

Saturday, November 9, 2013, 8pm
First Congregational Church

Apollo's Fire

The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra

Jeannette Sorrell, *Music Director*

PROGRAM

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) “Brandenburg” Concerto No. 3 in G major,
BWV 1048

Allegro — Adagio — Allegro

Bach “Brandenburg” Concerto No. 5 in D major,
BWV 1050

Allegro
Affettuoso
Allegro

Jeannette Sorrell, *harpsichord*
Olivier Brault, *violin*
Kathie Stewart, *traverso*

INTERMISSION

Johann David Heinichen (1683–1789) Selections from Concerto Grosso in G major,
SeiH 213

Entrée — Loure
Menuet & L'Air à L'Italian

Heinichen Concerto Grosso in C major, SeiH 211

Allegro — Pastorell — Adagio — Allegro assai

Francis Colpron, *recorder*
Kathie Stewart, *traverso*
Debra Nagy, *oboe*
Olivier Brault, *violin*

Bach “Brandenburg” Concerto No. 4 in G major,
BWV 1049

Allegro — Andante — Presto

Olivier Brault, *violin*
Francis Colpron & Kathie Stewart, *recorders*

*The Apollo's Fire national tour of the “Brandenburg” Concertos is made possible by
a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.*

*Apollo's Fire's CDs, including the complete “Brandenburg” Concertos, are for sale in the lobby.
The artists will be on hand to sign CDs following the concert.*

Cal Performances' 2013–2014 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

A MOUNTAINTOP EXPERIENCE:
PERFORMING CONCERTOS FOR THE VIRTUOSO BANDS OF EUROPE

IN MARCH 1719, Johann Sebastian Bach, Kapellmeister to the Prince of Köthen, travelled to Berlin on an errand to purchase a two-manual harpsichord. Always on the lookout for career opportunities, he took out time while in Berlin to perform for a certain Margrave Christian Ludwig of Brandenburg. The Margrave was so delighted with Bach's playing that he commissioned Bach to write several pieces for him. Two years later, the Margrave received a beautifully bound manuscript, dedicated to him, and containing the six magnificent pieces which Bach called *Six Concerts à plusieurs d'instruments*.

We know them as the "Brandenburg" Concertos, but they were not, in fact, composed specifically for the Margrave. Rather, these are six individual pieces that Bach had written at various times for use with his orchestra at Köthen. Being a busy man and a practical one, he simply collected six concertos which represented his best work, and copied them out for the Margrave. Apparently the Margrave did not have the musical personnel necessary to perform these works; thus, he never used the score, never sent Bach a fee, and never thanked him. So much for the Margrave.

Today, it is shocking to think that Bach's miraculous "Brandenburg" Concertos could ever have been so unappreciated. But in Bach's lifetime, he was nowhere near as successful or popular a composer as his German colleagues Telemann or Heinichen—not to mention Handel. Bach spent his last 25 years as the music director for the principal churches of Leipzig—a moderately prestigious post, but not very well paid. Bach was the Town Council's fourth choice for that post. They offered it to Telemann, Graupner, and Fasch before finally settling for Bach. The records of the Leipzig Town Council contain the discouraged quote from Councillor Platz: "As the best men cannot be gotten, we must settle for the mediocre." Their "mediocre" composer Bach gave them the *St. Matthew* and *St. John* passions, among other things.

Likewise, the Prince of Köthen, for whom Bach had actually written and performed the "Brandenburgs" originally, had first offered his Kapellmeister job to someone else, before settling for Bach. His first choice was Johann David Heinichen. But Heinichen had bigger fish to fry.

Heinichen, like Handel, studied in Italy where he learned the latest musical styles. (Bach never had the opportunity to do this. Instead, he walked 250 miles on foot to study for a few weeks with the great German organist Buxtehude.) While in Venice, the young Heinichen met the Elector of Dresden, who was vacationing there as were many German princes. Dresden was a great artistic capital of Europe—second only to Venice itself. And the orchestra of the Dresden palace was famous for its virtuosity. So when the Elector offered Heinichen the post of Kapellmeister in Dresden, Heinichen jumped. But this left the door open for Bach to get the job in Köthen.

The Prince of Köthen kept a small but excellent orchestra of eight to eleven musicians. We believe that Bach composed the "Brandenburgs" for this ensemble, during his years as Kapellmeister in Köthen. The fact that he composed these concertos at different times for different occasions means that they have extremely diverse instrumentation (each one requires a different group of players). This also demonstrates that the six concertos were never intended to be performed as a set. To perform all six is impractical from the point of view of musical personnel. Moreover, the structural coherence that Bach always instilled in pieces that he composed as a set (i.e., key relationships, form, instrumentation, etc.) does not exist between the six "Brandenburgs." Rather, each one is an individual gem—a sparkling and perfectly structured entity on its own.

Music writers in the 18th century often talked about the goal of musical performance: to move the affections (moods, emotions) of the listener. The "Brandenburg" Concertos are masterful examples of this. They have proven their

extraordinary power to move, delight, and captivate audiences for 250 years. But what is it that gives them that power—that greatness that we all intuitively sense?

