

CHARLES AVISON
CONCERTI FROM OPUS 9

Charles Avison (1709-1770) :Concerti from Opus 9 (1766)

Opus 9 no. 1 in G

1	largo	[3:13]
2	allegro	[2:48]
3	adagio	[0:43]
4	aria con affetto	[3:11]

Simon Jones (violin), Rebakah Durston (violin), Duncan Druce (viola), Rachel Gray (violoncello), Jane McDermott (violone). John Treherne (harpsichord)

Opus 9 no. 9 in C minor

5	adagio	[1:43]
6	allegro	[1:25]
7	largo	[1:11]
8	aria andante	[2:19]

Simon Jones (violin), Rebekah Durston (violin), Duncan Druce (viola), Rachel Gray (violoncello), Jane McDermott (violone), John Treherne (concertino harpsichord)

Opus 9 no. 7 in E flat

9	largo	[1:35]
10	allegro	[2:35]
11	largo	[0:40]
12	allegretto	[2:16]

Simon Jones (violin), Rebekah Durston (violin), Duncan Druce (viola), Rachel Gray (violoncello), Jane McDermott (violone),

John Treherne (harpsichord)

Charles Avison (1709-1770) :Concerti from Opus 9 (1766)

Opus	9	no.	8	in	В	flat
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13	andante cantabile	[3:44]
14	allegro assai	[1:40]
15	adagio	[0:43]
16	allegro moderato	[2:02]

Simon Jones (violin), Rebekah Durston (violin), Duncan Druce (viola), Rachel Gray (violoncello), John Green (concertino organ)

Opus 9 no. 4 in G minor

17	largo	[1:03]
18	allegro	[1:32]
19	largo	[0:59]
20	aria andante	[4:26]

Simon Jones (violin), Rebekah Durston (violin), Duncan Druce (viola), Rachel Gray (violoncello)

Opus 9 no. 6 in E minor

21	largo	[1:18]
22	allegro	[1:35]
23	largo	[0:48]
24	allegro – affetuoso – allegro	[2:57]

Simon Jones (violin), Rebekah Durston (violin), Duncan Druce (viola), Rachel Gray (violoncello), John Green (organ)

The Opus 9 Concerti are published in facsimile by:

J.P.H. Publications, Bridge View, Garrigill, Alston, Cumbria, CA9 3DU, UK

Charles Avison (1709-1770)

Charles Avison was a most influential figure in English eighteenth century musical life. Born in Newcastle in 1709. he remained as organist at the city's cathedral from 1736 until his death in 1770, despite lucrative offers of prestigious posts elsewhere. He was described by the renowned Dr. Burney as 'an ingenious and polished man, esteemed and respected by all who knew him; and an elegant writer upon his art'. Avison's "Essay on Musical Expression", published in London in 1752, was both influential and controversial. It was widely disseminated and provoked lively debate.

From 1735 onwards, Charles Avison organised subscription concerts in Newcastle, the first of their kind in the city. Later, in association with John Garth, a similar series of concerts was promoted in Durham. Local professionals and amateurs formed the backbone of the orchestra for the concerts and there were occasional appearances by visiting virtuosi, such as the violinist Felice Giardini and William Shield of Wylam, one of Avison's former pupils.

The existence of the orchestra and the subscription concerts must have been a great incentive to Avison to compose suitable music. In total, including revisions, there are some 60 concerti grossi and in addition 12 arrangements for strings of harpsichord sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti.

The twelve concerti of opus 9, divided into two sets, were published in 1766 in London by Johnson, Bremner and Preston. They are extremely versatile works. In four parts, when seven was more usual, the opus 9 concerti are advertised as being playable in several ways. As string quartets they are perhaps the first English examples of the genre. Parts for organ or harpsichord enable the works to be played as keyboard solos, or the keyboard parts can provide a continuo texture or substitute for the first violin as the concertino instrument.

There is stylistic variety to be found in the standard four-movement pattern adopted by Avison. With the exception of Concerto no. 8 in B flat, which begins with an attractive, lilting *siciliana*, all of the recorded concerti open with dotted, French influenced movements. Energetic, tightly constructed fugal second movements are featured in five of the recorded examples, generally followed by a short *largo* linking to a variety of finales. Concerto 4 in G minor ends with a virtuosic triplet variation on a gentle minuet in the tonic major. No. 8 in B flat has a bucolic gigue, no. 9 a C minor aria with dramatic falling sevenths, while Concerto 1 in G and no. 6 in E minor end with gentle minuets, no. 6 with a contrasting 'affetuoso' middle section in the major.

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The Georgian Concert

Leader: Simon Jones Artistic director: Peter Harrison

The Georgian Concert was founded in 2000 to specialise in the historically influenced performance of mostly English repertoire from the eighteenth century. This new ensemble was an extension of the work of Concert Royal, one of England's longest established early music ensembles. Concert Royal's Peter Harrison, John Treherne (harpsichord) and cellist Rachel Gray are joined in The Georgian Concert by violinists Simon Jones and Rebekah Durston, Duncan

Druce (viola), Jane McDermott (violone) and organist John Green.

This blend of youthful vitality and experience is characterised by high standards of professionalism, by innovative interpretation and by an enthusiastic commitment to the performance of music by the eighteenth century masters.



The instruments:

Simon Jones:

Violin by Carlo Tononi, Venice, 1703 (recreated by Edward Smith)

Rebekah Durston:

Violin, English, possibly Ferber School, c.1760 **Duncan Druce:**

Viola by F.J. van der Voort (1994) after Stradiyari

Rachel Gray:

Violoncello, English, c.1770

Jane McDermott:

Violone by Martin Morris (1984) after Amati **John Treherne:**

Harpsichord by Andrew Wooderson (1996)

John Green:

Chamber organ by Peter Collins (1995)

Recorded at The National Centre for Early Music, York on 25/26 March 2001

Research: Peter Harrison

Producer/Recording Engineer: Ben Turner

Front cover: Portrait of Charles Avison (detail) dated 1761 by F. Lindo. By kind permission of the Provost and Chapter of the Cathedral Church of St. Nicholas, Newcastle upon Tyne.

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The Georgian Concert in rehearsal Simon Jones, Rebekah Durston, Duncan Druce John Treherne, Rachel Gray, Jane McDermott



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