



Johann
STAMITZ
Symphonies, Op. 3
Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6

Musica Viva Moscow Chamber Orchestra
Alexander Rudin

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STAMITZ
(1717–1757)

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Symphony in G major, Op. 3, No. 1, Wolf G2 (1751–54)	12:36
1 I. Presto assai	3:05
2 II. Andante non adagio	4:14
3 III. Menuet	2:16
4 IV. Presto	2:58
 Symphony in G major, Op. 3, No. 3, Wolf G3 (1751–54)	 13:52
5 I. Allegro	4:08
6 II. Andante	3:32
7 III. Minuetto	3:08
8 IV. Presto	3:00
 Symphony in E flat major, Op. 3, No. 4, Wolf Eb3 (c. 1750–52)	 8:11
9 I. Allegro	2:53
10 II. Andante	2:29
11 III. Prestissimo	2:47
 Symphony in A major, Op. 3, No. 5, Wolf A2 (c. 1750–52)	 12:11
12 I. Allegro	3:58
13 II. Andante	4:44
14 III. Presto	3:26
 Symphony in F major, Op. 3, No. 6, Wolf F2 (c. 1748–52)	 11:10
15 I. Allegro	3:37
16 II. Andante	4:52
17 III. Presto assai	2:38

Johann Stamitz (1717–1757)

Symphonies, Op. 3, Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6

Of all the composers of symphonies active before Haydn embarked on his singularly long and brilliant career, Johann Stamitz (1717–1757) is arguably the best known and the most frequently credited with being an innovative force in the early development of the genre. Nonetheless, Eugene K. Wolf, the pre-eminent authority on the composer's symphonies, plays down this aspect of Stamitz's reputation, concluding instead that his most important contributions to the development of the symphony lay in his successful assimilation of the new operatic overture style into the somewhat conservative concert symphony with its links to the Baroque *ripieno* concerto. The success of his works and the influence they came to exert lay less in their novelty than in the quality of their musical invention and structural organisation. Many of the characteristics that came to be associated with Stamitz's symphonies – notably their brilliant string writing and skilful orchestration – owed a great deal to the context in which the works were composed and first performed.

The son of a musician who later became a merchant, landowner and town councillor, Stamitz probably received his early musical training from his father before entering the Jesuit Gymnasium in Jihlava in 1728. He was a student in the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Prague in 1734–35 but appears to have abandoned his studies around this time in order to establish a career as a violin virtuoso. He was probably engaged as a violinist at the court of the Elector Palatine in Mannheim in 1741–42 and in 1750, after several years of distinguished service, he was appointed to the newly-created post of Instrumental-Music Director. Like many of his professional contemporaries, Stamitz was extremely versatile, performing, when required, on the violin, viola d'amore, violoncello and double bass. Although very little is known about his training in composition, Stamitz was clearly an experienced composer by the time he joined the court orchestra. As early as 1742 he is known to have composed a concerto for two orchestras.

The Elector Palatine, Carl Theodor, was one of the great patrons of the 18th century and during his reign

Mannheim established itself as one of the leading cultural and scientific centres in Europe. Devoted to music, Carl Theodor spared no expense in engaging the finest performers for his court and under Stamitz's direction, the Mannheim court orchestra developed into a phenomenal ensemble, justly famed throughout Europe for the precision and fire of its playing. Although the standard of string playing was high, Stamitz set about improving it further, working individually with the players to enhance both the accuracy and tone of the ensemble. This ethos remained fundamental to the orchestra even after Stamitz's death. The poet and aesthetician C.D.F. Schobert recalled in 1806 that:

'listening to the orchestra one believed oneself to be transported to a magic island of sound ... No orchestra in the world ever equalled the Mannheimers' execution. Its forte is like thunder; its crescendo like a mighty waterfall; its diminuendo a gentle river disappearing into the distance; its piano is a breath of spring ...'

It was not only a disciplined and brilliant ensemble but it included in its ranks a number of exceptional composers. Dr Charles Burney, who visited Mannheim in 1772, was not only impressed by the size of the musical establishment but also by its 'good discipline', adding that:

'... indeed there are more solo players, and good composers in this, than perhaps in any other orchestra in Europe; it is an army of generals, equally fit to plan a battle, as to fight it.'

Much of the music that the orchestra performed was written by composers within its ranks who cleverly exploited its musical strengths. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the expressive and at times highly dramatic use of dynamic effects commonly encountered in their symphonies. But composers also cultivated other

devices that relied for their effect on the orchestra's extraordinary precision. Over time, some of these ideas became clichéd and eventually fell into disfavour, but in the 1750s, when Stamitz was at the height of his fame, the Mannheim style electrified audiences across much of Europe. This was due in no small measure to the publication of symphonies by Stamitz and his colleagues in Paris and other major centres.

