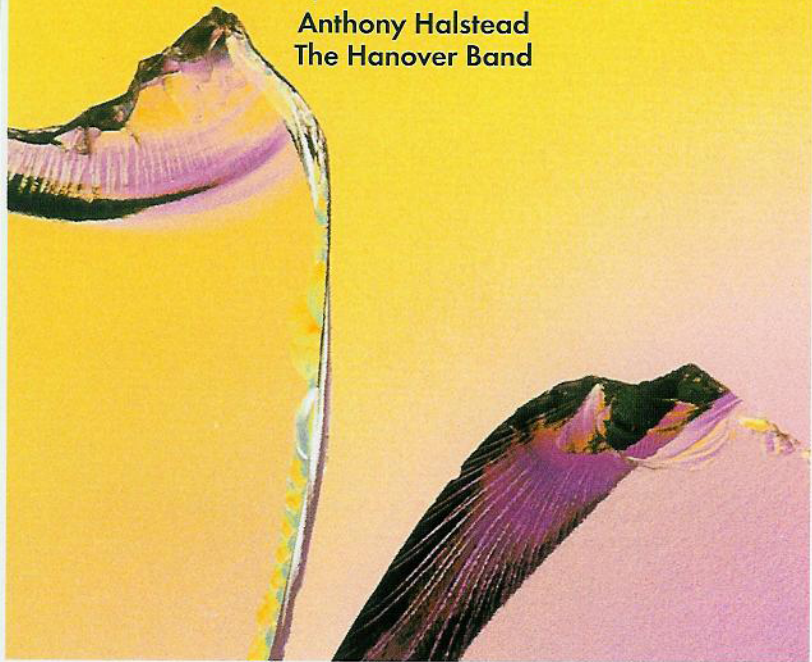


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Johann Christian Bach

Berlin Harpsichord Concertos 2

Anthony Halstead
The Hanover Band





Anthony Halstead (Photo: Jim Four)

Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782)

The Berlin Harpsichord Concertos Vol. 2

Concerto in E major*

15'34

- | | | |
|----------|---------------|------|
| 1 | Allegro assai | 6'00 |
| 2 | Adagio | 5'16 |
| 3 | Presto | 4'18 |

Concerto in F minor

14'59

- | | | |
|----------|------------------|------|
| 4 | Allegro di molto | 5'37 |
| 5 | Andante | 5'51 |
| 6 | Prestissimo | 3'31 |

Concerto in G major

19'49

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|------|
| 7 | Allegro | 6'52 |
| 8 | Poco adagio | 6'32 |
| 9 | Allegro | 6'25 |

T.T.: 51'01

* First Recording

Anthony Halstead, Harpsichord & Direction

The Hanover Band

The Hanover Band

Erfolg ist für die Hanover Band kein Fremdwort. Seit das Ensemble 1980 von seiner künstlerischen Leiterin Caroline Brown gegründet wurde, hat es sich zu einem der künstlerischen Fundamente der historischen Aufführungspraxis in Großbritannien entwickelt.

Heute gilt die Hanover Band als eines der führenden britischen Orchester mit historischen Instrumenten. Mit seinem breiten Repertoire und seinen exzellenten Interpretationen hat sich die Band einen internationalen Namen gemacht.

Regelmäßige Tourneen führen das Ensemble immer wieder in die bedeutenden britischen, europäischen und amerikanischen Konzertsäle. Und wo immer das Orchester auftritt, ist das Publikum fasziniert. Sowohl in seiner Heimat als auch im Ausland erfreuen sich die vielseitigen, zugänglichen künstlerischen Resultate des Ensembles grosser Beliebtheit. Caroline Brown hat sich für ein kühnes, innovatives Programm engagiert, das jetzt bei der mitreißenden erzieherischen Arbeit der Band Früchte trägt. Schon in der Pionierzeit der achtziger Jahre war das Publikum von der Klarheit und Leidenschaftlichkeit der Hanover Band unmittelbar begeistert. Die New York Times berichtete, »daß die drängende, gewichtige, sogar raue Interpretation der Beethoven-Symphonien zu den größten Offenbarungen auf Originalinstrumenten gehört, die bisher aufgenommen wurden«.

