# Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782)

## Johann Christian Bach

Johann Christian Bach was born in Leipzig 5 September 1735 and died in London 1 January 1782.

Johann Christian was the most cosmopolitan of all the Bach family, arguably the most versatile and certainly in the eighteenth century the most famous. He must have received a thorough grounding in music under the supervision of his father, Johann Sebastian, in whose house he lived for the first fifteen years of his life. Nearly five years in Berlin under the guardianship of Carl Philip Emanuel broadened his horizons and, above all, brought him into regular contact with opera. A further seven years in Italy exposed him to a multitude of new cultural experiences and laid the foundations of a reputation as an opera composer. This, in turn, took him in 1762 to London, which he found a congenial base for his activities as composer, performer and teacher for the rest of his life. His reputation, fostered by the publication of his works in all the main centres of Europe, brought him invitations to compose for the Mannheim court and the Paris Opera, two of the continent's most important musical institutions. The London public however eventually tired of him and he died in debt at the age of 46 after a period of ill-health, unlamented by the British but mourned by his admirer and friend of nearly 20 years, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

### Six Symphonies, op. 3

Thanks to the efforts of scholars like Jan LaRue and Barry Brook we now know much more about the early history of the symphony than we used to, but the definitive book on the subject has still to be written. Perhaps it never will be written because to research it properly would require the author not only to study the majority of the twenty thousand or so surviving works composed before 1800 but also to make scores of most of them first. It is one of those strange quirks of fate that while scores must have existed, if only the composers' autographs, very few still survive and most of these early symphonies are only preserved in separate orchestral parts. It follows therefore that any comment about the early development of the symphony has to be offered modestly and received as provisional.

Then there is the additional complication of nomenclature. Symphonies in the mid-eighteenth century generally had three short movements, but so also did Italian opera overtures (Sinfonie). There is plenty of evidence – not least because they were published in sets of six specifically for use in concerts – that opera overtures were regularly performed outside the theatre, but not much proof that concert symphonies were used in dramatic performances. However, in archives throughout Europe there are works with no known connection to a dramatic work described as overtures and opera overtures described as symphonies. The distinctions between the two genres later increased, not least when opera overtures began to be written in one movement only, so that confusion was no longer possible. However at the time when Johann Christian Bach issued his collection of six concert works, op. 3, the terms were apparently still interchangeable. The French title page of the first edition describes them as *Simphonies* but in his advertisement for the publication and on the music pages themselves Bach called them overtures.

The advertisement appeared on Wednesday, 3 April 1765 in the London daily newspaper *The Public Advertiser*

*NEW MUSIC*
*This Day are published,*
*Dedicated (by Permission) to His Royal Highness the*

*Duke of YORK*
*SIX new Overtures, in 8 Parts, as*
*they were performed at the Wednesday Subscrip-*
*tion Concert, in Soho-square. Price 75s.*
*Six Italian Duets, for two Voices and a Harpsichord*
*Price 10s. 6d.*
*Both composed by J. C. Bach, Music Master to*
*Her M(a)jesty*
*Printed for the Author, and Sold at his House in*
*King Square Court, Dean-street Soho; and at Mr.*
*Welcker's Music Shop, Gerrard Street, Soho*

The Wednesday Subscription Concert took place in the elegant surroundings of Carlisle House, Soho, a large mansion owned by Mrs Teresa Cornelys (1723–1797), a retired opera singer and former mistress of Casanova, who since 1760 had attempted to turn it into the centre of fashionable London life. Her Thursday evening assemblies consisted of music, card-playing and dancing and ran from seven in the evening to one or two the following morning. In 1764 she had added an annual series of Wednesday evening subscription concerts. These were initially given under the direction of Gioacchino Cocchi (c. 1720–after 1788) but the following year they were taken over by Bach and his friend and colleague, Carl Friedrich Abel (1718–1794), who alternated as director. The subscription was five guineas for ten concerts. This was then a large sum of money and it ensured a certain exclusivity among the patrons. A ladies committee, to whom all potential subscribers had to apply, further guaranteed that even wealthy undesirables were excluded. This exclusivity attracted the cream of London society, including some younger members of the Royal Family.

Prince Edward Augustus, Duke of York (1739–1767), a younger brother of the King and the dedicatee of Bach's Op. 3, was almost certainly one of their number. He was a keen musician and had studied in Italy with the cellist and composer Francesco Zappa, whom he appointed his personal in the year of his death.

The ten concerts began on 23 January 1765 and ended on 27 March. No details of the programmes survive, except that we know from Bach's advertisement that these present symphonies were performed. Whether they were specifically written for the series is perhaps debatable, given the existence of so many manuscript copies in Italian collections.

### Symphony in D major, op. 3, no. 1 (C 1)

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

The *allegro con spirito* begins boldy with a scale of D major in unison, which is briefly developed in the bass but is never heard again. A completely new idea then emerges, two long notes each over an accompaniment of eight short ones. The two-note motive rises from the second violins to the first and then to the oboes. While the oboes have it, the first violins take up a new motive. This is soon expanded to include a descending scale, which itself has already been anticipated a bar earlier by a rising scale in the bass. All this technical ingenuity has occupied little more than 20 bars and shows very clearly how carefully composed were these concert works. Unlike in some of the opera overtures, there is no noise-making for its own sake. Every note counts. The *andante* (in G major for strings alone) is firmly rooted in the melody of the first violins, doubled in thirds or sixths by the seconds for added intensity at the end of sections. Like the *allegro con spirito*, the presto begins with a unison

motive but here it permeates the entire movement (it is used especially prominently in the bass). The whole movement has the character of a perpetuum mobile.

### Symphony in C major, op. 3, no. 2 (C 2)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The opening *allegro* is in triple time (the first of only two in the set) and comforms most closely of any movement in the six symphonies to the classical sonata form described in the text books. There is a clearly defined "second subject" area and the unison motive heard at the opening, but transformed into the minor, is the starting point for a mini "development" section. The *andante* (in C minor for strings alone) offers mixture of pathos and consolation. The *allegro assai* bears a close family resemblance to the finales of Bach's three comic opera overtures, but is longer and more finely detailed.

### Symphony in E flat major, op. 3, no. 3 (C 3)

*1. Allegro di molto*
*2. Andantino*
*3. Allegro*

The *allegro di molto* begins in perhaps the most disappointing manner of any first movement in the set and Bach compounds this initial disappointment by repeating the opening material twenty bars into the movement. Yet on this apparently characterless material, also played twice in the "development", he constructs a highly satisfactory movement. One ingredient contributing to this success is to end the first and second subject groups in bath exposition and development with related material (based on a melody in the bass). Another is to introduce some completely new material just before the reprise. Neither is a frequently-used or risk-free device, but here, in the hands of a composer of real talent, they are deployed to brilliant effect. In common with the best of his contemporaries, Bach also had the ability to compose heart-rending music in a major key. The *andantino* (where the strings are joined by two flutes) is a fine example of the fruits of this talent. The jolly *allegro*, on the other hand, has the character of an opera buffa overture finale, including one very operatic crescendo.

### Symphony in B flat major, op. 3, no. 4 (C 4)

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante, sempre piano*
*3. Tempo di menuetto, più tosto Allegro*

The *allegro con spirito* is a beautiful example of Bach's ability to build a movement of classical proportions, using the principles of phrase-answer-contrast and, above all, repetition. The *andante* is dominated by an "unending" melody in the first violins. This is itself based on a multiplicity of melodic variations within the general rhythmic framework of weak-strong-weak, with the strong accent coming on the first beat of the bar. Just when this pattern might be threatening to become monotonous, Bach introduces phrases starting on the first beat of the bar. There are Minuet-Finales in three of Haydn's symphonies but none in Mozart's. They also occur three times in Bach's (and a great deal more often in his *Simphonies Concertantes*). The minuet here is an elegantly detailed movement of ample proportions. There is no second minuet or Trio.

### Symphony in F major, op. 3, no. 5 (C 5)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The first violins, piano, syncopated and over a running bass, begin the *allegro* in a highly original way. A new instrumental section joins in with every new bar and shortly after the whole orchestra is playing there is a general crescendo. There can be few openings like it in the symphonic music of the time. Paradoxically, this originality is off-set against passages later in the movement whose harmonic scheme would not be out of place in Corelli. In the *andante* (for strings alone) the two sets of violins, sometimes in thirds or sixths and sometimes in unison, weave a sensuous melody. The finale is a genial buffo movement, with just a touch of academicism in the second half.

### Symphony in G major, op. 3, no. 6 (C 6)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3.Allegro assai*

Like the third work in this set, this symphony begins unpromisingly: five short notes in the violins, which are then silent until the third bar, followed by a descending scalic figure in the lower strings. Yet in both symphonies Bach produces a fine movement. This one is notable for the vigorous development of these two basic ideas in the second half of the movement. Bach provides more than adequate contrast to such characteristic figuration with somewhat different "second subject" material over a perpetuum mobile accompaniment in triplets in the second violins. The *andante* (for strings alone) is in Bach's special key of G minor and, as usual, that stimulates him to produce a movement which belies his reputation as a composer of "superficial" music. The finale sounds as though it belongs in the theatre and, in fact, the motive with which it begins and the use to which it is put bears a remarkable likeness to the last movement of the overture to his third opera, *Alessandro nell'Indie* (Naples, 1762).

## Six Symphonies, Hummel op. 6

Johann Christian Bach had his own chronological system of opus numbers for the works he published in London under the protection of a Royal Licence and Privilege granted to him for fourteen years on 13 December 1763. However, Bach chose not to issue all his music in London and his publishers in Paris, Amsterdam, Vienna and elsewhere all had numbering systems of their own. The result was (and is) needless duplication and complication. Bach's own opus 6, for example, was a set of Italian canzonets for two sopranos and continuo, which he brought out in 1767. Towards the end of 1769 the Parisian publisher Huberty gave the some number to a set of six symphonies and, when he sold out and moved to Vienna, these were re-issued by his successors, still with the same number. For some obscure reason, when in 1777 Huberty issued a Viennese edition of Bach's first set of keyboard sonatas (which Bach himself called opus 5) he also called them opus 6. Meanwhile, 1770, the important Amsterdam publisher, Johann Julius Hummel, had brought out his own Johann Christian Bach, opus 6, a set of six symphonies only four of which are the same works as were published in Paris. To avoid further confusion, it is clear that the works on this disc need to be referred to as Six Symphonies, Hummel opus 6.

Hummel advertised his publication in the Dutch newspaper, s'Gravenhaegse courant, on 16 November 1770 but some of the symphonies at least seem to have been composed several years earlier. The fourth and fifth were advertised in 1766 in the first supplement to the Breitkopf thematic catalogue and the third in 1767 in the second supplement. Moreover, even earlier manuscript copies of

two of the symphonies exist in Benedictine abbeys in Austria: a copy of the third dated 1762 (and attributed to C. P. E. Bach) is at Gottweig and a manuscript of the first dated 1764 is at Kremsmünster.

All six symphonies are in three short movements, fast-slow-fast.

### Symphony in G major, Hummel op. 6, no. 1 (C 7a)

*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The *allegro con brio* is a very restless movement, both in its use of key and thematic material. It is pitched in its main key for rather less than half its duration and only for three bars after the Exposition and before the Recapitulation There ore three quite substantial sections which appear once and then take no further part in the movement. The second of these sections is especially interesting because it offers a rare example in works of this period of the second violins taking over the main melodic role from the firsts, while they and the violas merely provide an accompaniment of repeated notes. Every one of these six symphonies has a slow movement marked *andante*. They are, nevertheless, all different in character. The movement here is for strings alone and is dominated by the two violins, gently going about their business in unison, sixths and thirds with a little assistance from time to time in propelling the momentum forward from the lower strings. The *allegro assai* has the basic character of a 3/8 finale of a contemporary opera overture, but the predominantly cheerful tone is counterbalanced by a significant section in the minor mode in the middle.

### Symphony in D major, Hummel op. 6, no. 2 (C 8)

*1. Allegro spiritoso*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro spiritoso*

The first of the two movements marked *allegro spiritoso* is perhaps the least characteristic example of Bach's style in all the set. It shares a lack of melodic distinction with a number of the manuscript symphonies attributed to Bach. Yet it is not without charm. It makes its effect through a skilful use of phrase repetition, the crescendo and appealing textures, often based on two violas. The *andante* too is built on patterns, but the range of textures is widened by the use of flutes (replacing the oboes of the outer movements) and horns and a more prominent role for the horns. The viola makes a rare appearance as a melody instrument in bar 10. There is also attractive use of sequential phrases towards the end of each half of the movement. The last movement is another cheerful 3/8 finale, but, with a prominent passage for the horns just before the return of the opening material, perhaps more redolent of the hunting field than the theatre.

### Symphony in E flat major, Hummel op. 6, no. 3 (C 9)

*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The *allegro con brio* is bursting with energy. Even those parts where a certain amount of repose might be expected are underpinned by busy accompaniments. As in both other movements in this symphony, the recapitulation of the first part is rather shorter than the original, with some seemingly important material (like the crescendo) omitted. The *andante*, here for strings alone and in C minor, is full of characteristic Bachian features, especially the "scotch snap". Surprisingly the "second subject" in the relative major (beginning at bar 11) never returns in the second part of the movement. But then the opening material never has a proper recapitulation in the tonic key. The vitality and good humour

of the first movement returns in the finale. The beginning of the section which I suppose could be called the second subject has a rhythmically leasing passage of four and a half bars, which on repetition becomes even more puzzling because nothing is in the same part of the bar as before. Continuing the trend for truncated recapitulations noted in the first two movements, the opening material never returns in its original form and key in the second half of the movement. Instead, transposed into C minor, it sounds like a mini-development section and provides excellent contrast to the cheerful mood of the rest of the movement.

**Symphony in B flat major, Hummel op. 6, no. 4 (C 10)**

*1. Allegro di molto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

The first movement has the feeling of an opera overture. The material Bach uses is not very distinguished, but yet again by sheer technical skill (not least the careful balancing of phrase and answer) and energy he produces a movement which convinces. The *andante* (in E flat major and for two flutes and strings) is a seemingly simple binary movement made more sophisticated not just by the plaintive tones of the flutes but also by the use of a seven-bar main theme and a rather nice coda at the end. The finale, in total contrast, is a simple, almost brusque, rondo with two short episodes, recalling Bach's early opera overtures.

**Symphony in E flat major, Hummel op. 6, no. 5 (C 11)**

*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

If the large number of manuscripts of this work to be found in libraries throughout Europe is any guide, this must have been one of Bach's most popular symphonies, and rightly so. The opening of the *Allegro con brio* perhaps typifies this appeal: it is charming yet sufficiently original to interest the connoisseur. The movement begins with a four-bar theme in unison, not peremptory in tone but inviting. A crescendo from piano takes us to a forte, which is immediately interrupted by four-bar duet (marked piano) for the violins. The forte then resumes until the end of the first subject. You can hear how much more conventional the whole sequence would sound without the interruption from the two violins when it reappears in the recapitulation. Yet just as the entire movement is drawing to a close, there is the duet again, out of its original context, surprising and delighting. There are plenty more surprises in the movement to: the charming "second subject" vanishes after its first appearance and the "development" begins with the note you are least expecting. The *andante* in C minor is built almost entirely on the repetition of two short motives; one for the opening minor-key section and the other for the major-key section which follows. In the second half of the movement when the music moves from major to minor these motives are exchanged. The serious mood of this movement is underpinned by divided violas, oboes and a very sparing use of horns. The finale could not be in greater contrast: a jolly movement in 3/8 time with only the slightest hint of formal or harmonic sophistication.

**Symphony in G minor, Hummel op. 6, no. 6 (C 12)**

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante più tosto adagio*
*3. Allegro motto*

In the eighteenth century minor key symphonies were extremely rare. Jan LaRue in his monumental, A Catalogue of 18th-Century Symphonies, lists the opening themes of 16 558 symphonic works. Of these, 15 647, over 94 %, are in major keys. The remaining 911 are mostly in D

minor (the most common minor key), C minor or G minor. LaRue's otherwise invaluable book however does not show how many of these 911 works have all their movements in minor keys. I would guess that extremely few of them do. Neither of Mozart's qualifies nor do any of Joseph Haydn's nine, not even the extremely severe F minor symphony No. 49. *La Passione*, the trio of which is in F major. So Johann Christian Bach's only minor-key symphony, admittedly in three rather than four movements, is probably one of an extremely rare species.

As usual, Bach has one or two surprises for his more attentive listeners. In the first movement, for example, the very first bar, which in context sounds an absolutely integral part of the movements is never heard again. In contrast, the rhythmic motive in bar 2 and ideas in bars 4–7 are deployed almost to excess. But the character of the *andante*, for strings alone and the third slow movement in C minor in this set of symphonies, undoubtedly derives from its first two bars. If evidence is still needed that Johann Christian Bach could compose music which is not superficial this movement is surely it! The strong finale is worthy of the two earlier movements, with much interplay between the higher and the lower instruments and a highly original ending.

## Six Symphonies, Markordt op. 8

We know very little about the Amsterdam music publisher, S. Markordt, except that he began the business in about 1770 and his widow sold it to his more prominent and enterprising local rival, J. J. Hummel, in 1808. However, in his earliest years (and certainly by 1773) Markordt issued six symphonies by Johann Christian Bach, which he called Op. 8, the number Bach himself allocated to a set of quartets. Three of the symphonies had already been published in 1770 by Hummel and remainder had been advertised in either the 1766 or the 1767 supplement to Breitkopf's thematic catalogue. Markordt's versions of the three symphonies previously published by Hummel are not exactly the same, but are insufficiently different to justify their separate recording here.

### Symphony in G major, Markordt op. 8, no. 2 (C 13)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto assai*

A set of orchestral parts of this symphony in the monastery library at Kremsmünster in Austria is dated 1764, but the work was probably quite a number of years old when it was copied. The *allegro* is the simplest of movements. The first 29 bars, which comprise the first subject area, are repeated note for note in the recapitulation. The second subject area too is repeated almost as literally, except for the customary difference of key. There is no development as such, just a few bars of dialogue between the oboes and the full orchestra and a repeated figure, getting ever higher, which leads to the recapitulation. The character of the *andante* is determined by the use of two viola parts, which play a moto perpetuo over (mostly) a pizzicato bass line. Above this the violins exercise their ingenuity in exploiting a simple rhythmic figure. Just when this threatens to be outstaying its welcome, Bach introduces new material, only to return to his original figure very soon afterwards. The *presto assai* is one of those tiny movements usually found as the finale in the opera overtures of the time. This one is not quite as jolly as most since about a quarter is given over to an episode in the minor key.

### Symphony in D major, Markordt op. 8, no. 3 (C 14)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

I would not be surprised if this little symphony was eventually found to have been the overture to an opera, perhaps even a comic opera, since it has all the characteristics of one. The *allegro assai* begins with a loud, attention-grabbing arpeggio, followed by an immediate drop in dynamics to piano, which turns out to be the beginning of a long crescendo, during which the violins rise through two octaves. There is much repetition of phrases. In fact the entire second subject area, such as it is, is built in that fashion. There is no development, just a brief episode (touching on the minor at the end) before we crash into the recapitulation. This is much shorter than the exposition, but contains an entirely new section (and a nasty surprise for the second violins – a virtuoso passage in semiquavers). The *andante* is a limpid movement for strings, much in the style of the overture to Gli uccellotori. The *Presto* has so strong a feeling of the theatre about it that you almost feel a sense of deprivation when it is not followed by a chord on the harpsichord and a singer beginning the first scene of act one!

### Symphony in F major, Markordt op. 8, no. 4 (C 15)

*1. Allegro molto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Tempo di Menuetto*

This by for the most sophisticated of the three Markordt symphonies recorded here. The first movement begins conventionally enough with three repeated chords, but there are many unexpected delights to follow. The most striking is the fusion of the development and the recapitulation. Just before the half-way mark the material of the opening returns in the dominant key. This is followed by a vigorous new section passing through D minor (and by sequential repetition) to C major. A crescendo prepares the ear for the expected return of the opening material of the movement, marking the beginning of the conventional recapitulation. What Bach actually gives us – quite a shock – is the second subject area instead. However, as if to restore the balance of the movement, and perhaps made amends for shocking us, he brings back much of the first subject material (but without the three chords) to round off the movement. The *andante* is another patterned movement, in principle much the some as the slow movement of the first symphony on this CD. The Minuet and Trio finale is one of the most attractive movements in all of Bach's orchestral music, tuneful and beautifully composed. Note in particular the Trio in the minor key (for oboes, violins and bass only) and the reprise of the minuet, not the conventional literal repeat, but a recomposed version to provide a stronger conclusion to the work.

### Symphony in C major, Venier no. 46 (C 16a)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andantino*
*3. Allegro assai*

The music publisher Jean Baptiste Venier, who was active from about 1755 until 1784, brought much foreign instrumental to the Parisian public. He seems to have had very good contacts around Europe, since he was the first to publish a symphony by Joseph Haydn (Hob, I:2) and also managed to issue the overture to Johann Christian Bach's opera *Artaserse* before the first performance. In all he published ten works by Bach, three opera overtures, a set of symphonies (also called op. 8) of which no copy has yet come to light and the work recorded here for the first time. Venier published it in the late 1770s as *Simphonie Périodique No. 46*, but the style clearly dates it somewhat earlier, possibly as early as the early 1760s. The first movement is characterised by its unison opening and its profligate use of musical ideas. There is no second subject area worth talking about. What initially appears to be the second subject turns out in fact to be the beginning of a passage leading to the recapitulation. The *andante* is a gently flowing movement for strings alone, with some delightful harmonic twists and

some “Mozartian” scoring of the violins in octaves. The finale is coloured much of the time by the second violin line in triplets, contrasting with the insistently duple character of the other parts. There is a central episode in the minor of an entirely contrasting nature, which is followed by a literal repeat of the opening section.

## Symphony in C major, Venier no. 46

(alternative)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante con espressione*
*3. Allegro*

The first movement is the non-identical twin of Venier’s *Simphonie Périodique No. 46*, but the second and third movements are different. A similar relationship exists between the overtures to the *Cantata a tre voci* (Birthday Cantata) and *Il tutore e la pupilla*.

Here there is no documentary evidence to prove which version came first, but the one we have here seems to be the less mature work. Certainly the first movement is technically less accomplished. The *andante* is fairly typical of Bach’s dreamy slow movements for strings alone. The finale once again is of the opera buffa type.

