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**FAMOUS
CONCERTOS**
Brandenburg
Concertos
Violin
Concertos
Oboe
Concertos
Recorder
Concertos

Pieter-Jan Belder
Musica Amphion
Thomas Zehetmair
Amsterdam Bach Soloists
Andrius Puskunigis
St. Christopher Chamber Orchestra
Erik Bosgraaf
Ensemble Cordevento

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Johann Sebastian Bach 1685–1750

Brandenburg Concertos

- Concerto No.1 in F BWV1046**
1. I. [Without tempo indication] 3'53
 2. II. Adagio 3'33
 3. III. Allegro 4'06
 4. IV. Menuet - Trio I - Polonaise - Trio II 8'04

Frank de Bruine *oboe*
 Rémy Baudet *violin piccolo*
 Teunis van der Zwart,
 Erwin Wieringa *horn*

Concerto No.2 in F BWV1047

5. I. [Without tempo indication] 4'47
6. II. Andante 3'15
7. III. Allegro assai 2'38

William Wroth *trumpet*
 Frank de Bruine *oboe*
 Pieter-Jan Belder *recorder*
 Rémy Baudet *violin*

Concerto No.3 in G BWV1048

8. I. [Without tempo indication] 5'18
9. II. Adagio 0'20
10. III. Allegro 4'45

Rémy Baudet, Sayuri Yamagata,
 Irmgard Schaller *violin*
 Staas Swierstra, Marten Boeken,
 Mariëtte Holtrop *viola*
 Rainer Zipperling, Richtte van der Meer,
 Albert Brüggén *cello*

Concerto No.4 in G BWV1049

11. I. Allegro 6'42
12. II. Andante 3'31
13. III. Presto 4'34

Rémy Baudet *violin*
 Pieter-Jan Belder, Saskia Coolen *recorder*

Concerto No.5 in D BWV1050

14. I. Allegro 9'47
15. II. Affettuoso 5'42
16. III. Allegro 5'10

Wilbert Hazelzet *transverse flute*
 Rémy Baudet *violin*
 Pieter-Jan Belder *harpsichord*

Concerto No.6 in B flat BWV1051

17. I. [Without tempo indication] 5'56
18. II. Adagio ma non tanto 4'43
19. III. Allegro 5'40

Staas Swierstra, Sayuri Yamagata *viola*
 Mienke van der Velden,
 Johannes Boer *viola da gamba*
 Lucia Swarts *cello*

Musica Amphion (Rémy Baudet leader)

Pieter-Jan Belder

Recordings: May & June 2006, Lokhorstkerk, Leiden,
 The Netherlands
 Recording & editing: Peter Arts
 Musica Amphion is conducted from the harpsichord
 by Pieter-Jan Belder and performs on period
 instruments.
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Violin Concerto in E BWV1042*

20. I. Allegro 7'10
21. II. Adagio 6'46
22. III. Allegro assai 2'47

Violin Concerto in A minor BWV1041†

23. I. [Without tempo indication] 3'57
24. II. Andante 6'18
25. III. Allegro assai 3'31

Violin Concerto in D minor BWV1052† reconstructed from the Harpsichord Concerto BWV1052

26. I. [Without tempo indication] 7'25
27. II. Adagio 6'43
28. III. Allegro 7'41

Violin Concerto in G minor BWV1056* reconstructed from the Harpsichord Concerto BWV1056

29. I. [Without tempo indication] 3'25
30. II. Largo 3'06
31. III. Presto 3'07

Thomas Zehetmair *violin & artistic director*

Amsterdam Bach Soloists

Henk Rubingh *leader*
 Tineke de Jong, *Juditha Haeblerlin, †Karen
 Segal *violin I*
 Krisi Goedhart, Eva Scheytt,
 *Elisabeth Ingen Housz,
 †Juditha Haeblerlin *violin II*
 Gert Jan Leuverink, Roland Krämer *viola*
 Wim Straesser *cello*
 Libia Hernandez *double bass*
 Dominique Citroen *harpsichord*

Concerto for Two Violins and Orchestra in E BWV1043

32. I. Vivace 4'09
33. II. Largo ma non tanto 7'10
34. III. Allegro 5'09

Karl Suske, Giorgio Kröhner *violin*
 Walter Heinz Berstein *harpsichord*
 Gewandhausorchester Leipzig
 Kurt Masur

