprising things that one genre learns from the other—the music's emotional range increases dramatically. Their combined story feels spontaneous and capable of expressing both profound melancholy and wild joy. Unconventional musical techniques and expressive vocabulary become newly available as one world meets another. They inhabit very different places on the rhythmic spectrum: where Baroque rhythmic impulse is more refined and initiated by a larger body motion, the Cape Breton ictus tends more toward a hot-edged dance groove and syncopation. The joyful and elemental rhythmic drive of Cape Breton music meets the wondrous fantasy of Bach's musical tapestry. They meet in living moments that are imagined spontaneously into existence through experimentation, often trying something out that the composer didn't have in mind, unleashing out-of-the-box creativity and a sense of fun or naughtiness. To capture the creation of living moments, these tracks were recorded in complete takes. There are only two edits in the entire recording.

These pieces are stories about vulnerability, longing, and joy. They touch a soft, sacred place inside where we heal and connect. I hope you enjoy these living moments of music. I continue exploring these ideas and playing techniques in words and music on my website and Patreon.

davidgreenbergviolinist.com

patreon.com/davidgreenbergviolinist

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DETAILED TRACK LISTINGS

1 **McG & G** (4:40)

Minuet in A with variations (William McGibbon 1690-1756, arr D Greenberg for solo violin)
Grateful for These Gifts (D Greenberg b 1965)

I really enjoyed arranging McGibbon's fun minuet! I found the piece in David Johnson's excellent book [Scottish Fiddle Music in the 18th Century](#) (John Donald, Edinburgh, 1984). The original composition is a pleasant tune, but when I played around with it in a fiddley way, it was way more fun. I changed some of the harmonies and figurations to add some rhythm and fiddle-tune-ness, and added an intro. Here is an example of how I altered the minuet, to make it fun to play as an unaccompanied fiddle piece:

McGibbon Minuet (as composed by William McGibbon)



McGibbon Minuet (as arranged by DG)



In *Grateful for These Gifts*, I experimented with creating a tune that has just two main melody notes. It is surprisingly satisfying with the help of the bassline:

Grateful for These Gifts (2-note melody)



with bassline



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2 SLEEPY MAGGIE'S MESSENGER (8:12)

Allemande & Double from Partita No I in B minor (J S Bach 1685-1750)

Mo Chuachag Laghach (The Gentle Milkmaid) old Scottish/Cape Breton reel (Trad)

Sleepy Maggie reel (Trad Cape Breton setting)

Sleepy Maggie reel (set by James Oswald 1710-1769, *The Caledonian Pocket Companion*, 1747)

Messenger Reel (Owen Greenberg b 1993 and D Greenberg)

Most of the sets begin with an introduction. I find it more compelling to begin before the beginning, with something that works its way gradually into the story's energetic flavor. For the intro to Bach's B minor *Allemande*, I wanted to build to a moment of grand expectation—which is difficult to conjure as the first notes you play, without getting all drama-queen about it...

The B minor partita has always been my favorite of Bach's famous set of six Sonatas & Partitas for solo violin. I played this piece on my senior recital at Indiana University in 1987 (and because I struggled with intonation, I didn't receive full marks...). Then I didn't play it again for quite a while, until a few years ago. So it's lived in my conscious and unconscious state for a long time. As I reawakened this gorgeous piece in my mind, I failed to examine how it went as thoroughly as I ought to have done, and as a result, there is an "Easter egg" for you to find (or perhaps we'll call it an "afikoymen" since I'm Jewish...), in the form of a missing bar-and-a-half of Bach's music!

I learned *Mo Chuachag Laghach* from a recording of Cape Breton violinist Bill Lamey (1914-1991). I met Bill at one of the first Cape Breton dances I ever attended, around 1986. He was a generous and kind person, and when he found out I was new to Cape Breton, he personally coaxed one of the best step dancers at the dance to dance with me, to show me how it went.

