



J. S. BACH

Les Six Concerts Brandebourgeois

BWV 1046-1051

Le Concert des Nations

Fabio Biondi, Pierre Hantaï, Marc Hantaï
Friedemann Immer, Pedro Memelsdorff
Alfredo Bernardini, Paolo Grazzi
Josep Borràs, Thomas Müller
Javier Bonet

JORDI SAVALL



SACD, DVD and their logos are trademarks of Sony and Philips. Unauthorized copying, hiring, lending, public performance and broadcasting of this record prohibited. © 2010 Alia Vox

J. S. BACH

Les Six Concerts Brandebourgeois

CD 1

Concerto I, en Fa Majeur, BWV 1046
Concerto II, en Fa Majeur, BWV 1047
Concerto III, en Sol Majeur, BWV 1048



ALIAVOX

AVSA9871A

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

DSD

Direct Stream Digital



SUPER AUDIO CD
HYBRID
Multi-ch
Stereo

This Hybrid
Multichannel SACD
can be played on any
standard compact
disc player.



Le Concert des Nations
JORDI SAVALL

Unauthorized copying, hiring, lending, public performance and broadcasting of this record prohibited. © 2010 Alia Vox

J. S. BACH

Les Six Concerts Brandebourgeois

CD 2

Concerto IV, en Sol Majeur, BWV 1049

Concerto V, en Ré Majeur, BWV 1050

Concerto VI, en Si Bémol Majeur, BWV 1051



ALIAVOX

AVS19871B

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

DSD

Direct Stream Digital



same quality as
HYBRID
Multi-ch
Stereo

This Hybrid
Multichannel SACD
can be played on any
standard compact
disc player.



Le Concert des Nations
JORDI SAVALL

2 CD

J. S. BACH

Les Six Concerts Brandebourgeois

BWV 1046-1051

CD 1

Concerto I, en Fa Majeur, BWV 1046

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| 1. [Allegro] | 3'56 |
| 2. Adagio | 4'11 |
| 3. Allegro | 4'13 |
| 4. Menuetto & Trio ; Polacca & Trio | 8'36 |

Concerto II, en Fa Majeur, BWV 1047

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| 5. [Allegro] | 5'07 |
| 6. Andante | 4'24 |
| 7. Allegro assai | 2'48 |

Concerto III, en Sol Majeur, BWV 1048

- | | |
|--------------|------|
| 8. [Allegro] | 5'42 |
| 9. Adagio | 0'31 |
| 10. Allegro | 5'26 |

CD 2

Concerto IV, en Sol Majeur, BWV 1049

- | | |
|------------|------|
| 1. Allegro | 6'50 |
| 2. Andante | 3'17 |
| 3. Presto | 4'55 |

Concerto V, en Ré Majeur, BWV 1050

- | | |
|---------------|------|
| 4. Allegro | 9'58 |
| 5. Affettuoso | 5'35 |
| 6. Allegro | 5'08 |

Concerto VI, en Si Bémol Majeur, BWV 1051

- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 7. [Allegro] | 7'00 |
| 8. Adagio ma non tanto | 5'16 |
| 9. Allegro | 5'32 |

LE CONCERT DES NATIONS

Direction : JORDI SAVALL

Enregistrement réalisé, en mars 1991, au Palazzo Giusti dei Giardini à Padoue par Michel Bernstein et Charlotte Gilart de Kéranflèche. Directeur de production: Michel Bernstein

Montage et remasterisation SACD : Manuel Mohino

La Fundació Centre Internacional de Música Antiga reçoit le soutien de la Generalitat de Catalunya

Au recto : Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) c.1715, Reutsch, Johann Ernst (fl. début s. XVIII)
Städtische Museum, Erfurt, Germany / The Bridgeman Art Library

LE CONCERT DES NATIONS

orchestre d'instruments d'époque

FABIO BIONDI *violino piccolo anonyme français, XVIIIe siècle,
violon Desiderio Quercetani, Parma 1987, d'après Gennerao Gagliano 1742,
alto Desiderio Quercetani, Parma 1986, d'après Nicola Amati 1652*

PIERRE HANTAÏ *clavecin Philippe Humeau, d'après Silbermann, Barbaste 1979*

MARC HANTAÏ *flûte Rudolf Tutz, d'après G.A. Rottenburgh, Innsbruck 1990*

PEDRO MEMELSDORFF *flûtes en fa Fulvio Canevari 1991 & en sol Fulvio Canevari 1990*

GIULIO CAPOCACCIA *flûte en fa F. van Huene 1990, d'après Denner*

THOMAS MÜLLER *cor naturel baroque, copie d'Alexander, Mayence*

JAVIER BONET-MANRIQUE *cor naturel baroque*

FRIEDEMANN IMMER *trompette baroque en fa Meini & Laüber 1976*

ALFREDO BERNARDINI *hautbois Alfredo Bernardini 1987, d'après Spaceby 1730*

PAOLO GRAZZI *hautbois Toshi Hasegawa, d'après Johann-Jakob Denner 1730*

PAOLO FALDI *hautbois Toshi Hasegawa, d'après Johann-Jakob Denner 1730*

JOSEP BORRÀS *basson Laurent Verjat 1983, d'après J. Rottenburgh, ca. 1710*

ADRIAN CHAMORRO *violon Annibalis Imperi, Pisa 1752*

MATHIAS WEIBEL *violon anonyme*

ANGELO BARTOLETTI *alto école allemande, 1800-1820*

ROBERT BROWN *alto Desiderio Quercetani 1989, copie Stradivari*

GALINA ZINCHENKO *alto Michael de Hoog, Chartres 1989, d'après Magini*

MAURIZIO NADDEO *violoncelle école milanaise, fin XVIIIe siècle*

BRUNO COCSET *violoncelle anonyme français, début XVIIIe siècle*

ANTONIO FANTINUOLI *violoncelle anonyme, XVIIIe siècle*

JORDI SAVALL *basse de viole Barak Norman, Londres 1697*

EUNICE BRANDAO *ténor de viole anonyme XVIIe siècle*

LORENZ DUFTSCHMID *basse de viole Hanns Khoëgl, Vienne ca. 1680
violone Antony Hauser, Reutte 1725*

