

ALIGNMENT ALIGNMENT

FLORILEGIUM

Masters of Baroque

Filmed at Beverley Minster,
Friday 27th May 2022

Florilegium

Ashley Solomon *director*

Masterpieces of the Baroque

Brandenburg Concerto no. 6
in B flat major, BWV 1051

Allegro; Adagio ma non troppo; Allegro

Johann Sebastian Bach

1685–1750

Brandenburg Concerto no. 5
in D major, BWV 1050

Allegro; Affettuoso; Allegro

J.S. Bach

Brandenburg Concerto no. 3
in G major, BWV 1048

Allegro; Adagio; Allegro

J.S. Bach

INTERVAL

Violin Concerto in A minor,
BWV1041

Allegro; Andante; Allegro assai

J.S. Bach

Orchestral Suite no. 2
in B minor, BWV 1067

*Ouverture; Rondeau; Sarabande; Bourrée I & II;
Polonaise; Menuet; Badinerie*

J.S. Bach

Bach's title of 'Six Concertos with Several Instruments' was apt, as the variety of instrumentation in these concertos is their trademark feature and far exceeds that of any comparable set from the period. As a set they certainly required a larger and more versatile orchestra than the Brandenburg court possessed; in contrast the sixteen regular members of the *Kapelle* at the court in Cöthen included almost all the instrumentalists needed to perform these six concertos. Three of these are presented in the first half of tonight's concert.

Brandenburg Concerto no. 6 in B flat major, BWV 1051

The sixth concerto requires seven players from two different musical worlds. Whilst probably written in 1721, thus making it the last of the set to be composed, the work harks back to the seventeenth century and the sound world of the English viol consort. The two bass viols help to create this antiquated colour, employed by Bach in this concerto despite their lack of popularity at the time. The two violas and cello represent the modern or new world soloists. There are no violins to be seen and Bach delights in promoting his favoured instrument to the fore. The opening movement sees the violas chase each other in very close imitation, supported by pulsing chords in the lower instruments. They are left alone in the slow movement supported by a decorated continuo line in the cello, and all join forces once again for the finale – a humorous and infectious gigue which ends this spirited concerto.

Brandenburg Concerto no. 5 in D major, BWV 1050

The fifth concerto was undoubtedly inspired by the arrival in Cöthen of the new Mietke harpsichord in 1719 and is probably one of the last of the six to have been composed. It uses the most modern instrumentation of the group and is the first piece by Bach to use the transverse flute instead of its vertical cousin (the recorder). It exists in two versions that are earlier than the one in the score dedicated to the Margrave of Brandenburg. The final version, in particular, broke new ground in music history and has been described as both revolutionary and evolutionary. For the first time in a concerto the harpsichord steps forward from its traditional function as an accompanying continuo instrument to become a member of the ensemble of soloists. Throughout this concerto the harpsichord overshadows the two other solo instruments (flute and violin), claiming all the virtuoso passagework and finally silencing them altogether in the long and dazzling solo cadenza which Bach expanded in length from 19 to 65 bars. No less than thirteen eighteenth-century sources for this concerto exist, in various hands, a testament to the work's popularity then as now. The second movement uses only the three soloists, with the harpsichord sometimes acting as the basso continuo in a trio sonata, but occasionally contributing a fourth melodic line as both right and left hand develop independent voices. The final movement is a treasure often overlooked because of the virtuosic and outspoken first movement. It is a gigue, traditionally the final movement of a dance suite, in which the occasional keyboard whirls are absorbed as high spirits.

Brandenburg Concerto no. 3 in G major, BWV 1048

The third concerto is thought to have been composed as early as 1712, clearly inspired by the four-violin concertos in Vivaldi's *L'estro armonico*. As in the Vivaldi model, Bach creates an orchestra out of a group of solo string players, in this case three violins, three violas and three cellos, with double bass and harpsichord continuo. Bach constantly shifts the roles of the players – at times the three groups play antiphonally, at other times an individual steps forward for a brief solo, and at yet other times all eleven instruments come together to play an 'orchestral' tutti. Bach later re-used the first movement of the concerto as the sinfonia for Cantata 174, *Ich liebe den Höchsten von ganzem Gemüte*, adding parts for two horns and three oboes to the already rich sound of the strings.

Violin Concerto in A minor, BWV 1041

Bach probably composed his two extant violin concerti around 1730, not long after he agreed to lead the Collegium Musicum in Leipzig. This talented amateur group gave weekly performances, often in the informal setting of a coffee house, providing Bach with an outlet for secular music that would not have surfaced during his primary duties preparing music for church services. The violin concerti in A minor and E major were among the works that Bach recast in the late 1730s as keyboard concerti, also intended for the Collegium Musicum. The six keyboard concerti provide evidence that there were once other concerti for violin, but only the two solo concerti and a double violin concerto in D minor have survived. As C. P. E. Bach wrote of his father in 1774, 'from his youth up to fairly old age...[Bach] played the violin purely and with a penetrating tone and thus kept the orchestra in top form, much better than he could have from the harpsichord. He completely understood the possibilities of all stringed instruments.'

