

Program

Brandon Patrick George, flute
Mahan Esfahani, harpsichord

J.S. Bach: Sonata in C Major for flute and basso continuo, BWV 1033

Andante – Presto

Allegro

Adagio

Menuet 1 – Menuet 2

C.P.E. Bach: Sonata in A minor for solo flute, Wq. 132

Poco Adagio

Allegro

Allegro

J.S. Bach: Sonata in A Major for flute and harpsichord, BWV 1032

Vivace

Largo e dolce

Allegro

~~intermission~~

C.P.E. Bach: Harpsichord Sonata in A minor, Wq. 49/1, “*Württemberg*”

Moderato

Andante

Allegro assai

J.S. Bach: Sonata in B Minor for flute and harpsichord, BWV 1030

Andante

Largo e dolce

Presto

Program Notes

The **Sonata in C major for flute and basso continuo** (BWV 1033) is a [sonata](#) in 4 movements. It is attributed to [Johann Sebastian Bach](#) in the manuscript, which is in the hand of his son [Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach](#) and has been dated to about 1731, although scholars question the attribution ^[1]

The movements are:

- *Andante – Presto*
- *Allegro*
- *Adagio*
- *Menuet 1 – Menuet 2*

Jeanne Swack notes that the first menuet "is related to the first in a set of variations in a concerto for oboe, obligato cembalo and doubling cello by the [Merseburg](#) composer [Christoph Förster](#)"; this suggests that the movements of BWV 1033 "may have had a disparate origin, as does the sudden appearance of an obligato cembalo part solely for that movement."^[1]

The [basso continuo](#) can be provided by a variety of instruments including the harpsichord and viola da gamba.

The **Sonata for Solo Flute in A minor, Wq.132, H 562**, is a [sonata](#) for [flute](#), without [Basso Continuo](#) or accompanying instruments, composed by [Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach](#).^[1] The sonata is considered, along with Telemann's [Fantasias for Solo Flute](#) and J. S. Bach's [A minor partita](#), one of the most significant works for unaccompanied flute before the 20th century.^[2] It is the sole flute work by Bach that was printed and published during his lifetime. No manuscript of it has been discovered.

The sonata uses the *slow–fast–fast* movement format. The [tempo](#) unifies the work. The first movement is slow (*Poco adagio*), and the second is faster (*Allegro*), the third (*Allegro*) is slightly more faster than the second, so the result, when played, is unified acoustically.^[4]

Bach also used [motivic development](#) to unify his work, as his father did. Examples are the "scalar arch" motif in the first measures, repeated in fragments in the whole sonata, and the descending half-step motif, which appears at the beginning of every movement.^[4]

The melodic line seems more angular than soft, as it is clear from the use of [sixteenth notes](#) in the *Allegro* movements, broken chords, thirds and frequent rests, all of them a mix of Baroque and Galant style.

The **Sonata in A major for transverse flute and harpsichord** by Johann Sebastian Bach (BWV 1032) is a sonata in 3 movements: Movement 1: *Vivace* (in A major), Movement 2: *Largo e dolce* (in A minor, ending with an imperfect cadence), and Movement 3: *Allegro* (in A major). This work also has a complicated past. Bach notated the work himself on a series of remaining empty staves at the bottom of pages of a piece of music he had written earlier. Later on, pages were lost from the manuscript, along with many bars from the first movement. So here, too, reconstruction was necessary. The sonata as a whole was probably also a 'reconstruction' of an earlier work. Notes made on the manuscript suggest that it was preceded by another version – probably a 'real' trio sonata for recorder, violin and *basso continuo*.

The **Harpsichord Sonata in A minor, Wq. 49/1, "Württemberg"** is the first of a set of six sonatas that Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach dedicated to the young Carl Eugen, Duke of Württemberg. It was composed in the early 1740s, shortly after Bach had become Chamber Musician in the employ of Frederick the Great of Prussia. The duchy of Württemberg was the object of a tug of war between Prussia and the Hapsburg empire, and Frederick had had the young duke brought to Berlin, allegedly for his education and protection. During this period Carl Eugen received instruction in music from C.P.E. Bach – and we may assume that he was a gifted student as, in later years, he was known to seat himself at the harpsichord

accompanying the singers of the ducal opera house. Accordingly the 'Württemberg' Sonatas are very demanding, clearly intended for skillful, professional keyboard players rather than the amateurs who at this time were becoming an important target for composers and publishers. The sonatas have almost symphonic or even operatic dimensions and attitudes; in fact they may almost be called romantic, conjuring up fantastic and colorful landscapes.

The **Sonata in B minor for transverse flute and obligato harpsichord** by [Johann Sebastian Bach \(BWV 1030\)](#) is a [sonata](#) in 3 movements: *Andante*, *Largo e dolce*, *Presto*.

The structure of the opening movement, with its alternation between fuller-textured, ritornello-like passages and stretches dominated by the soloistic writing for the flute, reflects its debt to concerto form. In the ensuing *Largo e dolce*, too, Bach writes for the harpsichord as he would for the ripieno (the orchestra) in one of his concertos, and the flute spins out its melody as a soloist. The closing movement begins with a *Presto* fugue written in three voices - flute, keyboard right hand, and keyboard left hand - in the manner of a trio sonata. The concluding *Allegro*, a dance movement in 12/16, continues this kind of writing.

From the artists

Brandon Patrick George : "In 2020, I released my debut album that features important compositions for my instrument, including the Partita for solo flute by J.S. Bach. Among all of the wind instruments in existence during Bach's lifetime, the flute has the richest literature, and certainly the most solo music by the composer himself. I had always hoped to find the right partner to collaborate with on the sonatas for flute and harpsichord, and little did I know, I would find that in Mahan.

Mahan and I became friends during a visit I made to Munich shortly before lockdown in 2020. He was performing with the Munich Chamber Orchestra, including works by Györgi Ligeti and Frank Martin. Hearing Mahan's incredibly virtuosic playing of this baroque instrument, with contemporary compositions and a modern symphony orchestra, made me wonder if perhaps we would collaborate on the Bach sonatas with myself playing modern flute. Not everyone possesses the openness and curiosity of modern repertoire and instrument collaborations that Mahan has, so it seemed to me that this would be an excellent match. As fate would have it, after becoming friends, exchanging messages and video calls during 2020, we would be paired together by the 92nd Street Y in New York to close out their Bach and Mendelssohn Festival in 2022. I like to think that our very natural musical chemistry, friendship, as well as a bit of luck, brought this project together. It remains one of the most meaningful collaborations of my musical career, and I am grateful to the universe, and the 92nd Street Y for bringing this partnership to life. It is an honor to bring these masterpieces to audiences everywhere."