ROBERTO SENSI *contrebasse Christoph Leidolf, Vienne*

Direction : **JORDI SAVALL**





J. S. BACH

Les Six Concerts Brandebourgeois

BWV 1046-1051

Le Concert des Nations

Fabio Biondi, Pierre Hantaï, Marc Hantaï

Friedemann Immer, Pedro Memelsdorff

Alfredo Bernardini, Paolo Grazzi

Josep Borràs, Thomas Müller

Javier Bonet

JORDI SAVALL





La collection *Heritage* initiée par Alia Vox en 2007, avec la réédition du *Vespro della Beata Vergine* de Monteverdi (AVSA9855), se propose d'offrir une vision renouvelée des enregistrements réalisés entre 1977 et 1996 par Jordi Savall, Montserrat Figueras et leurs ensembles Hespèrion XX, La Capella Reial de Catalunya et Le Concert des Nations pour le label Astrée. Ce legs discographique unique représentant près de 70 albums parmi les plus emblématiques de la renaissance de la musique ancienne sera systématiquement remasterisé et édité avec le soin qui caractérise Alia Vox depuis sa création en 1998. Cette démarche permet de réunir sous une même bannière les productions passées et actuelles, et de mesurer l'ampleur et la continuité du travail réalisé par les artistes d'Alia Vox depuis plus de trente ans.

The *Heritage* collection, launched by Alia Vox in 2007 with the re-release of Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (AVSA9855), aims to offer a fresh vision of the recordings that Jordi Savall, Montserrat Figueras and their ensembles Hespèrion XX, La Capella Reial de Catalunya and Le Concert des Nations made under the Astrée label between 1977 and 1996. This unique discographic legacy of almost 70 albums, which include the most emblematic recordings of the early music renaissance, will be systematically remastered and edited with the meticulous care that has been Alia Vox's hallmark since the label was founded in 1998. Both past and present productions featuring the Alia Vox artists' performances will thus be available under a single banner, allowing listeners to measure the breadth and continuity of their work over more than thirty years.

La serie *Heritage* iniciada por Alia Vox en el 2007 con la reedición de *Vespro della Beata Vergine* de Monteverdi (AVSA9855) se propone ofrecer una visión renovada de las grabaciones llevadas a cabo entre 1977 y 1996 por Jordi Savall, Montserrat Figueras y sus conjuntos Hespèrion XX, La Capella Reial de Catalunya y Le Concert des Nations para el sello Astrée. Este patrimonio discográfico único formado por casi 70 álbumes, entre los más emblemáticos del renacer de la música antigua, será remasterizado y editado con el cuidado que caracteriza la labor de Alia Vox desde su creación en 1998. La iniciativa permitirá reunir bajo una misma marca producciones pasadas y actuales, así como medir la amplitud y la continuidad del trabajo realizado por los artistas de Alia Vox desde hace más de treinta años.

Heritage, eine 2007 mit der Neuauflage von Monteverdis *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (AVSA9855) bei Alia Vox initiierte Reihe, hat sich das Ziel gesetzt, eine erneuerte Betrachtungsweise der Einspielungen anzubieten, die Jordi Savall und Montserrat Figueras mit ihren Ensembles Hespèrion XX, La Capella Reial de Catalunya und Le Concert des Nations zwischen 1977 und 1996 für das Label Astrée vornahmen. Dieses einzigartige Vermächtnis mit fast 70 Alben, die zu den bedeutendsten der Renaissance- und alten Musik zählen, wird nun mit der Sorgfalt, die Alia Vox seit seiner Gründung 1998 auszeichnet, systematisch remastert und veröffentlicht. So kommen Produktionen aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart unter einem Dach zusammen, wodurch die Tragweite und Beständigkeit der mittlerweile über dreißigjährigen Arbeit der Musiker von Alia Vox fühlbar wird.

La collana *Heritage*, inaugurata da Alia Vox nel 2007 con la riedizione del *Vespro della Beata Vergine* di Monteverdi (AVSA9855), si propone di offrire una visione rinnovata delle registrazioni realizzate dal 1977 al 1996 da Jordi Savall, Montserrat Figueras e i loro gruppi Hespèrion XX, La Capella Reial de Catalunya e Le Concert des Nations per il marchio Astrée. Questo lascito discografico eccezionale, formato da quasi settanta dischi tra i più significativi della rinascita della musica antica, sarà sistematicamente rimasterizzato e edito con la cura che caratterizza Alia Vox dal momento della sua fondazione, nel 1998. Questa iniziativa permette di riunire sotto un'unica etichetta le produzioni passate e attuali, dando la misura della portata e della continuità del lavoro compiuto dagli artisti di Alia Vox da più di trent'anni.

