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Notes on the Program

Bach and Vivaldi: Two Giants who Influenced Each Other

by Jeannette Sorrell

Peter Schickele, the great comic creator of P.D.Q. Bach, has remarked that J.S. Bach composed "by the light of the Vivaldi manuscripts burning in the fireplace."

There is truth underlying Schickele's banter. Like most great composers, Bach made a thorough practice of studying the works of other composers whom he admired. That list included Buxtehude, Reinken, Pachelbel, and others. But Bach's surviving output contains far more transcriptions of Vivaldi than of any other composer.

Bach's great admiration for his violinist-colleague to the south is evident in the keyboard transcriptions he made of seven of Vivaldi's violin concertos. These arrangements bear the name of J.S. Bach on the manuscripts, with no mention of Vivaldi. Thus, they carry BWV numbers in the catalogue of Bach's works. The unsuspecting listener therefore would not realize they are Vivaldi's compositions if not informed.

These two giants brought the genre of the baroque concerto to its zenith. In doing so, they were inspired by two very special and very different orchestras.

Small & Mighty: Bach's Orchestra in Köthen

For six years (1717-1723), J.S. Bach led one of the two finest orchestras of Germany. As music director at the palace of Köthen, he presided over a small but excellent orchestra of musicians who had formerly worked at the palace of Berlin. The prince of Köthen had successfully recruited these musicians from Berlin.

The Berlin-Köthen musicians inspired in Bach an outpouring of virtuoso compositions for small orchestra. These pieces have become amongst the most beloved orchestral works in the world - the Brandenburg Concertos, the orchestral suites, and the violin concertos. Today, the town of Köthen still celebrates its heritage as the birthplace of these masterpieces of Bach.

Sadly for us, many of the pieces that Bach wrote in Köthen are lost. One of the many missing manuscripts is that of the **Violin Concerto in D Minor**. However, Bach's later transcription of the piece as a harpsichord concerto survives, and this makes it possible for a violinist to reconstruct the lost violin part.

The key of D Minor was often used by 18th-century composers (including Mozart) for bold, dramatic concertos. Bach's D Minor Concerto lives up to that expectation with fierce intensity. The outer movements, both of which use the *ritornello* form developed by Vivaldi, require unflagging concentration and nerve from the soloist. There are two extensive passages using the "bariolage" effect - a violin technique in which moving notes are rapidly alternated with repeated notes, (the repeated note being an open string on the violin). Bariolage can be reproduced on the harpsichord, but it is much more naturally idiomatic to the violin.

The middle movement of the concerto is a haunting Adagio, full of rhetorical and dramatic moments. Beginning with a ground-bass theme played by the orchestra in unison, this movement becomes a poetic conversation between the orchestra and the soloist. The opening theme recedes to the cellos and basses, where it repeats with eternal inevitability as the soloist soars in moody lines above it.

Bach's **Brandenburg Concerto no. 3**, also written for Köthen, is an exuberant celebration of democracy in music. The piece is scored for ten *solo* string players who toss themes back and forth as in a tennis match. Written for the leading virtuoso string players of 18th-century Germany, it remains a thrilling workout for any ensemble today. The piece uses both texture and form in unprecedented ways, blending the solo concerto and group concerto (concerto grosso) forms. Bach wrote two substantial movements, but left the players to improvise a transitional second movement, for which he provided only two chords. The contrapuntal complexity of the outer movements (far exceeding the concertos of Vivaldi) is one of the qualities that makes us feel we hear something new and different each time we listen. Above all, there is a sense of exhilaration that all of us feel from performing it. Some of that is due to sheer virtuosity.

The pieces that we call the **Orchestral Suites** were labeled by Bach as "Overtures." All of them are French-inspired suites consisting of a virtuosic overture in French style, followed by a series of dance movements. The great **Overture no. 2** is essentially a flute concerto, and was clearly intended for a quite small ensemble so that the gentle baroque flute (or *traverso*) could be heard. In the **Overture no. 3**, the beloved and poignant Air is justly famous (known in modern times as "Air on the G String," though Bach would have never played it on the G string, and neither do we). This air is a profound example of Bach's extraordinary ability to move the emotions through music. The Gigue is a virtuoso romp that keeps all parties on their toes.

