



Concerto

Works for one &
two harpsichords

Guillermo Brachetta
with
Menno van Delft



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Guillermo Brachetta *harpsichord*

with

Menno van Delft *harpsichord*⁷⁻⁹

Harpsichord after Michael Mietke (Bruce Kennedy, 1989)^{1-3, 7-9 (cembalo I) & 10-12}

Harpsichord after Johann Heinrich Gräbner (Geert Karman, 1997)^{4-6 & 7-9 (cembalo II)}

About Guillermo Brachetta & Menno van Delft:

'But, above all, it's Brachetta's playing – extrovert but never 'flashy' – that is the key. Instinctively idiomatic, he is compelling throughout'

BBC Music Magazine

'[Brachetta] and van Delft play as though on one supercharged harpsichord, their ensemble immaculate, the clarity and resonance of their instruments beautifully captured.'

Gramophone

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

**Concerto nach Italienischem Gusto
(Italian Concerto) in F major, BWV 971**
(Clavier-Übung II, 1735)

- | | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1. [Allegro] | [4:50] |
| 2. Andante | [5:10] |
| 3. Presto | [4:44] |

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710-1784)

Concerto in G major, BR A 13b / Fk 40
(Composed 1740. Second, revised version, 1775)

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 4. Allegro non troppo | [4:26] |
| 5. Andante | [2:56] |
| 6. Vivace | [3:31] |

Johann Sebastian Bach

**Concerto a due Cembali in C major,
BWV 1061a (1733-1734)**

- | | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 7. [Allegro] | [7:16] |
| 8. Adagio ovvero Largo | [4:47] |
| 9. Fuga | [5:59] |

Carl Heinrich Graun (1703/4-1759)

or Johann Gottlieb Graun (1703-1771)

Concerto in A major, GraunWV C:XIII:90
(Number 5 from an edition by Walsh, London c. 1762 as
*Six Concertos for the harpsicord or organ compos'd by
Sir. Graun and Agrell, Opera 2*)

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| 10. Allegro | [4:42] |
| 11. Andante | [4:18] |
| 12. Allegro moderato | [3:39] |

Total playing time [56:24]



Concerto: Works for one and two harpsichords

Bach's enthusiasm for Italian music was reflected in the copies he made of music by Vivaldi and others, and in the arrangements he made for solo harpsichord and organ during his time in Weimar, between 1708 and 1717. Nowhere is his admiration for the Italian style more apparent than in his only surviving original solo keyboard concerto, the **Italian Concerto**, BWV 971. It was probably composed at Leipzig in about 1730 and was originally published in 1735 as the opening piece in Part Two of Bach's *Clavier-Übung* where it is described as 'einem Concerto nach Italienischen Gusto' – a concerto after Italian taste – to which Bach adds the specific instruction that it is 'for a harpsichord with two manuals.' Malcolm Boyd has described the Italian Concerto as 'a brilliant recreation in keyboard terms of the three-movement Vivaldian solo concerto'. Using the two manuals of the harpsichord to recreate the 'solo' and 'tutti' of an Italian *concerto grosso*, the *ritornello* structure of the first and third movements (in which a recurring refrain alternates with episodes for a soloist), is very clearly delineated. The central 'Andante' – in D minor – recalls the slow movements of works like Bach's violin concertos. As Donald Francis Tovey put it

in one of his *Essays in Musical Analysis*, Bach 'preserves every possible feature of concerto form and style' in the *Italian Concerto*, even though he uses just a single keyboard instrument. It is a dazzling demonstration of Bach at his most virtuosic – not only in terms of the demands he makes on players but also in terms of his own compositional imagination and ingenuity in creating a concerto texture on a single instrument.

Only a few of Bach's works were published during his lifetime, but sales of Part II of the *Clavier-Übung* were brisk. The first edition was issued by the Nuremberg publisher Christoph Weigel at Easter 1735 (when it was known to have been on sale at the Leipzig Easter Fair) and a second printing, including corrections, was issued the following year, suggesting that the *Italian Concerto* was something of a popular success. Even the critic Johann Adolph Scheibe – who had previously attacked Bach for his 'turgid and confused manner' and 'ponderous labour' – reacted favourably to the *Italian Concerto* in a review published in 1739: 'Pre-eminent among works known through published editions is a clavier concerto of which the author is the famous Bach of Leipzig, which is in the key of F major. [...] It is to be regarded as a perfect model of a well-designed solo concerto.'