## Symphony in F major (in manuscript)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

In Johann Christian Bach’s time much the most important centres of music publishing were London, Amsterdam and Paris. Music was, of course, printed in other major cities but less extensively. However, in many places, notably Italy, music still circulated in manuscript copies. Then as now, music by a famous composer found a more ready sale than that of lesser figures, so copyists regularly attributed works by minor composers to major. That is why there are more spurious symphonies attributed to Johann Christian Bach (not to mention Joseph Haydn) than authentic. Thanks to the pioneering efforts of scholars like Jan LaRue, H. C. Robbins London and Barry Brook it is now possible to identify the real composers of most of these works. Some of the remainder are of such poor quality as to make authentication impossible. Just a few might be genuine, including this delightful little symphony recorded here for the first time. All its manuscript sources are in Italy or Switzerland in libraries with lots of authentic works. The style suggests a date of around 1760.

The first movement begins conventionally enough with a few loud notes in unison followed by a quiet harmonised passage, but the tone of the movement becomes darker as it progresses. Instead of the second subject in the dominant major key for which the ear has been prepared, we have an agitated passage in the dominant minor.

This restless tone remains in the development, which is here a clearly defined section, and even persists in the recapitulation, where the second subject returns once again in the minor. The unison motive we heard at the very beginning of the movement returns towards the end to initiate a coda, placed there (as it were) to convince us that the movement really was in the major key after all. The *andante*, for flutes and strings, is perhaps the most characteristically Bachian movement of the three. The *presto* is yet another cheerful opera buffa overture finale, with only the slightest hint of more serious concerns.

## Symphony in G major, Huberty op. 6, no. 1

*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Andantino*
*3. Tempo di Minuetto*
*4. Allegro assai*

Music copyists were by no means the only unscrupulous people in the eighteenth-century music business, publishers regularly issued works without the composer's permission, often brought out garbled editions and frequently attributed work of lesser men to greater. *Supplement IV* (1769) of the Breitkopf thematic catalogue lists six symphonies by Johann Christian Bach published in Paris as op. 6. The edition, by Huberty, contains the overture to *Il tutore e la pupillo*, an extraordinary (and undoubtedly spurious) symphony in five movements and four of the works later published by Hummel as op. 6. The first symphonies in the Huberty and Hummel collections are superficially the same, but a closer inspection reveals important differences. The three movements, which in Hummel have no repeated sections, are in Huberty all divided into two sections with repeat marks, thus doubling the length of the work. (In this recording only the first sections are actually repeated). In the first and second movements there are also extra bars, the largest number before the recapitulation in the first movement. However the most obvious difference in the Huberty edition is the added minuet and trio. No original symphony by Johann Christian Bach has four movements and this minuet is clearly an interpolation by an unknown composer. We have nonetheless recorded it here, if only as a curiosity. We know from other sources that Bach's own published versions of his works were sometimes revisions of lengthier originals. How Huberty got hold of these versions of the three movements we shall probably never know, but they are almost certainly genuine and obviously earlier than their Hummel equivalents. These variants may not be of earth shattering importance, but a close comparison with the Hummel version will, I am sure, convince you that, when it came to revising his works, Bach's critical faculties were extremely well developed.

## Three Symphonies, Burchard Hummel op. 9/Longman & Broderip op. 21

On 8 March 1773 the Dutch newspaper, s'Gravenhaegse courant, carried an advertisement for three symphonies, op. 9 by Johann Christian Bach. The advertisement had been placed by the local music publisher Burchard Hummel (1731–97), younger brother of the much more famous Amsterdam publisher, Johann Julius (1728–98). At that time the brothers worked very closely together, but why these three symphonies were brought out by Burchard and not Johann Julius (who had already published a large number of Johann Christian's works) and how they came into his possession can only be the object of speculation. Shortly afterwards the London firm of Longman and Lukey – the defendants in Bach's famous lawsuit which established once and for all the principle of musical copyright in Britain – issued their own edition with the music printed from Hummel's plates. The symphonies must have become popular in Britain and remained so for quite a long time because some time during the decade after Bach's death in 1782 Longman and Broderip, the successors of Longman and Lukey, produced a third edition as op. 21, which they printed from expensive newly-engraved plates.

One of the factors contributing to the popularity of these symphonies – apart from their obvious charm – may have been their practical and economical scoring. Flutes, bassoons and even clarinets may have been available in the great metropolitan centres of Europe, but in the vast majority of musical establishments throughout the continent an orchestra of strings with a pair each of oboes and horns remained the norm from the 1760s to the French Revolution. However, my researches over the post few years have revealed that these and other Johann Christian Bach symphonies and overtures hitherto accepted as the genuine article are in fact arrangements of more fully and exotically scored

originals. To make the point more clearly, we have taken this opportunity to record the works in both forms.

**Symphony in B flat major, op. 9/21, no. 1 (C 17b)**

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

The opening of the *allegro con spirito* and indeed much of the rest of the movement suggest that this may originally hove been on opera overture, possibly to *La finta sposo* of April 1763, the only opera directed by Bach during his single season as music director of the King's Theatre in London yet to be identified. The structure of the movement nonetheless is a very clearly defined sonata form. The loud chords of the beginning return to announce the start of both a rudimentary development section and the arrival of the recapitulation. The "second subject" (in the oboes) is repeated in text-book fashion in the recapitulation. The slow movement is built on three statements of a sensuous sixteen-bar melody, the second half being more fully orchestrated than the first, with two episodes and a coda. The *presto* finale – in sonata form – is evidence in the case against the work having originally been an opera overture: it is longer and much better composed than the vast majority of them.

**Symphony in E flat major, op. 9/21, no. 2 (C 18b)**

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Tempo di Menuetto*

Johann Christian Bach's main Parisian music publisher, Jean-Georges Sieber, published a fourth edition of this work in about 1775 in a set of three symphonies also containing works by François-Joseph Gossec and Joseph Haydn. In this edition Bach's symphony is given a fourth movement, an *allegro con spirito* in 6/8 time. We have not recorded it here because it is technically well below Johann Christian's normal level of competence and therefore almost certainly spurious. The first of the three authentic movements begins with an orchestrated crescendo from the *piano* opening. The violins get ever higher and first horns and then oboes are added, but it is not until the tenth bar that Bach feels it necessary actually to add the instruction crescendo. Formally the movement is as free as the first symphony was conventional. The second subject, for example, does not return in the recapitulation. Perhaps Bach thought we had heard quite enough of it in the development. The *andante* however is formal simplicity itself: two statements of an eight-bar melody in the first violins over a pizzicato accompaniment, with an episode between and a coda afterwards. But that is to do Bach's ravishing movement about as much justice as describing a stunningly beautiful woman as a female biped. The minuet finale (without Trio) is almost as simply constructed and nearly as sensuously attractive.

**Symphony in B flat major, op. 9/21, no. 3**

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro di molto*

This symphony is much shorter than the other two of op. 9/21 because it is actually an arrangement of the overture to *Zanaida*, Bach's second opera for the King's Theatre, London, which had been performed as long ago as May 1763. It had also been published the following year by the younger Walsh in both its original and a reduced orchestration. The *allegro assai* begins with a somewhat unusual "call to order" for an opera overture. The unison passage which immediately follows plays a major structural role in the whole movement, making its final appearance as the coda. The second subject features the two oboes in canon, the some as in the first movement of the first

symphony. There is no development section as such, but a rather discursive first part to the recapitulation, beginning not quite half way through the movement. The *andante* begins with a simple eight-bar melody, played first by the strings and then repeated (mostly) by the wind. When it is repealed in the middle of the movement, it is only played once, with the wind taking the first half and the full orchestra the second. The remainder of the movement is characterised by similar orchestral exchanges, which (however effective they may be here) are only revealed in their full glory in the original orchestration.

The *allegro di molto*, like many opera overture finales of the time, is over in a minute but more ingeniously composed than most.

## Symphony in E flat major, with clarinets (C 18a)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Tempo di Menuetto*

The modern edition by the pioneering Johann Christian Bach scholar Dr Fritz Stein in the famous Eulenburg series of miniature scores has made the work one of the most accessible to music lovers for over sixty years. It has also been recorded a number of times. However, as for as I know, no conductor, instrumentalist, musicologist, recording producer or writer of programme notes has ever commented of the uncharacteristic nature of the flute/oboe parts. Usually in Johann Christian Bach's works they mostly play the some notes as the first or second violins. Here they are given a much less demanding role, quite uncharacteristic of Bach's writing for them, but entirely consistent with his way of writing for clarinets. All become clear when I come upon an anonymous set of parts once in the Royal Music Collection and now in the British Library in London. There the parts were given to clarinets – and there also was on independent bassoon part. In other words, I had recovered the original version of the lost of the op. 9 symphonies. Although the parts are not in Johann Christian's own handwriting, there can be no doubt of the version's authenticity. The effect of clarinets and bassoons on the scoring is perhaps not as startlingly obvious here as it was in the previous work, but there is undoubted gain (in my view) in their restoration.

## Symphony in B flat major, Sieber 1773 Collection, no. 1 (C 17a)

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

This symphony was placed first in Sieber's Bach-Toeschi-Stamitz collection, the position normally given by composers and publishers in orchestral collections to the work they considered the best. Here we have the first opportunity to hear what we have been missing for all these years. There can be no doubt that presence of clarinets in place of the oboes and a very active bassoon replacing the lower strings in this original version alters the character of the entire work – and for the better. In the first movement the many passages for unaccompanied clarinets and bassoon make much more musical sense than before. The second half of the main melody of the *Andante*, for example, on every one of its three appearances, with the first clarinet an octave below the first violin and the bassoon an octave below that, sounds remarkably rich compared with the arrangement for oboes.

## Symphony in E flat major (C 19), Sieber 1773 Collection, no. 2

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Tempo di Gavotta: Allegro*

On 10 May 1773 Sieber advertised the publication of a collection of six symphonies, containing two works each by Bach, Joseph Toeschi and Carl Stamitz. The title page of the publication itself informs us that the symphonies has been chosen by the new directors of the famous public concerts, *Le Concert Spirituel*, to inaugurate their regime and that they had met with the greatest success and applause of the public. The new directors, Pierre Gaviniès, Pierre Le Duc and François-Joseph Gossec, took over in March 1773 and, although the surviving programme details of the period do not list any symphonies by Bach, we can be reasonably certain that Sieber's title page tells the truth. The symphonies must certainly have been popular, because Sieber re-issued then at least eight times. The second symphony was also published by J. J. Hummel in Amsterdam in September 1774 and Robert Bremner in London in May 1775. Both of these editions replace Bach's original clarinets with oboes and re-allocate the bassoon's solo passages to the violas or the 'cellos. Bach must have approved, or at least acquiesced in, the publication of this arrangement, since he appears not to have complained about it in public as he did in the case of on earlier Bremner publication of one of his works. It is unlikely, however, that he made the arrangement himself, not least because it takes the oboes higher than they were actually able to play at the time! Since the work has never been recorded before, we thought it appropriate this time to record only the original version.

The *allegro* is characterised by much motivic repetition and development. A few bars after the opening, the first clarinet begins on orchestrated crescendo based on a two-bar figure. A similar passage forms the first part on the second subject group. The development proper starts with a fugato! The *andante* is the perfect antidote to all the ingenuity of the first movement, a cantilena, with almost all the melodic interest concentrated in the first violin part. The *Gavotte* has more than a passing family resemblance to the first movement and forms a most satisfactory finale.

## Six Symphonies, Forster op. 18

When Johann Christian Bach was dying in the autumn of 1781, the London instrument maker, music seller and music publisher, William Forster, began to issue six of his orchestral works to which he, Forster, gave the opus number 18. Bach had already used the some number for his own edition of six sonatas (four for keyboard and violin, one for keyboard duet and one for two keyboards), which he had brought out earlier in the some year or perhaps in 1780. The six symphonies Forster published as op. 18 are, like Bach's own op. 18, for a mixture of resources. nos. 1, 3 and 5 are for a double orchestra and the remainder are for the normal single orchestra. no. 2 is actually the overture to Bach's opera *Lucio Silla* (Mannheim, 1775). no. 4 has as its slow movement an arrangement of the Andante of the overture to another operatic commission for Mannheim, *Temistocle* (1772). And no. 6 is arranged, certainly not by Bach, from the overture and two of the ballet movements in his French opera, *Amadis de Gaule* (Paris, 1779).

The double orchestra works are among the finest symphonies written by any composer before the 1780s and remained in the repertory of London concerts well into the nineteenth century. Quite when Bach started writing double orchestra symphonies is not clear. The earliest reference I have been able to find is to the performance of a "favourite" symphony for double orchestra at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket on 21 February 1772. That was obviously not its first performance. Similarly, we do not know how many of the works Bach wrote. But there is good evidence that there were more than the three that we have today. Whether Bach originated the double-orchestra symphony or whether he

imported the idea from Mannheim, where the size and quality of the orchestra allowed it to be divided, is unclear. The Elector's Director of Instrumental Music, Christian Cannabich (1731–1798), and his Spiritual Adviser and second Kapellmeister from 1775, Georg Joseph Vogler (1749–1814) both wrote double-orchestra symphonies.

The double orchestra in all three of the works recorded here consists of two complete string sections, seated one on each side of the conductor. The oboes and horns play with the first orchestra and the flutes with the second. The bassoon has divided loyalties. Bach's enjoyment at exploiting the many possibilities of the interplay between the two orchestras is obvious.

### Symphony for double orchestra in E flat major, Forster op. 18, no. 1 (C 26)

*1. Spiritoso*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro*

The first movement begins with a bold motive for both orchestras together in unison. This will be tossed around between the two orchestras throughout the movement, even acting as an accompaniment to more lyrical material. The first orchestra (stereo left) continues on its own in semiquavers. The second orchestra returns in the ninth bar and plays exactly what the first orchestra played during the first eight bars. Against this the first orchestra provides a vigorous accompaniment. The dynamic then drops to *piano* as a written-out, "Mannheim", *crescendo* begins. The actual word crescendo is not used in Forster's printed parts but as more and more instruments are added and the pitch rises, that is clearly what Bach intended, A strenuous *tutti* follows, with the bass instruments of both orchestras thundering out the crescendo motive. We then hear the opening unison motive again from the combined orchestras, but this lime in the dominant key. The first orchestra then plays a short lyrical section alone, which it then repeats to the accompaniment of the second orchestra playing the unison motive. The roles are then reversed. Another *tutti* follows, with the two orchestras at times playing the some material at the distance of half a bar. A further lyrical section then begins, with first orchestra leading and the second following. The calm is shattered by the entry of the crescendo motive played by the combined orchestras. The development has begun but will continue for a mere 26 bars. The recapitulation returns us to familiar territory. But Bach has one final imaginative stroke: he ends the movement *pianissimo* – an extremely unusual procedure in a work of the period.

The lovely *Andante* finds the two orchestras doing different things for most of the time. In general, the violins of the first orchestra busy themselves with triplet semiquavers while the second orchestra plays a more serene role. The finale is lively and cheerful, with the character but no the form of a "hunting" rondo. Note the many rapid-fire exchanges between the two orchestras, beginning with the first entry of the second orchestra.

### Symphony in B flat major, Forster op. 18, no. 2 (G 9)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

As I have already observed, this symphony is note for note the overture to *Lucia Silla* (Mannheim, 1775) and, following its first modern publication in the edition by Fritz Stein and its first Recording by Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra in the 1920s, the work which led the modern revival of interest in Bach's music. It is not only a fine concert piece, but works wonderfully well in the theatre. The first movement, with its Italianate "call to order" (the repeated chords) at the beginning, is a wonderful prelude to an evening's dramatic entertainment. The oboe solo in the *andante* is one of Bach's happiest inspirations. The finale whips up the sense of expectation at the

music drama shortly to be unfolded. At, the risk of being accused of special pleading, I would say that this work is among very best pieces of music composed as a prelude to an eighteenth-century opera by any composer.

**Symphony for double orchestra in D major, Forster op. 18, no. 3 (G 15b)**

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro*

This work too originally served as an overture to a work for the Mannheim court, the azione drammatica, *Endimione*. Whether it was the original overture to *Endimione*, first given in London on 6 April 1772, we cannot be sure, since it is missing from Bach's autograph score. The only significant difference between the only surviving manuscript full eighteenth-century score in the Landesbibliothek in Darmstadt and the parts published by Forster is that the manuscript has parts from trumpets and timpani and Forster's parts either leave them out or transfer them to the horns. The substance of the work being the same in both cases.

Like op. 18, no.1, this work begins with a unison motive. Here it is even shorter: just four notes in the some rhythm as the start of the *Lucia Silla* overture. Thereafter, the two orchestras compete, if anything, even more intensely than in op. 18, no. 1. The *Andante* is a movement to treasure. The brisk interchanges between the orchestras are set aside and for much of the time they play together. Only in the middle section of the ABA structure, does Bach exploit the full potential of the interaction between the two orchestras, producing some of the most complex orchestral textures (and the most ravishing sounds) in the whole of eighteenth-century music. The finale is also an ABA structure, with a thrilling and highly theatrical coda added.

**Symphony in D major, Forster op. 18, no. 4 (C 27)**

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

As I have noted above, the Andante is an arrangement of the slow movement of the overture to Bach's opera *Temistocle* (Mannheim, 1772). There it is exotically scored for strings, flutes, horns and three clarinetti d'amore. Since ordinary clarinets remained a rarity in orchestras until the last years of the eighteenth century and clarinetti d'amore were as rare as hens' teeth, the only way the movement was going to be published was in an arrangement without any clarinets at all. The outer movements seem to have had no antecedents, which is why I have accepted the work as authentic in my Thematic Catalogue of Bach's works.

The first movement has all the bustle of an opera overture, including yet again the loud repeated notes at the beginning (there traditionally to draw the wealthy and fashionable audience's attention to the fact that the show was beginning – conductors were not greeted with applause when they entered the pit in those days). In the relaxed *andante*, the flutes and violas take over the tasks originally allotted to the clarinetti d'amore. The exhilarating finale is a simple rondo, with the second statement of the main section at only half its original length. The episodes between the recurring material are much longer and very closely argued. The second episode is in the minor key.

**Symphony for double orchestra in E major, Forster op. 18, no. 5 (C 28)**

*1. [Allegro]*
*2. Andante*
*3. Tempo di Minuetto*

The first movement opens gently, with both orchestras appearing independently. They then join forces in another written-out "Mannheim" crescendo and then the contest between them begins. If at times it is gentler competition than in the two other double-orchestra symphonies, elsewhere is just as fierce. The yet again the exquisite *andante* is the highlight of the work. Bach points up the contrast between the two orchestras by having the second playing with mutes almost to the very end and by having the first play pizzicato when the second has important thematic material. The stately Minuet finale has a highly memorable tune in the first and last (major key) sections. The central section in the tonic minor offers just the right contrast.

### Symphony in D major, Forster op. 18, no. 6 (XC 1)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegretto*
*4. Allegro*

I have excluded this piece from the list of authentic works in my Johann Christian Bach Thematic catalogue because it is clearly the work of an arranger, possibly William Forster himself. Johann Christian Bach, like his father, was well able to recycle his music if it suited him. However, both father and son always reused their music competently. Here are the fingerprints of the bungler. Why, for example, would Johann Christian Bach wish to simplify the original opening of the first movement or have eleven bars played twice (bars 62–72 played again as bars 73–83) when such repetition is absent from the original *Arnadis* overture. More importantly, it is inconceivable that Bach himself would have added the nine extra bars at the end of the *andante*, which prepare the ear for a return to D major, whereas the next movement begins in A major! However, these considerations aside, there is still much to enjoy here: the vigour of the opening *allegro*, the relaxed *andante* (with its flute and oboe duet), the *allegretto* (in fact Gavottes 1 & 2 from the end of Act One of *Amadis*), with its plaintive oboe solo in the middle section in A minor, and to conclude the jolly final *allegro* (originally a Gigue in E major from the *divertissement* at the end of Act Two).

## Overtures

In the mid-eighteenth century the overtures to Italian operas, both comic and serious, were almost always in three short movements – fast, slow, fast – and almost invariably merely had the function of announcing the beginning of the evening's entertainment, without any attempt being made to reflect the subject material of the opera. Johann Christian Bach's early overtures for the theatre conformed to type but, in general and unlike many of those by his contemporaries, were carefully and imaginatively composed.

### Artaserse (G 1)

(Teatro Regio, Turin, 1760)
Overture:
*1. Allegro molto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

On 3 May 1760 the management committee of the Teatro Regio in Turin met to discuss a letter which had just arrived from Johann Adolf Hasse (1699–1783) in response to its invitation to him to compose the first opera for the forthcoming Carnival season. Hasse was the most successful composer of serious Italian opera at that time and competition for his services by all the major theatres was intense. At the same meeting therefore, the committee resolved to get in touch with Bach and others as a precaution should the Hasse commission fall through. This must have happened later the same

month, because at its meeting on 30 May the committee decided to place the commission with Bach. So it was that Bach's first opera *Artaserse* (*Artaxerxes*) reached the stage of the Teatro Regio on 26 December, with Gaetano Guadagni (soon to be Gluck's first Orfeo) in the cast. However, because of illness both in the royal family of Savoy and in the cast, the opera ran for only seven performances.

The overture begins in an arresting fashion – in unison and with a rising figure based on the notes of the common chord. The general mood is one of excited anticipation. The slow movement is in total contrast. The strings, coloured from time to time by two flutes, offer a moment of reflection. The finale is a miniature Rondo, with two Episodes (the second in the minor), bringing back the festive mood of the first movement.

### Cantata to celebrate the Birthday of King Charles III of Spain (G 11)

(Teatro San Carlo, Naples, 1762)
Overture:
*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

In 1739 the French antiquarian, Charles de Brosses (1709–1777), described Naples as "the capital of the world's music" and many later visitors confirmed his opinion. Since 1737 the focus of musical activity in this capital, which also happened to be the political capital of the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, had been the Teatro San Carlo. This had been built on the instructions of the kingdom's energetic 21-year old ruler, Charles III (1716–1788), not because he was especially fond of opera, but because opera was the court entertainment par excellence and a famous theatre reflected great prestige on a monarch and his realm. After a reign of 25 years in Naples, Charles became King of Spain in 1759. However, the custom of performing an annual cantata in the San Carlo in honour of his birthday (20 January) lasted for a number of years after his departure. The 1762 cantata had the usual cast of three, including the veteran castrato Caffarelli (Handel's first Serse), and music by Bach, who had been working in Naples for some months.

