Chapter Seven

“Per l’orchestra di Dresda“ – Vivaldi and Court Musical Performance in Dresden

The importance of the electoral court as a performance venue for Vivaldi’s music in Dresden has come up a number of times in this book, directly or indirectly. I have mentioned Vivaldi’s decisive advocate at the royal residence on the Elbe River, Johann Georg Pisendel on more than one occasion. Leading violinist and long-standing concertmaster of the court orchestra, and one of the key figures of Dresden musical life of the period, Pisendel’s personal meetings with Vivaldi and his experience of Vivaldi’s art during the Venice stay of 1716–17 left a deep impression on him (fig. 36).

At first sight, the topic of Vivaldi and Dresden may seem to be of largely local interest, though a closer look reveals it to be of far greater importance. The relevant areas include specific aspects of Vivaldi’s life and works, along with the positive regard for and reception of his works by leading exponents and certain segments of German musical culture.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Dresden was the city of the so-called Augustinian Age, that is, of the reigns of the elec-

Figure 36.
Johann Georg Pisendel in a freehand drawing by Fauk.

tors Frederick August I (August the Strong, 1694–1733) and Frederick August II (1733–1763) (fig. 37). Both electors were also kings of Poland (as August II and August III), which increased the brilliance of the Dresden court. Critical as our assessment of these two rulers' absolutism may be today, without doubt, Dresden, the royal residence of one of the largest and economically most developed German states at the time, became a major European cultural and artistic center. Baroque Dresden came into being: a fascinating metropolis famed for splendid architecture, sculptural masterpieces, and rich art collections, its many festivities involving theater and music. Of course, the prime motive behind these events was each sovereign's need to display his power and wealth, his absolutistic splendor; yet it is also true that both rulers possessed a genuine affinity for the arts. The younger of the elector-kings was probably fonder of music and of the theater than August the Strong, and the Habsburg princess he married in 1719, Maria Josepha, eldest daughter of Emperor Joseph I, was also a passionate music lover and patron. It was she who subsequently acquired the estates of several leading Dresden musicians for the court orchestra archives, including the priceless private music library of Pisendel, who died in 1755.

The part of court musical life holding greatest interest in relation to Vivaldi is the so-called *Kammermusik*, as distinct from (Catholic) court

Figure 37. Frederick August II as prince-elector. Copper engraving by Martin Bernigeroth.

church music and opera, including all concertante musical offerings in the *chamber* and at table. In charge of this music was the Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Orchestra, as the Dresden court orchestra of the two elector-kings was called. Following the difficult years that Saxony went through during the first phase of the Northern War (which also created a crisis in the court musical establishment) a long growth period began for this ensemble, starting about 1709. A 1709 orchestra budget already included about thirty names, and by 1719 the orchestra had increased to slightly more than forty members, including eight violinists, five violists, five cellists, three bass players, two flutists, five oboists, three bassoonists, two horn players, two organists, and two theorbists.[1] During the 1730s, the number of violinists increased to

thirteen. The orchestra's ensemble, which consisted of many renowned virtuosos, was soon considered of the highest order. The violin section included the long-standing concertmaster, Jean-Baptiste Volumier (in Dresden from 1709 to 1728), Pisendel, and Francesco Maria Veracini (1717–1722), while the leading wind players were flutists Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin and his student Johann Joachim Quantz (in Dresden until 1741), oboists François Le Riche and (his student) Johann Christian Richter, and, finally, musicians such as Jan Dismas Zelenka (contrabass player from 1710 and later church composer), lutenist Silvius Leopold Weiß, and Pantaleon Hebenstreit. Hiller wrote in his *Lebensbeschreibungen* (Biographies), referring to the time around 1717, that "No orchestra in Europe could claim as many virtuosos as the Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Orchestra in Dresden".[2]

Under such conditions, there can be no doubt that the Dresden court orchestra was receptive to the appealing repertoire of modern Italian chamber music. Vivaldi concertos were played at an amateur concert in Strasbourg in February 1713.[3] Shortly thereafter, a relatively wide selection of works was available to the small Weimar court orchestra, both in printed and in manuscript form. We can therefore assume with certainty that at this point, along with solo and trio sonatas and concerti grossi, the newer solo concertos (including Vivaldi's) became part of the Dresden orchestra's repertoire. To date, however, we have no indications that Vivaldi's works enjoyed a privileged position in the repertoire at that time.

The incidence of Vivaldi's music in the Dresden court repertoire did not become truly extraordinary until the autumn of 1717 when Johann Georg Pisendel returned from Italy. From April 1716 Pisendel had been south of the Alps as the leader of a small ensemble that accompanied the prince-elector. The ensemble spent most of its time in Venice, where the prince stayed from February 1716 to July 1717. Frederick August's *Kammermusik*, which also included oboist Johann Christian Richter, violone player Jan Dismas Zelenka, and court organist Christian Petzold, apparently stayed together only until the beginning of 1717; in any case, at chat time Pisendel was granted permission to continue on to both Rome and Naples.

Though our main interest in the prince-elector's stay in Venice, along with his musical entourage, is directed toward Pisendel and his relations with Vivaldi, the prince-elector's own musical contacts also

merit our attention, especially since he was engaged in hiring Venetian musicians and singers for the upcoming Dresden opera. The prince-elector, who was born in 1696 (making him twenty years old at the time) and was considered a great lover of Italian music, must have been an important figure in the city's musical life during this, his third visit to Venice (he had been there briefly in both 1712 and 1713). The many musical homages and the number of works dedicated to him in the *Serenissima* are proof of this. Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, for example, dedicated to him his opera *Ariodante*, which premiered in November 1716 at the Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo. In addition, Giorgio Gentili dedicated his *Concerti a quattro*, Op. 6, of 1716, and Veracini dedicated his manuscript set of Twelve Violin Sonatas dated 26 July of the same year. Not least of all, the important artists that he signed for Dresden are proof of the prestige enjoyed by both the prince-elector and the court he represented among Venetian musicians. Among those holding favorable impressions of the music at his court were Antonio Lotti, one of the most respected Venetian composers, and Veracini, one of the leading violin virtuosos of the time, who had triumphed over the young Tartini in 1716 in an academy held in a Venetian palazzo. Several episodes concerning Johann David Heinichen's stay in Venice, reported by Hiller, also give a vivid picture of the role Frederick August played in the city's musical life.[4] Heinichen, who dedicated his oratorio *La Pace di Kamberga* (performed during Lent of 1716) to the prince-elector, was also engaged by Frederick August in Venice; his duties as electoral Saxon *maestro di cappella* began on 1 August 1716.

The Italian musicologist Fausto Torrefranca was the first scholar to investigate the relationship between the Saxon prince-elector and Vivaldi.[5] His research came about because he saw that Vivaldi (with whom the Dresden violinist accompanying the prince had particularly close ties) played only a peripheral role in Frederick August's eyes. The *Concerto a 10 oblig.* (RV 576) exists as a set of parts without dedication in Dresden (Mus. 2389-0-125), while the Turin copy of the score bears a note in the composer's own hand: "p. S. A. R. Sas.ª", which stands for "per Sua Altezza Reale di Sassonia" (for His Royal Saxon Highness). We can also assume with certainty that the prince-elector and Vivaldi, who was probably the most popular Venetian musician of the time, knew each other. Why then did Vivaldi not dedicate a representative printed work to the prince? And was it Frederick August's or

Vivaldi's decision that he was not to be among the Venetian artists who traveled to Dresden in September 1717? After all, Vivaldi left his native city only a few months later to work as *maestro di cappella* in the far more modest court of Mantua.

Although Torrefranca's hypotheses, which are built on the notion of scant favor (*scarso favore*) on the part of the prince-elector toward Vivaldi, are untenable as a whole, they do contain noteworthy observations and suppositions about the relationship between the prince-elector and Vivaldi. To be sure, any attempt to find a fitting explanation without sufficient facts would be pure speculation.