Seit jenen frühen Tagen sind die Kritiker der Hanover Band treu geblieben. Heute sind die Rezensenten der Livekonzerte und der Aufnahmen so begeistert wie eh und je: »Wieder eine äusserst bezaubernde CD ... mit einer schlicht explosiven Vitalität«, schrieb CD Review im August 1994 zur Aufnahme der Pariser Symphonien Nr. 85-87 von Joseph Haydn.

Die umfangreiche Diskographie der Hanover Band enthält unter anderem den Zyklus der von Fonoforum ausgezeichneten Beethoven-Symphonien (Nimbus), Symphonien von Joseph Haydn (Hyperion), sämtliche Symphonien von Schubert (Nimbus) und Schumann (BMG) sowie Overtüren von Weber und Cherubini mit Roy Goodman. Seit 1993 nimmt die Band regelmässig für das Red Seal Label der RCA Victor auf.

Derzeit spielt die Hanover Band unter der Leitung von Anthony Halstead sämtliche Werke von Johann Christian Bach für **cpo** ein.

Johann Christian Bach

(born Leipzig 5 September 1735 - died London, 1 January 1782)

Johann Christian was the most cosmopolitan of all the Bach family, arguably the most versatile and certainly in the eighteenth century the most famous. He must have received a thorough grounding in music under the supervision of his father, Johann Sebastian, in whose house he lived for the first fifteen years of his life. Nearly five years in Berlin under the guardianship of Carl Philipp Emanuel broadened his horizons and, above all, brought him into regular contact with opera. A further seven years in Italy exposed him to a multitude of new cultural experiences and laid the foundations of a reputation as an opera composer. This, in turn, took him in 1762 to London, which he found a congenial base for his activities as composer, performer and teacher for the rest of his life. His reputation, fostered by the publication of his works in all the main centres of Europe, brought him invitations to compose for the Mannheim court and the Paris Opera, two of the continent's most important musical institutions. The London public however eventually tired of him and he died in debt at the age of 46 after a period of ill-health, unlamented by the British but mourned by his admirer and friend of nearly 20 years, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The catalogue of the estate of the Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (Verzeichniß des musikalischen Nachlasses des verstorbenen Capellmeisters Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach), published in Hamburg in 1790 by his widow, Johanna Maria, is not only a very important source of information about Emanuel's works but also about the music of the entire Bach dynasty. Furthermore it tells us most of what we know about the early compositions of Johann Christian Bach. Specifically it refers to "A packet containing compositions (by Johann Christian), prepared in Berlin, before the author went to Italy, comprising 5 keyboard concertos, 1 violoncello concerto, 2 trios and 3 arias." (ein Paket mit Compositionen, in Berlin verfertigt, ehe der Verfasser nach Italien ging, bestehend in 5 Clavier-Concerten, 1 Violoncell-Concert, 2 Trii und 3 Arien). The catalogue also lists some of his keyboard music included in an anthology and the scores of a symphony, an overture and a further keyboard concerto "in the style of Tartini," (nach Tartinis Manier). The catalogue does not specifically state that these works were from Johann Christian's Leipzig or Berlin periods, but the implication is there, not least because of the evident coolness between the two brothers in later years.