The use of repeated chords at the beginning of an operatic overture was a cliché, but here Bach, by placing then over the nervous syncopation in the second violins, produces a delightful and ingenious effect. The texture of the *Andante* is mostly two parts (violins and bass) but the melody line already displays many of the gestures of Bach's mature style – the *Scotch snap*, the longish trill followed by shorter notes, and triplet semiquavers towards the end of a section. Note also the imitation of the violin melody in the bass at the beginning and elsewhere. The finale is another miniature Rondo.

### Gli uccellatori (G 23)

(Regio Ducal Teatro, Milan, 1759)
Overture:
*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The première of *Gli uccellatori (The bird-catchers)*, the first comic opera (to a text by Carlo Goldoni) by Florian Leopold Gassmann (1729–1774) took place at the Teatro S. Moisè in Venice during the 1759 Carnival. The opera reached the stage of Regio Ducal Teatro in Milan the following autumn, but with a new overture composed by Johann Christian Bach. This was not the first music by Bach to have been performed at the Regio Ducal but it seems to have been his first overture for that (or possibly any other) theatre. Johann Christian Bach's overture was eventually published (slightly

revised) in London in June 1763 as the first number in Robert Bremner's series *The Periodical Overture*, but here it is performed according to a copy of the manuscript of the complete opera as performed in Milan made for the King of Portugal and now perserved in the Ajuda Palace in Lisbon.

The *Allegro con spirito* is characterised by the unison passage with which it begins. The rare use of trumpets heightens the general atmosphere of bustle. An elegantly poised *Andante* follows. The festive mood returns with the vigorous *Allegro assai*, which like the first movement opens in unison.

**Alessandro nell'Indie (G 3)**
(Teatro San Carlo, Naples, 1762)
Overture:
*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

On 20 January 1762 the first performance of the Birthday Cantata was followed by the première of Johann Christian Bach's third opera, *Alessandro nell'Indie (Alexander in the Indies)*. Alessandro received only three productions (the other two were in the small town of Lodi near Milan), but it included Bach's most famous aria, *Non so donde viene*, which Mozart much admired.

The first movement of the overture contains a number of imaginative moments, some of which we would now describe as Mozartean, but the real treasure is the *Andante*. The use of the minor key seems to bring out the best in Bach and here is a fine example of his early style. The finale restores the high spirits of the first movement, but even here as the opening melody cascades down from the first violins to the seconds and then the bass you are aware that a composer of genuine talent is at work.

**La Giulia (G 22)**
(Regio Ducale Teatro, Milan, 1760)
Overture:
*1. Allegro di molto*
*2, Andante*
*3. Allegro*

*La Giulia (Julia)* was a pasticcio – an opera assembled from the works (existing or newly composed) of a number of composers – compiled by Giovanni Battista Lampugnani (1708–1788), harpsichordist of the Regio Ducal Teatro. The two surviving scores of the complete opera do not name Bach as the composer of the overture (or indeed any of the music), but, since he himself published it in London in 1765, there is no doubt about its authenticity.

It is a strange fact that, while most orchestral scores composed in the third quarter of the eighteenth-century have viola parts which spend most of the time merely doubling the bass line, there are others where there are two quite independent parts for significant passages of a movement or even of a complete work. Bach's overture *La Giulia* is one of these and his use of divided violas in all three movements gives it its special character.

**Il tutore e la pupilla (G 24)**
(King's Theatre, London, 1762)
Overture:
*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

Early in 1762 Bach's successful operatic career in Italy brought him an invitation from the King's Theatre in London to compose two operas and to act as Musical Director for the 1762–3 season. This was one of the most significant events in his career and led to his making London the centre of his activities until his death nearly 20 years later. Then, as now, London was the largest city in Europe and one of the richest. All the really important people in Britain had a house there and at the centre of society was the German-speaking court of George III. Opera however was not the state-supported activity it was in Naples but a commercial venture which bankrupted many of those foolhardy enough to undertake it. The spielplan contained comic as well as serious operas and when Bach arrived in London the public was beginning to become more interested in the comic. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Bach, who never composed a comic opera in his life, made his debut at the King's Theatre on 13 November 1762 directing one, the pasticcio *Il tutore e la pupilla (The tutor and the girl pupil)*. In the cast was Anna Lucia de Amicis, later a very famous prima donna indeed and the first Giunia in Mozart's Lucio Silla, but then merely a member of a family of touring comic opera singers, albeit its star.

The overture Bach provided is a reworking of the one to the Birthday Cantata. The *Presto* is largely unchanged, although there is an attractive new passage over a static bass near the end. The first movement is quite extensively revised, but the *Andante* is completely new. A commentator in a London newspaper later noted that Bach seemed to have taken note of the English fondness for the music of Handel. Perhaps it is not too fanciful to look upon this movement as one of the earliest pieces of evidence for this opinion.

### Catone in Utica (G 2)

(Teatro San Carlo, Naples, 1761)
Overture:
*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The feast day of St. Charles Borromeo (4 November) was also the name day of Charles III and therefore a day of celebration in Naples. From 1737 it was the pretext for a brilliant new opera production at the San Carlo too. In 1761 the opera was *Catone in Utica (Cato in Utica)* and the composer Bach. He was already well known in Naples both as a performer and as a composer and this was not the first time he had been considered for an opera commission by the San Carlo. Bach arrived in Naples around the end of September, with a letter of introduction to the Co-Regent of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies from the Austrian Governor of Milan, Count Firmian, in his pocket. In the title role of Catone was the famous tenor Anton Raaff, then 47 and ten years later Mozart's first *Idomeneo*. Raaff, in the first of the four major roles Bach composed for him, undoubtedly contributed greatly not only to the success of the opera but to the later dissemination of his music. *Catone* was revived in Naples in 1764 and in all received nine productions, including one in Brunswick (Braunschweig) in 1768.

The overture follows the by now familiar outline: a ceremoniously festive first movement (with trumpets), an *Andante* and a brisk triple-time finale. The slow movement has certain Handelian characteristics – and that was before Bach went to London.

### La cascina (G 26)

(King's Theatre, London, 1763)
Overture:

*1. (Allegro)*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

By the beginning of 1763 Bach still had not presented the first of his two commissioned operas before the London public. Instead on 8 January he directed a new comic pasticcio with a text adapted from Goldoni called *La Cascina (The Farm)*. However, in spite of the charms of Anna Lucia de Amicis and her family, the opera failed and was taken off after its second performance. Bach's overture alone appears to have survived.

This overture is superficially similar but in detail unlike any of the others on this CD. The first movement is the only one in triple- as opposed to quadruple-time, the *Andante* is rather like a march and the finale is in duple-time. It is performed here in the version published in London by John Walsh in November 1763.

### La cascina

*Alternative Andante*

A number of manuscripts of the overture to *La Cascina* give a slightly different version of the *Andante*, a few bars longer and with wind instruments. Whether this version was earlier or later than the one published by Walsh is unclear.

### La calamita de'cuori (G 27)

(King's Theatre, London, 1762)
Overture:
*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante grazioso*
*3. Presto*

On 3 February 1763, little more than three weeks after the failure of La cascina, Bach directed another comic opera at the King's Theatre, *La calamita de'cuori (The magnet of the hearts)*. Once again the text was largely by Goldoni but this time most of the music was by Baldassare Galuppi (1706–1785). The overture once again was by Bach, but it was not a new piece and had already been published in Paris in June 1762. The reason why he chose to use a work which already existed is not too difficult to imagine, the première of his own first commissioned opera was only a few days away.

The overture was almost certainly composed for on earlier opera which has yet to be identified because it has features generally found only in opera overtures: all three movements are in the same key, the first movement does not end firmly in its home key but inconclusively in the dominant and the last two movements are linked. As usual outer movements strive to generate the excitement expected at the start of a theatrical performance. The *Andante* is another of Bach's neo-Handelian movements, rendered more poignant by the use of flutes. Mozart uses the first four bars of this movement (not quite accurately quoted) as the main thematic material of the slow movement of his *piano concerto in A major, K 414*, of 1782. It would be nice to think (as some writers have done) that Mozart was paying homage to his old friend and teacher in the year of his death, but unfortunately there is not a scrap of evidence to support this idea. Rather the reverse, since Mozart had already used much the same theme in a piano piece (K 315g, no. 4) nine years earlier.

### Gioas, re di Giuda (D 1)

(King's Theatre, London, 1770)
Overture:
*Grave – Allegro – (Grave) – Andante*

During Johann Christan Bach's time in London, one or other and sometimes bath of The Theatres Royal in Covent Garden and Drury Lane presented a series of oratorio performances on the Wednesdays and Fridays beginning after Ash Wednesday and ending the week before Holy Week, when all theatres were closed. The eleven performances of these series, which replaced the regular repertory of plays, English operas and afterpieces, were almost entirely of works by Händel and usually ended with *Messiah*.

In 1770, a year when both Covent Garden and Drury Lane were offering largely Handelian oratorio seasons, Johann Christian Bach mounted a series of Italian oratorios at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, the home of Italian opera in London. Since he was already occupied on Wednesdays with the Bach-Abel concerts, he performed the oratorios on Thursdays. The repertory was Nicolò Jommelli's celebrated *La passione di Gesù Cristo* of 1749, Pergolesi's even more famous Stabat Mater of 1736 and a (mostly) new work by Bach himself, *Gioas, re di Giuda*, based like many of Händel's oratorios on an Old Testament subject. The story of Joash, King of Judah, related in 2 Kings 11 & 12 and 2 Chronicles 22–24, formed the basis of a libretto Pietro Metastasio wrote for Georg Reutter the younger for performance at the Imperial Chapel in Vienna in 1735. Bach set a version of the some text, heavily revised by the resident poet of the King's Theatre, Giovanni Gualberto Bottarelli Gioas was performed three times that season and a further three the following January. However, as the music historian Charles Burney wryly reported shortly afterwards "the success" of Bach's first oratorio season "was neither flattering nor profitable, though the undertaking was patronised and frequently honoured with the presence of their Majesties." In his second season, in 1775, Bach significantly played safe with a totally Handelian repertory. Even in 1770, however, he was only too well aware of the hold Händel's music had on the London musical public. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the overture to *Gioas*. The opening bars of the *Grave* are Handelian in spirit, the *Allegro* pays homage to his robust Anglicised-style and the *Andante* resembles some of his lilting movements. Moreover, the opening *Grave*, its return after the *Allegro* and the coda with trumpets and drums which concludes the otherwise lightly-scored Andante, clearly reflect Handelian formal precedents. Nonetheless, it needs to be noted that all these features seem to have been grafted on to the two instrumental movements of a pre-existing work, the overture to a court ode probably composed for George III's birthday (4 June) in 1768 or 1769.

**La clemenza di Scipione (G 10)**
(King's Theatre, London, 1778)
Overture: *Allegro assai*
*No. 22, March in E flat major*
*No. 5, March in G major*

In the last opera he composed for the London stage, Johann Christian Bach broke away from the three-movement form he had previously used in all his Italian opera overtures. He was, of course, well aware of the possibility of composing on opera overture in one movement, since he had made various arrangements for London and Naples of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, which has one, in the early 1770s. Gluck's overture of 1762 was a rather formal composition, reflecting the work's origins as part of the ritual of the Imperial court rather than anticipating the tragic events which were about to unfold. Bach's overture on the other hand may possibly be regarded (and almost certainly would be by some present-day opera producers) as depicting the fighting between the Romans and the Carthaginians, which Scipio orders to cease with the very first words of the opera. This may, of course, be imposing a late twentieth-century aesthetic on the piece, but its relentless forward movement and sharp dynamic contrasts tempt such an interpretation. The published full score – one of the very few to be issued of an Italian opera composed for London in the second half of the eighteenth century – prints the overture

without trumpets and drum parts. Perhaps this is how Bach conceived it, keeping their sound in reserve for the first chorus "S'oda il suon delle trombe guerriere".

In mainstream eighteenth-century Italian *opera seria* the orchestra's only solo contribution to the proceedings, apart from the overture, was to play the marches to bring on or take off the processions called for by the drama. These marches were usually routine pieces of utilitarian music, composed with competence but little more. Bach's two marches in *La clemenza di Scipione* are among the better examples of the genre, as was recognised at the time by their publication in arrangements for a variety of instrumental combinations The march in E flat major begins the final scene of the opera, when Scipio's act of clemency resolves all the various conflicts, personal and political, which have formed the basis of the action. It is notable for its use of divided violas and passages for unaccompanied wind band (including clarinets). The march in G major comes from the first act, probably not immediately after the overture (as in the score) but in the middle of scene 4, where the libretto calls for a march to accompany the arrival of the "ambassador" of the defeated Carthaginians under Roman military escort. This is a more conventional piece, but also rich in fine detail.

**Adriano in Siria (G 6)**
(King's Theatre, London, 1765)
Overture:
*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The Mozarts, father and son, were in London during the run of Johann Christian Bach's third Italian opera for the British capital. No documentary evidence has yet been discovered that they attended any of the performances. However, since they were well acquainted with Bach and the castrato Giovanni Manzuoli, who was that season's musical sensation and the creator of the opera's most important role of Farnaspe, their total absence seems unlikely. Certainly the circumstantial evidence is strong. Mozart senior or junior knew and admired Manzuoli's main aria, "Cara, la dolce fiamma", sufficiently to compose a set of vocal embellishments for it. More relevant still are the almost identical openings of the Wolfgang's Symphony in D major, K 45 (January 1768), his overture to *La finta semplice* (Spring-Summer 1768) and Bach's overture. Moreover, Bach's overture, unlike the aria and uniquely among his known London opera overtures, was not published in his lifetime, so Wolfgang would have had difficulty in hearing it except in the opera house. It follows the usual three-movement form of the time, but with the unusual scoring (for then) of flutes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and strings.

**Zanaida (G 5)**
(King's Theatre, London, 1763)
Overture:
*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro di molto*

The original scoring of the overture to *Zanaida* is even more unusual – flutes, tailles (tenor oboes in F – played here on cors anglais), clarinets, bassoons, horns and strings. Since this is also the original scoring of the overture to *Orione* but occurs (as far as I know) in no other contemporary works, it may reasonably be assumed that the opera orchestra in London during the 1762–3 season contained some visiting virtuosi, probably from continental Europe. It is difficult in the late twentieth-century to appreciate how rare clarinets were in the 1760s, let alone cors anglais, but it is significant that there are

works published in the 1770s in the former French Royal Music Library where the printed clarinet parts have been transcribed for oboes, presumably because clarinets were not available.

The musical establishment of the king of France, however, was not the only organisation lacking the necessary instruments, so, when the overtures to *Zanaida* and *Orione* were printed by the younger Walsh, he (or possibly even Bach himself) provided an arrangement for more conventional forces. It is in these arrangements that the works have so far been recorded. Indeed, we have recorded the arrangement of the *Zanaida* overture, better known as the Symphony in B flat major, op. 9, no.3.

Here however we offer the original version, initially assembled from printed parts dispersed in various collections and subsequently checked against the recently rediscovered autograph score of the complete opera. Once again the overture follows the usual three-movement plan.

**Carattaco (G 7)**
(King's Theatre, London, 1767)
Overture:
*1. Allegro di molto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*
*No. 20, March in B flat major*
*No. 26, March in G major*

Caratacus (also known as Caractacus), the British chieftain, who in 43 AD defied the Roman Emperor Claudius, was betrayed to him and paraded through the streets of Rome but subsequently pardoned on account of his dignified behaviour in captivity, was an unusual subject for an Italian opera in 1767 The opera itself is unusual in many respects: it breaks the classic unities of time and place and features large choral scenes, to give just two examples. The overture, however, is conventional enough to serve for any serious Italian opera of the time, if rather better composed than most. Indeed, the first movement (with the addition of trumpets and drums) did subsequently also serve as the opening movement to Bach's first Mannheim opera *Temistocle* in 1772.

The march in B flat major introduces the last scene in the second act, when Roman soldiers and their prisoners are embarking on the south coast of Britain en route for Rome. The march in G major accompanies the entrance of Caratacus and the Emperor for the final scene and dénoument of the opera.

**Orione (G 4)**
(King's Theatre, London, 1763)
Overture:
*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro*

The original version of the overture to *Orione* has always been available but this is its first recording. One contemporary commentator remarked that Bach had adapted his style in this his first London opera to suit the English taste. Certainly, by comparison with the overtures for his first three operas composed for Italy this is a rather more robustly constructed piece. The opening *allegro*, although marked *con brio*, has to be taken more slowly than usual in order to let the elaborate instrumental detail register. The use of a Minuet finale, complete with a Trio for unaccompanied wind band would have been inconceivable in an Italian opera written in Italy.

**Symphony in D major, Schmitt Op. 18, no. 1**

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

This work is something of a curiosity. The first movement is the overture to *La clemenza di Scipione*, with additional parts for trumpets and drums. The second movement is the *Andante* from the overture to Bach's only completed French opera, *Amadis de Gaule*, of 1779, but with the horn parts removed and a few extra bars added on at the end. The third movement is a repeat of the second half of the Scipio overture. We have recorded it here from the point where the Schmitt edition indicates. An earlier recording, based on a twentieth-century German edition, presents a cut version of the whole movement.

Joseph Schmitt (1734–1791) was a German priest and composer, who was also active in the Netherlands as a music publisher. He had been a pupil of Carl Friedrich Abel in Dresden before 1758 and it is just possible that he came into contact with Bach through him. There is therefore the very slight possibility, I suppose, that Bach himself had some hand in the publication. However, it is much more likely that, as the director of a publishing firm specialising in reprints, Schmitt himself assembled the work recorded here from the printed editions by Welcker and Sieber.

*Ernest Warburton*

**Endimione (G 15)**

Overture in D major:

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro assai*

The serenata *Endimione* was premiered at the King's Theatre in Haymarket, the theater for which Johann Christian Bach wrote all his London operas, on April 6, 1772. The occasion of its premiere was a concert "for the Benefit of Mr. Wendling". The flutist Johann Baptist Wendling, a member of the famous Mannheim Orchestra, had taken up residence in London in 1771 together with his wife Dorothea, who was an outstanding singer, and his daughter Elisabeth Augusta. Wendling played an active role in the premiere of the work both as a musician and an organizer. Bach's later wife, the soprano Cecilia Grassi, sang the demanding part of Diana.

*Endimione* is based on a libretto by Pietro Metastasio from 1721. Giovan Gualberto Bottarelli, the house librettist at the King's Theatre revised it for the London production. The story concerns the love of Diana, the goddess of the hunt, for the hunter Endimione, with Amor contriving this passion. The nymph Nice, who also loves the hunter, goes away empty-handed. The clever Amor is the one who triumphs from the confusions wrought by love. He is praised in song in the concluding chorus: "Viva Amor, che dolce e lento del suo fuoco ogn'alma accende." In keeping with the prescriptions of the serenata form, the action is relatively compact, does without the grand gesturing of the heroic-tragic opera seria, and derives its subject matter from the pastoral genre.

The first movement of the overture, however, is anything but light fare. One also has the impression that one is hearing anticipations of Mozart's *Haffner* Symphony K 385 (1782) in the powerful unison be ginning, energetic octave runs, and cantabile second subject. The symphonic élan of this *allegro* finds an effective counterbalance in the cheerful peace of the *andante*. Formally, the andante has a da capo form follow the opening sonata-form movement. With its prominent horn parts

the finale in 6/8 time reminds us that Diana, the goddess of the hunt, is the main character of *Endimione*.

The London publisher William Forster included the overture in full as no. 3 in a printed edition issued us Bach's op. 18 and containing six symphonies by this composer. The work probably came out in the winter of 1781/82. The only change introduced by Forster was the elimination of the timpani and trumpets in the instrumentation. The other overtures included on this recording were also reused in various ways by Forster in op. 18. Whether Bach himself had a direct hand in this publication has not been settled. It is possible that it was issued prior to his death on New Year's Day 1782 It is interesting to note that in op. 18 Forster also published overtures and instrumental movements from operas by Bach which had not been composed for performance in London and thus could hope to obtain greater attention from the English public: *Temistocle*, *Lucio Silla*, and *Amadis des Gaules*.

**Temistocle (G 8)**

Overture in D major:
*1. Allegro di molto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

Bach wrote *Temistocle* as a commissioned work for Carl Theodor, the Prince Elector of the Palatinate, with Johann Baptist Wendling arranging for the commission. The performance was supposed to take place during the festivities held on the prince's name day in Mannheim in November 1772. Inasmuch as at the time Carl Theodor's court was not just any address, this represented a distinguished commission for Bach. Contemporaries, among them Leopold Mozart and Charles Burney, ranked the prince's orchestra, led by Christian Cannabich, among the best in the whole of Europe.

*Temistocle* is set in Greece end Persia during the Persian Wars of the fifth century B.C.E. The original libretto, again going back to Metastasio, was also set by Caldara, Porpora, and Jommelli. Bach's setting was based on the version by the Mannheim court poet Mattia Verazi. The central motif of the work is Themistocles' love for his fatherland. Although Xerxes has taken him into his service, he refuses to march against his native Athens on behalf of this Persian king. It is in a complex finale, set before Xerxes' throne and stamped by the technique of ensemble writing, that the drama reaches its climax. Themistocles, believing that he can rescue himself from his dilemma only by committing suicide, intends to drink a cup of poison in the king's presence, but Xerxes is so impressed by the Greek's heroic courage that he abandons his plans for war against Athens.

The premiere of *Temistocle* on November 5, 1772, opened the new Mannheim opera season. The performance could draw not only on first-class singers such as Anton Raaff in the title role and Dorothea Wendling as Aspasia but also on all the pomp that Mannheim had at its command. The prince was willing to invest his fair share in this performance held in his honor and saw to it that it was filled out in excellent style. Moreover, the whole celebration was accompanied by splendid court ceremony. A great many illustrious guests from the ranks of the high nobility, among them the Margraves of Baden, the Hereditary Prince of Hesse-Kassel, and the Prince of Nassau-Weilburg, were in attendance.

The festive pomp and circumstance of the first movement of the overture, an *allegro* sonata-form movement, seems in particular to measure up to what may have been the greatest success in Bach's career as an opera composer. Here the sumptuous effect more clearly occupies the foreground than is the case in the first movements of the other overtures heard on this compact disc. The motivic work is based on broken chords to syncopated string chords, double-stop motifs over drum basses, and short

melodic formulas – in other words, on the usual ingredients of an effective overture from this period. The opening formed by Bach from this "raw material" hurries forward, aims at grabbing the audience's attention, and is perhaps not necessarily to be classified as a little symphonic cabinet piece. Three clarinetti d'amore lend the *andante* a very unique sound. Bach also emphasizes this sound in a number of solo passages The clarinetto d'amore was an only rarely employed variant of the clarinet, with the addition of a *Liebesfuß*, a pear-shaped bell, serving to extend its tonal range. Bach's *Temistocle* is perhaps the most outstanding example of all of the employment of this apocryphal instrument. (Apart from the andante of the overture, the three clarinetti d'amore are employed only in one aria.) When the andante was reused as the middle movement of the Symphony op. 18 no. 4, the three clarinetti d'amore were eliminated from the score. Their parts were distributed among the other orchestral instruments in the symphonic structuring of the work. The *allegro* and *presto* of the overture were not included among the Symphonies op 18.

