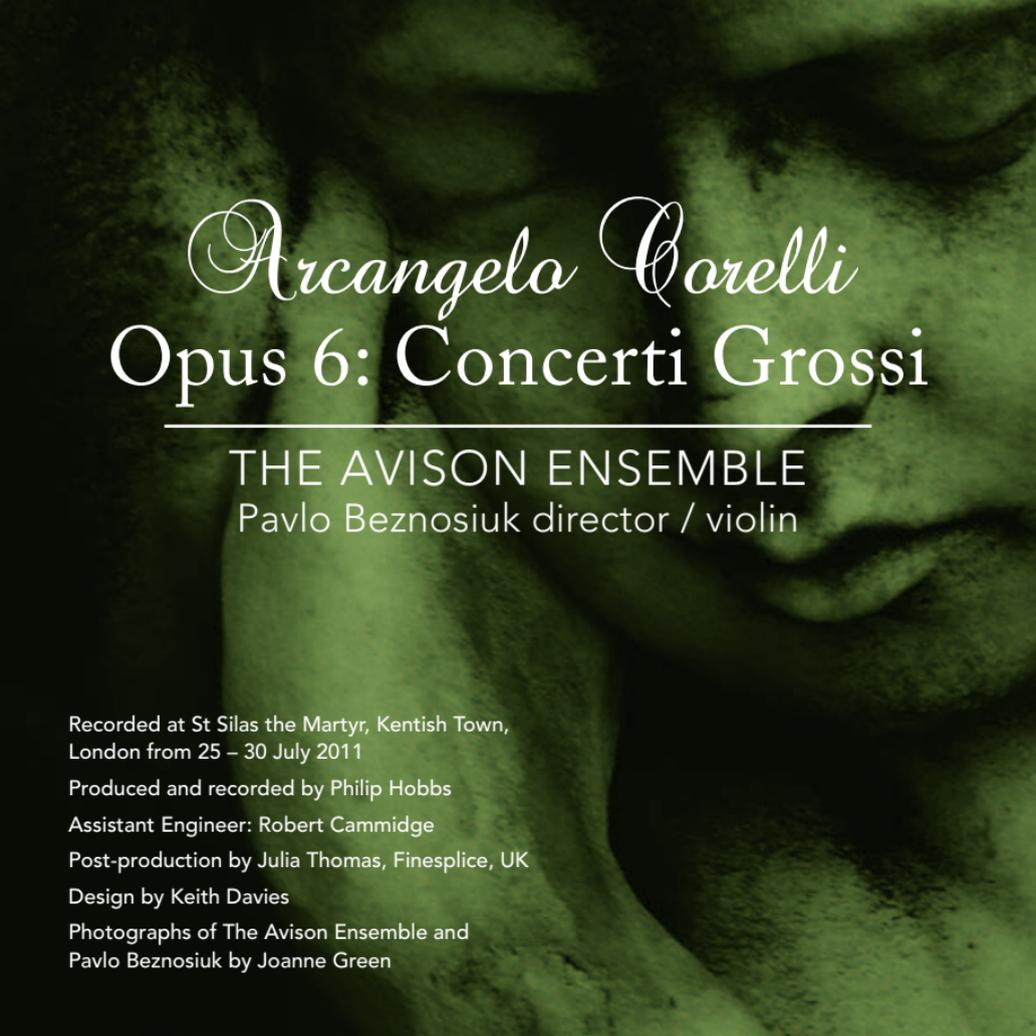




Arcangela Corelli
Opus 6: Concerti Grossi

THE AVISON ENSEMBLE
Pavlo Beznosiuk director / violin



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Recorded at St Silas the Martyr, Kentish Town,
London from 25 – 30 July 2011

Produced and recorded by Philip Hobbs

Assistant Engineer: Robert Cammidge

Post-production by Julia Thomas, Finesplice, UK

Design by Keith Davies

Photographs of The Avison Ensemble and
Pavlo Beznosiuk by Joanne Green

Disc 1

Concerto Grosso in D Major, No. 1

- ① I. Largo – Allegro – Largo – Allegro 4.33
② II. Largo 2.44 ③ III. Allegro 1.57
④ IV. Allegro 2.03

Concerto Grosso in F Major, No. 2

- ⑤ I. Vivace – Allegro – Adagio – Vivace – Allegro –
Largo Andante 3.55 ⑥ II. Allegro 1.56
⑦ III. Grave – Andante Largo 2.05 ⑧ IV. Allegro 2.44

