



**Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de  
SAINT-GEORGES**

**Symphonies concertantes**

**Symphony in G major**

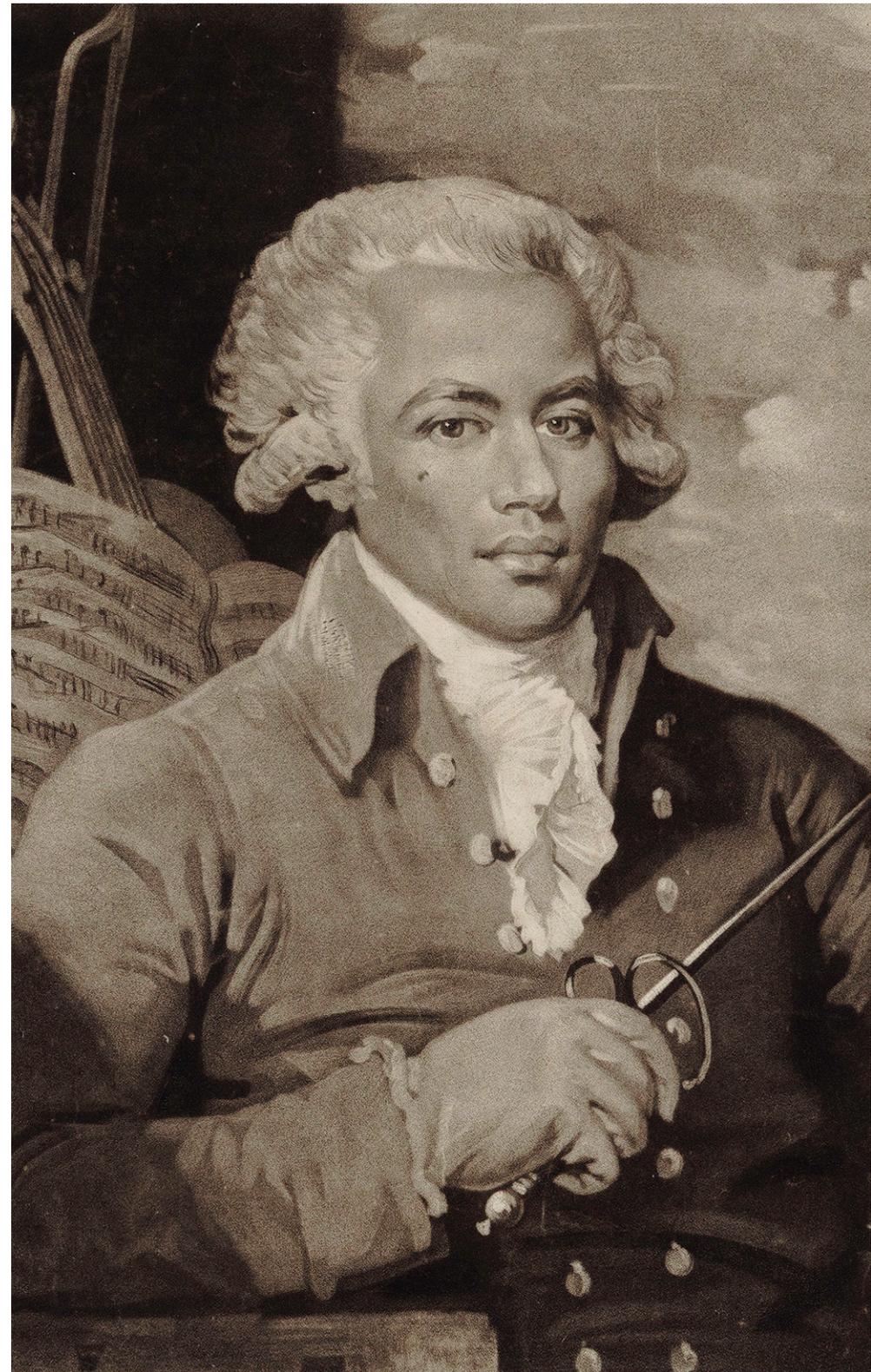
**Yury Revich, Violin**

**Libor Ježek, Violin**

**Pavla Honsová, Viola**

**Czech Chamber Philharmonic  
Orchestra Pardubice**

**Michael Halász**



## Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799)

### Symphonies concertantes • Symphony in G major

Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799) – a brilliant swordsman, athlete, violin virtuoso and gifted composer – might well lay claim to being the most talented figure in an age of remarkable individuals.