Of all these works only the five keyboard concertos can now be positively identified, in Johann Christian's autograph full score (Mus. mss. Bach P. 390) in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. They are fairly typi-

cal products of the North German School of the time, the school of Carl Heinrich and Johann Gottlieb Graun, Franz and Georg Benda, and Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, with what the New Oxford History of Music calls its "antiquated language and confusion of styles." They are also generally quite unlike any of Johann Christian's compositions post-1755. Together with another "Berlin" concerto they are also the longest of his 26 authentic keyboard concertos and the only ones scored for soloist and four-part strings. Here every movement is built on the ritornello principle: a passage for the entire ensemble played at the beginning, repeated complete or in part a number of times during its course and one final time to bring the movement to a close, with passages for the solo instrument between the statements of the ritornello. This is the standard formal scheme for the baroque concerto. In the hands of a bad or lazy composer it could (and sometimes did) produce mechanical and cliché-ridden music, but even in the 1750s a talented and industrious artist could produce work of real interest and merit. During his nearly five years as Carl Philipp Emanuel's ward and pupil Johann Christian was in contact with many of the finest exponents of the genre. But these concertos are much more than the supervised composition exercises of a gifted student. They display accomplishment as well as talent.

Concerto in E major

Allegro assai – Adagio – Presto
first recording

The unique manuscript of this concerto contains many revisions and corrections and is mostly written on the same type of paper as the early Concerto in B-flat major (recorded on *cpo* 999 393–2), which suggests that this work too may have been among the earliest of the set to have been composed, perhaps not long after 1750. This supposition is supported by even a casual hearing of the work. It is perhaps the most baroque sounding of the five. This is partly defined by the way Bach uses the orchestra. Here, as usual, it plays the ritornelli, provides the customary punctuation derived from ritornello material between solo paragraphs and supports the soloist with sustained chords, but, one tiny passage in the *adagio* apart, there is no melodic interplay between soloist and tutti. The baroque sound is, of course, even more clearly defined by the nature of the musical material itself.

The opening of the ritornello of the *allegro assai* is almost archetypal baroque: relentless triplet quavers over a descending bass coming to a half-close. The second paragraph sees the triplet quavers in the bass, here descending chromatically, and new material in the violins. This paragraph has several attempts at coming to a conclusion – another typical baroque procedure. When it finally succeeds, we hear what initially sounds like a return to the opening, but actually

turns out to be a dialogue between the two violins, over sequential harmony – another baroque feature. Like the second paragraph, this third makes more than one attempt at a conclusion. A brief unison passage – yet another favourite baroque mannerism, with many triplet quavers, brings the ritornello to an end. All this is strongly characterised and memorable material, but it is almost entirely ignored in the solo sections of the movement. The first solo introduces completely new material which re-appears at strategic points later in the movement, but otherwise the remaining solo sections are remarkably free from melodic relationships. Nonetheless, the strength and memorability of the ritornello material and the sometimes unexpected way in which Bach deploys it ensures a satisfyingly balanced movement.

The solo part is somewhat more melodically integrated into the structure of the *adagio* in E minor. The 8-bar ritornello is chiefly characterised by the use of the violins in thirds and sixths and appears complete at the beginning and end of the movement. Elsewhere, orchestrally it plays very little part in the proceedings, with just its closing bars announcing the beginning of the second and third solo sections. Each of these three solo sections takes the melody of the opening of the ritornello as its starting-point, but rapidly moves on to a free fantasy.

Like the Concerto in B-flat major, the last movement here is marked *presto*, but here once again the soloist and orchestra keep their own material to themselves. Once more the ritornello

material is strongly characterised. Notice how the lower instruments imitate the first violins at the beginning and near the end, the nervous descending passage just after the start and the four unison notes at the end – more an exclamation mark than a full-stop. This movement has all the exuberance of a talented young man revelling in his newly-won powers as a composer.