Concerto Grosso in C minor, No. 3

- ⑨ I. Largo 2.02 ⑩ II. Allegro 1.59 ⑪ III. Grave 1.48
⑫ IV. Vivace 2.35 ⑬ V. Allegro 2.18

Concerto Grosso in D Major, No. 4

- ⑭ I. Adagio – Allegro 3.24 ⑮ II. Adagio 1.44
⑯ III. Vivace 1.04 ⑰ IV. Allegro 3.11

Concerto Grosso in B-flat Major, No. 5

- ⑱ I. Adagio – Allegro 3.21 ⑲ II. Adagio 1.36
⑳ III. Allegro 2.13 ㉑ IV. Largo – Allegro 3.15

Concerto Grosso in F Major, No. 6

- ㉒ I. Adagio 1.40 ㉓ II. Allegro 1.51
㉔ III. Largo 3.02 ㉕ IV. Vivace 2.09 ㉖ V. Allegro 3.14

TOTAL TIME: 65.10

Disc 2

Concerto Grosso in D Major, No. 7

- ① I. Vivace – Allegro – Adagio 2.27 ② II. Allegro
2.08 ③ III. Andante largo 2.09 ④ IV. Allegro 1.07
⑤ V. Vivace 1.11

Concerto Grosso in G minor, No. 8 'Fatto per la notte di Natale'

- ⑥ I. Vivace – Grave 1.59 ⑦ II. Allegro 2.30
⑧ III. Adagio – Allegro – Adagio 2.43 ⑨ IV. Vivace
1.15 ⑩ V. Allegro 2.09 ⑪ VI. Pastorale: Largo 3.42

Concerto Grosso in F Major, No. 9

- ⑫ I. Preludio: Largo 1.18 ⑬ II. Allemanda: Allegro
2.36 ⑭ III. Corrente: Vivace 1.29 ⑮ IV. Gavotta:
Allegro 0.46 ⑯ V. Adagio 0.47 ⑰ VI. Minuetto:
Vivace 1.37

Concerto Grosso in C Major, No. 10

- ⑱ I. Preludio: Andante largo 2.04 ⑲ II. Allemanda:
Allegro 2.31 ⑳ III. Adagio 0.56 ㉑ IV. Corrente:
Vivace 2.36 ㉒ V. Allegro 2.18 ㉓ VI. Minuetto:
Vivace 2.05

Concerto Grosso in B-flat Major, No. 11

- ㉔ I. Preludio: Andante largo 2.21 ㉕ II. Allemanda:
Allegro 2.27 ㉖ III. Adagio – Andante largo 2.02
㉗ IV. Sarabanda: Largo 1.07 ㉘ V. Giga: Vivace 1.23

Concerto Grosso in F Major, No. 12

- ㉙ I. Preludio: Adagio 2.06 ㉚ II. Allegro 2.16
㉛ III. Adagio 1.28 ㉜ IV. Sarabanda: Vivace 0.54
㉝ V. Giga: Allegro 3.09

TOTAL TIME: 64.27

Arcangelo Corelli

Opus 6: Concerti Grossi

There are few musical works that have enjoyed such a lasting fame as the six opera of the eminent Italian violinist Arcangelo Corelli. Even though his published works were few in number, and largely restricted to three genres, Corelli was to have a significant impact on the development of European classical music during the late 17th and early 18th centuries. In addition, his music continued to be performed throughout the 18th century and in Britain, where Corelli's works were held in particularly high esteem, his music never entirely disappeared from the repertory.

Arcangelo Corelli was born on 17 February 1653 in the small Italian town of Fusignano, situated thirty miles east of Bologna. His safe delivery, into a family of wealthy landowners, must have been a joyous occasion for he entered the world less than a month after the death of his father, in whose honour he was named. Little is known about Corelli's youth, but it is believed that he received his first music lessons from a priest in the nearby town of Faenza; this was followed by a period of study at Lugo. No earlier than 1666 he went to Bologna, a large and prosperous cultural centre situated on the main trade routes between Milan and Venice to Rome. Here he studied the violin and, in 1670, was admitted to the Accademia Filarmonica, a musical institution founded by the Bolognese nobleman, Count Vincenzo Carrati. By 1675 Corelli had moved to Rome, where he appeared as a violinist in an orchestra assembled for a series of Lenten oratorios at the church of S. Giovanni