### Lucio Silla (G 9)

Overture in B flat major:
*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

Bach's *Temistocle* come across very well with its discriminating Mannheim public. As a result, the 1773 season also began with this opera, and further works by Bach, among them *Endimione* and the cantata *Amor vincitore*, were also subsequently presented at the Mannheim court. It is thus not surprising that Carl Theodor gave Bach a commission for another opera. The libretto for his *Lucio Silla*, this time originating with Giovanni De Gamerra, was again revised by the court poet Verazi. (Mozart also composed music for this subject, but his setting was based on Gamerra's original.) Bach's opera was premiered at the court theater in November 1775, again on the occasion of the prince's name day and with almost the some stags cast as for *Temistocle*. Bach was not able, however, to repeat the great success of his first Mannheim opera with *Lucio Silla*. Mozart wrote to his father from Mannheim as late as 1777, "Bach wrote two operas here, of which the first was more pleasing than the second. The second was *Lucio Silla*". According to the some letter by Mozart, Georg Joseph Vogler, the assistant conductor in Mannheim, had very unfavorable things to say about an aria from Bach's *Lucia Silla*: "What kind of aria? – Well, the hideous aria by Bach, the wretched thing – yes, 'Pupille amate'. He certainly wrote it while punch-drunk." Mozart did not agree with this judgement.

The central figure of *Lucio Silla* is the Roman dictator Lucius Sulla (Anton Raaff), who at the end of this opera experiences a change of heart much in the manner of the Persian king Xerxes in *Temistocle*. Instead of executing Giunia (sung by Dorothea Wendling), whom he desires but who remains true to another man, he pardons her and her beloved. Moreover, he relinquishes his political command and makes peace with his political enemies. Although the dramatic parallels to *Temistocle* are obvious, Bach's second Mannheim opera is less open to reform than its predecessor in formal matters and musically less remarkable. It is thus that the overture has always attracted much more attention than the opera itself. The overture is regarded as one of Bach's best orchestral works of all. Forster published it without any changes at all in the printed collection of symphonic works forming Bach's op. 18. The concentrated *allegro* with its festive dotted chord beats at the beginning is followed by an andante with an extremely beautiful melody. Its hymnic theme, looking back almost yearningly on a fading idyll, numbers among Bach's most powerful ideas.

### Amadis des Gaules (G 39)

Overture in D major, Overture:

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro*

Ballet Music:
*1. Gavotte*
*2. Ballet*
*3. Air (lent)*
*4. Allegro*
*5. Choeur (Allegro)*
*6. Ballet (Adagio)*
*7. Choeur (Allegro)*
*8. Ballet (Adagio assai)*
*9. Ballet (Allegro maestoso)*
*10. Gavotte (Allegretto)*
*11. Ariette et choeur*
*12. Tambourin*

Bach did not conclude his career as an opera composer where one might have expected him to do so, say, in London or Italy. He wrote his last (and perhaps best) opera in 1778/79 for the Académie Royale de Musique in Paris. He received this commission not so much because of his reputation as an opera composer but because his instrumental works enjoyed a wide circulation in Paris. A good many of his symphonies, concertos, sonatas, and chamber compositions were printed by publishers operating in the French capital.

Bach's *Amadis des Gaules* based on an already quite old libretto by Philippe Quinault got caught up in the midst of the aesthetic debates being carried on by Parisians about the "true form" of the opera, a question bound up with the priority of a national style, by which the French style and the Italian style were meant. One of these controversies, the quarrel between the "Gluck party", which represented the French tradition, and the "Piccini party", which preferred the Italian style, created a stir in Paris during the years prior to Bach's *Amadis*. The Académie Royale, which had presented Gluck's operas on the stage, may have thought of drawing Bach too into the conflict. At least the program assigning him the task of composing music for a libretto which had been set by Lully in 1684 cannot simply he disregarded. In any event, the opera had to he shortened from five acts to three (with Alphonse Marie Denis de Vismes doing the editing job), which was already occasion for criticism. Bach himself does not seem to have been fully aware of the fact that he was supposed to become involved in an aesthetic controversy with his new work. He had spent the winter of 1778/79 in London and had completed the opera there. In August 1779 he traveled to Paris, where the press was eagerly awaiting him. When *Amadis des Gaules* was finally presented before the queen in the Palais Royal of the Opéra on December 14, 1779, it was a failure and was quickly forgotten.

The compromise formed by *Amadis* between the French style and the Italian style at the time would not have made either of the two parties happy. As was obligatory for the French opera, all three acts end with divertissements; they take the form of ballet inserts and are only loosely connected with the action. All the recitatives are accompanied by the orchestra, which also represents a feature corresponding to Gluck's style. On the other side, however, Bach draws on the aria types of the Italian opera, on their virtuosity and extended da capo form, which normally was not employed in France. The overture with its three interconnected movements also represents the Italian type. For its part, however, the subject matter featuring some fairy-tale elements contrasts with most Italian libretti in that it is set in the world of chivalric romance and goes back to a late-medieval source. Magicians and

knights, demons and fairies are the main characters of this love story centering on Amadis, a knight who must defend his love for Oriane against magic intrigues but triumphs in the end.

The characterful, colorful overture leaves behind the model of the attention-grabbing opera sinfonia of the mid-eighteenth century, which was composed only with its opening function in mind. The gifted symphonist shows his hand and confirms his lineage as the youngest of Bach's sons everywhere in the masterful and nuanced design. After the first overture movement has ended on the dominant with a quite unfinished effect, a bucolic *andante* immediately follows with beautiful solo wind passages. The *allegro* following it in turn is nothing other than the continuation of the first movement and thus brings the expected completion of the same. The first two movements of the overture are reused in the Symphony op. 18 no. 6, albeit in revised form. In the symphony two dance movements from the opera replace the concluding *allegro* of the overture. Whether Bach himself undertook this revision or it was supplied by Forster, who may also have put together the whole symphony edition of op. 18, remains an open question.

Ten movements from the last scene of Act III and the finale of the opera occupy the center the ballet music compiled for this recording. The lovers Amadis and Oriane have finally been united and are acclaimed by the retinue of the good fairy Urgande in a "Fête de l'Arc des Loyaux Amants". Dance movements in which the baroque heritage of Rameau is clearly audible and choruses of joy occur in sequence. Prior to this, an A major gavotte from the seventh scene of Act I is heard. (It is the third movement in the Symphony op. 18 no. 6.) An effective D major *allegro* in rondo form from the end of Act II (superscribed "Tambourin" owing to its instrumentation with piccolo and percussion) forms the conclusion of the suite.

*Andreas Friesenhagen*

## The Symphonie Concertante

For a period of about sixty years, starting around 1765, a type of orchestral work with solo parts for two or more solo instruments flourished in the newly developing public concert life of the major cities of Europe. The genre is nowadays usually called the Sinfonia Concertante, presumably because that is the title generally given to its finest example, Mozart's K 364 with violin and viola soloists. At the time, however, such works went under a multiplicity of descriptions. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority were given the French title Symphonie Concertante.

It is tempting to regard the baroque concerto with multiple soloists as the model from which the Symphonie Concertante developed. But, as the distinguished American scholar and leading expert on the genre, Barry S. Brook rightly states, "the Symphonie Concertante resembles the Concerto Grosso no more than the Classical solo concerto resembles its Baroque antecedent". In the Symphonie Concertante the solo group is more prominent, the orchestra more subservient and the interplay between them less important than in the Concerto Grosso. Moreover, the tone of the Symphonie Concertante is predominantly cheerful and deep emotion is almost completely avoided. Brook has identified some 570 works in the form by about 210 composers and only two or three of these are in minor keys. For the first two decades of its popularity the genre was centred on Paris, with works by native French composers being supplemented by those of visiting composers, especially those from Mannheim. Apparently French taste much preferred the work in two-movement form, which inevitably locked a slow movement. Even in the three-movement type which flourished elsewhere it is rare to find a middle movement with a tempo indication slower than Andante. During the early years the solo group usually consisted of two violins. Later much larger groups of up to nine instruments were used. By for the most prolific composers of Symphonies Concertantes were Giuseppe Maria Cambini (1746–?1825), with over 80 to his credit, and Carl Stamitz (1745–1801), with 38. Most other

leading composers in the genre, such as the Chevalier de Saint-Georges (c. 1739–1799), Jacques Widerkehr (1759–1823), Jean-Baptist Davaux, and Christian Cannabich (1731–1798), produced about a dozen works each. Johann Christian Bach, with his output of at least 17 works, must be counted among them and his works, in the view of the distinguished British scholar and Editor of the famous New Grove Dictionary of Music, Stanley Sadie, "are as a group unmatched by any other composer".

**Symphonie Concertante in E flat major (C 33)**
with Two Violins and Oboe Soli
J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 30, p. 295
*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Tempo di Menuetto*

On Sunday, 4 April 1773 in Paris, the violin virtuosi and brothers Simon and Pierre Le Duc opened the second half of a concert in the famous series, the Concert Spirituel, "with a lyrical and well-proportioned concertante by Bach".

The following October, Bach's principal Parisian publisher, Jean-Georges Sieber, issued a set of orchestral parts of the work recorded here. It is likely, therefore, if not absolutely certain, that they were one and the some work. On the other hand it is doubtful whether the Sieber edition and the edition by J. J. Hummel published in Amsterdam a year later faithfully represented Bach's original conception of the work. The main source of Bach's Symphonies Concertantes, a manuscript once belonging to Royal Music Library and now in the British Library in London, also contains a keyboard concerto which is the some in all its essentials as the present work. The probability is that the keyboard version came first and what we have here is an arrangement made for Paris. This is very much in line with Bach's practice of recycling his favourite works for use in different cities. However, the keyboard concerto version of the work is very richly scored with pairs of flutes, clarinets, bassoons and horns as well as strings. The Sieber and Hummel editions lack the parts for clarinets and bassoons, which makes some passages (in the third movement especially) sound ill-considered and undernourished. Bach was a master of orchestration and was praised as such by the contemporary English musicologist, Dr. Charles Burney, so he would hardly have willingly reduced the orchestration unless he had been compelled to do so and would certainly have revised the less than satisfactory passages. In any case such an arrangement would hardly have been necessary for a performance at the Concert Spirituel, arguably the most prestigious concert giving organisation in a city where clarinets were probably more easily available than almost anywhere else in Europe. The chances therefore are that the Sieber/Hummel version of this work, which has been recorded a number of times before and was published in the Eulenberg miniature score series as long ago as 1935, is actually a publisher's arrangement. There are several other instances of this in Bach's output as his publishers were always reluctant to issue orchestral works which called for clarinets because the instruments were still quite rare. This is therefore the first recording of the work to restore it to what was probably its original form by simple expedient of incorporating the missing wind parts from the keyboard concerto version of the work with very minor modifications.

The *allegro* is true to type. The long opening ritornello (about a fifth of the entire movement) provides the orchestra with virtually the whole of the material which it uses during the remainder of the movement. Once the soloists enter, the orchestral contribution is largely restricted to short passages marking the end of their solo or duet passages. The cadenza is contemporary and comes from J. C. Bach's Gloria in G. In the *Andante* we enter a different sound world. The solo violins are silent and a new soloist, an oboe, takes over. This contrast is sharp enough in the reduced orchestration of the Sieber/Hummel edition but in the much richer reconstructed version we have here the sudden

emergence of the only woodwind instrument not included in the wind section of the orchestra is indeed startling. Further aural delights are in store in the Minuet, which has neither the usual Trio nor the customary repeated sections, Here Richard Maunder's reconstruction really comes into its own. The rich passages for wind alone are most impressive and are show up the much leaner version with flutes, horns and 'cello in Sieber/Hummel for the arrangement it undoubtedly is. The two violins dart around with the energy of Mediterranean swallows in their solo passages. And if you do not have a smile on your face by the end of the movement I would be very surprised.

**Symphonie Concertante in G major (C 32)**
with Two Violins and 'Cello Soli
J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 30, p. 231
*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. (Tempo di) Minuetto*

Only three of Bach's Symphonies Concertantes were published during his lifetime. Like the previous work, this one was published in Paris, probably also in 1773, but by a publisher much less closely associated with Bach, La Chevardière. I suppose it is just possible that the work here was really the one performed at the concert at the Concert Spirituel in April 1773, but the use of a solo group which includes a 'cello in addition to the two violins and its less fluent and polished style probably rules it out. As with the previous work, there are textual questions which need to be considered. The orchestra in La Chevardière's edition consists of pairs of oboes and horns as well as strings and that is the form in which the work has hitherto been recorded. While the oboe parts are quite manageable on the modern instruments used in these recordings, they are almost unplayable on the eighteenth-century instruments required in a recording which aims to reflect contemporary performance practice. Moreover, the general pitch of the parts, the tessitura, suggests that they were intended for the higher range of the flute rather than the oboe. And it is for these reasons that we have used flutes on this first recording of the work on Period Instruments.

Unlike the other two works recorded here, this one retains the some solo group throughout. The opening ritornello of the *allegro* is almost a quarter of the movement and the orchestra generally takes a more positive part in the proceedings than in the preceding work. This is especially true of the flutes, who function almost as fourth and fifth soloists. Some of the distinctive sound of the work also comes from the use of divided violas. In the *Andante* they almost invariably double the two flutes an octave lower. The full orchestra is used very sparingly in this movement. After the opening ritornello it is never heard again except in three unison passages strategically placed in the second half. A sturdy Minuet and more delicate Trio round off the work. The first section of the Minuet is purely orchestral, but the second, which is nearly three times its length, is almost exclusively given over to the soloists. Initially the two violins predominate, but in due course they yield to the solo 'cello playing in its highest register. The Trio (in E minor) is chamber rather than orchestral music: the three soloists are silent and the two flutes and the two violas have the stage to themselves, with just the occasional punctuation from the bass.

**Symphonie Concertante in E flat major (C 42)**
with Two Violins and 'Cello Soli
J.C. Bach Collected Works, Volume 30, p. 161
*1. Allegro*
*2. Largo ma non tanto*
*3. Tempo di Minuetto*

Like the first work on this CD, this Symphonie Concertante exists in another form: as a Bassoon Concerto. The version recorded here survives in manuscript sources in Milan and Mantua and a further copy in the Royal Library in Berlin has been missing, presumed destroyed, since the end of the Second World War. Two set of parts of the version for bassoon have however survived in Berlin. The few scraps of evidence they offer suggest that the bassoon version was composed for the virtuoso, Georg Wenzel Ritter (1748–1808), who was a member of the Mannheim orchestra from 1764 to 1778. This would date that version as having been composed between 1772 and 1775, when Bach was in the Palatinate supervising the productions of four of his major works, the operas *Temistocle* and *Lucio Silla* and the serenatas *Endimione* and *Amor Vincitore*. On the other hand, neither version is obviously the earlier and both are equally convincing in performance. However, what we know of Bach's practice of recycling his favourite works does perhaps point to his having arranged a preexisting work for Mannheim rather than the other way round. It is probably fairly safe therefore to assume that the work we have here dates from the early 1770s.

The *Allegro* is very similar in form to the first movements in the preceding works. The cadenza played here is found in both surviving manuscripts and shows just how wide of the mark are some of late twentieth century attempts at supplying, cadenzas to two hundred year old works. The two solo violins are silent in the *Largo ma non tanto* and but here it is a solo 'cello which takes over. This is one of Bach's longest slow movements – and one of his most deeply felt. The Minuet which concludes this work is like its counterpart in the first in having neither a Trio nor any repeated sections. However, here the orchestra plays a much less important role. After the orchestral ritornello of 32 bars the two solo violins take centre stage and remain there virtually to the end, shaping and developing the material, while the orchestra merely offers a few bars of punctuation from time to time.

**Symphonie Concertante in B flat major (C 46)**
with Violin and 'Cello Soli
J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 48:3
*1. Allegro maestoso*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. Allegro*

This is one of the best of Johann Christian Bach's works in the genre, but until recently it was thought to have been lost or at best unavailable for the foreseeable future. The only known manuscript was a set of orchestral parts formerly in the Königliche Hausbibliothek in Berlin. This was either destroyed during the Second World War or may just possibly have been taken away by the Soviet authorities. All we had were the incipits in Charles Sanford Terry's thematic catalogue and a description in Fritz Tutenberg's 1928 monograph on the orchestral music. It was quite obvious that Tutenberg had made scores of those works which had existed only in parts in order to write his book and, when Richard Maunder was preparing the two volumes of Symphonies Concertantes for the Collected Works, he made strenuous efforts to Find them but without success. By then Tutenberg had died and no one, including surviving members of his family, knew where his papers were. However, during a visit to the Staatliches Institut für Musikforschung Preusischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin in November 1996, was lucky enough to come across most of his scores, including this concertante. In fact the manuscript was in two different hands. The first movement and the first few bars of the second were quite neatly written and the score had evidently once belonged to Fritz Stein, another noted Johann Christian Bach scholar and one-time director of the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. The complete second movement and the finale were in Tutenberg's large and untidy handwriting, obviously made at top speed and full of abbreviations. At first glance some of it appeared to be barely legible. In the event, however, it proved not too difficult to produce a performable score.

The style and proportions of the work place it among Johann Christian Bach's works of the late 1770s. It was therefore probably composed for the annual series of concerts he presented with Carl Friedrich Abel at the Hanover Square Rooms in London. The soloists then would almost certainly have been the violinist Wilhelm Cramer (1746–99) and the cellist James Cervetto (1747 or 49–1837). The *allegro maestoso* opens with a grand ritornello taking up almost a third of the length of the entire movement. It is full of well-differentiated musical ideas, two of them featuring clarinets, then still uncommon instruments. Since it is a ritornello of a Symphonie concertante movement and not the exposition of a symphonic movement in sonata-form, it begins and ends in the home key. There is, however, a clearly defined second subject area in the dominant key (beginning with the descending figure in thirds and sixths in the strings). The violin is the first soloist to be heard, with a statement of the opening theme. This is then repeated (as in the ritornello) but by the 'cellist. As before the clarinets follow this with two statements of a cheerful little motive in the clarinets, answered here not by the full orchestra as before but by the soloists. The descending figure in the strings (denoting the start of the second subject group) follows, but after that the movement is given over to virtuoso displays by the soloists (with just one reminder of ritornello material) until about two thirds of the way through. Then the full orchestra returns with a selection of ritornello material in the dominant key, carefully omitting the beginning (which we are about to hear again from the soloists) and the end (which Bach is saving up for after the cadenza). The soloists return as they entered, but Bach is much too good a composer merely to repeat himself in this recapitulation. The descending second subject figure, for example, never returns. After the cadenza, which (since it occurs in the manuscript) is presumably is by Bach himself, the movement ends as did the ritornello. Most unusually in an orchestral work of the time, the first violins are silent at the beginning of the *Larghetto*, leaving the seconds and violas to announce the theme together in thirds. The solo 'cello too is silent but for the whole movement, leaving the solo violin centre stage. In its four solo passages in a major-key movement it weaves a bittersweet cantilena – yet another rebuke to those commentators who (in their ignorance) continue to recycle the old view that Johann Christian was incapable of writing deeply-felt music. The finale has no such ambitions. It is a cheerful rondo in 6/8 time, with the two soloists vying with each other in the virtuosity stakes between the three statements of the rondo theme.

**Symphonie Concertante in F major (C 38)**
with Oboe and Bassoon Soli
J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 31, p.125
*1. Allegro*
*2. Tempo di Minuetto*

The only surviving source of this work is the set of orchestral parts at the British Library in London (R.M. 21, a. 5–7) which contains no fewer than ten of Johann Christian Bach's Symphonies Concertantes. Although that manuscript contains some of his lost and grandest works in the genre, this is one of the earliest and slightest. It is none the less attractive for that. Stylistically it clearly belongs to the 1760s and it may not be too fanciful to consider the possibility that Bach wrote it in Naples in 1761 for the two artists who played the oboe and bassoon obbligati in the highly popular final aria, "Per darvi alcun pegno", of his most widely performed opera, *Catone in Utica*. Bassoon players capable of coping adequately with the high tenor register of the instrument were, after all, not very common in those days. This perhaps explains why, whereas the now unavailable Berlin copy (Königliche Hausbibliothek no. 158) assign the part to the bassoon, the London manuscript gives it to the 'cello.

As usual, Bach has one or two surprises for the unwary listener in the *Allegro*. For into the ritornello, in fact more than a fifth into the whole movement, there is a half-close and we hear the

opening theme again on the oboes, followed by another few bars also from the beginning. Has the first solo section begun? A few moments later it becomes very clear that it has not and that Bach has been teasing us. After the ritornello comes to a proper close, there is more teasing. The bassoon has the first solo, but, instead of playing the opening theme again as convention requires, he strikes up with something quite different. The oboe ploys a variant of this bassoon theme when he enters, but otherwise that is the lost we hear of it. When the soloists return after the central (partial) statement of the ritornello, they have the opening theme. One again Bach has a trick up his sleave: the oboe begins the melody alone and this is taken up by the bassoon in canon two bars later. The cadenza is found in the London manuscript and is therefore from the eighteenth-century, if not by Bach himself. In the minuet the passages for solo instruments ore reserved for the beginning of the second half (both halves are repeated). This is a gentle rather than a showy movement, a quality underlined here (as in the allegro) by the occasional use of divided violas.

**Symphonie Concertante in D major (C 35)**
with Two Violins Soli
J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 30, p.161
*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. (Tempo di) Minuetto*

Another important source of Bach's Symphonies Concertantes (and of his music in general) is the Accademia Virgiliana in Mantua. Among the genuine works attributed to Bach ore a few which have recently been found to be by other composers and some concertantes which, although unknown from other sources, are probably authentic. This present work is one of these. The first movement is broadly constructed in the now-familiar pattern, but with a greater emphasis on virtuosity than the previous work. This includes a quite lengthy cadenza found in the manuscript. In the *andante* except for the little motive in the flutes, which seems to pervade the entire movement, references to ritornello material are sparse later in the movement. The cadenza comes from the Mantua manuscript. The minuet and trio (in the tonic minor key) anticipate the form familiar from Haydn and Mozart. The solo instruments feature only in the minore.

