

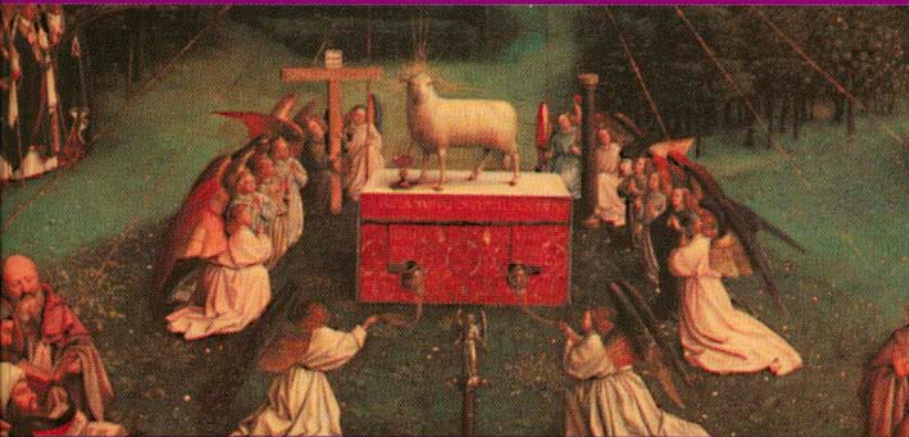


CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 14598

J.S. Bach

A MUSICAL OFFERING
The complete instrumental trio sonatas



Florilegium

J.S. Bach

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The complete instrumental trio sonatas



FLORILEGIUM

Ashley Solomon	flute, recorder
Andrew Crawford	flute (Ricercar a 6 & BWV 1039)
Rachel Podger	violin, viola
Lucy Russell	violin (Ricercar a 6 & BWV 1037)
Daniel Yeadon	cello, viola da gamba
Neal Peres da Costa	harpsichord, organ

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TRIO SONATA IN G MAJOR BWV 1038 flute, violin, cello, harpsichord

1	Largo	3.30
2	Vivace	0.55
3	Adagio	2.02
4	Presto	1.18

5 RICERCAR A 6 FROM THE MUSICAL OFFERING BWV 1079

recorder, flute, violin, viola, viola da gamba, organ 7.11

TRIO SONATA IN G MAJOR BWV 1039 2 flutes, cello, organ

6	Adagio	3.33
7	Allegro ma non presto	3.08
8	Adagio e piano	2.05
9	Presto	2.35

TRIO SONATA FROM THE MUSICAL OFFERING BWV 1079 flute, violin, cello, harpsichord

10	Largo	6.26
11	Allegro	6.07
12	Andante	3.30
13	Allegro	2.55

TRIO SONATA IN C MAJOR BWV 1037 2 violins, cello, organ

14	Adagio	3.31
15	Alla breve (Allegro moderato)	2.43
16	Largo	1.37
17	Gigue (Allegro molto)	4.59

Total Time

59.04

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Production & Distribution

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More information about
our releases can be found

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Made in Germany

Florilegium

Ashley Solomon	flute – R.Cameron after Denner (1995) recorder – M.Grinter after Bressan (1997)
Andrew Crawford (Ricercar a 6 & BWV 1039)	flute – R.Cameron after Bressan (1991)
Rachel Podger	violin – Pesarinius, Genoa 1739 viola – Cabasse c.1750 violin – Anonymous English 1730
Lucy Russell (Ricercar a 6 & BWV 1037)	
Daniel Yeadon	cello – M.Watson after Guarnerius (1991)
Neal Peres da Costa	viola da gamba – G.Bridgewood after Edward Lewis (1987) harpsichord – A.Garlick after Goujon (1996) organ – V.Woodstock (1993)

photo: Hanya Chlala



Florilegium is one of Britain's leading period instrument ensembles, renowned for its imaginative variety of instrumental colour, nuance and phrasing and its eagerness to experiment. It has established a unique reputation for stylish and exciting interpretations of music from the Baroque era to the early Romantic revolution.

