BACH
VIOLIN
CONCERTOS
CECILIA BERNARDINI
DUNEDIN CONSORT
JOHN BUTT
HUW DANIEL
ALFREDO BERNARDINI

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)
VIOLIN CONCERTOS

Cecilia Bernardini *violin*
Dunedin Consort
John Butt *director*

Huw Daniel *violin*
Alfredo Bernardini *oboe*

Recorded at
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Concerto for violin and oboe in C minor, BWV 1060R

1. Allegro 4:50
2. Adagio 4:46
3. Allegro 3:23

Violin Concerto in E major, BWV 1042

4. Allegro 7:40
5. Adagio 5:31
6. Allegro assai 2:41

Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV 21

7. Sinfonia 2:41

Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV 1041

8. [Allegro] 3:49
9. Andante 6:05
10. Allegro assai 3:32

Concerto for two violins in D minor, BWV 1043

11. Vivace 3:40
12. Largo ma non tanto 6:18
13. Allegro 4:33

Total Running Time: 59 minutes

BACH VIOLIN CONCERTOS

The term 'concerto' was rather widely used in Johann Sebastian Bach's day; he employed it most frequently on the title-pages of many of the works we now call cantatas, as a way of denoting those sacred works in which instruments and voices participated ('concerted') together. Bach's earliest essays in the genre that we would now term concerto (i.e. pieces in which one or several instruments are set against a body of accompanying strings) were, in fact, transcriptions for solo keyboard – harpsichord or organ – of modern Italian concertos. He made these around 1713–14, at the Weimar court, in response to the young Prince Johann Ernst's enthusiastic purchase of such works; the prince himself also wrote concertos in the new Italian style, one of which Bach arranged for organ.

Thus, just as he did in other musical genres, Bach cut his teeth in concerto composition by copying and adapting the works of others (in this case primarily Antonio Vivaldi) and learning as he did so. The practice brought acquaintance with many of the useful compositional devices involved, most particularly the ritornello process that Vivaldi did so much to develop. This latter proved one of the most enduring methods Bach was to employ throughout his subsequent career as a composer: it involved writing a clearly recognizable block of music, played by all the instruments to open a movement. This could then be used, entirely or in part, to delineate the pivotal key areas later on, bringing the soloists back 'to order', as it were, and, finally, providing the conclusion for the movement as a whole. The similarity with traditional rhetorical structuring of orations is unmistakeable: an idea is fully seeded in the opening utterance, which is brought back at regular intervals in slightly different ways, so as to deepen the implications of the main idea and also to generate a sense of overall coherence.

Bach soon rose in position through the court, and thus had the chance to write concerted music of his own, the first and most obvious fruits being a set of exquisite cantatas spanning the years 1714–16. They contain several movements for instruments

alone, such as the sinfonia with solo oboe that opens Cantata 21, *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis*. It seems likely that a number of movements from Bach's later concerto repertory may also have begun life as sinfonias or indeed as stand-alone instrumental pieces. Opportunities for secular music-making were greatly enhanced by the move to the court at Cöthen, where Bach had the luxury of working with a small band that comprised some of the most talented players of their generation. It is here that commentators have traditionally assumed Bach wrote the majority of his instrumental concertos. However, while it is certain that the six Brandenburg Concertos were compiled in Cöthen, by no means all the other concertos (such as the Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV 1041, and the Concerto for two violins in D minor, BWV 1043) show any traces of pre-Leipzig composition. In fact, Bach continued to provide instrumental movements for his Leipzig cantatas; and his leadership of the town's Collegium Musicum c.1729–42 represented a seminal aspect of his music-making in the latter half of his life. The collegium was surely not only the forum for the performance of most of his orchestral music to date, but also the impetus for the composition of new pieces.