The second time through *Sleepy Maggie* is a wild setting from James Oswald (who might be the composer of this old favorite). My son Owen and I exchange tune ideas from time to time, and *Messenger Reel* began with him sending me a hummed version of the first half of the tune via Facebook Messenger. We've written a number of other tunes together over the years, and he recently suggested that we put together a little book of them. That possibility always makes me smile, and so we're sure to send them out into the world one way or another, before too long! Sometimes he'll come up with a melody by humming it all day, or it might come to him as he's doodling on a guitar. The most recent one that he sent me was written out on paper, and when I recorded my interpretation of it for him to listen to, he laughed and said he never imagined it going that fast. Oops! That was a good reminder that trad-style tunes are best shared by playing or singing them to each other, rather than sending off bits of paper!

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3 GLOOMY AND ENTHRALLED (7:59)

Lord Balgonie's Favorite air (from Niel Gow 1727-1807, A Fourth Collection of Strathspey Reels, 1800)

Adagio from Sonata No 2 in A minor (J S Bach)

Enthralled (Oliver Schroer 1956-2008)

Here is the first of two sets played on the octave violin. It's called "octave" because it sounds a full octave lower than a normal violin, even though it's the same size, resulting in a delightfully funky sound. The first tune appears in many books as *Gloomy Winter* or *Gloomy Winter's Now Awa'* and that's how I think of it—deliciously gloomy. In Gow's setting, he notes it is "a very old Highland tune" and suggests playing it "Slow, with much expression." Bach's *Adagio* feels even more melancholy than usual when played on the octave fiddle. Oliver Schroer's *Enthralled* is one of my all-time favorite tunes. One day when we were both living in Toronto, we happened to meet on the subway, and we ended up trading tunes in his apartment. I still feel the pull of his warm, creative spirit.

4 SUSAN'S KLEZMER CORRENTE (5:01)

Corrente from Partita No 2 in D minor (J S Bach)

Susan's Reel (D Greenberg)

The second tune is for Susan Hunter. A few years ago I was living at Susan and John's house in Halifax (which I still think of as my Canadian home). One day I was doodling this tune into existence in the dining room, and I found out that Susan had been dancing to it in the kitchen the whole time—which was especially remarkable because she was recovering from knee surgery at the time!

5 JOHN'S A-JIVIN' (8:17)

Sarabande & Gigue from Partita No 2 in D minor (J S Bach)

Deer John, a Cautionary Tail bluesy tune (D Greenberg)

In playing around with the opening of Bach's gorgeous and melancholy D minor *Sarabande*, I loved how playing a lower appoggiatura into the upper note (f") results in creating very open-sounding double-decker fifths (d'-a'-e"). It reminded me of how I feel after meditating—a little bewildered but deliciously uncluttered and open. As the introduction expanded, there was a moment when Bach suddenly reappeared, mid-phrase. It surprised me how organically it develops, played that way.

I wrote the last tune for John Siemens of Halifax NS to commemorate his near-deer disaster. He was commuting from New Brunswick to Halifax and decided to drive the pickup truck instead of the smaller car that day; the deer probably wouldn't have survived either one, but John was okay, thanks to the pickup. John likes blues and jazz, so I thought I'd try making a jazzy jig, and this is what came out. It's really not a jig at all, but it's kinda fun to play!

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6 MERRY BE AT FOUR IN THE MORN (9:05)

The Merry Miss Mary D march (D Greenberg)
Siciliana & Presto from Sonata No I in G minor (J S Bach)
Four in the Morn reel (Owen Greenberg)

Mary Doeringer was a fellow member of Stanley Ritchie's student Baroque orchestra at Indiana University in the mid-80s. Mary entertained us all with a running summary of Stanley's teaching quotes, which were a remarkable combination of hilarious and enlightening. This march for her was one of my first attempts at making a Cape Breton-style tune. At the time I was particularly enamored by High-Bass tunes, where the lower two strings are tuned up to match (in octaves) the pitch of the upper two strings, creating a ringing and open sound. The strings are all tuned to either A or E, so it wouldn't work so well for tunes in the key of B^b ... which is the key of *The Merry Miss Mary D*. However, I composed that tune to mimic the open-tuned sound of High-Bass tuning, even though the strings are in the usual g-d'-a'-e" tuning.

I recently noticed that Bach's G minor *Presto* is a twisting, meandering series of musical sequences from beginning to end, with but a single exception. Can you find it?

Owen can be somewhat description and literal with his tune titles, so I'll bet you can guess what time of day his reel *Four in the Morn* came to him!

