



VIVALDI

Concertos for the Emperor

The English Concert

ANDREW MANZE

Acknowledgments

Front cover: *Sbrove Tuesday festival in Saint Mark's Square*, by Gabriele Bella (1733–99), Venice, Italy / The Art Archive / Querini Stampalia Foundation Venice / Dagli Orti
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Performing editions for this recording were prepared from existing sources by Andrew Manze.

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PRODUCTION USA



ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741)
Concertos for the Emperor

Concerto no. 2 in C major RV 189 16:59

- 1. I Larghetto – Allegro non molto 5:58
- 2. II Largo 4:38
- 3. III Allegro molto (*cadenza by A.M.*) 6:24

Concerto no. 10, *L'amoroso*, in E major RV 271 11:25

- 4. I Allegro 4:38
- 5. II Cantabile 2:55
- 6. III Allegro 3:51

Concerto no. 3 in C minor RV 202 13:03
(later published as Op.11 no.5)

- 7. I Allegro non molto 5:32
- 8. II Largo 3:01
- 9. III Allegro non molto 4:30

Concerto no. 7 in C major RV 183 9:26

- 10. I Allegro non molto 4:07
- 11. II Largo 2:37
- 12. III Allegro 2:42

Concerto no. 11, *Il favorito*, in E minor RV 277 13:12
(later published as Op.11 no.2)

- 13. I Allegro 4:22
- 14. II Andante 4:07
- 15. III Allegro 4:43

Concerto no. 4 in F major RV 286 14:24
(also known as Concerto per la solennità di San Lorenzo)

- 16. I Largo molto e spiccato 5:55
- 17. II Largo (*cadenza by A.M.*) 3:44
- 18. III Allegro non molto 4:45

The English Concert
Andrew Manze *director*

ANTONIO VIVALDI (1678–1741)

Concertos for the Emperor

IN SEPTEMBER 1728, the Habsburg ruler Charles VI, Archduke of Austria, King of Germany, Hungary, Bohemia and Spain, Holy Roman Emperor *etc etc*, travelled to the Duchy of Carniola in order to inspect the port of Trieste. Antonio Vivaldi made the eighty-mile journey northeast of Venice to attend on him. It is not known whether the two men had met before, although the previous year Vivaldi had dedicated his twelve concertos Op.9, entitled *La cetra* (The Lyre), to Charles, suggesting they probably had met or at least corresponded. This encounter seems to have been the highlight of an otherwise disappointing trip for the Emperor, judging by two letters which survive from a Venetian Abbé, Antonio Conti, to a French lady, Mme de Caylus. On 23 September Conti wrote, 'the Emperor is not too happy with his Trieste. . . . He has spent a lot of time discussing music with Vivaldi. It is said that he has spoken with him more in two weeks than he has with his own ministers in two years. . . . His appetite for music is very strong.' And in another letter Conti wrote, 'the Emperor has given Vivaldi a large amount of money together with a chain and gold medallion.'

Cash and baubles were no doubt welcome to Vivaldi but probably not the reward he was hoping for: to become one of Charles's court composers. Of all the arts, the Emperor favoured music in particular. Like his grandfather, Ferdinand III, and father, Leopold I, Charles was an able composer, mainly of church music, and a generous patron. He funded the publication of *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725), one of the most influential works of western music theory by his composition teacher and *Kapellmeister*, Johann Joseph Fux, and he was skilled enough as a performer to direct performances of operas by Fux and the vice *Kapellmeister* Antonio Caldara. Charles maintained the Habsburg tradition of employing Italian artists at court, and Venetians in particular. As well as Caldara, Marc Antonio Ziani, Fux's predecessor as *Kapellmeister*, was from Venice, as were Sebastiano Ricci and Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini, who painted altarpieces for the Emperor's new *Karlskirche*, and the court poets Apostolo Zeno and Pietro Metastasio. Vivaldi no doubt

had high hopes that he might join his countrymen in Vienna, perhaps with a dual role as player and composer, such as that of Francesco Bartolomeo Conti. Conti, no relation to the letter writer above, was for many years the principal theorbo player as well as court composer. Holding two posts meant receiving two stipends, which raised Conti's income higher than that of Fux himself. It was not to be, however. Perhaps Vivaldi's compositional style was too modern for the Emperor's—or Fux's—conservative tastes. When a new court composer was appointed a few years later, Matteo Palotta was chosen, a master of the *stile antico*. This was the 'old style' of Palestrina, 'the brightest light in Music, whose memory I shall never cease to honour with the greatest reverence' (Fux, *Gradus*).

