

Academy of Ancient Music

Saturday, November 1, 8 pm, 2003
First Congregational Church

Richard Egarr, director and harpsichord

Rachel Brown, flute

Pavlo Beznosiuk, violin

Rodolfo Richter, violin

Trevor Jones, viola

Alison McGillivray, cello

Malachy Robinson, double bass

William Carter, theorbo

Johann Sebastian Bach Suite No. 2 in B Minor for Flute, Strings,
and Continuo, BWV 1067

Overture

Rondeau

Sarabande

Bourrée I & II

Polonaise

Menuet

Badinerie

Bach Concerto in D Minor for Harpsichord,
BWV 1052

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

INTERMISSION

Bach Concerto in A Major for Harpsichord,
BWV 1055

Allegro

Larghetto (Siciliano)

Allegro ma non tanto

Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 for Flute,
Violin, and Harpsichord, BWV 1050

Allegro

Adagio

Allegro

The Academy of Ancient Music appears by arrangement with David Rowe Artists.

Recordings: Harmonia Mundi, Decca

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Suite No. 2 in B Minor for Flute, Strings, and Continuo, BWV 1067

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

It is sad when great works of art become so familiar that we can no longer appreciate their true worth. Who can tell how many posters of Van Gogh's sunflowers, Mona Lisa mugs, or inflatable Michelangelo Davids there are in the world? Many musical equivalents push themselves at us continuously as backgrounds in elevators, waiting rooms, and on hold.

The famous Badinerie (if that is indeed its title) that concludes this suite by Bach reached this status in the mid-1970s with the explosion of James Galway onto the pop-classical music scene. Whether this happening was good or evil, it is forever after a hard task to reset minds and perceptions towards the work as a whole. Bach reserved his most impassioned and deeply anguished music for the flute in this acrid key of B Minor. (The great flute sonata in this key and the Benedictus from the Mass in B Minor attest to this.) The Suite No. 2 in B Minor, too, as a composition should take both performer and listener to darker parts of themselves. The unusual slow ending to the first movement, with its sobbing, descending lines; the tortured lines and harmonies of the Sarabande; the insistent hammering of the Bourée are a few examples. Perhaps this is music infused with gall rather than gold.

Harpsichord Concertos

Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach's concertos for harpsichord, strings, and continuo define the origin of the keyboard concerto. Bach's position as director of the Collegium Musicum in Leipzig demanded that he organize music for its performances every week. It seems that it was here, in these "concerts," that this series of concertos for harpsichord had its beginning, probably at Zimmermann's Coffee House in Leipzig. This setting would have been the perfect environment to inspire the idea of using the harpsichord as a concertante instrument, liberating it from the confines of the continuo section. One can sense that his sons' education and reputations were also contributing factors. In the great Concerto in D Minor, BWV 1052, was Bach watching and smiling from the viola, as his son flew over the keyboard to his chugging accompanying eighth-notes?

To make these concertos work with the harpsichord as the solo instrument, the size of ensemble is of the utmost importance. The harpsichord itself has, for "modern" ears, a relatively low dynamic level. The loudest harpsichord played by the strongest, most resonant musician cannot achieve anywhere near the "forte" of a modern piano. To accompany one harpsichord with a large body of strings is always awkward. The use of one player per part allows for the most musically flexible approach in which players can sound at full volume in tuttis, and even in the quietest moments can be expressive rather than hold back.

Bach's own headings for these concertos clearly specify the concertato harpsichord accompanied by two violins, viola, and continuo. Assuming a single player per part, what of "continuo"? The option most often encountered is for the soloist also to play continuo in the tutti sections, resulting, alas, in unfortunate consequences on matters of sonority. The continuo section (harpsichord/organ/lute) provides an added but complimentary and indispensable color. In most tuttis of these harpsichord concertos, Bach carefully wrote out the first violin part into the right hand of the harpsichord, providing the required combination of soloist and tutti playing in unison, otherwise the important structural "unison" sonority is lost. The function of the "continuo" during solo passages must therefore be fulfilled by another continuo instrument, and the harpsichord left alone to its concertante role. Our choice of continuo instrument was for the lute or theorbo, a different but complimentary plucked color. (It is known that the great German lute player Leopold Weiss was active in Leipzig in the 1740s and played with Bach a number of times.)

During the final two decades of his life, Bach seems to have been very intent upon gathering his music together and presenting it in a number of final coherent manuscripts or published collections. It seems that he wished to bring a collection of six harpsichord concertos together as a single opus.