To start with, most of Bach's instrumentations are unique and daring. (Ten *solo* string players? Harpsichord as a solo instrument in a concerto?!) He also uses both texture and form in unprecedented ways, blending the solo concerto and group concerto (*concerto grosso*) forms. Concertos Nos. 4 and 5 feature primarily one solo instrument (violin and harpsichord, respectively), but also feature *groups* of solo instruments in contrast.

In addition, the contrapuntal complexity of Bach's compositional textures (far exceeding the concertos of Vivaldi) is surely one of the qualities that makes us feel we hear something new and different each time we listen. He also achieves extraordinary textural variety: for example, the slow movement of No. 4 is a poetic and rhetorical dialogue between the trio of soloists and the full ensemble. By contrast, the slow movement of No. 5 take us into a chamber music environment, where the pool of light centers on the three soloists alone; here, the music unfolds with haunting, expressive individuality and a timeless sense of measured order.

Above all, there is a sense of exhilaration that all of us feel from performing the "Brandenburgs." Some of that is due to sheer virtuosity: the featured solo instrument(s) in each piece requires a level of virtuosity that is literally *athletic*. For example, there is that exuberant celebration of democracy in music: the Concerto No. 3, where each individual string player is an equal soloist. Designed to showcase the virtuoso musicians of the Köthen orchestra, the piece remains a thrilling workout for any ensemble today. Bach composed two substantial movements for this concerto, leaving the players to improvise a transitional second movement, for which he provided only two chords.

Concerto No. 4 features revolutionary pyrotechnics for the violin, and the recorder parts are rather devilish as well. The triumphant counterpoint of the finale proves once and for all that that fugal writing can be *fun*.

Concerto No. 5 requires from the harpsichordist a level of speed in the scalar passages that far exceeds anything else in the repertoire. One has to train for this piece the same way one trains for an athletic event. Also, the unusual role of the harpsichord in this Concerto—starting off playing basso continuo (*easy*), then playing solo melodies in dialogue with the flute and violin (*moderately difficult*), then getting carried away into virtuoso scales (*very difficult*), and finally leaving the others in the dust as one contemplates the universe in a huge solo cadenza (*mountaintop experience*)—makes this piece a unique emotional experience each time one plays it.

What makes the "Brandenburgs" so great, in the end, is best understood through Bach's words as a teacher of how to play basso continuo: "The aim and reason of the basso continuo, *as of all music*, should be none else but the glory of God and the refreshing of the mind."

Heinichen's concertos for Dresden are fascinating counterparts to the "Brandenburgs." Like the "Brandenburgs," Heinichen's pieces are showcases for individual stars of the ensemble and groups of soloists as well. The Dresden orchestra, for whom Heinichen was writing, was larger than Bach's ensemble in Köthen. Heinichen's pieces sometimes include up to five soloists, and often consist of suites featuring different soloists in each movement. His writing shows great variety, and each of his concertos is individually crafted, containing three, four or five movements. Heinichen builds up thematic material in the Allegro movements from a succession of tiny, contrasting motives—a technique later used by Haydn and Beethoven. His slow movements show colorful imagination in the use of texture and instrumentation. Rather than the sense of uplifting spirituality that rings through Bach's music, Heinichen seems to enjoy musical jokes and the fun of playing together. As such, his pieces make a wonderful complement to an evening of "Brandenburgs."

Jeannette Sorrell
Cleveland, 2013

APOLLO'S FIRE

THE CLEVELAND BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Jeannette Sorrell, *Music Director*

VIOLIN

Olivier Brault, *concermaster*
 Andrew Fouts, *principal*
 Evan Few
 Adriane Post
 Emi Tanabe
 Beth Wenstrom

VIOLA

Karina Schmitz, *principal*
 Kristen Linfante
 Adriane Post*

CELLO

René Schiffer
 Mimé Y. Brinkmann
 David Ellis

BASS

Sue Yelanjian

TRAVERSO & RECORDER

Francis Colpron, *principal recorder*
 Kathie Stewart, *principal traverso*

OBOE

Debra Nagy

HARPSICHORD

Jeannette Sorrell

* "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 3 only



Photos by Roger Mastrorossi

Named for the classical god of music and the sun, **Apollo's Fire: The Cleveland Baroque Orchestra** was founded in 1992 by the award-winning young harpsichordist and conductor Jeannette Sorrell. Ms. Sorrell envisioned an ensemble 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 Ms. Sorrell's passion for drama and rhetoric.

Hailed as "one of the pre-eminent period-instrument ensembles" (*The Independent*, London), Apollo's Fire made its London debut in 2010 in a sold-out concert at Wigmore Hall, with BBC broadcasting. Apollo's Fire returned to Europe in fall 2011, as part of a major international tour with French countertenor Philippe Jaroussky. The ensemble was met with standing ovations in Madrid, Bordeaux, Lisbon, Metz, Boston, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Berkeley.