Bach's **Concerto in C major** BWV 1061a is the original version of a work better known in its later state, scored for two harpsichords and strings (BWV 1061; the string parts may be by a member of Bach's circle). The original Concerto *senza ripieno* demonstrates – like the *Italian Concerto* – Bach's genius for reinventing and reimagining the style of Italian masters. The result is his only concerto expressly written for two unaccompanied harpsichords. It probably dates from the early 1730s and the surviving manuscript sources include copies of both harpsichord parts in the Berlin State Library (D-B Mus. ms. Bach St 139, Faszikel 1) dating from about 1733. The music of both parts is copied by Anna Magdalena Bach, while the first part has a title page probably in Bach's own hand that describes the work simply as *Concerto a due Cembali*. The first movement opens with a festive flourish and it is notable for its joyous and sustained sense of forward momentum. The slow movement has the unusual marking 'Adagio ovvero Largo' ('Adagio or otherwise Largo'), a wistful *siciliano* in which the musical lines of the two instruments seem to interweave effortlessly. The concerto ends with a lively fugue. In his biography of Bach, Martin Geck has summarised the delightful effect of the concerto, and its considerable ingenuity: 'The irresistible charm this work lies in the function of the two harpsichords:

they are completely equal and thus constantly switch between them the assignments of tutti and solo. The result is an extraordinary degree of mobility – but also of density, both structural and tonal. Bach, who always considered the harpsichord the instrument for the concentrated display of complex relations, was fascinated by the possibility of doubling the potential here. Moreover, he would have enjoyed presenting the concerto with one of his sons.'

Bach's second child (and his eldest son) was Wilhelm Friedemann (1710–1784) who received an exhaustive and inspiring musical training from his father: the repertoire originally composed for his education included the two- and three-part Inventions and Sinfonias, some of the French Suites and Book I of The Well-tempered Clavier. After studying with his father at the Thomasschule in Leipzig, he went on to study law at the University of Leipzig before moving to Halle to pursue his interest in mathematics. His career as an organist (he held posts in Dresden, Halle Braunschweig and Berlin) was marked by frequent disputes, suggesting a difficult and argumentative personality. His last years – in financially reduced circumstances – were spent teaching in Berlin where his favourite pupil was Sara Itzig Levy, a skilled performer who was later to become the great aunt to Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn, taking

a great interest in their musical education. Despite a patchy career, Friedemann Bach was widely recognized during his lifetime as a superlative keyboard player on the harpsichord, clavichord and organ, and he was particularly celebrated for his skill at improvisation. During his years in Dresden (1733–46), he concentrated on instrumental composition and it was here that he wrote the **Concerto in G major** BR A 13b / Fk 40 (Concerto per il cembalo solo) in about 1740. Composed only five years after the publication of his father's *Italian Concerto*, it is in a gentler, more enigmatic (and more forward-looking) style, but in terms of procedure, the approach is very similar (Karl Geiringer wrote that 'it imitates a keyboard arrangement of a concerto grosso'). The opening 'Allegro non troppo' begins with a robust and fully-textured tutti that gives way to 'solo' passages scored for three voices that resemble a *concertino* of two violins and a cello (an effect made all the more telling, as Geiringer observes, by 'moving the bass into closer proximity to the upper parts'). The melancholy 'Andante' is written only for the three imaginary soloists, while the finale is brisk and playful. Its composer was particularly taken with the slow movement as he recycled as the song *Herz, mein Herz sey ruhig* which he wrote as a wedding present for Sara Itzig when she

married Salomon Levy in 1783. But he also reworked the whole concerto around 1775 – the version recorded here – considerably enriching the texture throughout, particularly through the addition of low bass notes that suggest he had access to an instrument with an extended range and wanted to make the most of its potential.

In 1727, the young Friedemann Bach went to Merseburg to study the violin with Johann Gottlieb Graun (1703–1771), a violinist and composer. Graun's younger brother Carl Heinrich (1704–1759) was also a composer, noted for his development of German opera and the two decades he spent as Kapellmeister to King Frederick the Great (Graun's opera *Montezuma* is on a libretto by Frederick). There is some doubt about which of the Graun brothers wrote the **Concerto in A major**. In his chapter on 'The Eighteenth-Century British Keyboard Concerto after Handel' (in *Aspects of Keyboard Music*, Oxford, 1986), Timothy Rishton lists its publication by John Walsh in 1762 as one of the *Six Concertos for the Harpsicord or Organ compos'd by Sigr. Graun and Agrell*, and attributes the work firmly to 'J.G. Graun'. However, Carl Heinrich was the better known of the two brothers and matters are further complicated by the fact that both Grauns are known to have written harpsichord concertos. In *The Present State of Music in Germany*,

the Netherlands, and United Provinces (1773), Charles Burney wrote that Frederick the Great's 'favourite operas are those of his late *maestro di capella*, Charles Henry Graun, to which he is so much attached, as they hear, unwillingly, those of any other master; and the overture and concertos [...] of his brother, the concert master, M. Joh. Gottlieb Graun, but lately deceased, are still in high reputation at Berlin. [...] His admirers say [he] was one of the greatest performers on the violin of his time, and most assuredly a composer of the first rank.'