In spring 1716, when Johann Georg Pisendel arrived in Venice, he was twenty-nine (born 26 December 1686). He was not only an accomplished virtuoso on his instrument but also a musical all-rounder, familiar with both Italian and French styles. He had been a choir boy in the Ansbach Hofkapelle (court chapel) and a voice student of Francesco Antonio Pistocchi. He had studied violin with Giuseppe Torelli and, during his years of playing with the court chapel orchestra (1703–1709), had developed into a violinist who in 1709 amazed the members of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, led by Melchior Hoffman, by playing a Torelli violin concerto. The newly matriculated Pisendel was soon appointed deputy leader of the Leipzig Collegium Musicum. Here, the young musician was discovered by the new Dresden concertmaster, Volumier, and hired for the court orchestra, starting in January 1712 as assistant concertmaster. Before he traveled to Venice in 1716, he had in 1714 (again as part of the prince-elector's *Kammermusik*) visited Paris.

It seems relevant to mention these facts because they place Pisendel's *studies* with Vivaldi in their proper light. The *Lebenslauf Herrn Johann Georg Pisendels* (Biography of Johann Georg Pisendel), published in 1767, states that Pisendel in fact "took actual violin lessons"[6] from Vivaldi (and from the "famous violinist, Montanari", in Rome, though presumably he mostly taught him modern Italian interpretation in Vivaldi's manner). In addition, a recently rediscovered document proves that the consultations (as we might call Pisendel's lessons with Vivaldi, using modern terminology) included composition: the autograph of a concerto movement composed by Pisendel in Venice contains corrections in Vivaldi's hand.[7] The relationship between the two musicians was surely more that of a friendship between professional colleagues

than one of teacher and pupil. Not least of all, the fact that Vivaldi entrusted a considerable number of compositions to the Dresden violinist would support this view: five violin sonatas and six violin concertos that are part of the autograph manuscripts of the Pisendel collection in Dresden bear the dedication "fatto per Monsieur Pisendel" (fig. 38).[8] These manuscripts are remarkable for not being clean copies, as would have been normal in the case of dedicated works; they are all working manuscripts, some of which are more like sketches, containing extensive corrections. In one instance (Mus. 2389-0-44), the manuscript is an opening Allegro and not a complete concerto and is presumably the first draft of an early version of what was later published as the Concerto in D Minor, Op. 8 (RV 242). Manuscripts of this kind were certainly given only to friends or trusted colleagues.

The close relationship between the two musicians is also indicated by the two episodes that Johann Adam Hiller reports from Pisendel's period in Venice: the previously mentioned experience with the *sbirri* and Pisendel's appearance as virtuoso "between two acts" of an opera at

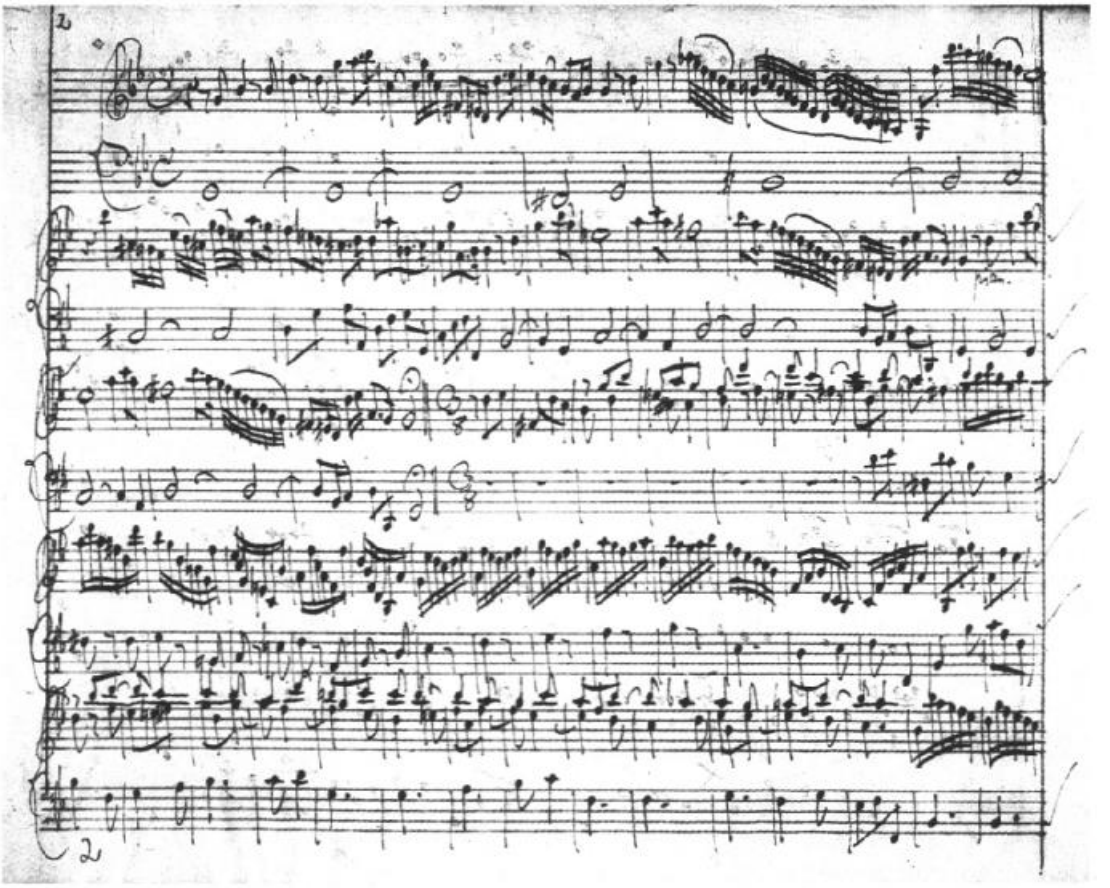


Figure 38. Beginning of the Violin Sonata (RV 26) in Pisendel's hand.

which he played Vivaldi's Concerto in F Major "with hunting horns" (RV 571). In that performance, the German violinist took the place of Vivaldi, who (as we know from Uffenbach's diary)[9] normally shone between the acts of his operas in violin performances. This was certainly not the only occasion on which Pisendel performed Vivaldi concertos and sonatas publicly in Venice. Taken alone, the fact that we have the instrumental parts to at least eight of the *prete rosso*'s violin concertos in Pisendel's hand and an even larger number of violin sonatas that he copied himself or received from the composer (while in Venice) proves as much.

It would be wrong to mention Pisendel's relationship with Vivaldi only in connection with the German's stay in Venice. We are certain that the Dresden violinist maintained personal contacts with other leading musicians in the city, including Tommaso Albinoni and Benedetto Marcello. Albinoni also presented the German virtuoso with a violin sonata in manuscript bearing the dedication "Composta per il Signor Pisendel".[10] Yet the ratio between the Vivaldi works that traveled to Dresden and those by other Venetian composers clearly shows the extraordinary impact that Vivaldi had on Pisendel. In September 1717 when he returned to Dresden from Venice, he took at least forty manuscripts of Vivaldi instrumental works with him – in addition to the original manuscripts given to him, his own copies of seven sonatas, and more than twenty concertos and sinfonias in score form or in parts.