La sèrie *Heritage* iniciada per Alia Vox el 2007 amb la reedició de *Vespro della Beata Vergine* de Monteverdi (AVSA9855) es proposa oferir una visió renovada dels enregistraments duts a terme entre 1977 i 1996 per Jordi Savall, Montserrat Figueras i llurs conjunts Hespèrion XX, La Capella Reial de Catalunya i Le Concert des Nations per al segell Astrée. Aquest patrimoni discogràfic únic format per gairebé 70 àlbums, entre els més emblemàtics del que ha estat el renaixement de la música antiga, serà remasteritzat i editat amb la cura que caracteritza la tasca d'Alia Vox des de la seva creació el 1998. La iniciativa permetrà reunir sota d'una mateixa marca produccions passades i actuals, així com mesurar l'amplitud i la continuïtat de la feina realitzada pels artistes d'Alia Vox des de fa més de trenta anys.

J. S. BACH

(1659-1695)

Six Concerts

Avec plusieurs Instruments

Dédiées A Son Altesse Royale

Monseigneur CRETIEN LOUIS

Marggraf de Brandenburg &c. &c. &c.

par Jean Sebastien Bach

CD1

CONCERTO I, EN FA MAJEUR, BWV 1046

Thomas Muller & Javier Bonet Manrique *corni da caccia*
 Alfredo Bernardini, Paolo Grazzi & Paolo Faldi *hautbois*
 Josep Borràs *basson*, Fabio Biondi *violino piccolo*

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| 1. [Allegro] | 3'56 |
| 2. Adagio | 4'11 |
| 3. Allegro | 4'13 |
| 4. Menuetto & Trio ; Polacca & Trio | 8'36 |

CONCERTO II, EN FA MAJEUR, BWV 1047

Friedemann Immer *tromba*, Pedro Memelsdorff *fiauto dolce*
 Paolo Grazzi *oboe*, Fabio Biondi *violino*

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| 5. [Allegro] | 5'07 |
| 6. Andante | 4'24 |
| 7. Allegro assai | 2'48 |

CONCERTO III, EN SOL MAJEUR, BWV 1048

- | | |
|--------------|------|
| 8. [Allegro] | 5'42 |
| 9. Adagio | 0'31 |
| 10. Allegro | 5'26 |

CD2

CONCERTO IV, EN SOL MAJEUR, BWV 1049

Fabio Biondi *violino principale*
 Pedro Memelsdorff & Giulio Capocaccia *fiauti d'Echo*

- | | |
|------------|------|
| 1. Allegro | 6'50 |
| 2. Andante | 3'17 |
| 3. Presto | 4'55 |

CONCERTO V, EN RÉ MAJEUR, BWV 1050

Marc Hantaï *traversière*

Fabio Biondi *violino principale*

Pierre Hantaï *cembalo concertato*

- | | |
|---------------|------|
| 4. Allegro | 9'58 |
| 5. Affettuoso | 5'35 |
| 6. Allegro | 5'08 |

CONCERTO VI, EN SI BÉMOL MAJEUR, BWV 1051

Angelo Bartoletti & Fabio Biondi *viola da braccio*

Eunice Brandao & Lorenz Duftschmid *viola da gamba*

Jordi Savall *basso di viola*

- | | |
|------------------------|------|
| 7. [Allegro] | 7'00 |
| 8. Adagio ma non tanto | 5'16 |
| 9. Allegro | 5'32 |

LE CONCERT DES NATIONS

Direction : JORDI SAVALL

Enregistrement réalisé, en mars 1991, au Palazzo Giusti dei Giardini à Padoue
par Michel Bernstein et Charlotte Gilart de Kéranfléc'h.

Directeur de production: Michel Bernstein

Montage et remasterisation SACD : Manuel Mohino

La Fundació Centre Internacional de Música Antiga reçoit le soutien de la Generalitat de Catalunya

Au recto : Johann Sebastian Bach, c. 1715. Johann Ernst Reutsch. Stadtische Museum, Erfurt, Germany.
The Bridgeman Art Library

Six Concerts

Avec plusieurs Instruments.

Dedicee

A Son Altesse Royale
Monseigneur

Christian Louis.

Margrave de Brandenbourg K. H. H. G.



per
Joh. Joh. Phil. Kirnberger

par
Son tres-humble & tres-obéissant serviteur

Jean Sébastien Bach
Maître de Chapelle de S. A. S. le
Prince royal de Prusse &c.

Les Six Concerts Brandebourgeois (BWV 1046).

Dédicace, sur le manuscrit des concertos, de la main de Jean-Sébastien Bach au margrave Christian Ludwig de Brandebourg.

© bpk

LE CONCERT DES NATIONS

orchestre d'instruments d'époque

FABIO BIONDI *violino piccolo anonyme français, XVIIIe siècle,
violon Desiderio Quercetani, Parma 1987, d'après Gennerao Gagliano 1742,
alto Desiderio Quercetani, Parma 1986, d'après Nicola Amati 1652*

PIERRE HANTAÏ *clavecín Philippe Humeau, d'après Silbermann, Barbaste 1979*

MARC HANTAÏ *flûte Rudolf Tutz, d'après G.A. Rottenburgh, Innsbruck 1990*

PEDRO MEMELSDORFF *flûtes en fa Fulvio Canevari 1991 & en sol Fulvio Canevari 1990*