Since its formation by Ashley Solomon and Neal Peres Da Costa in 1991, Florilegium's performances and recordings have received outstanding critical acclaim around the world. Concert engagements have taken Florilegium to France, Germany, Holland, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Hungary, Spain, Turkey, Canada, the USA, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, the People's Republic of China and Australia and it receives numerous reinventions to perform at major international festivals. Festival appearances have included concerts at the Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Symphony Hall, Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Beethoven House in Bonn, Theatre Grevin in Paris, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and the Frick Collection in New York.

Florilegium was awarded the highly coveted post of Resident Baroque Ensemble at London's Wigmore Hall in 1998. The group performs several concerts there each season and is actively involved in its education work. Florilegium is a flexible ensemble, performing music from intimate chamber works up to large-scale orchestral and choral repertoire. It has worked with some of the world's finest musicians and regularly collaborates on large-scale projects with the Choir of Westminster Abbey and the Choir of Winchester Cathedral.

While the genius of J.S. Bach (1685-1750) is commemorated throughout the world during this, the very first year of the twenty-first century, several thought provoking and astonishing facts are worth pondering. During Bach's lifetime, the dissemination of his works via the medium of publishing and printing was meagre compared with lesser talents, indeed, only a handful of purely instrumental compositions dominated his published oeuvre. However it is even more astonishing that contemporaries such as Handel, Telemann and Hasse appear to have enjoyed a much greater and celebrated public appreciation. Should there be surprise then, that upon Bach's earthly departure his music suffered much the same fate as any decent and capable Capellmeister of the era? His music was simply shelved, its place usurped by the next in line.

It was in reality, only a 'flicker', in the time-scale of the universe before the dust was blown from Bach's manuscripts and the world at large began to appreciate his godly stature. So universally known and respected has his music become over the past two hundred and fifty years, that even mechanical inventions of the space age (mobile phones and the like) spew forth his heavenly sequences with less than heavenly electronic nuances.

What could be said that would do any justice what so ever to Bach's work? Wittingly or unwittingly, his craftsmanship transcended time, space and human imperfection. This supernatural-like ability certainly pervades his compositions in the popular 'trio' sonata, form for two matched or contrasted melodic instruments supported by the ever continuous 'basso'. Of those which are very humbly offered on this space age compact disc, *BWV 1079* for flute, violin and continuo from the famous study in coun-

terpoint *The Musical Offering*, and *BWV 1039* for two flutes and continuo are by scholarly reckoning from Bach's pen. *BWV 1039* might well have been a favourite because, as so often was the case, Bach transcribed it for viola da gamba and keyboard (*Trio Sonata BWV 1027*). While *BWV 1037* for two violins and continuo is attributed to the virtuoso keyboard player and composer J.G. Goldberg (1727-1756) and *BWV 1038* for flute, violin and continuo is conjectured to be an exercise by one of Bach's gifted offspring, both exhibit the wonderful characteristics of the Bach 'school'. Furthermore, *BWV 1038* seems to borrow material from the *Sonata BWV 1021* for violin and continuo, and almost certainly makes use of the incipit theme 'Gute Nacht' from the Motet *BWV 227* 'Jesu, meine Freude'. Scholars of the future may determine the authenticity of these works, though in the end there is little doubt that Bach's influence reined supreme. Sublime and sensuous melodies accompanied by rich and gracious harmonic impulses are interspersed with music of a more formal and contrapuntal nature. And Bach's wit is ever present even in the more serious-natured *Musical Offering*.

