

# ALEXANDER DOUGLAS FRANCE NICHOLLS

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BMus (UWA), BMus Hons (Syd Con.), MM (Juilliard), PhD (MDW)

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## BIOGRAPHY

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Alexander Nicholls is an award-winning violoncellist and musicologist specialising performance and study of eighteenth-century music. He holds degrees in music performance from The Juilliard School (USA), and The University of Western Australia (AUS), as well as a music studies degree from The University of Sydney (AUS) and a doctorate from the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (AT) under the supervision of Clive Brown where he is focussed on the music collections and violoncello performing practices of King Friedrich Wilhelm II (1744–1797). Alexander appears regularly in concerts and recordings with various ensembles and orchestras across the world. His passions lie in the recovery and performance of neglected eighteenth-century music which he is currently pursuing through archival study, Galant Schema Theory, and performance.

## EDUCATION

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<b>Doctor of Philosophy: Musikwissenschaft (Musicology)</b>	2020–2025
<i>University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Vienna, AT</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Ph.D. Thesis: "The Musical Collections and Cello Playing of King Friedrich Wilhelm II: Patronage and Performing Practice"</i></li><li>• <i>Supervisor: Prof. Clive Brown</i></li><li>• <i>Grade 1 ("Sehr Gut", Very good). Graduated with High Distinction</i></li></ul>	
<b>Master of Music: Historical Performance</b>	2014–2016
<i>The Juilliard School, New York, USA</i>	
<b>Bachelor of Music (Honours): Music Studies</b>	2013
<i>The University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Sydney, AUS</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Music Studies Thesis: "Schematic phrasing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: An examination of Domenico Corri's punctuative phrasing practice, and its implications for historically informed performance"</i></li><li>▪ <i>Supervisor: Prof. Neal Peres Da Costa</i></li><li>▪ <i>First Class Honours. Graduated with High Distinction</i></li></ul>	
<b>Bachelor of Music: Violoncello Performance</b>	2009–2012
<i>The University of Western Australia, Perth, AUS</i>	
<b>NSW Higher School Certificate</b>	
<i>Sydney Conservatorium High School, Sydney, AUS</i>	2007–2008
<i>Radford College, Canberra, AUS</i>	2004–2006

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

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- Research Grant Program *GO.INVESTIGATIO* fellowship from the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (ÖAW) –2024, €4,500 research grant to study the *Königlichen Hausbibliothek at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*.
- Research Grant Program of the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz – 2021, €3,600 research grant to study the *Königlichen Hausbibliothek at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*
- 2022 Dieter W. Bäuerle Award for Music –2022, € 2,000 research grant to study the *mechanical instruments of Christian Ernst Kleemeyer*
- Förderungsstipendium für das PhD-Doktoratsstipendium 2022–23, €700 per month
- Grant from the Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa – 2022, €10,000 grant for the recording of CD "*Janitsch Church Sonatas, Berlin Friday Academy 2022*"
- Goethe Institute Boston Bach Cello Competition Scholarship – 2016, €2,000, *Full study and living scholarship to Germany for 1 month*
- The University of Sydney Wood Study Scholarship – 2014-16, \$10,000 AUD study scholarship to attend *The Juilliard School*
- The University of Sydney Mandelbaum Study Scholarship – 2014-15, \$10,000 AUD study scholarship to attend *The Juilliard School*
- Juilliard Historical Performance Scholarship – 2014-16 *Full two-year tuition scholarship (\$106,600 US)*
- Sydney Conservatorium Honours Class I – 2013
- University of Sydney Honours Scholarship – 2013 \$8,000 AUD study scholarship
- Sydney Conservatorium High School Reuben F Scarf Award for Commitment – 2008

