



JOHN GARTH

SIX CONCERTOS FOR VIOLONCELLO

RICHARD TUNNICLIFFE

THE AVISON ENSEMBLE

Pavlo Beznosiuk

John Garth (1721 – 1810)*Six Concertos for the Violoncello**With Four Violins, Alto Viola, and Basso Ripieno**Dedicated to His Royal Highness the Duke of York***The Avison Ensemble****CD1:**

Concerto no. 1 in D major	[17.08]	
1 <i>Allegro</i>		[7.37]
2 <i>Andante</i>		[4.40]
3 <i>Giga</i>		[4.50]
Concerto no. 2 in B flat major	[11.57]	
4 <i>Allegro moderato</i>		[4.15]
5 <i>Affettuoso</i>		[2.46]
6 <i>Allegro assai</i>		[4.56]
Concerto no. 3 in A major	[14.12]	
7 <i>Allegro</i>		[4.39]
8 <i>Andante</i>		[4.43]
9 <i>Allegro</i>		[4.49]

CD2:

Concerto no. 4 in B flat major	[13.57]	
1 <i>Presto</i>		[3.12]
2 <i>Andante affettuoso</i>		[6.18]
3 <i>Minuet</i>		[4.26]
Concerto no. 5 in D minor	[16.57]	
4 <i>Allegro</i>		[7.26]
5 <i>Adagio – affettuoso</i>		[3.03]
6 <i>Allegro moderato</i>		[6.28]
Concerto no. 6 in G major	[19.26]	
7 <i>Allegro</i>		[7.29]
8 <i>Siciliana</i>		[5.16]
9 <i>Allegro</i>		[6.40]

John Garth (1721 – 1810): Six Concertos for Violoncello

In the eighteenth century Durham was a small, bustling, northern metropolis. Its Norman cathedral nestled above the city, a focal point for the many musicians, clergy and dignitaries who came to work or visit. Being situated on the main route from London to Edinburgh, Durham was well placed for travellers who would frequently take rest in one of its several inns; the most popular of which, The Red Lion, was a regular venue for concerts and assemblies. Most visitors to Durham thought it special. Daniel Defoe, the author of Robinson Crusoe, spoke highly of the city, as did Charles Dibdin, the well-known British composer. He said that 'DURHAM, in summer, must be one of the most beautiful situations in ENGLAND. The river, the castle, the bishop's palace, and the straggling suburbs, present you with a new and picturesque view wherever you turn.' Dibdin had been warmly received on his arrival, and spoke highly of those he met, feeling that the 'more genteel part of the inhabitants are more a community than a neighbourhood, a family than a society.'

What really made Durham an important city was that it was the centre of political power in the north-east. Until 1839 the Palatinate

of Durham was run by the 'prince-bishop', the official representative of the King. Empowered by the Monarch, he enjoyed the privilege of enforcing legislation, minting his own coinage, and controlling the courts. The Durham assize week was one of the most popular occasions in the entire year, and spectators would travel far to attend. Being such an important city meant that it was a socio-economic centre and many of the well-to-do were able to spend their free time attending one of the numerous social events that frequently took place there.

The heart of musical life in Durham was unquestionably the cathedral. The majority of the resident musicians were employed as lay clerks in the choir, many of whom were not indigenous to the northeast having been attracted to Durham by the high salaries. Other musicians were home grown having been boy choristers, and who had progressed through the choirs' ranks. All of these musicians were involved in numerous concerts in the city frequently run by the cathedral organist, but also in those organised by other local musicians. John Garth was never a chorister and did not have particularly strong ties with the cathedral; however, he did have a profound influence on the musical life in the city.

