
Deutsche Grammophon
HILARY HAHN
BACH·CONCERTOS
Los Angeles
Chamber Orchestra
Jeffrey Kahane
SURROUND

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BACH · CONCERTOS

Los Angeles
Chamber Orchestra

Jeffrey Kahane

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH [1685-1750]

Concerto for Violin, Strings and Continuo in E major, BWV 1042 ..... [16'28]

Konzert für Violine, Streicher und Basso continuo E-dur

Concerto pour violon, cordes et basse continue en mi majeur

1 1. Allegro ..... [6'57]
2 2. Adagio ..... [7'07]
3 3. Allegro assai ..... [2'25]

Concerto for 2 Violins, Strings and Continuo in D minor, BWV 1043 ..... [14'25]

d-moll · en ré mineur

4 1. Vivace ..... [3'21]
5 2. Largo ma non tanto ..... [6'50]
6 3. Allegro ..... [4'14]

MARGARET BATJER, violin II

Concerto for Violin, Strings and Continuo in A minor, BWV 1041 ..... [13'36]

a-moll · en la mineur

7 1. (Allegro moderato) ..... [3'30]
8 2. Andante ..... [6'45]
9 3. Allegro assai ..... [3'21]

Concerto for Oboe, Violin, Strings and Continuo in C minor, BWV 1060 ..... [13'11]

Konzert für Oboe, Violine, Streicher und Basso continuo c-moll

Concerto pour hautbois, violon, cordes et basse continue en ut mineur

10 1. Allegro ..... [4'36]
11 2. Adagio ..... [5'21]
12 3. Allegro ..... [3'14]

ALLAN VOGEL, oboe

HILARY HAHN, violin

Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra
Jeffrey Kahane

FOREWORD Hilary Hahn

While I was warming up in a dressing room recently, a piece of artwork on the wall caught my eye. In the center was the following excerpt from T. S. Eliot: "... The past experience revived in the meaning / Is not the experience of one life only / But of many generations ..."

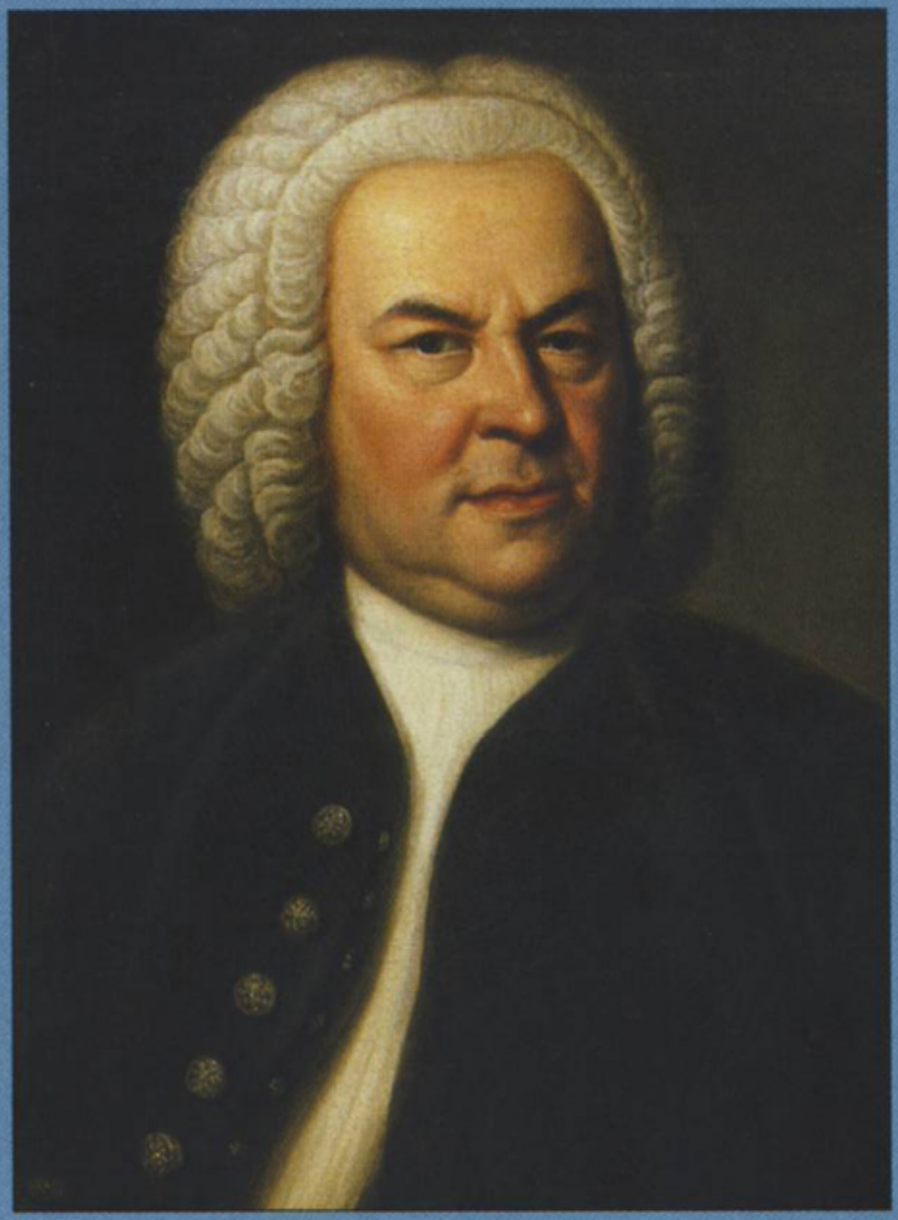
Had Eliot been describing the music of J. S. Bach, he would have hit the nail right on the head. As with many other works of classical music, countless interpretations of these four concerti have been passed from generation to generation, from teacher to student, from legendary musician to admirer, and from colleague to colleague. In Bach's case, this continuation of tradition has lasted well over two centuries. The world has changed greatly since he composed these works, but through it all, his music has remained unsullied, a touchstone of emotional purity.