## LEADERSHIP

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- Galant Schemata Conferences
  - International online conferences exploring Galant Schemata Theory with theorists and performers.
  - III. 2025: 21st March - 23rd March: "Galant Schema Theory: Contemporary Approaches to Composition, Pedagogy, Performance"
  - II. 2023: 29 Sept -1<sup>st</sup> Oct: "Defining the Galant"
  - I. 2022: 30<sup>th</sup> September- 2<sup>nd</sup> October: "Galant Schemata in Theory & Practice Conference"
  - *Based on my undergraduate research at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, in 2022 I took the initiative to organise the first ever music international Schema theory conference together with my colleague Dr Jonathan Salamon. This has now become a regular event which invites scholars from around the world to take part in the establishment of a new field of music analysis.*
  - Read more: <https://www.galantschemastudies.com/>
- Church Sonatas CD and Trio Sonatas CD of Johann Gottlieb Janitsch Projects. Resulting in the publication of *Janitsch Church Sonatas 2022* and *Janitsch Trio Sonatas 2020* with the Dutch label Brilliant Classics.
  - *Based on my studies at the Juilliard school, I took the initiative to organise, along with my colleagues, the recording of two CDs of neglected chamber music of Johann Gottlieb Janitsch.*

## WORK HISTORY – FREELANCE VIOLONCELLIST WITH ORCHESTRAS AND ENSEMBLES

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- Australian Brandenburg Orchestra (AUS)
- Australian Classical and Romantic Orchestra (AUS)
- Australian Haydn Ensemble (AUS)
- Concetus Musicus Wien (AT)
- Les Arts Florissants (FR)
- Eroica Berlin (GER)
- Berlin Friday Academy (GER)
- Athesinus Consort Berlin (GER)
- Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra (USA)
- English Concert (UK)

## PUBLICATIONS

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### Theses

- Doctoral Thesis: *"The Musical Collections and Cello Playing of King Friedrich Wilhelm II: Patronage and Performing Practice"* 2024
- Honors Thesis: *"Schematic phrasing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: An examination of Domenico Corri's punctuative phrasing practice, and its implications for historically informed performance"* 2013

### CDs

- Georg Philipp Telemann: *Cantata "Ino"*, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, CPO, Bremen 2024
- Johann Gottlieb Janitsch: *Janitsch Church Sonatas*, Berlin Friday Academy, Brilliant Classics, Berlin 2022
- Kowar, Helmut: Kleemeyer 170. Dittersdorf, Haydn, Martín y Soler und Pleyel auf den zwölf Walzen der Flötenuhr Nr. 170 von Christian Ernst Kleemeyer, Berlin. Göttingen Cuvillier (2nd issue) 2022
- Johann Gottlieb Janitsch: *Janitsch Trio Sonatas*, Berlin Friday Academy, Brilliant Classics, Berlin 2020
- Christoph Graupner: *Antiochus und Stratonica*, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, CPO, Bremen 2019
- Georg Friedrich Handel: *Almira*, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, CPO, Bremen 2018
- Samuel Schiedt: *Cantiones Sacrae Motetten*, Athesinus Consort, Carus, Berlin 2018

### Books

(Under Review)

- Editor: Nicholls, A., Solomon, J., Tarrant, C., (under review) *Galant Schemata in Theory and Practice*.
- Author: Nicholls, A., (under review) "Punctuating the Ponte: Unfolding compositional motivations of eighteenth-century performing practices through schema theory" Chapter in *Galant Schemata in Theory and Practice*.

### Journal Articles

(In Preparation)

- Nicholls, A. (in preparation) Cadenzas for a King: Cello Cadenzas in the musical collections of Friedrich Wilhelm II.

- Nicholls, A., (in preparation) Friedrich Wilhelm II's Concerto Part-Sets as Evidence of Orchestral Size in Concerto Practice, Berlin c.1780–1790.
- Nicholls, A., (in preparation) Jean-Pierre Duport's Chordal Realisation of Secco Recitative in Late 18th-Century Berlin.