The Concerto for violin and oboe in C minor, BWV 1060R, survives as a concerto for two harpsichords (in manuscripts dating from the very end of Bach's life and after his death). The work presumably originated during Bach's association with the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, since the majority of the autograph manuscripts of the harpsichord concertos can be dated to that period. However, as with all these concertos, there is undoubtedly a lost original composed for another instrumental medium. Since the late nineteenth century, the assumption that BWV 1060 was originally a concerto for oboe and violin has barely been challenged. Certainly the disparity between the two parts is unusual in a Bach concerto (the solo violin parts of the D minor Double Violin Concerto, for instance, are identical in texture and figuration): the 'oboe' line is generally more lyrical but less agile than that of the 'violin'. Even if this accepted solution were to be invalidated – some suggest that the original was a concerto for two violins – it is one that preserves virtually all the notes from the 'authentic' harpsichord version and thus requires minimal transcription (or rather 'detranscription').

The supremely lyrical central movement has much in common with its equivalent in the Double Violin Concerto: both are among the most continuously lyrical melodic arches in Bach's entire oeuvre. It is interesting to note that he seldom wrote such unadulterated and sustained melody, even for voices; indeed, much of his originality as a composer comes from his ability to combine lines and create a cumulative sense of melody. In the opening movement the thematic ritornello is remarkably adaptable, particularly since the echoes at the end of the opening phrases allow it to be fragmented or extended with great ease. The complete ritornello is heard only at the beginning and end: during the course of the movement Bach teases the listener with partial and modified statements. These always present something new and unexpected while still providing the orientation which is the customary function of the ritornello. Another subtlety is the reuse of some of the intervening episodic material in a new order towards the end of the movement. The spectacular final movement uses a similar principle: but here the ritornello and its associated motives pervade virtually every bar. In music such as this, Bach appears to generate diversity out of a single unit in order to create a musical universe based on the most economical means.

A similar approach, but with completely different musical material, is easily recognized in the opening movement of the Violin Concerto in E major, BWV 1042, a work that Bach most probably composed during his years as court Kapellmeister at Cöthen (1717–23). Here the opening triad is particularly memorable, and when the solo violin plays independent material, fragments of the ritornello continually interrupt, as if to reaffirm its dominance. It is tempting to see Bach's approach as an allegory of his position in court life (which itself was to him a microcosm of God's wider order): the individual's expression must be articulated entirely within the hierarchy of the princedom, and only once this relationship has been fully established can the soloist be accorded more freedom, as the piece unfolds. Not only is the opening repeated at the end, but so in fact is the entire first section, as a *da capo*, in a structural device that Bach was more accustomed to use in his sonatas than his concertos. Thus the increasing thematic independence of the violin is checked by a return to the initial order; or, rather, it is framed and supported by the two outer pillars. In the central movement the violin commands the stage with its long, lyrical lines expressing

anything but an outer, objective, courtly order. Nevertheless, this is supported by an ostinato bass pattern, which preserves the same motivic content through virtually every bar of the piece. Thus, the most heartfelt expression is heard only against an unobtrusive, but entirely necessary, bass line, again representing the individual within the context of an indispensable background order. Exactly the same sort of relationships are evident in the final movement, a joyous dance (rondo) whose opening theme returns, with almost mechanical regularity, in the tonic of E, while the violin part develops the episodes with ever increasing virtuosity.

Given that Bach was well acquainted with many of the concertos of Vivaldi, it is interesting to note that the latter's Op. 3, *L'Estro armonico* (1711), contains two concertos in A minor that are notable for their clarity and incisiveness. Bach undoubtedly sought something of this quality when he wrote his own A minor Concerto (probably soon after taking over the Leipzig Collegium Musicum in 1729). Although he probably did not adhere as rigidly to stylistic and affective associations for certain keys as some scholars would like to believe, the key of A minor is particularly suited to the violin and its performance style since all four open strings correspond to important notes in the scale and its relative C major.

The opening allegro is one of Bach's most refined concerto movements, its sections seeming to succeed one another and return with an effortlessness that never descends into routine. A particularly interesting feature is the way musical elements are extended into progressively longer phrases, giving the sense of the soloist developing his own voice as the piece proceeds. Equally striking is the way solo and accompaniment are beautifully balanced, the one growing out of, and complementing, the other. To refer to the two contradictory etymologies for the word 'concerto' – to agree and to dispute – this concerto uses the forces normally associated with disputation (solo versus orchestra) to present a particularly 'agreeable' dialogue.

