

BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

J. S. Bach

SINFONIAS

from CANTATAS



Takashi Watanabe organ
ENSEMBLE CORDIA · Stefano Veggetti

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750
Sinfonias from Cantatas

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| 1. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV188
"Ich habe meine Zuversicht"
Reconstructed by T. Watanabe
& S. Veggetti 7'44 | 6. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV146
"Wir müssen durch
viel Trübsal"* 7'44 |
| 2. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV174
"Ich liebe den Höchsten
von ganzem Gemüte" 5'32 | 7. Concerto from Cantata BWV35
"Geist und Seele wird
verwirret" – 1st part 5'24 |
| 3. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV169
"Gott soll allein mein
Herze haben" 7'35 | 8. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV35
"Geist und Seele wird
verwirret" – 2nd part, Presto 3'25 |
| 4. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV12
"Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen,
Zagen" – Adagio Assai * 2'44 | 9. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV156
"Ich steh mit einem Fuß im
Grabe" – Adagio * 2'30 |
| 5. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV49
"Ich geh und suche mit
Verlangen" 6'29 | 10. Sinfonia from Cantata BWV52
"Falsche Welt, dir trau
ich nicht" 3'52 |

Takashi Watanabe organ
Ensemble Cordia · Stefano Veggetti cello & conductor

ENSEMBLE CORDIA – Stefano Veggetti
On period instruments

Concert master

Lorenzo Gugole, David Drabek*

Violins

Gabriele Campagna, Veronika Egger, Yukie Yamaguchi, Ayako Matsunaga,
Katarzyna Solecka, Esther Crazzolarà*

Violas

Yoko Tanaka, Ayako Matsunaga, Veronika Egger, Alessandro Lanaro*

Cellos

Franziska Romaner, Stefano Veggetti, Dalibor Pimek

Violone

Marco Lo Cicero, Riccardo Coelati Rama*

Organ & Cembalo

Takashi Watanabe

Theorbo

Maurizio Piantelli

Oboes

Marsh Molly, Michele Antonello, Priska Comploi, Andreas Helm*,
Thomas Meraner*, Chikako Nagatsuka*

Taille

Priska Comploi, Thomas Meraner*

Bassoon

Makiko Kurabayashi, Dana Karmon*

Pearls of Bach

Following an old tradition, in the 17th century German composers used to open their sacred compositions with a short instrumental introduction, which they usually called “sonata” or “sinfonia”. Johann Sebastian Bach, too, adhered to this custom well into his Weimar years (1708–1717). The pieces in his first two Leipzig cantata cycles (1723/24 and 1724/25), on the other hand, as a rule do not contain independent sinfonias and instead begin with extensive choral movements. Hence the Leipzig audiences must have been quite surprised when, beginning in September of 1726, Bach presented a series of cantatas which required only one or two soloists, but in which he put much greater emphasis on the role of the instruments by equipping them with extensive introductory movements. With this, Bach did not intend to revive a long-abandoned tradition, however; rather, this involved establishing completely new artistic principles. These instrumental introductions were magnificent virtuosic sinfonias with concertato instruments that introduced the splendid atmosphere of the court chapel into the world of municipal church music, reminding listeners that their composer was the former kapellmeister of the Prince of Anhalt-Cöthen, a title he still used. Obviously Bach was rather taken with this combination of instrumental movement and cantata, for he continued to experiment with its potentialities for the next several years.

Among Bach scholars it has been established for quite a while that the majority of these introductory sinfonias are movements taken from the pool of instrumental pieces that Bach had composed for the court at Cöthen and that to a large extent are lost today. In two cases this can actually be proved: The introductions of the cantatas BWV52 and BWV174 were taken from the so-called Brandenburg Concertos of 1721. The sinfonias with obbligato organ (BWV188, 169, 49, 146, and 35), on the other hand, probably go back to now-lost solo concertos for melodic instruments. By choosing these models with their implied reminiscence of his time as kapellmeister Bach was able to draw attention to his position as “Director Musices Lipsiensis”, i.e. the municipal kapellmeister of the city of Leipzig.

Their concertato principle provided those of Bach’s cantatas that were composed in the autumn months of 1726 with a certain urbane flair. The organ steps out of its habitual

function as a mere thorough-bass and accompanying instrument and instead presents itself in a gallant garb; at the same time Bach skillfully eschews the danger of secularizing his church music. The success of this experiment is owed to the earnest character and intricate texture of his concertos, which continued to be accepted as appropriate also in a spiritual or liturgical setting. Nevertheless, Bach’s arrangements of concerto movements for obbligato organ were an important intermediate step on the way to the harpsichord concertos of 1738 which established a new and trendsetting instrumental genre.

This recording presents ten such instrumental introductory movements taken from sacred compositions by Bach. These include the six sinfonias from cantatas composed in 1726, three pieces from the so-called Picander cantata cycle of 1728/29, and one sinfonia written already in Weimar.

