



BRILLIANT
CLASSICS



J.S. BACH
HARPSICHORD CONCERTOS

MUSICA AMPHION · PIETER-JAN BELDER *harpsichord*

Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750
Harpsichord Concertos

Brandenburg Concerto V BWV1050
for Traverse flute, violin solo,
harpsichord, strings and basso continuo
1. I. Allegro 10'07
2. II. Affettuoso 5'27
3. III. Allegro 5'14

Harpsichord Concerto I in D minor
BWV1052
4. I. Allegro 7'44
5. II. Adagio 6'09
6. III. Allegro 8'04

Harpsichord Concerto II in E BWV1053
7. I. Without tempo indication 7'57
8. II. Siciliano 4'21
9. III. Allegro 6'31

Harpsichord Concerto III in D
BWV1054
10. I. Without Tempo indication 7'40
11. II. Adagio e piano sempre 5'25
12. III. Allegro 2'45

Harpsichord Concerto IV in A
BWV1055
13. I. Allegro 4'32
14. II. Larghetto 4'37
15. III. Allegro ma non tanto 4'13

Harpsichord Concerto V in F minor
BWV1056
16. I. Without tempo indication 3'35
17. II. Largo 2'21
18. III. Presto 3'25

Harpsichord Concerto VI in F
BWV1057
19. I. Without tempo indication 7'05
20. II. Andante 3'31
21. III. Allegro assai 5'03

Harpsichord Concerto VII in G minor
BWV1058
22. I. Without tempo indication 3'50
23. II. Andante 5'58
24. III. Allegro assai 3'27

Triple Concerto BWV1044
for harpsichord, flute, violin, strings and
basso continuo
25. I. Allegro 8'43
26. II. Adagio ma non tanto
e dolce 5'39
27. III. Alla Breve 7'15

Musica
Amphion

Pieter-Jan Belder *harpsichord & direction*
Sayuri Yamagata *violin*
Florencia Gómez *Traverse flute*

Sophie Wedell *violin I*
Rie Kimura *violin II* (BWV 1052, 1056-1058)
Sayuri Yamagata *violin II* (BWV 1053-1055) Solo in BWV 1050 & 1044
Elise Dupont *violin II* (BWV1044)
Yoshiko Morita *viola* (BWV 1052, 1056-1058)
Staas Swierstra *viola* (BWV 1050, 1053-1055, 1044)
Rainer Zipperling *cello*
Margareth Urquhart *violone*
Saskia Coolen *recorder*
Thera de Clerck *recorder*

The closest **Johann Sebastian Bach** ever came to giving public concerts was between 1729 and 1741, when he twice headed the Leipzig musical society, the Collegium Musicum, an ensemble made up of professional and university musicians (he temporarily relinquished the post between 1737 and 1739). The collegium had been founded in 1702 by Georg Philipp Telemann when studying law in the city and was centred at Zimmermannsches Kaffeehaus, the city's best-appointed café on the elegant Katharinenstrasse. It was probably there that the seven solo concertos for harpsichord and orchestra were first performed. They are found in a single autograph manuscript that dates from the time of Bach's sabbatical from the collegium. Although the collection remained in Leipzig, it is thought that they were not written for use during his second term with the collegium but rather for performance at the Dresden court, where he had been honorary *kapellmeister* since 1736.

All seven are reworkings of earlier works for solo instruments, though, of the concertos featured in this recording, only one was originally for keyboard: the outer movements of the Triple Concerto (BWV1044) derive from a prelude and fugue (BWV894), and its middle movement is a reworking of the slow movement of the third Trio Sonata for organ (BWV527—more on these later).

Surviving instrumental models are known for the concertos in D major and F major (BWV 1054 and 1057, respectively). The Concerto in D minor is also generally thought to have been a very early violin concerto due to its violinistic *figurae*. If so, the harpsichord version suggests the original was probably the most virtuoso of Bach's all violin concertos. Movements from cantatas—usually sinfonias in which the solo line is treated as an organ obbligato—also serve as some of Bach's models. All come from the composer's third Leipzig cycle (1725–1727), though these, themselves, seem to be independent keyboard arrangements based on earlier work.