dei Fiorentini. Soon after, he entered the orchestra of S. Luigi dei Francesi as the third of four violins; he quickly progressed through their ranks to become leader in 1682. Additionally, in 1679 he entered the service of Queen Christina of Sweden, then in the last of her four sojourns in Rome, as a chamber musician. In a letter, dated 13 May 1679, Corelli recorded that he was busy composing trio sonatas for the Queen and he subsequently dedicated his 1681 Op. 1 sonatas to her. However, this post proved to be ephemeral as he was dismissed after Pope Innocent XI withdrew Queen Christina's financial support. Between 1676 and 1679 Corelli had performed in another series of Lenten oratorios at S. Marcello, a church under the patronage of Cardinal Benedetto Pamphili. Pamphili was one of the most eminent and wealthy artistic patrons of his time and, by 1684, Corelli had entered into his service; Corelli honoured this patron through the dedication of his 1685 Op. 2 sonatas. As part of his duties, Corelli was a member of Pamphili's orchestra; he also continued to take part in performances of oratorios in the city and played at the theatre.

Pamphili's relocation to Bologna in 1690 to become papal legate gave another wealthy supporter of the arts, the Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni, an opportunity to assume the patronage of Corelli, and he was to remain firmly established in Ottoboni's household for the remainder of his life. Ottoboni's relationship with Corelli was close; in fact, the Cardinal was more like a friend than an employer and Corelli honoured this patron through the dedication of his 1694 Op. 4 sonatas. On 26 April 1706, Corelli was admitted, along with the virtuoso keyboard player Bernardo Pasquini and Alessandro Scarlatti, to the exclusive Arcadian Academy in Rome; on his admission, Corelli was given the title of 'Arcomélo' (the melodious bow). After 1708 Corelli began to retreat from public gaze as he busied himself with the composition, or more likely

revision, of his concerti grossi. Corelli died on 8 January 1713 a rich man with a fine art collection of 142 paintings. He left the arrangements for his burial to Ottoboni, who had Corelli interred in the Pantheon. For several years the anniversary of his death was marked at that church by the solemn performances of his concertos.

Even though Corelli's Op. 6 concerti grossi are among his best known works, he never saw them in print as they were published posthumously in 1714. Attached to the first edition was a dedication, dated 3 December 1712, to the Elector Palatine Johann Wilhelm. Although preparations for their issue were in an advanced state at Corelli's death, it was left to one of his pupils, Matteo Fornari, to facilitate their release. Corelli had chosen Estienne Roger of Amsterdam as his publisher, and the two men had entered into a formal agreement on 21 April 1712. At this time, Roger already possessed some of Corelli's concertos and was eager to publish the entire set. In return for their publication rights, Roger agreed to provide Corelli with 150 copies, free of charge, presumably for the composer to sell. In his will, as well as his collection of violins and manuscripts, Corelli bequeathed to Fornari his Op. 6 and 'any gift' that may come from their publication. Fornari was impatient to take possession of the copies promised to Corelli, but was distrustful of Roger, whom he suspected of procrastination. However, Fornari's fears were groundless as Roger had begun to forward editions to him by September 1713.

Fornari, in order to protect his income from their sale, took out a papal privilege on the concertos that prevented the importation or reissue of copies for the Roman market. This decree also prevented any opposition from the rival Bolognese publishers, who were usually first to reissue Corelli's music. Fornari's attempts to protect his profits did not end there, for he decided to replace Corelli's original dedication with one of his own so that he might receive any reward due from the dedicatee. It is uncertain as to whether his aim

was a success but, in 1716, the Elector responded to a petition from Corelli's elder brother Ippolito by conferring on the family the Marquisate of Ladenburg.