7 ALLEMANDE JOY (7:46)

Allemande from Partita No 2 in D minor (J S Bach)
Joy Go With My Love jig (from Neil Stewart collection, 1761)
Andrew Carr slip jig (from Niel Gow's collection, The Complete Repository, 1799)
Marching to Mimbastica march (D Greenberg) / *Doug MacPhee's Reel* (D Greenberg)

This set includes tunes for two of the most important people in my life - Maria Blair, my life partner, and Doug MacPhee, my Cape Breton brother. Maria's initials are MIMB, so I think of her domain as Mimbastica. Doug took me under his wing early in my Cape Breton music exploration. I am so grateful for his friendship and mentorship. He has been an important part of my entire adult life.

8 CALEDONIA'S CORRENTE (7:13)

Caledonia's Wail for Niel Gow Her Favorite Minstrel air (Simon Fraser collection, 1816)
Corrente & Double from Partita No I in B minor (J S Bach)

I learned *Caledonia's Wail* from Bill Lamey, and it was in the same set as the other tune on this album that I learned from him (the *Mo Chuachag Laghach* reel). I like how the B minor *Corrente* feels expansive like an eagle soaring up high, and then its *Double* feels more like crawling insects scampering around on the ground!

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9 **SAVAGE SARABANDE** (6:32)

Sarabande from Partita No I in B minor (J S Bach)

Mrs Savage's Whim triple hornpipe (from Young's Dancing Master vol I, 1713)

Young Damon's Flight triple hornpipe (from Young's Dancing Master vol 2, 1718)

Another set on the octave violin. John Young took over the updates to The Dancing Master series of books from John & Henry Playford. These two triple hornpipes were published at roughly the same time (1713 & 1718) that Bach's B minor partita was composed (1720). Bach probably didn't know these English triple hornpipes though. **Chris Norman shared these triple hornpipes with me, and I arranged them.**

10 **BARBARA'S** (5:47)

Barbara's Reverse Passacaille (D Greenberg)

Barbara is a dear friend and one of the most warm-hearted people I have ever met. She is a fine musician herself—a chamber musician, choral conductor, organist and music educator. And she is a beloved champion for the arts in Nova Scotia. Barbara founded the St Cecilia concert series, and she nurtured and expanded the Musique Royale concert series. Together those two series presented about 100 concerts each year in venues all across Nova Scotia, including in many small communities where she worked with local committees to offer high quality concert programs. She also organized other events, including those designed for children, for meditation, and the legendary “Cecilia’s Retreat” Saturday house concerts overlooking beautiful Mahone Harbour. The Cecilia’s Retreat concerts begin at 11:00am, in a large room that has a piano at one end and the kitchen at the other, and the brunch is prepared during the performance so that by 12:30 or so, everyone’s mouths are watering from the delicious aromas of scallops frying in butter and baking goodies. And Her husband Roy is her partner on the production side of much of the concert presenting, never wanting the spotlight but always working behind the scenes to make all the events run smoothly.

When she recently retired, I wrote this piece for her. A Baroque passacaille was often built upon a repeating 4-note descending bassline; the piece I wrote for Barbara is a "reverse passacaille" because the bassline goes up instead of down! The terms Passacaille (French)/Passacaglia (Italian) and Chaconne/Ciaccona were often interchanged in the Baroque period; both terms referred to a dance in triple meter based upon a repeating ground bass — most of them more complex than the 4-note descending bassline pattern). These Baroque pieces, both French and Italian varieties, are some of the most dramatic, mesmerizing, and yummy music I know. In composing this tune, I wanted to begin with a Scottish-style slow air in a free meter, and then move to the rhythmic and flowing passacaille, and return again to the slow air at the end. I like how a strong Celtic modal flavor crept in when I moved to the minor about halfway through.

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 70:32

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THANKS & CREDITS

FOR Maria Blair, who listens to my dreams and doesn't take any nonsense. She is the reason I live in Corvallis now. We like to share life's adventures together, be they walking the Camino de Santiago, playing music, gardening, or fighting off wildlife... I love sharing my life with you.

THANK YOU to the many people who made this project possible!

