International Presentations of Music & Dance

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The English Concert

TREVOR PINNOCK, *Director and Harpsichordist*

SIMON STANDAGE and MICAELA COMBERTI, *Violinists*
DAVID REICHENBERG, *Oboist*

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 15, 1986, AT 8:00
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G major, B.W.V. 1048 ..... J. S. BACH (1685-1750)

Allegro moderato
Allegro

Harpsichord Concerto in D minor, B.W.V. 1059..... J. S. BACH
Arrangement by Gustav Leonhardt

Allegro
Larghetto
Presto

TREVOR PINNOCK, *Harpsichordist*

Symphony No. 3 in C major ..... C. P. E. BACH (1714-1788)

Allegro assai
Adagio
Allegretto

INTERMISSION

Oboe Concerto in E-flat major..... C. P. E. BACH

Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Allegro ma non troppo

DAVID REICHENBERG, *Oboist*

Concerto for Two Violins in D minor, B.W.V. 1043..... J. S. BACH

Vivace
Largo, ma non tanto
Allegro

SIMON STANDAGE and MICAELA COMBERTI, *Violinists*

About the Artists

Founded in 1973 by harpsichordist Trevor Pinnock, **The English Concert** now has an international reputation as one of the most prominent ensembles playing on period instruments.

Appearing either as an orchestra or small chamber group, The English Concert has toured extensively throughout Britain, Australia, and Europe, appearing at many festivals including "Britain Salutes New York," the Vivaldi Festival in Venice, and at Ansbach, Aldeburgh, Bath, Helsinki, and Flanders. In 1983 The English Concert marked its tenth anniversary season and, to great critical acclaim, its premier North American tour. Engagements for 1984 included visits to France, a televised performance of Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* at the BBC Promenade Concerts, and a return to the United States and Canada. In May, 1985, it became the first specialist baroque orchestra from Britain to visit Japan. During the 1985-86 concert season, the orchestra is touring in Britain, France, and Germany, as well as the current two-week visit to the United States.

The English Concert has an exclusive long-term contract with DG/Archive Production and reaches a wide audience through its numerous best-selling recordings. Many of these have won major awards, including the Gramophone Early Music Award, the Deutscher Schallplattenpreis, and three consecutive Edison Awards. The English Concert's recording of the complete orchestral works of Bach and Handel, a project of five years' duration, was completed in 1984, with the final recordings issued in 1985, the tercentenary of the birth of both composers. The orchestra's recording of Handel's *Concerti Grossi, Opus 3*, was recently released to critical acclaim and was awarded a Grand Prix Internationale du Disque. The next major recording project undertaken by The English Concert will be an extensive exploration of Italian music.

Trevor Pinnock is recognized as one of the leading harpsichordists of his generation. Born in 1946, he received his early musical training as a chorister in Canterbury Cathedral and subsequently studied organ and harpsichord at the Royal College of Music, London, winning major performance prizes on both instruments.

Today Mr. Pinnock divides his time between solo performances, at home and abroad, and directing The English Concert, which has gained an outstanding reputation through its expressive use of baroque instruments. For the past few years he has been engaged in an extensive series of recordings for the DG/Archive label — already issued are the complete Bach Toccatas, the Goldberg Variations, the complete Handel Harpsichord Suites, and, with his English Concert, the six Brandenburg Concerti and Handel's *Water Music.*

Trevor Pinnock is also in demand as a guest director and has worked with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra, and the London Bach Orchestra. He has directed and performed as soloist with many orchestras throughout Europe, the United States, and Australia. In 1983 he directed his first opera — a concert performance for the BBC in St. John's, Smith Square, London, of Rameau's *Acante et Cephise.* In North America Trevor Pinnock is a very popular artist, both in recital and as orchestra director. His United States conducting debut took place in Chicago and early 1985 saw his Canadian conducting debut in Ottawa with the National Arts Centre Orchestra.