Young & Passionate: Vivaldi's Orchestra in Venice

While Bach was writing his concertos for the most seasoned professional musicians of Germany, Vivaldi took his inspiration from a very different kind of orchestra. In fact, Vivaldi was writing for a youth orchestra in Venice - *the most famous female youth orchestra the world has known*.



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An orchestra of girls? How did this happen?

Vivaldi, a former priest, was the music master at the prestigious *Ospedale della Pietà* in Venice - an orphanage for girls, most of whom were illegitimate daughters of the nobility. The orphanage was a kind of music conservatory (see sidebar) with an outstanding orchestra. Vivaldi's weekly concerts with his all-girl band of orphans became famous, drawing wealthy tourists from across Europe.

In writing hundreds of concertos for the *Pietà* orchestra, Vivaldi was the great developer of *ritornello* form - the form that became the model for concerto-writing by all European composers of the century, including Bach. The Italian word "ritornello" means something that *returns*. The same word is used to mean the *refrain* in pop music - and indeed, Vivaldi's ritornellos convey the bold and driving sense of rhythm that is more commonly associated with pop music. Like pop composers today, Vivaldi was writing for teenagers. For this reason, I think he infused his concertos with youthful energy that often resembles rock n' roll.

The **Concerto in A minor for Two Violins** opens with a spirited ritornello and fiery solo writing. In the second movement, Vivaldi presents a seemingly timeless ritornello. Just as Bach did in his Violin Concerto in D minor, Vivaldi introduces this theme in the full orchestra in unison, then moves it into the cellos and bass, where it becomes an inexorable ground-bass that repeats with a sense of eternity. The two solo violins improvise above it like angels. I think of this poetic movement as the eternal motion of the planets in the cosmos. The spell is broken when the bold third movement erupts, full of wild and virtuosic writing for the two soloists.

The **Concerto for Two Cellos** was probably premiered by two teenage cellists at the orphanage. It is a wonderful example of Vivaldi's driving rock-n-roll rhythm, as the cellists engage in a duel that is alternately playful and fiery. The beautiful middle movement is a poetic dialogue with haunting and exotic harmonies.

Whether or not Bach ever burned any Vivaldi manuscripts, we hope that the fire of these concertos by two giants will warm you and keep you filled with inspiration.

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Cleveland 2022

See next page for Musicians' roster and bios.

APOLLO'S FIRE - The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra
Jeannette Sorrell, Artistic Director

VIOLIN Alan Choo, <i>co-concertmaster</i> Susanna Perry Gilmore, <i>co-concertmaster</i> Emi Tanabe, <i>principal</i> Evan Few Andrew Fouts Min-Young Kim Holly Piccoli	CELLO René Schiffer, <i>principal</i> Ezra Seltzer
VIOLA Nicole Divall, <i>principal</i> Yael Senamaud-Cohen	CONTRABASS Sue Yelanjian
	LUTE & THEORBO William Simms
	TRAVERSO Kathie Stewart
	HARPSICHORD Jeannette Sorrell

ABOUT APOLLO'S FIRE

"The U.S.A.'s hottest baroque band"

- CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE, UK

Named for the classical god of music, healing and the sun, Apollo's Fire is a GRAMMY®-winning ensemble. The period-instrument orchestra was founded by award-winning harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell, and is dedicated to the baroque ideal that music should evoke the various Affekts or passions in the listeners. Apollo's Fire is a collection of creative artists who share Sorrell's passion for drama and rhetoric.

Hailed as *"one of the pre-eminent period-instrument ensembles"* (THE INDEPENDENT, London), Apollo's Fire has performed five European tours, with sold-out concerts at the BBC Proms in London (with live broadcast across Europe), the Aldeburgh Festival (UK), Madrid's Royal Theatre, Bordeaux's Grand Théâtre de l'Opéra, and major venues in Lisbon, Metz (France), and Bregenz (Austria); as well as concerts at the Irish National Concert Hall (Dublin), the Irish National Opera House (Wexford), the Birmingham International Series (UK), the Tuscan Landscapes Festival (Italy), and Belfast Castle with a live broadcast carried by the Associated Press of Europe.