Recordings: 1977 & 1978, Paul-Gerhardt-Kirche,
 Leipzig, Germany (13–15); 1 March 1994, Waalse
 Kerk, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (1–12)
 © 1979 VEB Deutsche Schallplatten Berlin (13–15);
 1994 Edel Classics GmbH (1–12)
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Oboe Concerto in F BWV1053

35. I. Allegro 7'15
36. II. Siciliano 4'53
37. III. Allegro 5'44

Concerto for Oboe d'Amore in A BWV1055

38. I. Allegro 4'12
39. II. Larghetto 4'01
40. III. Allegro ma non tanto 4'25

Oboe Concerto in G minor BWV1056

41. I. Allegro 3'14
42. II. Largo 2'22
43. III. Presto 3'17

Concerto for Oboe d'Amore in G

(arranged after three cantatas)

44. I. [Bass aria] (from BWV100) 3'23
45. II. [Alto aria] (from BWV170) 6'16
46. III. [Bass aria] (from BWV30) 4'07

Concerto for Oboe and Violin in C minor BWV1060

47. I. Allegro 4'23
48. II. Adagio 4'13
49. III. Allegro 3'11

Andrius Puskunigis *oboe & oboe d'amore*
Simona Venslovaite *violin* (13–15)

St Christopher Chamber Orchestra
Donatas Katkus

Recording: 17–22 August 2013, Church of St Catherine, Vilnius, Lithuania
Production: St Christopher Chamber Orchestra & Donatas Katkus
Sound recording: Laura Jurgelionyte
Sound editing: Eckhard Steiger
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Concerto for Recorder in G

Arias from Cantatas BWV 215 and 32, transcribed by Thiemo Wind

50. I. [Allegro] 6'26
51. II. Adagio 5'19
52. III. Presto 3'12

Concerto for Recorder in B flat BWV1055

53. I. Allegro 3'57
54. II. Larghetto 4'56
55. III. Allegro ma non tanto 3'54

Concerto for Recorder in D BWV1053

56. I. [Allegro] 7'24
57. II. Siciliano 3'55
58. III. Allegro 5'55

Concerto for Recorder in D minor 'BWV1059'

59. I. [Allegro] 5'06
60. II. Adagio 2'50
61. III. Presto 2'42

62. Liebster Jesu, Wir Sind Hier BWV731 2'39

Erik Bosgraaf *recorders*

Ensemble Cordevento*
Zefira Valova *violin I*
Ivan Iliev *violin II*
Zdenka Prochazkova *viola*
Linda Mantcheva *cello*
Alessandro Pianu *harpsichord*

*On period instruments

Recording: 6–9 July 2011, Kruiskerk, Burgum (Friesland), The Netherlands
Recording producer and editing: Dirk Fischer
Preparation of scores: Ivan Iliev and Alessandro Pianu (BWV 1053, 1055, 1059) and Thiemo Wind (Concerto in G)
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Brandenburg Concertos

The surviving orchestral works of Johann Sebastian Bach provide examples of concertos and suites, the two most important orchestral genres in the late Baroque. Bach dedicated his final versions of the six **Brandenburg Concertos (BWV 1046-1051)** on March 24, 1721 to Christian Ludwig, the Margrave of Brandenburg. Probably each concerto had had earlier performances (at least two – Nos. 1 and 5 – in different versions) in Weimar or Cöthen. The Brandenburg Concertos are not solo concertos in the sense in which we understand concertos today, but examples of earlier forms of concerted music. Each of the six features a different combination of solo and tutti instruments, combinations that are highly unusual for the late Baroque. In three of these concertos (Nos. 1, 3 and 6) the orchestra is divided into well-balanced instrumental groups which pass themes from one to another in a lively musical dialogue, comparable to a series of questions and answers. From time to time a solo instrument takes control of the conversation. The three other concertos (Nos. 2, 4, and 5) are typical of the concerto grosso, with three or four solo instruments (concertino) competing with an accompanying group of strings (the ripieno). However, one solo instrument in each of these concertos stands out above the others in the concertino (the trumpet, violin, and harpsichord in Nos. 2, 4, and 5, respectively), thereby creating in effect three solo concertos. Although not conceived as a group, these six works seem to be brought together to demonstrate different ways of writing 'concertos for several instruments', as the autograph title-page calls them.