**Symphonie Concertante in E major (C 44)**
with Two Violins, 'Cello and Flute Soli
J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 30, p. 395
*1. Allegro*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. Allegro molto*

All the symphonies concertantes on this CD are to found in the main source of Johann Christian Bach's works in the genre, a manuscript set of parts in the British Library in London (R. M. 21. a. 5–7). This work is also preserved in the music collection of the Thurn and Taxis private collection in Regensburg. Unfortunately, neither manuscript is dated. Nonetheless, its style places it among the mature works of the late 1770s. The ritornello of the opening *Allegro*, as happens in the majority of Bach's concertantes, takes up a quarter of its length. This has two features which are well worth listening out for. The first is the sudden hush at the sixth bar after all the bustle of the opening. The passage never appears again, so one wonders why it was there in the first place. One possible explanation could be that his audience was so slow to settle down at the beginning of a noisy work that Bach inserted the sudden quiet passage to embarrass them into silence) The second is the "second subject," which is not in the conventional dominant major but in the dominant minor. Bach was evidently quite pleased with his originality because he not only brings it back in the original key in the

central (if partial) statement of the ritornello but also refers to it in the lengthy solo sections on either side of it. Another original feature is that the 'cello never takes over a melodic idea from the violins. It always either initiates an idea, which they then take up, or goes off on its own. Significantly perhaps, the cadenza (which comes from the London manuscript) is for violins alone.

The *Larghetto* in E minor is for strings (with the violas occasionally divided) and solo flute only, the only time that instrument is used in the work and an unusual feature in a symphonic concertante (although Johann Christian Bach himself uses other such alien instruments elsewhere in his concertantes). What is also noteworthy is that the plaintive opening theme of the movement is never repeated or even alluded to later. It is also strange that so much of the solo flute's music is in G major. It is almost as if Bach is placing more reliance on the instrument's tonal quality than the minor mode to achieve the solemn effect he is clearly striving for. The finale sounds as though it ought to he a rondo, but it actually uses the opening section as a ritornello. Note the "learned" canonic opening, with the top of the orchestra leading and the bottom following a bar later. The first solo section belongs to the violins. As if to compensate, the second, after the central statement of the ritornello, features the 'cello. In the middle of each solo section is a darker passage in the oboes and the minor mode, reflecting the spirit if not the letter of the minor-key passages in the first movement.

**Symphonie Concertante in E flat major (C 41)**
with Two Clarinets, Bassoon, Two Horns and Flute Soli
J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 3l, p. 157
*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. (Tempo di) Minuetto*

Bach, like Mozart, was besotted with the sound of the clarinet. Unfortunately, the players at his disposal seem to have had rather limited instruments or techniques or possibly both. In this concertante he compensates for this by giving the more complex music to the other instruments and not allowing the clarinets the lengthy solo passages found in the string concertantes. The two long opening notes of the *allegro assai* play an important structural role in the ritornello (which comprises more than a quarter of the movement) and consequently the entire movement. The first solo section begins with the clarinets in canon, with the second two bars behind the first. This use of imitation between the two instruments is a prominent feature of their contribution to the whole movement. After 15 bars the first solo section is interrupted by a lengthy orchestral extract from the ritornello. The clarinets take up their solo gain, also in canon (here joined by the bassoon) and in the conventional key of sonata form. It is no surprise when the re-statement of these solo passage after the central ritornello occurs in the tonic key. Bach's love of orchestral colour is clearly exemplified in the *Larghetto*: the upper strings are muted and the bass plays pizzicato until the very last bars, the bassoon is much the most important bass instrument, the clarinets hove a mainly sustaining role and a single flute takes centre stage (even to the extent of enjoying the only cadenza in the work). The sturdy minuet offers no solos for the concertante group. Bach's strategy was clearly to save it up for the second minuet (or Trio), where the two clarinets, two horns and bassoons have the field entirely to themselves.

**Symphonie Concertante in A major (C 34)**
with Violin and 'Cello Soli
J.C. Bach Collected Works, Volume 30, p. 347
*1. Andante di molto*
*2. Rondeau: Allegro assai*

This Symphonie Concertante was published by Jean-Georges Sieber, Bach's principal Parisian music publisher, in 1775 and slightly later by Johann Andre of Offenbach am Main – one of only three of his works in the genre to be published in his life-time. It must have been popular because it remained in Sieber's catalogue until the end of the century. Perhaps this is because it appears to have been composed with the French taste in mind. Certainly its highly decorated style contrasts with the bluffer manner of most of his other concertantes. The work is also present in the British Library manuscript I have already mentioned. However, Sieber's publication offers a rather more demanding version of the 'cello part in the first movement and that is the version we have recorded here. The *Andante di molto* begins in typical fashion with a huge ritornello for the full orchestra running to over a quarter of the whole movement. We never hear it again in anything like its complete form. There are much shortened re-statements: just after the mid-point of the movement and after the cadenza at the end. Otherwise a few bars are used every now and then to provide musical punctuation between the solo sections, which ore lengthy and highly virtuosic.

The cadenza recorded here is by Sebastian Comberti, which acknowledgements to JCB.

The second movement is in the style of a Gavotte and somewhat unconventional in form for a Rondeau, as there is only one real episode I This latter is in the minor, with the violin and cello obbligati imitating each other over a drone bass for much of the time, almost like a musette. The music before and after this episode is identical. And there is even more symmetry with the main 12-bar Rondeau theme beginning and ending the section.

**Symphonie Concertante in C major (C 36b)**
with Two Violins and 'Cello Soli
*1. Andante*
*2. Allegro*

This work forms part of the most important collection of Johann Christian Bach's symphonies concertantes to have survived, the set of orchestral parts in the British Library in London, call number R.M. 21 a. 7. (4.). However, recent research has revealed that it is not a totally original work but a radical reworking of on earlier three-movement symphonie concertante (C 36a), once thought to have been irretrievably lost. The differences between the two works give a fascinating insight into the composer's mind. Not only is the second movement of C 36a eliminated in the revision, but both of the original outer movements are shortened and to some extent re-composed. Flutes are added to the original orchestration. And, equally significantly, literally hundreds of the original grace notes are removed. Evidently JCB had grown impatient with the elaborateness of his first thoughts and was looking for a simpler means of expression. Unfortunately, since neither work survives in the composer's autograph and the extant manuscripts are undated, we have no precise date for the composition of either version. My guess would be that C 36a was written by the mid-1760s and the revised version recorded here was made by the end of the some decade.

The long and leisurely first movement clearly roots the work in the French tradition of concertantes. There are none of the bold gestures of Italian music. The opening ritornello, occupying the first quarter of the movement, provides almost all the musical ideas which are exploited later. The first violin is the first soloist to appear, playing a variant of the opening bars of the ritornello. Eight bars later the second violin follows suit and diverts the music to the dominant key. After a brief pause, momentum is renewed with alternating phrases from the oboes and flutes. It is only under the second flute phrase that the solo cello makes its modest first appearance, 77 bars from the beginning of the movement and well over a third of the way through is course. However, this reticence seems to have been one of Bach's compositional tricks, as the cello's first solo is much more virtuosic than the solos

given to the violins. But not to be outdone, the violins are soon showing how skilled they are in fast passagework. Finally, a few seconds before the midpoint of the movement, Bach brings all three soloists together for the first time. The central ritornello (actually the last few bars of the original) follows, modulating to the relative minor. Then the two violins enter in the same order as they did at first, but by now their treatment of the opening theme is much further away from the original. When the cello makes its return it is with quite new material, of least for a few bars. The full orchestra then restates the first third of the ritornello. The solo violins return to compete against each other and subsequently the cello joins them for the longest passage in the entire movement when all three soloists play together. Once again the orchestra intervenes with a few bars taken from the latter part of the ritornello. From this the solo cello emerges with a solo cadenza (composed here by Sebastian Comberti), perhaps to compensate for his hitherto subordinate role. When the concluding trill of this cadenza is resolved, we are subjected to the biggest surprise of the entire work: instead of ending the movement with the conventional orchestral coda, Bach plunges us straight into the second movement.

However there are more surprises to come in the *allegro* itself. The first part is miniature rondo, but the solos in the episodes are given not to the string soloists but to the orchestral oboes, flutes and horns. Only when the second part (in C minor) arrives do the three string soloists put in an appearance, while the entire orchestra takes a rest. This trio section is quite the most radically re-composed and abbreviated part of the original work. The movement is rounded off by a literal repeat of the jolly first part.

### Symphonie Concertante in E flat major (C 37)

with Flute, Oboe and Bassoon Soli

*1. Andante*

*2. Allegro*

The set of orchestral parts in the British Library referred to above also includes this work. There is also another source in the Royal Library in Brussels, a score written on British paper, which was once owned by the great Belgian scholar and collector, François-Joseph Fétis (1784–1871). In that source it is attributed to Joseph Haydn and consequently listed among the spurious works in Hoboken's Haydn catalogue as I:Es14. Again neither source is dated, so my dating of its composition as the mid-1760s is merely conjecture.

The externals of this piece are remarkably similar to the previous work: an easy-going *andante*, followed by a cheerful *allegro*. However, the language is less ornate and the textures less complex. The ritornello in the *Andante* is also much less important structurally and generally used only in fragments. In fact the opening four bars are never heard again. The three soloists dominate, either singly, in their two pairings and all together. The cadenza for all three instruments this time) is closely modelled on an eighteenth-century example in the Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv in Wolfenbüttel, composed for an aria from JCB's *La clemenza di Scipione*. In the *allegro* the first part is repeated after the second as in the previous work. Here a flute solo separates two statements of the main section. The second part begins and ends with the orchestral strings (in C minor), while the middle section is largely given over to the wind instruments (with the conspicuous absence of the flute), playing in the home key of E flat major.

### Symphonie Concertante in G major (C Inc 5)

with Two Violins, 'Cello and Flute Soli

*1. Allegro spiritoso*

*2. Andante*

*3. Allegro*

The only source for this work is in another box of parts at the Accademia Virgiliana in Mantua. The bass part describes it as *Sinfonia Del Sigre Gio: Christofforo Bach*. This has led some scholars to consider the possibility that it might be a work by JCB's elder brother, Johann Christoph Friedrich (1732–1795), but there is now a consensus that this is extremely unlikely. Five works in the Mantua library are similarly ascribed. Two are undoubtedly authentic works by JCB. Features of the remaining three, including this present work, have necessitated my placing them among the works of uncertain authenticity in my Thematic Catalogue of JCB's works (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1999).

Most of these doubts concern the lack of formal clarity in the first two movements and the distribution of the solo parts throughout. Even from his earliest days JCB displayed a very orderly composing mind, which seems to be somewhat lacking here. But, whether he wrote the piece or not, there is much to enjoy, not least the G minor *Andante*.

### Symphonie Concertante in C major (C 36a)

with Two Violins and 'Cello Soli

*1. Andante*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. Allegro*

Until 1996 this work was thought to have been lost. The one known set of parts, Berlin Hausbibliothek, no.149, was presumed plundered or destroyed at the end of World War II However, by one of those pieces of luck which researchers hope to have from time to time, I found a score mode from these parts in the 1920s for Fritz Tutenberg when he was preparing his book, Die Sinfonik Johann Christian Bachs (Wolfenbüttel & Berlin: Kallmayer, 1928). The first movement is in the professional hand of Fritz Stein (1879–1961), at the time on the staff of the University of Kiel and later to become Director of the Berlin Hochschule für Musik under the Nazis. The remaining movements are in Tutenberg's much less expert handwriting, obviously hurried and at times barely legible. However, both parts of the score are clear enough for the work to be rescued from oblivion.

The incipits in Charles Sanford Terry's thematic catalogue of 1929 suggested that the present work was probably just the C major concertante (C 36b), with a Larghetto placed between the two known movements. However, the situation is far more complex and interesting than that. The outer movements of the present concertante are indeed closely linked to those of C 36b, but here both are longer and more elaborate (if lacking the flutes of C 36b). The more compact versions found in C 36b are clearly the work of a more mature artist and therefore later revisions. In the absence of a dated autograph, we can only guess at the date of composition of both of these works, but my guess is that this present work dates from the mid 1760s and its revision from the end of the some decade. I am supported in this view by the origins of the second movement of the present work. This is a reworking of *Larghetto* of the Violin Concerto (C 76), which almost certainly dates from Bach's time in Italy (1755–1762).

The long and leisurely first movement clearly roots the work in the French tradition of concertantes. There are none of the bold gestures of Italian music. The opening ritornello, occupying the first quarter of the movement, provides almost all the musical ideas which are exploited later. The first violin is the first soloist to appear, playing a variant of the opening bars of the ritornello. Eight bars later the second violin follows suit and diverts the music to the dominant key. The cello emerges for its first solo under a passage for duetting oboes well over a third of the way through the movement. However, this delay seems to have been one of Bach's compositional tricks, as the cello's first solo is much more virtuosic than the solos given to the violins. But not to be outdone, the violins are soon showing how skilled they are in fast passagework. The central ritornello (based on the lost few bars of

the original) follows, modulating to the relative minor. Then the two violins enter in the same order as they did at first, but by now their treatment of the opening theme is much further away from the original. When the cello seems as though it is beginning its next solo, it is immediately joined in imitation by the two violins. Indeed the cello plays a remarkably subordinate role among the soloists until near the end of the movement, where it has a cadenza all to itself.

In the *Larghetto* the only soloist is the first violin and the orchestral oboes of the outer movements ore replaced by flutes. The key is C minor and even before the orchestral ritornello has run its course, we hear some interesting harmonies. Although the solo violin clearly dominates the movement, the flutes (the first solo instruments we hear) are also important, providing contrast and punctuation as needed.

The oboes and horns fulfil a similar role in the outer sections of the *allegro*. In fact the three "official" soloists play only with the orchestral tutti until the central Trio, where we are once again in C minor. Here the three soloists have the stage to entirely themselves. Note the use to which Bach puts the descending figure at the beginning. Perhaps there really was a gene for counterpoint in the Bach family! After these 136 bars (counting the repeats) with the soloists, orchestra returns with an exact repeat of the opening section to round off the movement.

### Symphonie Concertante in D major (C 39)

with Two Flutes, Two Violins and 'Cello Soli

*1. Allegro assai*

*2. Tempo di Minuetto*

This is the only stand-alone orchestral work to survive in Bach's own handwriting. The manuscript is preserved in the Thurn and Taxis archives in Regensburg, but how and when it reached there we do not know. There are five other sources, in Göttweig, Mantua, Prague and London, but none of the manuscripts is dated. The style however suggests that it was probably composed in the late 1760s. The two movement form shows the influence of France, but the style and content of the opening *Allegro assai* is clearly Italian. There are five designated soloists, but Bach uses them mostly in two groups: as a pair of flutes and a trio of strings. The only time they play together (except in the tuttis) is when the two flutes act as a background accompaniment to the strings. Elsewhere the two groups alternate, almost always playing different material. The material for the flutes is less virtuosic than that for the strings, which perhaps explains why they have the cadenza (Bach's own) at the end of the movement.

The first part of the minuet dispenses with solo passages. These appear during the second part: for flutes, then strings, next a ritornello fragment for full orchestra, then flutes again, followed by strings and a ritornello-based coda. Once again the two groups of soloists plough their independent musical furrows.

This delightful little work is one of Bach's happiest creations. It makes you wonder why he never had it printed.

### Symphonie Concertante in E flat major (C 40)

with Two Oboes, Two Horns, Two Violins, Two Violas and 'Cello soli

*1. Andante*

*2. Minuetto*

This work is also to be found in the Thurn and Taxis collection, but not unfortunately in Bach's autograph. There is another set of parts in the British Library and a score in the National Library in Vienna, but the set of parts which once belonged to the Accademia Virgiliana in Mantua now appears

to be lost. All three surviving sources are undated and give the work a different title. In London it is merely called *Concerto*, in Vienna *Concertino à più stromenti; o sia Notturno* and in Regensburg *Concertina Notturno*. Of these, the Viennese description (a small concerto or nocturne for many instruments) comes closest to describing its character. Its elaborate scoring for nine solo instruments is in line with such other as Mozart's *Serenata notturna* (K 239) and *Notturno* (K 286/269a) and Haydn's *Notturni* for the King of Naples (H II:25*–32*), either in their original versions or in the revisions for London.

If you think you have heard the opening of the Andante somewhere before, you may know the later of Bach's two oboe concertos (C 81). However, the resemblance does not last long. As with the previous concertante, the soloists are basically used in groups (oboes, horns, violins, violas). Only the cello is used much on its own. However, here we have some shoring of material between the groups. The long central ritornello at the mid-point of the movement is followed by seven solo entries when the movement's opening motive is passed from cello to violins two and one and then from violas two and one to flutes two and one. Although the some motive is playable by the horns, Bach perhaps wisely – resists the temptation of over-using the material. The cadenza this time is left to the two violins.

The minuet may also be familiar, if you know the third of the Wind Symphonies attributed to Bach (B Inc 9). These six works, which include arrangements of music by Boccherini, Gluck and Gossec, were probably cobbled together by a hock in Johann Julius Hummel's publishing, office in Amsterdam. However, there is no doubt about the authorship of this movement, at least in its original form as played on this CD. In fact there are three minuets: the first for full orchestra, the second (in C minor) for oboes and lower strings and the third for horns and upper strings. The solo cello takes part in both the second and the third minuet, after both of which the first minuet is repeated.

*Ernest Warburton*

**Sinfonia concertante in B flat major (C 48)**
with Oboe, Violin, 'Cello and Fortepiano Soli
*1. Allegro*
*2. Adagio sostenuto*
*3. Rondo: Allegretto*

**Sinfonia concertante in C major (C 43)**
with Flute, Oboe, Violin and 'Cello Soli
*1. Allegro*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. Allegretto*

Opinions about the artistic ranking of the youngest Bach son Johann Christian, also known as the "Milan" or the "London" Bach, have always been extremely polarized. "There is nothing behind my brother's present manner of composing", Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach declared in early summer of the year 1768 with great frankness to the poet Matthias Claudius, probably not without a grain of fraternal rivalry. When Claudius objected that nevertheless the music of the London Bach was most pleasing to the ear, the newly-installed Hamburg music director retorted gruffly: It pleases and fills the ear, but the heart remains empty. A very different opinion was expressed by Leopold Mozart in a letter to Wolfgang Amadeus from the year 1778; to render the composition of light and pleasant chamber works more palatable to his son he pointed out that even "Bach in London" had never published anything but "such trifles". "What is slight becomes great when it is written with a natural flow and in a light hand while at the same time being worked out thoroughly. To do this is more difficult than all

the artful harmonic progressions incomprehensible to most and all the melodies that are almost too hard to perform. Did Bach lower himself by writing such music? Not at all!"

These two remarks present in a nutshell the fundamental differences between the rationalism prevalent in northern Germany and the generally more sensuous attitude of the south and Italy – differences that in the 1760s and 1770s were still deemed irreconcilable and that only the Viennese Classical period of the 1780s and 1790s knew how to reconcile. The works assembled on this CD represent important milestones along the way towards this synthesis. When after turbulent years in Italy Johann Christian Bach settled in London in 1762, he attempted to consolidate his reputation first with opera productions at the King's Theatre and a few years later by launching, jointly with his compatriot Carl Friedrich Abel, a series of subscription concerts. For the latter he wrote a great number of imposing orchestral works, among them the two large-scale concerted symphonies presented here. Neither composition was published at the time, and they are preserved today in the form of sets of parts kept in the Royal Music Collection at the British Library.

The **Sinfonia concertante in B flat major (C 48)** is one of the latest and most mature of Johann Christian Bach's orchestral works. It was written around 1780, at a time when Bach's reputation in the London music world was already waning rapidly and his financial troubles and private worries were threatening to become insurmountable. His music reveals nothing of this oppressive situation, however – on the contrary: With its festive splendour it radiates such o confident and refreshing vivacity, offering such an abundant wealth of melodic ideas, that one inevitably thinks that with this music Bach wanted to present a deliberate antithesis to his personal situation.

The large-scale tripartite structure of the work is symphonic throughout; the light, "divertimento" tone typical of this genre has yielded entirely to on orchestral sound full of solemn splendour yet at the some time nimble and versatile, which provides the perfect vehicle for Bach's mature style. The first movement is characterized by on extended orchestral exposition, which introduces the finely attuned thematic material. This is then taken up and developed by the four solo instruments in multiple ways, Bach being especially apt at making use of the various possible combinations of the instrumental idioms and orchestral colours. Thus first the oboe appears, initially on its own, then accompanied by the orchestra and eventually supported by the keyboard; next the two string instruments are introduced, before the keyboard sets out on an extended solo passage. In the course of the piece the quartet of soloists is treated by Bach like on independent ensemble, against which the orchestra retreats into the background. There are long passages where the listener gains the impression that he is attending a chamber concert transferred to the concert podium, where the intelligent and colourful interaction of the musical partners is more important than mere virtuosic brilliance.

A similar situation prevails in the elegiac *Adagio sostenuto*. This movement presents a number of different "soundscapes": Apart from the full tutti there are the oboe solo accompanied by strings, the duet of violin and violoncello mostly moving in thirds, and finally the richly ornamented keyboard solo permeated by dialogic interpolations of the other solo instruments. Bach's masterful achievement lies in establishing a perfect balance between these disparate elements and in thus gathering multiple details into a sublime whole.

The vivacious Rondo functions as a serene continuation of the artistry presented in the first two movements. Here the keyboard is separated more distinctly from the other instruments than before; it has its own solo passages whereas the melody instruments generally appear in duo or trio settings. This separate treatment enabled Bach to employ the keyboard both as a tutti-replacement and in several passages to entrust it with the theme of the essentially orchestral Rondo.

The **Sinfonia concertante in C major (C 43)** according to research done by Ernest Warburton was probably written around 1774/75. This beautiful work too was composed at a time of great financial hardship: The business partners Bach and Abel had acquired property at London's Hanover Square, constructing a new concert hall in its garden where they would from now on host their concerts. There were a great number of rival ventures, however, so that despite their outstanding musical quality the Bach-Abel concerts turned out to be not much of a success. But again, these dismal worries have in no way affected the music. The piece is obviously tailored exactly to the preferences of the London audience. Sonorous melodies and brilliant passages of the four soloists are most prominent. In the middle movement the high tutti wind instruments pause, and the strings are given a uniquely dark timbre merely by the two bassoons playing along colla parte, harmonizing attractively with the idiom of the high solo instruments. The work closes with a jolly movement in 6/8 metre reminiscent of a hunting scene. The soloists here appear either jointly, quasi as an alternative tutti block, or they present themselves with soloistic passage work.