The second movement follows a scheme that Bach seems to have associated particularly with violin concertos, since it is found both in the E major Concerto (as noted above) and in what is most likely a further one, that in D minor, BWV 1052

(which survives only as a harpsichord concerto). The use of the ostinato principle here creates something of a mesmerizing effect, and the movement is perhaps more of a 'state' than a sequence of events.

The A minor Concerto's lively, dance-like finale is perhaps Bach's most animated and carefree movement in the minor mode. Somewhat reminiscent of the rondo form that concludes the E major Concerto, it is in fact a rather more sophisticated affair, with a fugal ritornello that returns in different keys and forms. Although the music seldom falls into the regular phrasing of an actual dance, every bar has the characteristic swing of a gigue. Increasingly, the soloist seems to make attempts to break out into purely virtuoso display, as if threating anarchy within the music form; but the ritornello process ultimately wins out, if seemingly at the last minute.

The Concerto for two violins in D minor, BWV 1043, also survives as a later concerto for two harpsichords, and like all Bach's concertos for multiple instruments, it clearly served several functions. The surviving sources suggest that it may have originated in its two-violin version during the early years of Bach's association with the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, although an earlier origin for some of the music is not impossible. While many have suggested that the harpsichord version (and other concertos for multiple harpsichords) was obviously devised for Bach's sons, it may well be that they were also among the violinists who could have played this piece: Wilhelm Friedemann Bach had after all studied the violin with Johann Gottfried Graun in Merseburg. Bach himself was also well known as a violinist, at least in his earlier years, so it is quite possible that he too could have been among the concerto's original soloists.

Whatever its origins, the work was doubtless heard several times during Bach's collegium years. As ever, it capitalizes on the vigour, momentum and formal pacing of the popular modern Italian concerto, to which are added a more fugal and imitative texture and a constant teasing of the listener as to which elements will be reused, and when. This is also one of Bach's most richly melodic works, most obviously in the central Largo ma non tanto. The first movement too, greatly benefits from its opening material, a phrase that works both alone and in various forms of imitation and

contraction; it also contains its own sense of melodic and rhythmic momentum, one that seems to infect the movement as a whole. The most dazzling moments are saved for the finale, a drama of motives, idioms and contrasting textures held together by an unstoppable harmonic drive. Bach seems to have generated this diversity out of a small number of units, gestures that always sound new and unexpected when heard in the sequence of the movement.

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Photograph by David Barbour

John Butt

John Butt is Gardiner Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow and musical director of Edinburgh's Dunedin Consort.

As an undergraduate at Cambridge University, he held the office of organ scholar at King's College. Continuing as a graduate student working on the music of Bach, he received his PhD in 1987. He was subsequently a lecturer at the University of Aberdeen and a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, before joining the faculty at UC Berkeley in 1989 as University Organist and Professor of Music. In autumn 1997 he returned to Cambridge as a University Lecturer and Fellow of King's College, and in October 2001 he took up his current post at Glasgow. His books have been published by Cambridge University Press: they include *Bach Interpretation* (1990), a handbook on Bach's Mass in B minor (1991) and *Music Education and the Art of Performance in the German Baroque* (1994). Marking a new tack, *Playing with History* (2002) examined the broad culture of historically informed performance and attempted to explain and justify it as a contemporary phenomenon. Butt is also editor or joint editor of both the Cambridge and Oxford Companions to Bach and of the *Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music* (2005). His book on Bach's Passions, *Bach's Dialogue with Modernity*, was published in 2010, and explores the ways in which Bach's Passion settings relate to some of the broader concepts of modernity, such as subjectivity and time consciousness.