The autograph manuscript scores of these works tell an interesting story. Bach began by completing the Concerto in G Minor, BWV 1058, which also survives as the Violin Concerto in A Minor, BWV 1041, and he prefaced this score with the letters "J.J." ("Jesu juva"), his normal practice when beginning a set of pieces or a major work. He then entered the tiny fragment of the Concerto for Oboe and Harpsichord in D Minor, BWV 1059, stopped for whatever reason, and began again, producing the six concertos known as BWV 1052 to 1057 as the final "set." This is reinforced by his prefacing BWV 1052 with "J.J." and signing off the set after BWV 1057 with "Finis.S.D.Gl." ("Soli Deo gloria"). The manuscript scores of BWV 1058 and 1059 were then placed after this fixed set. Since we have the autograph scores, the issue of an Urtext performing version of these works then shouldn't seem so problematic, but unlike the St. Matthew Passion and other practically "final draft" autograph manuscripts, the scores of the harpsichord concertos are very much working drafts with numerous additions, corrections, and annotations.

Bach's reworking of earlier material into these harpsichord concertos has, for generations, led to extreme flights of musicological fancy and conjecture about supposed lost "originals" for them. Indeed, for the Harpsichord Concerto in F Major, BWV 1057, Bach's reworked the fourth Brandenburg concerto, originally scored for two solo recorders, solo violin, "strings," and continuo in the key of G Major. Why should Bach wish to rework such a stunning "old" piece (which had its place within a set of concertos) and place it as the sixth and final work in a group of harpsichord concertos? What could be more difficult—and in a way more appropriate—than to take a virtuoso violin part he himself had created in his "first" set of concertos, and turn it into the crowning and most demanding keyboard concerto of this new "second" set? The skill with which this transcription is managed, particularly in regard to the bass lines, is consummate. The physical translation of the violin's pyrotechnics into keyboard terms is as transcendental as Liszt's of Paganini.

Little of this sensitivity and skill applies to the various published attempts to "reconstruct" the other so-called "original" versions for violin, oboe, and oboe d'amore of the remaining harpsichord concertos. This musicological addiction to "reconstruction" (and not just of Bach's music) has grown into something of an industry. It seems to satisfy some musical desire to be closer to Bach by becoming involved in the compositional process of some phantom earlier versions of these harpsichord works (for which no hard evidence exists). Bach, along with Handel, was a great expert in making his own recompositions or re-arrangements. Whenever he chose to adapt or expand earlier music, he managed it with inimitable skill and always created something extra, giving the old bones entirely new flesh. In any attempt at reconstructing these harpsichord concertos, a great deal is lost and very little gained. The gains are the slight increase in repertoire for violinists and oboists who have another couple of pieces of Bach to play. The losses are the musical integrity and superb sense of balance of the harpsichord versions (particularly in the bass lines), not to mention the loss of actual musical material that the reconstructed versions inevitably suffer.

The earlier appearance of certain movements of these concertos in cantatas with the "solo" part played by the oboe cannot seriously confirm in any way an earlier version as a concerto for that instrument. Such musicological "suggestion" can often achieve a greater status than is, in my view, safe. It must be seen for what it is: supposition.

These fabulous keyboard concertos by Bach should be treasured, for it is here that Bach irrevocably freed the keyboard from its supporting role as a continuo instrument and unleashed it upon the concertato world, an act for which we must be eternally grateful.

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 for Flute, Violin, and Harpsichord, BWV 1050

Bach

There are very few true moments of departure in music history—points after which it is possible to say that things were never the same again. In the 20th century, there was the codification of the 12-tone system by Schönberg; in the 19th century, the irrevocable alteration in concepts of the symphony and sonata by Beethoven with his late sonatas and the Ninth Symphony. The music of the 18th century saw many mini-revolutions in forms and expression alongside the general aesthetic and

cultural ones. Perhaps unwittingly, J.S.Bach forever changed the face of the concerto with the fifth in the set of concertos written for the Margrave of Brandenburg. It is still not clear why Bach chose

to free the keyboard from its essential supporting role as a continuo instrument in the concerto. The obvious demonstration of his own prowess as a keyboard player seems to me an unlikely ploy, given that the composition also features two other “soloists.” This idea of an “ensemble” concerto was certainly not new. Vivaldi—whom Bach revered and from whom he learned the “concerto” trade by study and transcription of his music—had already cornered this market with his concertos written for Dresden.

Whatever the reasons, Bach unleashed the keyboard into the concerto equation. This was an inspired leap of faith, make no mistake. Bach’s harpsichord, although perfect as a solo and continuo instrument, ultimately would never be able to compete later in the century with the larger orchestras and the dynamic/ expressive demands. Luckily, in Bach’s hands with the fifth Brandenburg, he released the keyboard from its fetters, and in so doing allowed others—his sons, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Rachmaninoff—to go and do likewise.