AF's London 2014 concert was chosen by the DAILY TELEGRAPH as one of the "Best 5 Classical Concerts of 2014", with their critic writing, *"An evening of superlative music-making... the group combines European stylishness with American entrepreneurialism."*

North American tour engagements include sold-out concerts at Carnegie Hall (2018), the Tanglewood Festival (2015 and 2017), the Ravinia Festival (2017 and 2018), the Metropolitan Museum of Art in NY (2013, 2014, and 2015), the Boston Early Music Festival series, and the Library of Congress, as well as concerts at the Aspen Music Festival, Caramoor Festival, and major venues in Toronto, Los Angeles and San Francisco. The ensemble has performed two major U.S. tours of the *Monteverdi Vespers* (2010 and 2014) and



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a 9-concert tour of the *Brandenburg Concertos* in 2013.

At home in Cleveland, Apollo's Fire frequently enjoys sold-out performances at its subscription series, which has drawn national attention for creative programming.

With over 8 million views (total) of its YouTube videos, Apollo's Fire is one of the most popular baroque orchestras on the worldwide internet. The ensemble also launched a "Worldwide Watch-at-Home Series" in October 2020, bringing its subscription concerts into the homes of patrons around the world.

Apollo's Fire has released 26 commercial CDs and won a GRAMMY® award in 2019 for the album *Songs of Orpheus* with tenor Karim Sulayman. AF's recordings have won rave reviews in the London press: "*a swaggering version, brilliantly played*" (THE TIMES) and "*the Midwest's best-kept musical secret is finally reaching British ears*" (THE INDEPENDENT). Eight of the ensemble's CD releases have become best-sellers on the classical Billboard chart: the Monteverdi Vespers, Bach's Brandenburg Concertos & Harpsichord Concertos, a disc of Handel arias with soprano Amanda Forsythe titled "The Power of Love" (Billboard Classical #3, 2015), and Jeannette Sorrell's four crossover programs: *Come to the River - An Early American Gathering* (Billboard Classical #9, 2011); *Sacrum Mysterium - A Celtic Christmas Vespers* (Billboard Classical #11, 2012); *Sugarloaf Mountain - An Appalachian Gathering* (Billboard Classical #5, 2015); and *Sephardic Journey - Wanderings of the Spanish Jews* (Billboard World Music Chart #2 and Billboard Classical #5, Feb. 2016); and *Songs of Orpheus* (Billboard Classical #5, 2018).

"Led by a brilliant harpsichordist, Jeannette Sorrell, the ensemble exudes stylish energy - a blend of scholarship and visceral intensity."

- GRAMOPHONE

JEANNETTE SORRELL, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

"A resplendent performance... breathtaking. The production belonged entirely to Ms. Sorrell."

- THE NEW YORK TIMES

GRAMMY®-winning conductor Jeannette Sorrell is recognized internationally as one of today's most compelling interpreters of Baroque and Classical repertoire. She is credited by BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE for "*forging a vibrant, life-affirming approach to early music.*"

The daughter of a European immigrant father and American mother, she grew up as a musician and dancer. She began her conducting studies with George Trautwein and continued under Leonard Bernstein, Robert Spano, and Roger Norrington at the Tanglewood and Aspen music festivals. As a harpsichordist, she studied with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam and won First Prize and the Audience Choice Award in the Spivey International Harpsichord Competition, competing against over 70 harpsichordists from Europe, Israel, the U.S., and the Soviet Union.

Sorrell is the founder and artistic director of APOLLO'S FIRE, and has led the renowned period ensemble as conductor and harpsichord soloist in sold-out concerts from Carnegie Hall and London's BBC Proms to the Tanglewood and Ravinia festivals. At home in Cleveland, she and Apollo's Fire have built one of the largest audiences of any baroque orchestra in North America.

In demand with symphony orchestras and period groups alike, Sorrell made her conducting debut last month with the **New York Philharmonic** (Handel's *Messiah*), with the **NEW YORK TIMES** writing, "*Jeannette Sorrell led a splendid performance... lithe, glowing and elegant.*" She makes her debut this spring with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic in Bach's *St. John Passion*. She has repeatedly conducted the Pittsburgh Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Utah Symphony, and New World Symphony, and also led the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Seattle Symphony, Opera St. Louis with the St. Louis Symphony, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco, the Florida Orchestra, the Calgary Philharmonic (Canada), and the Royal Northern Sinfonia (UK), among others.

