

# Santa Fe CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

51<sup>ST</sup> SEASON

Saturday  
5 p.m.

JULY 27

St. Francis Auditorium in the  
New Mexico Museum of Art

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM by Eric Bromberger

### JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

*Concerto in C Minor for Oboe and Violin,  
BWV 1060 (ca. 1736)*

It's a painful fact that a number of works by Bach have been lost. During his lifetime, Bach was famed as a virtuoso organist rather than as a composer, so the great part of his work was in manuscript when he died. His manuscripts went to his widow and two of his sons. Anna Magdalena and Carl Philipp Emanuel took good care of the ones in their possession, but Wilhelm Friedemann, often financially pressed, sold many of the ones he had for quick cash. Some probably remain in cellars and attics, waiting to be discovered, but others have doubtless disappeared forever.

The Concerto for Oboe and Violin is a reconstruction of a lost manuscript. In 1729, Bach became the director of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum—a small orchestra made up of professional, amateur, and student musicians that gave weekly concerts—and he needed music for the orchestra to perform. From this period comes Bach's Concerto in D Minor for Two Harpsichords, which he probably presented at the orchestra's Wednesday evening and Friday night concerts. But research has suggested that the two-harpsichord concerto was in fact Bach's own recycled version of a concerto he'd written several years earlier for oboe and violin. The version performed on this evening's program represents an attempt to recreate the original.

The vigorous *Allegro* opens with a surging tutti that returns throughout the movement, which makes effective use of echo effects, usually through the oboe imitating the orchestra's phrases. By contrast, the *Adagio* is graceful,

elegant music. Longest of the three movements, it's essentially a duet for the two soloists with only the barest of orchestral accompaniment. Bach's long melodic line flows easily between the oboe and violin before the end of the movement brings a surprise: the music suddenly modulates into radiant G Major at the cadence.

Many of Bach's final movements are graceful dance movements, but here the concluding *Allegro* doesn't dance—it stomps. The return to C Minor sounds suddenly fierce, and the powerful opening figure is spit out by the whole orchestra, with the soloists soon taking it up themselves. As the movement develops, elaborate violin sextuplets swirl above the oboe line, and the movement concludes on the vigorous theme with which it began.

### CARL PHILIPP EMANUEL BACH (1714–88)

*Flute Concerto in D Minor, H. 484.1, Wq. 22 (1747)*

Johann Sebastian Bach wanted his sons to have educational experiences and opportunities he never had growing up. While he gave his second son, Carl Philipp Emanuel, a thorough musical training, he also sent him to Leipzig University and the University of Frankfurt an der Oder to study law. But the lure of music proved too strong for Emanuel: Despite spending seven years in university study, he walked away from that training to devote himself to the keyboard and to composition. In 1740, he was named court harpsichordist to Frederick the Great, an accomplished amateur flute player, and Emanuel spent the next 27 years in Berlin and Potsdam in service to him.

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The Flute Concerto in D Minor heard on this evening's program dates from around 1747, when Emanuel was 33 years old. The German artist Adolph Menzel (1815–1905) did a famous painting depicting one of the elegant musical evenings at Frederick's court, complete with glittering chandeliers, uniformed courtiers, and an attentive crowd as Frederick plays the flute and Emanuel accompanies him on the keyboard. Perhaps the king himself played the Concerto in D Minor at one of those musical evenings—although to the conservative tastes of Frederick and his other court composers, the dramatic character of this music would have seemed extravagant and even alien. Not surprisingly, Emanuel chafed under such conditions. In an oft-quoted remark, he once said: "It seems to me that music should, above all things, touch the heart, since a musician cannot move others unless he himself is moved." It was therefore with some relief that he left Frederick's service at age 53 to become music director of the city of Hamburg, where he spent the rest of his life.

There's evidence that this Flute Concerto may be an arrangement of an earlier work for keyboard, but it certainly sounds idiomatic enough in the flute version. The fiery *Allegro*—it seems to bristle with energy and sharp contrasts—opens with a vigorous rising theme that recurs throughout the movement, and the flute makes its entrance with this same figure.

The second movement, marked *Un poco andante*, sings with a graceful, even romantic intensity. After a long orchestral introduction, the flute takes up the orchestra's subject and extends this melodic line; the soloist has the opportunity for a cadenza near the close.

Above vigorous accompaniment, first violins launch the stormy *Allegro di molto*, with the flute quickly engaging this same material. This movement is in constant motion, right up to its unexpectedly sudden conclusion.

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**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)**  
*Keyboard Concerto in E Major, BWV 1053*  
(ca. 1738–39)

In April 1729, shortly after leading performances of his monumental *St. Matthew Passion*, Bach made a significant change in his musical life. After serving for six exhausting years as the cantor

for the Thomaskirche (St. Thomas Church) in Leipzig—where he composed cantatas, oratorios, and passions for religious observances—Bach became the director of an orchestra called the Leipzig Collegium Musicum. During the warm months, the orchestra gave public concerts on Wednesdays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. in a coffee garden called Grimmisches Thor, and in the winter they played on Fridays from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. inside Zimmermann's coffee house.

As the orchestra's director, Bach was responsible for choosing the music it performed, and he quickly discovered that he needed new keyboard concertos, probably for his talented sons Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel to perform with the orchestra. He turned to his library and recycled eight concertos he'd written much earlier—often for other instruments—by arranging them as keyboard concertos. These concertos had been composed during Bach's years as kapellmeister in Cöthen (1717–23), and some may actually date from his time in Weimar (1708–17). In 1738 and 1739, Bach carefully prepared manuscripts for seven of these keyboard concertos, so they exist today in accurate texts—although it's not always possible to determine the exact instruments for which they were originally composed.

Evidence suggests that the Concerto in E Major may have been transcribed from an early oboe concerto. The key of E Major was one that Mozart didn't seem to find particularly congenial (he wrote only one work in that key), but Bach seemed to feel differently, as he used it to produce such bright, sunny music as his Second Violin Concerto and Third Partita for Solo Violin.

This keyboard concerto partakes of that same sunny spirit. Its opening *Allegro* bursts to life with a great rush of ebullient energy, and the bright spirits of that ritornello sustain the entire movement. It's a feature of this nonstop energy that the soloist plays throughout the movement.

Bach then moves to the relative-minor key—C-sharp Minor—for the central slow movement, and, after the glistening first movement, this *Siciliano* sounds particularly somber. Bach preserves the swaying dotted rhythms of that old dance form (its title suggests its place of origin) and has the violins announce the main idea as the soloist accompanies. Gradually, the soloist assumes the central role and the strings do the accompanying.

The concluding *Allegro* returns to the key and manner of the opening movement. Set in a quick 3/8 time, this movement spins off energy and dances the concerto to its spirited close.

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**ERIC BROMBERGER** earned his doctorate in American literature at UCLA and for 10 years taught literature and writing courses at Bates College and San Diego State University. Then he quit teaching to devote himself to his first love, music. Bromberger, a violinist, writes program notes for the San Diego Symphony, the La Jolla Music Society, San Francisco Performances, the University of Chicago Presents, Washington Performing Arts at The Kennedy Center, and many other organizations. He was a pre-concert lecturer for the Los Angeles Philharmonic for more than 20 seasons.