Garth was baptised on 27 December 1721 at the church of St. Philip and St. James, Witton le Wear, County Durham. He was the fifth of six children born to William, a yeoman of Harperley, and a landowner at Low Woodfield. Little is known about Garth's childhood but he probably studied at the King James I Grammar School at Bishop Auckland and may have been one of the first pupils of Charles Avison (1709-1770), the Newcastle organist and composer. Garth's first-known musical position was that of organist at St Edmund's Church in Sedgfield to which he was appointed before 1742. He was an organist of considerable ability and gave numerous organ recitals across the north-east. Later, he was appointed organist at Auckland Castle, traditionally the main residence of the Bishop of Durham; a position he held until 1793.

In relation to music in Durham City itself, Garth's name first appears in an advertisement for a benefit concert in 1746, although he had most likely been involved in concerts run by Avison before that. He later took responsibility for the running of the Durham subscription concerts that were held in the assembly rooms, and held concerts at 'Old Durham', the public gardens on the outskirts of the city. Avison and his sons came to Durham to perform at Garth's concerts, and Garth returned the favour.

Later, he worked with Thomas Ebdon, the cathedral organist, and was involved in the choir's concerts.

Garth's musical output is relatively extensive. The running of concerts in Durham gave him and other local musicians the opportunity to compose new works and have them performed. Most were well received and a large number of them were published. The first published work to which Garth's name is attached is his eight-volume English edition of the *Marcello Psalms*, issued from 1757. Here Garth took over a project that Avison had begun and they were well received. His next publication was the Op. 1 *Six Concertos, for the Violoncello* which appeared in 1760 after having circulated the concert scene for several years beforehand. Garth dedicated them to Edward the Duke of York, a cellist of considerable ability. Garth met him in August 1761 when he, Avison, and William Herschel (who later became a renowned astronomer) were part of the group of musicians engaged to entertain him during his stay with the Milbanke family at Halnaby Hall in Yorkshire. Garth followed their success with his Op. 2 keyboard sonatas which adopt the format of two violins, cello and keyboard as favoured by Avison.

This first set was highly successful, appearing

in at least six editions, the first sonata being subsequently issued separately at least five times between 1790 and 1810. Garth issued four further sets (Opus. 4-7) but these did not achieve the same level of popularity. Garth did not always follow Avison's example, and this is most evident in his set of six voluntaries for organ Op. 3, published in 1771. These were probably written for performance at Auckland Castle and are exceedingly different from Avison's bisectonal examples which only survive in manuscript. Garth's voluntaries, by contrast, have a concerto-like structure and show the influence of Stanley. Secular in style, they contain dances and even the embryonic principles of sonata form which are also seen in his concertos and sonatas. Other published works include a set of collects, several hymns and a glee. Manuscript works include three anthems written for the Durham choir.

Following Avison's death, Garth began to withdraw from concert life. Over many years he had accumulated a great deal of property that he rented out, and he no longer required music in order to support himself. He continued to play the organ and travelled extensively across County Durham to teach keyboard and cello. Old age and ill health resulted in his abilities being greatly reduced, however most of the aristocracy were fond of him and knew

that he derived a great deal of pleasure from private teaching, so they tolerated his infirmity. Garth finally retired from music in 1794 when he married Nanny Wrightson from Cockerton, near Darlington. He had known his wife for many years, probably meeting her through the concerts in Darlington in which he was involved during the 1760s. Following their marriage they moved to Cockerton, and, despite his age, much of his property was placed in trust for their firstborn son; sadly, however, they died without issue. Following the death of Nanny's father in 1806, they moved into Cockerton Hall, Garth living there until he passed away. He was buried in the north aisle of St. Cuthbert's Church, Darlington.

Garth's Op. 1 concertos were specifically written as a vehicle for him to demonstrate his abilities as a cellist in his own concerts. At the time there was a lack of suitable cello music available, and certainly nothing similar had been published in Great Britain. Garth premiered one of these concertos at a concert in the assembly rooms in Durham in 1753 where they were well received, as is evident from the review:

"We hear from Durham, that on Thursday fe'nnight there was a splendid Appearance of Ladies and Gentlemen at a Concert of Musick at the Assembly

Room there, where several fine Pieces of Musick were performed, particularly a Violoncello Concerto, composed and executed by Mr Garth, which was justly admired and applauded by all present.” - *Newcastle Journal* (16 June 1753).