The Walsh edition of the concerto is used for the present recording. It is for solo harpsichord but includes indications of 'solo' and 'tutti' suggesting that it was an arrangement of a work with accompaniment. This is confirmed by a set of manuscript string parts from the 1760s. The extensive archive of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin (the city in which both the Graun brothers spent their most successful years) remains uncertain about attributing the work, listing it as by 'Johann Gottlieb Graun or Carl Heinrich Graun'. At any event, what this elegantly-written and decidedly tuneful work offers a rather different view of music written in Germany at the time of Bach.

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Instruments used in this recording

Two-manual harpsichord after Mietke (Bruce Kennedy, 1989)

- a1 = 415 Hz
- After an original by Michael Mietke (c. 1656/71-1719), Berlin, built probably c. 1704-1708, now in Schloß Charlottenburg, Berlin (Germany)
- Copy built by Bruce Kennedy, in Château d'Oex, Switzerland, in 1989
- Collection Menno van Delft, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Two-manual harpsichord after Gräbner (Geert Karman, 1997)

- a1 = 415 Hz
- After an instrument by Johann Heinrich Gräbner (1705-1777), Dresden, built in 1774, now in the Grassi Museum für Musikinstrumenten, Leipzig (Germany)
- Copy built by Geert Karman, in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1997
- Collection Menno van Delft, Amsterdam, Netherlands





Guillermo Brachetta

Guillermo was born and grew up in Argentina and, albeit not a typical Argentinian, he still retains certain national characteristics including the love for cooking, the vehemency for debating and the passion for making music. Guillermo settled in The Netherlands in 1995 in order to perfect his skills in at least one of those disciplines.

He graduated from the Conservatory of Amsterdam and has collaborated as a soloist and basso continuo player with many renowned orchestras and ensembles around the world. It is, however, in making chamber music that Guillermo's unique improvisational skills and his "supple gravitas" on the harpsichord can be properly enjoyed.

His celebrated debut solo recording, *Ciaconna*, was released on Resonus Classics, prior to *Divine Noise*, his first recording collaboration with Menno van Delft, for which he transcribed movements from Rameau's opera *Platée*. A co-founder of the successful Ensemble Fantasticus, he has recorded several albums with this critically acclaimed Baroque trio.

Outside Fantasticus, Guillermo has a lifelong mission to rediscover and promote the neglected work of Wilhelm Friedemann

Bach. To achieve this aim, Guillermo founded Collegium Wilhelm Friedemann Bach together with his former teacher, Menno van Delft.

Guillermo is also active as a researcher and music editor, working in close cooperation with Cambridge University Press and other international institutions, having prepared first editions of numerous works from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

www.brachetta.com



Menno van Delft

Menno van Delft (Amsterdam, 1963) studied harpsichord, organ and musicology at the Sweelinck Conservatory in Amsterdam, the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and the University of Utrecht. Amongst his professors were Gustav Leonhardt, Bob van Asperen, Piet Kee, Jacques van Oortmerssen and Willem Elders.

In 1988 Menno won the clavichord prize at the C.Ph.E. Bach Competition in Hamburg and subsequently made his debut at the Holland Festival Early Music Utrecht. He gave concerts and master classes throughout Europe and the U.S.A. and made numerous recordings for radio and television. As a continuo player and soloist Menno performed with Pieter Wispelwey, Bart Schneemann and Jacques Zoon and with the Nederlandse Opera, Al Ayre Español, Nederlands Blazersensemble, Cantus Cölln, Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest, Nederlands Kamerkoor, Nederlandse Bachvereniging and recorded for labels such as Globe, Deutsche Harmonia Mundi, Chandos, Channel Classics, Capriccio, EMI and Decca.

With Johannes Leertouwer and the Schönbrunn Ensemble (with Marten Root and Viola de Hoog) he recorded J.S. Bach's six violin sonatas and the *Musical Offering*. Menno

recorded J.S. Bach's *Kunst der Fuge* and keyboard toccatas and took part in a recording project with the complete keyboard works of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, which received a 2003 Edison and the Deutsche Schallplatten Kritik Preis. In 2004 the first of a series of recordings on important historical clavichords was released by Teknon: sonatas and variations by J.G. Mützel on the 1763 J.A. Hass clavichord from the Russell Collection in Edinburgh.

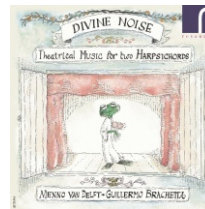
A recording on two clavichords of the Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) in Berlin (the 1728 Hass and the Horn from ca. 1793) and a recording for Resonus of J.S. Bach's six Partitas on the Hoffmann clavichord from 1784 at Hatchlands are due to be released.

Together with Siebe Henstra he forms the clavichord duo Der Prallende Doppelschlag. Menno teaches harpsichord, clavichord and basso continuo at the Conservatory of Amsterdam (formerly Sweelinck Conservatorium) and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Hamburg.

www.mennovandelft.com

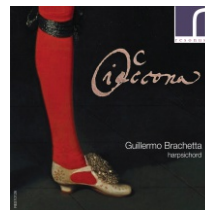


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