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# J. S. BACH

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CONCERTO  
for Harpsichord and Strings  
für Cembalo und Streicher  
D minor/d-Moll/Ré mineur  
BWV 1052



Eulenburg

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JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

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D minor/d-Moll/Ré mineur  
BWV 1052

Edited by/Herausgegeben von  
Richard Clarke



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# PREFACE

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At the beginning of the 18th century the harpsichord had indeed already long since taken hold as a virtuoso instrument for solo works. In chamber music and concertos, though, it was still limited to the continuo function; composers evidently did not consider the rather delicate, fast-fading sound of the harpsichord capable of prevailing as soloist over an ensemble, let alone over full-voiced ripieno strings. That, conceivably, is why from about 1730 Johann Sebastian Bach initially wrote concertos for two, three and four harpsichords. With his first concerto for solo harpsichord, keyboard virtuoso Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Sebastian's second eldest son, would finally establish the piano-concerto genre in 1733. Johann Sebastian himself produced, *circa* 1738, a group of manuscripts that included altogether seven concertos for solo harpsichord (an eighth concerto breaks off after a few bars). These are the concertos in D minor (BWV 1052), E major (BWV 1053), D major (BWV 1054), A major (BWV 1055), F minor (BWV 1056), F major (BWV 1057), G minor (BWV 1058), together with the fragment in D minor (BWV 1059).

Unlike his son's harpsichord concertos, Bach's concertos for solo harpsichord – just as those for two to four harpsichords – are not original works for this scoring, but the outcome of arranging already existing works, mostly his own concertos for violin or oboe. The models for the three solo-harpsichord concertos are well known: the D major concerto BWV 1054 goes back to Bach's violin concerto in E major (BWV 1042), the G minor concerto BWV 1057, to the fourth Brandenburg concerto (BWV 1049), and the G minor concerto BWV 1058 is based on the violin concerto in A minor (BWV 1041). In the other cases the original concerto models are in fact lost, though style-critical examination of the harpsichord concertos leaves hardly any doubt that such models must have existed. What is more, Bach made use of musical material

from the concerto models in some of his church cantatas before adapting it ultimately for the harpsichord concertos.

By virtue of their less sophisticated transcription technique, and other than is suggested by their sequence in the manuscript, the two final works of the group written down *circa* 1738, the G minor concerto BWV 1058 and the D minor fragment BWV 1059, probably date from an earlier time of origin than the first six concertos. Even though he did not describe them as such, Bach considered these six works collectively as an 'opus' and characterised them accordingly: the concerto group is headed with Bach's customary inscription 'J.J.' (*Jesu juva*) and ends after the sixth concerto with 'Finis S.D.Gl.' (*Soli Deo Gloria*). Hence, the concertos BWV 1052–1057 are the only self-contained concerto collection other than the six Brandenburg concertos that Bach himself assembled.

The Concerto in D minor BWV 1052 with which Bach opened the series of his concertos for solo harpsichord probably goes back to a lost violin concerto. This is suggested by the virtuosic passages in the two outer movements tracing back to the so-called *bariolage* technique in violin playing: the rapid alternation of pitches on open and stopped (fingered) strings. Since these passages always depend on the base pitches d', a' and e" (the violin's open strings) from this it must be assumed that the original violin concerto was likewise in D minor. Musicologists were long in disagreement over whether this original concerto stemmed from Bach himself or was really by another composer. However, the view postulating none other than Bach's authorship has now gained acceptance.

The genesis period of the lost D minor violin concerto is completely obscure and can only be hypothetically ascertained. Bach could have been intensively occupied with instrumental music of larger setting during two phases of his life: from 1717 to 1723 during his tenure as

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court Kapellmeister in Köthen, where a competent ensemble was available to him and the commissioning of instrumental music was part of his official duties; and later again in Leipzig between 1729 and about 1741, when besides his occupation as Thomaskantor he also directed the bourgeois student *Collegium Musicum*. The conjecture that the model for the D minor harpsichord concerto might already have originated in the Köthen period is supported by the fact that traces of its musical material can be identified in cantatas dating from the 1720s. Material from the two first concerto movements is found in the opening sinfonia and in the first choral movement of the cantata *Wir müssen durch viel Trübsal in das Reich Gottes eingehen* (BWV 146), dating from 1726 or 1728. Used in the opening sinfonia of the cantata *Ich habe meine Zuversicht* (BWV 188) of 1728 or 1729 is the musical material from the concerto's third movement. The transcription techniques in these cantata movements are not yet sophisticated: in each case Bach has placed the violin part of the original concerto movements unaltered in the organ treble, and the organ bass is identical with the concerto's basso continuo. It is not evident that Bach had taken great pains to turn the violin part into an idiomatic solo part for the keyboard instrument. How his arranging technique gradually became more refined, can be seen by comparing this organ transcription with the later D minor concerto's virtuosic, sophisticatedly elaborated harpsichord part. In both of the outer movements most notably, Bach has transformed the solo part of the violin concerto into a harpsichord solo part totally exploiting the instrument's technical potential for playing polyphony. At the same time he respected the tonal balance between harpsichord and ripieno

strings. Three extended solos in the first movement give opportunity for presenting virtuosic passagework, and towards the end of the third movement the harpsichord is also offered scope for a veritable concerto cadenza.