During their 1728 encounter, Vivaldi presented Charles not with a printed copy of the previous year's Op.9, as one might expect, but with a manuscript set of parts of twelve concertos also entitled *La cetra*. This now resides, unfortunately without its solo first violin part, in the Austrian National Library in Vienna. It lay there undisturbed for two and a half centuries and was assumed to contain the same music as Op.9. Not until the 1970s did the musicologist Michael Talbot inspect the manuscript to discover that, but for one concerto (B minor, RV 580), the two versions of *La Cetra* are completely different. This recording presents, together for the first time, the six concertos which can be reconstructed from alternative sources.

Why there are two versions of *La cetra* will probably always remain a mystery. Did Vivaldi not have a copy of Op.9 to give to Charles? If so, perhaps there was a problem between the composer and his publisher, Michel-Charles Le Cène of Amsterdam. Le Cène certainly made it clear on the title page of Op.9 that he had paid for the edition himself. Was Vivaldi guilty of pocketing imperial money that should have gone to Amsterdam? Or did Vivaldi assemble a special set of concertos that would please a connoisseur like Charles but not necessarily appeal to the general public buying Op.9? Vivaldi was often more daring and experimental when writing concertos which were not to be published. Printed music at that time was less an

outlet for artistic self-expression or exploration than it was a commercial venture. Music written in an unfamiliar idiom, or requiring enormous technical skill, simply would not sell. As if to support this generalization, two of the bravest, most innovative concertos on this disc, RV 202 and 277, were later published as part of Op.11 (1729). This set was, and still is, Vivaldi's least popular. One authority on Venetian instrumental music even described it as 'inconsequential,' an extraordinary dismissal of some of Vivaldi's finest, most passionate music.

RV 277 is subtitled *Il favorito*, though we do not know by whom. Charles himself perhaps? The same applies to RV 271, *L'Amoroso*, whose title and nature suggested to us a different performing style. We chose to omit the harpsichord and have a baroque guitar, the lover's instrument, playing continuo. Also, we muted the whole orchestra, an effect Vivaldi occasionally called for in certain especially sensitive concertos (such as *Il riposo*, RV 270). The mutes were specially made from lead by William Thorp. Sources for RV 286 describe it as *per la solennità di San Lorenzo*, 'for St Laurence's day.' The endless chiming of the second violins throughout the third movement is thought by some to represent bells, perhaps those of the San Lorenzo convent in Venice, not far from the *Ospedale della Pietà* where Vivaldi worked.

Although the two remaining concertos share the key of C major, they could not be more different. RV 183 is perhaps the most Vivaldian of them all, with bright, compact outer movements and a *Largo* that is harmonically unsettled by constantly interrupted cadences. RV 189 overflows with melodies, unique harmonies (for Vivaldi) and unexpected turns. The triumphant scales of the opening immediately give way to a mysterious second idea in the minor. Major and minor then tug at one another throughout the piece. The second movement, in C minor, is similar to the opening *Allegro* of the Cello concerto, RV 401, although it is without question more poignant as a *Largo*, with the soloist floating high above a minimal accompaniment of violins and violas. The *Allegro molto* is one of Vivaldi's most abandoned movements. Melodies come and go,

and just at the moment when most concertos recapitulate their opening material Vivaldi playfully quotes the soloist's first phrase from the third movement of *L'amoroso* twice, first in the major, then the minor (at 3:39).

This recording includes two improvised cadenzas and improvised ornaments in all the slow movements apart from that of RV 277, which is already sufficiently adorned by the composer. The art of improvising was a highly developed and important part of concerto playing in Vivaldi day, although few violinists today, even 'historically informed' ones, seem interested in this vital element of performance practice. Vivaldi's improvisations, some of which were notated and survive today, are striking for their virtuosity and rhythmic freedom. They bear out the famous eyewitness account of the diarist Johann Friedrich Armand von Uffenbach in 1715:

...towards the end, Vivaldi played a solo wonderfully well, adding a cadenza which really frightened me. It is impossible that anybody has ever played, or ever will play, in such a way. His fingers were so close to the bridge that there was not the width of a straw left for the bow, and he did this across all four strings at incredible speed.

— ANDREW MANZE



Andrew Manze *violin & director*

Andrew Manze is “a violinist with extraordinary flair and improvisatory freedom” (*BBC Music Magazine*), “the first modern superstar of the baroque violin” (*San Francisco Examiner*).