This was presumably the first large body of works by Vivaldi to reach Dresden, though not the only one. To the best of our present knowledge, a considerable portion of the Vivaldi manuscripts in Dresden were written a good deal later, probably between 1725 and 1730. Two groups of scores totaling twenty-four concertos, which Pisendel had assigned two of his apprentice musicians (one of whom has been identified as the young Quantz)[11] to copy, and an overwhelming part of the performance material, copied by the copyists for the court orchestra, can probably be dated at around 1730. Contrary to earlier suppositions, the copyists in question began working for the court orchestra in about 1725.[12]

Based on the information about the court copyists, the hypothesis has been advanced that intensive performance of Vivaldi in Dresden did not begin until "Pisendel became concertmaster in 1728" and that "the actual heyday of Vivaldi performances in Dresden was intense, but brief".[13] These conclusions are open to a number of questions. Is it

likely that the performance materials of the concertos, copied in Venice under Pisendel's direction (and doubtless also played there), were abandoned in Dresden? Taken together, these performance materials, which were available after 1717, along with the sonatas and the printed works (the Op. 2 sonatas and Op. 3 concertos), make up a quite large repertoire. These works, including the "Prince-Elector" Concerto (RV 576) could have been copied in Dresden soon after Pisendel's return from Venice. The objection that Vivaldi's champion, Pisendel, did not yet have the authority of a concertmaster, that is, no "responsibility for selecting orchestral repertoire",[14] is unconvincing. Given concertmaster Volumier's predilection for French music, it would seem more reasonable to assume that he and Pisendel practiced a division of labor. František Benda's autobiography alludes to the role Vivaldi's concertos played at the Dresden court around 1720. The Czech violinist, who was a student of Pisendel while a choirboy in Dresden, wrote in 1763, "In Dresden, where the choirboys played concerts for each other, I played the viola. At the same time I practiced the violin and played the latest Vivaldi concertos by heart".[15] That Benda was able to recall Vivaldi's violin concertos after more than four decades would seem to indicate that they played a special role in court musical life at the time,

The fact that large portions of the Dresden Vivaldi repertoire were almost certainly written during the late 1720s and perhaps early 1730s seems to confirm the view "that Vivaldi's works must have been regularly performed in Dresden for a long period".[16] There can be no doubt that Vivaldi continued to supply the Saxon capital with new works, which were copied in Dresden, for a relatively long time after the first influx of the composer's works in 1717. Possibly not all these works were the composer's most recent, yet some of the compositions that went to Dresden after about 1725 must have been written at that time. In addition to concertos also found in the later printed sets (Opp. 9, 11, and 12), these include works such as the Concerto in C Major (RV 177), which is closely related to the sinfonia to *L'Olimpiade* (1734). We also should note that certain works were repeated after a long interval, as indicated by duplicate sets of parts or duplicate individual parts copied at a later date. Possibly, one such work is the Concerto in F Major (RV 571) that, according to Hiller's account, Pisendel had already played in Venice and of which there are two part sets and a score in Dresden. One of them, a revised version by Pisendel, must have

been written during the mid-1720s at the earliest.

Performances of Vivaldi's works seem to have fallen off during the 1730s, so Dresden's "Vivaldi era" may have come to an end (virtually no new compositions were acquired), but this is entirely natural. Not only had audiences grown somewhat tired of the style of Vivaldi's concertos, even Vivaldi – a "progressive musician"[17] – was left behind stylistically during his lifetime. Two factors were especially important in regard to Dresden: the influence of Johann Adolph Hasse, who headed the court music starting in 1734, and, especially, the style that the ex-Dresdener Quantz called the German, or mixed, style. Indigenous concerto production was going on in Germany, not least among Dresden musicians and those close to them. These composers took Vivaldi (and other Italian models), added their own creative contributions, and adapted them to Dresden conditions by considerably expanding the orchestra's participation. Good examples of this trend are found in the concertos of the Zerbst court music director, Johann Friedrich Fasch, who had close ties with Dresden. The Dresden manuscript collection contains about two-thirds of his sixty-one verifiable instrumental concertos, most of which were presumably composed for the Saxon capital.

By far the most comprehensive and significant part of the instrumental works in the Dresden Vivaldi collection consists of roughly ninety instrumental concertos, about a dozen orchestral compositions without soloists (primarily opera sinfonias), and eighteen chamber music works (sonatas and concertos for chamber ensemble).[18] Still, the Dresden collection also contains more vocal works than any other library except the Turin library, which houses the composer's autographs. We therefore have to ask whether the privileged position Vivaldi's instrumental works enjoyed at the Dresden court also extended to sacred and secular vocal music.

The answer to this question is definitely negative. First, not one of Vivaldi's stage works was performed at the Dresden court, in spite of the fact that for a long period – from autumn 1717 to Carnival 1720 and again starting in the early 1730s – the Saxon capital was one of the most brilliant centers of Italian opera in Germany. During that period the repertoire consisted almost entirely of works by the local court composers Lotti and Hasse. Virtually no operas were performed in Dresden between 1720 and 1730, that is, during the major period of Vivaldi's career as an opera composer. We probably should not over-

emphasize this fact, but we should not ignore it either. The only works in the Dresden manuscript collection by Vivaldi the opera composer, with the exception of a few surviving separate opera sinfonias, are two large aria collections totaling forty-four opera arias. One of these manuscripts (Mus. 1-F-30) is a volume of eighty-four arias from Venetian operas from 1713 to 1716 which contains sixteen arias (as a group) from Vivaldi's *Arsilda regina di Ponto* (autumn 1716, Teatro Sant'Angelo). Most probably this volume, written by a Venetian copyist, was brought to Dresden in 1717. The second aria collection (Mus. 2389-J-1) contains twenty-eight pieces (some of them in the composer's hand) from Vivaldi operas written between 1727 and 1732/33, most of which are from *La fida ninfa* (eight arias and the trio "S'egli è ver"). In 1730, after his stay in *Germania*, Vivaldi may have wished to present himself as an opera composer to the Saxon capital, then without a court music director.

Nor did Vivaldi's sacred music occupy a privileged position at the Dresden court. Except for the extant manuscripts of two motets ("In turbato mare irato", RV 627, and "Sum in medio tempestatimi", RV 632) and the solo psalm setting ("Laudate pueri", RV 601), only one other work belonged at one time to the Dresden music collection: the Magnificat in G Minor (RV 610 or 610a/b). It is included in an *Inventarium* compiled starting in 1726 by Jan Dismas Zelenka and containing all the sacred compositions he owned. Along with the extant manuscript and printed music, this inventory is our most valuable source of information about the repertoire of Dresden court church music from this period.[19] The inventory includes the two Vivaldi motets RV 627 and RV 632. Zelenka was initially in charge of religious music together with Kapellmeister Heinichen; after Heinichen's death in 1729, he had sole responsibility for the post for many years. During his visit to Venice in 1716, he must have become acquainted with Vivaldi's sacred music. Yet it is almost impossible to detect, in the few Vivaldi sacred works acquired for Dresden, an indication that this meeting had an especially lasting effect on the Dresden church composer-to-be (he was not officially granted the title until 1735). Vivaldi was considered as important as many lesser masters of the period, while Antonio Caldara is represented in the inventory by fully ten masses or parts of masses. As far as we can determine today, not a single Vivaldi mass was brought to Dresden.

The last areas that remain to be considered are vocal chamber music (cantatas) and festive court music (serenatas). While the respectable

number of at least ten Vivaldi solo cantatas are to be found in Dresden archives,[20] there is no trace of any festive or celebrative works. This is not surprising in regard to works written for festive events in Dresden, though the Saxon prince-elector visited Venice on three occasions between 1712 and 1716/17, which certainly would have provided ample opportunities for such works. When the son of the previous prince-elector, the eighteen-year-old prince Frederick Christian, was paid musical tribute by the Ospedale della Pietà in March 1740, the festive program contained four instrumental compositions by Vivaldi and a serenata. The composer of this latter work, of which only the text has survived, was, however, Gennaro d'Alessandro, the *maestro di coro* at the time, not Vivaldi.