With over 8 million views of their YouTube videos, Sorrell and Apollo's Fire have released 27 commercial CDs, of which 9 have been bestsellers on Billboard Classical. Sorrell won a GRAMMY® in 2019 for her album "Songs of Orpheus" with Apollo's Fire and tenor Karim Sulayman. Her recordings include the complete *Brandenburg Concerti* and harpsichord concerti of Bach (Billboard Classical Top 10 in 2012) and Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (Billboard Classical #2 in 2020). She has also released four discs of Mozart. Other recordings include Bach's *St. John Passion*, Handel's *Messiah*, the *Monteverdi Vespers* (Billboard Classical Top 10) and five creative crossover projects, including *Sephardic Journey - Wanderings of the Spanish Jews* (Billboard World Music #2, Classical #7) and *Christmas on Sugarloaf Mountain* (Billboard Classical #3, and named "Festive Disc of the Year" by GRAMOPHONE).

Sorrell is the subject of the 2019 documentary by Academy award-winning director Allan Miller, titled *PLAYING WITH FIRE*. She has also been featured on *Living the Classical Life*. She has attracted national awards for her creative programming and her "storytelling" approach to early music, which has attracted many new listeners through the use of contextual and dramatic elements.

She holds an honorary doctorate from Case Western University, an Artist Diploma from Oberlin Conservatory, a Bachelor's degree from Wake Forest University (as a Reynolds Scholar), and an award from the American Musicological Society. Passionate about guiding the next generation of performers, Sorrell is the architect of Apollo's Fire's Young Artist Apprentice program, which has produced many of the nation's leading young professional baroque players; and the new Artistic Leadership Fellows program.

"Under the inspired leadership of Jeannette Sorrell, Apollo's Fire has become one of the pre-eminent period-instrument ensembles, causing one to hear baroque material anew."

- THE INDEPENDENT, London

SOLOIST BIOGRAPHIES

“A paragon of delicacy”

- SAN FRANCISCO CLASSICAL VOICE

Spanish-born violinist **FRANCISCO FULLANA** is one of the first international solo violinists to fully embrace and absorb the baroque language of historical performance. Hailed as a *“rising star”* (BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE), he is the winner of four international violin competitions as well as an Avery Fisher Career Grant. His Carnegie Hall recital debut was noted for its *“joy and playfulness in collaboration ... it was perfection”* (NEW YORK CONCERT REVIEW).

As Artist-in-Residence with Apollo’s Fire, he performs with the GRAMMY®-winning period orchestra in 17 concerts during 2021-22, including at Carnegie Hall in March and at Cleveland’s Severance Hall in May. He also shares his love of music and his immigrant story with youth at several Spanish-speaking public schools in Cleveland and Chicago, in collaboration with AF musicians.

Fullana’s solo debut album, titled *“Bach’s Long Shadow,”* was chosen by BBC Music Magazine as *“Instrumental Album of the Month”* in July 2021. His recent album of Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* with Apollo’s Fire was chosen as no. 3 in the *“Best Classical Albums of 2021”* by the Times of London.

Born into a family of educators, Francisco was raised in Mallorca and Madrid and was recognized in Spain as a prodigy. He moved to the U.S. at the age of 16 (as an unaccompanied minor) to study at The Juilliard School. His primary teachers and mentors for the next 8 years were Donald Weilerstein, Masao Kawasaki, and Midori.

His lifelong fascination with baroque music has influenced both of his prior recordings: his 2018 debut album, *Through the Lens of Time* (Orchid Classics) and his 2021 solo album, *Bach’s Long Shadow*, which juxtaposes Bach Partitas on gut strings and baroque setup with virtuoso solo violin works from the next three centuries.

As a concerto soloist, his engagements have included the Bayerische Philharmonie, the Münchner Rundfunkorchester, the City of Birmingham Symphony, Vancouver Symphony, and the St Paul Chamber Orchestra, among others.

As a chamber musician, Francisco is a Bowers Program Artist at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. His many performances have included the Marlboro Festival and the Perlman Music Program, as well as collaborations with Mitsuko Uchida and members of the Guarneri, Juilliard, Pacifica, Takács, and Cleveland quartets.