GIULIO CAPOCACCIA *flûte en fa F. van Huene 1990, d'après Denner*

THOMAS MÜLLER *cor naturel baroque, copie d'Alexander, Mayence*

JAVIER BONET-MANRIQUE *cor naturel baroque*

FRIEDEMANN IMMER *trompette baroque en fa Meisl & Laüber 1976*

ALFREDO BERNARDINI *hautbois Alfredo Bernardini 1987, d'après Spacey 1730*

PAOLO GRAZZI *hautbois Toshi Hasegawa, d'après Johann-Jakob Denner 1730*

PAOLO FALDI *hautbois Toshi Hasegawa, d'après Johann-Jakob Denner 1730*

JOSEP BORRÀS *basson Laurent Verjat 1983, d'après J. Rottenburgh, ca. 1710*

ADRIAN CHAMORRO *violon Annibalis Imperi, Pisa 1752*

MATHIAS WEIBEL *violon anonyme*

ANGELO BARTOLETTI *alto école allemande, 1800-1820*

ROBERT BROWN *alto Desiderio Quercetani 1989, copie Stradivari*

GALINA ZINCHENKO *alto Michael de Hoog, Chartres 1989, d'après Magini*

MAURIZIO NADDEO *violoncelle école milanaise, fin XVIIIe siècle*

BRUNO COCSET *violoncelle anonyme français, début XVIIIe siècle*

ANTONIO FANTINUOLI *violoncelle anonyme, XVIIIe siècle*

JORDI SAVALL *basse de viole Barak Norman, Londres 1697*

EUNICE BRANDAO *ténor de viole anonyme XVIIe siècle*

LORENZ DUFTSCHMID *basse de viole Hanns Khoëgl, Vienne ca. 1680
violone Antony Hauser, Reutte 1725*

ROBERTO SENSI *contrebasse Christoph Leidolf, Vienne*

Direction : JORDI SAVALL



Photo: Assumpta Burgués



Le Concert des Nations à Sant Felip Neri, Barcelone 1990.



Place de l'église St. Thomas à Leipzig.
Gravure sur cuivre, coloriée (vers 1740) de Johann Georg Schreiber (1676-1750) © bpk



J. S. BACH

THE SIX BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS

As soon as we try to track down the historical circumstances surrounding the composition of Bach's works, our problems begin. Thanks to decades of painstaking research and the subtle intuition of leading musicologists, today we have more detailed information unravelled from the tangled web of small clues that have been patiently gathered. The rather obscure life of a music maker from Saxony did not give rise in his own day to the great chorus of publicity which surrounded his contemporaries Handel and Rameau, and he himself did not do much to make our task easier, since he left very few traces of his daily life in the form of correspondence, dates or written accounts...

Nothing is simple, therefore, and sometimes posterity has clouded the issues: the *Goldberg Variations* were probably not written for Goldberg, any more than the *B minor Mass* was written in *B minor*. As for our *Six Concertos with several instruments*, they have little to do with *Brandenburg*. This name was given them by the first great exegete of Bach's work, the German musicologist Philipp Spitta who, at the end of the 19th century, spoke of the *Brandenburg Concertos*, just as others had referred to Mozart's *Prussian Quartets*, for example, following the German practice of referring to their dedicatee. And that is how it all began.

The precious autograph manuscript of these six concertos has in fact miraculously survived until our time, copied out and preceded by a flattering dedication in French to the Margrave Christian Ludwig of Brandenburg: "Sir, as a couple of years ago I had the good fortune to perform before Your Royal Highness at Your Highness's command, and, having remarked the pleasure that Your Highness took in the small talents which Heaven has given me for Music, and since, when I took my leave of Your Royal Highness, you

did me the honour of commissioning a few pieces of my Composition, I have, in accordance with Your Highness's most gracious orders, taken the liberty of offering my very humble work to Your Royal Highness, with the present *Concertos*, which I have arranged for several instruments..." The dedication is dated 24th March, 1741.

Were the *Concertos* performed for the Margrave? It is doubtful. The Palatine orchestra was just about big enough to play the fifth and sixth concertos, which require a total of six musicians (all famous virtuosos!); and the manuscript would appear to have been stored along with sheaves of "diverse concertos" which show no sign of ever having been used. However, it is possible that copies were made and the necessary musicians were assembled for their performance. But even if this manuscript had been lost, without knowing it we would still be acquainted with some fragments from the six *Concertos* through the use that Bach later made of them in a number of his cantatas, both sacred (BWV 52 and 174) and secular (BWV 207). Moreover, the fourth concerto was arranged by the composer himself as a concerto for harpsichord, two flutes, strings and continuo (BWV 1057).

But other sources remain. Each of the concertos is in fact known through various manuscript copies, in score or in separate parts (including those made by Bach himself for the fifth concerto), from the Berlin collection or from originals that the composer had kept, offering proof that these pieces were not as forgotten as people have sometimes claimed. Well before their first publication, which certainly only dates from 1850, the *Brandenburg Concertos* were thus known and no doubt performed. Together with their variants, these copies are of the greatest interest, since they have allowed us to establish a "definitive form" for the works and to gain a glimpse of their development, as Bach was always at pains to re-work his major compositions – "polish them ceaselessly and polish them again..." However, without the Berlin manuscript we would not have known that the composer himself brought together a group made up of these six concertos, a unique case in his orchestral work; and, as we shall see, this is all the more surprising in that, in terms of style, form and instrumental line-up, they are so varied that we would not naturally think of them as being grouped together.

