

Bach - Flute concertos (Gatti) [2008]

Written by bluesever

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03 Flute Concerto in B minor, reconstructed 04 Triple Concerto in D major, BWV1050a 05
Triple Concerto in D major, BWV1050a 06 Triple Concerto in D major, BWV1050a 07
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minor, BWV1067 10 Ouverture in B minor, BWV1067 11 Ouverture in B minor, BWV1067
12 Ouverture in B minor, BWV1067 13 Ouverture in B minor, BWV1067 Marcello Gatti –
transverse flute Ensemble Aurora Enrico Gatti – director

One of the great tragedies in the history of music must certainly be the eclipse of Johann Sebastian Bach's name and reputation following his death in 1750 and the obscurity into which his vast output was consigned. Bach was already a musical anachronism during his lifetime. He insisted on composing in the ornate and complex contrapuntal style of the High Baroque even as the musical world was adopting the less challenging, beautifully melodic buoyant elegance of the galant style. With his manuscripts divided amongst his family and his fame yet to come, many of the precious autograph copies of his unpublished works were lost. Some were sold and then consigned to oblivion; others were used as wrapping paper. It is believed that more than one thousand works by Bach were lost because few understood their transcendent greatness.

This loss of so much of Bach's music continues to act as an irritant to musicians upon whom the lesson of the oyster has not been lost. Wishing to re-create those lost works for which clues have been left behind, musicians are carefully examining extant pieces for anything that might indicate they once existed in another form. Bach often adapted instrumental works for use in his cantatas and other vocal pieces while under the crushing deadline imposed by the requirement of at least one new such work a week. That Bach produced more than 300 masterpieces in the form under those conditions is nothing short of miraculous.

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When an instrumental precursor is assumed to be lost it may be re-created from existing works by utilizing musical creativity under the careful guidance of intelligent guesswork. Three splendid examples of such musical reverse engineering can be found on this beautifully performed CD. The first piece on this disc is labeled a Flute Concerto in B minor. It is a sparkling work reconstructed from three different vocal compositions. The first movement began life as the introductory sinfonia to the Cantata BWV 209, identified some time ago as being the first movement of a lost concerto in B minor for traverso flute, strings and basso continuo. The middle movement is based on the soprano aria from the celebratory Cantata BWV 173a, composed for the birthday of the prince of Anhalt-Cothen. The third movement is constructed from an aria scored for tenor and strings, part of a drama for music BWV 207/3. Although they come from disparate works the three movements meld together naturally to make a balanced whole. Marcello Gatti plays the transverse flute with just the right combination of galant elegance and Baroque expressiveness.

The second work on this CD is an early three movement version of the Fifth Brandenburg Concerto, now a Triple Concerto in D major for transverse flute, harpsichord and violin. This reconstructed version is shorter and features stripped-down scoring that turns it into more of a chamber music piece. Its unfamiliarity entices the ear used to the Brandenburg version. The soloists are splendid in this evocative performance.

The final work on this disc is the brilliant orchestral Overture in B minor BWV 1067 with its scintillating obbligato passages for flute. Now reduced to chamber music dimensions, the music explodes with a brilliant display of onrushing virtuosity and contrapuntal mastery. The musicians respond with beautifully expressive playing and technical agility. The Ensemble Aurora under maestro di concerto and first violinist Enrico Gatti plays splendidly in all three works.

The sound on this CD is superb with Glossa's engineers emphasizing the mid-range and treble ends of the sonic spectrum. The instruments have an attractive "bite" that illuminates Bach's complex counterpoint, highlighting the inner voices of this brilliantly-constructed music. One can hear these concertos with unusual clarity. The instruments sound reasonably close and precisely located in a moderately-sized acoustic space.--- Mike Birman, audaud.com

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