These concertos were composed at a time of great change in British music. There had been a steady movement away from the multi-sectioned ‘da chiesa’ baroque concerti grossi of Corelli and Geminiani, (which still had a firm grip on many of the indigenous composers) towards the three movement ‘da camera’ preoccupation in which the evermore attractive galant style of composers such as J. C. Bach (a composer based in London and thoroughly influenced by the mannerisms and rhetorical gestures of the Mannheim orchestra) was prevalent. Garth’s concertos certainly had their origins in the old-fashioned concerto grosso and were undoubtedly influenced by Avison’s own, yet they also evinced features that pointed towards the later works of Haydn and Mozart. All six follow the ‘da camera’ format of quick-slow-quick and adopt the Corellian tradition of alternating between the ritornello and concertante sections. The outer movements of the concertos adopt a binary structure common to the dance paradigms of orchestral and keyboard suites of the earlier eighteenth century.

On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that Garth is making use of incipient sonata processes. Given Garth’s close connections with Avison, who deployed a proto-sonata design in several of his Op. 6 concertos (from 1758), one would automatically attribute this affinity to Avison’s influence, yet the performance of Garth’s concerto in 1753 would imply that *he* was the first of the two to utilise this formal thinking. Garth’s principal influence was very probably C. P. E. Bach whose *Prussian Sonatas*, published in 1742, make use of a form that is almost identical to that which Garth used in both the use of themes and modulation but lacks the final recapitulation. Avison knew Bach’s sonatas well, recording the latter’s influence on him in the *Advertisement* to his Op. 8 keyboard sonatas.

In most of his quick movements Garth uses a ritornello structure consisting of three episodes sandwiched between four ritornelli, a formal schema that was being extensively used from the middle of the century. Within this plan Garth exercised a good deal of freedom in how the material was used and there are slight differences in each movement regarding how the dominant is reached and articulated. Like most baroque dance forms, the opening orchestral idea of the work is heard in the dominant at the beginning of the second

section. This is a regular structural occurrence before a rapid return to the tonic and a precipitate embarkation for related keys (this process being very much a forerunner of the development of the later, more fully formed sonata structures of the Classical period). Most significant to the process of sonata thinking, however, is the 'double return' where the tonic and 'expositional' material from the first part of the binary structure are recapitulated, although in an abridged form.

Garth composed these concertos over an extended period of time, presumably due to his commitment to the *Marcello Psalms*, and this is particularly evident in the first movement of Concerto I where the opening ritornello is restated almost in its entirety at the end, a feature of the old-fashioned concerto. By contrast, the first movement of Concerto V is far more forward-looking in that the first part of the binary structure concludes with the orchestra and *not* the soloist, a feature more common to later concerto-writing practices.

Stylistically all the quick movements are highly dynamic with a vibrant melodic line over the supporting orchestra, in many ways adhering to Avison's ideas on the balanced use of 'air' and harmony. All the concertos begin with an

extensive statement of the main themes on the first violin which is consequently taken up by the solo cello. During these extended solo sections the orchestra provides harmonic support, but in the recapitulations there is a greater involution of the solo material and its dialogue with the *ripieno*. The central slow movements are shorter than the outer movements and spotlight the cello as main protagonist with some gentle interplay between it and the orchestra.

This is evident in Concerto IV where the contrapuntal treatment between the cello and first violin is conspicuously more elaborate. The only time Garth breaks with the three-movement structure is Concerto V where the central movement is broken down into four shorter sections featuring two short Adagios for the orchestra, each followed by longer, thematically linked 'Affettuoso' sections for the cello. All the concertos end with a fast movement, but instead of the common time of all the first movements, a variety of time signatures are used. The Allegro assai of Concerto II is a brilliant and exceedingly vibrant 2/4 finale, while the final Minuet of Concerto IV looks forward to the turbulent 'emotionalism' of the *Sturm und Drang* of the later eighteenth century, so characteristic of C. P. E. Bach, Joseph and Michael Haydn.