The dedicatory epistle allows us to piece together some of the collection's history. We know that at the beginning of 1719 Bach went to Berlin to buy a great new harpsichord from the maker Mietke for the use of his orchestra at Cöthen. It was no doubt on this occasion that he met the Margrave of Brandenburg, the

uncle of the King of Prussia; alone or as part of a group, he performed before the Prince, who was no doubt impressed and wished to know more of the composer's work. "A couple of years" later, Bach, who may have had some future prospects involving Berlin, sent the Margrave this brilliant sampler of his compositional skill in the form of concerto movements, arranged as a group of six, following the custom of the time.

But there is nothing to suggest that the Brandenburgs were composed for the Margrave. On the contrary, it seems likely that the composer gathered together six of the most significant pieces, chosen from his quite large collection of *concertante* works, and that he revised or arranged them for the occasion. Intended for the excellent ensemble of virtuosi for which he was responsible at Cöthen, some of these pieces may even go back, in a slightly different form, to the preceding period, (around 1716, or perhaps 1713) when Bach was in Weimar, where they were used particularly as sinfonias in cantatas: we see this, for example, with the first concerto, part of which may have served as an introductory piece to the hunting Cantata written in 1716 for the court of Weissenfels. According to the present state of research, it is thought that the six Concertos, in the form that we know them, must have been composed in the course of the three years between 1718 and 1720, in the following order: 6, 1, 3, 2, 4 and 5.

Does the fact that they were gathered together by Bach make them a cycle? No convincing sign of articulation or internal cohesion has hitherto been discovered to justify our belief in an overall plan on the part of the composer. We are therefore inclined to think that, contrary to the normal procedures of the period according to which all collections claimed a unity of conception, the composer sought variety, presenting as he was to do much later in other musical forms (albeit with very different intellectual aims!), a kind of "Art of the Concerto". Might we not also in retrospect see in the Concertos something of that didactic intention which in Bach was so often associated with the "recreation of amateurs"? Since his *Orgelbüchlein* of the same period was intended "to instruct" by presenting all the ways of handling the chorale, might this not have been a prodigiously varied and original description of the various ways of handling the concerto?

From one work to another there is a difference in the instrumental arrangement and in the number of movements, but also – and most importantly – in the style and formal structures: *Concerto grosso* or solo concerto, Italian or French aesthetic, contrapuntal masterpieces or virtuoso fireworks? None of the six concertos can be ascribed to a pre-existing model, and the composer offers us a dazzling synthesis of

the different facets of his genius and of European fashion, throwing up a great arch between the old style of concerto with several choirs and the future concerto for piano and orchestra. However, if we were to try to establish links between the *Brandenburg concertos* and other famous pieces, our first choice, rather than any Italian precedents, might be Couperin's *Concerts Royaux*, which were their exact contemporaries (1722); for they were also examples of real chamber music intended for the delectation of intimate gatherings. Indeed, the French dedication and the style of the French Suite in the first Concerto invite this comparison.

But a new analytical approach may perhaps in the future show these concertos in a different light. In fact, we know today the extent to which all "Baroque" composers, and in particular those at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, were preoccupied with rhetoric (we even find a reference to Bach in a note from a contemporary translation of Quintilian's *Instituto Oratoria*). The macrostructure of a work, the articulation of its musical discourse, in its play of allusions and symbols, particularly in terms of its tonality, harmony and instrumentation, arises from a universally known and accepted code, and this is found even in purely instrumental works. All music was then enunciated as a discourse, the vehicle for the movements of the soul. As a result of a renewal in interpretation, a new field of research has opened up for the contemporary musicologist. But the fact that some movements from the six Concertos were incorporated in the sound texture or the dramaturgy of this or that cantata, sometimes even embellished, if not "revealed", by the spoken words (as in the case of the third movement from the first concerto) which in 1726 provided the opening chorus for Cantata BWV 207, once again begs the question of whether it might be possible to decipher their musical language in the light of the rules of rhetoric? We might legitimately ask whether the interplay of emblems and allegories revealed beneath the surface of the *Brandenburgs* points to a unifying "programme", an implicit address to Bach's princely dedicatee, and an as yet invisible common denominator of discourse which might justify their selection and their ordering.

CONCERTO I in *F major* for two hunting horns, three oboes, bassoon, *violino piccolo*, two violins, viola, cello and continuo (the concertante "*violino piccolo*" is not a distinct instrument, but simply a violin tuned a minor third higher for reasons of sonority, so that it can be better separated from the others). This is the "hunting Concerto", in which not only the two horns, but also the three oboes evoke the pleasures of pastoral pursuits. Moreover, part of this music (movements one and two, without the concertante violin, and the fourth, without the *polonaise*), is known in an earlier version under the title *Sinfonia*, of which at least the first movement might have served as an introduction to the hunting cantata BWV 208, with which it

shares a similar instrumental line-up. The additions to the third movement, with its brilliant solo violin part and the *polonaise* might have been intended for a performance in Dresden in 1717: a double homage to the Kapellmeister, the French violinist Volumier, and to the Prince-Elector of Saxony, who was also King of Poland. In its *Brandenburg* version, the concerto includes four movements.

First of all, we have the usual three movements of a concerto in the tempi quick, slow, quick. The first is an *Allegro* in *da capo* form, with frequent triplet figures contrasted with semiquavers, the two horns being highlighted in a marvellous effect of cynegetic "cacophony". The delightful melodic garlands adorning the *Adagio* are shared between the first oboe and the *violino piccolo*; and it is the latter which takes the spotlight during the ensuing joyful *Allegro* in the company of a particularly virtuosic first horn part. Then, just as the concerto seems to be drawing to a conclusion, there is a surprising addition of a suite of dances comprising a minuet repeated as a refrain after each of three charming *divertissement* episodes which restore the instrumental colour, a first trio (for two oboes and bassoon), a *polonaise* (for two violins, viola and continuo) and a second trio (for two horns and three oboes in unison).

