

Johann Sebastian Bach served as Capellmeister in Cöthen from December 1717 until May 1723. His patron was Prince Leopold von Anhalt-Cöthen (1694-1728). Only in his mid twenties when Bach served him, he was a music enthusiast who was "dearly loved" by Bach. The prince played the violin, the viola da gamba, and the clavier himself and loved to join the "band" as a sophisticated Karaoke player.

Because at this Calvinist court Bach had no church responsibilities, during these years he produced some of his most celebrated instrumental works, both solo and ensemble. In our previous Bach Pilgrimage program we featured three monumental works for solo violin, solo violoncello, and solo harpsichord as well as Cantata BWV 21 written for a performance in Hamburg in 1720. We have also presented the Brandenburg Concertos and several instrumental concertos with orchestra written in Cöthen at previous concerts.

For this concert we will hear one of six duo sonatas for violin and harpsichord as well as an orchestra suite. The second half of the program will feature a rare organ piece attributed to this period as well as a church cantata written in Cöthen in early 1723 as an audition piece for the position of Thomascantor in Leipzig.