The **Brandenbrug Concerto No.1**, in F major, is scored for two horns, three oboes, bassoon, violin (a small violin, called violino piccolo), strings and continuo. This seems to be an unusual ensemble, but one which Vivaldi used (with two oboes instead of three) in four concertos. More unusual is the work's structure. At first glance it might appear that Bach has merely added a French-style minuet to the usual three movement concerto. But in fact the genesis of the work is more complicated than that. An earlier version (BWV1046a) without the violino piccolo and called 'sinfonia' has only the first two movements and the minuet (lacking the second trio, the string polonaise). Bach could have used this piece for an introduction to a longer work,

to Cantata 208, as has been suggested. The new Allegro, the third movement of the concerto in its well-known version, makes the work much more of a concerto. But even the style and structure of this movement point to Bach's secular vocal music rather than to his other orchestral works. Bach did, indeed, use it again as the opening chorus of the secular cantata BWV207. The music sounds more at home there, with trumpets, drums and four part chorus. The famous Bach scholar Alfred Dürr called this unbelievably skilled adaptation of a concerto movement as a da capo chorus 'one of Bach's most remarkable achievements.'

If the first concerto was designed more in the French taste, the other five are more Italianate in structure. **Brandenburg Concerto No.2**, in F major like the first, has a solo group consisting of trumpet, recorder, oboe and violin, a very heterogeneous collection of instruments. In its perfect proportions this concerto seems to be the very prototype of a concerto grosso. The trumpet, with its high clarino register, is treated with such virtuosity that the work gives the impression of a real solo concerto. In the melancholy middle movement the trumpet is kept silent, but in the Finale it is put to the forefront again. It announces the jolly main subject and also concludes this dashing piece.

Brandenburg Concerto No.3 is arranged for three groups of strings, each of which is divided in turn into three parts. The majestic first movement, with its contending melodic forces and the occasional emergence of sombre harmonies in the minor, is full of drama. Bach dispensed with the customary slow second movement. Simple cadences of only two chords provide the performers with an opportunity to improvise a cadenza. The breath-taking Finale sounds like a wild chase among the nine string parts.

The title page of the autograph score of the Brandenburg Concertos and Bach's dedication (according to the New Bach Reader) reads as follows Six Concertos with several instruments dedicated to His Royal Highness, Monsieur Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg &c. &c. &c, by His very humble and very obedient servant Johann Sebastian Bach, Capellmeister of His Most Serene Highness, the Reigning Prince of Anhalt-Cöthen.

Your Royal Highness,

As I had a couple of years ago the pleasure of appearing before Your Royal Highness, by virtue of Your Highness's commands, and as I noticed then that Your Highness took some pleasure in the small talents that Heaven has given me for Music, and as in taking leave of Your Royal Highness, Your

*Highness deigned to honor me with the command to send Your Highness some pieces of my composition: I have then in accordance with Your Highness's most gracious orders taken the liberty of rendering my most humble duty to Your Royal Highness with the present concertos, which I have adapted to several instruments; begging Your Highness most humbly not to judge their imperfection with the rigor and fine and delicate taste that the whole world knows Your Highness has for musical pieces; but rather to infer from them in benign consideration the profound respect and the most humble obedience that I try to show Your Highness therewith. For the rest, Sir, I beg your Royal Highness very humbly to have the goodness to continue Your Highness's gracious favor toward me, and to be assured that nothing is so close to my heart as the wish that I may be employed on occasions more worthy of Your Royal Highness and of Your Highness's service – I, who without an equal in zeal am, Sire, Your Royal Highness's most humble and obedient servant
Cöthen, March 24, 1721 JEAN SEBASTIAN BACH*

Although Brandenburg Concertos No.4 and 5 still owe a lot to the concerto grosso, in each of these works one instrument takes the lead as soloist. In No.4 a concertino of violin and two recorders is set against the strings. The second movement, with the violin pre-eminent, has an unmistakable concertante character.