Among all his works, Vivaldi's instrumental works can be singled out as having a dominant position in the Dresden court repertoire. To a large extent, this reflects the generally held impression and appreciation of Vivaldi's works, but Pisendel's role here is significant. It was Pisendel alone who was responsible for ensuring the works of the *prete rosso* such a prominent role. Pisendel's area of "jurisdiction" was restricted to instrumental music, however, and his special interest as performer was in the violin concerto and in the violin sonata.

The initial impression one has in dealing with the concerto and sonata manuscripts contained in the Dresden Vivaldi archives is that the repertoire was tailored to the violinist Pisendel. Almost every one of the roughly ninety concertos preserved in manuscript in Dresden is written for one or more solo violins. Although Vivaldi wrote some eighty solo and double concertos for wind instruments, none are in the Dresden collection. Of his twenty-seven solo concertos for cello, only one is in Dresden. Much the same can be said for the sonatas: thirteen (possibly only eleven) solo sonatas for violin and continuo (not counting the printed edition of the Twelve Violin Sonatas, Op. 2) as opposed to at most three oboe sonatas – presumably for Johann Christian Richter.[21] The Dresden collection not only contains the largest number of Vivaldi solo sonatas but also contains the sonatas the composer presented to Pisendel in autograph manuscripts, which include his perhaps finest and most demanding violin sonatas, the Sonata in A Major (RV 29) and the Sonata in C Minor (RV 6).

In addition to the violin virtuoso Pisendel, the Dresden court orchestra with its special and unusual performance is the second

factor responsible for the type of Vivaldi repertoire performed in the Saxon capital. The Dresden court was the second most predominant performance venue for Vivaldi, following only the Pietà and its highly praised orchestra. The Dresden orchestra gave performances (often probably commissions) of a very distinct new kind of concerto: the concerto with "many" concertante instruments, scored for strings and winds. The composer called these pieces *Concerti con molti Istromenti.* About half of the over fifteen pieces of this kind known today are preserved in Dresden or are connected with Dresden, and one is tempted to identify a certain scoring as the *Dresden type.* It is found in the five concertos for solo violin, which have one pair each of concertante horns and oboes (usually also with a bassoon) and strings, and form part of the repertoire of the Dresden court orchestra (RV 562, 568, 569, 571, and 574). The *Dresden* works also include the previously mentioned Concerto in G Minor "per Sua Altezza Reale di Sassonia" (RV 576) and the especially colorful concerto in the same key, of which there is no copy in Dresden, entitled "per l'Orchestra di Dresda" (RV 577) (fig. 39).[22] Both of these works employ two recorders and two oboes together with violin (RV 577) and violin and oboe (RV 576) as the principal solo instruments.

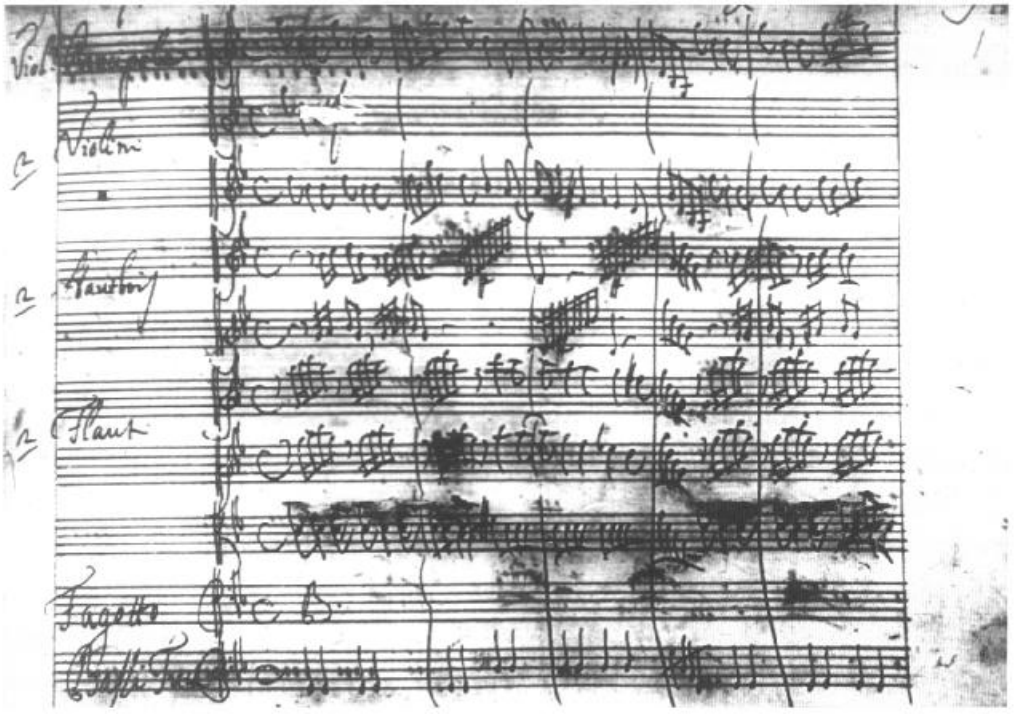


Figure 39. Autograph score of the Concerto in G Minor "per l'Orchestra di Dresda" (RV 577).

"Concerti con molti Istromenti"

Compared to the total number of the composer's instrumental concertos, a group consisting of less than twenty works would seem to be relatively insignificant. Still, on the basis of their weight and historical influence, the works Vivaldi called *Concerti con molti Istromenti* (Concertos for Many Instruments) are of particular importance not only for their form but also within the context of early eighteenth-century orchestral music as a whole. The crucial distinctiveness of these concertos is that they are not Corellian concerti grossi in the old style, rather, they are works that fully conform to the model of the three-movement solo concerto, with, however, at least four or five solo instruments of different types. Concertos such as those for four violins (with or without a cello), as found in *L'estro armonico*, do not fall under this definition. On the other hand, there is no definition that clearly separates this group of works from others. As far as we know, Vivaldi used the term "Concerti con molti Istromenti" only twice: once, to designate an individual work, the RV 555 concerto with thirteen (!) concertante instruments, and secondly, in the title of the famous 1740 Dresden manuscript collection (Mus. 2389-O-4), in which the first work – the one that lends the set its name – is a concerto for eleven solo instruments (RV 558). In general, the composer also uses the title *concerto* to describe works with more than one or *many* solo instruments, after which he usually enumerates the instruments in question ("… con Corni da Caccia, due Oboè, Fagotto", etc.). If today Vivaldi's coinage "Concerto con molti Istromenti" is increasingly being used as the term for a genre or type of music, it is because there is really no more fitting name for these works.