*Peter Wollny*

### CADENZA IN C (attributed to Symphonie Concertante in G, C 45) for Oboe, Violin, Viola and Cello

Bach scholars have long associated the Cadenza with the "lost" Symphonic Concertante in G, C 45, first performed in 1776, and possibly the most frequently performed of Bach's works in this genre.

The cadenza survives via Shield's "Introduction to Harmony", in which it is printed on pages 116–117.

William Shield was the principal viola at the King's Theatre in the 1770s and, being named by Dr. Burney in Rees's *Cyclopaedia* as a soloist at the Bach/ Abel concerts, probably played in many performances of C 45.

Shield states "This ingenious Cadence is engraved from the original M.S. which I had the good fortune to purchase with the celebrated Concertante to which it is so proper an appendage" and he later continues: "a more excellent model for an instrumental Cadence in four parts perhaps cannot be exhibited".

He omits to name the composer, however, but its scoring for this instrumental combination, its key of C, and its two tempo indications (of *Adagio* for the first five bars, and *Andante* for the rest of the piece) point to its belonging to the 2nd movement (*Larghetto*) of the Symphonic Concertante in G.

The oboist J.C. Fischer has been suggested as its composer, but my strong conviction is that it is by J.C.Bach.

*Anthony Halstead*

## Violin Concerto in C major (C 76)

*1. Allegro vivace*
*2. Largo*
*3. Rondo: Allegro assai*

The opening of this work has been known to scholars for many years. It appears in the list of the contents of a box of orchestral parts in the Accademio Virgiliana in Mantua. Unfortunately the parts themselves have disappeared. There the work is described as *Concerto pieno del Sig' Bach*. Since the identical designation was also given to the same library's copy of the Symphonie Concertante in E-flat major (C 40), there was a strong possibility that the lost work was authentic. And so it turned out to be when I unexpectedly come upon a complete set of parts in the archive of St. Anthony's Basilica in

Padua in the summer of 1997. What authenticated the work was not the beginning of the first movement, which we already know from the source in Mantua, but the remaining movements. The second was clearly an earlier version of the slow movement of the Symphonic Concertante in C major (C 36a), itself (as noted above) until recently thought to have been irretrievably lost. The third was a version of the last movement of the Symphony in C major, Venier no. 46 (C 16a). The cello part of the Padua copy interestingly describes the work as *la Sinfonia Concertata a Violino Solo con Orchestra Del Sig. G. Seb. Bach*. This is not the only work by Johann Christian to be ascribed to his father, but it is only known work for violin solo and orchestra. And its hybrid format is such as to give musicologists with tidy minds many a sleepless night. It is either a Symphonic concertante with only one soloist, a symphony with violin solos or a violin concerto with for fewer opportunities for the soloist than we have come to expect. It seemed simplest here and elsewhere to call it a violin concerto.

The French style of the first movements of the two previous works is here abandoned in favour of a vigorous Italian, with more than a hint of the old baroque violin concerto. Note especially the unison opening. The solo violin enters after the customary lengthy orchestral ritornello (almost a third of the length of the movement) with new material (beginning with a falling fourth, as in the first solo entry in the previous work). In fact much of the solo part has little to do melodically with the ritornello. The *Largo* is more evidence that a composer so often accused of superficiality was quite capable of writing solemn, even profound, music when he wanted to. No wonder he chose to revise it as the centrepiece of C 36a. The finale is a garrulous rondo with two episodes: the first in C minor for the orchestral strings and the second in A minor for the soloist, her only solo spot in the entire movement.

*Ernest Warburton*

## Early Harpsichord Concertos

The catalogue of the estate of the Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (Verzeichniß des musikalischen Nachlasses des verstorbenen Capellmeisters Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach), published in Hamburg in 1790 by his widow, Johanna Maria, is not only a very important source of information about Emanuel's works but also about the music of the entire Bach dynasty. Furthermore it tells us most of what we know about the early compositions of Johann Christian Bach. Specifically it refers to "*A packet containing compositions (by Johann Christian), prepared in Berlin, before the author went to Italy, comprising 5 keyboard concertos, 1 violoncello concerto, 2 trios and 3 arias*".(ein Paket mit Compositionen, in Berlin verfertigt, ehe der Verfasser nach Italien ging, bestehend in 5 Clavier-Concerten, 1 Violoncell-Concert, 2 Trii and 3 Arien). The catalogue also lists some of his keyboard music included in an anthology and the scores of a symphony, an overture and a further keyboard concerto "*in the style of Tartini*", (nach Tartinis Manier). The catalogue does not specifically state that these works were from Johann Christian's Leipzig or Berlin periods, but the implication is there, not least because of the evident coolness between the two brothers in later years.

Of all these works only the five keyboard concertos can now be positively identified, in Johann Christian's autograph full score (Mus. mss. Bach P. 390) in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Peussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. They are fairly typical products of the North German School of the time, the school of Carl Heinrich and Johann Gottlieb Graun, Franz and Georg Benda, and Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, with what the New Oxford History of Music calls its "*antiquated language and confusion of styles*". They are also generally quite unlike any of Johann Christian's compositions post-1755. Together with another "*Berlin*" concerto they are also the longest of his 26 authentic keyboard concertos and the only ones scored for soloist and four-part strings. Here every movement is built on the ritornello principle: a passage for the entire ensemble played of the beginning, repeated complete or in part a number of times during its course and one final time to bring the movement to a close, with passages for the solo instrument between the statements of the

ritornello. This is the standard formal scheme for the baroque concerto. In the hands of a bad or lazy composer it could (and sometimes did) produce mechanical and cliché-ridden music, but even in the 1750s a talented and industrious artist could produce work of real interest and merit. During his nearly five years as Carl Philipp Emanuel's ward and pupil Johann Christian was in contact with many of the finest exponents of the genre. But these concertos are much more than the supervised composition exercises of a gifted student. They display accomplishment as well as talent.

**Concerto in D minor (C 70)**

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Adagio affettusoso*
*3. Allegro*

The first eight notes of the ritornello of the first movement are the key to the understanding of the entire movement. They dominate the ritornello itself, returning prominently half-way through, twice subsequently in the bass and at the beginning of the unison passage which rounds it off. For the record, Bach also uses this little motive in inverted and speeded up forms, but that is difficult to appreciate without a score. The first solo, based on the ritornello material, is short, just 12 bars. Then follow the first few burs of the ritornello played by the orchestra exactly as they were at the beginning. The solo harpsichord takes up the eight note motive again, but soon we feel the music is moving from minor to major. You will note on the way the two statements of the eight note motive in the violins under the solo instrument. The whole orchestra shortly returns with a couple of bars of the ritornello in the relative major key of F major before yielding again to the soloist. A much longer orchestral statement of the ritornello in F major (more than half of it) then follows, roughly a third of the way through the movement. The next third is by for the most complex part of the movement. As before there is alternation between the soloist and the orchestra, but there is also more modulation and some "development" in the orchestral part of the little 5-note figure which follows the main 8-note figure at the beginning of the ritornello. At the end the soloist emerges from this complex texture, there is a cadence and the ritornello returns in the orchestra in the dominant minor key. But, as happened before at its first statement in F major, this ritornello is of very brief duration – a false return, as it were. Then there is another short solo passage and a much fuller statement of the ritornello in A minor – actually the first half with four interpolated bars. The soloist then returns in the home key with the eight note motive and the order of musical events after that is much the some as in the first third of the movement following the opening ritornello, but a little longer and in different keys. The entire movement is then rounded off by the last 11 bars of the ritornello. If I have concentrated on this technical detail, it is only to show how carefully and imaginatively the teenaged composer approached his task of injecting new life into an old form.

The remote key of B flat major – the furthest tonally away from the main key of any Johann Christian Bach keyboard concerto, the tempo indication of *adagio* qualified by the adjective *affettuoso* (with tenderness) and muted strings all indicate that Bach was attempting a deeply felt slow movement. Such deep feelings are usually associated with minor keys. Bach, like Mozart after him, was able to achieve them in major keys too.

The concluding *allegro* uses many of the devices of the first movement, but also introduces others. To the casual hearer the beginning of the first solo may appear to have little to do with the opening bars of the ritornello, but the attentive listener will notice that, while the soloist is rushing around in semiquavers, the pizzicato strings are playing its melody. The attentive listener will also notice that the first and second major returns of the ritornello begin not with its opening material but well into its second half. This might appear and sound eccentric had Bach not in both cases already "*developed*" the motive with which this truncated ritornello begins in the orchestra as an

accompaniment to solo passagework. Finally, what appears to be the opening of the original ritornello returns for the one and only time in its original key and scoring at the very end of the work. In fact, it is just the final bars, the earlier sections having received so much attention earlier in the movement that Bach presumably judged that their further appearance would be too much.

### Concerto in B flat major (C 68)

*1. Allegretto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

On the sixth page of the original score of this concerto is this inscription in Johann Christian's handwriting: "*I have made this concerto ... is it not beautiful?*" (Ich habe dieses Conc. gemacht ... ist das nicht schön?). Such seeking after approval is generally more in character in a young adolescent than a young man nearing twenty, so it seems reasonable to assume that this concerto dates from Johann Christian's earliest years under Carl Philipp Emanuel's roof. There is physical evidence too to suggest that this was the earliest of the five to be composed: most of the work is on different paper from the rest of the manuscript and there are many more corrections and alterations than in the other works. Then there is the evidence of the work itself. In general the musical material is simpler and the structures more clearcut. In the allegretto, for instance, the ritornello, already a sixth of the whole movement, is repeated note for note at the end. This is not to suggest that the work is merely an apprentice piece of no intrinsic interest.

In the first movement, the first solo begins with new material featuring the "*feminine endings*" and syncopation absent from the ritornello. Both in the ritornello and elsewhere there is that easy dialogue between instruments which was to remain a feature of Johann Christian's style to the very end of his life. The Andante (with the strings here too muted) also features a mannerism which was to be for ever his: melodies featuring a short note on the accented first beat of the bar followed by a longer note off the beat. Note too the startling use of the "*Neapolitan sixth*" near the end of the ritornello. The presto finale is a daring movement for a young composer to have written. Apart from its headlong pace and nearly 400 bars, it has a deceptively simple ritornello. The opening does not sound particularly fast, but as soon as it reaches the ninth bar you suddenly become aware of how quickly the music is going. Very soon the bass and the violins begin a quasi-canon, rising ever higher only to descend to a pause bar. Then off it goes again, with the violins bowing away furiously in semiquavers, while the violas and the bassos toss the opening motive of the ritornello from one to the other – the bass version inverted and the viola the correct way up. Immodest the young Johann Christian may have been, but I am sure you will agree with him that his concerto was indeed "*schön*".

### Concerto in F minor

*1. Allegretto*
*2. Andante e grazioso*
*3. Allegro*

This concerto is the best known of Johann Christian Bach's five "*Berlin*" concertos thanks to an edition published in 1954 and the only one to be recorded until recently. It is paradoxically the most "*modern*" sounding of the three concertos on this CD and at the some time the most "*old-fashioned*". It sounds "*modern*" to those ears accustomed to the later Bach concertos in its use of violins in thirds and sixths, with their clear-cut and sometimes repeated phrases. This is most apparent in the *andante*, significantly also marked *e grazioso*. It sounds "*old-fashioned*" to the same ears by virtue of all its unison passages in the outer movements and especially by the trills at the end of those in the first. The keyboard writing looks back to the baroque with some passages which would not seem to out of place

in the fifth Brandenburg Concerto and also forward to the rococo with others which could transfer with ease into one of the concertos of Johann Christian's opus 1 or 7. However; perhaps its most striking feature is how different in overall character this concerto is from the others in the manuscript.

### Concerto in E major (C 71)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Adagio*
*3. Presto*

The unique manuscript of this concerto contains many revisions and corrections and is mostly written on the some type of paper as the early Concerto in B flat major, which suggests that this work too may have been among the earliest of the set to have been composed, perhaps not long after 1750. This supposition is supported by even a casual hearing of the work. It is perhaps the most baroque sounding of the five. This is partly defined by the way Bach uses the orchestra. Here, as usual, it plays the ritornelli, provides the customary punctuation derived from ritornello material between solo paragraphs and supports the soloist with sustained chords, but, one tiny passage in the adagio apart, there is no melodic interplay between soloist and tutti. The baroque sound is, of course, even more clearly defined by the nature of the musical material itself.

The opening of the ritornello of the *allegro assai* is almost archetypal baroque: relentless triplet quavers over a descending bass coming to a half-close. The second paragraph sees the triplet quavers in the bass, here descending chromatically, and new material in the violins. This paragraph has several attempts at coming to a conclusion – another typical baroque procedure. When it finally succeeds, we hear what initially sounds like a return to the opening, but actually turns out to be a dialogue between the two violins, over sequential harmony – another baroque feature. Like the second paragraph, this third makes more than one attempt at a conclusion. A brief unison passage – yet another favourite baroque mannerism, with many triplet quavers, brings the ritornello to an end. All this is strongly characterised and memorable material, but it is almost entirely ignored in the solo sections of the movement. The first solo introduces completely new material which re-appears at strategic points later in the movement, but otherwise the remining solo sections are remarkably free from melodic relationships. Nonetheless, the strength and memorability of the ritornello material and the sometimes unexpected way in which Bach deploys it ensures a satisfyingly balanced movement.

The solo part is somewhat more melodically integrated into the structure of the *adagio* in E minor. The 8-bar ritornello is chiefly characterised by the use of the violins in thirds and sixths and appears complete at the beginning and end of the movement. Elsewhere, orchestrally it ploys very little part in the proceedings, with just its closing bars announcing the beginning of the second and third solo sections. Each of these three solo sections takes the melody of the opening of the ritornello as its starting-point, but rapidly moves on to a free fantasy.

Like the Concerto in B flat major, the last movement here is marked *presto*, but here once again the soloist and orchestra keep their own material to themselves. Once more the ritornello material is strongly characterised. Notice how the lower instruments imitate the first violins at the beginning and near the end, the nervous descending passage just after the start and the four unison notes at the end – more an exclamtion mark than a full-stop. This movement has all the exuberance of a talented young man revelling in his newly-won powers as a composer.

### Concerto in F minor

*1. Allegro di molto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Prestissimo*

This work is the only one recorded on this pair of cpo CDs devoted to Johann Christian Bach's early keyboard concertos which is not included in full score in Mus. mss. Bach P. 390. It survives nowadays complete in five other manuscripts, with a sixth (formerly in the Berlin Singakademie) presumably lost in World War II. Four of these six attribute the work to Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (as does the Breitkopf Thematic Catalogue of 1763), one (in a different hand from the one which copied the music) names Wilhelm Friedemann Bach as the composer and the other identifies it as a composition by Johann Christian. This last source, now in the Bach Archive in Leipzig, is perhaps the most important because it was written by Johann Christoph Altnikol (1719 or 20–1759), husband of Elisabeth Bach and therefore brother-in-law to the three composers, who was presumably well placed to attribute the work correctly. Significantly perhaps, Carl Philipp Emanuel did not include the work in his list of compositions and no expert on Wilhelm Friedemann's music has claimed it as his. Paradoxically, further support for Johann Christian's claim to be the composer comes from one of the manuscripts attributing it to Emanuel. Although the harpsichord part (Mus. mss. Bach St. 482) unequiovally names Emanuel as the composer, its cover has a label with the inscription: "*Concerto fb Per il cembalo dal Sig. J.C. Bach detto il Milanese riveduto dal Sigr C. F. Bach*" (Concerto in F minor for the harpsichord by Mr. J.C. Bach called the Milanese revised by Mr. C. P. E. Bach). Labels can, of course, provide false as well as accurate information and it was only when Dr Rachel Wade, General Editor of the complete edition of the works of C. P. E. Bach, identified the handwriting as that of Christoph Nichelmann (1717–61 or 2), a colleague of Emanuel's at the court of Frederick the Great (who almost certainly must have known Johann Christian as well) that scholars began to take it at face value. More recently another meticuluos American scholar, Professor Jane R. Stevens, has discovered a sketch of ten bars of the first movement in Johann Christian Bach's handwriting – on the last page of the first concerto in Mus. mss. Bach P. 390. Even this does not make the case absolutely watertight, but the overwhelming balance of the evidence points to Johann Christian as the author.

The concerto itself is in much the same mould as the other five concertos, but (in Jane Stevens' view) "more aggressively expressive" than any of them. The ritornello of the *allegro di molto* is characterised by a strong, wide-ranging figure heard at the beginning on the first and second violins in unison, shortly afterwards divided between them in canon, then in the bass and finally on the violins in unison again before leading seamlessly to a concluding passage for all the strings in unison. The solo sections similarly rely heavily on this figure. The *Andante* in C minor likewise derives its coherence from the very close relationship between the material of the ritornello and the solo passages. This relationship also characterises the *prestissimo* finale. The considerable use of sequences and repetitions both in the ritornello and the solo sections is another prominent feature.

### Concerto in G major (C 72)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Poco adagio*
*3. Allegro*

The manuscript now called Mus. mss. Bach P. 390, notwithstanding the various corrections and alterations it contains, is an all probability a fair copy made from earlier scores now lost. It is tempting therefore to look upon the fifth and last concerto it contains as the last to be composed. Certainly it is the most fluent and technically assured, as well as having the most demanding solo part. The orchestra plays a more positive accompanimental role in the solo sections than elsewhere. There is also a brief example of the type of dialogue between soloist and orchestra which was to become common in the classical concerto. This occurs almost exactly three-quarters of the way through the first movement when the soloist for the first and only time enters with the opening theme of the ritornello. However, generally baroque gestures and techniques – notably sequences and unison passages – are still very

much in evidence. It needed the liberating influence of Johann Christian's move to Italy in the late spring or summer of 1755 and his exposure to genuine Italian opera, not the old-fashioned variety performed in Berlin, to bring him up to date.

## Six Keyboard Concertos, op. 1

If we were not absolutely certain that at least five of the six works in Vols 1 and 2 of this series of Johann Christian Bach's keyboard concertos were authentic, it would be very easy to conclude that those works and the six presented here were by completely different composers. But his seven years in Italy brought about a remarkable change in Johann Christian's style of composition. Gone were the late baroque gestures of the North German concerto and in their place were now the fluent, Italianate melodies with clearly defined periods of quite a different style of concerto.

Bach left Italy at the end of June 1762 with, apparently, every intention of returning, after having fulfilled a year's contract as musical director of the Italian opera house, the King's Theatre, in London. Initially his working and living environment in London was Italian. He even had lodgings with his employer, the impresario of the King's Theatre, Colomba Mattei, and her husband in Jermyn Street. However, court was German and a number of German musicians, including his future collaborator Carl Friedrich Abel (1723–87), were active in the city. It can therefore only have been a very short time before Bach was drawn into German musical and court circles. Bach's involvement with the German musical faction in London did not endear him in the long run to the Italian, but during the 1762–3 season at least lie had a foot in both camps. Johann Christian's main task as a composer during that season was two compose two full-length operas, but he also found time to write and publish the six keyboard concertos on this CD. On Thursday, 10 March 1763 he placed this advertisement in the London daily newspaper, *The Public Advertiser*

*NEW MUSIC.*
*This Day is published,*
*Price One Guinea,*
*SIX Concertos for the Harpsichord, with*
*Accompanyment, for two Violins and a*
*Violoncello. Dedicated*
*Permission to her Majesty. Composed by*
*Signor John Bach.*
*Printed for the Author, and to be had of*
*him at Signora Mattei's*
*in Germyn-street, St. James's, and at Mr.*
*Hanimel's Music Shop in*
*King-street, St. Arm's, Soho.*

The text of the formal dedication is included in the magnificent presentation copy of the first edition once in Queen Charlotte's possession and now in the British Library. The original French text is given in the French language section of this booklet.

*To the Queen*

*Madame*

*It having very graciously pleased Your Majesty to admit my services to Her in the art of singing, I have made it a duty to employ all my diligence to Her studies, and to Her amusement.*
*It is in this regard that I have taken the liberty of offering Your Majesty this feeble sample of my work.*

*The indulgence and kindness with which Your Majesty has deigned to listen to this music being played has encouraged me to make It public; and the very gracious permission that Your Majesty has given me to have it printed under Your glorious protection, assures me that She would wish to receive this evidence of my industry with that kindness and that Royal beneficence, which inspires the admiration of this Kingdom, the delight of the Court, and the happiness of Her Servants and Subjects, and the good fortune of him, who has the honour to be with the most respectful veneration*
*Madame*
*Your Majesty's*
*Most humble, most obedient,*
*and most submissive servant*
*John Bach*

Princess Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (1744–1818) was passionate about music and even sang and played the harpsichord to entertain the guests as supper was being prepared directly after her marriage to King George III of England on 8 September 1761. It was hardly surprising therefore that Bach, who could instruct her in both disciplines and in her mother tongue, was firmly established in her retinue within a very few months of arriving in London. No records exist showing what or how Bach taught her, but the dedication of these concertos makes it fairly clear that they were written for her to listen to rather than to play herself. The private nature of these performances is probably the reason why Bach chose so small an accompanying ensemble, just two violins and cello and also provided no opportunities for cadenzas. It is also perhaps for the same reason that the majority of them adopt the then fashionable two-movement form of chamber music.

### Concerto in B flat major, op.1, no. 1 (C 49)

*1. Allegretto*
*2. Minuetto*

To ears accustomed to the mature concertos of Mozart the leisurely pace of the first movement of this concerto must come as a shock, yet here in miniature are the formal precursors of those great works. The *allegretto* of this first concerto sets out the formal pattern for the majority of opening movements in this set of concertos. The string ensemble first of all gives out the main melodic material in a section lasting approximately a fifth of the movement. The soloist enters with the opening material of the movement, but shortly afterwards begins to digress from the path laid down in the string ritornello. Some ideas are never taken up again, others are saved for later use and others immediately developed. During this first solo section the ensemble plays a decidedly supportive role, supplying sustained chords, punctuation at cadences and (just occasionally) a little melodic interest of its own. While the string ritornello which started the movement began and ended in the tonic key, the first solo section begins in the tonic and ends in the dominant. When this point is reached, the strings play a shortened version of their ritornello, also in the dominant key. The second solo section then begins. This is much freer in its use (or lack of use) of material from the ritornello than the first solo section. Here, for example, it is only towards the end of the section that any ritornello material is heard at all. This second solo section is rounded off by a few bars from the ensemble, loosely based on material from the ritornello. The third solo section then begins in the tonic key. This is a recapitulation of the first solo section. This recapitulation is never exact. It cannot be, for the simple reason that. while the first solo section moves from the tonic to the dominant, the third and final section has to remain throughout in the tonic key to provide a satisfactory tonal balance to the whole movement. This balance is reinforced by the final few bars in the movement, which are based on the last part of the original string ritornello.