CONCERTO II in *F major*, for concertante, trumpet, recorder, oboe and violin, with two violins, viola, cello and continuo. In this unusual grouping, the four solo instruments are treated as equals, although the trumpet sometimes seems to take the lion's share. Powerfully individualized, the instrumental sounds are never confused, but clearly distinguish the concertino group from the *concerto grosso* recalling the *Corellian* style in its dialogue with the *ripieno* — a very imaginative dialogue which relaunches the soloists in groups of sound that are constantly renewed. From the subtle marquetry of the initial *Allegro*, the soloists take small secondary elements and develop them while the *ripieno* resumes the introductory motif as a *ritornello* whose rhythmic cells animate the movement with irresistible *élan*. The trumpet is silent in the second *Andante* movement, giving way to the two other soloists supported by the continuo: this is a brief lament interrupted by rests, with imitative interplay over the regular undulation of the bass part. This movement in four parts may derive from a sonata. The trumpet returns to launch the exultant motif of the *Allegro assai* in a display of acrobatic virtuosity; the soloists enter in fugal style and share the dialogue of the whole piece with relatively little support from the *ripieno*.

CONCERTO III in *G major*, for three violins, three violas, three cellos and continuo. Although this third concerto for three groups of three instruments recalls the Venetian polychoral concerto, contrary to

expectations it comprises only two rather than three movements: two single chords, modulating to the relative minor and left hanging in suspense, in fact separate (or connect) the two parts of this work. And here lies an as yet unsolved enigma which admits three possible solutions: the format may reflect the composer's desire to link the two movements in this way; alternatively, it may leave room for an improvised movement, or even represent an open form in which another movement can be interpolated by the performers, as desired. Based on a single dactylic figure (often used by Bach in the expression of joy) launched by the little anacrusis figure which was a particular rhythmic favourite with the composer at that time, the first *Allegro*, set in tripartite form, elaborates on this motif in a development of great richness. Making little use of counterpoint, the writing proceeds with boisterous sound effects which contrast with the delicate embroidery of the three trios; superimposed over the regular movement of the quavers, these dactylic cells and semiquaver figures derived from the initial motif introduce daring dramatic episodes, descending into the low range in the cellos. In *gigue* rhythm (12/8), the second *Allegro* is made up of two sections with reprises. It is based on the permanence of a turbulent semiquaver motif constantly punctuated by percussive quavers; these two metres ensure the perfect continuity of a frantic discourse during which only the three breaks in the formal articulation allow pause for breath. Thus ends what might be called the "first volume" of this set of six concertos; in the finale of the sixth concerto, another dance for string instruments concludes the "second volume".

CONCERTO IV in *G major*, for principal violin, two recorders, two violins, viola, cello and continuo. With its pastoral character created by the two recorders and the key of *G major*, this concerto offers clear parallels with the first of the six. But whilst it follows very approximately the form of a *concerto grosso*, it allows some emancipation in the solo parts, as the balance between the concertino and *ripieno* changes from one movement to another. The initial *Allegro* boasts a superb architectural structure, with a long introduction for the *ripieno* repeated in its entirety at the end, thus confirming the ternary structure of what is in effect a kind of slow *gigue*; in the middle are three episodes presenting in succession, first a violin solo (in semiquavers) accompanied by chirping on the recorders, followed in the middle of the work by the great virtuoso solo for violin in semiquaver triplets, supported by a discreet punctuation, and finally a modified reprise of the earlier episode. Each episode ends with a return, in different keys, to the initial element of the introduction, thus underpinning the articulation of the whole piece, like a pillar in sound. With its *Corellian* form, the *Andante* conjures up a pastoral scene with its motif of tender sadness, its sighs and its echoes, culminating in the call of the flageolets which concludes this evocation of extreme delicacy. The most brilliant of the

three, the last movement is also the most academic, with its fugal entries and its five-part contrapuntal combinations going hand in hand with a highly subtle interplay of sound and an instrumental intoxication which culminates in the central cadenza for violin solo. A lively dance of great lightness and vivacity, it has all the features of an animated pastoral scene.

CONCERTO V in *D major* for transverse flute, principal violin, solo harpsichord, violin, viola, cello and continuo. This "royal" concerto is a companion piece to the second concerto. Here the harpsichord has a dual role as continuo and soloist, the latter conferring on it the status of the first concerto for keyboard, a form which Mozart inherited from Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and brought to its perfection. The superb refrain theme of the initial *Allegro* rapidly gives way to a first development in which the four-note descending figure, which is to be the principal development motif, appears along with the three figures that derive from the principal theme. In a simple interplay of alternating *ritornelli* and episodes, the remarkably complex thematic and polyphonic development blossoms with an astonishing richness of invention. Particularly notable is the *pianissimo* episode in F sharp minor, where the violin and flute engage in a dialogue on a motif of poignant sadness, while the strings and harpsichord continue with their muted incantations. The unusual succession of chromatic trills on the flute and violin leads to a return to the major key for the final digressions, finally giving way to the giddy intoxication of the harpsichord's long cadenza (65 bars!); this bravura piece was no doubt an opportunity for Bach to show himself off to best advantage before the Margrave of Brandenburg. The second *Affettuoso* movement develops the gentle reverie of the three solo instruments; two motifs, one rising and rhythmical, and the other falling and melodic, restoring the equilibrium, are woven into a delicate four-part embroidery. The finale, an *Allegro* in the form of an *aria da capo* written in 2/4 time, takes the form of a *gigue* animated by triplet rhythms throughout. The exposition in fugal style (with four entries from the soloists and then two from the ripienists) of the joyful initial motif is launched by a kind of covert advance. Marked *cantabile*, the development reveals unsuspected expressive qualities in this theme, presented in B minor, F sharp minor, A major and D major. The theme is developed in fragments and brings together sonorities which go beyond the strict confines of the *concerto grosso* to give preeminence to the harpsichord.