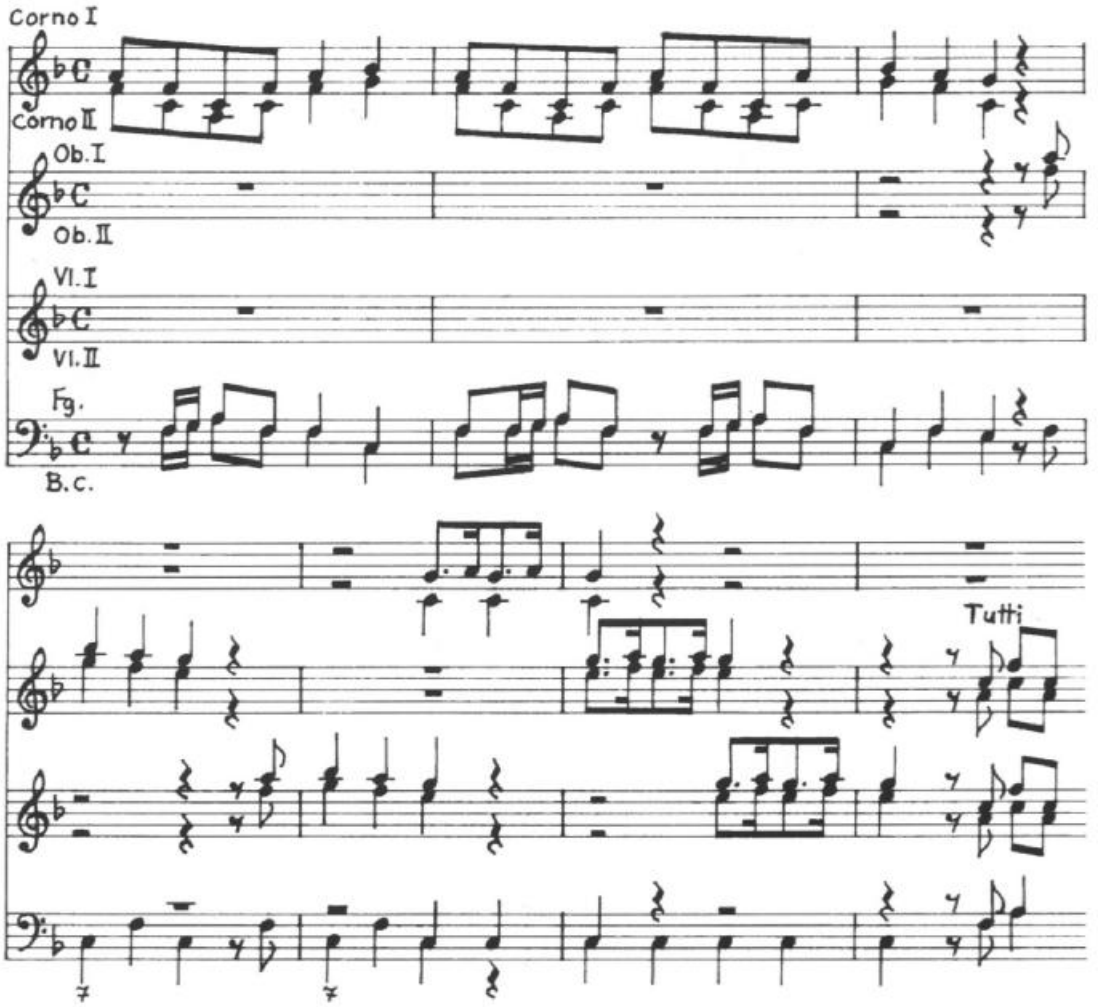
It is impossible to know when Vivaldi wrote his first of the "concertos for many instruments", yet there are a number of indications that this type of concerto came into being soon after the solo concerto. Vivaldi seems to have created this special kind of concerto; certainly, no one has been able to identify any direct Italian genre models. Musical conditions in the Pietà orchestra may have played an important role in stimulating such scoring because the Ospedale's rich potential of soloists on various instruments must bave made him think of uniting *many* players in one work. We must, however, keep in mind that a major portion of these concertos could hardly have been written for the Pietà

orchestra – those with pairs of concertante horns, for example, since to the best of our knowledge the horn was not used at the Pietà. Hiller writes that one of these concertos with horns (RV 571) was played by Pisendel in a Venetian theater between the acts of an opera during the winter of 1716–1717; another concerto's (RV 562) designation, "Per la solennità di San Lorenzo", refers to the location at which an especially splendid celebration on the martyr Lawrence's saint day (10 August) was held. In Venice, the main celebration venue was the Benedictine convent of San Lorenzo (which had to draw on outside musicians for such festivities), not the Ospedale della Pietà.[23] There are sets of parts for the Concerto in D Major (RV 562) in Pisendel's hand on Venetian paper (Mus. 2389-O-94) – also for the Concerto in F Major (RV 571), so the work cannot have been composed later than 1717.[24]

It is impossible to tell whether any of the other concertos with horns were commissioned by Dresden. The possibility exists because the fact that all Vivaldi's works with this scoring were brought to Dresden shows the special interest the Dresden court orchestra (which had two regular horn players as early as 1710) had in these particular compositions.

Rudolf Eller has best described the particular historical and structural features of the "Concerti con molti Istromenti". Using the analysis of what I have described as the *Dresden Type*, with solo violin, horns, and oboes, Eller sees "the new and special aspect … (as) the purposeful and intelligent organization of the movement form by use of different solo instruments in various sections of the structure", that is, the dominant solo violin, on the one hand, and the two pairs of concertante winds on the other. This means that the composer is not content in the fast, ritornello-form outer movements merely to "have the various solo instruments and their groupings play freely with the tutti and among themselves", but "rather he creates definite links between the different soloists and the formal structure". Especially characteristic is the occurrence of concertizing within the ritornellos as well as concertizing in the form of extended solos. In this kind of movement, the opening ritornello is "not performed throughout by the tutti but, at times, by solo instruments, chiefly groups of winds".[25] For example, in the opening Allegro of the Concerto in F Major (RV 571), which I have mentioned several times, the fanfare-like ritornello opening is followed by an eight-bar episode in which three groups of instruments – horns/bas-

soon, oboes, and violins – engage in a kind of dialogue (ex. 48). Almost all ritornellos in these works contain similar passages, some of which are quite long (42 bars of 4/4 in the first movement of the concerto RV 569, 58 bars of 3/4 in the opening movement of the concerto RV 568). In a few cases (the last movements of RV 569 and 574), even the opening of the ritornello is entrusted to a concertante wind group.



Example 48. Concerto in F Major (RV 571), first movement, bars 11 ff.

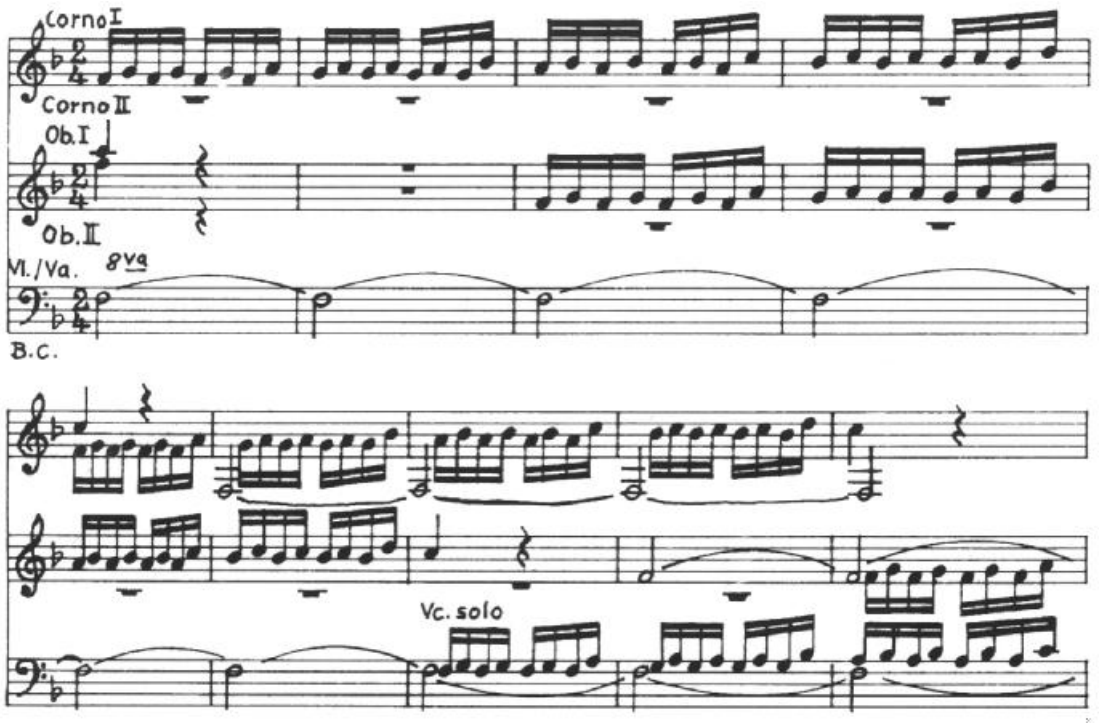
According to Rudolf Eller:

> When, however, [after the end of the ritornello] the first large solo section begins, most of which was always played by the principal violin, another type of playing begins that brings a second, contrasting dimension. The solo contrasts already with

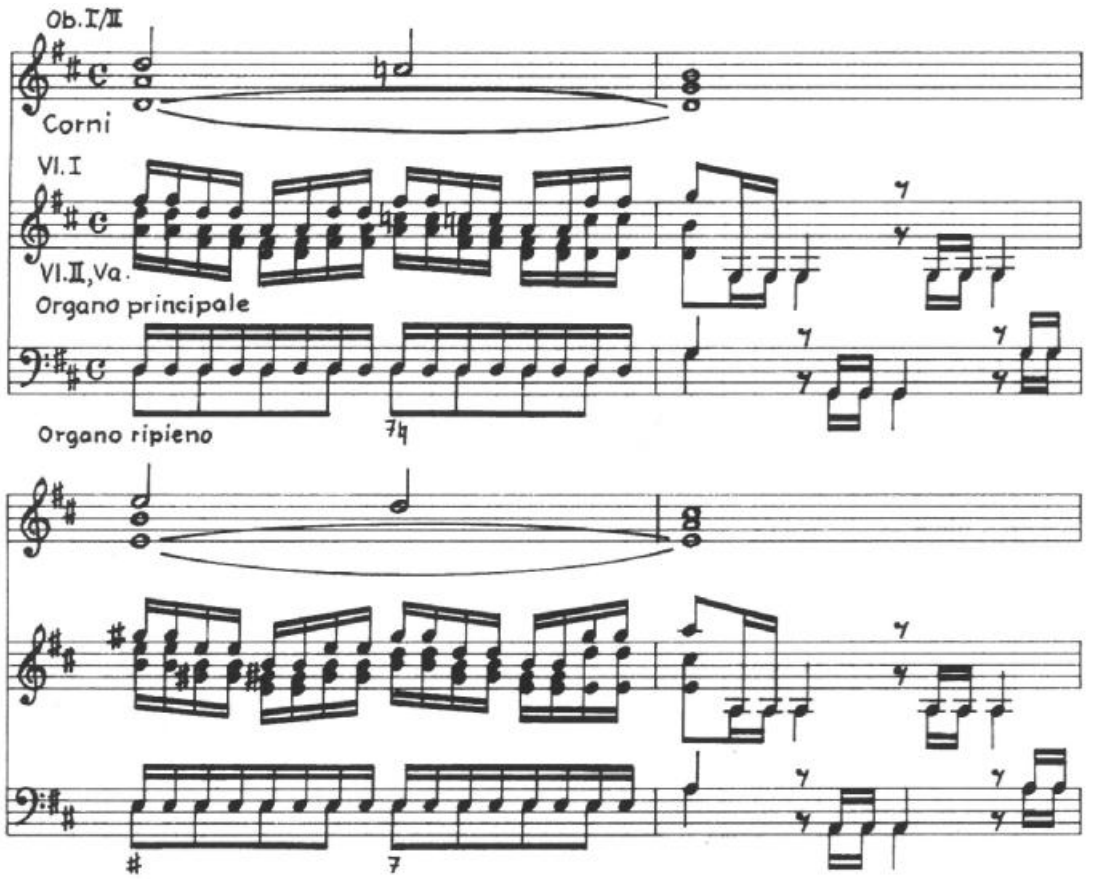
> the ritornello as a whole, solely by its largely figurative, strongly virtuosic motifs, but also, the motives differ collectively from those in the ritornello, from those in the tutti, and from those in the contrasting episodes within the tutti. Thus the result is not only a mixing or combining but also an intensification of concertizing, a concertizing on various levels. In the course of the movement these levels interact a number of times; there is varied concertizing between the wind groups, the principal violin, and the tutti or single tutti voices.[26]

In many cases there is an extraordinarily free use of ritornello form.

Of course, these remarks cover only one aspect of the special qualities of these pieces. The concertos are equally remarkable for the way in which the orchestra is used: the imaginative interplay of instrumental groups and the occasionally almost symphonic tutti writing. Two examples (mus. ex. 49a and 49b) illustrate this. The first comes from the last movement of the Concerto in F Major (RV 569) and contains the beginning of the last solo episode, which unfolds over a long tonic pedal point. The second is the seventeen-bar sequential passage from the first



Example 49a. Concerto in F Major (RV 569), third movement, bars 198 ff.



Example 49b. Concerto in D Major (RV 562), first movement, bars 17 ff.

movement ritornello of the "San Lorenzo" Concerto (RV 562), which is interesting owing to its combination of rustling string-figuration and long-held, sustained wind chords.

In addition to the group of five concertos with pairs of horns and oboes as concertante instruments, three concertos feature two recorders and two oboes in this function. As I have mentioned, two of these works, the Concertos in G Minor (RV 576 and RV 577), were certainly written for Dresden, and the third work, the Concerto in D Minor (RV 566), probably was also intended for the "orchestra di Dresda" owing to clear parallels to RV 577. The work dedicated to the prince-elector (RV 576) was probably composed in 1716, while the other two most likely were not written before 1720 or 1721.[27] The two G minor works display differences of musical character and structure when compared with the Concerto in D Minor, which features two violins as the principal solo instruments and which has a moderate, almost intimate

character. Its final movement, like the opening movement of the Concerto in F Major for Flute (RV 434 or RV 442), is based on the ritornello of the aria, "Ti sento, sì, ti sento", but the theme is recast in minor in RV 566. In contrast, the two concertos in G minor are powerful, with insistent tuttis and highly varied instrumental interaction. The pairs of recorders and oboes are the main soloists, joined by one violin and a second oboe in one case (RV 576) and by one solo violin in the other (RV 577). In the latter work, however, the two wind groups and individual instruments within them have unusually large solo parts. Both pieces are excellent examples of the most artistically and historically advanced Vivaldi concerto.

In general, the other concertos use uncommon scoring groups and the instrumentation varies from work to work. The only exceptions to this rule are two concertos for two oboes and clarinets (RV 559 and RV 560) and the concertos for two violins and cellos (RV 564 and RV 575).[28] Still, in the same way, these concertos can be considered "Concerti con molti Istromenti". The interaction is largely confined to dialogue between the two pairs of instruments, which gives special interest to the pieces. This principle is applied most consistently and effectively in the especially beautiful largos of RV 559 and RV 575.

The other concertos scored for large numbers of instruments are written for unique combinations, including some unusual sounding instruments. Such uncommon scoring is an indication that these concertos were written for the Pietà orchestra, in which such instruments were something of a specialty. The only concerto of this group that we know was written for another venue is the Concerto in C Major (RV 556) composed for the feast of San Lorenzo.[29] Table 2 gives a list that includes the most important of these works and their scoring.[30]

Finally, one of the five preserved concertos for double orchestra (RV 581–585) also belongs to this group: the Concerto in A Major "in due cori con flauti obligati" (RV 585) (the autograph score is in Dresden), with each of the two *cori* consisting of two violins and two recorders (as solo instruments).

Each of these concertos is remarkable in its own right – in technical craftsmanship, in musical expression, and in style, but most of all in instrumentation. Though musical substance is secondary to instrumental color in some of the cheerfully festive movements, a work like the "San Lorenzo" Concerto in C Major (RV 556) shows that works of this

Table 2
Selected Vivaldi concertos that have uncommon scoring.