The son of a former councillor in the parliament at Metz and a reputedly beautiful slave of Senegalese origin, Joseph Boulogne was born near Basse Terre, Guadeloupe, and lived for some time on an estate on Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) before his family finally settled in Paris in around 1749. At the age of 13, Saint-Georges became a pupil of La Boëssière, a master of arms, and also took riding lessons at Tuileries Palace with the head of the royal riding academy, Chevalier Dugast, who considered him his best pupil. He fought his first public fencing match in Paris with the Italian fencer Giuseppe Gianfaldoni on 8 September 1766 and although he lost, his opponent predicted that he would become the finest swordsman in Europe.

Of his musical education we know very little. In old accounts of his life it is claimed that he had lessons with Platon, his father's plantation manager on Saint-Domingue, and it has also been suggested that he studied the violin with Jean-Marie Leclair and composition with François-Joseph Gossec in France. In view of his long professional association with Gossec, it is quite likely that he received a good deal of advice from him in his early career and this may have extended to instruction in composition. As the six years he spent in La Boëssière's establishment were devoted exclusively to physical training and academic studies, it is assumed that the bulk of Saint-Georges' musical education took place between 1758 and 1769, the year of his first professional engagement, as a violinist in Gossec's Concert des Amateurs. He made his public debut as a soloist with the Concert des Amateurs in 1772, performing his *Two Violin Concertos, Op. 2*. When Gossec became a director of the Concert Spirituel in 1773, Saint-Georges succeeded him as musical director and leader of the Amateurs which, under his leadership, quickly won recognition as one of the finest orchestras in France.

In 1777 Saint-Georges made his debut as an opera composer with *Ernestine* at the Comédie-Italienne. As is the case with many composers, the dramatic flair that served him so well in instrumental music proved largely unsuited to the theatre. The premiere was a fiasco and the work received only a single performance. The fault was not entirely Saint-Georges's own, but even his popularity as a composer of instrumental music and his gift for writing attractive and engaging music could not save *Ernestine* from instant oblivion. In the course of the same year he became affiliated with the private theatre and concerts of Mme de Montesson, the secret, unacknowledged wife of the Duke of Orleans. Utilising Saint-Georges's other talents, the Duke put him in charge of his hunting retinue at his seat in Le Raincy.

After the disbanding of the Amateurs in January 1781, probably due to financial problems, Saint-Georges founded the Concert de la Loge Olympique, the orchestra for whom Count d'Ogny later commissioned Haydn to compose his brilliant set of six *'Paris' Symphonies*. On the death of the Duke of Orleans in 1785, Saint-Georges lost his position in the household and visited London where he gave exhibition fencing matches at Angelo's Academy. He returned to Paris in 1787, composed a moderately successful comedy, *La fille-garçon*, and resumed work with the Loge Olympique.

Within six months of the outbreak of the Revolution, the Loge Olympique was dissolved and Saint-Georges returned to England in the company of the young Duke of Orleans, Philippe-Egalité. Once again, Saint-Georges supported himself by giving fencing matches in London and, on this occasion, also in Brighton where he fought before the Prince of Wales. He returned to Paris in 1790 but finding the state of affairs unsatisfactory undertook a tour of northern France with the actress Louise Fusil and a horn player, Lamothe. He took up official residence in Lille in 1792 where he became a captain in the National Guard. In his desire to take a more active part in the Revolution, Saint-Georges formed a corps of light troops

in the summer of 1792 which it was planned would eventually comprise a thousand men of colour. Known as the Légion Nationale du Midi, the corps enjoyed little military success. Saint-Georges was relieved of his command, imprisoned for 18 months, and on his release forbidden to live near his former comrades.

Unemployed again, Saint-Georges led a vagabond existence with Lamothe and lived for a time on Saint Domingue. Around 1797 he returned to Paris where he served briefly as a director of a new musical organisation, the Cercle de l'Harmonie, based in the former residence of the Orleans family. He died in Paris in June 1799.