Most of the concertos that constitute the Op. 6 are made up of movements written at different times and for different occasions. There is evidence that Corelli had composed some as early as 1682 when the Savoyard composer, George Muffat, reported that he had heard Corelli's concertos performed in Rome. Although it is impossible to confirm whether Muffat had heard the Op. 6 on this occasion, some of the movements do possess stylistically conservative features that indicate an early date of composition. Several movements survive in an earlier form; for example, the *Largo* of Concerto 6 was originally written for the 1689 performance of the oratorio *Santa Beatrice d'Este*. There are also manuscript copies of the *Corrente* from Concerto 10 and the *Pastorale* from the 'Christmas Concerto' (Concerto 8), both of which predate the publication of the Op. 6. Furthermore, Concertos 4 and 7, and the first movement of Concerto 2, appear to have been originally conceived for trumpet, while other movements, such as the finales of Concertos 2 and 3 – the latter of which takes the form of a gigue – are stylistically similar to movements in his trio sonatas. Nevertheless, when Corelli reused old music he meticulously revised it so that it fitted seamlessly into the new work. This can be seen in several concertos, including the second which has obvious thematic links between four of the five movements.

Corelli's concertos were written for two groups of players. The first of these, the 'concertino', consists of two violins and a cello, while the second group, the 'ripieno', is formed from two violins, viola and bass. The ripieno parts could be doubled by other performers, but the concertino parts were to be played by soloists. In many respects, the two groups reflect the origin of the word 'concerto' which means, in Latin, to

‘contend or dispute’. In Corelli’s concertos, the ripieno is largely used to double or reinforce the concertino, producing a *chiaroscuro* effect, similar to the alternation between loud and quiet already present in his sonatas. Many of the movements work well as trios and can be played by the concertino alone; this has led to an assertion that the concertos are, in essence, augmented sonatas. Nevertheless, some movements cannot be played in this manner without some loss. One such movement, the first *Allegro* of Concerto 2, features some delightful antiphonal writing between the concertino and ripieno sections.

Corelli’s concertos, like his sonatas, are of two types: they either take the sacred *da chiesa* ‘church’ form or the secular *da camera* ‘chamber’ form. Stylistically, the two designs are very different, as is evident from his sonatas, but with the Op. 6 the two forms began to merge. In his church sonatas, Corelli made more use of polyphonic textures, while those of the chamber type are, in essence, orchestral suites. All of the first eight concertos in the Op. 6 are of the church type, even though Concertos 4, 6, and 8 have no fugues; many of these concertos also contain dance movements. The last four are of the chamber type and begin with a prelude followed by a series of movements, often dances; some contain non-dance movements, such as Concerto 12 where only two of the five movements are in a dance form. It is rather ironic that the ‘Christmas Concerto’ is the least church-like of the first eight, since it contains the most dances.

The account books of Ottoboni reveal that a ‘Christmas Concerto’ was customarily performed on Christmas Eve and that, in 1690, it was Corelli who was paid for the composition of the concerto, possibly an embryonic version of Concerto 8. The eighth concerto is unlike the other eleven as Corelli gave it a title, *Fatto per la notte*

di Natale 'Made for this night of Christmas'. Such concertos were not unknown as a contemporary of Corelli, Giuseppe Torelli, included a *Pastorale per il Natale* in his Op. 8 concertos from 1709. Of Corelli's 'Christmas Concerto', it is only the *Pastorale* that is traditionally associated with Christmas and, in order to set the pastoral scene, Corelli composed the movement in compound time. He also set out to recall the biblical shepherds who attended the birth of Christ through the use of features associated with their music, such as the sound of pipes or bagpipes. Corelli imitated the bagpipe's drone through the use of sustained notes in the lower instruments, while the pipes of the shepherds are conveyed in the simple, lyrical melodic lines that are often heard in thirds or sixths. In the original parts, Corelli added the term 'ad libitum' after the movement's title; this appears to indicate that the entire *Pastorale* could be omitted when this concerto was performed outside the Christmas period.

Even though most of the attention has been directed to the 'Christmas Concerto', all twelve concertos are highly refined and reflect Corelli's exceptional skill at composition. Features of the others include the vigorous first *Allegro* of Concerto 3, which is the longest extant fugue by Corelli, while Concerto 4 concludes with a memorably tumultuous coda. Furthermore, the *Allemanda* of Concerto 11 has a virtuoso cello part that, with its use of bass diminution, is more like a cello concerto.