Simon Standage is well known as a specialist in 17th and 18th century music. As principal violinist and founding member of The English Concert, he has made a number of notable recordings, including Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, for which he was nominated for the best instrumental soloist with orchestra in the 1984 Grammy Awards. Mr. Standage studied at King's College, Cambridge, and later with Ivan Galamian in New York. Since returning to England, he has appeared as soloist with many of the principal chamber orchestras. He also plays a great deal of chamber music with his colleagues and has made a close study of baroque music and performance practice. He is the leader of the Salomon String Quartet, which specializes in historical performance of the classical repertoire, and professor of baroque violin at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Micaela Comberti spent a year in Vienna with Eduard Melkus, who first introduced her to the baroque violin, and then attended the Royal Academy of Music. Returning to Austria, she continued her studies on the modern violin with Sandor Vegh and attended the classes of Nikolaus Harnoncourt. In the last few years she has become a leading exponent of the baroque and classical violin and spends most of her time playing with The English Concert, the Salomon String Quartet, and teaching.

David Reichenberg, born in Iowa, studied oboe with Jerry Sirucek at Indiana University School of Music, graduating in 1972. He then moved to Europe where he was first oboe with the Hamburg Symphony Orchestra before taking up the baroque oboe. He subsequently became a member of Nikolaus Harnoncourt's Concentus Musicus, touring with them throughout Europe, Japan, and the United States. Living in London since 1978, Mr. Reichenberg has played with the Taverner Players and the London Baroque and Classical Players. As soloist with The English Concert, he has recorded the Bach and Handel Oboe Concertos and Handel's Concerti Grossi, Opus 3, which won two major recording awards in 1985. He teaches privately and at the Guildhall School of Music, as well as at the Mateus Academy in Portugal every summer.

Trevor Pinnock, *Director/Harpsichordist*

First Violins: Simon Standage, *Leader*, Miles Golding, Graham Cracknell, Pauline Nobes
Second Violins: Micaela Comberti, Roy Goodman, Nicola Cleminson, Rachel Isserlis
Violas: Trevor Jones, Annette Isserlis; *Cellos*: Jaap ter Linden, Richard Webb
Double bass: Amanda MacNamara; *Oboist*: David Reichenberg

THE ENGLISH CONCERT -- PROGRAM NOTES

In recent decades, careful assessment and reevaluation of the primary sources of Bach's music have resulted in a radical revision of older views of the composer's professional life. Whereas once it was thought that most of Bach's over two hundred surviving cantatas--only about half of the number he must have written--were composed over the course of his long Leipzig cantorate (1723-50), it is now seen that most of these church pieces were written in the phenomenally short span of about seven years. Efforts to clarify Bach's output of instrumental music have been similarly fruitful. It once seemed that the rush output of concertos and chamber sonatas was most prolific during Bach's tenure as Capellmeister in Cöthen (1717-23). Now a more complicated picture has begun to emerge, one which suggests that Bach began the composition of many of these works a good deal earlier, in his second Weimar period (1708-17) and carried on a process of refinement, alteration, and recasting which in many cases may have extended over a quarter-century.

The "Six Concertos with Several Instruments" commonly known as the Brandenburg Concertos have yielded new clues to their origins as a result of this musicological scrutiny. The Concerto No.3 in G major, from its style as a purely ensemble rather than solo concerto, probably numbers (as do the first and sixth concertos) among the earliest mature achevements of Bach's involvement with the Italian concerto genre, a preoccupation which began in is Weimar years and was to affect his whole compositional manner.

Here is an audacious complication of the Italian concerto grosso principal, which was based on the contrast and interplay of two or three soloists with a larger orchestral body. In the first movement of Bach's concerto, three each of solo violins, violas and 'cellos, supported by basso continuo, constitute a polymorphous ensemble wherein any of the instruments can step forward as soloists, consort with its fellows, or join in massive unison statements for the full band.

Bach chose not to write a full slow movement for this work, perhaps to provide an extreme contrast to the intricacies of the first movement by this quite extreme example of the short chordal slow movements often found in Italian concertos of the period. This concentrated moment of repose--nothing but a Phrygian cadence--prefaces the headlong dash of the final Allegro, an extraverted, gigue-like binary movement wherein the scoring is simplified a bit by the complete absorption of the three 'cello parts into the continuo line. This movement's much less complicated texture acts to resolve some of the tension created by the first movement's ferocious complexity, while closing the work with a masterful German interpretation of the splendid power of the Italian string style.