Whereas most of Bach's harpsichord concertos – like a large part of his oeuvre altogether – fell virtually into oblivion after his death, the D minor concerto was rediscovered as a brilliant masterwork for pianists already early in the 19th century. One reason for this, besides the grateful keyboard writing, was probably also its characteristic style, emphatic and passionately onrushing, wholly suited to the taste of the time. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy repeatedly played it from 1832, thus, for instance, also in 1843 on the occasion of the dedication of the Bach monument at the front of the Thomaschule, Leipzig. Robert Schumann, made aware of the work through Mendelssohn's performances, described the D minor concerto as 'one of the greatest masterpieces' and took it in 1837 as the reason to advocate a 'complete collection and publication of all the works by Bach' – a plan that finally began to be realised with the inauguration of the Complete Edition of the Bach-Gesellschaft in 1851. Well before that the D minor concerto had already first appeared in print in 1838.

The music text presented here is based on the Bach-Gesellschaft Complete Edition Vol. 17, re-checked and newly-corrected (2015) with reference to the autograph MS, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, *Mus. ms. Bach P 234*.

Susanne Schaal-Gotthardt  
Translation: Margit L. McCorkle

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# VORWORT

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Das Cembalo hatte sich zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts zwar schon lange als virtuoseres Instrument für Solowerke etabliert. In der Kammermusik und in Konzerten war es dagegen noch auf die Continuo-Funktion beschränkt; Komponisten trauten dem eher zarten, schnell verhallenden Klang des Cembalos offensichtlich nicht zu, sich gegen ein Ensemble, geschweige denn gegen ein vollstimmiges Streicher-Ripieno solistisch durchsetzen zu können. Möglicherweise deshalb hat Johann Sebastian Bach ab etwa 1730 zunächst Konzerte für zwei, drei und vier Cembali geschrieben. Mit seinem ersten Konzert für ein Cembalo begründete 1733 schließlich Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Johann Sebastian Bachs zweitältester Sohn und Klaviervirtuose, die Gattung Klavierkonzert. Johann Sebastian Bach fertigte um das Jahr 1738 ein Manuskriptkonvolut an, in dem insgesamt sieben Konzerte für ein Cembalo enthalten sind (ein achttes Konzert bricht nach wenigen Takten ab). Es sind dies die Konzerte d-Moll (BWV 1052), E-Dur (BWV 1053), D-Dur (BWV 1054), A-Dur (BWV 1055), f-Moll (BWV 1056), F-Dur (BWV 1057), g-Moll (BWV 1058) sowie das Fragment d-Moll (BWV 1059).

Anders als im Falle der Cembalokonzerte seines Sohnes sind Bachs Konzerte für Cembalo – ebenso wie die für zwei bis vier Cembali – keine Originalwerke für diese Besetzung, sondern das Ergebnis von Bearbeitungen bereits bestehender, zumeist eigener Konzerte für Violine oder Oboe. Bei drei Konzerten für ein Cembalo sind die Vorlagen bekannt: Das D-Dur-Konzert BWV 1054 geht auf Bachs Violinkonzert E-Dur (BWV 1042) zurück, das g-Moll-Konzert BWV 1057 auf das 4. Brandenburgische Konzert (BWV 1049), und dem g-Moll-Konzert BWV 1058 liegt das Violinkonzert a-Moll (BWV 1041) zugrunde. In den anderen Fällen sind zwar die ursprünglichen Konzertvorlagen verschollen, doch lassen stilkritische Untersuchungen der Cembalokonzerte kaum einen Zweifel daran,

dass solche Vorlagen vorhanden gewesen sein müssen. Bach hat musikalisches Material der Konzertvorlagen überdies in einigen seiner Kirchenkantaten verwendet, bevor er sie schließlich zu den Cembalokonzerten umarbeitete.

Aufgrund ihrer weniger ausgefeilten Transkriptionstechnik und anders als es ihre Reihenfolge im Manuskript suggeriert, sind die beiden letzten Werke des um 1738 niedergeschriebenen Konvoluts, das g-Moll-Konzert BWV 1058 und das d-Moll-Fragment BWV 1059, wohl auf eine frühere Entstehungszeit zu datieren als die ersten sechs Konzerte. Diese sechs hat Bach, auch wenn er sie nicht so bezeichnete, als ein „Opus“ betrachtet und entsprechend gekennzeichnet: Die Konzertgruppe beginnt mit dem Hinweis „J.J.“ (Jesu juva) und endet nach dem sechsten Konzert mit „Finis S.D.Gl.“ (Soli Deo Gloria). Die Konzerte BWV 1052–1057 sind damit neben den sechs Brandenburgischen Konzerten die einzige von Bach selbst zusammengestellte geschlossene Konzertsammlung.

Das Konzert d-Moll BWV 1052, mit dem Bach die Reihe seiner Konzerte für ein Cembalo eröffnete, geht wohl auf ein verschollenes Violinkonzert zurück. Darauf deuten virtuose Passagen in den beiden Ecksätzen hin, die auf die sogenannte Bariolage-Technik beim Violinspiel zurückzuführen sind: den raschen Wechsel von Tönen, die gegriffen werden müssen, und Stütztönen auf der leeren Saite. Da diese Passagen jeweils auf den Stütztönen d', a' und e'' ruhen – den leeren Saiten der Violine –, ist außerdem davon auszugehen, dass das ursprüngliche Violinkonzert ebenfalls in d-Moll stand. Lange waren sich die Musikforscher nicht einig darin, ob dieses Ursprungskonzert von Bach selbst stammte oder doch von einem anderen Komponisten. Inzwischen hat sich die Überzeugung durchgesetzt, dass kein anderer Autor als Bach anzunehmen ist.

Die Entstehungszeit des verschollenen d-Moll-Violinkonzerts liegt völlig im Dunkeln