Technically, the **Brandenburg Concerto No.5** is a concerto grosso with three soloists: flute, violin and harpsichord. It is obvious however, from Bach's treatment of the three solo instruments, that he was thinking in terms of the keyboard concerto. Not only is there a brilliant harpsichord cadenza of no less than 65 bars towards the end of the first movement, but throughout this Allegro and in the Finale too, the harpsichord emerges as the most prominent of the three soloists. The humble

harpsichord, whose role in ensembles had mostly been that of supporting other instruments, assumes the proud role of leader. Obviously this work was from the outset intended for the harpsichord and must be considered as the first original clavier concerto ever written. Probably Bach, who played the part himself, was inspired to compose it by the exquisite harpsichord he had bought in 1719 for his Prince in Berlin. The thrilling and dramatic first movement is followed by a melancholic 'Affettuoso', played by the three solo instruments only. The Finale has a completely different mood, shaking off the strong introspection of the first and second movement. Elements of the fugue, concerto, gigue and da capo aria have been brought together here in a skilful combination. A sense of bucolic humour prevails in this lightweight gigue-like piece.

Brandenburg Concerto No.6 has the most unusual and thinnest scoring of the set, written for two violas, two viole da gamba, cello and continuo. One of the gamba parts may have been intended for Prince Leopold, an enthusiastic amateur on the instrument, because this part offers virtually no technical difficulties. Bach himself most likely played the first viola part. After a brilliant first movement full of polyphonic intricacies the Adagio omits the viole da gamba and gives an expressive and nostalgic melody to the violas. The finale has the same optimistic mood and rhythmic drive as the first movement.

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Violin Concertos

Johann Sebastian Bach grew up with the violin; hearing his father play the instrument was his first musical experience, and it was as a violinist of the Weimar Hofkapelle that he gained his first public appointment. This explains why he wrote a sizeable number of solo and ensemble pieces for this instrument, including several concertos for solo violin, strings and continuo, two of which (BWV 1041 and 1042) have survived in their original shape.

For these works Bach chose a musical form which exerted a great fascination on all Baroque composers: the Italian concerto as established by Antonio Vivaldi in

the early 18th century. Vivaldi introduced the three-movement solo concerto with its regular alternation of ritornelli for full orchestra and solo passages, the musical proceedings following a relatively fixed harmonious pattern: the ritornello keeps the whole structure together, with the motivic material being presented in a different key each time it recurs, and the modulations take place in the solo sections which give the soloist wide scope for virtuoso display. It was mainly during his Weimar period that Bach took a profound interest in this type of concerto, arranging seven of Vivaldi's violin concertos for the keyboard. In fact, he did not just retain the original form, but modified it considerably. For example, he relieved the sharp contrast between static ritornello passages and dynamic solo episodes by linking the two through interconnecting thematic work. Bach added richness to the musical texture, turning the concerto into a space for complex polyphonic structures. Yet he remained true to the basic concept of opposing musical forces.

The two violin concertos, **BWV1041** in A minor and **BWV1042** in E (early examples of Bach's contribution to the genre), were presumably written around 1720. At that time Bach held the post of Director of Princely Chamber Music at Cöthen. He felt so comfortable at the court of the music-loving Prince Leopold that he stated: 'I may well stay here for the rest of my life'. As a kapellmeister he was mainly entrusted with the composition and performance of secular chamber and orchestral music, including the Brandenburg Concertos and the Well-Tempered Clavier.

The two Violin Concertos in A minor and E major provide direct evidence of the way in which Bach expanded and upgraded the concerto form. The solo violin is contrasted with a group made up of two violins, viola and continuo, and in both works the sequence of movements follows the same pattern: fast-slow-fast. While the A minor concerto's first movement is still largely indebted to the model of the Italian concerto in formal terms, in terms of thematic development the movement is almost chamber-like in character; Bach derives virtually the entire melodic material of the first movement from the germinal idea of the first four bars, and here the orchestra states the energetic opening motive which the soloist immediately sets out to vary and elaborate. Tutti and solo episodes ensue in rapid succession, with both sides

participating in the process of thematic development but with the solo violin still given sufficient scope for virtuoso playfulness.

The slow movements of both concertos, meanwhile, are testimony to Bach's powers of lyrical expression. At first we hear the elegiac cantilenas of the solo violin over an ostinato bass theme in the relative key, there ensuing a dialogue between the outer parts which respond to each other in echo-like fashion, moving away and drawing closer again. The theme of the last movement of the A minor concerto may be seen as a variation of the opening motif in the first movement, which means that the motivic connections are not confined to individual movements. For the final movement Bach chooses the popular and lively form of the Gigue, which brings the concerto to a virtuosic and exuberant conclusion.