Using gut strings and a baroque bow, Francisco performs on the 1735 *“Mary Portman”* ex-Kreisler Guarneri del Gesù violin, on loan from Clement and Karen Arrison through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

ALAN CHOO, violin, *“was a dynamo, delivering lines with panache. He Exemplified virtuosity”* (THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER). A leading soloist, chamber musician, and historical specialist, Alan made his solo debut with Apollo’s Fire at the Tanglewood and Ravinia Music Festivals in 2017, and currently serves as Artistic Leadership Fellow for AF, where he takes on the roles of soloist, concertmaster, and guest director. He is also Founder and Artistic Director of Red Dot Baroque, Singapore’s first professional period ensemble and Ensemble-in-Residence at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory. As a modern violinist, Alan has appeared as a soloist with the St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra,



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Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Orchestra of the Music Makers and more. A recipient of multiple awards such as the Early Music Award from the Peabody Institute, Paul Abisheganaden Grant for Artistic Excellence, and Grace Clagett Ranney Prize in Chamber Music, Alan has also given masterclasses to students at the Cleveland Institute of Music, Baldwin-Wallace College, Bowling Green State University, and Yong Siew Toh Conservatory.

SUSANNA PERRY GILMORE, violin, enjoys a multifaceted career as solo artist, chamber musician, and orchestral concertmaster. Hailed as “a terrific fiddle player” (THE CLASSICAL REVIEWER, UK) and praised for her “authenticity and exquisite taste... musical depth and human touch” (THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER), she has been featured as a chamber music performer on National Public Radio’s Performance Today, A Prairie Home Companion and America’s Music Festivals. Recent solo engagements include the European premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s “The Singing Rooms” for violin, choir and orchestra in Paris and the Berg, Prokofiev, Mozart and Korngold violin concertos with the Omaha Symphony, with whom she serves as concertmaster. She holds degrees from Oxford University (UK) and the New England Conservatory. She is the violinist on Apollo’s Fire’s best-selling CD recordings Sugarloaf Mountain and Sephardic Journey.

RENÉ SCHIFFER, cello, is praised for his “*interpretive imagination and patrician command of the cello*” (THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER). He is a native of Holland where he was a protégé of Anner Bijlsma. He later studied baroque cello with Jaap ter Linden and viola da gamba with Catharina Meints. As a member of Sigiswald Kuijken’s La Petite Bande for sixteen years, he toured four continents and appeared many times on European television. He has also performed with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Les Musiciens du Louvre, and in over 40 projects with Tafelmusik of Toronto. As a concerto soloist, he has appeared throughout North America and Europe, and can be heard on acclaimed CD recordings of the Vivaldi *Concerto for Two Cellos* and the *Tango Concerto for Two Gambas* (his own composition) on British label AVIE. He can be heard on more than 50 CD recordings, on the Harmonia Mundi, Philips, Virgin Classics, Erato, Sony, and AVIE labels. He serves on the faculty of the Cleveland Institute of Music as Teacher of Baroque Cello, and has given masterclasses and coachings for the New World Symphony (Miami), the University of Michigan, Oberlin Conservatory, and Cincinnati College-Conservatory.

EZRA SELTZER, cello, has been hailed for his “scampering virtuosity” (AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE) and “superb” playing (NEW YORK TIMES). He is the principal cellist of the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, New York Baroque Incorporated, and Early Music New York. He has frequently appeared as guest principal cellist of Musica Angelica and Orchester Wiener Akademie, among others. In his hometown of New York City, he can be found performing Bach cantatas weekly at the acclaimed Bach@One series at Trinity Church Wall Street with the Trinity Choir and Trinity Baroque Orchestra. He is a founding member of the Sebastians, and performs frequently with the vocal ensemble TENET. He attended Yale University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts in history and Master of Music in cello. He graduated from the inaugural class of Juilliard’s historical performance program.

KATHIE STEWART, flute, is a founding member and principal flutist of Apollo’s Fire. A faculty member at the Cleveland Institute of Music and a Kulas Visiting Artist at Case Western Reserve University, she also joins the faculty of Indiana University beginning this year. She previously served on the faculty at Oberlin Conservatory, where she taught baroque flute for nearly twenty years. She has toured internationally with Apollo’s Fire and can be heard on over 15 CD recordings. Kathie is a leading interpreter of historic Celtic music, playing Irish flute on several Apollo’s Fire recordings. She has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra, Tafelmusik, The Four Nations Ensemble, Oberlin Baroque Ensemble, ARTEK, and the Bach Sinfonia in Washington, D.C. She is also Assistant Director of the Seattle Baroque Flute Workshop.