The voyage of discovery through these trio sonatas was wonderfully enhanced by the eclectic *Ricercar à 6* from *The Musical Offering*. Bach's conception and arrangement of the ponderous theme throughout the six voices is so magnificent that the experimental instrumentation offered in this recording was bound to be fruitful. By way of honouring such a grand invention, its genesis recounted by the celebrated historian Johann Nicolaus Forkel (1749-1818) is indispensable. One evening in 1747, Frederick the Great postponed the nightly musical activities at his Palace in Potsdam exclaiming to his assembly, "Gentleman, old Bach is come". Without a chance to don a suitable cantor's attire, Bach was hurriedly ushered towards the King whereupon

after the necessary protocol, he tried the extensive collection of Silbermann forte-piano's which were dotted about the Palace.

The musicians went with him from room to room, and Bach was invited everywhere to try them [the forte-piano's] and to play unpremeditated compositions. After he had gone on for some time, he asked the King to give him a subject for a fugue in order to execute it immediately without any preparation. The King admired the learned manner in which his subject was thus executed extempore; and, probably to see how far such art could be carried, expressed a wish to hear also a Fugue with six obligate parts. But as not every subject is fit for such full harmony, Bach chose one himself and immediately executed it to the astonishment of all present in the same magnificent and learned manner as he had done that of the King.... After his return to Leipzig, he composed the subject he had received from the King in three and six parts, added several intricate pieces in strict canon on the subject, had it engraved, under the title of *Musikalisches Opfer*, and dedicated it to the inventor.

How did Bach and musicians of his time actually play and sound? What were their preferred tempi, rubati, articulations and dynamic nuances? The reality is that we do not know! Using instruments set up in an appropriate style combined with an awareness and application of performing practices described in written documents, provides a rich and colourful musical vocabulary. We cannot however say that the results are anything but informed experiments. 'Ear-witness', evidence preserved in the earliest sound and mechanical recordings (wax cylinders and player-piano rolls) around the turn of the nineteenth century positively demonstrate that 1) since then, musical taste has changed significantly; what was once considered intrinsically musical, now causes much disapproval and consternation, and 2) written description and musical notation are imperfect and 'sketchy', in the preservation of important details of performance. These old recordings qualify the written word, sometimes exposing glaring inconsistencies or different meanings. Perhaps the inventors of the mobile

phone and the Internet will soon be able to transport us back to that event in 1747. But we will most likely be very shocked by what we hear!

As twenty-first century musicians we are griped steadfastly by twenty-first century aesthetics and all its consumer and commercial expectations. But we have tried to break away from these constraints and our informed guess work is based on recent scholarship and continuous questioning. In the end, we have had enormous fun getting to know this genius of geniuses.

Neal Peres Da Costa

(1) Johann Nicolaus Forkel, *On Johann Sebastian Bach's Life, Genius and Works* (Leipzig, 1802), cited in Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, *The Bach Reader* (New York, W.W. Norton & Co. 1966), pp 305-306.

colophon

Production
Producer
Recording engineer, editing
Painting cover
Cover design
Liner notes
Harpsichord technician

Channel Classics Records by
Walter van Hauwe
C. Jared Sacks
'Adoration of the Lamb', Jan van Eijck
David Louf, Utrecht
Neal Peres Da Costa
Edwin Pickering

Technical information
Microphones
Digital converter
Recording location
Recording date

Bruel & Kjaer 4003, Schoeps
24 Bit Prism / Genex Recorder
St. Martin's Church, East Woodhay, UK
March 1998

discography

CCS 5093 Telemann Concerti da Camera
CCS 7595 Le Roi s'amuse / music of Leclair, Boismortier, Corrette
CCS 8495 Vivaldi Concerti
CCS 9096 In the name of Bach / music of G.C., J.E., W.F., J.C., and J.B. Bach
CCS 11197 Sanguineus and Melancholicus
CCS 13598 Telemann Paris Quartets

with cellist Pieter Wispelwey:

CCS 6294 Vivaldi Cello Sonatas
CCS 7395 Haydn Cello Concertos and London Symphony no. 104
CCS 10097 Vivaldi Cello Concertos