BWV1042 is similar in design, but its lighter and more brilliant flavour puts it nearer to the Brandenburg Concertos. Here again, Bach makes full use of the potential inherent in his germinal motive – an ascending E major triad – which he then subjects to intensive development in both the tutti and solo episodes. A deeply expressive Adagio is followed by the final movement where five unchanged tutti sections and four solo passages alternate in a simple rondo pattern.

Bach wrote further concertos for solo violin, but sadly the original material has been lost. However, as scholars discovered early on, virtually all his concertos for harpsichord are arrangements of earlier instrumental concertos. The harpsichord concertos **BWV1052** and **BWV1056** contain numerous figures clearly written with the technical resources of the violin in mind. It is quite obvious that Bach used violin concertos, presumably from his Weimar period, as a basis, simply transforming the violin part into the upper part of his harpsichord writing, and indeed the autograph scores of the arrangements make it possible to reconstruct the original form of the concertos. Whether the original concertos are really from Bach's pen, however, has again become a matter of controversy in recent years.

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Translated by Bernd Zöllner

Oboe Concertos

The numerous parts for oboe solo in Bach's cantatas, oratorios, masses and concertos clearly indicate that he admired the instrument. Of the 200 or so cantatas that have survived, most feature a recitative, aria or sinfonia with magnificent soli for oboe, oboe d'amore or oboe da caccia.

J.S. Bach's brother, Johann Jacob Bach (1682–1722) was himself an oboist. When their father died in 1695, both musicians came to live with their elder brother Johann Christoph (1671–1721) – a pupil of Johann Pachelbel – and it is possible that some of the oboe solos Johann Sebastian composed were specifically written for Johann Jacob.

Furthermore, this instrument was developed in Leipzig, where Bach served as Kapellmeister from 1723 onwards. He was therefore in regular contact with talented oboists, such as Caspar Gleditsch, who performed in his weekly church cantatas. In the early 18th century, the oboe d'amore, which Bach used in his cantata *Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn* BWV23, appeared in this very town.

Keen to develop secular German music, Prince Leopold may have commissioned from Bach concertos for various melodic instruments, hiring him to serve as Kapellmeister of the Köthen court in 1717. Even though these works – which no doubt included a series of oboe concertos – have since disappeared, the composer supposedly adapted some of them for the students of the Collegium Musicum, transforming the original compositions into harpsichord concertos (from which the oboe concertos are now performed on a reconstructed or arranged basis). Indeed, it should be noted here that Bach was in the habit of transcribing his own concertos, also recycling their material for use in his cantatas. In 1729 he had taken over the directorship of the Collegium Musicum, started by Telemann and which required instrumental music for its regular performances. Thus it is probable that the original manuscripts of the harpsichord concertos date back to the late 1730s.

The **Concerto in F major BWV1053** is based on Harpsichord Concerto No.2 in E major BWV1053, itself descended from an older score.

The first movement's theme has been integrated into the cantata *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben* BWV169 (1726) as a sinfonia for obbligato organ and orchestra

(No.1). All oboe concerto scores hitherto edited are based on this work rather than the harpsichord version; through our wish to highlight both variants of this movement, we used the score of the more ornamented harpsichord version for the *da capo*.

The second movement has been reworked as an aria for alto, obbligato organ and orchestra in the same cantata (No.5: 'Stirb in mir, Welt'). The oboe is better suited to playing the organ part (right hand) than the concerto's solo harpsichord part, whose virtuosity only fits this instrument.

The Sinfonia (No.1) for obbligato organ and orchestra from the cantata *Ich geh' und suche mit Verlangen* BWV49 (1726) is based on the third movement. In our recording, we use the Sinfonia's score until the da capo (thus following the first movement's pattern), at which point we switch to a variant inspired by the harpsichord concerto.

Concerto in A major BWV1055. The original manuscript of the harpsichord concerto is the only one left intact. Its tessitura, tonality and ornamental style, however, would seem to indicate that Bach originally composed it for oboe d'amore – its starting note, for example, is an 'a', the lowest note on the oboe d'amore at that time. Nowadays the concerto is performed more frequently on this instrument.