By the standards of the age, Saint-Georges was not a prolific composer but this is perhaps hardly surprising given the extraordinary range of his activities. The majority of his instrumental works were published in Paris between 1772 and 1779 and include string quartets, violin concertos and symphonies concertantes. That the violin dominates his output is understandable given Saint-Georges' prowess on the instrument. The violin concertos, which he presumably composed for his own use, make extensive use of high positions and require great agility in string crossing and double-stopping, frequently in fast tempos. His friend the actress Louise Fusil wrote that 'the expressivity of his performance was his principal merit' and indeed there is far more to his concertos than mere virtuosic display. They are well written compositions, rich in melodic invention and displaying at times a striking degree of originality. Saint-Georges typically published these pieces in pairs with one concerto scored for strings alone and the other including a modest wind section. This pattern was also retained in his sets of symphonies concertantes which date from the same period.

As its designation suggests, the symphonie concertante is a hybrid genre that draws on both the symphony and concerto traditions. In the 18th century the symphonie concertante assumed two broad styles: the first fundamentally symphonic in conception but with important obbligato parts for two or more instruments; the second in most respects indistinguishable from a concerto with multiple soloists in its retention of the characteristic

hybrid sonata-ritornello structure. Saint-Georges, an early and important exponent of the genre, favoured the second approach, perhaps because as a virtuoso himself he felt instinctively drawn to the concerto rather than the symphony. Both types, however, frequently differ from their models in their cyclic structures and in France, where the symphonie concertante enjoyed great popularity, it is common to find works with two rather than three or four movements. These two-movement symphonies concertantes typically have a conventional first movement followed by a rondo, with no intervening slow movement. The two *Symphonies concertantes, Op. 9* are excellent examples of this type but, as *Op. 10, No. 1* demonstrates, Saint-Georges occasionally abandons the rondo second movement in favour of a brisk finale using a truncated sonata-ritornello structure. The solo writing in the symphonies concertantes is challenging and shows little evidence that Saint-Georges was concerned about accommodating players less skilled than himself.

The *Symphonies concertantes, Op. 9* were issued in Paris by Le Duc in c. 1777 and thus belong to the most productive period of Saint-Georges' career as a composer. Although probably composed for performance with the Concert des Amateurs, the two compositions were also performed at the Concert Spirituel according to Le Duc's title page. The leisurely unfolding of the first movements of both works, with their lyrical themes and delicate, almost transparent accompaniments, share many points of similarity with Saint-Georges' concertos. The addition of a second solo violin, however, creates new textural possibilities which Saint-Georges explores with his characteristic sensitivity to string sound. The inclusion of a solo viola in the *Symphonies concertantes, Op. 10*, published in Paris the following year by La Chevardièrre, opens up further combinatorial possibilities which show the composer's powers of invention to good advantage. If the lack of a slow movement in these works restricts their expressive universe, they are not without moments of wistful sadness even in their generally sunny *Rondeau* finales.

In Paris during the 1760s and 1770s, Saint-Georges was surrounded by symphonists such as Gossec and his

friend Simon Leduc. Orchestral concerts featured symphonies by local composers, by Mannheim symphonists such as Carl Stamitz and Christian Cannabich, and by visitors, including Mozart whose 1778 visit included a warm reception for his *'Paris' Symphony*. Saint-Georges also played or conducted most of the Paris premieres of Haydn's symphonies in the 1770s and 1780s, which gave him direct experience of the most progressive music in the genre. In spite of being at the very centre of all this activity, he seems not to have been particularly interested in composing symphonies. His only extant works in the genre are the two published by La Chevardière in 1779 as *Op. 11*. First performed under Saint-Georges's direction by the Concerts des Amateurs, they are excellent examples of the cosmopolitan French symphonic style.

The first, in G major, has the effervescence of a Haydn symphony, and its unusual off-beat rhythmic patterns in the first movement's opening subject create an interesting antiphonal effect between violin sections. The second subject's step-wise shape and lyricism is interrupted by octave leaps which serve to animate the music. The apparent naivety of the second movement belies its inventive layering of accompanying lines, while the Finale's bright opening sets up its energetic dynamic contrasts, with horns and oboes reinforcing its rustic louder sections. The symphony's three-movement structure serves as a timely reminder that the four-movement form, although widely employed across Europe, did not hold universal sway at this time.