Sometimes I'm asked, "What sets Bach apart from other great composers?" It's a difficult question to answer. There are so many details that one could point to, yet, like the famous Mona Lisa's smile, the most distinctive elements are the most elusive. Some people emphasize that Bach's music captures the essence of humanity, that it brings together complex elements of light and shadow, solitude and communion, elation and the depths of sorrow. The listener is led through conflict to beautiful resolution, but satisfying as the resolution may be, another layer of expression is constantly waiting to be uncovered. I feel that this is true of all of Bach's compositions.

I must say, however, that what impressed me most while preparing for and making this recording was the unique sense of community inherent in Bach's music. In the year or so leading up to the sessions, I worked on these four concerti intensively with numerous orchestras, conductors, and fellow soloists. As always, each musician and each audience member brought his or her own thoughts to the process – but instead of clashing, those different ideas and opinions inevitably contributed to an organic whole. Experiences com-

bine well in Bach; meaning is garnered from collective history, while memories are dusted out of the smallest corners and put to affectionate use.

My memories of these pieces are happy ones. My first performance of the E major concerto, outside of Philadelphia, was the only time my aged but beloved and spirited teacher, Jascha Brodsky, saw me play with orchestra. Several generations of his family joined him; it was the sole occasion on which I heard him called "Papi". A few years later, I performed the second-violin part in the Concerto for Two Violins, with Jaime Laredo, who was my coach at the time. Shortly thereafter, I was introduced to the Concerto for Oboe and Violin by a Russian oboist whose violinist grandfather had been the long-time, previous owner of my violin. The oboist's family and what seemed like Baltimore's entire Russian community attended that concert, to hear him perform next to his grandfather's violin. I also remember receiving the music for the A minor concerto; the notes were so familiar, and I enjoyed the opportunity to play them at long last, after years of singing and dancing to recordings of the piece and, in concert halls, annoying my neighbors by quietly tapping my toes to the quick movements. In essence, the meaning that these four pieces hold for me is greater than the notes alone; it is deeply entwined with my experiences, which would not have been possible without the influence of many past generations.



It is my hope that while listening to this album, you - in turn - will be inspired to hum to the slow movements, tap your feet to the fast, and dance to it all (at home, of course). Join in! I am sure Bach would be pleased.

Bach Violin Concertos

Johann Sebastian Bach was renowned as a keyboard virtuoso, but he was also a skilled violinist. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, had been a professional violinist in Erfurt and Eisenach (where Johann Sebastian was born), so our composer surely grew up with the sound of that instrument in his ear. It was as a violinist that Sebastian obtained his first professional appointment, at Weimar in 1703, and when he died 47 years later in Leipzig, he left in his estate a violin built by Stainer – probably the luthier Jacob Stainer whose instruments remain prized today. In 1774, Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel recalled of his father: "From his youth up to fairly old age he 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."

Bach supplied the violin repertoire with surpassing masterpieces, including eight sonatas with harpsichord accompaniment, six works for unaccompanied violin, obbligato parts in his cantatas and passions, and a handful of concertos. The violin plays an important solo role in three of the Brandenburg Concertos as well as in the Triple Concerto in A minor for flute, violin, and harpsichord BWV 1044. But his essential works for solo violin and orchestra are the four concertos presented on this recording.