Corelli's concertos were well received and frequently reissued throughout the 18th century. On mainland Europe they were admired, but more in a stylistic sense since composers such as Torelli, Albinoni and Vivaldi had produced newer, more energetic paradigms before the Op. 6 was published. A combination of the Corellian style and Vivaldian form may be seen in many German concertos, including those by Telemann. In France, Italian music was held in high esteem and the 'Christmas Concerto' was

a staple of the Parisian Tuileries Concerts Spirituels from their inception in 1725 until 1766. A French edition of Corelli's concertos appeared in c.1740, but they were never as well-liked as his sonatas. However, in Britain Corelli's Op. 6 was highly successful and very influential. The first British edition appeared in 1715; they were subsequently reissued many times and remained a concert favourite throughout the 18th century. Their popularity is evident from the writings of Charles Burney who, in 1789, wrote that the '*concertos of Corelli seem to have withstood all the attacks of time and fashion with more firmness than any of his other works.*' Their success owed much to the freelance nature of musicians in Britain, who were expected to form concert orchestras with little notice and practically no rehearsal time. Concerti grossi were, for them, the ideal genre as the concert organisers, or other billed performers, would take on the more challenging concertino roles, leaving the orchestral players the simpler ripieno parts. Foreign composers enjoyed particular success with this genre in Britain, the most notable of whom were Francesco Geminiani and Handel.

Handel was well aware of the British populace's predilection for Corelli's concertos and composed his own set in 1739. Entitled the *Grand Concertos*, they emulated Corelli's set but are very different stylistically; Handel paid homage to his illustrious predecessor by giving his set the same opus number. Native British composers also produced a large number of such works, the most prolific of whom was Charles Avison; he issued six collections of original concerti grossi and a further set based on the 'Essercizi' of Domenico Scarlatti. Other native composers of concerti grossi include John Stanley, William Babel, Robert Woodcock, Richard Mudge and Michael Festing. However, as the music written by Corelli's imitators faded into obscurity, his concertos remained highly regarded. Performances of the 'Christmas Concerto', in an arrangement for organ, became popular in the second-half of the

18th century and continued to be played throughout the 19th century and into the 20th. In 1953, Michael Tippett marked the tercentenary of Corelli's birth through the composition of his *Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli*, the source of which was the *Adagio* from the second concerto.

Few people in the history of musical composition have enjoyed such a long, unbroken period of popularity as Corelli. Of his famous contemporaries, the music of both Bach and Vivaldi endured a period of neglect after their deaths; only Handel achieved the same lasting fame as Corelli, primarily through his ever fashionable oratorios. Corelli's continual appeal is entirely due to the timeless nature of his works, particularly his set of concerti grossi which have admirably withstood the ravages of time. Many have spoken in praise of Corelli's concertos, but perhaps the greatest tribute again comes from Burney who said that the '*harmony is so pure, so rich, and so grateful; the parts are so clearly, judiciously, and ingeniously disposed; and the effect of the whole, from a large band, so majestic, solemn, and sublime, that they preclude all criticism, and make us forget that there is any other Music of the same kind existing.*'

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The Avison Ensemble

Gordon Dixon, Executive Director

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Concertino

Pavlo Beznosiuk	violin	Matthys Hofmans, Antwerp, 1676
Caroline Balding	violin	Stainer School, c.1690
Richard Tunnicliffe	cello	Attrib. Leonhard Mausiell, Nuremberg, c.1720
Andrew Skidmore*	cello	Mathias Thir, Vienna, c.1770
Paula Chateauneuf	archlute	Michael Schreiner in 2011 after David Tecchler, Rome, 18th century
Roger Hamilton	harpsichord	Marc Ducornet / Mark Ransom / Clair Hammett Box organ after Loosemore (1655) by William Drake of Buckfastleigh (2001) on Concerti 2, 3, 8 and 11

Ripieno

1st Violin

Joanne Green	Michiel de Hoog, 1988
Bojan Cicic	Rowland Ross, 2002
Hilary Michael	Jan Pawlikowski, Krakow, 2009

2nd Violin

Katarina Bengtson	Richard Duke, Holborn, London, 1750
Sarah Bealby-Wright	1694, possibly 'Stainer'
Ewa Chmielewska-Zorzano	Jan Pawlikowski, Kraków, 2007. Copy of Groblicz I, Poland, c.1600

Viola

Rachel Byrt	Anon., c.18th century
Thomas Kirby	Bernd Hiller, Markneukirchen, 2006

Cello

Aoife Nic Athlaoich	Bass Violin by Clive Morris, Neath, 2000, after the 'Servais' Stradivari, 1700
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Violone

Tim Amherst	Michael Heale, 1989, after Nicolo Amati, c.1650
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* Performs on Concerti 5 & 10



The Avison Ensemble

The Avison Ensemble is one of England's foremost exponents of 18th century music on period instruments. It is named after Charles Avison (1709-1770), the Newcastle-born composer, conductor and organist, *'the most important English concerto composer of the 18th Century'* (New Grove).