The interest shown in Stamitz's symphonies by Parisian publishers arose in part from a year-long visit he paid to the French capital in 1754–55. He appeared for the first time at the Concert Spirituel on 8 September 1754 and was also active in other public concerts including the Concerts Italiens. The first of his published works – the *Six Orchestral Trios*, *Op. 1* – was issued in 1755, and on 29 August he received a privilege of ten years to publish instrumental works of his own composition. Only one other publication appeared before Stamitz's untimely death in March 1757, a set of six symphonies that were advertised in the *Mercure de France* as being available from the publisher and music seller, Le Clerc, which Wolf believes was the original version of Huberty's print of the composer's *Op. 3* symphonies.

While it is unclear whether Stamitz himself selected these works for publication, we can be certain that *Op. 3* was not conceived as a set. Wolf's stylistic analysis of the works suggests that they were composed over a period of up to nine years, making *Op. 3* unique among the published sets of Stamitz's symphonies in containing works from different chronological periods. If this were Stamitz's intention, then the inclusion of these works may indicate the value he himself placed upon them. However, it is more than likely that the publisher compiled *Op. 3* from whatever works and sources he had access to at the time. This notion is strengthened further by the form in which several symphonies are transmitted in Huberty's print with omitted movements and reduced instrumentation. A good example of this can be seen in the first symphony of the set, *Op. 3, No. 1 (Wolf G2)* which dates from the years 1751–54. A set of contemporary manuscript parts preserved in the Fürst Thurn und Taxis'sche Hofbibliothek in Regensburg adds a pair of oboes to the

orchestra and also includes a *Minuet* and *Trio* movement which is omitted by Huberty. The same pattern is repeated in the Regensburg copies of *Op. 3, No. 3 (Wolf G3)*, which is the probably the earliest work of the set, and in *Op. 3, No. 2 (Wolf D3)* whose expanded instrumentation also includes a pair of trumpets and timpani (see Naxos 8.553194). The instrumentation of the last work in the set, *Op. 3, No. 6 (Wolf F2)* highlights both the flexibility of 18th-century performance practice and the pragmatic approach of many publishers. Wolf assigns this symphony to the years c. 1748–52. The scoring may have originally included flutes or oboes since at least four works in *Op. 3* omit authentic oboe parts. A version of the work printed in London by Bremner in 1764 includes oboes although Wolf believes these parts may have been added by the publisher to make it conform to the *a8* format of the *Periodical Symphonies* series in which it appeared. All other extant sources – and the *Breitkopf Catalogue* (Part I 1762) – give the *a6* scoring of Huberty.

The five symphonies featured on this recording illustrate perfectly the reason why Stamitz's symphonies made such an impact during his lifetime. To their contemporary audiences, they crackled with energy, particularly in their lively outer movements with their virtuosic violin writing, colourful orchestration and expressive – and sometimes surprising – exploitation of dynamic contrasts. The famous Mannheim crescendo does make its appearance in a number of the symphonies, but Stamitz takes care not to overuse the device. It is deployed occasionally as an expressive device but in later works, such as the *Symphonies*, *Op. 3, No. 2 (Wolf D3)* and *Op. 4, No. 1 (Wolf F3)*, he assigns a structural function to the crescendo, its three-fold repetition serving as important pillars in the musical architecture. Slow movements invariably omit the wind instruments and rely for effect on their masterful handling of string texture and nuanced dynamic changes. Their melodic writing is often intricate and demands greater precision in playing than either the vigorous outer movements or the attractive *Minuets* and *Trios*. These movements no doubt impressed their more sophisticated audiences as much or even more than the imposing first movements of Stamitz's symphonies.

If the audiences who first heard these works in the famous Rittersaal at the palace in Mannheim were beguiled by their freshness and novelty, connoisseurs (including Stamitz's friends, rivals and enemies) found them equally fascinating in their musical variety and mastery of musical organisation on both the small scale and large. While Haydn seems not to have been deeply influenced by Stamitz's symphonies, there is no question that his music did reach Vienna and was also known in his native Bohemia. If his achievements as a symphonist were later dwarfed by those of Haydn and his successors, Stamitz's position in the history of the genre is a vital one.

More importantly, perhaps, his symphonies serve to highlight in an often remarkable fashion, the seismic shift in musical thinking between the northern and southern German lands in the middle decades of the 18th century. Stamitz's earliest symphonies were composed during the last decade of Bach's life when he was engaged in the composition of esoteric masterpieces such as the *Musical Offering* and *The Art of Fugue*, and he died two years before Handel, that other musical giant of the late Baroque.

