

Composer's Notes

1685 was quite a year for composers, marking the births of Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, and Domenico Scarlatti. The Italian composer relied almost exclusively on the harpsichord, or one of its variants, to push technical boundaries and bridge the Baroque and Classical eras through groundbreaking contributions to keyboard music.

As the piano developed, more keyboard artists turned to Scarlatti's miniatures, written in the formal structure of the sonata as it existed during the composer's lifetime. Anyone who has studied the instrument will have encountered some of these works during their musical journey. I always loved reading through those that were perhaps a little less virtuosic, but listening to artists such as Vladimir Horowitz, Fernando Valenti, and so many others traverse these delights was always a pleasure.

While we were hunkered down during the pandemic, I decided to transcribe a few of them. This had been done several times by others, but my intention was to

select five that might be suitable for what can loosely be termed an orchestral wind ensemble. With more than 550 to choose from, I selected sonatas representing several aspects of the composer's style, including his being influenced by the Spanish keyboard artists of the time, especially Soler.

As with much music of this period, matters of tempo, expression, and dynamics are at the discretion of the transcribers and performers. I have given a few guidelines, but they are purely based on my own preferences. The sonatas do not necessarily have to be played as a set. The order in which they are presented is one that I think works if they are performed as a suite.

I do not remember having so much fun writing original works or arranging music by others. I hope that listeners and performers will approach these sonatas with the spirit that was intended when I started working on them. Perhaps I will write another volume or two in the future.

—Leonard Slatkin, 2024

Duration: ca. 15:30

Instrumentation

2 Flutes
2 Oboes
1 English Horn
2 Clarinets in B-flat
1 Bass Clarinet in B-flat
2 Bassoons
1 Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in C
2 Trombones
1 Bass Trombone