

Welcome Bach 2 –

Chamber music by Telemann,
C.P.E. Bach and J.S.Bach

The Herschel Players

Graham O’Sullivan *flute & recorder* Molly Marsh *oboe*
Huw Daniel *violin* Susanna Pell *viola da gamba*
Mie Hayashi *harpsichord*

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

Quartet in G major for flute, oboe, violin and basso continuo
from *Musique de Table* (1733) (TWV 43: G2)

Largo-Allegro-Largo
Vivace-Moderato-Vivace
Grave – Vivace

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788)

‘Württemberg’ Keyboard Sonata in A minor, (WQ49:1/H 30)

Moderato – Andante – Allegro assai

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Organ Trio Sonata no.6 in G major (BWV 530)

Vivace – Lente – Allegro

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach

Fantasia sopra ‘Jesu meines Lebens Leben’ (H 639)

Georg Philipp Telemann

Concerto à 4 for recorder, oboe, violin and basso continuo (TWV 43: a3)

Adagio – Allegro – Adagio – Vivace

Our programme includes music by Johann Sebastian Bach, alongside music by his friend Georg Philipp Telemann and his second son (and Telemann's godson) Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. We open and end it with two quartets by Telemann. Although Telemann's music was generally held in high regard by his contemporaries, it was his quartets which were most frequently singled out for particular praise. There were only two theoretical discussions of late baroque sonatas in four parts written by Telemann's contemporaries, and in both of these, Telemann's works were cited as being exemplars of the form. In one of these, Johann Adolf Scheibe wrote "The famous *Telemann* has really surpassed almost all other composers with his excellent quartets... whoever wishes to observe and become intimately acquainted with the true essence of these singular musical pieces has only to turn to the beautiful works of this great composer for instruction", and the Berlin flautist and composer Johann Joachim Quantz referred to "A certain group of *six quartets* for different instruments, mostly flute, oboe and violin, which Mr. *Telemann* wrote some time ago, but which have not been engraved, may provide excellent and beautiful models for compositions of this type." It is clear Scheibe had in mind Telemann's *Quadri* (1730) and *Nouveaux Quatuors* (1738) (also known as 'The Paris Quartets', for flute, violin, viola da gamba and continuo). The particular quartets which Quantz had in mind are less easily identifiable. The quartet with which we open our programme does not appear to be one of the quartets he had in mind, notwithstanding the identical instrumentation, given that it hails from Telemann's celebrated collection *Musique de Table* (published in 1733), for which Quantz was himself a subscriber. The quartet (Concerto) with which we conclude our programme, which was not engraved and published in Telemann's lifetime, but which survives in manuscripts of both parts and score, and which is scored for *recorder*, rather than flute, oboe, violin, does not appear to have been one of those quartets he had in mind either.

What *both* quartets in our programme, however, amply demonstrate is that the praise of Telemann's quartets was entirely justified. Quantz wrote that a good quartet requires: "(1) a subject appropriate for treatment in four parts; (2) good, harmonious melody; (3) short and correct imitations; (4) a discerningly devised mixture of the concertante instruments; (5) a fundamental part with a true bass quality; (6) ideas that can be exchanged with one another, so that the composer can build both above and below them, and middle parts that are at least passable and not unpleasing; (7) no apparent preference for one part; (8) that each part, after it has rested, must re-enter not as a middle part, but as a principal part, with a pleasing melody; but this applies only to the three concertante

parts, not to the bass; (9) that if a fugue appears, it must be carried out in all of the four parts in a masterful yet tasteful fashion, in accordance with all the rules". Both quartets in our programme amply demonstrate these various virtues.