The second movement is a minuet and trio (but not so named). Unusually, it lasts longer than the first movement, even when (as here) the two sections of the first minuet are not played twice when it is repeated. The clever way in which Bach grafts the concerto concept on to the simple dance movement repays close attention.

### Concerto in A major, op. 1, no. 2 (C 50)

*1. Andante*
*2. Minuetto*

The opening movement of this concerto is even more leisurely than the first. Yet the formal plan of the *andante* is broadly the some as that allegretto. There are very many subtle differences and delights. Note, for instance, the way in which the first violin imitates the soloist's melody at the beginning of the first and third solo sections. Note too the new material which the soloist introduces (in the dominant) in the first solo section, which he then repeats (in the tonic) in the third.

The second movement this time is a single large-scale minuet, beautifully proportioned. But, like almost all of Bach's music, it is not without its surprises. To mention just the most startling one, at about the mid-point of each half of the movement, following a few bars from the soloist, we find ourselves not on the firm harmonic ground we expected but in suspense. The chord is the one we were expecting, but its root position not its inversion.

### Concerto in F major, op. 1, no. 3 (C 51)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Minuetto*

In the remaining concertos of the set we are on more familiar ground, all the first movements are allegros of some kind. Here again the broad formal outline is the some, but with a long string passage after the first solo section and a somewhat truncated third solo section in relation to the first.

A large-scale minuet once again completes the concerto, full of delightful detail and much of it featuring melodies in sensuous thirds and sixths.

### Concerto in G major, op. 1, no. 4 (C 52)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Presto*

In this concerto Bach sets aside the two movement concerto in favour of the one in three. Moreover, he calls the piece "Concerto o [or] sinfonia" in the original edition. We shall probably never know precisely what he meant by using this expression, but its form is quite unlike the three earlier first movements. For a start, the soloist never plays the melodic material of the opening ritornello. This begins in much the same vein as the others, but just at the point when you might expect some new, contrasting material to be presented the soloist bursts in a cascade of arpeggios. He then ignores everything which has gone before and introduces much new material of his own. This first solo section, which is roughly twice the length of the ritornello, ends in the dominant and then everything we have heard so far is repeated. The second half of the movement, which is also to be repeated, begins with a shortened version of the ritornello in the dominant. The soloist enters as before and not only introduces some new material but develops some old. We then hear the ritornello in the tonic key but in a different shortened form than before. The soloist follows this up with a shortened recapitulation of the first solo section and the movement ends with the shortest of codas.

If the soloist dominated the first movement, he monopolises the second. Again it is a very strange movement. The first dozen bars, with their strange harmonic ambiguity, play no structural part in the movement and, if both halves were not repeated, would never be heard again.

The *presto* could not be in greater contrast: very short, very lively, very cheerful, with just one shortish section in the minor mode.

### Concerto in C major, op. 1, no. 5 (C 53)

*1. Non tanto Allegro*
*2. Allegretto*

The first movement is cast in the same general formal mould as the first three concertos, but the solo Sections are perhaps melodically freer and more rhapsodic.

The *allegretto* is a charming movement and not quite as simple as it might appear. Note for example, the use Bach makes of the potential for contrapuntal development of the very first phrase.

### Concerto in D major, op. 1, no. 6 (C 54)

*1. Allegro assai*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro moderato*

Like the fourth concerto, the sixth is in three movements and is described as "*Concerto o Sinfonia*". The *Allegro assai* and the *andante* have a close family resemblance to their counterparts in the earlier concerto. But the first is nowhere near as dramatic and the second a limpid, uncomplicated monologue.

The last movement is a set of six variations on *God save the king*, the oldest of all national anthems. Bach's variations were presumably meant as a further compliment to his Royal patron but are certainly not his most imaginative composition. Nonetheless, they served to keep his name alive long after his death since editions continued to appear for a hundred years after they were written.

## Six Piano Concertos, op. 7

The six keyboard concertos, op. 7, first published in 1770, have much in common with the op. 1 set Johann Christian Bach issued seven years earlier. Both sets are dedicated to the British Queen, whose music master Bach had become. They have the some orchestration: two violins and cello. They are on much the same scale. And both have four concertos with two movements and two with three. However, there ore important differences too. On this occasion Bach appears to have issued the concertos through his regular London publisher rather than producing his own first edition. Here on the title page of John Welcker's publication the solo part is assigned to "Harpsichord or Piano Forte", whereas in Bach's first edition of op. 1 no alternative to "Clavecin" was given. The new designation is a reflection of the fact that since 1766, when Johann Christoph Zumpe (1726–1791) produced his prototypes, pianos had been increasingly available in London. Nonetheless, in spite of his own well-documented enthusiasm for the piano, Bach is careful to ensure that the solo part does not demand too many effects only achievable on the newer instrument. Indeed, in the fifth concerto there are very few dynamic markings and in Nos. 2 and 6 none at all. Elsewhere, in addition to the usual alternation of substantial sections marked piano and forte, there are groups of two or three notes marked forte within an otherwise piano passage. The word crescendo or its equivalent is nowhere to be found, but (as Richard Maunder has pointed out) a succession of piano, mezzo forte and forte markings just before the recapitulation in the first movement of the fourth concerto is a crescendo except in name.

Recent research has taught students of Johann Christian Bach's music to treat early editions of his music with caution. Far too many have proved to be arrangements of more elaborate originals. Here too we have good reason to question whether the printed texts of these concertos are what Bach and his colleagues actually played or whether they are versions edited for publication. Manuscript horn parts for five of the six concertos exist in libraries with important collections of his music and one source also has oboe parts for the third concerto. Since all of these additional parts are obviously the work of a talented composer, the possibility of their being authentic cannot be ruled out. However, much more compelling evidence comes from a manuscript copy, partially in Bach's own handwriting, of the keyboard part of the sixth concerto which was sold at Sotheby's London auction in May 1992. All three movements there are much longer than the published version and the keyboard part is rather more demanding. However, here we have recorded all six concertos as Bach published them, because, edited for publication or not, they have his imprimatur.

### Piano Concerto in C major, op. 7, no. 1 (C 55)

*1. Allegretto*
*2. Minuetto*

This first concerto follows the custom of the times by being the easiest of the six to play. It is cast in the "classical" form for first movements of concertos: tutti exposition, solo exposition, development, recapitulation. Here all four sections are of a similar length, but, like all good composers, Bach has one or two musical surprises in each section for the attentive listener. The Minuetto (without Trio) is a fine example of Bach's characteristic blend of a popular style with sophisticated technique. Note, for example, how he teases the listener by bringing the first part of the movement to a close only at the fourth attempt and then without the accompanying strings. And how he is not content to do the same at the end of the second part (as convention demanded) but adds a six-bar coda for the whole ensemble to round off the movement.

### Piano Concerto in F major, op. 7, no. 2 (C 56)

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Tempo di Minuetto*

There is a long-standing tradition, originating from the memoirs of Mrs Papendiek, one of Queen Charlotte's entourage, that Bach composed this concerto for himself to play on the organ between the two parts of his oratorio, *Gioas, re di Giuda*, in the Lent of 1770. The English custom of performing an organ concerto between the acts of an oratorio had been established by Handel many years before and Bach was, in characteristic manner, merely following local practice. However, as R.J.S. Stevens, who sang as a boy in the choir, notes in his *Recollections of a Musical Life*, "this Concerto gave no pleasure to the Audience, and was absolutely hissed: all our boys laughed at the exhibition; so different was it from the true Organ Style of playing, to which we had been accustomed". In retrospect, it is difficult to imagine a sophisticated audience in Europe's largest and most prosperous city laughing at this genial and attractive work.

The first movement may very well have been written, as some commentators have claimed, in imitation of the English organ concertos of such composers as James Hook. This is supported by the frequent appearance of unison passages punctuating the lengthy solo passages and the casting of the movement in a mixture of baroque and classical forms. The Minuet is notable for a lengthy episode in the minor mode, but objectively is one of Bach's less successful movements since he over-uses his material.

### Piano Concerto in D major, op. 7, no. 3 (C 57)

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Rondeau: Allegretto*

The first movement here too lacks the formal straightforwardness of the first concerto. Perhaps Bach himself was aware of this because, uniquely in all his concertos, he directs the entire solo exposition to be repeated. And then, as if to compensate for this, omits much of the material from the solo exposition, including the soloist's arresting entry, from the recapitulation. Not only in its formal aspects but in its general tone, this is a fascinating movement. Where else but in Mozart, for example, do you find a concerto beginning with such a mixture or formality and diffidence?

The second and final movement is a Rondeau with two episodes. Even in the episodes the material of the main section is never far away. In the first, quite short, episode you can hear fragments of the opening bars in the string accompaniment. In the second, much longer, episode in the relative-minor key the link is more tenuous: just one reference when the accompanying strings return after the first keyboard solo. Here Bach avoids the danger of over-using his material by giving the second statement of the main Rondeau section at little more than half its original length and providing new material at the end of the third.

### Piano Concerto in B flat major, op. 7, no. 4 (C 58)

*1. Allegro giusto*
*2. Allegro di molto*

Perhaps the main problem a composer faced when writing a two-movement concerto was to provide each movement with sufficient individual characteristics to avoid monotony. Usually this meant a foster movement followed by a slower. Here Bach reverses the order. As if to emphasise the point, he begins the *allegro giusto* quietly. This is only the first of the many surprises in this ingenious, if formally comparatively straightforward, movement. The use by later composers of the ingenious harmonic progression of the interrupted cadence which twice delays the conclusion of the "orchestral" exposition and the brief excursions into the minor mode just before the "second subject" in the solo exposition and the recapitulation, may have dulled our response to such originality, but the London audiences in the late 1760s must have found them quite startling. The *allegro di molto* lacks such subtleties and relies, like the finales to most symphonies and opera overtures of the time, on its headlong pace to bring the concerto to a satisfying conclusion.

### Piano Concerto in E flat major, op. 7, no. 5 (C 59)

*1. Allegro di molto*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro*

This concerto is undoubtedly the finest of the set. The three-movement form enables Bach to produce a deeply-felt slow movement in C minor. Note especially how the interplay between the violins develops as the movement progresses. Like the fourth concerto this work begins quietly. It is cast in "conventional" classical form, but the "development" begins with the soloist introducing new material – a typically Mozartian procedure predating Mozart. The first two movements both have places for a solo cadenza and, as luck would have it, there are two cadenza's in Bach's autograph in the some keys. There is no indication on the manuscript that they belong to this work, but, as this is the only extant keyboard concerto with movements in these keys, there can be little doubt that they belong here. The concerto is rounded-off by an ingenious movement, superficially cheerful and apparently simple enough to please the *Liebhaber* (or general listener) but actually full of all manner of compositional devices to keep the *Kenner* (or connoisseur) enthralled.

**Piano Concerto in G major, op. 7, no. 6 (C 60a)**

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegretto*

Because of the existence of the much longer version of this concerto, Stephen Roe has suggested that this work was written before the others in the set. This possibility is supported by a number of features of the revised version. The most obvious is that the soloist is much more dominant than elsewhere, almost as dominant as in the six Berlin concertos. Also the first movement is cast in a hybrid version of the "ritornello" form of the Berlin concertos and the "conventional" classical sonata-concerto form. The presence of so extended an orchestral passage (three-quarters of the length of the opening ritornello) in the dominant key at the mid-point of the movement was perhaps intended to off-set the dominance of the solo part, but it certainly emerges as a backward-looking feature. The *Andante* too is a formal hybrid, more elaborate than simple binary form and not quite developed enough for sonata form. As so often, Bach reserves a few surprises for the finale. Note in particular his dalliance with the minor just before the "recapitulation" and the near seismic lurch to the subdominant just before the end.

**Piano Concerto in G (Alternative version of op.7 no. 6) (C 60b)**

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegretto*

Dr. Warburton had known of the existence of the original manuscript of this work for several years, since it was sold by Sotheby's, London, to a private collector on 29th May 1992. Subsequently, it would seem that Warburton communicated with the owner and was able to establish with certainty that the concerto is in fact an alternative, longer, and presumably earlier version of the published Concerto in G, op. 7 no. 6. The owner of the manuscript, who wishes to remain anonymous, kindly allowed Dr Ernest Warburton access to it, via a photocopy.

In "The Collected Works of J.C. Bach, Vol. 48:1" (1999, Garland Publishing, Inc., New York and London,) the current, alternative version of the concerto is referred to by Warburton, the General Editor, as Version B so than a comparison of its length can be made with Version A, the published op. 7 no. 6.

All three movements of B are considerably longer than those of A, the increased length being generally attributable to its more extended string *Ritornelli*. More strikingly, the keyboard writing is more florid in *B* than in A.

The MS is in Bach's hand, and is in "short score", that is, on two slaves, with only about 65 % of the keyboard and string writing fully composed. Warburton completed the remaining sketched-out material, in some instances cross-referring to Op. 7 No. 6, and elsewhere creating new figuration for both keyboard and strings based on Bach's indicated harmonic outlines.

Sadly, Dr Ernest Warburton, who masterminded this entire recording project, did not live to hear his completion of the work, as he died after a short illness on August 7th 2001, only four weeks before the recording sessions. Since he would undoubtedly have been writing this essay himself, had he survived, it is entirely appropriate to quote from his description of Version B in the "Collected Works of J.C. Bach / 48:1" referred to in paragraph 2 above:

"In size, though obviously not in musical style, it resembles JCB's earliest efforts in the concerto form, (those) written in the 1750s, C 68–73, (the *Berlin Harpsichord Concertos*.)

This version of Op.7, No. 6 is, as it were, a missing link between the rambling, discursive early pieces, and the concise, more Mozartean works Bach chose to publish in London from 1763 onwards. One can understand why Bach should choose to prune the extended ritornelli for publication, but he also considerably simplified the piano part.

This raises an interesting question: do the editions published by JCB reflect what the composer actually performed, or did he, for commercial purposes, somewhat simplify the works to promote a wider sale? Charles Burney's criticism that Bach's keyboard compositions 'are such as ladies can execute with little trouble' is disproved in the energetic runs and arpeggios of this manuscript."

As a performer's note, I would like to add that, fittingly for the final sessions of this entire recording project, we recorded the Keyboard Concerto in G on September 5th, Johann Christian Bach's birthday, and, happily, that the luxury of the recording medium allowed me to improvise the cadenzas in Movements 1 and 2 several times until we found the ones that seemed most convinc ing.

*Anthony Halstead*

## Piano Concertos, op. 13

Bach issued his third set of concertos in 1777. They share many features with the earlier collections published in 1763 and 1770. In fact, the six concertos in all three sets use the some six keys, with the exception of op. 1, no. 2. Here again four concertos are in two movements and two in three. However, there are important differences too. The scale of the concertos has expanded. The "orchestra" has also expanded to include pairs of oboes or flutes and horns, but still not violas. The title page of Bach's first edition describes these wind instruments as "*ad libitum*" (optional), but the works themselves quite clearly show that their inclusion is much to be desired. The first edition also still allows the harpsichord as an alternative to the piano, but again the evidence of the solo part suggests a very strong preference for the newer instrument. The optional wind and the harpsichord alternative were quite clearly responses to commercial reality. Only the richest households could afford the four extra wind players and, little more than a decade after pianos had become available in England, many people still only had harpsichords. Moreover, ever the pragmatist and following his practice in the earlier sets, Bach allowed a keyboard reduction of the orchestral tuttis to be printed in the solo part in addition to the solo passages to enable those who wished to do so to play the concertos unaccompanied. This practice must have persisted into the 1790s because London publishers were then still offering the keyboard part as a separate publication.

### Piano Concerto in C major, op. 13, no. 1 (C 62)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Rondeau: Allegretto*

The *allegro* begins with two loud bars followed by two soft. The first pair returns later to mark the beginning of the first solo section and the recapitulation, but it is the second which has the greater role in the course of the movement. It appears in all manner of guises. Bach not only exploits its melody, even turning it upside down in the development, but perhaps even more importantly uses its melodic contour and harmonic scheme to produce new ideas. Another important component of the movement is the phrase which begins the second (almost equal) half of the orchestral exposition. This consists of an octave leap and two repeats of the upper note. Bach clearly could not resist the contrapuntal possibilities of this little scrap of melody and, even as the first violin plays the fourth note, the second violin takes it up and the bass follows in similar fashion. One further feature of this orchestral exposition which is worth nothing is that the second parts of both halves are the some for most of their course. The soloist is hardly ever idle during his exposition. Much of his material we have already

heard in the orchestral exposition, but note how his version of the phrase with the rising octave continues quite differently. Just before the mid-point of the movement the orchestra returns with a much shortened version of the opening tutti in the dominant key. This is more in line with baroque practice than rococo or classical, showing that even as late as the mid-1770s old habits died hard. However, the quite long development which follows it could not be more up to date and "Mozartean". The recapitulation mirrors the solo exposition very closely. When the soloist has bowed out (without a cadenza), the movement ends with a literal restatement of the last three-quarters of the orchestral exposition, a baroque procedure if ever there was one.

The main section of the Rondeau is first played by the orchestra alone and then repeated with the soloist as the senior partner. In the first episode Bach reminds us three times of material from the main section. The second episode, as so often, is in the minor and it too has the occasional reference to material from the main section. It is fascinating to hear how Bach, having been so deeply into the minor mode, prepares us for the return to the major in the final statement of the main section.

### Piano Concerto in D major, op. 13, no. 2 (C 63)

*1. Allegro con spirit*
*2. Andante*
*3. Allegro non tanto*

The first movement shares the broad outline of the opening movement of the first concerto, even if some of the proportions are different. But here it is the loud opening two-bar unison motive which pervades the movement. To a skilled composer its shape suggests endless possibilities for contrapuntal development. Bach, perhaps judging that there were more enthusiastic amateurs among the prospective purchasers of these concertos than conoisseurs, only exploits its potential twice: at the beginning of the development and in the recapitulation. Bach's wish to please his public is also evident in the *Andante*. This is a fantasia on a popular Scotch song, "Saw ye my father". Scotch songs (as they were then called), and indeed Scottish literature, were very popular in England and much of the rest of Europe at the time and so Bach was "climbing on to the bandwagon" in using this simple song. The popular English composer, James Hook (1746–1827) had already produced a set of simple variations on the tune. Here Bach offers something much more subtle: a rondo, where the main section is varied on each of its repetitions. Bach underlines the contrast with the outer movements by replacing the oboes with the gentler-toned flutes. The finale, with the oboes back in place, is a more conventional rondo, rather like the second movement of the first concerto, with two episodes, the second in the minor.

### Piano Concerto in F major, op. 13, no. 3 (C 64)

*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Rondeau: Allegro*

Flutes replace the usual oboes throughout this concerto, emphasising the contrast between this elegant and exquisitely detailed concerto and its rather more extrovert predecessor. In form the first movement is like its counterparts in the first two concertos, but here the second subject is more prominent. The development too is more extended and "Mozartean", especially in its exploitation of a descending figure first heard just before the second subject in the exposition. The Rondeau also follows the two earlier precedents: a main section (played first by the orchestra and then repeated mostly by the soloist) twice repeated with two soloistic episodes between. As in the first concerto both episodes have references to the main Rondo theme. The second, much longer, episode is once again in the minor. Here, as so often, Bach hints at the depth of expression of which he was clearly capable had the environment in which he worked allowed it. Both movements are marked *allegro*, which is taking

a risk. But here, as in the only other of his twelve two-movement concertos (op. 7, no. 4), with two allegros Bach produces movements of sufficient contrast to make the actual tempo markings irrelevant.

### Piano Concerto in B flat major, op. 13, no. 4 (C 65)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Andante con moto*

If the number of eighteenth-century reprints of this concerto is any kind of guide, this was Bach's most popular keyboard concerto. Its popularity lay in the use of the "Scotch" song, "*The yellow hair'd laddie*", as the basis for its last movement. In London during the 1770s the enthusiasm for "Scotch" songs amounted to a passion which was not to cool until the early years of the following century. The arrangements of folksongs by Haydn and Beethoven were products of this some fashion. "*The yellow hair'd laddie*", with words by Allan Ramsay (1686–1758), the father of the great Scottish pointer of the some name, was one of the more popular songs and Bach may also have set it on two other occasions: once for domestic performance with keyboard and viola da gamba accompaniment (LH 5) and again as an aria with orchestra. In the latter form it appears as an insertion aria (G Inc 3) in *Gli euqivoci*, a wonderful comic opera by Stephen Storace (1762–1796) with libretto by Lorenzo do Ponte, which was produced in Vienna in 1786 a few weeks after *Le nozze di Figaro* and with much the same cast. Here in this concerto Bach uses the tune as the basis for a quite subtle set of variations.

The opening *allegro*, with its bold opening theme in unison, establishes that this is a concerto on the grand scale appropriate for the public concert hall. Moreover, after the amazingly brief orchestral exposition (a mere 33 bars), the soloist scarcely rests until the very end of the movement. Real virtuoso music!

The soloist is equally active in the *Andante*, but the contrast in mood and texture between the two movements could scarcely be greater. The neutral pizzicato opening for the orchestra is quite striking, as is its sudden switch to arco for the first time two-thirds of the way through the movement. Another noteworthy feature is that this is the only movement of the fourteen which make up the six concertos of opus 13 which calls for a cadenza from the soloist.

### Piano Concerto in G major, op. 13, no. 5 (C 66)

*1. Allegretto*
*2. Tempo di Menuetto*

The character of this concerto seems more suited to performance in a private drawing room than in a public concert hall. Its attractions are in subtle harmonies rather than grand gestures. For a concerto of this date the orchestral exposition is very long (nearly a quarter of the length of the entire movement) and contains enough musical ideas for two movements. Bach chooses not to exploit all of them in the solo exposition and even introduces a new motive involving crossed hands. The central orchestral section – here more in the character of the old ritornello – is even more selective and therefore short. The solo "development" section which follows begins with the repeated-note motive used at the very beginning of the movement being handed down successively via the soloist, the first violin, the second violin to the boss. Bach repeats the passage a third lower before moving on to exploit other material from the orchestral exposition, some of which he ignored in the first solo section. The repented-note motive returns at the end of the section to usher in the recapitulation, which follows mutatis mutandis the some course as the solo exposition.