Julie Wyrick Julie is a long-time friend, and she was the first to directly support my recording project with a generous donation. When the pandemic descended upon us in early 2020, she decided to donate the refunded money from one of the canceled musical events to an artist, and she chose my recording to support, for which I am very grateful! Julie is an accomplished Scottish-style pianist herself, and for many years performed with her late husband, fiddler & dancer Steve Wyrick, at RSCDS events. They made a lovely recording together of SCD music called *Second Chances*.



L to R: Maria Blair - David - Julie Wyrick - Steve Wyrick

Mark De Silva I met Mark just a few months ago in August 2022, when I was performing as Artist-in-Residence in Early Music Vancouver's Bach Festival. Mark sponsored my solo concert—which was a live version of the MVO recording. He was moved to support this recording as well as the bigger endeavor that surrounds it. And then there were the subsequent conversations about life, the universe, and everything.... I'm very grateful to Mark for his generous and ongoing support.

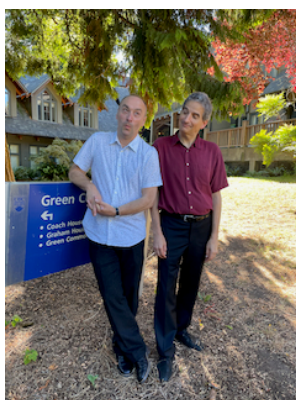


L to R: David, Mark, Maria (outside Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, moments after my MVO solo recital, Aug 2022)

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[Geneviève Gilardeau](#) Geneviève is a Baroque violinist I know from my time with Tafelmusik (the Toronto-based Baroque orchestra). Her gorgeous, sensitive playing is always a balm for the soul. During the pandemic we made play-dates to play for each other over Zoom. I'm grateful for those meetings and all the encouraging emails in between that kept me moving forward with this recording project.

[David McGuinness](#) When I first heard the delicious acoustics in George Fox University's Bauman Auditorium, I had only about a minute before my workshop was to begin. While students filed in, I quickly set up my H4N Zoom recorder and recorded about 45 seconds of bits of the MVO program. Then it sat for about a week before I listened to it and went "oh wow, that's the sound I'm looking for!" But I had no experience in choosing an acoustic recording space. I wanted to get an opinion I could trust, to be sure that it was a workable sound-space, so I asked my friend, musician-producer extraordinaire David McGuinness, to have a listen. I'm grateful for his advice that gave me the confidence to make a decision of where to record.



David & David, during their artist-in-residence adventures at EMV's Vancouver Bach Festival 2022

Wendy Greenberg A big thanks to my sister Wendy for using her mad grant-writing skills to help me fine-tune my Canada Council for the Arts grant application that supported this recording. I'm also grateful to her for creating concert opportunities in Bemidji MN, where I could try out experimental solo repertoire in a supportive atmosphere!

Owen Greenberg My son Owen sends me newly composed melodies sometimes. They are always a delight, and sometimes they find their way deep inside my brain and dominate my musical being for weeks. Some of his creations call out to me to collaborate. We have thus accumulated a repertoire of "O-D-us" tunes. A couple of them made it onto this recording, which makes me very happy.

[Sara Greenberg](#) My daughter Sara is a circus aerial artist who inspires me through her initiative. Recently she asked me to record a backing track for an aerial act that she was creating with a singer. I didn't know if I was capable of doing that, but since she thought I was, I went ahead and did it. (And it came out pretty cool...) When that empowering attitude is directed at you from your daughter, it's potent.

Jeanette Greenberg Mom has always given me unconditional love and support. For this project, she was also my test audience. Mostly she told me how much she enjoyed whatever it was I played for her (often over the phone), but sometimes she had an observation that made me reconsider and improve on a musical decision.

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Howard Booster Howard has invited me several times to perform at his house concert series where I tried out MVO material. He's given me invaluable, specific feedback about my online courses, where I developed the theory around creating living moments on the violin. He's described for me how my teaching has opened up more musical possibilities that make playing more satisfying and fun, and that gave me confidence to continue on this path. Also, as the recording neared the finish line, he answered questions that only an true audiophile can.

Marcia Thumma Marcia has always been a source of positive energy and encouragement. It's like wind in my sail!