Telemann's 1733 publication *Musique de Table* was one of the most significant collections of instrumental music of the waning baroque age, synthesizing as it did Italian and French styles, genres and forms. The work as a whole was divided into three 'Productions', each of which were the same in their general layout – each beginning with an Overture-Suite in the French style scored for 7 instruments, concluding with a 'Conclusion' for the same 7 instruments in the same key. Between these Telemann included in each of the Productions a quartet, an Italian concerto, a trio sonata and solo sonata for various instruments, displaying Telemann's versatility and intimate understanding of the instruments for which he was writing, many of which he had at some stage or other played himself. The **Quartet in G major (TWV 43: G2)** for flute, oboe, violin and continuo is from the first Production, and demonstrates the synthesis of styles referred to. It begins in the manner of an Italian *sonata da chiesa* (a Largo, siciliana in form), which Telemann then links to a fugal allegro, before reprising the opening Largo, evoking the form of a French overture. There follows an Italianate concerto movement into which Telemann inserts a Moderato interlude in the *style galant*. A closing Italian gigue (Vivace) is introduced by a short *Grave* cadence, something commonly found within the *Sonata da chiesa*.

Perhaps the technical demands of the **Concerto in A minor (TWV 43: a3)** upon the obbligato instruments encountered in the final movement were such that Telemann considered it a work less suitable for publication for his intended market, which clearly was not confined to professional musicians - although in the case of *Musique de Table*, we know that a good number of eminent musicians were included amongst its 185 subscribers (Handel, Blavet, Quantz and Pisendel among them) – but included members of the royalty and the nobility from across Europe. The work is intensely expressive from start to finish, and it is amongst Telemann's most striking quartets. The first movement presents a succession of sigh figures, with material passed seamlessly among the three obbligato instruments. This is followed by a triple fugue, before a closely imitative Adagio which precedes a remarkable closing Vivace in the style of an Italian concerto, with virtuosic and idiomatic writing for each of the three obbligato instruments. This movement, amongst his quartets, and the technical demands it places on each of the 'soloists' brings to mind in

particular the *Concerti da Camera* by Vivaldi, including several scored for the same set of instruments with the addition of an obbligato part for bassoon.

Johann Sebastian Bach and Telemann met for the first time in Eisenach when Telemann worked there from 1708-1712, by which time Bach was a chamber musician and organist at the neighbouring court of Saxe-Weimar. When Telemann worked in Eisenach, Bach's brother was the town organist and harpsichordist there and is likely to have been instrumental in introducing the two great musicians to each other. Bach had, it appears, long admired Telemann's music, and copied out and performed around this time the latter's double violin concerto and other works during Telemann's Eisenach years. In 1714, when Bach's second son Carl Philipp was born, Telemann was invited to become his godfather, and Carl Philipp was given the middle name 'Philipp' in honour of his notable and clearly esteemed godfather.

In our programme we include one of Carl Philipp's better known works, the **A minor "Württemberg" sonata (Wq 49:1)**, alongside a work hardly known at all, an instrumental Fantasia based on the chorale 'Jesu meines Lebens Leben'.

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's set of 6 "Württemberg" sonatas were composed between 1742 and 1744, and published either in 1744 or 1745. They post-dated both in composition and publication his set of six "Prussian" keyboard sonatas (Wq 48). The former collection was dedicated to his royal employer, Friedrich II, King of Prussia. The latter collection was dedicated to Carl Eugen, the Duke of Württemberg who had studied keyboard under Bach while being educated in Berlin but who, by 1744, having reached the age of 16, had assumed his sovereign duties in Württemberg. Both these collections were to exert a great influence as models for keyboard sonatas in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and interest in them continued into the nineteenth century too. Writing in 1796 the composer and critic Johann Friedrich Reichardt wrote of the two sets of sonatas and Carl Philipp's early keyboard concertos that "up to that point no instrumental music had appeared, in which such rich and yet well-ordered harmony was united with such noble song, and so much beauty and order reigned with such original temperament". Haydn, who apparently came upon the "Prussian" sonatas in the late 1750's wrote at the time that "I did not come away from my clavier till I had played through them, and whoever knows me thoroughly must discover that I owe a great deal to Emanuel Bach, that I understood him and studied him diligently". Beethoven's early encounter with the

“Württemberg” sonatas is documented in copies he made of the slow movements of the fourth and fifth of the sonatas.