Garth's Op. 1 violoncello concertos, though by no means revolutionary, are well-crafted works by a fine and accomplished composer. His first published compositions, they clearly show the influence of Avison but also are forward-looking, revealing that he was well aware of the latest musical developments. Today he is hardly known in the country of his birth, nor is he a familiar name in Durham and the north-east where, during his lifetime, he enjoyed some considerable approbation.

Indeed, what approbation exists is normally connected with Avison who tends to receive most attention for his work in Durham and Newcastle; however, in order for Avison to have been so successful he required the assistance of a great many first-rate musicians in the region, of which John Garth was without doubt the most important.

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Simon Fleming is currently researching a PhD at Durham University on music in Durham City during the eighteenth century, and has also extensively researched the music of Charles Avison.

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<http://www.paxtonhouse.co.uk>

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Edition prepared by Gordon Dixon
Cadenzas by Richard Tunnicliffe

Executive Producer Gordon Dixon
Producer and Engineer: Philip Hobbs
Cover designs: Joanne Green

Performed on period instruments

Première Recording

Six
CONCERTOS,
For the
VIOLONCELLO.
WITH
Four Violins, one Alto Viola, and Basson. Requiem.
Dedicated to
His Royal Highness the Duke of York.
by
John Garth.

Printed by WELCKER, 10, GERRARD STREET, SOHO.

L O N D O N

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where may be had by the same Author*

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The Avison Ensemble

Several years ago cellist Gordon Dixon discovered a collection of 18th century music hidden away at the back of a cupboard. This turned out to be a number of concertos of the hitherto little known Newcastle born composer Charles Avison. Excited by the originality and freshness of the music Gordon formed The Avison Ensemble with the aim of enhancing public awareness of Avison and the many other neglected British composers of the baroque period.

Comprising some of Europe's finest musicians, the Avison Ensemble performs on period instruments in order to recreate as close as possible the distinctive 'sound world' that the composers would have known.

The Avison Ensemble is unique in having its own composer along with a substantial repertoire of his music as yet unperformed in modern times. Miraculously they have added to this repertoire with the recent acquisition of two of Avison's original workbooks, which contain many unpublished works by Avison and other 18th century composers.

Today, the Avison Ensemble introduces new audiences to classical music through touring, recording, subscription concerts and radio broadcasts. Most recently these include a collaboration with the Choir of Her Majesty the Queen's Chapel Royal, numerous broadcasts for the BBC as part of the Ensemble's "Live from the 18th century" concert series; recordings of concertos by Garth and Herschel for *Cavalier Classics* with cellist Anner Bylsmer and violinist Pavlo Beznosiuk; and the first ever complete recording of Charles Avison's 12 concertos Op. 6 released by *Naxos* in July 2004.

February 2006 saw the release of the Avison Ensemble's latest CD *Charles Avison: Six Concertos opus 3 & Eight Concertos opus 4*, again on the Naxos label. They have also recently recorded Avison's Twelve concertos opus 9.



THE AVISON ENSEMBLE

Performers on this recordings:

Richard Tunnicliffe, cello

Attrib. Leonhard Mansiell, Nuremberg c1730
(bow by John Dodd)

Pavlo Beznosiuk, violin

Mattys Hofmans – Antwerp 1676

Caroline Balding, violin

Stainer School c. 1680

Rachel Byrt, viola

Nicholas Woodward, Bristol 1995 (after 1664 Guarneri)

Catherine Rimer, cello

Anon: Saxon c. 1750

Timothy Amherst, bass

Attrib. Hieronymus Amati c. 1650

Robert Howarth, harpsichord

Morton Gould 1991 after Grimaldi c. 1680

Richard Tunnicliffe studied cello and viola da gamba at the Royal College of Music, and now plays music ranging from the Renaissance to the present day on a number of instruments. He is a member of the viol consort "Fretwork", who have travelled widely, had over 20 works written for them, and made numerous recordings. In 2007 they become Ensemble in Residence at Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge.