With regard to the many descending arpeggios played by the solo instrument in the first movement of the harpsichord concerto, we decided not to carry these over to the oboe d'amore part in the arrangement, but to instead entrust these sequences to the first violin rather than to the harpsichord (basso continuo) in order to draw even more attention to them. Indeed, these patterns are important because they envelop the basic musical line of the violins along the entire movement. The left-hand part of the solo harpsichord has also been somewhat adapted in various passages, so that it is better suited to the string writing.

Concerto in G minor BWV1056 is based on Harpsichord Concerto No.5 in F minor BWV1056. The original version, now lost, was most certainly intended for the violin. It has been reconstructed many times and easily adapts to the oboe.

The Adagio of the harpsichord concerto can be found – transposed into F major

– in the Sinfonia for oboe solo (No.1) from the cantata *Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe* BWV156 (1729), a movement that draws particular attention to the lyricism of the oboe. For the first movement we have been faithful to the harpsichord version, refusing to omit two very brilliant passages that are often left out in other adaptations or in published scores.

Concerto in G major: the arrangement is based on three arias taken from the Cantatas BWV100, 170 and 30. The bass aria 'Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan, er ist mein Licht und Leben' (What God does, that is done well, he is my light and life), taken from the cantata *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* BWV100 (1732–35), provides the score for the first movement. The second movement is a transcription of the alto aria 'Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust' (Blitheful rest, pleasing delight of the soul), taken from the cantata of the same name: BWV170 (1726). The bass aria 'Gelobet sei Gott, gelobet sein Name' (Praise the Lord, praise His name), excerpted from the cantata *Freue dich, erlöste Schar* BWV30 (1738) (Rejoice, redeemed throng), has been rearranged for the third movement. Because of the oboe's natural vocal qualities, no melodic line modification was required during the transcription.

Even though the manuscript copies of the **Concerto in C minor BWV1060** that have come down to us only pertain to the version for two harpsichords, the original version was undoubtedly intended for oboe and violin, all the more so since the Breitkopf catalogue of 1764 mentions a lost concerto for oboe and violin. Unlike the Concerto in D minor for two violins BWV1043, composed between 1717 and 1723 and which Bach later transformed into a concerto for two harpsichords, this reconstructed concerto features different writing as regards the two solo parts. While the first is naturally suited to the oboe in terms of tessitura, melodic pattern and breathing, the second solo part features an ornamental style characteristic of the violin, and it does not go beyond the 'g', the lowest possible note on this instrument.

Adapting concertos for harpsichord or other instruments, or taking arias from cantatas and transforming them into concertos for oboe or oboe d'amore, enables us to compensate for the loss of original works written for this instrument and contributes to the expansion of its solo repertoire. The huge musical legacy of J.S.

Bach augurs a land of almost endless possibilities that one can explore in order to appreciate the composer's genius even more.

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Translation: Aline Ferber

Concertos for Recorder

The recorder was an everyday instrument for Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). The instrument is featured in all of the principal genres of his oeuvre, and he used it during virtually all of his creative periods. The composer made use of various different types, ranging in size from the alto recorder in f1 to the *flauto piccolo*, or sopranino recorder, sounding an octave higher. The instrument makes an appearance in some ten percent of the more than two hundred surviving cantatas.

An early example is *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* BWV 106, a funeral cantata which is believed to have been composed in 1707, during Bach's tenure as an organist in Mühlhausen. The scoring for *Gott ist mein König* BWV71, written for the newly-inaugurated Mühlhausen town council in 1708, also includes two recorders. Bach's next post was in Weimar (1708-1717), where his duties included the production of church cantatas from 1714 onwards. The first of these was *Himmelskönig sei willkommen* BWV182, which gives the recorder a prominent solo part. In this work, Bach shows how idiomatically he could already compose for the instrument.

As Leopold von Anhalt-Cöthen's master of music (1717–1723), Bach's church music duties were minimal because Leopold was an adherent of Calvinism rather than Lutheranism. His work in Cöthen was dominated largely by instrumental music. It is from this period that the *Six concerts à plusieurs instruments*, better known to us as the six Brandenburg Concertos, have come down to us. In the Second Concerto, a single recorder appears in a solo role next to trumpet, oboe, and violin. The Fourth is a genuine triple concerto for two recorders and violin. Bach would later rework this piece as a harpsichord concerto (BWV1057). He altered the key from G major to F major, and a harpsichord took the place of the original solo violin, but the two recorders remained as part of the scoring.