We know that Carl Philipp composed both of the “Württemberg” sonatas on his favoured keyboard instrument, the clavichord, albeit in adopting the two dynamic levels throughout them – *forte* and *piano* – he appears to have envisaged performance on a two-manual harpsichord. Each of the two sets of keyboard sonatas display Carl Philipp’s originality as a composer, both in terms of form and expression, and make considerable technical demands upon the performer. In the later set of “Württemberg” Sonatas, Carl Philipp intensified the drama and expressiveness of the music, but also its playfulness. The performer and listener are constantly surprised by his innovative use of motives.

This four-part **Fantasia sopra ‘Jesu meines Lebens Leben’ (H 639)**, in contrast to the “Württemberg” sonata in our programme was unpublished in Carl Philipp’s lifetime and comes down to us in two manuscript sources (one eighteenth and one nineteenth century) neither of which were in his hand. Only one instrument is specified in the score, namely the oboe, which is given the chorale voice. In our performance you will hear the unspecified accompanying voices performed on flute, violin and viola da gamba. The style of the composition is much closer to that of Johann Sebastian Bach than the vast majority of Carl Philipp’s surviving works. Might this potentially belong to that body of works from the earlier years of his life spent in Leipzig under his father’s tuition? From this period several works come down to us which appear likely to have represented collaborations between father and son (or sons), or possibly works given to Bach’s sons to work upon as part of their musical education (one thinks, for example, in this regard of the flute sonata performed in our first *Welcome* Bach concert - BWV1033 - and also the violin sonata - BWV1021 - the bass line of which generated two other pieces). A very early cantata by Carl Philip Emanuel was discovered not so long ago, which was clearly modeled on the work of his father (and probably was performed in Leipzig) and so perhaps this *Fantasia* might also be a fragment of another early cantata written and performed in his formative years in Leipzig. The use of the chorale in the *Fantasia* is not perhaps by itself evidence that it was composed at that time. A work that came to mind when I first heard this work on a fine recording by the Oxford-based ensemble *Charivari Agréable* was a quartet by one of Carl Philipp’s Berlin contemporaries, Johann Gottlieb Janitsch, the haunting first movement of which is based on the chorale ‘O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden’. The inner and bass parts of the *Fantasia*, however, are a world away from

the comparatively straightforward accompaniment provided for the chorale in the Janitsch quartet, and these would suggest that the Fantasia is more likely to be an early work from Carl Philipp's days in Leipzig.

We included the opening movement Bach's **Organ Trio Sonata no.6 in G major (BWV 530)** at the end of our first *Welcome Bach* concert, in a transcription for recorder, treble viol and continuo, transposed from the original key to C major. We are delighted in *this* programme to perform the trio in its entirety, sharing the upper voices between flute, oboe and violin and the right hand of the harpsichord and performing it in its original key (G major). Bach's transcribing of other composer's works has already been alluded to in relation to the music of his friend Telemann. An even more profound influence on his own compositions were his transcriptions of Italian concertos for organ and harpsichord, such as the concertos of Vivaldi and Marcello. The three-movement structure of his organ trio sonatas, written for his eldest son (Wilhelm Friedemann), itself owes more to the concerto than to the sonata, and Bach adopts the ritornello structure of Vivaldi's concerti in several of the fast movements within the 6 trios, notably within the brilliant opening Vivace of the 6th sonata. In our performance we have chosen to underline this structure in the first movement by generally apportioning tutti passages in the top line to oboe and solo passages to the flute. The remaining two movements – an exquisite Lente followed by a busy and vibrant closing Allegro - owe less to the concertante style which so fascinated both Bach and Telemann, and are more traditionally rooted in the trio form, the two richly imitative upper parts of equal prominence throughout.

Graham O'Sullivan

York, June 2021