CONCERTO VI in *B flat major* for two violas, two violas *da gamba*, cello and continuo. Written exclusively for string instruments, like the third concerto in the set (with which it also shares a more archaic style), in this concerto Bach lavishes as much invention on his monochrome group as he does elsewhere on his use

of contrasting colours. As a viola player himself, he chose for the first time to give the best part to a duet of violas, in the absence of any violins; but in order to balance the sound, he set against them the clearer timbre of the violas *da gamba*, rather than linking them to two cellos. As its sole theme, the *Allegro* plays on an embroidery of a perfect chord presented in a noble dance rhythm. While the form of the piece roughly follows the pattern of *tutti/soli* alternation, the contrapuntal development abounds in fugal entries, canons and contrasts of different groups and dynamics, with the subtle interplay of the timbres of the six bowed instruments underpinned by a relentless, rhythmic beat. With great economy of means, Bach gives the central movement, the *Adagio ma non tanto*, to the trio of *basso continuo* and two violas which share the meditative, flowing melody, which progresses without echoes or reprises. There is unity both of mood and rhythm over the continuous movement in the bass. The finale, an *Allegro* in *gigue* rhythm, takes the form of a rondo. The refrain is launched by an anacrusis for the two violas in unison, a bounding theme with violent syncopation. In the episodes, variations on different fragments of the theme appear in semiquavers, in canon and in dialogue between the violas and the cellos, then rapid figuration divided between the two violas and, finally, a recapitulation of the opening.

GILLES CANTAGREL

Translated by Jacqueline Minett

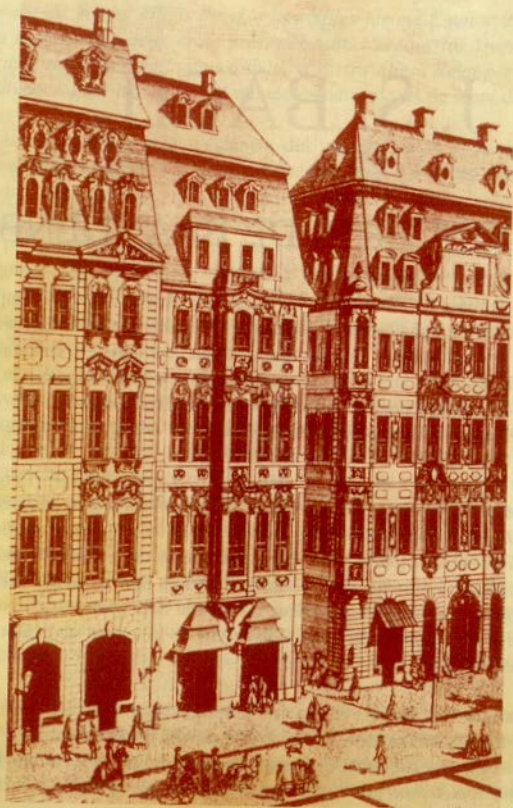
A Son Altesse Royale
Monseigneur
Chrétien Louis
Margraf. de Brandebourg. R. H. H. S.
Monseigneur.

Comme j'en ay eue couple d'années, le bonheur de me faire entendre à Votre Altesse Royale, en ven-
tu de ses ordres, de que je remarquai alors, qu'Elle prenoit quelque plaisir aux petits talents que le Ciel
m'a donné pour la Musique, & qu'en prenant congé de Votre Altesse Royale, Elle voulut bien me faire
l'honneur de me commander de lui envoyer quelques pièces de ma Composition: j'ai donc, selon ses très gracieux
ordres, pris la liberté de rendre mes très-humbles devoirs à Votre Altesse Royale, par les présents Concertos
que j'ai accommodés à plusieurs Instruments; La priant très-humblement de ne vouloir pas juger leur im-
perfection, à la rigueur du gout fin & délicat, que tout le monde sçait qu'Elle a pour les pièces musicales; mais
de tirer plutôt en beaucoup de compassion, le profond respect & la très-humble obéissance que je tâche à lui ren-
dre par-là. Pour le reste, Monseigneur, je supplie très-humblement Votre Altesse Royale d'avoir la bonté
de continuer ses bonnes grâces envers moi, et d'être persuadé que je n'ai rien tant à cœur, que de mériter d'être em-
ployé en des occasions plus dignes d'Elle et de son service, moi qui suis avec un zèle sans pareil

