

Antonio
Vivaldi

6 Concertos for
Flute (Op.10) *also*
A minor RV440

**Jennifer
Stinton**
(flute)



Concertgebouw
Chamber Orchestra
Harry Christophers

alto

Vivaldi: Flute Concertos, Op.10

By the time Vivaldi took up his duties as “maestro di violino” at the Ospedale della Pietà in 1703, this orphanage for women, one of four in Venice, was enjoying a considerable musical reputation. As “maestro di violino” Vivaldi was responsible for teaching stringed instruments and possibly, at least early on in his career, wind instruments, too. A passage from the letters of the French scholar and traveller, Charles de Brosses, writing in 1739, when he was on friendly terms with Vivaldi, gives us a lively impression of the esteem in which the musical members of the Venetian orphanages were held: “They are brought up at the expense of the state and trained solely to excel in music. Moreover, they sing like angels and play the violin, the flute, the organ, the oboe, the cello and the bassoon; in short, there is no instrument however unwieldy, that can frighten them”.

Certainly, by 1739, when de Brosses recorded his impression, the flute had become a widely used instrument in Venice but, earlier in Vivaldi’s career it had been the recorder which held sway. As late as 1726, the German flautist, theoretician and composer Quantz, who had met Vivaldi in Venice remarked that the transverse flute was not popular in Italy. Yet in Germany, for example, composers had been writing for the instrument for some years. One of Bach’s great flute works, the Partita in A minor for unaccompanied flute belongs to his years at the Court of Cöthen (1717-1723); so too, does the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 in D major, in which the flute is one of three concertante instruments. Quantz’s visit seems to have marked the change in fortune of the transverse flute in Venice for in the following year (1727) Vivaldi included a dazzling flute obbligato in his opera, “Orlando furioso” and, in about 1728 his publisher, Le Cène, in Amsterdam printed six concertos for flute and strings as the composer’s Opus 10. At this time, furthermore, the Pietà appointed its first flute teacher, Ignazio Siber, who was in fact himself, a celebrated oboe player.

Five of the six flute concertos of Vivaldi’s Opus 10 are reworked versions of pieces, generally for a smaller chamber group in which the treble recorder rather than the transverse flute played a prominent role. Thus we may reasonably suppose that commercial expedience was uppermost in the composer’s mind when he prepared them for publication. No alternative version of the Concerto in G major (Op. 10, No. 4) is known to us but that does not necessarily mean to say that none existed.

No less than three versions of the Concerto in F major “La tempesta di mare” (Op. 10, No. 1) have

survived. In each of them a mildly programmatic element reflects its subtitle “The Storm at Sea”; both of the fast outer movements contain vigorous scale passages whose bold unisons and restless rhythms contribute towards a turbulent picture - one with which Vivaldi, living in Venice, must have been familiar – while in the central Largo a tranquil melody is interrupted by threatening string arpeggios.

The Concerto in G minor, “La notte” (Op. 10, No. 2) derives from a chamber concerto for flute, violins and bassoon in the same key (RV 104). In these works the programmatic element is strengthened by the inclusion of descriptive headings for two of the movements; and they are comparatively unusual amongst Vivaldi’s concertos in their adoption of a six-section pattern rather than the customary three-movement scheme. The writing is vividly atmospheric above all in the two sub-headed sections: “Fantasmi” (Ghosts) and “Il sonno” (Sleep).

The Concerto in D major, “Il gardellino” (Op. 10, No. 3) has a slighter programmatic content than “La notte”. Here the song of “The Goldfinch” is more suggestive of bird-song than imitative of it. Vivaldi’s pastoral landscape is at its headiest in the lyrical ‘*Siciliano*’ slow movement where the solo flute, with continuo accompaniment only, evokes an Arcadian idyll in a rhythm with stray pastoral associations.

Alone among Vivaldi’s Opus Ten, the Concerto in G major (Op. 10, No.4) seems to have been written expressly for transverse flute and strings. Its first movement is tautly constructed deriving impetus from insistent repeated bass notes in the tutti centred mainly round the tonic and dominant keys. The solo sections are short, pleasingly varied and lighthearted. The central Largo consists of a lyrical melody for the flute accompanied by continuo and punctuated by the violins and viola of the tutti. The finale, with its folk-like melody and tied bass notes are suggestive of a vigorous pastoral dance.

Although it takes its place amongst the flute concertos of this set, Vivaldi conceived the Concerto in F major (Op. 10, No. 5) for treble recorder and strings. In fact little in the way of adaptation was required, though Vivaldi shifted up the key of the slow movement from F minor to G minor more effectively to capitalise upon features of the transverse flute technique. Both outer movements avoid anything in the manner of technical virtuosity while the Largo contains a melody of the kind

beloved by Italian opera composers seeking to evoke a pastoral landscape. In his own day Vivaldi was recognised in Venice as much for his operas as for his instrumental music and each of the movements of this concerto contain material which he had already used in various stage works.

The Concerto in G major (Op. 10, No. 6) is derived from a chamber concerto for recorder, oboe, violin and bassoon (RV 101). It has some unusual features notably in the relationship that exists between the second and third movements and in the fact that the third movement is, untypically, a set of effectively contrasted variations. The theme of these variations is, in fact that contained in the preceding Largo though now presented more briskly in the major key as opposed to the minor key of the Largo. The Concerto, as a whole, provides a fitting conclusion to the set for, at least in the variation finale Vivaldi provides his soloist with music that requires technical virtuosity while in the slow movement, in binary form, there is ample scope for tasteful and imaginative ornamentation.