—Richard Egarr, 2003

The original Academy of Ancient Music was established in 1726 for the purpose of studying and performing “old” music—defined initially as music composed at least a century earlier, but soon to include more contemporary composers, most notably Handel. The modern revival of The Academy, founded by Christopher Hogwood in 1973, created one of the first period-instrument orchestras and is now renowned worldwide for its concerts and over 250 recordings of music from the Baroque, Classical, and early Romantic eras.

The Academy of Ancient Music is especially well known for its pioneering recordings under Christopher Hogwood for Decca. The orchestra was the first to record all of Mozart’s symphonies on period instruments and has since recorded the complete piano concertos and symphonies of Beethoven, and is part-way through recording the complete Haydn symphonies and the complete Mozart piano concertos with fortepianist Robert Levin. Under Hogwood, The AAM has also made a number of opera recordings for Decca, in particular working closely with Cecilia Bartoli. Their prize-winning recordings include Mozart’s *La Clemenza di Tito*, Haydn’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and Handel’s *Rinaldo*, which was honored with Gramophone (2001) and Cannes Classical (2002) awards. In 1996, the artistic directorship of The AAM was extended with the appointment of Paul Goodwin as associate conductor and Andrew Manze as associate director; it has subsequently been widened further through invitations to a number of guest directors. As well as working with selected choral directors—Stephen Cleobury with the Choir of King’s College, Cambridge; Edward Higginbottom with the Choir of New College, Oxford; Stephen Layton with Polyphony—The AAM will be working with, among others, Giuliano Carmignola, Richard Egarr, Pavlo Beznosiuk, Masaaki Suzuki, and Paul Daniel, while continuing to work with Hogwood and Goodwin.

The commissioning of new works under Paul Goodwin represents a new development for The Academy of Ancient Music. The first commission and recording, Sir John Tavener’s *Eternity’s Sunrise*, met with enthusiastic critical acclaim and led to a second new Tavener work and recording, *Total Eclipse*. David Bedford’s *Like a Strand of Scarlet* followed in 2001, and in March 2003, The AAM premiered John Woolrich’s *Arcangelo*, written to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the birth of Corelli. The AAM’s next commission is from Thea Musgrave in the 2005–2006 season.

Both Tavener recordings are on Harmonia Mundi, for whom The AAM has made a number of recordings: Mozart’s *Zaide* and Christmas music by Schütz and his contemporaries (conducted by Paul Goodwin); violin concertos by J.S. Bach and Vivaldi, and concerti grossi by Handel and Geminiani (directed by Andrew Manze); and Bach’s harpsichord concertos (directed by Richard Egarr). Choral recordings include works by Bach, Handel, and Vivaldi with the Choir of King’s College under Stephen Cleobury, and two recordings with Edward Higginbottom and Choir of New College: Pergolesi’s *Marian Vespers* and *Coronation Anthems*, a collection of music from 17th- and 18th-century English coronations.

Highlights of the 2002–2003 season included two major United States tours, a number of concerts marking the Corelli 350th anniversary, the continued residency at St. John's, Smith Square (London), and the launch of a new Cambridge series at West Road Concert Hall. Summer 2003 included festival appearances across England, a performance at the BBC Proms, and a major concert in Vienna replicating a mammoth Beethoven benefit concert of 1808.

The AAM's 30th anniversary season in 2003–2004 includes the start of a major exploration of Mendelssohn and his circle by Christopher Hogwood, American and European tours with Richard Egarr, a celebration of Sir John Tavener's 60th birthday in London under Paul Goodwin, and an Italian program showcasing the talents of violinist Giuliano Carmignola.

For more information, please visit The AAM on the web at www.aam.co.uk.

Richard Egarr (director and harpsichord) is one of the most exciting and versatile musicians of his generation. He plays all types of historical keyboards, performing music ranging from 15th-century organ intabulations to modern piano music from this century. He is in great demand as a soloist, chamber musician, and conductor.

Egarr's musical training as a choirboy at York Minster and at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, and as organ scholar at Clare College Cambridge, brings a deep and wide-ranging experience to his activities inside and outside early music. His study with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam further inspired his work in the field of historical performance, culminating in his taking top prize in the International C.P.E. Bach Fortepiano–Clavichord–Harpsichord Competition in Hamburg.