## ONLINE MEDIA

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- *Eroica Berlin (2022)* – Cello solo in live performance of Gioachino Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri* (1813), Act 2: "Per lui che adoro"  
[Watch on YouTube](#)
- *Janitsch Trio Sonatas: Berlin Friday Academy (2020)* – CD recording  
[Listen on YouTube](#)
- *Janitsch Church Sonatas: Berlin Friday Academy (2022)* – CD recording  
[Listen on YouTube](#)
- *Samuel Scheidt: Cantiones Sacrae Motetten: Athesinus Consort Berlin (2018)* – CD recording  
[Listen on Spotify](#)
- *Juilliard: A Day in the Life (2015)* – Documentary feature  
[Watch on YouTube](#)
- *Juilliard Master's Recital (2015)* – Audio visual recording  
[Watch on YouTube](#)

## INVITED TALKS

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- Lecture at the Musik und Kunst Privatuniversität der Stadt Wien (MUK) 09/2023
  - I gave a lecture to Bachelor students on Mechanical Music of the 18th Century
- Lecture at the Boston Phoebe Carrai violoncello masterclass 01/2023
  - I gave a lecture to the masterclass attendees on the compositional schemata of Johann Sebastian Bach's violoncello suites.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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- *"Webern the Galant Composer"*: Conference paper at the Galant Schema Studies conference (10/2023)
- *"Concentus Musicus Wien: Recovering Lost Sounds"* lecture at the La Documenta conference, Paris (06/2023)
- *"Punctuating the Ponte"*: Conference paper at the Galant Schema Studies conference (10/2022)

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

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- Cello solo concert in the music rooms of Friedrich Wilhelm II using the performing practice insights gained through my doctoral studies. Marmor Palais, Potsdam 11/2024
- Editor of the Wikipedia page of Frederick William II of Prussia (in English)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_William\\_II\\_of\\_Prussia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_William_II_of_Prussia)
- Blog post of the archival research stay in Berlin (2021) <https://blog.sbb.berlin/friedrich-wilhelm-ii-violoncello/>

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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My research interests are built upon three interrelated pillars: performance-led research, theory and analysis, and historical musicology.

### 1. Performance-Led Research:

The first pillar centres on performance as both method and outcome. Artistic output – particularly through live performance and recordings – serves as a primary mode of inquiry. This approach is exemplified in my recorded practice, most notably in my roles as musicological and artistic director for two CD publications with Brilliant Classics, focusing on the trio and church sonatas of the Berlin composer Johann Gottlieb Janitsch (1708–1762). Throughout my academic career, I have maintained a strong commitment to performance-informed musicological research, where interpretative decisions are shaped by theoretical and historical understanding.

### 2. Theory and Analysis:

The second pillar involves a composition-based theoretical approach, with a particular emphasis on the application of Robert Gjerdingen's Galant Schema Theory to eighteenth-century repertoire. This framework provides insight into compositional conventions and their implications for performance practices, including phrasing, cadenza writing, and improvisation. My interest in this area was first developed in my Honours thesis, which examined schematic patterns in eighteenth-century music, and continues through my ongoing collaboration with Dr Jonathan Salamon. Together, we co-chair international conferences on Galant Schema Theory under the initiative *Galant Schema Studies*.

### 3. Historical Musicology:

The third pillar draws on archival and documentary sources – such as performance materials, treatises, and correspondence – to better understand historical performance practices. My doctoral research focused on the cello playing of King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia (1744–1797), using his extensive personal music collection to investigate repertoire, technique, and stylistic conventions at the Prussian court.

Together, these three pillars form a cohesive research agenda that integrates practice, theory, and historical context. I am motivated by the belief that performance, grounded in scholarly inquiry, can offer

unique insights into historical repertoires and foster a deeper understanding of music as both an artistic and cultural phenomenon.

## **MEMBERSHIPS**

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- Gesellschaft für Selbstspielende Musikinstrumente (Society for Self-Playing Musical Instruments)
- Juilliard Alumni
- St George's College Perth Alumni
- Convocation of UWA Graduates
- Conservatorium High Association of Old Students