Butt's conducting engagements with Dunedin Consort have included major Baroque repertory and several new commissions. He has been guest conductor with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, English Concert, Irish Baroque Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Royal Academy of Music Bach Cantata Series, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Portland Baroque Orchestra and Stavanger Symphony Orchestra. Butt also continues to be active as a solo organist and harpsichordist: eleven recordings on organ, harpsichord and clavichord have been released by Harmonia Mundi, and most recently Linn issued his account of *Das wohltemperierte*

Klavier by Bach. As conductor or organist he has performed throughout the world, including recent trips to Germany, France, Poland, Israel, South Korea, Canada, Belgium, Holland and the Irish Republic.

In 2003 Butt was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and received the Dent Medal of the Royal Musical Association. That year his book *Playing with History* was shortlisted for the British Academy's annual Book Prize. In 2006 he was elected Fellow of the British Academy and began a two-year Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship for his research on Bach's Passions. He has recently served on the Council of the Arts and Humanities Research Council. In January 2011 he became the fifth recipient of the Royal Academy of Music/Kohn Foundation's Bach Prize, for his work on the performance and scholarship of Bach. In 2013 Butt was awarded the medal of the Royal College of Organists and appointed OBE for his services to music in Scotland.

Photograph by Rich Dyson

Photograph by Diederik Rooker

Cecilia Bernardini

Widely considered one of the most versatile violinists of her generation, the Dutch-Italian violinist Cecilia Bernardini performs on both modern and Baroque violin. Bernardini has appeared as soloist in many of Europe's most prestigious concert halls, including the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Musikverein (Vienna), Konzerthaus (Berlin) and Wigmore Hall (London), playing much of the main Romantic and Baroque concerto repertoire. In 2010 she was the violinist in the world premiere of Philip Glass's Double Concerto for violin and cello with the Residentie Orkest.

Bernardini frequently leads and directs modern and period instrument ensembles, such as the Ensemble Zefiro, Scottish Chamber Orchestra with Robin Ticciati (including appearances at the Edinburgh International Festival), King's Consort, Camerata Salzburg (including the Linz Brucknerhaus and Salzburg Festival), Arcangelo with Jonathan Cohen, Holland Baroque Society, Bach Collegium Japan, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra with Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Ensemble Pygmalion with Raphael Pichon (in recordings for Erato) and Nederlandse Bachvereniging with Jos van Veldhoven.

In 2012 Bernardini was appointed leader of the Dunedin Consort, with whom she appears regularly as soloist; she plays on their critically acclaimed recordings of Bach's *John Passion* and Brandenburg Concertos and the award-winning recording of Mozart's Requiem.

A keen chamber musician, Bernardini regularly performs with her father, the Baroque oboist Alfredo Bernardini, and is a member of the Serafino String Trio.

Bernardini plays a 1750 Santo Serafin violin, kindly loaned by the Netherlands Musical Instrument Foundation, and, in Baroque repertoire, a 1743 Camillus Camilli violin kindly loaned by the Jumpstart Jr. Foundation.

Photograph by Tim Mintiens

Huw Daniel

Huw Daniel was a pupil at Ysgol Gyfun Ystalyfera, South Wales, and continued his education as an organ scholar at Robinson College, Cambridge, where he graduated with first-class honours in music in 2001. He then studied the Baroque violin at the Royal Academy of Music for two years with Simon Standage. In 2004, Daniel was a member of the European Union Baroque Orchestra (EUBO), whose members formed Harmony of Nations, a group that continues to this day.

Daniel is a member of the Dunedin Consort, Irish Baroque Orchestra, Orchestra of the Sixteen and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Since 2004 he has led the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música, Porto, Portugal, and has returned many times as guest leader of EUBO. He has also guest-led the English Concert, Orchestra of the Sixteen and Barokkanerne (Oslo), in concerts and recordings.

Daniel plays a violin by Alessandro Mezzadri, c.1720, kindly loaned by the Jumpstart Jr. Foundation.

Photograph by Arnold Ritter

Alfredo Bernardini

Soon after graduating from the Royal Conservatory of the Hague in 1987, where he studied with Bruce Haynes and Ku Ebbinge, Alfredo Bernardini joined some of the most prestigious Baroque ensembles, such as Hespèrion XX, Le Concert des Nations, La Petite Bande, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Freiburger Barockorchester, English Concert, Bach Collegium Japan and Balthasar Neumann Ensemble, and with them toured all over the world and took part in over 100 recordings. In 1989, with the brothers Paolo and Alberto Grazzi, he founded Ensemble Zefiro, whose recordings have won important prizes such as the Cannes Classical Award and the Diapason d'Or de l'Année in 2009.

