



CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 15798

Bach

Flute Sonatas **vol.1**

Ashley Solomon *traverso*

Terence Charlston *harpsichord*

J.S. Bach (1685-1750) Flute Sonatas vol.1

Ashley Solomon, traverso
Terry Charlston, harpsichord

Sonata in C major BWV 1033

1	Andante-Presto	1.23
2	Allegro	2.22
3	Adagio	1.45
4	Menuett 1 & 2	2.47

Partita in a minor BWV 1013

5	Allemande	4.19
6	Corrente	4.12
7	Sarabande	5.56
8	Bourrée Angloise	2.55

Sonata in e minor BWV 1034

9	Adagio ma non tanto	3.10
10	Allegro	2.38
11	Andante	3.54
12	Allegro	4.29

Sonata in E major BWV 1035

13	Adagio ma non tanto	2.41
14	Allegro	3.08
15	Siciliano	3.14
16	Allegro assai	3.03

Sonata in b minor BWV 1030

17	Andante	8.15
18	Largo e dolce	3.45
19	Presto	5.37
Total time 70.35		



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Recording date: September 1998, September 1999

Flute: Rod Cameron (1997) after J Denner

Harpsichord: Andrew Garlick (1998) double manual after Ruckers



photo: Hanya Chlala

Ashley Solomon has performed as a soloist throughout Europe, the Americas, the Far East and Australia. He has recorded numerous programmes for radio and since 1993 has recorded for the Dutch company Channel Classics with Florilegium, the chamber ensemble that he co-founded in 1991.

Born in 1968, Ashley won a recorder and flute scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in 1986. He gained a first class honours music degree in 1989, and the Diploma of Advanced Studies in 1991, the same year that he won first prize in the Moeck International Recorder Competition. The majority of his time is spent performing with Florilegium, who have now made ten recordings for Channel Classics and have performed at many major music festivals throughout the world, as well as being Ensemble in Residence at the Wigmore Hall in London since 1998.

Ashley is a frequent guest principal flautist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra when they perform on classical instruments, and in 1998 he was made an Honorary Associate of the Royal Academy of Music. Since 1994 has held the position of professor at the Royal College of Music. He was made an Honorary RCM in 2000.



photo: Sarah Tunkel

Terence Charlston was born in Lancashire, England, and studied the piano, organ and harpsichord in Oxford and London. He pursues a busy career, especially in the field of baroque chamber music, and he performs regularly with some of Britain's leading ensembles including Florilegium. He has been a member of London Baroque since 1995.

He is professor of harpsichord and basso continuo at the Royal Academy of Music where, as Head of Early Music (1995-7), he innovated the new Historical Performance Practice course. He also teaches at the Neuberg Oesterwoche fur Alte Musik.



photo: Sarah Tunkel

BACH FLUTE SONATAS - A Personal View

Much has been written about JS Bach's flute sonatas in the past, with opinions from numerous scholars casting doubts on the authenticity of a number of these works. In selecting the sonatas for this first recording, I was keen to choose those that would give the listener the opportunity to hear the most varied collection of compositions within Bach's flute sonata style. In so doing, I have included at least one work which scholars of Bach have not been able to prove was definitely by him.

Three of the sonatas on this recording use the harpsichord in a continuo, or accompanying, role. This is not to say that it is in any way subservient to the flute. It supports and often initiates the numerous complicated key progressions with which Bach experiments throughout his flute compositions. Next, there is the unaccompanied flute work composed in 1718 probably for the French flautist Pierre Gabriel Buffardin. Unlike the repertoire for cello and violin, where Bach wrote a collection of six solo sonatas or partitas, his works for solo flute are limited to this single partita. The final work on this disc is the great sonata in b minor for flute and obbligato harpsichord (BWV 1030), which is possibly his most impressive work for the flute. The first movement is the longest sonata movement Bach ever composed and it is difficult to find anything comparable among any of his instrumental sonatas.

It is in the first piece on this recording, however, where scholars still need to reach a consensus over the origins of the work. The sonata in C major BWV 1033 was probably composed while Bach was in Cöthen and might even have been conceived as a piece for solo flute. In performance, the work almost convinces as an unaccompa-

nied sonata and yet it has the unusual feature of having an obbligato harpsichord part written out for the first Menuett. This is particularly noteworthy as the rest of the sonata clearly uses the harpsichord in a continuo role. In fact there are no other examples of Bach using this feature in his continuo flute sonatas. The first movement is also quite unusual in the way it contains two sections: the Andante and Presto. The Presto begins immediately as the Andante ends and the flute becomes increasingly virtuosic as this section unfolds, while the bass sustains a tonic pedal right up until the final cadence of the Presto - nearly sixteen bars later!

The Partita in a minor BWV 1013, as mentioned earlier, is Bach's only work for unaccompanied flute, and is probably his earliest work for the instrument. It has several peculiarities, which call into question its authenticity for the flute. With Bach's undoubted knowledge of the instrument, it seems rather unusual that he would have composed the first two movements (Allemande and Corrente) with no natural pauses or breathing spaces essential for flute music. The second peculiarity is the frequent use of arpeggio figures that appear in both these movements, surely a technique more appropriate to a keyboard or string instrument? The final feature worth noting is that it is only in four movements, compared to the standard of between five and seven dance movements in Bach's cello suites and violin partitas. However, on listening to the flute partita I do not believe that the work is incomplete in any way, and it remains one of the greatest challenges in the baroque flautist's repertoire.

The two sonatas for flute and continuo harpsichord in e minor (BWV 1034) and E major (BWV 1035) could not be more different. Although there is no manuscript in Bach's hand for either of these sonatas we are able to approximate dates for both

works. The e minor sonata was probably composed around 1724 in Leipzig, whilst the E major sonata was a much later work, dating from Bach's first visit to see his son Carl Phillip Emmanuel whilst he was in the service of Frederick the Great, and can be dated to around 1741.

The e minor sonata has always been one of my favourites, written in a key well suited to the baroque flute. The technical challenges and virtuosic fast passagework in the two fast movements show the instrument off to its full potential, whilst the large scale opening movement and lyrical Andante compliment the two Allegros. The E major sonata whilst also containing four movements is much more galante in style, and the challenges are quite different. The key of E major is not the most suitable for the one-keyed baroque flute (an instrument based around D major). The work is much lighter in temperament, with its highly decorated opening Adagio and delightfully noble Siciliana, framed by two light-hearted Allegros.

The final sonata in b minor is the longest work Bach composed for the flute. It is more than twice the length of the opening sonata in C major and is the only work on this recording to have survived in a manuscript in Bach's hand. The work dates from around 1736 and its first movement is the most chromatic of all his works for flute. The key of b minor suggests melancholy and displeasing (according to Mattheson 1713), and these emotions are clearly felt throughout the opening Andante. The Largo in D major helps to release the tension and melancholy whilst the final Presto fugue gives way to a Gigue (unusually in 12/16) full of syncopation and discordant intervals.

I chose to make this recording using a copy of a flute made by J Denner. This would have been in use at about the time of the earliest work, the Partita. The particular copy that I have works most favourably at a = 392, a full tone below modern concert pitch, and the dark tone and colour at this pitch is complimented by the strong, rich bass of the Ruckers (copy) harpsichord also heard on this recording. We hope that you agree that the flute and harpsichord tones are balanced well enough not to require the addition of a bowed bass line to the continuo.

Ashley Solomon

COLOPHON

Production

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Recording engineer, editing

Photo cover

Cover design

Liner notes

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St Mary's church, Weston, Hitchin, UK

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Instruments

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