Work	Scoring of Work
1. Concerto in C Major (RV 555)	3 violins, oboe, 2 recorders, 2 ***viole inglesi***, ***salmoè***, 2 cellos, 2 harpsichords, 2 trumpets (final movement only), strings, and contìnuo
2. Concerto "per la solennità di S. Lorenzo" in C Major (RV 556)	2 oboes, 2 clarinets (***clarini***), 2 recorders, 2 violins, bassoon, strings, and continuo
3. Concerto in C Major (RV 558)	2 ***violini in tromba marina***, 2 recorders, 2 mandolins, 2 ***salmò***, 2 theorboes, cello, strings, and continuo
4. Concerto "Funebre" in B-flat Major (RV 579)	violin, oboe, ***salmoè***, 3 ***viole all'inglese***, strings and continuo (oboe and ripieno strings are noted "con sordini")

kind can go beyond a kind of neutral festiveness. A good example of this is the Largo introduction to the first allegro movement – it begins with the brilliance of a French ouverture and ends ***pianissimo*** with subdued, descending minor chords covered by a lonely, infinitely long high note in the winds. The wonderful, formally distinct Concerto "Funebre" with its muted, wan timbre is an exception in every respect. One commentator rightly speaks of a "mourning shroud" cast over the music.[31]

Historically, the most influential works were not those for unusual ensembles, but rather those concertos scored for common groups. These include concertos with pairs of concertante flutes and oboes and, in particular, those works with pairs of horns and oboes, anticipating the standard scoring of pre- and early Classical symphonies. The language of future orchestral music is already present to an astonishing degree, and although we should not overestimate the pioneering aspect of such works, we can recognize that they play a role in the complex processes that prepared the symphonic orchestral style of the decades to come.

The lasting influence of this type of concerto in general and specifically on the German concerto, is incontestable. It is no exaggeration to state that, regardless of modifications to the Vivaldi model, the vast majority of the so-called group concertos (with or without a single dominant solo instrument and written in Germany between roughly 1720 and 1750) derived, at least indirectly, from the tradition of Vivaldi's concertos scored for mixed instruments. The Dresden court was by far the most important transmission channel for this particular trend toward a German acceptance of Vivaldi style. Virtually all the relevant composers (most of all Heinichen, who was active generally only in Dresden) were in more or less close contact with the Dresden orchestra, especially with Pisendel. The Dresden violinist and concertmaster was on friendly and professional terms (which in many cases involved the exchange of manuscripts or printed music) "with Stölzel in Gotha, Telemann in Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg, Fasch in Zerbst, Förster in Rudolstadt, Graupner in Darmstadt, and later, with his students Quantz and the brothers Graun in Berlin".[32]

In this context I would like to stress once again the extent of Vivaldi's influence in Dresden, using for this purpose examples furnished by works of Johann Friedrich Fasch, whose large number of concertos for Dresden demonstrate perhaps most directly how important Vivaldi's wind concertos were as models. This is particularly apparent in an early group of works, composed about 1730, that are scored for the same forces as Vivaldi's "Dresden" concertos (solo violin, two horns, two oboes, and bassoon).

Finally, we come to Johann Sebastian Bach, another name from the list of composers who maintained especially close ties with the Dresden court. As cantor for the Thomas school in Leipzig, he was a Saxon subject and was permitted to carry the title (albeit only as of November 1736) of "Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Composer". We have evidence he took trips from Leipzig to Dresden as early as 1724, and we know of visits in the opposite direction by musicians of the Dresden court orchestra to the house of the Leipzig cantor. In 1773 Johann Adolph Scheibe wrote about the period around 1730 saying that "we received reliable and thorough information almost every day through the connection between the late *maestro di cappella* Bach and other music lovers in Leipzig and the virtuosos of the royal orchestra in Dresden".[33] One of these "virtuosos" with whom the Leipzig music director was on

friendly ternis certainly was Pisendel, who in 1709, during his journey from Ansbach to Leipzig, had stopped in Weimar and "introduced himself to Mr. Johann Sebastian Bach, who was employed there at the time".[34] Pisendel was also referred to either as the one who suggested that Bach write his partitas and sonatas for solo violin or as the violinist for whom they were composed.

The first phase of Bach's involvement with the Italian concerto was long behind him at that point. It had begun during his early and middle years in Weimar, and probably culminated around 1713–1714, when the not quite thirty-year-old composer transcribed at least twenty mostly Italian instrumental concertos as unaccompanied organ or harpsichord concertos, thus creating a new repertoire of virtuoso keyboard music. Though not all the works were originally by Vivaldi, as was assumed during the nineteenth century, the nine arrangements by Bach of concertos by the Venetian composer clearly demonstrate that he was at the heart of Bach's interest. Of the other composers identified, only the young prince Johann Ernst of Weimar wrote more than one of the works arranged by Vivaldi. Bach surely had access to *L'estro armonico*, which had been published in 1711 and from which he transcribed five concertos.[35] The other transcriptions must have been based on manuscripts. Table 3 includes the most important information about these works.

Since scholars have shown that the transcriptions adhere closely to the form of the individual movements and to the works as a whole, the arranger's changes are not as major as was assumed for many years. On the whole, Bach's changes either are necessitated by the transcription for a keyboard instrument, providing idiomatic writing for these instruments (for example, reworking the continuo as an accompanying keyboard figuration), or furnish written out versions of more or less understood performance conventions of the period (for instance, ornamentation of a solo line). To be sure, the arranger occasionally betrays his utterly different musical nature by inserting secondary parts that make for a denser texture.

Though the Weimar concerto arrangements clearly document Bach's involvement with the newly created Italian concerto, they are documents of secondary importance. The real measure of the importance of Vivaldi's compositional principles for Bach comes in the significant stylistic changes in his own writing during those years. His main

Table 3
J. S. Bach Transcription Sources.

BWV #	Key	RV #	Key	Solo Instruments	Source Used by Bach
1 . Transcriptions for Organ					
593	A minor	522	A minor	2 violins	Op. 3, No. 8, printed version
595	C major	208	D major	violin	manuscript of Op. 7, No. 11 (RV 208a) different from the printed version
596	D minor	565	D minor	2 violins & cello	Op. 3, No. 11, printed version
2. Transcriptions for Harpsichord					
972	D major	230	D major	violin	Op. 3, No. 9, printed version
973	G major	299	G major	violin	source identical to the printed version of Op. 7, No. 8
975	G minor	316	G minor	violin	manuscript version differing from the printed score of Op. 4, No. 6 (RV 316a)
976	C major	265	E major	violin	Op. 3. No. 12, printed version
978	F major	310	G major	violin	Op. 3, No. 3, printed version
980	G major	381	B-flat major	violin	manuscript; parts of first movement identical with Op. 4, No. 1 (RV 383a)

interest was not initially in composing concertos of his own (to which he did not devote major attention until his Cöthen years), but rather it was in evolving his own musical language under the influence of and based on the formal principles Vivaldi had developed in his concerto movements. This applies to types of themes, to harmonic placement, and to understanding of form. For Bach, the ritornello form remained,

well into his later years in Leipzig, one of his basic structural principles in almost all areas. The influence of Vivaldi's concertos is not, therefore, confined to Bach's concertos, but it includes the German composer's musical language as a whole, and, as Forkel would put it, his way of "thinking musically". The statement that "Vivaldi's influence" on Bach can "scarcely be exaggerated"[36] must be seen in this light.

Given the importance of Bach's encounter with Vivaldi during the Weimar years, it hardly seems conceivable that his interest was confined to a single early study of a relatively narrow selection of the Venetian composer's works. Instead I would assume that he continued to seek out Vivaldi's music in all areas. The major source of these works would certainly have been the Dresden court, which Bach first visited in the autumn of 1717 while he was still active in Weimar, that is, at the time when Pisendel was returning or had just returned from Italy. The most salient event of this first visit to Dresden was Bach's competition with Louis Marchand, though he must also have been exposed to new works by Vivaldi.