Allan Badley

## Yury Revich



Photo: Elisabeth Gatterburg

Violinist Yury Revich was named 'Newcomer of the Year' at the ECHO Klassik Awards 2016, 'Young Artist of the Year' at the International Classical Music Awards 2015 and 'Young Musician of the Year' at the Beethoven Centre Vienna. After training in Moscow and Vienna he made his Carnegie Hall debut with Daniil Trifonov in 2009 and has since performed at concert halls worldwide including La Scala, the Berlin Philharmonie, BOZAR Brussels and the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall Moscow. He has worked with orchestras including the Russian National Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Tonkünstler Orchestra, and with conductors including Yuri Bashmet, Ariane Matiakh and Duncan Ward. Revich collaborates with harpsichordist Olga Fillipova in Baroque repertoire and has premiered works by composers including Johanna Doderer and Benjamin Rota. An official partner of UNICEF Austria, he hosts an annual Dreamland Gala concert for the organisation in Vienna as part of his 'Friday Nights with Yury Revich' concerts. Revich plays a 1709 Stradivarius loaned by the Goh Family Foundation.

[www.facebook.com/YuryRevich](https://www.facebook.com/YuryRevich)

## Libor Ježek



Libor Ježek followed in the footsteps of his parents, both professional violinists. He studied violin with professor Jan Schulmeister at the P.J. Vejvanovský Conservatory in Kroměříž, Czech Republic, graduating in 1995, and continued in the class of Zdeněk Gola at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ostrava. He has participated in several violin competitions and masterclasses, including the Kocian Violin Competition, Beethoven's Hradec International Music Competition. Since 1999 he has been deputy concertmaster with the Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice, and he also teaches at the Conservatory of Pardubice. He is the leader and co-founder of the Corvus Quartet, established in 2004.

## Pavla Honsová

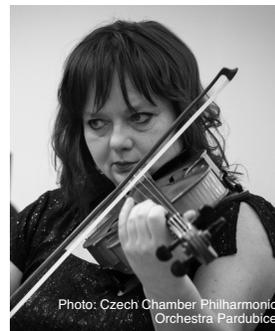


Photo: Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice

Pavla Honsová studied viola at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague in the class of Lubomír Malý from 1994 to 1998. In 1997, while still a student at the Academy, she accepted an engagement with the Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice, and since 1997 she has been the orchestra's viola section leader. In 1994 she won second prize at the Beethoven's Hradec International Music Competition and she also received the award for best interpretation of a contemporary composition by a Czech composer. Following her graduation performance and completion of her diploma thesis, *Jiří Jaroš, Sonata-fantasia for solo viola* (1998), she received an offer from Czech Radio to make a recording of Jaroš's *Sonata-fantasia* with Kodály's *Adagio*. In addition to orchestral solos, she has performed the solo parts in Mozart's *Sinfonia concertante in E flat major* (2015) (also recorded for CD in 1999) and Zdeněk Lukáš's *Viola Concerto* (2010).

## Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice



The Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice is valued for its stylistic interpretations and the extraordinary quality of its orchestral sound, and it is rightly ranked amongst the world's leading representatives of Czech musical culture. It often performs at the most prestigious festivals in the Czech Republic and venues throughout Europe such as the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, the Grosses Festspielhaus, Salzburg, the Herkulessaal and the Gasteig, Munich, the Musikverein, Vienna, the Brucknerhaus, Linz, and the Meistersingerhalle, Nuremberg among many others. Outside Europe the orchestra has performed in Japan and toured extensively around America. The first principal conductor, Libor Pešek, quickly raised the orchestra to a high standard, and subsequent principal conductors have included Marco Armiliato and Mariss Jansons. The orchestra has also welcomed numerous world-renowned soloists such as Isabelle van Keulen, Vladimir Spivakov, Ludwig Güttler, Radek Baborák, Gábor Boldoczki and Sergei Nakariakov. Aside from concerts, the orchestra regularly engages in operatic and theatre projects and has recorded dozens of successful albums on record labels including Naxos, ArcoDiva, Supraphon, Classico, Monitor-EMI and Amabile.

