

NAXOS

**Johann Sebastian
BACH**

**Sonatas for
Viola da Gamba
and Harpsichord**

**Mikko Perkola,
Viola da Gamba
Aapo Häkkinen,
Harpsichord**



Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord

Johann Sebastian Bach was a member of a family that had for generations been occupied in music. His sons were to continue the tradition, providing the foundation of a new style of music that prevailed in the later part of the eighteenth century. Johann Sebastian Bach himself represented the end of an age, the culmination of the Baroque in a magnificent synthesis of Italian melodic invention, French rhythmic dance forms and German contrapuntal mastery.

Born in Eisenach in 1685, Bach was educated largely by his eldest brother, after the early death of his parents. At the age of eighteen he embarked on his career as a musician, serving first as a court musician at Weimar, before appointment as organist at Arnstadt. Four years later he moved to Mühlhausen as organist and the following year became organist and chamber musician to Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Weimar. Securing his release with difficulty, in 1717 he was appointed Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Cöthen and remained at Cöthen until 1723, when he moved to Leipzig as Cantor at the School of St Thomas, with responsibility for the music of the five principal city churches. Bach was to remain at Leipzig until his death in 1750.

As a craftsman, obliged to fulfil the terms of his employment, Bach provided music suited to his various appointments. It was natural that his earlier work as an organist and an expert on the construction of organs, should result in music for that instrument. At Cöthen, where the Pietist leanings of the court made church music unnecessary, he provided a quantity of instrumental music for the court orchestra and its players. In Leipzig he began by composing a series of cantatas for the church year, later turning his attention to instrumental music for the Collegium musicum of the University, and to the collection and ordering of his own compositions.

Presumably intended by Bach as a set, the three *Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord*, BWV

1027-29, have survived as separate pieces. The sonatas have the usual texture of Bach's instrumental sonatas, with two upper parts supported by a bass part, the form familiar from the organ *Trio Sonatas*, BWV 525-530. The *Viola da Gamba Sonatas* have been variously dated, either to about 1720, to Bach's Cöthen period, when the Court Capelle included the bass viol-player Christian Ferdinand Abel, or to the later period in Leipzig, when Bach was occupied with the Collegium musicum, in the repertoire of which the sonatas may have been included. The first of the set, the *Sonata in G major*, BWV 1027, is seemingly based on a supposedly earlier work, the *Sonata for Two Flutes and Continuo*, BWV 1039, and it is conceivable that the other two sonatas had their origin in earlier works. In four movements, the first of the group opens with the theme for the viola da gamba, over a bass pattern that is repeated with the entry of the subject in the upper register of the keyboard and in the dominant key. The imitative interplay of the two upper parts continues. The second movement introduces the theme in the harpsichord, before its appearance, in the dominant, in the bass viol. The two upper parts continue in imitative entries in the *Andante* and the final *Allegro moderato*.

In the *Sonata in D major*, BWV 1028, the bass viol introduces a thematic fragment that is imitated by the harpsichord, and the following *Allegro* has the two upper parts entering together, with more obvious imitation in the second half of the movement, in which the harpsichord is allowed to fill out some of the textures. The B minor *Andante* is in the rhythm of a *siciliano*, with the original key restored in the final 6/8 *Allegro*, with its variations in texture and figuration.

The *Sonata in G minor*, BWV 1029, starts with a *Vivace* movement in which the subject that forms the substance of the movement is entrusted first to the bass viol, impelled forward by its lively figuration. The second of the three movements, a B flat major *Adagio*, allows the two upper parts to interweave, and this is

capped by a final 6/8 G minor *Allegro*, the opening subject, imitated by the bass viol, marked by its initial repeated notes, and taken up by the lower part in the keyboard.

Since the surviving source of the single movement *Trio in D minor*, BWV 583, an *Adagio*, comes from after 1750, it has not been possible to date the work, with suggested datings varying from about 1725 to Bach's earlier period at Cöthen. Although it is specifically designed for the organ, two manuals and pedals, it lends itself to performance by bass viol and keyboard, as, indeed, do the six organ *Trio Sonatas*, BWV 525-530, to which this work is akin.

The *Trio in G minor*, BWV 584, generally rejected from the Bach canon in this form, was taken, as an organ trio sonata movement, from the second movement of the Cantata *Wo gehest du hin*, BWV 166, written in Leipzig and dating from 1724. The three instrumental lines accompanying the *Adagio* tenor aria *Ich will an den Himmel denken* are there allotted to oboe, violin and continuo.

The *Sonata in A minor*, BWV 967, dates from the first decade of the eighteenth century and was at one time thought to be an arrangement of a sonata or

concerto movement for a solo instrument and continuo by another composer, a supposition based partly on the full texture of the first six bars, and the partial figuration of the bass that follows. Marked *Allegro*, it ends with a brief flourish followed by an *Adagio* final cadence.

The *Sonata in D major*, BWV 963, has been dated to the earlier years of the eighteenth century and comparisons have been drawn with the programmatic *Capriccio sopra la lontananza del suo fratello dilettissimo*, BWV 992, which presumably marked the departure of Bach's brother Johann Jacob for service in the army of Charles XII of Sweden, Bach's *Toccatas* and the sonatas of Kuhnau. The first of the five movements makes principal use of the opening figure. A recitative-like interlude leads to the third movement, in fugal texture. A short and expressive *Adagio* is followed by the final *Thema all'imitatio Gallina Cuccu* (Theme in Imitation of the Hen and Cuckoo), a fugue for which the hen provides the opening subject, with the characteristic notes of the cuckoo heard above the third entry of the subject.

