



Festival
Classica



BRANDENBURG CONCERTOS

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH

Ensemble Caprice / Matthias Maute

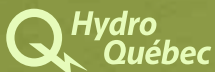
16th edition

2 June 2026 – 7:30 p.m.

Église Sainte-Famille

Boucherville

In collaboration with



Johann Sebastian Bach Brandenburg Concertos (1685–1750)

Pre-concert talk – 6:30 p.m.
Musicologist Marilou Garon
invites the public to learn more
about the pieces on the program.

Program
(115 mins with intermission)

Concerto no. 1 in F major, BWV 1046

Piccolo violin: **Olivier Brault**
Horns: **Louis-Pierre Bergeron, Micajah Sturgess**
Oboes: **Matthew Jennejohn, Joel Verkaik, Amada Kitik**
Bassoon: **Michel Bettez**

Concerto no. 2 in F major, BWV 1047

Trumpet: **Josh Cohen**
Oboe: **Matthew Jennejohn**
Recorder: **Matthias Maute**
Violin: **Olivier Brault**

Concerto no. 3 In G major, BWV 1048

Intermission

Concerto no. 4 In G major, BWV 1049

Violin: **Olivier Brault**
Recorders: **Matthias Maute, Sophie Larivière**

Concerto no. 5 in D major, BWV 1050

Harpsichord: **Elizaveta Miller**
Violin: **Olivier Brault**
Transverse flute: **Sophie Larivière**

Concerto no. 6 in B-flat major, BWV 1051

Violas: **Pemi Paull, Olivier Brault**
Violas da gamba: **Susie Napper, Kyran Assing**

Artists

Ensemble Caprice

Matthias Maute, conductor, artistic director

Olivier Brault, violin, viola and piccolo violin

Elizaveta Miller, harpsichord

Josh Cohen, trumpet

About

Johann Sebastian Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* stand among the greatest masterpieces of the Baroque era. Conceived as a dazzling exploration of instrumental colour, contrast, and virtuosity, the cycle is a celebration of musical imagination and dialogue.

Led by Matthias Maute, Ensemble Caprice brings these iconic works to life with a vivid, historically informed approach, combining expressive freedom with razor-sharp precision. A thrilling journey into Bach's boundless creativity.

Program notes

Benjamin Goron, musicologist

At the start of the 18th century, musical Germany was an archipelago of princely courts, free cities and churches through which circulated styles, musicians and scores. This was the vibrant world in which Johann Sebastian Bach composed, directed, improvised, and taught with astonishing skill, while finding time to repair organs on occasion. The *Brandenburg Concertos* hold a special place in his work, providing a dazzling display of his genius. In these six scores, Bach explores various combinations of instruments, blending virtuosity and musical architecture, intimate conversations, and orchestral brilliance. In them we hear the heritage of Italian concertos and the elegance of French dances, not to mention the contrapuntal depth that is the composer's signature. Brought together, these concertos make up an entire gallery of styles and colours, revealing Bach's ability to transform the musical forms of his time into a language of inexhaustible depth.

Dedicated to a margrave

The story of the *Brandenburg Concertos* begins with a meeting. In 1719, Bach travelled to Berlin to purchase a harpsichord for the court of Köthen, where he held the position of *Kapellmeister* (musical director) in the service of Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Köthen. In Berlin, he was introduced to Christian Ludwig, Margrave of Brandenburg-Schwedt, an aristocrat with a passion for music and collecting scores. The Margrave asked him to send some compositions. Two years later, in 1721, Bach sent him a manuscript with exquisite calligraphy containing six concertos "for various instruments." The dedication, written in French—the language of diplomacy of the time—testifies to the composer's respect for the addressee. Here is a translation of part of the first sentence, replete with formulas of courtesy:

"As I had the good fortune two years ago to be heard by Your Royal Highness, at Your Highness's command, and as I noticed then that Your Highness took some pleasure in the little talents which Heaven has given me for Music, and as in taking leave, Your Royal Highness deigned to honour me with the command to send some pieces of my Composition: I have in accordance with Your Highness's most gracious orders taken the liberty of rendering my most humble duty to Your Royal Highness with the present Concertos, which I have adapted for several instruments..."