Susan Hunter & John Siemens Susan and John are my Canadian family, and I'm so grateful for their support and friendship.

Oliver Schroer's estate (Peter Coffman) Peter generously welcomed me to include Oliver's beautiful tune on this recording.

Casey Sokol Casey helped me find Peter when I thought I'd reached a dead end!

Kathleen Lavengood & George Fox University Kathleen is a fine violinist and teacher who shares my passions for Cape Breton fiddling and teaching. She invited me to give a workshop to the music students at George Fox University in February 2022. That was the first indoor, in-person music event for me in over two years, since the beginning of the pandemic! And it was also when I was introduced to [Bauman Auditorium](#) and its yummy acoustics. I'm grateful to Kathleen for helping me make this dream a reality!

Jeremy VanSlyke & [Leaf Music](#) Jeremy is owner and music producer at Leaf Music, who answered my unending questions with the patience of a saint. I'm grateful for the opportunity to partner with Leaf Music through a digital distribution arrangement even when the FACTOR funds fell short (twice!).



Kiya Tabassian I'm grateful to Kiya for taking a chance to include me in the Rencontres musicales de Conques 2019 in Salles-la-Source, France. Performing my solo program *Bach au Cape Breton* (precursor to *Multiple Voices for One*) there gave me confidence to continue this journey.

Patrick Graham Patrick, an excellent percussionist, was performing at that same festival. We went on a long walk into the hills, where I told him about my dreams for this project. I am grateful for his strong conviction that the Canada Council for the Arts would want to support this project. I am grateful to Patrick for convincing me to apply for a grant!

Photo: Performance of *Bach au Cape Breton*,
L'église de Saint-Austremoine, Salles-la-Source, France

Doug MacPhee Doug has been a wonderful mentor, musical partner, and close friend for my entire adult life. Some people wonder how I was able to learn the Cape Breton fiddle style so well. Doug played a big role in my CB musical education in so many ways, and continues to do so!



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CREDITS

RECORDED June 2022 in complete takes at
Bauman Auditorium, George Fox University, Newberg OR

PRODUCER: David Greenberg
SOUND ENGINEER: Jason Fick
GRAPHIC DESIGN: Adam Agee
COVER PHOTO: David Greenberg
PHOTOS: Randall Lee Milstein and Maria Blair
LINER NOTES: David Greenberg with Maria Blair

INSTRUMENTS (PITCH: A = 415 HZ)

BAROQUE VIOLIN (1-2, 4-8, 10): Masa Inokuchi, Toronto, 1997

OCTAVE VIOLIN (3, 9): Shep Jones (Fiddarci Lutherie), Helena AL, 2009
(Octave violin design by Don Rickert)

BAROQUE BOW: Daniel Latour, France, 1985

TRANSITIONAL BOW (for octave violin): Stephen Marvin, Toronto, 1992

We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

For over three decades, David Greenberg has enjoyed a double career as a Baroque violinist and Cape Breton-style fiddler. His fluency and experience in these two genres make him uniquely qualified to interpret the wild music of 18th-century Scotland. David is a graduate of Indiana University's Early Music Institute (now called Historical Performance Institute), where he studied with Stanley Ritchie.

He has performed, taught, and recorded in North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East. David has performed with Tafelmusik, Red Priest, Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien, Concerto Caledonia, Apollo's Fire, Ensemble Caprice, La Nef, Toronto Consort, Seattle Baroque, Les Voix Humaines, Musica Pacifica, Ferintosh, Chris Norman, Suzie LeBlanc, and Doug MacPhee. He has recorded over 80 CDs, including with most of these ensembles and collaborators, as well as three groundbreaking Scottish-Cape Breton-Baroque recordings with his own ensemble Puirt A Baroque in the 1990s.

David co-authored *The DunGreen Collection* (1996), an influential treatise on Cape Breton fiddling. He is also a composer and arranger. Many of his tunes have been recorded by Cape Breton musicians such as Buddy MacMaster, Carl MacKenzie, Jerry Holland, and The Rankins.

He enjoys sharing his passion and knowledge about Baroque and Cape Breton music in workshop settings, including his intensive online courses *Cape Breton Deep-Dive*, *Making Tunes with Intention*, and *Cape Breton-Baroque Integration*.