Keith Anderson

Mikko Perkola

Mikko Perkola studied music at the Päijät-Häme Conservatory, at the Sibelius Academy and at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. His teachers were Arvo Haasma, Markku Luolajan-Mikkola and Wieland Kuijken. He has given concerts and recorded chamber music in Europe together with the Norwegian Baroque Orchestra, the Icelandic Chamber Orchestra, Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, Battalia, Retrover, Ensemble Severin, Wieland Kuijken, Laurence Dreyfus, Topi Lehtipuu, Hans-Ola Ericsson, Anna Lindal, Markku Luolajan-Mikkola and others. In 2005 Perkola appeared with the Gramophone Award-Winning viol quartet Phantasm, on their album with John Jenkins's *Consorts in Six Parts*, followed by a five-part recording in 2006. He has also made many radio recordings. Mikko Perkola is both a singer and composer in the Finnish group Tekijä Tuntematon, which interprets poems. His wide range in music-making includes collaborations with artists from different fields, from early music to multimedia and solo performances with amplified viol. He teaches the viola da gamba and early music in Lahti.

Aapo Häkkinen

Aapo Häkkinen began his musical education as a chorister at Helsinki Cathedral. He took up the harpsichord at the age of thirteen, studying with Elina Mustonen and Olli Porthan (organ) at the Sibelius Academy in his native city. From 1995 to 1998 he studied at the Amsterdam Sweelinck Conservatory with Bob van Asperen, and from 1996 to 2000 with Pierre Hantaï in Paris. Victorious in various competitions, he has appeared as a soloist and director throughout Europe and in Mexico, in collaboration with distinguished colleagues such as Monica Groop, Ilya Grubert, Tommi Hakala, Erich Höbarth, Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen, María Cristina Kiehr and Riccardo Minasi. He has conducted Pergolesi's *La serva padrona* for the Croatian National Theatre and Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* for Finnish Chamber Opera. He has recorded and broadcast widely, and commissioned and given the premières of keyboard and chamber music. Aapo Häkkinen has edited the complete organ works of Giovanni Maria Casini for Edition Escobar. He teaches at the Sibelius Academy and at international master-courses. Since 2003 he has been Artistic Director of the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra.



8.570210

DDD

 Playing Time
 75:42


www.naxos.com

 © & © 2007 Naxos Rights International Ltd.
 Booklet notes in English
 Made in Canada

Bach's three *Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord*, BWV 1027-29 have been variously dated, either to Bach's Cöthen period, where as *Kapellmeister* he was responsible for all instrumental music, and had at his disposal a small but outstanding ensemble of musicians, or to the later period in Leipzig, when he was occupied with the Collegium Musicum. These intensely expressive and often technically demanding, yet intimate works have the usual texture of Bach's instrumental sonatas, with two upper parts supported by a bass part.

Johann Sebastian BACH

(1685-1750)

Sonata in G major for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord, BWV 1027

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|------|
| 1 | Adagio | 4:45 |
| 2 | Allegro ma non tanto | 4:10 |
| 3 | Andante | 2:55 |
| 4 | Allegro moderato | 3:27 |

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------|
| 5 | Trio in D minor, BWV 583 | 6:02 |
| 6 | Trio in G minor, BWV 584 | 3:10 |

Sonata in D major for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord, BWV 1028

- | | | |
|----|---------|------|
| 7 | Adagio | 2:41 |
| 8 | Allegro | 4:37 |
| 9 | Andante | 6:06 |
| 10 | Allegro | 4:44 |

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 11 | Keyboard Sonata in A minor,
BWV 967 | 3:59 |
|----|--|------|

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 12 | Sonata | 3:55 |
|----|--------|------|

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 13 | Adagio | 0:52 |
|----|--------|------|

- | | | |
|----|------|------|
| 14 | Fuga | 2:11 |
|----|------|------|

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 15 | Adagio | 0:49 |
|----|--------|------|

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 16 | Fuga. Thema all'imitatio
Gallina Cuccu | 2:39 |
|----|---|------|

- | | | |
|----|--|-------|
| 17 | Sonata in G minor for Viola
da Gamba and Harpsichord,
BWV 1029 | 18:39 |
|----|--|-------|

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 18 | Vivace | 7:02 |
|----|--------|------|

- | | | |
|----|--------|------|
| 19 | Adagio | 6:56 |
|----|--------|------|

- | | | |
|----|---------|------|
| 20 | Allegro | 4:40 |
|----|---------|------|

Mikko Perkola, Viola da Gamba • Aapo Häkkinen, Harpsichord

Recorded at St Peter's Church, Siuntio, Finland, from 15th to 17th October, 2006
 Produced, engineered and edited by Mikko Murtoniemi • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson
 Viola da gamba: Guy Harrison, Toronto, 1998, after Michel Colichon, Paris, 1691
 Harpsichord: Joel Katzman, Amsterdam, 2002, after Pascal Taskin, Paris, 1769

Pitch: A=403 Hz; Temperament: Sorge, 1758

Cover photograph by Kimmo Syväri