Apollo's Fire has also toured throughout North America, appearing at the Aspen Music Festival, the Boston Early Music Festival, the

Library of Congress, the Tropical Baroque Festival in Miami, and the Ojai Music Festival in California. In 2010, the ensemble performed the Monteverdi Vespers in an eleven-concert national tour. At home in Cleveland, Apollo's Fire enjoys sold-out performances at its subscription series, which has drawn national attention for creative programming. Upcoming U.S. projects next season include tours of the Monteverdi Vespers and of Ms. Sorrell's acclaimed crossover program *Sacrum Mysterium: A Celtic Christmas Vespers*.

Apollo's Fire has released 20 commercial CDs, and currently records for the British label Avie. Since the ensemble's introduction into the European CD market in 2010, Apollo's Fire's recordings have won rave reviews in the London press. Four of the ensemble's CD releases have become bestsellers on the classical *Billboard* chart: the Monteverdi Vespers, Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos, and Ms. Sorrell's two crossover programs, *Come to the River: An Early American Gathering* and *Sacrum Mysterium*.



Jeannette Sorrell (*conductor & harpsichord*) has quickly gained international attention as a leading creative voice among the new generation of early-music conductors. She has been credited by the United Kingdom's *BBC*

Music Magazine for forging "a vibrant, life-affirming approach to the re-making of early music...a seductive vision of musical authenticity."

One of the youngest students ever accepted to the prestigious conducting courses of the Aspen and the Tanglewood festivals, Ms. Sorrell studied conducting under Robert Spano, Roger Norrington, and Leonard Bernstein, as well as harpsichord with Gustav Leonhardt in Amsterdam. She won both First Prize and Audience Choice Award in the 1991 Spivey International Harpsichord Competition, competing against over 70 harpsichordists from Europe, Israel, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

Ms. Sorrell founded Apollo's Fire in 1992. Since then, she and the ensemble have built one of the largest audiences of any baroque orchestra in North America. She has led Apollo's Fire in sold-out concerts at London's Wigmore Hall, Madrid's Teatro Real, the Grand Théâtre de l'Opéra in Bordeaux, the Boston Early Music Festival, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and the Aspen Music Festival, among others.

Ms. Sorrell made her debut with the Pittsburgh Symphony in 2013 as conductor and soloist in the complete "Brandenburg" Concertos. Upcoming conducting engagements include the Seattle Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and Omaha Symphony. She has also conducted the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis with the St. Louis Symphony, and the Grand Rapids Symphony (conductor and soloist), and has appeared as guest keyboard artist with the Cleveland Orchestra.

Ms. Sorrell and Apollo's Fire have released 20 commercial CDs, of which four have been bestsellers on the *Billboard* classical chart. Her recordings include the complete "Brandenburg" and harpsichord concertos of Bach (with Ms. Sorrell as harpsichord soloist and director). She has also released four discs of Mozart. Her other recordings include Handel's *Messiah* and the Monteverdi Vespers.

Ms. Sorrell has attracted national attention and awards for creative programming. She holds an honorary doctorate from Case Western University, two special awards from the National Endowment for the Arts for her work on early American music, and awards from the Cambridge Society of Early Music and the American Musicological Society. Passionate about guiding the next generation of performers, Ms. Sorrell has led many baroque projects for students at Oberlin Conservatory and the Cleveland Institute of Music.

OBLIGATO SOLOISTS

Olivier Brault (*concertmaster*) brings his communicative enthusiasm and historical scholarship to concerts throughout Canada, Europe, and the United States. A native of Montréal, he performs as soloist with many Canadian ensembles, including Ensemble Caprice, Les Boréades, and the Quatuor Franz Joseph. He joined Apollo's Fire in 2010. Also an accomplished baroque dancer, he holds a doctorate from the Université de Montréal, where he specialized in 18th-century French violin repertoire. He is the recipient of the medal of the Assemblée Nationale du Québec for his cultural contributions to his nation. He can be heard on many award-winning recordings on the Atma and Analekta labels.

Francis Colpron (*recorder*) is recognized as one of the most talented instrumentalists of his generation. His capacities for artistic and interpretative innovation have been acclaimed by the public, critics, and cultural authorities alike. In 1991, he founded the ensemble Les Boréades de Montréal, of which he serves as artistic director. This ensemble has recorded many albums on the Atma label, in addition to achieving great success locally with their concert series in Montréal and internationally across North America and Europe.

Debra Nagy (*oboe*) regularly performs with period instrument ensembles across the United States, and is the founder of the Cleveland-based ensemble Les Délices, whose debut CD was named "One of the Top Ten Early Music Discoveries of 2009" by NPR's *Harmonia*. A lecturer in the early music program at Case Western Reserve University, she was recently awarded a 2010 Creative Workforce Fellowship.

Kathie Stewart (*traverso & recorder*) is one of the leading baroque flutists of North America, and is a founding member of Apollo's Fire. She teaches baroque flute at Oberlin Conservatory, and holds a Master's in flute performance from the Mannes School of Music. She has performed

as guest musician with the Cleveland Orchestra, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, and Cleveland Opera. She is also an accomplished performer on Irish and folk flutes, and is featured on Apollo's Fire's bestselling recording *Come to the River*, as well as the "Brandenburgs" and a disc of Telemann concertos.