The Minuet preserves the gentle character of the first movement and adds the mildly chromatic harmonies which ore now called Mozartian.

### Piano Concerto in E flat major, op. 13, no. 6 (C 67)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Tempo di Menuetto: Andante*

To modern ears this is perhaps the most attractive concerto of the opus 13 set. The texture is coloured by the use of the transverse flute (or the German flute, as it was called in Britain), one of the most typical sounds of the second half of the eighteenth century. The widespread use of a falling bass (still an effective device in the popular music of the twentieth-first century) is one of the techniques which underpin the melodic charm of the first movement. However, ultimate satisfaction comes from the perception, conscious or otherwise, that this is a movement composed by a master musician in full control of all of his stock of attractive and imaginative material. The development section is particularly fine, almost Beethovenian. And written before Mozart had composed any of his great concertos!

The minuet en rondeau maintains the same standard of elegance as the first movement, but (inevitably) not its some high level of invention. However, the lengthy second solo (in the relative minor and over pizzicato strings) and its transition back to the major key are much to be admired.

## Piano Concerto in E flat major (C 75)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Andante*
*3. Rondeau: Tempo di Minuetto*

This concerto is the almost identical twin of the *Symphonie Concertante* in E flat major, first performed of the Concert Spirituel in Paris on 4 April 1773 and published in a reduced orchestration by Sieber of Paris later the same year and by J.J. Hummel of Amsterdam in 1774. There is no water-tight evidence as to which version came first. Richard Maunder, who edited both versions for the Collected Works, believes that the present version is the earlier. However, I have recently come to the conclusion that the form and style of the first movement, which are much appropriate to a *Symphonie Concertante* than a solo concerto composed in the 1770s, suggest that the keyboard version is the later. This view is perhaps supported by the fact that it alone among JCB's known mature keyboard concertos remained unpublished in his lifetime. However, it seems to have circulated quite widely in manuscript. Six manuscripts are known to have survived, of which the most important is the incomplete set of parts at R.M. 21. a. 6. in the British Library in London. The cadenzas played on this recording come from a complete set of parts in the Kantonsbibliothek in Aarau in Switzerland, which has a small but important collection of JCB's music.

The long opening ritornello of the *allegro* (amounting to about a fifth of the entire movement) is the orchestra's principal contribution to the proceedings. Shortened versions of the ritornello appear at the mid-point and at the end, but the orchestra's role elsewhere is largely to provide punctuation between or discreet support during the keyboard solos. Moreover, for nearly a third of the entire movement the orchestra is silent while the soloist performs unaccompanied. This is perhaps the most important difference between the two versions. Obviously two violins needed at least an orchestral bass for support, while the piano is quite capable of providing its own. Also, for the record, it is worth pointing out that the first movement of the keyboard concerto version is slightly shorter (by three bars) than its equivalent in the *Symphonie Concertante*. However, the two remaining movements are exactly the same length.

In the *Andante* the wind instruments are silent and, of course, the piano takes over the solo role allocated to the oboe in the *Symphonie Concertante*. The full orchestra returns for the Rondo-Minuet. This is a movement which seems to have a quite different character from its counterpart in the *Symphonie Concertante*. Perhaps the replacement of two soloists, who are more or less honour-bound to compete with each other in the virtuosity stakes, by just one who has the stage to himself is the chief contributory factor. Anyhow, an already genial and appealing movement becomes even more so in this guise.

## Piano Concerto in E flat major, Bailleux op. 14 (C 61)

*1. Allegro maestoso*
*2. Andantino*
*3. Rondeau: Allegro di molto*

This is the least characteristic of the concertos published during Bach's maturity. It is by for the longest and fully exploits a keyboard compass of five octaves. It was published in Paris in 1776 by Bailleux, who was not his regular French publisher. Remarkably, it was never reissued in London or Amsterdam, the two other major centres of music publishing in the eighteenth century. The original title page describes it as a concerto for harpsichord (clavecin), with an orchestra including (for the first time since the Berlin concertos of the early 1750s) violas and a pair of optional horns. The designation of the solo part for the harpsichord only seems like a throwback to earlier days. However, Bach's only surviving letter in French, sent from Richmond, England on 26 September 1770, shows that he was acquainted with the Paris-based Madame de Brillon, whom he describes as the great harpsichordist (grand [sic] Joueuse de Clavecin). Anne Louise Boyvin d'Hardancourt Brillon de Jouy (1744–1824), was one of the leading keyboard players in Paris and also a composer. Her salon at Passy was famous and its members included Benjamin Franklin (1777–1785). It is known that Bach sent her an English pianoforte. It is also possible that he composed this concerto for her, although the lack of a dedication of the title page of the publication suggests otherwise.

The *allegro maestoso* begins in Bach's most genial style. However, his extensive use of the "scotch snap" here suggests that the work may have been written some years before it was published. The opening ritornello (41 out of a total of 261 bars) remains firmly rooted in the tonic key. It reappears in shortened from twice later, in the dominant at bar 86) and in G minor (at bar 176), and a repeat of its last thirteen bars brings the movement to an unusual pianissimo close. The three solo sections are cleverly varied. The second is particularly notable for its use of the diminished seventh chord, more associated with romantic music than with rococo.

The *andantino* is an ingenious mixture of ritornello and sonata form. The first solo section (beginning in the tonic key and ending in the dominant) is mirrored very closely by the second (moving from dominant to tonic). Moreover, both of these clearly defined passages are repeated, with the repeat of the second being lengthened to include a cadenza. However, perhaps the most striking feature of the movement to modern ears are the remarkably forward looking, almost Beethovenian, harmonic progressions which it contains.

The finale's marking of *Allegro di molto* is a trap for the unwary soloist. Too fast a tempo from the beginning means mounting difficulties later. Perhaps to expose the soloist's virtuosity to the maximum effect, Bach has the strings play pizzicato when the going gets really tough. Needless to say there is no place for a cadenza at the end. Bach has correctly judged that the amount of virtuosity we have already heard is quite enough.

The numbers C 61, C 65–67, G Inc 3 and LH 5 refer to the entries in my Thematic Catalogue of Johann Christian Bach's music, published as Volume 48:1 of The Collected Works of Johann Christian Bach (Garland Publishing Inc., New York and London, 1999).

## Woodwind Concertos

### Flute Concerto in G major (C 78)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. Tempo di Minuetto*

Until recently it had been thought that Johann Christian Bach composed only one Flute Concerto. We now know that he wrote at least one other, the concerto in G major recorded here for the first time. If it sounds familiar to record collectors will, an interest in Johann Christian Bach, that is because it is basically the earlier F major Oboe Concerto transposed up a tone, with the solo part modified to reflect the different characteristics of the flute. The solo part in the only surviving source is in Bach's own handwriting, so we can be sure that not only is this concerto authentic but also the oboe concerto on which it is based. The orchestral ports are in the hand of a not very good copyist and the whole score is written on paper manufactured in the Netherlands. This paper was readily available in London and, indeed, was used by Bach in the autograph scores of his opera *Carattaco* (London, 1767) and the Rondeaux of the Flute Concerto in D major.

Like his father before him, Johann Christian Bach was a great re-cycler of his works. However, he was always very careful to cover his tracks. Except when the arias and duets from his London operas were translated from the Italian for use in the English-language theatres and pleasure gardens, he made sure that a movement appeared in a different context only in a work composed for a different city. Thus he was quite content to re-use operatic and even church music from his early years in Italy in his works for London and pieces composed for London in his commissions for Mannheim and Paris. All this appears to suggest that the concerto we have here is a work originally composed for Paris or even Milan and arranged for performance in London in the second half of the 1760s. It is a fascinating coincidence that about a decade later Mozart followed Bach's example, presumably unaware that he was doing so, when he also converted an oboe concerto into a work for flute, also transposing it up a tone and altering the solo part.

In the late 1760s the flautist Joseph Tacet, was one of Bach's close collaborators. As I have already noted, information about the programmes of London concerts of that period is sparse and even when the concert announcements offer more than the most basic information, they are tantalisingly incomplete. We know, for example, that Tacet played a flute concerto at the Thatched House in St. James's street on 2 June 1768 in a concert in which Bach also took part, but the advertisement announcing the concert does not give the name of the composer. It would be stretching a point much too far to assume that he was Johann Christian Bach.

The title page of the unique source of this concerto mentions horns but the actual score gives no music for them. However, since there was no need for the horn parts of the original oboe concerto to be re-written, an instruction to use a G crook rather than one in F being sufficient, perhaps Bach's copyist saved himself the trouble. In any event, since no other authentic orchestral work by Bach lacks them, it seemed logical to include horns in this recording. The allegro is easy-going rather than dynamic. Its form is similar but less "advanced" than in the second oboe concerto. There is no proper "second subject" and the "development" is just a section where new ideas are introduced and reinforced by repetition. The Larghetto is a movement which backs up Bach's claim to be regarded as

perhaps the chief composer of the Rococo. The tuneful Minuet en Rondeau, with its two solo episodes, was also popular in another form, as a "Favourite Rondeau" for viola-da-gamba and keyboard.

### Flute Concerto in D major (C 79)

*1. Allegro con brio*
*2. Rondeaux: Allegretto*

It is by no means clear that the two movements recorded here were ever intended to form port of the same work. The only surviving sources are separate scores of the two movements, both in Johann Christian Bach's handwriting, but each written on different paper and nowadays preserved in libraries in Berlin and Paris. The first movement, now in Berlin, is dated 1768. The Rondeaux has no date, but is written on the same type of paper as Bach used for much of the autograph score of his *opera Carattaco*, first produced in London in 1767. The chances are therefore that both movements were composed at roughly the same time. Certainly together they may an attractive and melodious whole. Whether, always assuming that they were designed to go together, there was ever a slow middle movement, as in the other live woodwind concertos, we shall never know. A published and recorded edition of the work uses the andante of the overture to Bach's *Parisian opera, Amadis de Gaule* (1779), as the middle movement, but without evidential, historical or stylistic justification. We have not followed that precedent here. There were, after all, very many two movement concertos being composed in the 1760s, including a quite a number by Bach himself.

The two movements we have here are among Bach's most attractive creations. Charming, elegantly written and full of melody. The *allegro con brio* in fact has two lyrical melodies, either of which could serve as the "second subject". The movement itself (like the oboe concerto mentioned above) of the typical early classical concerto. The contrasting section, as before, does not develop material heard earlier, but introduces new ideas perhaps the most attractive of which is built on leaps between the lower and upper registers of the solo flute. Overall the orchestral texture is light (presumably to allow such a gentletoned soloist to be heard clearly), but wonderfully detailed, with lots of rests for the lower instruments.

In Rondeaux the recurring statements of the main section are separated by three episodes for the soloist, each longer than its predecessor. One episode in the minor is common but two, as here, is quite unusual. Finally, do listen out for the transition leading from the last solo episode to the final return of the main section. It, like the remainder of the concerto, shows the hand of a master craftsman.

### Flute Concerto in D major

J.C. Bach's Collected Works, Volume 48, part 3

*Larghetto*

The discovery of this movement for flute and strings is one of the early fruits of the massive research project to document the music of the entire Bach Family, the Bach Repertorium. When Ulrich Leisinger and Peter Wollny were examining the Bach sources in the Brussels Conservatory they come across an anonymous manuscript, which some post librarian had attributed to Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. They however recognised it as a work not only in Johann Christian's style but actually in his own handwriting. It was clearly the slow movement of a three-movement work, either a flute concerto or a symphonie concertante. The obvious place for it is as the slow movement of the D major flute concerto and all the concrete evidence – the style, the handwriting, the type of paper – supports this hypothesis. Moreover, it sits very well between the two existing movements, which were perhaps too similar in mood and tempo to provide a totally satisfactory whole.

The three separate autograph manuscripts (now in Berlin, Brussels and Paris respectively) which make up this concerto are all working documents, with deletions and revisions all clearly visible. More than any other manuscripts in Johann Christian's hand they show the composing process. The score of this movement, in particular, is full of crossings-out, shortening the original version by over 20 bars. Bach's final intentions however are such an obvious improvement and sufficiently clearly expressed to have encouraged us to record his revised version (with one conjectural bar where the manuscript did not make sense) here.

The movement is a wonderfully subtle piece of musical composition. Note, for example, the way that the flute suddenly appears, floating over the final bars of the ritornello, continuing with a downward scale and then repeating the four bars played just before its entry before bringing the combined ritornello-first solo to a close.

**Oboe Concerto, no. 1 in F major (C 80)**

*1. Allegro*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. Tempo di Minuetto*

The sole surviving source of this concerto is a set of manuscript parts (lacking the part for 'cello) in the Öttingen-Wallerstein collection, formerly housed at Schloss Harburg in Swabia in southern Germany but now preserved at the University Library in Augsburg. The library catalogue informs us that it was part of the estate (Nachlass) of Franz Xaver Fürall, who was employed as on oboist at the court of Graf Kraft Ernst zu Öttingen-Wallerstein and who died on 11 February 1780. However, the picturesque Schloss Harburg, perched high on its rock above a bend in the river Wörnitz, is so for distant from any place which Johann Christian Bach is known to have visited or to have had any connection with that it seems reasonable to assume Bach did not write the concerto either for Fürall or his employer. Its style suggests that it was composed no later than the early 1760s, when Bach was active in Milan, Paris and especially London. He seems to have been quite fond of the work. Not only did he re-cycle the Minuet as the final movement of a Sonata for keyboard and viola da gamba (presumably in London after 1762 for his friend an colleague, Carl Friedrich Abel), but he arranged the whole work as a Flute concerto in G major, in much the same way that Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was later to transform his Oboe concerto, K 314. Of course, it is possible that the Flute concerto many have been the original and the Oboe version the arrangement. However, for reasons which I explain in the notes accompanying the recording of the version for flute I am inclined to think that the Oboe version came first. The concerto has been recorded once before, using just the incomplete set of performing material from Schloss Harburg, and two conjectural reconstructions of the full orchestration have been published. This recording, benefiting from the recent availability of the version of the concerto for flute, restores the whole work to what is probably its original state.

The *allegro* is Bach at his most genial. Formally it falls into the four basic sections – orchestral exposition, solo exposition, contrasting section, recapitulation of the early classical concerto. However, there is no "second subject" as such and the contrasting section does not "develop" existing musical material but introduces new ideas and reinforces them by repetition. The *Larghetto*, with its two viola parts, is an elegant rococo confection, with a false reprise after the central orchestral ritornello. The concerto ends with a tuneful Minuet en Rondeau. There are two solo episodes. In the first of which Bach cannot resist alluding to the main theme of the movement.

### Oboe Concerto, no. 2 in F major (C 81)

*1. Andante*
*2. Larghetto*
*3. Rondeau: Allegretto*

While the oboe concerto now called no. 1 survived in a single source in Schloss Harburg, well away from Bach's known areas of activity, the concerto here called no. 2 is uniquely preserved in a set of orchestral material used for his London concerts and subsequently presented by his widow to Queen Charlotte. Neither this material nor the concert advertisements in the London newspapers throw much light on the genesis and performance history of the work. The only known evidence for the performance of either of Bach's oboe concertos comes more than four years after his death. On 17 May 1786, the castrate, Ferdinando Tenducci, promoted a concert for his own benefit which consisted entirely of "Pieces... of that justly celebrated Master, Johann Christian Bach, deceased, which still remain in manuscript". The "Morning Post and Daily Advertiser" further informs us that "Act the First" was to end with "A Hautboy Concerto, Mr. Fischer". Like Tenducci, Johann Christian Fischer (1733–1800) had been a close friend and colleague of Bach's for many years, in fact since his London debut in 1768 in one of Bach's concerts. Bach undoubtedly wrote many of his concertante and chamber works for Fischer and even made keyboard arrangements of some of Fischer's own early concertos. It is now, of course, impossible to prove that the work performed in 1786 was the one recorded here, but it does seem a strong probability.

Some possible clue as to the concertos origins comes from the fact that the ritornello of the first movement is almost the same as the one in a symphonic concertante in E flat major (J.C. Bach Collected Works, Volume 31, p. 31), which probably dates from the early 1760s. The oboe concerto clearly comes much later, perhaps around 1770. The content and structure are much more sophisticated and reflect Bach's experience as a composer of keyboard concertos. Like two of the opus 1 keyboard concertos, the soloist in the first movement enters with new material, but here it is in the main key of the movement and more as a false than a proper start. After a few bars the soloist pauses and begins again, but this time with the "correct" material, i.e. the phrase heard at the beginning of the ritornello. From then on the movement proceeds much like an early classical concerto, with solo exposition, development and recapitulation, betraying its relatively early date mostly because of the appearance of a large block of ritornello material at the start of the development.

The *Larghetto* is a serious and beautifully crafted movement. The long ritornello – almost a quarter of the work – provides all the motives which hold the movement together, permitting the soloist to introduce new material and indulge his rhapsodic fancy. The finale, a French-style rondeau with two solo episodes, is music which cannot fail to raise a smile.

### Bassoon Concerto in E flat major (C 82)

*1. Allegro spiritoso*
*2. Largo ma non tanto*
*3. Tempo di Menuetto più tosto Allegro*

As any player of the instrument will confirm, the repertory does not include many concertos for bassoon. It is also a fact that the vast majority of these rare works seem to have been inspired by the exceptional qualities of a particular player. In the case of the present work that virtuoso may well have been Georg Wenzel Ritter (1748–1808), who was a member of the famous court orchestra of the Elector Palatine Carl Theodor in Mannheim from 1764 to 1778. Johann Christian Bach was active in Mannheim in the first half of the 1770s, supervising the premieres of two of his most ambitious projects, the operas *Temistocle* (1772) and *Lucia Silla* (1775), as well as performances of two other

major works, the *serenatas Endimione* and *Amor Vincitore*. Bach was clearly impressed by the quality of Ritter's playing since there ore bassoon obbligati in all four works. Of these much the most spectacular is the aria which concludes the first act of *Temistocle* – a veritable double concerto movement for tenor (originally Anton Raaff, Mozart's first Idomeneo), bassoon and orchestra, which makes almost superhuman demands on both soloists. The records of performances at Mannheim are surprisingly sparse and there appears to be no hard evidence for Ritter having played concertos there, let alone Johann Christian Bach concertos. When Carl Theodor became Elector of Bavaria on 31 December 1777 and was obliged to move his court to Munich, Ritter was one of the musicians who accompanied him. There he remained until 1788, for the first few months as second bassoon in the orchestra and then as chamber virtuoso. In 1788 he moved to the court at Berlin, where his reputation as one of the greatest virtuosos of his instrument was reflected in his exceptional salary of 1600 thalers.

One of the richest sources of Johann Christian Bach's music is the former Royal Music Library in Berlin and I do not believe it is reading too much into the evidence to suggest that it is likely that the only two surviving sets of performance material for this concerto which are now in that collection found their way there as a result of Ritter's involvement with Bach in Mannheim in the 1770s.

The work also exists as a Symphonie Concertante, the orchestral parts of which are virtually identical. Which version is the earlier is not immediately clear. Both works are equally convincing in performance. While it is a fact that all three movements are a few bars longer in the bassoon version, that in itself proves nothing. However, what inclines me to think that the Concerto is a revision of the Symphonie Concertante and not the other way round is the structure of the first movement. This is in a form which is quite usual in a Concertante but quite different from Bach's other woodwind concertos. In particular, the recapitulation is much shorter and of less structural importance than elsewhere.

The *Largo ma non tanto*, already in the *Symphonie Concertante* version one of Bach's longest and more deeply felt slow movements, is here 12 bars longer. It is arguable whether these extra bars add to the quality of the movement, but they certainly provide the soloist with two additional opportunities to display his technique in cadential flourishes. The concerto ends with a Minuet. However, unlike it and Mozart's Bassoon Concerto K 191, the Minuet is not in the form of a Rondo. More evidence, perhaps, of the work being an arrangement.

### Bassoon Concerto in B flat major (C 83)

*1. Allegro*
*2. Adagio*
*3. Presto*

Johann Christian Bach's two bassoon concertos are listed in the 1782–1784 Supplement to the famous Thematic Catalogue issued by the publishing house of Breitkopf. By then Bach was already dead, so on this occasion at least) that normally extremely useful tool in the doling of late eighteenth-century musical works is of no assistance. In the absence (so far) of any documentary evidence of early performances, we are compelled to look at the surviving sources of the work for clues about its origin. There are two extant sets of orchestral material: a complete set in the Mecklenburgische Landesbibliothek in Schwerin and a set locking the horn parts and without oboes in the Andante in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. The title page of the Berlin material does not mention horns. Neither does the advertisement in the Breitkopf catalogue. It is possible therefore that the Berlin set come from Breitkopf and so was copied in 1784 or later. The bassoon virtuoso, Georg Wenzel Ritter (1748–1808), entered the royal service in Berlin in 1788 and may have been the inspiration for the composition in Mannheim in the early 1770s of the E flat concerto. It is, of course, also possible that

we owe the origins of the present concerto to Ritter and that, his original material haveing been lost, a new set was ordered from Breitkopf to replace it. We shall probably never know the truth.

However, we can be fairly sure that the Schwerin material did not come from Breitkopf because the title page lists the horns. Beyond that we draw a virtual blank. The orchestral parts do not even have a watermark and the fragments of watermarks on the solo part are too small to identify. Since Bach's patron, Queen Charlotte of England, had been borne princess of Mecklenburg Strelitz it is hardly surprising if some of his works found their way to Schwerin, most likely for use in the concerts organised for Princess Ulrike by Johann Wilhelm Hertel (1727–1789). However, none of this really gets us any closer to the date of the work and the circumstances of its composition. All I can say from the evidence of the music itself is that stylistically it appears to date from the mid-1770s and that, unlike its companion, is probably an original work for the instrument.

The shape of its first movement, as in the other two concertos on this CD, is in essence the first movement form of the early classical concerto. But here there is more attempt at development in the central section. The *Adagio* is a dignified and serious movement of the kind obviously unknown to those earlier commentators who dismissed Bach as a morally suspect purveyor of frivolous music. There is, however, frivolity aplenty in the *Presto* finale. There is also considerable craftsmanship – note the canonic imitation of the main theme – and ample evidence, as elsewhere in the concerto, of a considerable knowledge of the technique and capabilities of the solo instrument.

*Ernest Warburton*

(C... *) = Thematic Catalogue of JCB's works by Ernest Warburton
New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1999