Bach's Concerto for harpsichord, solo oboe, and strings in d minor (BWV 1059) was the eighth and last in a series of similar works which occupied the composer in about 1739, shortly after he resumed his activity as director of the Collegium musicum that gave regular public concerts in Zimmermann's coffee house in Leipzig. This work in fact was apparently never completed in this form, for Bach notated only the first movement's opening ritornel in the large manuscript in which he assembled these solo concertos. Like all of these works, this d minor fragment is a transcription based on the first Sinfonia in the 1726 cantata "Geist und Seele wird verwirret" (BWV 35), where it is scored for three oboes, obbligato organ, and strings. But it is thought that the history of the concerto extends even further back than this, to a now lost concerto for oboe in d minor, probably written in Weimar or Cöthen. The second Sinfonia in the cantata, scored like the first, is logically the final movement of this work. The conjectural middle movement is more problematic: On one hand, it is possible that the composer intended the oboe concerto's original slow movement, which survives as the Sinfonia to the cantata "Ich steh' mit einem Fuss im Grabe" (BWV 156). But as Bach had just appropriated this slow movement for the Harpsichord Concerto No. 5 in f minor (BWV 1056), this is unlikely.

A viable though difficult solution is provided by analogy to the relationship between the cantata "Gott soll allein mein Herze haben" (BWV 169) and the Harpsichord Concerto No. 2 in E major (BWV 1053), where Bach recomposed Siciliano of the concerto (in its original version for oboe) as the cantata's second aria, "Stirb in mir." Mr. Pinnock has in like manner reconstructed the middle movement of this d minor harpsichord concerto from the eponymous first aria of "Geist und Seele wird verwirret," scored for alto with obbligato organ and strings.

The question naturally arises, why did Bach leave of this concerto just a small fragment? Certainly there is no doubt of the potential musical merit of the piece. Quite to the contrary, the reworked ritornel shows Bach's masterly skill in revision: the addition of flashing scales (tirades) and the syncopation of repeated-note arpeggio figures, among the more obvious details, change the character of this movement from forceful to fiery. Probably these nine bars were intended as but an aide-memoire for later work on the concerto, a plan which may have lost any practical importance by Bach's termination of his Collegium activities after 1742, not to mention his growing preoccupation the works such as the Goldberg Variations, the 24 New Preludes and Fugues, and the Art of Fugue, the works which were the focus of Bach's creative activity in the last decade of his life.

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-88), second son of Johann Sebastian, apparently had little need of the concerned advocacy his father expended on his unstable brothers Friedemann and Johann Gottfried Bernhard. After serving as his father's musical assistant for several years and pursuing an unusually extensive university education in Leipzig and Frankfurt, Emanuel had in 1738 the good fortune to be chosen harpsichordist of the clandestine musical establishment of Crown Prince Friedrich of Prussia. What appeared at first to be a fine situation for a young man interested in working with musicians such as J.J. Quantz and the brothers Graun and Benda turned out to have serious drawbacks. As Friedrich II of Prussia (though not yet der Grosse), the king's musical tastes did not keep pace with those of the more forward-looking musicians at his court. Thus, for thirty years Emanuel chafed under the burden of regularly accompanying the monarch's less than exceptional performances of countless galant flute sonatas and concertos. Curiously, though Bach was made keenly aware of the royal dislike for his own advanced tastes, he could never prevail upon Friedrich to allow him to obtain a position elsewhere. In 1768 Bach finally obtained his release from the Prussian court and successfullly applied for the post of municipal music director in Hamburg, a position made vacant by the death of G.P. Telemann, Emanuel's godfather. In the prosperous bourgeois climate of this free city Bach, like his predecessor, gave free reign to his energies, directing innumerable performances of sacred and secular music, teaching many talented pupils, and composing among other works the finest of his harpsichord concertos and the great series of keyboard sonatas, fantasies and rondos "for Connoiseurs and Amateurs" (1779-87).