Concerto in F minor

Allegro di molto – Andante – Prestissimo

This work is the only one recorded on this pair of **cpo** CDs devoted to Johann Christian Bach's early keyboard concertos which is not included in full score in *Mus. mss. Bach P. 390*. It survives nowadays complete in five other manuscripts, with a sixth (formerly in the Berlin Singakademie) presumably lost in World War II. Four of these six attribute the work to Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (as does the Breitkopf Thematic Catalogue of 1763), one (in a different hand from the one which copied the music) names Wilhelm Friedemann Bach as the composer and the other identifies it as a composition by Johann Christian. This last source, now in the Bach Archive in Leipzig, is perhaps the most important because it was written by Johann Christoph Altnikol (1719 or 20–1759), husband of Elisabeth Bach and therefore brother-in-law to the three composers, who was presumably well placed to attribute the work correctly. Significantly perhaps, Carl Philipp Ema-

nuel did not include the work in his list of compositions and no expert on Wilhelm Friedemann's music has claimed it as his. Paradoxically, further support for Johann Christian's claim to be the composer comes from one of the manuscripts attributing it to Emanuel. Although the harpsichord part (*Mus. mss. Bach St. 482*) unequivocally names Emanuel as the composer, its cover has a label with the inscription: "Concerto fb Per il cembalo dal Sig. J. C. Bach detto il Milanese riveduto dal Sigr. C. F. Bach" (Concerto in F minor for the harpsichord by Mr. J. C. Bach called the Milanese revised by Mr. C. P. E. Bach). Labels can, of course, provide false as well as accurate information and it was only when Dr Rachel Wade, General Editor of the complete edition of the works of C. P. E. Bach, identified the handwriting as that of Christoph Nichelmann (1717–61 or 2), a colleague of Emanuel's at the court of Frederick the Great (who almost certainly must have known Johann Christian as well) that scholars began to take it at face value. More recently another meticulous American scholar, Professor Jane R. Stevens, has discovered a sketch of ten bars of the first movement in Johann Christian Bach's handwriting – on the last page of the first concerto in *Mus. mss. Bach P. 390*! Even this does not make the case absolutely watertight, but the overwhelming balance of the evidence points to Johann Christian as the author.

The concerto itself is in much the same mould as the other five concertos, but (in Jane Stevens' view) "more aggressively expressive" than any of

them. The ritornello of the *allegro di molto* is characterised by a strong, wide-ranging figure heard at the beginning on the first and second violins in unison, shortly afterwards divided between them in canon, then in the bass and finally on the violins in unison again before leading seamlessly to a concluding passage for all the strings in unison. The solo sections similarly rely heavily on this figure. The *Andante* in C minor likewise derives its coherence from the very close relationship between the material of the ritornello and the solo passages. This relationship also characterises the *prestissimo* finale. The considerable use of sequences and repetitions both in the ritornello and the solo sections is another prominent feature.

Concerto in G major

Allegro – Poco adagio – Allegro

The manuscript now called *Mus. mss. Bach P. 390*, notwithstanding the various corrections and alterations it contains, is an all probability a fair copy made from earlier scores now lost. It is tempting therefore to look upon the fifth and last concerto it contains as the last to be composed. Certainly it is the most fluent and technically assured, as well as having the most demanding solo part. The orchestra plays a more positive accompanimental role in the solo sections than elsewhere. There is also a brief example of the type of dialogue between soloist and orchestra which was to become common in the classical concerto.

This occurs almost exactly three-quarters of the way through the first movement when the soloist for the first and only time enters with the opening theme of the ritornello. However, generally baroque gestures and techniques – notably sequences and unison passages – are still very much in evidence. It needed the liberating influence of Johann Christian's move to Italy in the late spring or summer of 1755 and his exposure to genuine Italian opera, not the old-fashioned variety performed in Berlin, to bring him up to date.

Ernest Warburton

Anthony Halstead

Anthony Halstead's prominence in the period instrument movement takes him increasingly to those modern instrument orchestras wishing to develop an awareness and style of authentic baroque and classical practice.

Anthony Halstead was born in Manchester, attending Chetham's School and the Royal Manchester College of Music where he studied piano, horn, organ and composition. Subsequently he studied the harpsichord with George Malcolm and conducting with Sir Charles Mackerras and Michael Rose. He now has a varied career as a conductor, director/harpsichordist and as a horn soloist of international repute.