Werner Breig's study of the compilation of the seven solo concertos has shown that the first six belonged to a separate manuscript and that the seventh and a fragment of an eighth concerto (BWV1059—not featured here) were written first. These demonstrate the simplest means of transcription, whereby the harpsichord takes

over the solo line with the right hand and doubles the continuo with the left. The same procedure seems to have occurred with the D minor Concerto, though with considerably more embellishment. However, when transcribing the first movement of the E major concerto (BWV1053), Bach rewrote the bass line to be completely independent of the string bass, taking this as an opportunity to rewrite the upper strings to suit the new harpsichord part. Elsewhere, he rarely altered the string parts, and, according to Breig, Bach's methodology was to write the violin parts first and then supply the harpsichord line before adding the string bass. His transcription of the fourth Brandenburg Concerto, though, was more radical. Here, Bach reworked the relationship between the violin (which became the harpsichord part) and the recorders which, in some cases, required the addition of entirely new material.

It is important to note that Bach's development (if not invention) of the keyboard concerto is the start of an impressive tradition that his sons continued before its adoption by other composers. The existence of an early concerto for two harpsichords in C major (BWV1061a) demonstrates his interest in exploiting the keyboard to simulate a range of textures primarily associated with other solo instruments. Take, for instance, the F major concerto (BWV1057). Bach counteracts the harpsichord's lack of sustaining ability and dynamic nuance by embellishing the long lyrical lines of the slow movement. Above all is the virtuosity of the keyboard parts, which is evident in the opening bars of Brandenburg Concert V, which might be seen as Bach committing to paper the type of extemporisation he may have performed himself.

Despite their being, for the most part, arrangements of other works, the concertos do not deserve to be dismissed as the hasty ephemeral works Albert Schweitzer described. They were carefully arranged with considerable thought to the possibilities transcribing music from other instrumental genres presented. Indeed, the compilation of all seven fits into the pattern of his later years by summing up the compositional achievement of his entire career as a musician and presenting them in as developed a format as possible.

Brandenburg Concerto V in D major for Flute, Violin, Harpsichord and Strings (BWV1050)

Bach composed the concerto while in the employ of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen as music director of his court. He had moved to Cöthen towards the end of 1717 and, while content with his duties, he had to cope with a lessening of the music budget, which had left three unfilled vacancies in the court orchestra. Bach was also dissatisfied with the court's limited educational opportunities for his children and began to look elsewhere for work. He had investigated the possibility of becoming the organist at a prominent Hamburg church, though little came of that. The Brandenburg Concertos were possibly written to find favour and work with Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg. Bach had played before the margrave in Berlin, and the concertos probably resulted from an invitation for Bach to send some music. They were dated 24 March 1721, though he had probably been working on them for some time. Whether or not they were performed is unknown: nothing came of the work, and Bach biographers doubt the music ever received an airing.

Before Brandenburg V, the harpsichord had been either a solo instrument or an accompaniment for ensemble ensembles but had never served a dual role. The violin and flauto traverso, which form the remainder of the concertino group, take a remarkably subservient role to the harpsichord. Neither has solos of more than thirty or so seconds and are instructed to play quietly when the harpsichord has a solo. Moreover, the violin receives none of the idiomatic writing expected of the instrument, which is reserved almost exclusively for the harpsichord. Such writing is most apparent in the extended cadenza of 65 bars that completes the first movement with a startling array of techniques: scalic passagework, arpeggios, and a tremendous climax built over a long pedal note in the bass. The second movement, a lyrical *affettuoso* is like a trio sonata in character, is in the relative B minor, though it carries none of the grief Bach usually associates with the key. Its tender and reflective mood stand in stark contrast to the final Allegro, a lively gigue with an A-B-A da capo structure in which, again, the harpsichord takes the dominant position, this time with

a solo of thirty or so bars. Here, the solo is accompanied by all the other instruments, including the remainder of the concertino group, which often play in unison.

Harpsichord Concerto I in D minor (BWV1052)

The concerto is thought to be a transcription of a lost work from Bach's Cöthen years, though the earliest known versions are the sinfonia and first chorale of the cantata *Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen* (BWV146), which provide the first two movements of the concerto, and the sinfonia from *Ich habe meine Zuversicht* (BWV188), which forms the last. The organ is used instead of the harpsichord in the cantatas, and the orchestra is expanded to include oboes. The earliest known version comes from 1734 in a manuscript copied by Bach's son, Carl Philippe Emanuel, though the only known autograph is in the source Bach compiled during his two-year break from the Collegium Musicum.