He is also principal cello of the Avison Ensemble and a guest principal of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has been much in demand as a continuo cellist, playing for Opera productions in Glyndebourne and Salzburg (with OAE) and can be heard in this capacity in many orchestral and chamber recordings. (with Renee Fleming, Elizabeth Wallfisch, Lisa Beznosiuk, Pavlo Beznosiuk, among others). He has received praise for his many performances of the 6 Solo Suites of Bach, in such venues as London's Wigmore Hall and Purcell Rooms, Warsaw Philharmonie and Berlin Schauspielhaus. He often presents these along with contemporary works, and has performed the 5th Suite as a dance work, using elements of baroque and modern dance, with Elizabeth Lea.

Other recordings include a solo disc of early 17th Century cello works along with the complete works of Domenico Gabrielli, widely regarded as the first significant virtuoso cellist/composer, for the Cello Classics label. He has also recorded John Joubert's "Kontakion" for cello and piano, with pianist John McCabe, which will be released to celebrate the composer's 80th Birthday in 2007.

He teaches Baroque Cello at the Royal College of Music, London, at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, and at CEMPR, Birmingham University, with whom he directed a performance of Bach's "St John Passion" in St. Phillip's Cathedral, Birmingham at Easter 2007.



Pavlo Beznosiuk: Director/Violin

A major presence on the early music scene for twenty five years, Pavlo Beznosiuk has been described as an artist with "star quality" whose "playing is full of fantasy" and "whose range of ideas seems every time more amazing". A rare performer who is equally at home on instruments as diverse as modern, classical, baroque and renaissance violins, viola and mediaeval fiddles.

Well known as a soloist, chamber musician and concertmaster, he has led and directed The Academy of Ancient Music, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Hanover Band, Avison Ensemble, L'Arte dei Suonatori (Poland) and Le Parlement de Musique (France).

As leader of the Parley of Instruments in the 1980s he was involved in pioneering work in the use of Renaissance violins and his improvisational abilities earned him the soubriquet "Heifetz of the Mediaeval Fiddle". In recent years, Beznosiuk's performances of the entire cycle of Biber's 'Rosary' sonatas have met with critical acclaim worldwide and his 2004 recording (on AVIE) of these pieces has been similarly fêted. He is currently engaged in a project to record all the published (and some unpublished) music by Charles Avison.

Pavlo Beznosiuk's extensive list of recordings is a testament to his popularity as one of the field's outstanding players. They include all the solos in the six Brandenburg concertos with the New London Consort, Vivaldi's Op.6 violin concertos with The AAM and Christopher Hogwood (Decca), Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante and Haffner Serenade (Virgin/EMI and Erato), and prizewinning recordings of the Schubert Octet and Cherubini string quartets with the ensemble Hausmusik. He has also made world premiere recordings of music by J.J. Walther and J.P. von Westhoff (on Etcetera). On television Pavlo Beznosiuk has featured in BBC documentary programmes on the life and music of Mozart and Beethoven; these and his innumerable TV and radio broadcasts for the BBC and other European stations have established his pre-eminence in the field of early music.



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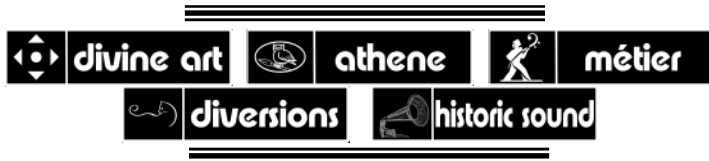
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