Orchestral Suite no. 2 in B minor, BWV 1067

It is likely that the second suite in B minor, scored for solo flute with string and harpsichord accompaniment, was actually the last of the suites to be composed and was possibly written for the celebrated French flautist Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin. The work begins with a grandiose overture based on the type devised by Lully. This is followed by a series of movements based on popular dance forms: an elegant rondeau, an intense sarabande, an energetic pair of bourrées, a formal polonaise

with a variation (double), a delicate menuet, and a fleet badinerie which is a dancing showpiece of woodwind virtuosity.

© Ashley Solomon

Florilegium

Ashley Solomon *director/flute*

Bojan Čičić *leader/soloist*

Agata Daraiskaite, Gabriella Jones *violins*

James O'Toole, Joanna Patrick, Ana Dunne-Sequi *violas*

Florence Petit *cello*

Imogen Seth Smith, Henrick Perrson *cello/viola da gamba*

Rosie Moon *double bass*

Julian Perkins *harpsichord*

Regular performances in some of the world's most prestigious venues have confirmed Florilegium's status as one of Britain's most outstanding period instrument ensembles. Since its formation in 1991 the ensemble has established a reputation for stylish and exciting interpretations, from intimate chamber works to large-scale orchestral and choral repertoire, working as an instrumental ensemble and also in collaboration with some outstanding solo singers and choirs.

Concert venues have included Sydney Opera House, Esplanade (Singapore), Teatro Colon (Buenos Aires), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Konzerthaus (Vienna), Beethoven-Haus (Bonn), Handel-Haus (Halle) and Frick Collection (New York). Among the numerous residencies Florilegium has held was Ensemble-in-Residence at London's Wigmore Hall from 1998 to 2000, performing several series of concerts each year and becoming actively involved in the hall's education work. It is Ensemble-in-Association at the Royal College of Music, regularly working each term with students on both period and modern instruments in baroque chamber music.

Florilegium's recordings for Channel Classics have been awarded many prizes including two *Gramophone Award* nominations, three *BBC Music Magazine* awards, numerous Editor's Choice from *Gramophone*, and half a dozen Diapasons d'Or and

Chocs de la Musique in France; the Bach Cantatas disc with Johannette Zomer was awarded an Edison Award, Dutch music's most prestigious prize. In 2014 the group's twenty-fifth recording of the complete Bach Brandenburg Concertos was awarded a Dutch Luister 10 Award, *Classical CD Choice* CD of the Month and was Classic FM Featured Album. This was followed by the award-winning release of 'Telemann: Concertos & Cantata *Ihr Völker hört*' with the mezzo-soprano Clare Wilkinson which received the *Gramophone* Editor's Choice award and was shortlisted in the *Gramophone* annual awards in the category of best baroque chamber music CD. Florilegium's most recent CD, music from the Court of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, was inspired by James Gaines's novel *An Evening in the Palace of Reason*.

Ashley Solomon

Combining a successful career across both theory and practice, Ashley Solomon is Head of Historical Performance at the Royal College of Music, having been appointed a recorder professor in 1994. In 2014 he was awarded a Personal Chair and in July 2017 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music (FRAM). In 2019 he was also elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Music (FRCM) which was conferred on him by HRH The Prince of Wales. Both Fellowships are in recognition of outstanding services to music.

Active as a soloist and chamber musician he is the director of Florilegium, and much of Ashley's time is spent working and performing with this ensemble which he co-founded in 1991, becoming its director in 2001. Florilegium has been recording with Channel Classics since 1993 and has to date made 35 recordings, many of which have garnered international awards. Since 2003 Ashley has been training vocalists and instrumentalists in Bolivia, working on the unique collection of music held in archives by the Moxos and Chiquitos Indians. He formed Arakaendar Bolivia Choir in 2005 and has directed them in concerts throughout North and South America, Europe, in the Far East and on their three CD recordings. In 2008 Ashley was the first European to receive the prestigious Bolivian Hans Roth Prize, given in recognition of the enormous assistance he has given to the Bolivian native Indians, their presence on the international stage and the promotion and preservation of this music.

Bojan Čičić

Croatian-born violinist Bojan Čičić specialises in repertoire ranging from the late sixteenth century to the Romantic violin concertos of Mendelssohn and Beethoven.

He is the leader of the Academy of Ancient Music, Florilegium and the founder of the Illyria Consort with which he made numerous critically acclaimed recordings. This year he directed Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra and Washington Bach Consort. In 2016 Bojan was appointed professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music and is passionate about training the next generation of instrumentalists in historically-informed playing styles.