For the introductions to cantata BWV188 (“Ich habe meine Zuversicht”) and BWV146 (“Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal”) Bach resorted to two movements of an earlier piece which he used again later for his harpsichord concerto BWV1052. The scoring of this earlier piece is unknown, but on the basis of certain figurations in the solo part it is generally assumed to have been a violin concerto. Even though this assumption continues to be widely accepted and indeed there are numerous “reconstructions” of the putative original version, it is quite obvious that Bach must have conceived this piece with a keyboard instrument in mind. In fact not one of the versions for violin presented so far is really convincing and the essential features – among them the repeated intrusion of the solo part into the tutti sections – can only be explained if we assume a keyboard piece as the original version. The first movement, of which the earliest version is transmitted in BWV146, gains its unique character from the ritornello’s succinct main subject, which is presented in unison. Embedded between the repeated ritornello sections, the solo passages are characterized by the unusually dense motivic texture of the accompaniment, in which there is rarely even a single bar without thematic allusion. The third movement of the lost original concerto, which we first come across in BWV188, is similarly intense but replaces the rather dark mood of BWV146/1 by a display of brilliant virtuosity.

The cantata “Ich liebe den Höchsten von ganzem Gemüte” BWV174, which was

first performed on 6 June 1729 in the Leipzig St Thomas Church, probably boasts the most magnificent monumental introduction that a sacred cantata has ever started with. To achieve this unusual effect Bach resorted to the first movement of his third Brandenburg Concerto in G major BWV1048, expanding its already ample orchestration of three violins, three violas and three violoncelli by adding a ripieno group of three strings, two horns, three oboes and bassoon. This adds considerably to the instrumental color to the movement and occasionally highlights melodic and rhythmic structures presented by the nine concertato instruments.

The serenely mellifluous *sinfonia* of the cantata “Gott soll allein mein Herze haben” BWV169, which was first performed on 20 October 1726, apparently belonged to a now-lost solo concerto, the scoring of which is not known. Those who are familiar with Bach’s instrumental works will notice that he used this *sinfonia* again later as the first movement of his harpsichord concerto in E major BWV1053. For this revision, he equipped the solo part with a great number of exquisitely refined additional details, but on the other hand forewent the sonorous interaction between the three oboes and the strings. Like several of the Brandenburg Concertos the movement displays an expansive *da capo* form and thus approaches the shape of an overdimensioned aria. The ingeniously contrived and yet almost playful polyphonic texture establishes orchestra and solo organ as dialogue partners. The latter’s part is so closely intertwined with the delicate texture of the other instruments that in one instance it is even allowed to contribute a single tone of the *ritornello* theme.

The third movement of the lost concerto was used by Bach in his dialogue cantata “Ich geh und suche mit Verlangen” BWV49, which was first performed on 3 November 1726. This *sinfonia* also adopts the form of a large *da capo* aria and with its airy, dance-like timbre and exuberant virtuosity almost conceals the extraordinary artistry with which Bach integrates the solo part with the *ritornello* material.

Both the first and the fifth movement of the two-part cantata “Geist und Seele wird verwirret” BWV35 (first performed on 8 September 1726) are *sinfonias* for obbligato organ and orchestra, for which Bach apparently resorted to the framing movements of a preexisting concerto. And here, too, he had intended at a later point to integrate these

two movements into a harpsichord concerto, yet, for unknown reasons he abandoned his plan after only a few measures. The first *sinfonia* is an unusually complex and intricately-worked concerto movement. The juxtaposition of *tutti* and *solo* typical of the Vivaldian concerto type has been replaced here by a sophisticated play with a continuous reversing of roles and deceptive promises to the listener. Attentive music lovers will notice, for example, the two instances where right in the midst of the orchestra’s dense polyphonic texture the organ cites the theme of the *ritornello*. The second *sinfonia* with its dance-like two-part structure appears comparatively simple, but it, too, contains quite a number of surprises: The entire thematic material is presented by the soloist, who plays without any disruption, while the orchestra is strictly limited to its accompanying function – even in the *ritornello*-like sections.

The *sinfonia* that introduces the cantata “Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe” BWV156 may have originally been the middle movement of a concerto composed already in Bach’s Weimar years. The opening motif of the oboe was probably borrowed from a concerto by Georg Philipp Telemann. Bach here takes up a new type of movement that was first adopted from the operatic arias by Italian composers and then transferred to purely instrumental music. The solo instrument – here the oboe – is assigned an expressive *cantilena*, conveying the impression as if it were reciting a text of intense poignancy at the key moment of a dramatic work. The same movement type is also found in the *sinfonia* of the cantata “Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen” BWV12 composed in 1714.

The program concludes with the *sinfonia* of the cantata “Falsche Welt, dir trau ich nicht” BWV52 that was first performed on 24 November 1726. Also transmitted as the first movement of the first Brandenburg Concerto, this piece juxtaposes three groups of instruments (horns, oboes, and strings) which merge into a multilayered motivic texture.