Allan Badley

Musica Viva Moscow Chamber Orchestra

Violin I

Natalia Juhimchuk
Elena Korzhenevich
Petr Chonkushhev
Lyubov Zhigunova
Svetlana Gres

Violin II

Tatiana Fedyakova
Zhanna Nekrich
Monh Enhbaatar
Anton Savchenko
Lyudmila Bezverhova

Viola

Leonid Kazakov
Anna Burchik
Yulia Shmeleva
Andrei Kolomoets
Lidia Kozhemyako

Cello

Olga Kalinova
Emin Martirosyan
Alexei Makarov

Double Bass

Nikolai Gorshkov
Stanislav Spiridonov

Oboe

Konstantin Jakovlev
Nikolai Sheko

Horn

Maria Antonia Riezu
Gonzalez
Sergei Kryukovcev

Harpsichord

Fedor Stroganov
Alexandra Koreneva

Musica Viva Moscow Chamber Orchestra



The Musica Viva Moscow Chamber Orchestra is a unique ensemble which performs in various genres, styles and formations, from small ensembles of around ten players performing Baroque repertoire on period instruments, to large Romantic symphonies for up to 50 musicians. The artistic policy of the orchestra is to perform rare music of the 18th and 19th centuries, and the orchestra has premiered works by C.P.E. Bach, Hasse, Tricklir and Alabiev among others. Musica Viva has recorded around 30 albums on different labels featuring diverse repertoire. The orchestra has collaborated with eminent soloists and conductors such as Christopher Hogwood, Roger Norrington, Christian Tetzlaff, Thomas Zehetmair, Max Emanuel Cencić, Eliso Virsaladze and Natalia Gutman. The Musica Viva Moscow Chamber Orchestra celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2018, and Alexander Rudin has been its artistic director since 1988.

www.musicaviva.ru

Alexander Rudin



Alexander Rudin is a world-renowned cellist and conductor. A multifaceted musician, he collaborates both with symphonic and chamber orchestras, and is also a pianist, harpsichordist and professor at the Moscow Conservatory. Rudin also researches old scores, and is the author of orchestral editions of chamber works and unique thematic cycles. Rudin's vast repertoire covers symphonic works and works for the cello from four centuries, from the well known to pieces that have never been performed. Rudin has worked with outstanding artists such as Eliso Virsaladze, Nikolai Lugansky, Alexei Lubimov, Natalia Gutman, Roger Norrington, Mikhail Pletnev, Eri Klas and Saulius Sondeckis among many others. His discography is extensive and diverse, and his latest album of Baroque cello concertos, released by Chandos in 2016, was critically acclaimed.

www.musicaviva.ru

The orchestral parts and scores of the following works are available from:

www.artaria.com

Sources

The sources upon which the editions used in this recording have been made are:

Symphony in G major, Op. 3, No. 1 (Wolf G2)

Edited by Allan Badley - Artaria Editions AE049
Regensburg, Fürst Thurn und Taxis'sche
Hofbibliothek (J. Stamitz 3)

Symphony in G major, Op. 3, No. 3 (Wolf G3)

Edited by Allan Badley - Artaria Editions AE050
Regensburg, Fürst Thurn und Taxis'sche
Hofbibliothek (J. Stamitz 4a)

Symphony in E flat major, Op. 3, No. 4 (Wolf Eb3)

Edited by Allan Badley - Artaria Editions AE051
Regensburg, Fürst Thurn und Taxis'sche
Hofbibliothek (J. Stamitz 4a)

Symphony in A major, Op. 3, No. 5 (Wolf A2)

Edited by Allan Badley - Artaria Editions AE052
Stockholm, Statensmusikbibliotek
(Ork. Rar – Huberty print)

Symphony in F major, Op. 3, No. 6 (Wolf F2)

Edited by Allan Badley - Artaria Editions AE052
Stockholm, Statensmusikbibliotek
(Ork. Rar – Huberty print)



Blessed with a gift for musical invention and structural organisation, Johann Stamitz was one of the pioneering figures in symphonic music before the emergence of Haydn. He drove the development of symphonic form via the assimilation of the new operatic overture style resulting in works of brilliance and skilful orchestration. His *Op. 3* symphonies, though not composed as a set, showcase why Stamitz was held in such high regard and was so influential: outer movements fizz with energy, and contain virtuosic string writing with frequent dynamic contrasts, while slow movements are intricate and refined.

Johann
STAMITZ
(1717–1757)

Symphonies, Op. 3

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| 1–4 | Symphony in G major, Op. 3, No. 1,
Wolf G2 (1751–54) | 12:36 |
| 5–8 | Symphony in G major, Op. 3, No. 3,
Wolf G3 (1751–54) | 13:52 |
| 9–11 | Symphony in E flat major, Op. 3, No. 4,
Wolf Eb3 (c. 1750–52) | 8:11 |
| 12–14 | Symphony in A major, Op. 3, No. 5,
Wolf A2 (c. 1750–52) | 12:11 |
| 15–17 | Symphony in F major, Op. 3, No. 6,
Wolf F2 (c. 1748–52) | 11:10 |

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Alexander Rudin

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

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