Both outer movements have structural and modal similarities. They begin with dramatic ritornellos played by all the instruments in octaves, a favourite technique found in Vivaldi (e.g., his *Grosso Mogul* concerto (RV208)). A dominant feature here is the relentless progression of semiquavers and the juxtaposition of passages in D and A minors, which centre around the violin's open strings. These account for the first 27 and 41 bars of the movement, respectively, giving the music a distinct modal character; interspersed into the texture are brief episodes for the harpsichord. The B sections of each movement are freely developed and employ virtuosic *violinistica* writing that includes bariolage figuration to imitate the playing of a violin's open strings. In the first, this begins with a repeated-note figure that is developed into demisemiquaver arpeggiando cadenza before a repeat of the opening ritornello in both B sections.

The slow movement, a 3/4 time adagio, is built upon a ground bass, which continues throughout the movement and over which the harpsichord plays florid melodic lines for its total of four episodes.

Harpsichord Concerto II in E major (BWV1053)

Several scholars (Siegbert Rampe, Dominik Sackmann et al.) suggest that this concerto was transcribed from a lost work for oboe or oboe d'amore. However, Christoph Wolff makes the convincing argument that it is a lost organ concerto from c. 1725. Other versions are found in two cantatas. *Gott soll allein mein Herze haben* (BWV169) provides the first two movements from its opening sinfonia and a later alto aria with obbligato organ, and the concerto's third movement is the sinfonia from *Ich geh und suche mit Verlangen* (BWV49). In the outer movements, Bach elaborates on the organ versions to exploit the brilliant sound of the harpsichord, particularly in the last, where he expands on the simple opening quaver motif of the organ version with rapid arpeggiandos and, later in the movement, turns the organ's semiquavers into a fiery display of triplets. The middle movement, an Italianate siciliano in the relative key of C-sharp minor, is also an elaboration of the organ sinfonia, with added ornamentation and dotted notes, and arpeggiated figuration at the opening and close.

Harpsichord Concerto III in D major (BWV1054)

This work is based on a surviving violin concerto in E major (BWV1042), which Bach probably transposed to avoid e", presumably to accommodate the range of his harpsichord. The concerto is perhaps one of the most euphoric, particularly in its outer movements, which flank an expressively ornamented central movement in B minor. As with other concertos, the new version demonstrates considerable reworking. The first movement contains added figuration and ornamentation to achieve the same brilliance on the harpsichord that the violin had in the original. Additions include some surprising gestures that begin with a dramatic descending demisemiquaver passage to introduce the harpsichord's first solo proper episode.

Harpsichord Concerto IV in A major (BWV1055)

The genesis of this work has been argued by several scholars to have been a lost oboe d'amore concerto. However, more recently, Peter Wollny suggested the origins

of the first movement to be a work for unaccompanied harpsichord. He qualifies his thesis in the way the strings are prevented from deploying an independent ritornello theme. Instead, they take a subordinate role as accompanists, which would not be possible had the music been conceived for an instrument other than the harpsichord. Interestingly, this is the only harpsichord concerto for which a complete original set of parts exist, including a fully figured bass part for probable use with another harpsichord.

Harpsichord Concerto V in F minor (BWV1056)

The missing source is thought to be either a concerto for oboe or violin in G minor. The second movement is used as the opening sinfonia of the cantata *Ich steh mit einem Fuß im Grabe* (BWV156) for solo oboe and strings and closely resembles the Andante of Telemann's Flute Concerto in G major (TWV51:G2). Whether this served as Bach's original model cannot be said with certainty, though Steven Zohn has provided evidence to suggest Telemann's concerto was the earlier.

Harpsichord Concerto VI in F major (BWV1057)

As previously mentioned, this is an arrangement of Brandenburg Concerto IV (BWV 1049) with the harpsichord derived from the original's violin part. In its second movement, Bach veers away from the original concerto by changing the ending by adding carefully balanced chromaticism, an excellent example of how Bach constantly strove to develop new material from old.

Harpsichord Concerto VII in G minor (BWV1058)

Bach used the Concerto for Violin in A minor (BWV1041) as his model for this piece, though a considerable amount of new material was added for the harpsichord's left hand. In addition, Bach altered some of the violin's figuration to make it more comfortable for the player. This is particularly noticeable as the third movement closes, where the virtuoso string crossing of the original solo is lacking in the

keyboard part. Unlike the other concertos, the string bass plays throughout the whole, which has the unfortunate outcome of making the harpsichord less effective as a solo. This suggests the concerto is a very early arrangement: Breig demonstrated that it belongs to a separate manuscript in the autograph (see above) and, when we consider it in light of Bach's tendency to write music in groups of six (e.g., the Brandenburg Concertos, French Suites, Partitas, and so forth), we might assume it was not intended as a part of this cycle.