[www.kfpar.cz](http://www.kfpar.cz)

## Michael Halász



Michael Halász's first engagement as a conductor was at the Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz, Munich, where, between 1972 and 1975, he directed all operetta productions. In 1975 he moved to Frankfurt to work as principal Kapellmeister with Christoph von Dohnányi, and here he conducted the most important works of the operatic repertoire. Many engagements as a guest conductor followed and in 1977 Dohnányi took him to the Staatsoper Hamburg as principal Kapellmeister. From 1978 to 1991 he was GMD (general music director) of the Hagen Opera House and in 1991 he took up the post of resident conductor at the Wiener Staatsoper for 20 years. Michael Halász's recordings for Naxos include ballets by Tchaikovsky, operatic excerpts of Wagner, symphonies by Beethoven, Schubert and Mahler, Rossini's overtures, three volumes of Liszt's symphonic poems (the latter critically acclaimed by the *Penguin Guide*), *Fidelio* (8.660070-71), *Don Giovanni* (8.660080-82), *Le nozze di Figaro* (8.660102-04), *Die Zauberflöte* (8.660030-31), and a pioneering recording of Schreker's opera *Der ferne Klang* (8.660074-75). He has also recorded Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and *Orfeo* (8.550766), Richard Strauss's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (8.553379), Rubinstein's *Don Quixote* (8.555394) and, for Marco Polo, ballet music by Rubinstein (8.220451) and Schmidt's *Symphony No. 1* (8.223119).

*The orchestral parts and scores of the following works are available from:*

**www.artaria.com**

*Sources*

The sources upon which the editions used in this recording have been made are:

**Symphonie concertante in C major, Op. 9, No. 1**

Edited by Allan Badley – Artaria Editions AE384  
London, The British Library Music Collections  
R.M.17.e.2.(13): Le Duc print, ca. 1777

**Symphonie concertante in A major, Op. 9, No. 2**

Edited by Allan Badley – Artaria Editions AE385  
London, The British Library Music Collections  
R.M.17.e.2.(13): Le Duc print, ca. 1777

**Symphonie concertante in F major, Op. 10, No. 1**

Edited by Allan Badley – Artaria Editions AE405  
Lund, Akademiska Kapellet Frih. Barnekow's  
donation. Nr.16: La Chevardière print, 1778

**Symphonie concertante in A major, Op. 10, No. 2**

Edited by Allan Badley – Artaria Editions AE406  
Lund, Akademiska Kapellet Frih. Barnekow's  
donation. Nr.16: La Chevardière print, 1778

**Symphony in G major, Op. 11, No. 1**

Edited by Reuben Blundell – Artaria Editions AE415  
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,  
département Musique, H-202 (A-H):  
La Chevardière print, 1779



Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges was a brilliant swordsman, athlete, violin virtuoso and gifted composer, with a claim to being the most talented figure in an age of remarkable individuals. He was an early and important exponent of the hybrid *symphonie concertante* – a genre that draws on both the symphony and concerto traditions. This novel format was the ideal platform for expressive inventiveness, providing new textural possibilities through the addition of a second solo violin or viola. The *Symphony in G major*, which has all of the effervescence typical of Haydn, is an excellent example of the cosmopolitan French symphonic style.



## Joseph Boulogne, Chevalier de SAINT-GEORGES

(1745–1799)

<b>Symphonies concertantes, Op. 9</b>		<b>No. 2 in A major</b>	<b>13:33</b>
(pub. 1777)		7 I. Allegro	8:41
<b>No. 1 in C major</b>		8 II. Rondeau	4:50
13:03		<b>Symphony in G major,</b>	
1 I. Allegro	7:47	<b>Op. 11, No. 1 (pub. 1779)</b>	<b>12:28</b>
2 II. Rondeau	5:14	9 I. Allegro	4:05
<b>No. 2 in A major</b>	<b>14:50</b>	10 II. Andante	4:14
3 I. Allegro	8:53	11 III. Allegro assai	4:06
4 II. Rondeau	5:56		
<b>Symphonies concertantes, Op. 10</b>			
(pub. 1778)			
<b>No. 1 in F major</b>			
	<b>10:39</b>		
5 I. Allegro	5:17		
6 II. Allegro	5:20		

**Yury Revich, Solo Violin I** 1–8 • **Libor Ježek, Solo Violin II** 1–8

**Pavla Honsová, Solo Viola** 5–8

**Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice**

**Michael Halász**

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 Producer: Jiří Štílec (ArcoDiva Management) • Editor: Václav Roubal • Booklet notes: Allan Badley  
 Publisher: Artaria Editions – edited by Allan Badley (Opp. 9 and 10), Reuben Blundell (Op. 11, No. 1)  
 Cover: *Portrait of Joseph Boulogne de Saint-George* (1788) by William Ward (1762–1826),  
 after Mather Brown (1761–1831)

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