As a player, he specializes in repertoire from 1610 to 1830; as a conductor, he is much in demand among both period- and modern-instrument orchestras around the world. He also teaches, edits music, contributes articles to numerous periodicals, and broadcasts regularly on radio and television. He is a presenter on BBC Radio's new Early Music Show.

A Cambridge Classicist by training, Andrew Manze studied the violin with Simon Standage and Marie Leonhardt. He was Associate Director of The Academy of Ancient Music from 1996 to 2003, and succeeded Trevor Pinnock as Artistic Director of **The English Concert** in July of that year. He is also Artist-in-residence at the Swedish Chamber Orchestra. In his new role at The English Concert, Andrew will move into Classical repertoire, including Mozart's violin concertos, orchestral works and reorchestrations of Handel's oratorios, while continuing to perform baroque repertoire. 2003 saw his debut tour of the UK with The English Concert, a televised concert at the London Proms and a filmed reconstruction of Handel's *Water Music* on the River Thames for the BBC. In their first prize-winning recording together, Manze led The English Concert in a dazzling Mozart program, including *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (HMU 907280).

Andrew Manze is also active as a guest conductor in large-scale oratorio and symphonic repertoire, with symphony, chamber and period-instrument orchestras in Europe, the US and Australia. He is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music and a Visiting Professor at the Royal College of Music, London; his cadenzas to Mozart's violin concertos were recently published by Breitkopf & Härtel.

Manze records exclusively for **harmonia mundi usa** and has released an astonishing variety of CDs. Recordings made with the trio Romanesca (Biber, Schmelzer, Vivaldi), The Academy of Ancient Music (including Bach violin concertos, Geminiani and Handel concerti grossi), and as a soloist (Telemann, Tartini), have garnered many international prizes: the *Gramophone*, *Edison* and *Cannes Classical Awards*, the *Premio Internazionale del Disco Antonio Vivaldi* and the *Diapason d'Or*—each of them twice. Since 1984 his collaboration with Richard Egarr has been setting new standards. Their discography includes sonatas by Rebel and Bach (both awarded the *Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik*) and Pandolfi's complete Violin Sonatas (*Gramophone Award*, 2000). Their recording of the complete Violin Sonatas of Handel was nominated for a 2003 GRAMMY® Award, and figured in the US *Billboard*® Chart. Their previous release, Corelli's Sonatas Op.5, has received unanimous rave reviews, was *Gramophone's Recording of the Month* and won the 2003 *Prix Caecilia*. Their next release will be of Mozart sonatas.

VIOLIN I

Andrew Manze *Joseph Gagliano, 1782*
Miles Golding *A. Mariani, c. 1660*
Graham Cracknell *Joseph Gagliano, c. 1760*
Rodolfo Richter *Andrea Guarneri, 1674*
Stephen Jones *Rowland Ross, 1981,
after Stradivarius*

VIOLIN II

Walter Reiter *Mathias Klotz, 1727*
Ulrike Engel *Antonio Gragnani, 1776*
William Thorp *English, mid-18th c.*
Fiona Huggett *Chris Johnson, 1999,
after Guarneri del Gesù*

VIOLA

Trevor Jones *Rowland Ross, 1977*
Ylvali Zilliacus *François Le Jeune, 1765*

VIOLONCELLO

Jane Coe *Rottenburgh, 1753*
Timothy Kraemer *John Barrett, 1743*

DOUBLE BASS

Peter McCarthy *Italian, c. 1630, Brescia region*

CONTINUO

William Carter *Archlute: Klaus Jacobsen, 1998*
Baroque guitar: Martin Haycock, 1990
Theorbo: Klaus Jacobsen, 2001
David Gordon *Harpichord: Ransom & Hammett, 1991,
after Carolus Grimaldi, c. 1700*
Temperament: $\frac{1}{2}$ comma meantone
Pitch: A = 415

The English Concert

ANDREW MANZE *director*

“The best of London’s authentic chamber orchestras”

– The Sunday Times, London

Andrew Manze’s leadership of **The English Concert** was launched in 2003 with a special appearance at the BBC Proms in London and the release of a new Mozart recording, *Night Music*, for **harmonia mundi usa** (HMU 907280). BBC Music Magazine wrote, “I can’t remember another performance... that can match these for freshness, exhilaration and sheer fun.”

The English Concert was founded by Trevor Pinnock in 1973 and is among the world’s leading early music ensembles. Under Andrew Manze’s direction, the orchestra has added annual appearances in the USA to its worldwide touring schedule and is expanding its recording plans with **harmonia mundi usa**.

*“Their recordings of the 17th- and 18th-century repertory
have indelibly shaped the way we listen to this music”*

– Chicago Tribune