From 1723 until his death, Bach was employed as cantor at the Leipzig Thomaskirche, and here church music once again became one of his tasks. Most of the church cantatas were written during this period. In *Ihr werdet weinen und heulen* BWV103 from 1725, the composer used a less commonly encountered recorder in d2, a so-called sixth flute, showing that he also had intermediate types of recorder at his disposal. Recorders also had a place in the *Matthäus-Passion*, although their role here was limited to a mere thirty bars of recitative ('O Schmerz').

In other words, recorder players have plenty of opportunity to shine in Bach's music. But what about true recorder concertos? Bach's oeuvre yields not a single one. Only harpsichordists and violinists were awarded solo concertos by the composer. Admittedly, there is a Concerto for oboe d'amore (BWV1055) in the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, which assigns it a place in the official Bach canon. But we must realize, nonetheless, that the assignment of the concerto to this instrument is by no means certain. This piece is the reconstruction of a concerto which only survives in Bach's own transcribed version for harpsichord. And this is not the only example: not all of the violin concertos have come down to us in their original form.

The present recording includes a number of transcriptions for recorder. They are not intended to introduce new hypotheses or to raise questions about existing reconstructions. They are no more and no less than an answer to the question: what might Bach have done, or could he have done, if he had written concertos for the recorder? The musicians of today are in good company with transcriptions of this kind. After all, the composer himself has given us an example. His oeuvre proves that a musical composition was not generally thought of as an autonomous work of art. During his lifetime it was still ordinary procedure to adapt a work for purposes different from those of the first performance.

In the spring of 1729, Bach assumed the directorship of a Collegium musicum that was originally founded by Georg Philipp Telemann. He was to hold this post until ca. 1741, except for the interval between the summer of 1737 and October 1739. This musical club held its meetings in the rooms belonging to Zimmermann's coffee-house. The members were students and middle-class citizens. In his capacity

as musical director, Bach 'composed' a number of concertos for one or more harpsichords; they are actually adaptations of earlier concertos for other instruments, probably composed in Weimar or Cöthen. Bach's autograph scores of the harpsichord concertos BWV 1052–1059 have survived in a single manuscript (*Mus. ms. Bach P 234*), currently located in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.

As we have noted, it has not been definitively established that the **Concerto BWV 1055** was originally a work for oboe d'amore. In fact, it may even be questioned whether the oboists of that time had sufficiently virtuoso capabilities on this relatively new instrument to satisfy the requirements which are set before them in this work. The concerto opens with a festive, buoyant allegro. The second movement is a Siciliano in the relative minor, as the soloist spins out delicate cantilenas supported by a cushion of strings. The third movement, although it bears the reassuring indication *allegro ma non tanto*, is rendered sufficiently virtuosic by the numerous passages in thirty-second notes and rapid triplets. Erik Bosgraaf has transposed the concerto from A major to B-flat major, and performs it on a recorder in b-flat1, a so-called *fourth flute*.

It is equally certain that the **Concerto for harpsichord in E major BWV 1053** was based on a solo concerto for another instrument. Bach also made use of the three movements in two church cantatas. We are familiar with the opening movement as the introductory sinfonia from *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben* BWV169, a solo cantata for alto which received its first performance on October 20, 1726. The central movement of the concerto appears in this cantata as an aria, 'Stirb in mir'. The cantata yields no further information about the original solo instrument: in both the sinfonia and the aria, the organ takes the soloist's part. We encounter the closing movement of BWV 1053 as the introductory sinfonia to the cantata *Ich geh' und suche mit Verlangen* BWV49. This cantata received its first performance on November 3, 1726, only two weeks after BWV169. Here, too, the organ is given the soloist's part. The cantata versions of the three concerto movements are written, one and all, in D major. In his transcription, Erik Bosgraaf has retained this tonality, and he performs the work on a recorder in a¹, a so-called *third flute*.

Because there is a cantata counterpart for each movement of this harpsichord

concerto, it can be clearly seen just how thoroughgoing Bach's procedure could be when he was transcribing a concerto. For example, the solo line was given more ornamentation, and numerous alterations were made in the string parts. For this reason, Erik Bosgraaf has taken the harpsichord concerto as his point of departure, in contrast to transcribers of modern reconstructions who have generally given priority to the cantata versions. The difference is immediately obvious in the opening measures: the full band is heard instead of the lonely single violin that Bach uses to open his Cantata BWV169.