Triple Concerto for Harpsichord, Flute, Violin, Strings and Basso Continuo (BWV1044)

Despite a three-person concertino, the harpsichord has the most prominent role in the concerto. Apart from an additional ripieno violin, its instrumentation is identical to Brandenburg Concerto V. Bach's model was the extended Prelude and Fugue in A minor (BWV894), a Weimar composition, which itself has the structure of the first and last movements of an Italian *concerto grosso*. This has led some to question whether the keyboard pieces are themselves taken from a lost ensemble work. Bach's arrangement of the first and last movements is possibly the most complex of his transcriptions and involved adding a considerable amount of new material as new ritornellos and a freshly composed cadenza for the final movement. However, the bulk of the original model remains intact in the solo keyboard part, and it is to this part that a considerable amount of orchestral accompaniment (including contributions from the other concertino instruments) has been added. The salient feature of the first movement lies in the juxtaposition of duplets and triplets, and while elements of the theme are treated in dialogue between the violin and flute, it becomes quickly apparent that the harpsichord's role is predominant. The third movement, a splendid *Allabreve* fugue, is closer to the keyboard version than is the prelude. It is relatively free in form and less concerto-like, and its reworking involved the inclusion of tutti statements of the ritornello at the movement's opening and close, which are, in themselves, self-contained fugues. The second movement reworks the siciliano from

the D minor Organ Sonata (BWV527). Here, the harpsichord takes the continuo line in the left hand and, in the right, one of the two melodic parts of the organ sonata. To this, Bach has added a newly-composed line that is passed between the concertino violin and flute. Noticeably missing are the ripieno instruments, giving the music the feel of a trio sonata movement in its own right.

There are several features of the concerto that are unusual, and these are worth a brief examination. They include:

1. Graded dynamics (e.g., the *pianissimo* and *mezzo-forte* marks in the third movement.
2. The unprecedented use of triple-stopping in the ripieno violins and viola.
3. Extended use of *pizzicato* in the outer movements' ripieni and its decorative use by the concertino violin in the second.
4. Uncharacteristic counterpoint in the third movement, where all six parts play a relentless stream of notes without rests.
5. Inelegant passagework in the concertino flute and violin writing.
6. The requirement for a wider keyboard compass that exceeds the range of any of Bach's other keyboard pieces.

While such features as its formal structures and use of two extant Bach works as its models appear to demonstrate a clear Bach provenance, they are nevertheless unusual enough to warrant further comment. The problem is that no autograph exists, which sets the concerto apart from the others. Indeed, it is not part of the collection Bach compiled in c. 1739, which suggests it was written sometime afterwards. The only sources we know are two copies made by Bach pupils Johan Friedrich Agricola and Johann Gottfried Mützel. Mützel did not make Bach's acquaintance until three months before Bach died in 1750, and we know from the paper Agricola used that his incomplete copy cannot have been made before 1741, after he had left Leipzig to work at the court of Frederick the Great. It could be that the concerto was Bach

experimenting with a more galant style of writing, but this does not account for some of its crudities. Such problems have led to several commentators questioning Bach's authorship altogether and suggesting one of his sons as a probable transcriber. Which son cannot be said with any certainty, though there is an apparent connexion between Agricola and Carl Philipp Emanuel (the pair co-authored Bach's obituary in 1754), which allows us at least to put forward at least his name as a possible contender.

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Pieter-Jan Belder (1966) studied recorder with Ricardo Kanji at the Royal Conservatorium of The Hague, and harpsichord with Bob van Asperen at the Amsterdam Sweelinck Conservatorium. He has pursued a flourishing career as harpsichordist, clavichord player, organist, forte-pianist and recorder player.



He has appeared at many international festivals, such as the *Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht*, the *Berlin Musikfest*, the *Festival van Vlaanderen*, the *Festival Potsdam Sans Souci*, *Bremen Musikfest* and the *Leipzig Bachfest*.

