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J. S. BACH

CONCERTO

for Violin, Strings and Basso continuo
für Violine, Streicher und Basso continuo
E major/E-Dur/Mi majeur
BWV 1042



Eulenburg

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

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Edited by/Herausgegeben von
Richard Clarke



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PREFACE

The source of the concertos was the Italians [...] Two famous Lombard violinists [Antonio Vivaldi and Giuseppe Tartini] [...] especially contributed much to this. The former was lively, rich in invention, and filled almost half of the world with his concertos. Although Torelli, and after him Corelli had made a start here, he, however, next to Albinoni, put them into a better shape and made of them a good model. He has therefore also gotten credit in general for this.¹

Italian instrumental music swept across Europe at the beginning of the 18th century like a whirlwind, arriving at all music venues, the court, the church or the home. Musicians from Italy were always welcome as composers, interpreters and teachers. Colleagues from many countries made their way over the Alps to study the new sonata and concerto forms. And the published music of the works of Albinoni, Corelli, Vivaldi and others contributed to making the new style known everywhere. Johann Sebastian Bach, of course, also ‘embraced’ this craze, first acquiring the new techniques by copying works of Italian masters. These activities of the chamber musician and court organist in Weimar were spurred on by Prince Johann Ernst: the music-loving noble (and amateur composer) went to study in the Netherlands and even brought back from there in 1713 a set of the most recently-published music, probably also including Vivaldi’s famous collection *L’Estro armonico*, Op. 3, published in 1711 by the publisher Estienne Roger in Amsterdam. Bach had, though, quite possibly come in contact earlier with the music of the Italians, for there were also other avenues of marketing music in Central Germany.

Later, in his Leipzig period with the ‘Italian Concerto’, Bach paid his respects to the ‘new

taste’ through its name alone, *Concerto in the Italian Taste* (BWV 971). But his own path to the new form had already begun at a much earlier date, in Weimar, with more than 20 transcriptions of concertos for keyboard instruments (harpsichord and organ) by other masters, amongst them, Vivaldi, Torelli and Marcello. With the ‘Brandenburg Concertos’, written in fair copy in Cöthen in 1721, and the solo concertos, Bach then produced a whole series of works for one or more solo instruments and orchestra. He had in mind the violin for the concertos in A minor, E major, and the double concerto in D minor. These, however, are but the extant original works, for the harpsichord concertos (and the single movements with solo organ in the cantatas) might well be the reworkings of lost concertos for violin and other instruments (oboe, oboe d’amore, perhaps also viola). It is, therefore, not known how many concertos Bach really wrote. After taking over the Leipzig Collegium Musicum in 1729, he certainly needed ‘fodder’ for the regular performances in the Zimmermann coffee house and provided the necessary repertoire with these transcriptions. Only a few concertos, originals as well as also arrangements, have been preserved. Music research has, though, attempted to reconstruct the – putative – models of the other concertos.

Figuring out the chronology of the works has proved to be difficult, even with the great progress here of modern techniques (such as, in particular, watermark analysis of papers used). If, however, autographs are no longer extant and copies are relied on, this process is made even more difficult. Original parts are extant for the A minor violin concerto and the D minor double concerto, but not for the E major concerto BWV 1042. Extant here are merely scores copied around 1760 by the Berlin musician, Johann Friedrich Hering, and an unknown copyist; Hering prepared parts for these scores, presumably getting his model from Bach’s son Carl

¹ Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Breslau, ³1789). Reprint edited by Hans-Peter Schmitz (Kassel, Basel, etc., ⁶1978, = Documenta Musicologica, first series: facsimiled printed material, II), 294 and 309.