Johann Sebastian Bach published the six Partitas for solo keyboard that make up the first volume of his *Clavierübung* (Keyboard Practice) as his Opus 1 in 1731 when he was forty-six. Printed at least twice, it proved to be so successful that four years later a second volume appeared that included what has become one of his most popular works for solo keyboard, the **Italian Concerto in F major, BWV 971.** Bach learned much from copying out the works of Corelli, Vivaldi and other Italian composers, and he was especially taken by the concerto grosso, which contrasted a soloist, or small group of soloists, against the rest of the orchestra. The *Italian Concerto* was composed a for a two-manual harpsichord which allowed him to distinguish between the tutti (full orchestra) and solo passages. This has not stopped pianists performing on modern instruments from including the Italian Concerto in their repertoire but having only one keyboard the pianist must rely on imaginatively changing both tone color and dynamic level to achieve the effects that Bach created on the two-manual keyboard, a sometimes-challenging task, as one hand is marked at a different dynamic level from the other. The exuberant opening movement is followed by the meltingly rhapsodical melody of the central andante, concluding with a high-spirited presto. Irresistible.

Bach composed his **Sonata in G major BWV 1021,** for violin and continuo either in Weimar or when he first arrived in Cöthen (ca.1715 - 1720). Written before the more compositionally advanced six *Sonatas for violin and harpsichord, BWV 1014 – 1019*, the work has the usual four movements of the older sonata da chiesa (church sonata), beginning with a particularly lovely Adagio movement in which the violin weaves in and around a lightly strolling bass line with the continuo instrument, in this case a piano, deftly filling out the harmonies, without intruding on the saxophone, which replaces the violin in this transcription.

The **Sonatas and Partitas for solo violin, BWV 1001-1006**, remain at the very pinnacle of works composed for a solo string instrument. As with the as the early sonata da chiesa, the three sonatas in the set have four movements (slow-fast-slow-fast), while the three partitas are more extended, with an exploratory, improvisatory feel as they use extended sequences of Baroque dances. The **Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004** closes with the **Chaconne** movement, a monumental, arched series of sixty-four exquisite variants upon the bare, open-ended four-measure phrase heard at its beginning. The two massive outer sections in the minor mode bracket a major-key central episode, and this colossal structure encompasses every aspect of violin-playing technique and contrapuntal ingenuity that Bach could have possibly known when he composed the approximately fifteen-minute long piece. Violists have long been successfully bringing the uniquely warm tonal range of their instrument to these Bach masterworks.

About her work **Timepiece for alto saxophone and pre-recorded music**, the composer Cynthia McTee writes: “I entitled the work, *Timepiece*, not only for its connection to the celebration of special events marking the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's one hundredth anniversary and the beginning of a new millennium, but also for the manner in which musical time shapes the work. The piece begins

slowly,'before' time, in a womb-like, subjective, holding place. And then a clock-like pulse emerges, takes control, and provides the driving force behind a sustained, highly energized second section of about six minutes".

Bach composed his **Praeludium and Fugue in C sharp Major**, **BMW 848**, as the third prelude and fugue in the First Book of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, a series of 48 preludes and fugues for keyboard. The two-part Praeludium employs a fast, 3/8 time series of chords, split between the hands in the keyboard version, and between the instruments in this transcription for two alto saxophones. The Fugue is more lighthearted than many composed by Bach, eschewing many of the commonly used fugal devices such as diminution, or augmentation, pedal point or inversion, lending it a character ideally suited to an interpretation by a pair of saxophones.

For many years it was thought that Bach composed his three sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord when he was Kapellmeister in the city of Cöthen, since the only autograph score which survives is that of the **Sonata for viola da gamba and harpsichord No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1027** was discovered only in 1929. Musicologists now generally agree that Bach composed these three works much later in Leipzig, at some time in the late 1730's or early 1740's, long after the composer had moved to that city in 1723 to take up his position as Thomaskantor. The jury is still out as to whether the *Trio Sonata for two transverse flutes and basso continuo in G major, BWV 1039*, one of the few trio sonatas that can genuinely be attributed to Bach, may either be an arrangement of this viola da gamba sonata, or vice versa. In this Sonata for viola da gamba, or in this case modern viola, the composer elevated the harpsichord, or in the case of this evening's performance, the piano, from having a subordinate, partly improvised basso continuo role to becoming an equal, fully written-out musical partner in the duo sonata style, one of the most important developments in the history of 18th century chamber music. Both works make use of the Baroque sonata da chiesa four-movement pattern of slow-fast-slow-fast. The opening Adagio movement in each work makes use of the imitative style of the traditional Baroque trio sonata, but lacking a full cadence flows luxuriantly into the following Allegro ma non tanto movement, where Bach demonstrates both the originality and the mastery of his use of counterpoint. The following Andante movement is suffused with a contrasting languid quality, nicely setting the stage for the restless return of the composer's contrapuntal magic in the bright, final Allegro moderato. More than 200 of Johann Sebastian Bach's cantatas have survived. While he composed cantatas throughout his career, by far the greatest number of them were written when he held the post of Thomaskantor, or Cantor at St. Thomas, in Leipzig from 1723 to 1750. Bach composed his church **Cantata No.179 Siehe zu, daß deine Gottesfurcht nicht Heuchelei sei** ("See to it, that your fear of God be not hypocrisy"), BMV 179 during his first year in Leipzig for the eleventh Sunday after Trinity, where it was first performed on August 8 in 1723. The unknown poet who composed the text stayed close to the prescribed Gospel readings for that day, alluding to several Bible passages. Bach used the music of the opening chorus again several more times, most notably in the opening Kyrie movement of his Mass in G major.