He regularly plays solo recitals, and is also very much in demand as a continuo player with such ensembles as the, *The Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century*, *Camarata Trajectina*, *Bach Collegium Japan*, *Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam*, and the *Netherlands Bach Society*, and has been working with conductors such as Frans Brüggen, Ton Koopman, Masaaki Suzuki, Jos van Veldhoven and Philippe Herreweghe, amongst others. Belder has also accompanied soloists such as Johannette Zomer, Nico van der Meel, Harry van der Kamp, Sigiswald Kuijken, Rémy Baudet, Rainer Zipperling and Wilbert Hazelzet. Belder conducts his own ensemble *Musica Amphion*.

In 1997 Pieter-Jan Belder was awarded the third prize at the Hamburg NDR Music Prize harpsichord competition. In 2000 he was winner of the Leipzig Bach harpsichord competition. In 2005 he made his debut as a conductor in the Amsterdam *Concertgebouw*, and was since then regularly conducting productions with soloists such as Michael Chance and Sarah Connolly (*Dido & Aeneas*) and the choir *Collegium Vocale Gent*.



Musica Amphion, founded in 1993 by harpsichordist and recorder player Pieter-Jan Belder, is dedicated to the performance of orchestral and chamber music from the 17th and 18th centuries on period instruments.

The leader is violinist Rémy Baudet, who holds the same position in the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century (conducted by Frans Brüggen). Apart from successful solo careers for most of them, all Musica Amphion members play as leaders in other prominent Baroque orchestras. This means that whilst they are firmly rooted in the characteristic Dutch approach to early music playing, they are also abreast of the latest developments in the field as a whole.

Musica Amphion appears regularly at important Festivals such as the Utrecht Early Music Festival, the Festival Classique in The Hague and the Bremen Musikfest. The ensemble frequently performs at various venues both in the Netherlands and abroad. In 2010 they performed Mozart's *Zauberflöte* in the Concertgebouw Amsterdam.

In 2011 Musica Amphion initiated a long-term project called 'Bach in Context'. This project sheds a new light on Bach's cantatas by presenting them in their musical-liturgical context. Several performances, in cooperation with the Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, were given to great acclaim in monumental churches in the Netherlands and Germany.

Musica Amphion has issued countless album recordings. Their discography includes Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, *Musikalisches Opfer* and the concertos for 2, 3 and 4 harpsichords, Telemann's *Tafelmusik*, the complete works of Corelli, Purcell's chambermusic, Rameau's *Pièces de Clavecin en Concert* and Mozart's early pianoconcertos. A recording of keyboard concertos by Bach & Sons, on Quintone was awarded a 10 in the Dutch music magazine *Luister* and was reviewed by *NRC Handelsblad* as 'the most enjoyable Baroque album for a long time.'

Musica Amphion has a busy schedule. In the Bach in Context series four album books have been published so far. A fifth volume is being prepared. The recording of three harpsichord concertos by C.P.E. Bach (2014) was received with the highest acclaim by the music magazine *Luister*.

Musica Amphion thanks the following persons for their generous support for making these recordings possible: Henk Stoel, Johan en Annetarie de Jong, Jan Willem van Willigen, Leon Penders en Simon en Wies Belder

He has made over 150 album recordings, most of them solo and chamber music productions. Since 1999 Belder has worked on his integral recording of the Scarlatti keyboard sonatas, which was released in 2007. Since then he has recorded Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier* along with the complete harpsichord works by Rameau and Soler. Brilliant also released a recording of the *Kenner und Liebhaber* series by C.P.E. Bach, recorded on the fortepiano and the clavichord as well as harpsichord concertos recorded with his own group Musica Amphion.

Recently Brilliant Classics released the first complete recording of the famous Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, a project Belder has been working on for more than 10 years.

Belder has also recorded several orchestral and chamber-music productions with *Musica Amphion*: Telemann's *Tafelmusik*, the complete works of Corelli, Bach's *Brandenburg* concertos, Bach's concertos for 2, 3 & 4 harpsichords, and the complete chamber music of Purcell. Also he initiated Bach in Context, a concert and an album series, performing Bach cantatas in their thematic context, and in which also the organ repertoire was incorporated. This series was in corporation with Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam and issued on the label Etcetera.

Pieter-Jan Belder is currently working on recording the harpsichord works by J.S. Bach, Dandrieu and William Byrd. He has a successful duo with baroque violinist Rie Kimura with whom he recorded C.P.E. Bach's violin sonatas for the label Resonus.

Belder teaches baroque performance at the Musikhochschule in Lübeck, Germany. www.pieterjanbelder.nl