The concertos were not necessarily entirely new works. Researchers believe that Bach assembled and reworked pieces that he had composed over previous years, particularly during his time at Köthen. In that small princely court, instrumental music held a central place: the orchestra boasted a number of virtuoso musicians able to perform demanding scores. As an irony of history, the works' uncommon requirements—players of virtuoso trumpet, hunting horns, recorders, viola da gamba, and solo harpsichord—probably exceeded the musical means of the Margrave's court. It would thus appear that the concertos were never performed there. The manuscript remained long forgotten until rediscovered in the 19th century, at which point the concertos began to be recognized as one of the pinnacles of Baroque orchestral music.

The art of the concerto according to Bach

The *Brandenburg Concertos* are based on the principle of musical dialogue. The very word “concerto” carries this ambivalence, signifying both rivalry and agreement between the musicians. In these works, Bach constantly plays on the tension between musical confrontation and collaboration. Some pieces are ensemble concertos, where musicians stand out from the orchestral fabric by turns. Others feature a group of soloists in true dialogue with the orchestra. This variety of forms shows the extent to which Bach was pushing the boundaries of the genre. One of the most striking characteristics of the *Brandenburg Concertos* is the diversity of instruments. Natural trumpet, recorders, oboes, hunting horns, piccolo violin, harpsichord, and viola da gamba: Bach used this instrumental diversity as a colour palette, creating six distinct worlds of sound. The music is built on small motifs that are developed, transformed, and passed between the instruments. This driving energy, carried by the continuo, is what gives the concertos their characteristic vitality.

Concerto no. 1 – The spirit of the hunt

The first concerto is the grandest and most spectacular. The hunting horns evoke the aristocratic world of outdoor pursuits, while the woodwinds and strings act as massed instrumental bodies. The work closes with a suite of elegant dances inspired by the French style.

Concerto no. 2 – Baroque sparkle

This concerto is based on a quartet of outstanding soloists: trumpet, recorder, oboe, and violin. The natural trumpet, played in a very high register, dominates the ensemble with spectacular brilliance, lending the music an almost triumphant dimension.

Concerto no. 3 – String architecture

In this work, Bach dispenses altogether with brass and woodwinds. The orchestra is made up of three violins, three violas and three cellos. The motifs pass from one group to another: the texture of the music is dense and energetic, admirably demonstrating the composer’s contrapuntal skill.

Concerto no. 4 – Pastoral dialogue

A pair of recorders surround a solo violin with great virtuosity. Their soft timbre creates a luminous, pastoral atmosphere, while the violin lights up the musical texture with quick, brilliant passages.

Concerto no. 5 – The harpsichord revolution

This concerto marks a historic moment: for the first time the harpsichord steps out of its accompanying role into the limelight as a soloist. The first movement features a vast cadenza revealing Bach as an improviser and keyboard virtuoso.

Concerto No. 6 – Deep colours

The last concerto is marked by an absence of violins. Bach favours instead violas and violas da gamba, whose darker tones create a warm, dense, almost introspective atmosphere.

Artists

Ensemble Caprice



Matthias Maute
Conductor,
artistic director



Olivier Brault
Violin, viola, and
piccolo violin



Elizaveta Miller
Harpichord



Josh Cohen
Trumpet



Orchestra

Ensemble Caprice

Direction: **Matthias Maute**

First violins

Olivier Brault (violin, viola, and piccolo violin)

Tanya Laperrière

Second violins

Lucie Ringuette

Violas

Pemi Paull

Judy Hung

Timothy Holman

Cellos

Jean-Christophe Lizotte

Susie Napper

Kyran Assing

Violas da gamba

Susie Napper

Kyran Assing

Double bass

Étienne Lafrance

Recorders

Matthias Maute

Sophie Larivière

Transverse flute

Sophie Larivière

Oboes

Matthew Jennejohn

Joel Verkaik

Amanda Kitik

Bassoon

Michel Bettez

Trumpet

Micajah Sturgess

Louis-Pierre Bergeron

Horns

Josh Cohen

Harpsichord

Elizaveta Miller

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16th edition

22 May to June 14 2026

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CONCERTS THAT HIT THE RIGHT NOTE!

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