The 1773 commission from Baron Gottfried van Swieten for six orchestral symphonies must have been among the most gratifying of Bach's career. Van Swieten, Imperial Ambassador to the court in Berlin, later Imperial Librarian in Vienna, specified that the composer (according to the 1814 report of J.F. Reichardt) should "let himself proceed freely, without any regard for the difficulties which would arise in performance." This was thus an especially sensitive invitation for Bach to write in his most personally-felt and characteristic vein, and a worthy gesture from the fascinating Baron, a patron who would play a critical role in Mozart's familiarization with J.S. Bach and Handel, and was himself to be the author of the librettos of Haydn's final oratorio masterpieces.

And, indeed, Emanuel Bach's six symphonies for strings and basso continuo (Wq. 182) are among his own greatest works. Unhindered by either consideration of technical demands or ease of musical comprehension, Bach produced six striking works which bear witness to the poet Klopstock's epitaph for the composer: "...this most sensitive Harmonist|united Beauty and Invention;|was great where

Word and Tone were united, |but greater| in bold, wordless Music." But again, perhaps the eminent English historian Dr. Charles Burney best summarized Bach's supreme craft in works of this order: "His boldest strokes, both of melody and modulation, are always consonant to rule, and supported by learning; and his flights are not the wild ravings of ignorance or madness, but the effusions of cultivated genius."

Throughout the Symphony No. 3, in C major, runs the curious thematic thread of which Emanuel was perhaps even more fond than was his father, that B-flat, A,C,B-natural figure which spells BACH in German pitch nomenclature. This is first heard in the middle of the slow, sequential bass line which supports the rushing violin scales that are the second major motivic group in the symphony's opening movement. The final restatement of the busy unison figure which dominates this Allegro assai crashes to a halt on a diminished seventh chord; the BACH motive is prominently stated here in the bass line as the Adagio establishes its tonic of e minor. This movement, replete with hanging repeated notes, motivic fragments, and great dynamic contrasts, is a remarkable adaptation to an orchestral context of Bach's empfindsam keyboard style. A final binary Allegretto begins gracefully enough, but playful triplets finally come to dominate, ending each section with a strong unison chorus. In this movement the chromatic BACH motive is the principal motive; though now more prominent, it is made smoothly diatonic: One is reminded by this musical witticism that Emanuel Bach was admired for being a brilliant punster.

Bach's three decades in Berlin were extremely productive ones, however the lack of official recognition may have chafed. His great 1753 Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments, nearly forty of the fifty-odd concertos he wrote to display his spectacular talents as a harpsichordist, and several collections of sonatas are but the highpoints of this period. Quite gregarious by nature, Emanuel Bach enjoyed association with the leading intellectual figures of the Prussian capital, and great respect as one of the finest composers in Northern Germany.

It was probably for one of his Berlin colleagues, Carl Ludwig Matthes, that Bach wrote his two concertos for oboe and strings around 1765. Matthes, in the service of Friedrich's difficult younger brother Heinrich, was apparently also a composer, for he contributed pieces to one of Bach's anthologies, the Musicalisches Vielerley of 1769. As do all of Bach's concertos for melody instruments, the E-flat oboe concerto (Wq. 165) also exists in an alternate setting for harpsichord (Wq. 40); in this case, manuscript evidence confirms the primacy of the oboe version.

Instead of the coruscating virtuosity characteristic of the keyboard concertos, this oboe work displays an unusual emphasis on sheer melodic appeal. This is clearly affirmed by the opening motive of the first movement, a simple descending fourth from a reiterated tonic note. The oboe maintains its graceful yet sensitive composure throughout its three long solos; the orchestra in four framing ritornels uses frequently more disjunct, animated, and harmonically venturesome material, achieving a witty kind of reversal of the normal concerto roles. The aria-like Adagio ma non tropo is a deeply-felt example of the empfindsam ("sensitive") style of which C.P.E. Bach was the leading master. That the movement closes in E-flat, the key of the final Allegro ma non troppo, rather than in its tonic of c minor, is characteristic of Bach's concern to bind together the movements of cyclic works. Though the composer in 1784 claimed that he never used rondos in his concertos, the finale of this oboe work in fact has the simple phrase structure, thematic repetition, and clear dance rhythm associated with that form. This concerto is, in sum, a remarkable example of Bach's genius in applying the basic principle of ritornel-solo alternation to the most varied thematic material to arrive at quite diverse structures. Dr. Burney was moved to write in appreciation:

> How he formed his style, where he acquired all his taste and refinement would be difficult to trace; he certainly neither inherited nor adopted them from his father, who

was his only master...but as he has ever disdained imitation, he must have derived from nature alone, those fine feelings, that variety of new ideas, and selection of passages, which are so manifest in his comopositions.

Ever since the time of J.S. Bach's great nineteenth-century biographer Philipp Spitta, the Concerto for two Violins in d minor (BWV 1043) was considered, as were most of the composer's other concertos, to have originated during the years in Cöthen. Quite recently, noted Bach scholar Christoph Wolff has proposed a quite interesting hypothesis, based on evaluation of the sources of the concerto as well as stylistic criteria, that the work might actually date from the early 1730's, the time of Bach's first involvement with the Collegium musicum. Though evidence for absolute confirmation of this conjecture is at present lacking, it helps explain the supreme mastery displayed in this work by placing it as the culmination of Bach's involvement with the composition of works in concerto style, developed in Weimar and Cöthen and perfected during the years of cantata production in Leipzig.

Works for paired solo instruments had figured prominently in the compositions of such Italian pioneers of the concerto as Tomaso Albinoni (b. 1671) and Giuseppe Torelli (b. 1658). Significant for the double concerto, too, was the trio sonata style and its extension in the concerti grossi of Corelli. Most stimulating of all the Italian influences on Bach's concertos, however, were the works of Antonio Vivaldi (b. 1678). The collections published between the years 1711 and 1717 by Roger of Amsterdam as opp. 3, 4, and 7 (much of whose contents apparently circulated earlier in manuscript) were the object of intense study by Bach and his cousin J.G. Walther in Weimar during the years 1708-17. Both men, to both practical and autodidactic ends, prepared numerous solo transcriptions for keyboard instruments from this Italian repertory. It is significant that of Bach's concerto transcriptions the most ambitious are a pair for organ based on the eighth and eleventh works from Vivaldi's op. 3, l'Estro armonico; both concertos are for two solo violins, and are among the Venetian master's finest. The second of these, in d minor, was especially celebrated, both for its drama and for its unusually elaborate fugal second movement. It is difficult to imagine that this splendid Italian work did not once again cross Bach's mind when he came to pen his own d minor concerto.

Like many of Bach's finest works, this piece is at the same time retrospective and innovative. The intensity of the work is made clear at the outset by the unusual fugal exposition of the ritornel. This device had in fact been used earlier by Giuseppe Torelli; what is so unusual in Bach's concerto is the manner in which this contrapuntal style is maintained throughout the movement. Even the idiomatic solo theme, involving leaps of tenths and an eleventh, does not disturb the almost relentless enchaining of the two voices of the concertino (Bach's own term). The last movement, as well, is suffused by this polyphonic emphasis, though here the dramatic element is heightened by a jagged principal theme, short triplet outbursts from the soloists, and especially by the two striking tutti passages where ripieno and concertino seem to exchange roles, the orchestra playing solo figurations against the soloists' heavy repeated chords.

It is the central Largo ma non tanto, however, which has sustained the fame of this concerto even during that long period when much else in the Bach canon was forgotten. In this radiant duet the orchestra fills a simple accompanying role, its continuo-like chords peacefully rocking in a prevailingly trochaic pattern. Above this, the solo violins spin an exquisite cantilena based on several distinct motives, all clearly fashioned from the opening theme. Whether singing alone, working the same motive in close counterpoint, or accompanying with rustling broken figures, the soloists weave a fabric at once simple and 'artificial' in the approving eighteenth-century sense of that term. As Philipp Spitta wrote of this movement over a century ago, it is "a very pearl of noble and expressive melody."

-- Paul Guglietti