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Music in the Age of Jefferson

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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*The University of Virginia Guide Service
and McIntire Department of Music
The University of Richmond Music Department
present*

*Music
in the age of
Jefferson*

La Stravaganza Ensemble

Thomas MacCracken, director

Bach-Brandenburg Concertos

4, 5, and 6

performed on authentic instruments

Saturday, April 15 at 8:15 P.M.

North Court Recital Hall

University of Richmond

Sunday, April 16 at 3:00 P.M.

University Chapel

University of Virginia

MUSIC OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D major, BWV 1050
for harpsichord, flute & violin solo, accompanied by
violin, viola, cello, violone & harpsichord

Allegro
Affetuoso
Allegro

Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B-flat major, BWV 1051
for two violas & cello solo, accompanied by
two violas da gamba, violone & harpsichord

[Allegro]
Adagio ma non tanto
Allegro

INTERMISSION

Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G major, BWV 1049
for violin & two recorders solo, accompanied by
two violins, viola, cello, violone & harpsichord

Allegro
Andante
Presto

L A S T R A V A G A N Z A

Robert Gilliam-Turner

- flute by R. Gilliam-Turner (Charlottesville, 1988),
copy of G. A. Rottenburgh (Brussels, c. 1750)
- recorder by R. Gilliam-Turner (Charlottesville, 1988),
copy of Jan Steenbergen (Amsterdam, c. 1710)

Alexandra MacCracken

- violin by Johann Friederich Meissner (Lübeck, c. 1750)
- viola by Sebastian Klotz (Mittenwald, 1736)

Thomas MacCracken

- harpsichord by Willard Martin (Bethlehem, Pa., 1981),
copy of Nicolas Blanchet (Paris, c. 1720)
- recorder by Thomas Prescott (Melrose, Mass., 1978),
copy of J. C. Denner (Nuremberg, c. 1700)

G U E S T A R T I S T S

Aimée Beggs

- viola da gamba by Peter Tourin (Duxbury, Vt., 1980),
copy of Claude Pierray (Paris, c. 1720)

Kevin Bushee

- violin by Larry Bowers (Martinsburg, W. Va., 1985),
copy of Tomasso Balestrieri (Mantua, 1757)

M. Alexandra Eddy

- viola by Jean-François Aldric, Paris, 1808

John Hackney

- harpsichord by Willard Martin (Bethlehem, Pa., 1981),
copy of Nicolas Blanchet (Paris, c. 1720)

Mark Kausch

- violone in D by Hammon Ashley (Seattle, 1975)
- violone in G by John Pringle (London, 1979),
after Henry Jaye (London, 1619)

Lynn Tetenbaum

- viola da gamba by William Addison (London, 1670)
- violin by an anonymous maker (Rome, c. 1760)

Harriet Risk Woldt

- cello by Peter Tourin (Duxbury, Vt., 1985),
copy of an anonymous 18th-century Austrian cello

NOTES

The set of six compositions known today as the Brandenburg Concertos take their name from Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg, to whom they were presented in 1721. In the dedication Bach explains that he did so in response to a request from the Margrave, whom he had met in Berlin a couple of years before, "to send Your Highness some pieces of my composition." Bach may also have intended this gesture as a subtle kind of job application, since he was evidently no longer completely satisfied with his current position as Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen; so far as we know, however, he received no offer of employment from the Margrave.

Whatever his motivation, it is clear from the scoring of these concertos that Bach wanted to demonstrate his versatility and imagination as a composer, since each one calls for a different combination of instruments, most of them quite unusual. Yet these works were not originally written as a set, or even specifically for the Margrave; rather, they represent a careful selection of pieces composed during the previous decade for Bach's own use at the courts of Cöthen and Weimar.

While each of the concertos included on today's program has three movements and features a trio of soloists, their differences in instrumentation are more striking than their formal similarities. Concerto No. 5 contains a solo part of unprecedented prominence for the harpsichord, and was in all likelihood written to show off a new instrument acquired by the Cöthen court orchestra in 1719, as well as to display the composer's own abilities at the keyboard. The scoring of Concerto No. 6, on the other hand, is notable both for the absence of violins and for the way it contrasts the two solo violas and cello with an accompaniment for three low-pitched members of the viola da gamba family. (For this work Bach himself would probably have led the ensemble from the first viola while Prince Leopold, a competent and enthusiastic amateur musician, would have played the much less demanding first gamba part.) In contrast to this unusually mellow sound, Concerto No. 4 calls for three solo instruments in the treble range, including brilliant virtuoso writing for the violin which, together with two recorders, is supported by a full four-part string ensemble.