Composing orchestral music was not really a principal focus of Bach's work. From 1717 to 1723 he was in charge of secular music for the court at Cöthen, but the 13-member instrumental ensemble available to him there fell short of what we would consider a modern orchestra. Thus his ostensibly orchestral pieces of the period, such as the Brandenburg Concertos and perhaps three of these violin concertos (BWV 1041–43), still stand with one foot firmly in the realm of chamber music. The ensemble supporting the soloist(s) consists here only of strings, with a harpsichord to realize the continuo line. In this connection Hilary Hahn has remarked: "All of Bach's music is chamber music, whether

it's written for a solo instrument or a large ensemble. In solo works the performer creates chamber music on one instrument, by balancing and phrasing many different lines at once. On the other hand, when more musicians are involved, the chamber-music structure is more standardized, and interpretations are formed through interaction with the other instrumentalists."

In 1723 Bach moved to Leipzig, where his time was largely given over to composing and directing sacred music. But between 1729 and 1741 he also found time to direct the city's Collegium musicum, a semi-professional assemblage of students and music lovers who met regularly at Zimmermann's coffee house - or, in the summer, in its outdoor garden - for instrumental music making. Now Bach had an ongoing need for concerto repertoire, and accordingly he dipped into his own back-catalogue to resurrect works he had written in Cöthen years earlier. In some cases he refashioned them into versions that spotlighted the Collegium's specific forces.

Scholars have traditionally maintained that BWV 1041-43 were composed in Cöthen and revived for the Leipzig Collegium musicum. The assumption is based on slender evidence at best, and recent thought favors the possibility that they actually originated in Leipzig around 1730. There is no doubt that Bach's keyboard arrangements of these three pieces date from his Collegium musicum years, when he turned the A minor violin concerto into a G minor harpsichord concerto, the E major violin concerto in a D major harpsichord concerto, and the D minor double violin concerto into a C minor concerto for two harpsichords.

The Concerto for oboe and violin BWV 1060 has less certain origins. All of Bach's solo or duo concertos with orchestra exist in versions featuring harpsichord - in this case, as a C minor concerto for two harpsichords - but none is thought to have been created for that instrument initially. In the 1920s the musicologist Max Seiffert analyzed the tessitura and other musical characteristics of BWV 1060 and deduced that the piece had originally been a concerto for oboe and violin; he published an edition for those instruments, transposing the piece to D minor to fit the oboe's comfort zone better. (A 1764 catalogue from the publishing firm of Breitkopf lists a Bach concerto for oboe and violin; though it fails to mention the work's key, at least it confirms that Bach penned some piece for this instrumental combination.) Scholars' opinions vary, however, and this concerto also exists in a reconstruction for oboe and violin pitched in C minor - performed here - as well as versions for two violins in either key.

Variety is the hallmark of these four concertos. The Violin Concerto in A minor, densely concentrated and contrapuntally involved, is by turns dramatic and lyrical in its outer movements. But its central Andante is relaxed and pensive - though it, too, generates a good deal of tension by piling up dissonances over extended pedal points. In contrast, the E major is one of the most jubilant of Bach's concertos, positively ebullient in its first movement and its concluding rondo. Here the hushed middle movement is a freely treated chaconne in B minor. The Concerto for Oboe and Violin is a lively and intensely emotional work in its outer

movements, especially the finale, which contains an exciting episode with great sweeps of triplets proclaimed by the violinist. These frame a luminous, introspective Adagio in which the two soloists spin out elegant contrapuntal lines above simple chords in the orchestra. The two violinists are equal partners in the D minor Double Concerto, often sharing their musical material in close alternation. The work's slow movement is a particularly fine example of Bach's ability to make time seem to stop while the players weave a magical tapestry from threads of poignancy, resignation and tenderness. Anything would seem an intrusion after such a movement, but Bach pulls no punches in the unusually energetic, even blustery, finale.

James Keller

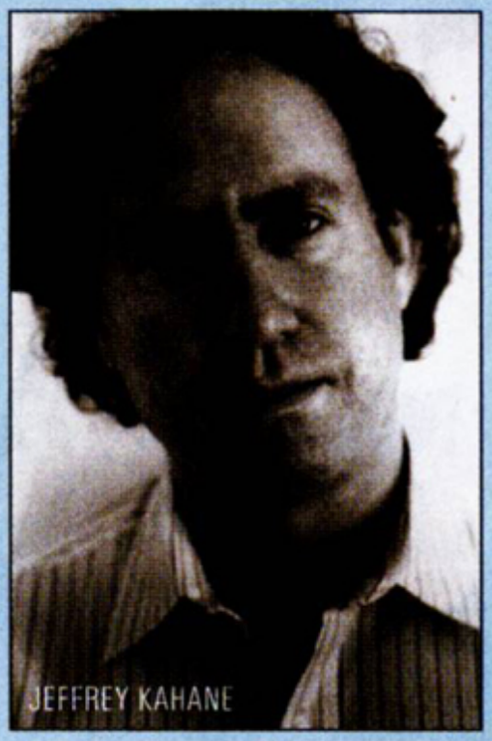
James Keller is program annotator of the San Francisco Symphony and New York Philharmonic