In addition to playing other works from the Baroque and early Classical periods, The Avison Ensemble is also a training ground for young up and coming musicians to gain experience of period performance practice and styles, affording them the opportunity to work with outstanding directors and soloists. The Ensemble has an active outreach programme involving thousands of children each year in music education projects throughout the North East.

The Avison Ensemble's recordings of the complete works of Charles Avison on both the Naxos and Divine Art labels have been exceptionally well received. Their recording of *Six Cello Concertos* by John Garth has been a sensational success, having been reprinted several times during the first year of its release and is regularly played on Classic FM. In 2009, The Avison Ensemble released their acclaimed first recording on Linn: Handel's *Concerti Grossi Opus 6*. This work is widely regarded as the composer's greatest contribution to the Baroque period and the recording received critical acclaim:

Orchestral Choice: *'I shall certainly return frequently to this splendid set.'*

BBC Music Magazine

'Where The Avison Ensemble really triumphs... is in conveying a sense of occasion and musical opulence...Magnificent!'

International Record Review

'The Avison's accounts under Pavlo Beznosiuk have a natural, easy virtuosity that will endear them to purists...'

The Sunday Times

In 2011 The Avison Ensemble released its second recording with Linn, *Vivaldi: Concerti Opus 8*, which includes the wonderful 'Four Seasons'. The group was praised for:

'performances which are as entertaining, compelling and colourful as they are authoritative and polished.'

International Record Review

Disc of the Week: *'Plenty of bold colours... recorded with immediacy and real presence.'*

BBC Radio 3 CD Review

'One of the most vibrant, authentic and involving recordings of Vivaldi's violin concertos I've heard.'

Classic FM Magazine

'Ideally realized by the superb period-instrument Avison Ensemble and recorded in vibrant, extraordinarily detailed sound.'

ClassicsToday.com

In addition to numerous appearances in the English regions, The Avison Ensemble has also appeared to critical acclaim at St John's, Smith Square in London and at the Hallé Handel Festival in Germany. Recently, the Ensemble has performed at St. James' Palace in London with the choir of Her Majesty the Queen's Chapel Royal and were the largest ensemble in the opening concert series at the new London concert hall, Kings Place, performing Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* as part of an all-Beethoven programme on period instruments.

www.avisonensemble.com



Pavlo Beznosiuk

Director / violin

Pavlo Beznosiuk has secured his reputation as one of Europe's most respected Baroque violinists over the last 25 years with a busy international career as soloist, chamber musician, concertmaster and increasingly as a director. In the mid 1980s he was involved in pioneering work in the use of Renaissance violins with The Parley of Instruments and was a key member of the groundbreaking Medieval ensemble The New London Consort playing *Vielles*, *Rebec* and *Lira da Braccio*. He is a frequent soloist / director with the Academy of Ancient Music and recent recital work has included performances of Biber's *Rosary Sonatas* and concerts combining solo violin music of Bach with that of Berio and Bartók. As musical director of The Avison Ensemble he has completed an exhaustive recorded survey of the music of Charles Avison.

In 2010 The Avison Ensemble released a recording of Handel's *Concerti Grossi Opus 6* and in 2011 released *Vivaldi: Concerti Opus 8* both of which have been received enthusiastically in the music press. Other recordings include J. S. Bach's *Sonatas & Partitas for Solo Violin*, Biber's *Rosary Sonatas*, Vivaldi's *Opus 12 Violin Concerti* with The Academy of Ancient Music and Christopher Hogwood, two recordings of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* with Monica Huggett and Rachel Podger and works by Walther and Westhoff. He has also performed in Europe, Australia, China, Korea and Singapore.



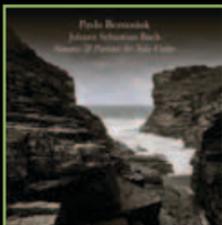
ALSO AVAILABLE ON LINN



The Avison Ensemble
G. F. Handel: Concerti
Grossi Opus 6



The Avison Ensemble
A. Vivaldi:
Concerti Opus 8



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