As a director, Bernardini has worked with orchestras in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Poland, UK, Sweden, Canada, Cuba, Australia and Israel and with the European Union Baroque Orchestra. In January 2013 he was counsellor and director of the first Baroque orchestra project of El Sistema de Música in Venezuela. His research on the history of woodwind instruments has resulted in several important articles in international journals. From 1992 to 2014 he taught historical oboe at the Conservatory of Amsterdam; he also taught from 2002 to 2009 at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, Barcelona. Since 2014 Bernardini has been a professor at the Mozarteum University of Salzburg.

Bernardini plays an oboe by Pau Orriols, La Geltrù 2005, after Thomas Stanesby, London, 1720.

Photograph by David Barbour

Dunedin Consort

The Dunedin Consort takes its name from Edinburgh's castle (Din Eidyn) and, like that famous landmark, has great cultural significance in Scotland's capital city and beyond. Under the musical direction of John Butt, the Dunedin Consort has consolidated its existing strength in the Baroque repertoire, winning the 2008 Midem Baroque Award and the 2007 *Gramophone* Baroque Vocal Award for its recording of the original Dublin version of Handel's *Messiah*.

The Dunedin Consort has appeared at music festivals in Scotland (including the Edinburgh International, Lammermuir and East Neuk Festivals), Canada, Italy, Spain, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, Israel and France, broadcasts frequently on BBC Radio 3 and BBC Scotland, and enjoys a close relationship with Linn.

The consort's 2008 releases of Bach's *Matthew Passion* (last performing version, c.1742) and Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (original Cannons performing version, 1718) both received many plaudits, including a *Gramophone* Award nomination for *Acis and Galatea*. In 2010 the ensemble's recording of Bach's Mass in B minor (Breitkopf & Härtel edition by Joshua Rifkin, 2006) won critical acclaim, while 2012 saw a fitting sequel to *Acis and Galatea* with the release of Handel's first English oratorio, *Esther*.

In 2013 came two further Bach recordings on Linn: the *John Passion* (reconstruction of Bach's Passion liturgy) was 'Recording of the Month' in both *Gramophone* and *BBC Music Magazine*, and the Brandenburg Concertos were nominated for a *Gramophone* Award in 2014. That year also saw the release of Mozart's Requiem. This unique attempt to reimagine the original performance – using a new scholarly edition by David Black and the same forces as would have been heard at the work's likely first performance, at Mozart's own Requiem Mass in Vienna – won the Dunedin Consort its second *Gramophone* Award (Choral category) and was also nominated for a 2015 American GRAMMY™ Award.

DUNEDIN CONSORT

John Butt *director & harpsichord*

Cecilia Bernardini *solo violin*

Alfredo Bernardini *solo oboe*

Huw Daniel *solo violin* (tracks 11–13)

Sijie Chen, Sarah Bevan-Baker,
Huw Daniel, Colin Scobie *violin ripieno*

Alfonso Leal del Ojo *viola*

Jonathan Manson *cello*

Maggie Urquhart *violone*

Keith McGowan *keyboard technician*

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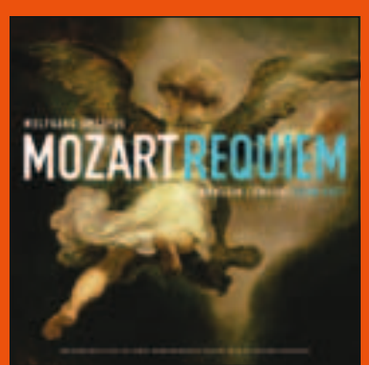
Breitkopf & Härtel Edition,
edited by J. Rifkin, 2006



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Reconstruction of first
performance

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Dublin Version, 1742

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Handel: Acis & Galatea
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