THE ARTISTS

Grammy Award-winner **HILARY HAHN** has already established herself as one of the most accomplished and compelling artists on the international concert circuit, appearing regularly with the world's great orchestras in Europe, Asia, and North America.

Admitted to Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music at the age of ten, Hilary Hahn made her major orchestra debut a year-and-a-half later with the Baltimore Symphony. Her 1993 Philadelphia Orchestra debut was followed by engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic and Pittsburgh Symphony. In March 1995, she made her German debut playing the Beethoven concerto with Lorin Maazel and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, in a concert broadcast on radio and television throughout Europe. Two months later she received the Avery Fisher Career Grant. In 1996, Ms. Hahn signed her first exclusive recording contract and made her Carnegie Hall debut in New York, as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Alongside her solo work, Ms. Hahn is devoted to chamber music and has frequently performed at the Skaneateles Chamber Music Festival in New York, at the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Born in 1979 in Lexington, Virginia, Hilary Hahn moved to Baltimore at the age of three, where she began playing the violin one month before her fourth birthday. From age five to ten, she studied with Klara Berkovich, who had taught for 25 years at the Leningrad School for the Musically Gifted. From ten to seventeen, she studied at Curtis with the legendary Jascha Brodsky - the last surviving student of Eugène Ysaÿe. Though she completed the Curtis Institute's degree requirements at age 16, Ms. Hahn deferred graduation for several more years, taking additional elective courses, coaching regularly with Jaime Laredo, and studying chamber music with Felix Galimir and Gary Graffman. In May of 1999, Ms. Hahn graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree.


JEFFREY KAHANE

Hilary Hahn has won numerous international prizes for her recordings. The present Bach disc is her first for Deutsche Grammophon, with which she signed an exclusive contract in 2002.

JEFFREY KAHANE was born in Los Angeles and graduated from the San Francisco Conservatory. A piano student of Howard Weisel and Jakob Gimpel, he won first prize at the 1983 Rubinstein Competition and also that year was awarded the Avery Fisher Career Grant and made his Carnegie Hall debut. Since then he has given recitals in many other important musical centers, and he ap-

pears regularly as soloist with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Israel Philharmonic and Leipzig Gewandhaus. He is also a frequent guest at summer festivals and well known for his collaborations with artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Dawn Upshaw, Joshua Bell, Thomas Quasthoff and leading chamber ensembles. Kahane made his conducting debut at the Oregon Bach Festival in 1988 and since then has appeared with orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra and Academy of St Martin in the Fields. During the 2001/02 season with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, of which he is music director, he made his New York conducting debut at Carnegie Hall and won critical acclaim as soloist/conductor performing the five Beethoven piano concertos.

MARGARET BATJER, concertmaster of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra since 1998, made her first solo appearance at 15 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra playing Menotti's Violin Concerto. A graduate of the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, she studied with Ivan Galamian and David Cerone. She has also been a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, St. Louis Symphony, Seattle Symphony and Dallas Symphony orchestras and in Europe with the RTE Orchestra in Dublin, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Prague Chamber Orchestra, Flemish Chamber Orchestra, Berlin Symphony Orchestra, as well as with the Halle Philharmonic Orchestra at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. Equally respected as a chamber musician, Batjer has performed regularly at the Marlboro Festival. Maurizio Pollini invited her to perform with the Quartetto Accardo at the Salzburg Festival in 1995 and 1999, in programs that were later repeated in New York. In the spring of 2000, Batjer and Jeffrey Kahane performed the complete cycle of violin sonatas of Beethoven in Los Angeles.

Principal oboist of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, **ALLAN VOGEL** received a doctorate in performance from Yale University, where he studied with Robert Bloom. He also worked with Lothar Koch in Berlin on a Fulbright Scholarship and with oboists Fernand Gillet and Josef Marx. Vogel has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Boston Symphony, New York Chamber Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields and Berlin Philharmonic. He has also been a frequent guest with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and made three tours of Japan, as well as performing with the Boston Pops and cellist Yo-Yo Ma and at festivals including Marlboro, Santa Fe, Aspen, Mostly Mozart, Sarasota, Oregon Bach and Chamber Music Northwest.

DDD

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