Anthony Halstead made his professional conducting debut in 1976 with the world premiere of

the musictheatre work »One and the Same« by Elisabeth Lutyens. However, following the development of his interest in authentic performance he has worked regularly with several period instrument orchestras – notably The Hanover Band, The Academy of Ancient Music and The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment – conducting or directing outstanding concerts that have included an all J. S. Bach programme at the BBC Proms, at the prestigious Berlin Bach Tage and, most recently, on tour in The Netherlands.

On CD, Anthony Halstead has conducted or directed many recordings. These include the symphonies of J. M. Kraus and concertos by J. H. Roman for Musica Sveciae, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos and a CD of concertos by Vivaldi for EMI Eminence, plus the complete Drottningholm Music by J. H. Roman and the complete Cello Concertos by Boccherini's for Naxos/Marco Polo, in which the soloist is Timothy Hugh. In addition he is currently engaged on a 5 year project to record all the orchestral music of J. C. Bach for **cpo**.

Anthony Halstead has conducted several orchestras in the UK – the English Chamber Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, The Ulster and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra – in addition to his concert work with period instrument orchestras. Elsewhere, he has received many invitations to conduct or direct in Scandinavia, Germany, Spain, Japan and Australia.

The Hanover Band

Success is no stranger to The Hanover Band. Since it was formed in 1980 by its Artistic Director, Caroline Brown the Band has become part of the artistic bedrock of authentic music in Britain.

It is now recognised as one of the U.K.'s leading period instrument orchestras with an international reputation for the breadth of its repertoire and the excellence of its playing.

Regular touring takes the Band to prestigious venues throughout the U.K., Europe and North America, attracting enthusiastic audiences wherever it appears. Its highly charged calendar of flexible and accessible work is popular both at home and abroad. Caroline Brown has been committed to an adventurous and innovative artistic programme which is now bearing fruit in its exciting education work.

In the pioneering days of the 1980's, the Band's earliest audiences were immediately struck by the clarity and passion of their performances. The New York Times reported »that their propulsive, weighty, even raucous account of Beethoven Symphonies – are the most revelatory original instrument performances... yet recorded«. Since those early days critical acclaim for both performances and recordings has been sustained and today's critics are as enthusiastic as ever. »Yet another utterly compelling disc ...simply bursting with vitality« CD Review August 1994 (Haydn: Paris Symphonies Nos. 85–87).

Johann Christian Bach

(né à Leipzig, le 5 septembre 1735 – mort à Londres, le 1er janvier 1782)

De tous les membres de la famille Bach, Johann Christian fut la personnalité la plus cosmopolite, probablement celle aux talents les plus divers et certainement la plus célèbre au 18^e siècle. Il doit avoir reçu une formation musicale complète, sous la direction de son père, Jean Sébastien, sous le toit duquel il vécut pendant les quinze premières années de sa vie. Au cours des quelque cinq années passées à Berlin sous la tutelle de son frère, Carl Philipp Emanuel, il élargit ses horizons et, fait extrêmement important, vécut en contact régulier avec l'opéra. Suivirent sept années passées en Italie, où il put engranger de nombreuses expériences culturelles nouvelles et jeter les bases de sa réputation de compositeur d'opéra. Ceci lui valut d'être invité à Londres, en 1762, dont il fit le port d'attache de ses activités comme compositeur, interprète et professeur de musique, pour le reste de sa vie. Sa réputation, soutenue par la publication de ses œuvres dans les principaux centres d'Europe, lui valut des invitations à composer pour la cour de Mannheim et l'Opéra de Paris, deux des institutions musicales les plus importantes du continent. Toutefois, le public londonien finit par se lasser de lui. Bach, endetté et malade, s'éteignit à l'âge de 46 ans, ignoré du public londonien mais pleuré par son ami et admirateur depuis près de vingt ans, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.