As a conductor, Richard Egarr has had great experience in many fields. He has directed operas and oratorios, from Bach's St. Matthew Passion to Sir John Tavener's *Ikon of Light*. He has been greeted as director of

specialized ensembles and modern orchestras alike, notably The Hanover Band, the Amsterdam Bach Soloists, and (as director) The Academy of the Begijnhof, Amsterdam. Among his recent productions are Handel's *Acis and Galathea* (with the Orchestra of the Paris Conservatory), Telemann's St. Matthew Passion (with the Britten–Pears Orchestra, Aldeburgh), and *Rasposo*, a baroque circus

production for the Festival Ile de France. This season, Egarr is guest directing The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Portland Baroque Orchestra, Bochum Symphoniker, and the Dutch Radio Chamber Orchestra. Next season, he will be returning to the Orchestra of the Paris Conservatory (Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*) and the Orchestra of the Britten–Pears Foundation (with Handel's *Acis and Galathea*). Further projects include Handel's *Messiah* with the Portland Baroque Orchestra, the Brandenburg Concertos with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, and Handel's *La Resurrezione* with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

As an orchestral soloist, Egarr has performed extensively in the major music festivals throughout Europe, as well as on critically acclaimed tours in the United States and Japan. He has played in the Musikverein in Vienna, the Philharmonie in Berlin, and Wigmore Hall in London. Egarr was guest soloist with the Dutch Radio Chamber Orchestra in the last three consecutive years, in concertos by C.P.E. Bach, Haydn, and Mozart.

Egarr has also demonstrated his remarkable improvisational skills in several recitals with jazz pianist-composer Guus Janssen. He will continue this collaboration next season in a project including the Dutch Wind Ensemble.

Finally, Egarr has enjoyed a highly successful collaboration with violinist Andrew Manze, in their unparalleled performances of music from the late Baroque. Past touring has included Germany, England, France, Spain, and Scandinavia, and this season will include two major tours of the United States and a debut tour of Australia.

Richard Egarr has appeared on many recordings. His solo discs include works by Frescobaldi, Gibbons, Couperin, Purcell, and J.S. Bach. His first complete recording of the keyboard works of Johann Jakob Froberger met great critical response. Recent recordings with Andrew Manze and Jaap ter Linden for Harmonia Mundi USA include sonatas by Rebel, Handel, and Bach. The

recording of

the complete sonatas of Pandolfi won the Baroque Instrumental category in the 2000 Gramophone Awards. With The Academy of Ancient Music, he has recorded works by Geminiani and the complete Bach harpsichord concertos, both for Harmonia Mundi USA.

Rachel Brown (flute), since winning first prize at the American National Flute Competition in 1984, has become well known for her

versatility on modern and historical flutes and recorders as “a performer of remarkable intensity and musicianship” (Sunday Telegraph). She plays principal flute with The Academy of Ancient Music, and also with The Hanover Band, Collegium Musicum 90, the King’s Consort, and the Brandenburg Consort, with whom she has given many concerto performances in Europe, America, and Japan.

Recent highlights include performances of C.P.E. Bach’s Concerto in D Minor in the 25th London Handel Festival, Mozart’s Concerto

in G Major with Die Haydn Akademie at Esterhaza, his concerto for flute and harp with Danielle Perrett and The Hanover Band at Wigmore Hall, the six Vivaldi concertos

Op. 10 with Arte dei Suonatori in Poland, the complete Telemann fantasias for solo flute in Stratford, chamber concerts with the London Handel Players in Canada, and a Schubert recital at the Purcell Room. In the 2003–04 season, she will give several solo performances with The Academy of Ancient Music of

C.P.E. Bach’s Concerto in G Major, J.S. Bach’s Suite No. 2 in B Minor, and Vivaldi’s Recorder Concerto in C Major, RV443.

Her recordings include concertos by J.S., C.P.E., and J.C. Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi, Leclair, and Quantz, and several CDs of Baroque chamber music of Telemann and music from the court of Frederick the Great. Brown has made three recordings of solo flute music from Hotteterre and Rameau to Schubert and Boehm, and her disc of Quantz concertos for Hyperion has been hailed worldwide.

Rachel Brown is a member of chamber ensembles Musical Offering and The London Handel Players. Her collection of original and reproduction instruments covers four centuries. Composers such as John Ogden and Barry Guy have written works specially for her. She has also given numerous lectures and recitals for the British Flute Society, the American National Flute Association, and the French flute society, La Traversière.

In great demand as a teacher, Brown has been invited to give master classes in Wales, Ireland, Spain, America, and Australia. For many years, she was a professor at the Royal College of Music, where she originally trained as a pupil of Trevor Wye and Lisa Beznosniuk. She currently teaches in London at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal College of Music.

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