The **Concerto BWV 1059** does not actually exist. The BWV-number was assigned to the nine opening bars of a 'Concerto a Cembalo solo, una Oboe, due Violini, Viola e Cont[ino]'. The Berlin autograph score breaks off at this point, and the remaining staves of the score are empty. Bach clearly began work on a transcription, but did not finish it. Once again, this is an example of reworking: we know this music today as the introductory sinfonia from *Geist und Seele wird verwirret* BWV35, a solo cantata for alto which dates from the autumn of 1726 (September 8). The organ has the solo role here, just as it does in the sinfonia from BWV169. It might be assumed that this movement was originally a solo concerto, probably for oboe, which has not survived. But what did the other two movements look like?

Cantata BWV35 consists of two parts, both of which open with a sinfonia. The second sinfonia, a Presto in the same key of D minor, looks, at first glance, like the logical candidate for the closing fast movement (as is the case in the present recording). However, the unusual form of the movement (aabb) and its texture are more suggestive of an arrangement of a chamber music composition. There is no plausible candidate for the slow central movement in the cantata. In the course of the twentieth century, it has become the custom to use the sinfonia for solo oboe which Bach used to introduce his cantata *Ich stehe mit einem Fuß im Grabe* BWV156. Later still, the composer would also use this piece as the slow movement of the Harpsichord Concerto in F minor BWV1056.

This recording presents something new and different in the form of a **Concerto in G major**, based on arias from Cantatas BWV 215 and 32. From my very first encounter with the congratulatory cantata *Preise dein Glücke, gesegnetes Sachsen* BWV215, I

have always heard the first aria, 'Freilich trotz Augustus' Name', as a vocal version of the opening movement of an instrumental solo concerto. The aria is characterized by a sunny, southern quality and a brisk atmosphere reminiscent of concertos by Tommaso Albinoni, hardly surprising since Bach was demonstrably influenced by this Venetian composer. No other cantata by Bach contains a fast-moving aria with such an explicitly concertante character. The solo tenor is accompanied by strings and two oboi d'amore, doubling the first violin line.

Bach composed this cantata in honor of an occasion when August III, the elector of Saxony and King of Poland, visited Leipzig from October 2 to 6, 1734. Since October 5 was the first anniversary of August's accession, the students of the University of Leipzig decided to arrange an evening concert and torchlight procession for the ruler. His arrival was announced at the last minute, and Bach probably had no more than three days to compose the cantata: it is thus more than likely that the work is partly based on existing material – particularly if we consider its generous dimensions. For this purpose, the composer had a procedure known as 'parody' at his disposal (fitting a new text to existing music).

Our tenor aria was written out entirely in Bach's calligraphic hand: there is no question of its being a composing score. This, indeed, supports the presumption that the composer based his work on pre-existing material. But that, however, does not mean that the original was a vocal composition. It is by no means improbable that an instrumental concerto movement was the basis. There are certainly other examples in Bach's oeuvre of instrumental movements which were later reworked as vocal (BWV 110/1, 146/2, 169/5 (see above)).

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Using this opening fast movement as a point of departure, I went on a search for candidates for a second and third movement. I came almost automatically upon the bass aria 'Rase nur, verwegener Schwarm' as a model for the closing movement. The aria is in 3/8, with a tempo indication of 'presto', a typical setup for an emphatic closing movement. Here, too, the singer is accompanied by strings: this time an oboe doubles the first violin line in a simplified form. Once again, the solo part demands such virtuosity of the singer that

the line could easily be of instrumental origin. Of course, one of the two arias had to be transposed, since the first is in G and the second in A. We decided to put the concerto in the main key of G major.

A prototype for a slow movement cannot be found in Cantata BWV215. For this, I took the E minor opening aria from the cantata *Liebster Jesu mein Verlangen* BWV32. The soprano is accompanied by solo oboe and strings. The solo parts for soprano and oboe resemble the result of a single part having been cut in two. It was a simple matter to (re)combine them into one single line. Erik Bosgraaf performs the concerto on a soprano recorder in c².

The album closes with Bach's *Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier* BWV731, a four-voiced chorale prelude for organ (*pedaliter*). The recorder plays the top voice, and the other lines are divided among the violin, viola, and cello.

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(Translation: David Shapero)