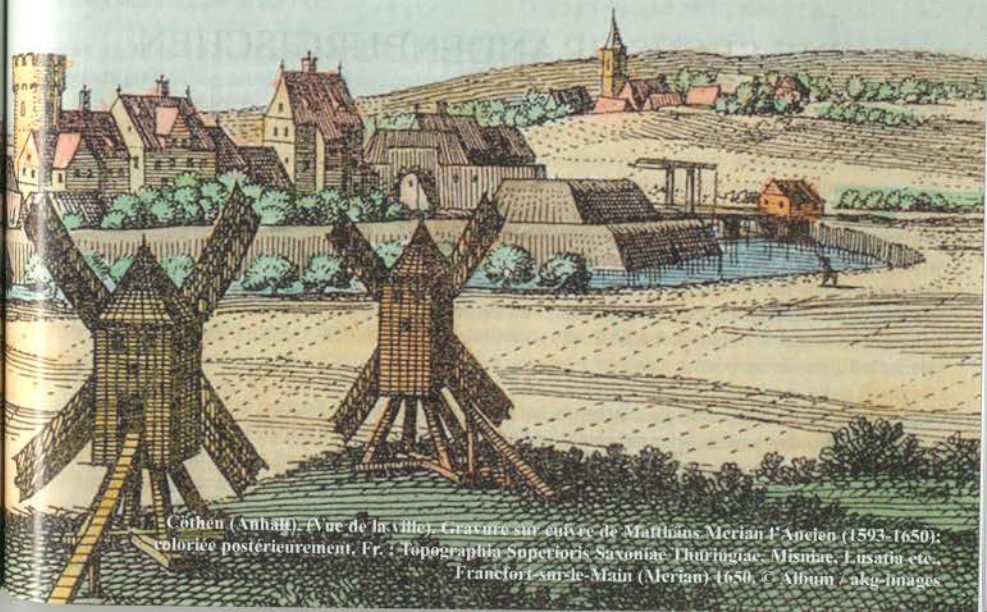
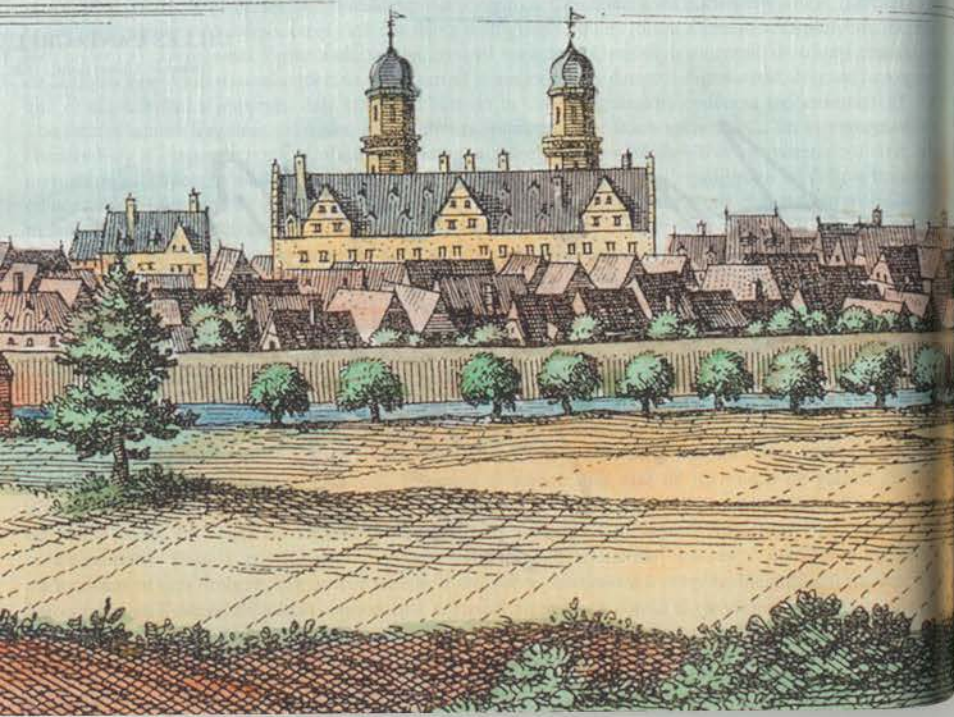
Chrétien L. de Schar

Monseigneur De Votre Altesse Royale

Le très-humble & très-obéissant serviteur
Jean-Sébastien Bach



Le Café Zimmermann
à Leipzig, extérieur
(bâtiment central).
Depuis 1729 Bach donnait
des concerts ici avec ses
élèves du Collegium
Musicum.
Détail d'une gravure sur
cuivre de J. G. Schreiber
d'après G. Wustmann.
© Album / akg-images.



Cöthen (Anhalt). Vue de la ville. Gravure sur cuivre de Matthäus Merian l'Annoien (1593-1650); colorisée postérieurement. Fr. : *Topographia Superioris Saxoniae Thuringiae: Misniae, Lusatia etc.* Francfort-sur-le-Main (Merian) 1650. © Album / akg-images

Daß Porzainer Jnsrd Johann Christoff Altmittel
seit Michaelis d. 1747. am (hiesigen) Musico in a. l. g.,
sehr assistiret, in dem halb all Violiste, halb all
Violoncelliste, insonderlich all Vocal-Basiste, sich
exhibiret, und also dem Mangel derer auf der Tho-
mas. D. 1. l. sich besorgend, Bass-Drummen (Fidel)
für und gegen alle sonstigen Abzüge nicht können zu
kräftigen kommen) ersetzt, und für sich eigenständig
bezeuget. Leipzig. d. 2. Maji. 1747.

Job: Sebast. Bach.

Joh: Sebast: Bach
Direct. Munich,
v. Cantor zu
Thoma.

Johann Sebastian Bach.



Le Collegium Musicum de Jena en répétition, vers 1740 C. Album / akg-images