Besides the Concertos, Opus 10, Vivaldi composed ten further concertos for transverse flute with various sizes of string accompaniment, as well as another for two flutes. One of them is the present **Concerto in A minor (RV 440)** whose appoggiaturas in the tutti section of the opening movement give the music a somewhat French gracefulness and poise. In this movement the solo flute writing aims at expression rather than virtuosity. In the 'Larghetto' both the melody of the solo line and its simple quaver accompaniment are tinged with melancholy while the finale, by contrast occupies the flute with brisk, lively passagework.

Nicholas Anderson

Jennifer Stinton, as an internationally recognised flautist, has performed as a soloist at many international festivals. Solo concerts abroad have included the performance of a concerto in the Concertgebouw which was broadcast 'live' on Dutch television, a recital in Davos, Switzerland, for the World Economic Forum ("G8") and tours of France, Scandinavia and the Middle East.

She studied the flute at the Royal Academy of Music and was subsequently awarded a Countess of Munster Scholarship and Arts Council Award to continue her studies in America with Geoffrey Gilbert. On her return to London she won a Martin Scholarship and a student fellowship from the Academy to research new repertoire for the flute, she has since been elected an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

A finalist in the 1987 Royal Overseas League Competition, she went on to win the 1988 South East Arts Platform. The following year Jennifer made her first of 12 recordings on the Collins Classics label, including her own flute transcriptions of Barber's Violin Concerto.

Jennifer is committed to the promotion of new and rarely heard music. She has been a featured artist on BBC Radio 4, and her American Album was released following a highly successful 'live' BBC Concert Hall recital. She has championed the music of young composers worldwide and performed many British and World premieres on London's South Bank. She has performed with the Fires of London and London Sinfonietta.

She appears as a soloist in London at the Wigmore Hall and South Bank, having made her debut at the Royal Festival Hall on 1991 performing a Mozart concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra in the presence of Diana, Princess of Wales. Jennifer regained rights to her Collins recordings and many of these have been reissued under licence on Regis, for example the *Rodrigo Concertos* with the E.C.O., *Barber/Khachaturian Concerti* with the Philharmonia, *CPE Bach Concerti* with OSJ, *20th Century Concerti* with SCO and *American Album for Flute* with Malcolm Martineau.

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Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

6 Concertos for Flute (Op.10) also A minor RV440

Jennifer Stinton (Flute)

Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra / Harry Christophers

Leader: Johan Kracht; Celia Harper: harpsichord; Robin Jeffrey, theorbo

Concerto No.1 in F, RV433

"La Tempesta di Mare"

- | | |
|----------------|------|
| [1] I Allegro | 2:40 |
| [2] II Largo | 1:55 |
| [3] III Presto | 2:03 |

Concerto No.2 in G minor

RV439 *"La Notte"*

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| [4] I Largo | 2:11 |
| [5] II Presto – "Fantasmi" | 0:49 |
| [6] III Largo | 1:02 |
| [7] IV Presto | 1:04 |
| [8] V Largo "Il Sonno" | 1:21 |
| [9] VI Allegro | 2:06 |

Concerto No.3 in D, RV428

"Il Gardellino"

- | | |
|-------------------|------|
| [10] I Allegro | 3:45 |
| [11] II Cantabile | 2:35 |
| [12] III Allegro | 2:53 |

Concerto No.4 in G, RV435

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| [13] I Allegro | 2:22 |
| [14] II Largo | 1:56 |
| [15] III Allegro | 2:21 |

Concerto No.5 in F, RV434

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| [16] I Allegro ma non tanto | 3:30 |
| [17] II Largo e cantabile | 3:05 |
| [18] III Allegro | 1:56 |

Concerto No.6 in G, RV437

- | | |
|------------------|------|
| [19] I Allegro | 4:10 |
| [20] II Largo | 1:54 |
| [21] III Allegro | 2:21 |

Concerto in A minor, RV440

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| [22] I Allegro non molto | 3:40 |
| [23] II Larghetto | 2:44 |
| [24] III Allegro | 2:55 |

Total Time: 57:50

Producer/Engineer: Benno Torrenga

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Vivaldi: 6 Concertos for Flute (Op.10) ALC 1059

Concerto in A minor for Flute, RV440

Jennifer Stinton (flute)

Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra

Harry Christophers

alto

“Jennifer Stinton plays a modern flute bringing exuberance matched by technical agility....admirably partnered by the strings (She) is not short of ideas where ornamentation is concerned....an attractive playfulness in interpretations serves the simple charm of the music very well..... Stinton adds a further flute concerto (RV440), whose first two movements afford pleasing examples of his expressive writing for the flute. In summary: this is fresh and lively music-making (and) is clearly recorded” (Gramophone)

Flute Concertos Op.10:

No.1 in F, RV433 “La Tempesta di Mare”

No.2 in G min, RV439 “La Notte”

No.3 in D, RV428 “Il Gardellino”

No.4 in G, RV435

No.5 in F, RV434

No.6 in G, RV437

RV440 in A minor

DDD, 1991

Time: 58min



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