Rudolf Eller assigns a central role in Bach's presumed Dresden encounter with Vivaldi to the *Concerto con molti Istromenti*, which, according to the German musicologist, provided a major impetus for composing the *Brandenburg Concertos* ("Concerts avec plusieurs instruments"). These works, which have as little in common with the concerto grosso as do Vivaldi's compositions, also occasionally have "scoring consisting of a dominant solo instrument with a concertino-like group or groups" and the overridingly important "formal idea of ensemble playing on two levels".[37] If Vivaldi's concepts of movement and form are greatly enriched and individualized in the process (assuming that Bach was actually stimulated by the Vivaldi works in question), this would only conform to the general line of Bach's Vivaldi reception that always includes the "modification and transformation of the Vivaldi model". Of all the composers who adopted Vivaldi's formal model, "Bach was the one who best understood its possibilities and was therefore better able to develop it further".[38]

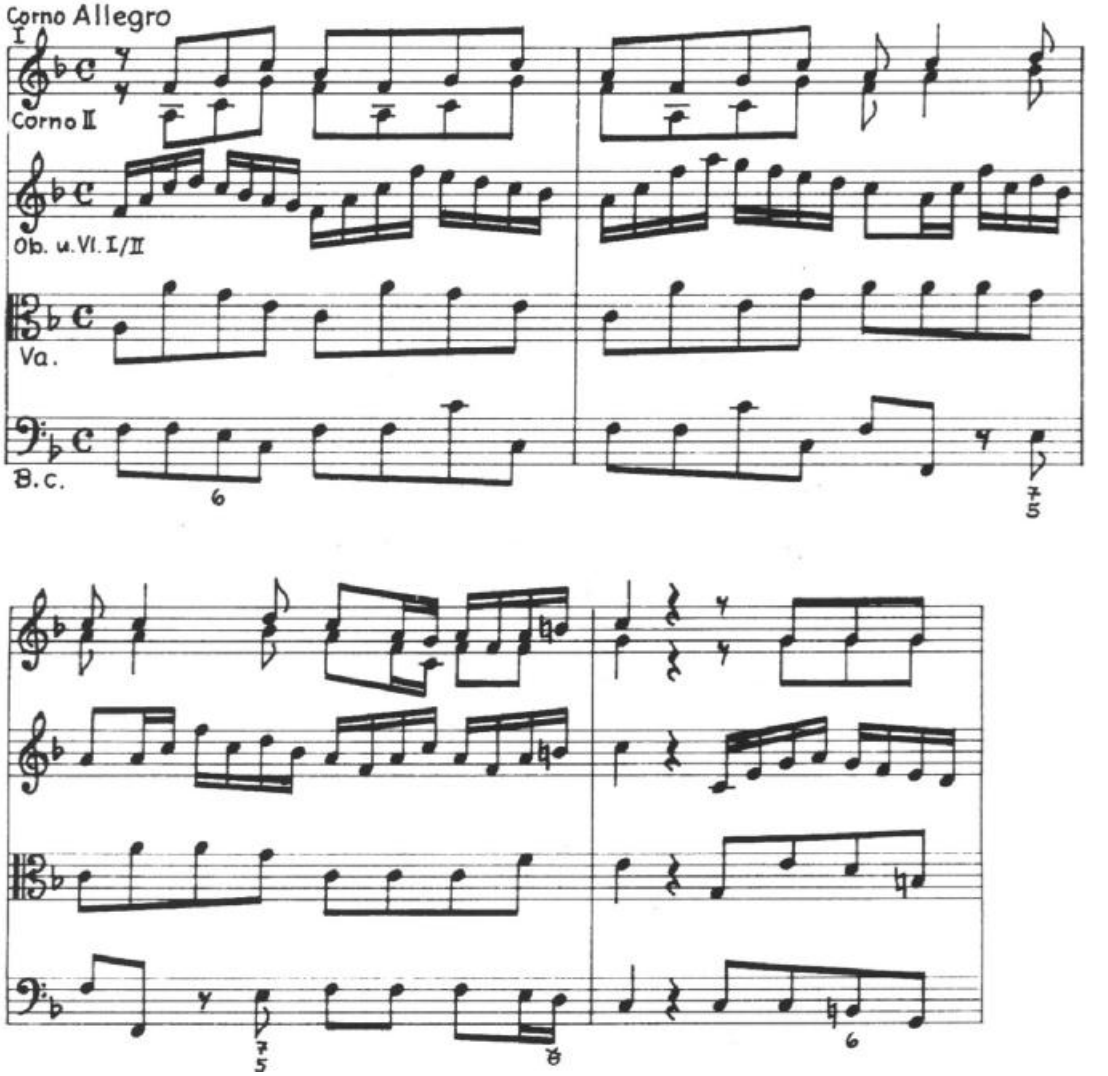
The *Concerto con molti Istromenti* genre also relates to other aspects of Vivaldi performances in Dresden: performance style and arrangements. Clearly, works that include concertante wind instruments require heavier scoring than the normal solo concerto with string ripieno. Vivaldi's concertos with pairs of winds are therefore preserved in Dresden with

parts for up to thirty and more players: ten to twelve violins, four violas, the required winds, and a bass section of up to twelve performers, including cellos, basses, bassoons, and occasionally two keyboard instruments. Existing scores and parts prove that not only mixed concertos were performed with large ensembles but also normal violin concertos and Vivaldi's works without soloists. We have parts for about fifteen of these compositions in large scoring; in these, the original strings are augmented by winds. In the simplest and most frequent cases, the violins are doubled by oboes (sometimes oboe and flutes) and the bass strings by bassoon(s). The sinfonias and concertos RV 122, 162, 192, 212, 213, 253, 507, 508, and 521 were performed this way. In most cases the string parts were slightly modified for the winds. Theorists from the period relate that, at least in Germany, it was common practice to reinforce the winds, and this is confirmed by the performance materials found in Dresden for many other works of the time. Johann Joachim Quantz advised "music leaders" to "take one viola, one cello, and a medium contrabass for four violins … for eight violins take two violas, two cellos, another slightly larger contrabass than the first; two oboes, two flutes, and two bassoons".[39]

The role of additional winds in Dresden arrangements was not, however, confined to doublings. The added winds (oboes and bassoon) were also given some concertante passages, as seen in the Dresden arrangements of the following violin concertos: RV 294 (Mus. 23S9-O-156), RV 319 (Mus. 2389-O-86), and RV 519 (Mus. 2389-O-159). Although such wind episodes are far less frequent here than in concertos originally scored for mixed winds, the model is clearly the *Concerti con molti Istromenti.* In some instances, these scoring changes also brought about substantial alteration of the work's structure. I will not touch on this area just as I will not touch on the broad topic of the practice of solo ornamentation, which is amply documented in the Dresden performance materials.

Pisendel was responsible for virtually all these adaptations and arrangements. He not only painstakingly added expression marks to the works he directed but he also often recast them according to a distinct ideal of musical taste and performance. A crucial aspect of the Dresden style of performance was to bring out the brilliance of the court orchestra, which meant favoring large, truly orchestral scoring with extensive use of wind instruments.

Pisendel's version of two string works by Vivaldi (and without soloists), the two sinfonias (or concertos) in F major (RV 135 and RV 140) are particularly striking examples of this tendency. Both pieces were originally string works in four parts (at times as little as three parts) whose effects derive from the brilliant, supple writing for the tutti violins. In Dresden, not only were oboes and bassoons used to double string parts, Pisendel also added two horn parts. The opening of the first movement of RV 140, entitled "Allegro molto" in the original Turin version, looks somewhat different in the orchestrally enriched Dresden version (ex. 50).



Example 50. Sinfonia in F Major (RV 140), first movement (Dresden version).