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Translation: Stephanie Wollny

Takashi Watanabe graduated from the Tokyo College of Music, followed by postgraduate studies in harpsichord at the Tohō Gakuen School of Music. Having studied harpsichord for two years he won the Early Music Prize in Japan. From 2002 he studied harpsichord with Bob van Asperen at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, and in 2005 he moved to Italy, to study historical organ with Lorenzo Ghielmi at the *Scuole Civiche di Milano*, graduating in 2010. As founder of *Ensemble Riecreation d'Arcadia* he won the first prize at “Premio Bonporti 2004” (president of the jury: Gustav Leonhardt) in Rovereto, Italy. The ensemble has since been invited to many early music festivals in Italy, Austria and Slovenia. He is in demand in Europe as a harpsichordist and organist, both as a soloist and as a continuo player and has played with such groups as *Ensemble Cordia*, *Ensemble Zefiro*, *La Divina Armonia*, etc. Between 2003 and 2008 he has been the conductor at the “Handel Festival Japan” in Tokyo, performing various operas and oratorios by Handel, which were received with great praise. In 2012, his first solo album of J.S. Bach's “Goldberg Variations” won several album awards. Since 2013 he has been teaching harpsichord and performance practice at the *Hochschule der Künste Bern*, Switzerland.



The cellist and ensemble director **Stefano Veggetti** over the past years of his musical activity has been unanimously appreciated for his highly accurate, virtuosic playing, outstanding musicianship and understanding of period style, and for a warm, lively and decidedly non-stuffy stage presence which opens up new spaces of expression, persuasiveness and intensity in the experience of musical communication. He obtained his cello diploma from the Conservatory of L'Aquila under David Cole, subsequently winning a scholarship to continue his studies in Philadelphia (USA) with Orlando Cole. Fascinated by the sound of period string instruments, upon his return to Europe he attended masterclasses with Anner Bijlsma, and he has since played as soloist and in chamber music ensembles performing in Europe, Mexico, and the USA with musicians and ensembles such as Anner Bijlsma, l'Archibudelli, Stanley Ritchie, Alfredo Bernardini, Ottavio Dantone, Erich Höbarth, Rachel Podger, Jos van Immerseel. He has appeared on European radio and TV (RAI, ORF, RDF Germany, RDP Antena2 Portugal, RSI.ch), and has recorded for Nuova Era (Italy), Opus 111 (France), Accent, Alpha Classics.

In 2000 he founded his own Ensemble Cordia, with whom he enjoys working on and performing “forgotten” works as well the significant masterpieces of the baroque and classical periods. He has made solo appearances at the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Settimane Musicali di Stresa and Bachfest Leipzig, I Concerti del Quirinale-Rome, Utrecht Early Music Festival. As principal cello with the Belgian period instrument orchestra Anima Eterna Stefano Veggetti has toured extensively throughout Europe and Mexico and taken part in Jos van Immerseel's Schubertiade project recording Schubert Arpeggione sonata and Trout quintet with Midori Seiler and Jos van Immerseel.

Since autumn 2016 he has been the artistic director of Barockakademin Göteborgs Symfoniker, the baroque branch of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra. Teaching occupies an important place in Veggetti's musical activities. For more than a decade he taught baroque cello at the Verona Conservatory and gives various masterclasses across Europe.

In 2000 he founded the Academy of Ancient Music in Bruneck and is still the artistic director. Stefano Veggetti plays the ex-Oblach cello by Nicola Gagliano (1737).

Located at the crossroads between German and Italian cultures, the **Ensemble Cordia**, founded and directed by Stefano Veggetti, brings together musicians from both linguistic regions to its home town Bruneck (South Tyrol) to perform works of the baroque and classical periods.

The use of precious period instruments enables the ensemble to realise its own idea of an “authentic” sound with youthful, fresh performances proposing a highly theatrical musical experience and at the same time unexpected and provocative.

Since its first foreign engagement in the Vienna Konzerthaus, the ensemble has developed a lively international concert schedule working together with renowned soloists and guest artists such as Stanley Ritchie, Alfredo Bernardini, Erich Höbarth, Roberta Invernizzi, Monika Mauch, Christian Hiltz, Gemma Bertagnolli, Rachel Podger and Dorothee Oberlinger all of whom appear as guests on concert and in recording projects. The concert projects juxtapose works by well-known composers (Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi, Boccherini, Haydn) with pieces from rediscovered contemporaries (F. M. Veracini, G. B. Platti, Anton and Paul Wranitzky). Much of this repertoire has been recorded on Brilliant Classics, and the recordings have been met with widespread acclaim from audiences and critics alike, receiving several awards from the international musical press. Guest appearances in leading venues and at important European music festivals have included the Vienna Konzerthaus (Haydn and Boccherini with Erich Höbarth), Bachfest Leipzig (secular Bach cantatas with Hana Blazikova), Rome (Accademia Filarmonica, Concerti del Quirinale), Grenoble (in collaboration with Le musiciens de Louvre), Magdeburger Telemann Festtage, Utrecht Early Music Festival and have been enthusiastically received by both the press and public for their rigorous discipline, energy, musical imagination and artistic persuasiveness.

Concerts by Ensemble Cordia have been broadcast by Deutschlandfunk, RAI, Radio Svizzera Italiana and Ö1 as well as live broadcasts by Ö1 and RAI.



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