

BASSORILIEVI

Georg Philipp TELEMANN (1681 - 1767)

TRIOS e QUARTETS with FLAUTO TRAVERSO and VIOLA DI GAMBA

ELISA COZZINI – Flauto traverso
FRANCESCO TOMEI – Viola da gamba
FEDERICA BIANCHI – Clavicembalo
UMBERTO CODECA' – Fagotto
GIOVANNI BELLINI - Tiorba
VIOLA MATTIONI – Violoncello
ALESSANDRO GIACHI - Violone

Recording and Editing : GIOVANNI PROSDOCIMI

Track list:

- TWV 42: a7 Trio Sonata per Flauto Traverso Viola di Gamba and basso continuo (manuscript D -DS Mus.ms. 1042/87)
- TWV 42: g7 Trio Sonata per Flauto Traverso Viola di Gamba and basso continuo (manuscript D -DS Mus.ms. 1042/46)
- TWV 42: g15 Trio Sonata per Flauto Traverso Viola di Gamba and basso continuo (manuscript D – Dlb Mus 2392 Q57 and D-ROu Mus Saec.XVII 18-20 ascribed to Georg Philipp Kress)
- TWV 42: h4 Trio Sonata per Flauto Traverso Viola di Gamba and basso continuo (manuscript D -DS Mus.ms. 1042/43 and in *Essercizii Musici*)
- TWV 42: c6 Trio Sonata per Flauto Traverso Viola di Gamba and basso continuo (manuscript D -DS Mus.ms. 1042/77)
- TWV 42: F5 Trio Sonata per Flauto Traverso Viola di Gamba and basso continuo (manuscript D -DS Mus.ms. 1042/11)
- TWV 43: C2 Concerto a Flauto traverso, Viola di gamba, Fagotto and basso (manuscript D-DS Mus.ms. 1033/69)
- TWV 43: h3 Concerto a Viola di Gamba, Flauto traverso, Fagotto and basso (manuscript D-DS Mus.ms. 1033/70)

The compositions performed here have reached us in the form of manuscript sheets, that belong almost entirely to the Darmstadt's Hessische Landes und Hochschulbibliothek archives, except the *Sonata* TWV 42:g15, which is preserved in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek in Dresden. These works remained mostly unpublished during the composer's lifetime, save for the B minor TWV 42:h4, available in the collection *Essercizii Musici* released in Hamburg (1739/40).

Darmstadt enjoyed a thriving and culturally blossoming first half of the 18th century, with its court the foremost place of development for the Gamba technique outside France, thanks to the activity of renowned players of the likes of August Kühnel (1645-c.1700) and Ernst Christian Hesse (1676-1762), the latter cherished by his contemporaries as an unrivalled *virtuoso*, and serving the house of Hessen-Darmstadt for about sixty-eight years. Hesse travelled intensely during the first times of his long Darmstadt tenure, to Italy and Austria - where he became acquainted with the Italian manner - and above all to France, where he practised with the undisputed living *maestri* of the Gamba, Marin Marais (1656-1728) and Antoine Forqueray (1672-1745).

An enjoyable anecdote of his Parisian stay relates that he addressed the two notoriously competing teachers at the same time, making however himself known with both his true name and the pseudonym of Sachs, until his tutors decided to arrange a public concert-comparison, for championing the virtues of their exceptionally gifted best pupil. The Hesse's trick was therefore discovered, and he

wisely found recommendable to leave France straight away. It would not be ventured to suggest that Telemann, who lived in Frankfurt (near Darmstadt) from 1712-1721, knew personally Hesse, and had the man in mind while composing the present works, where the performer is expected to master a particularly demanding instrumental writing, with passages of uncompromising virtuosity.

On our reading of these works, we have relied on a few general criteria:

In formal terms, there is no distinctive originality in the overarching scansion of this sonatas (with the exception of TWV 42:g15 and TWV 42:c6), whose internal articulation totally adheres to the conventions of the *Sonata da Chiesa*: four movements with alternation of slow and fast musical tempos. Within this general framework, we have attempted a modulation of the metronome speeds sensitive to specific expressive contents, and to dynamic links between the sections of each sonata. The *dolce* and *cantabile* musical affects, quite relevant to the Telemann's signature aesthetic, are abundantly displayed in these pieces, also by virtue of the unusual choice of two timbrically different *concertato* instruments, equally inclined to melancholy: the Flute and the Gamba.

Regarding their respective sonic qualities, the 18th century German theorists had some instinctive perceptual conceptions: Johann Johachim Quantz held that «the most pleasant nature of the flute is that which resembles the contralto voice, rather than a soprano or *di petto* register of the human voice», while Johann Mattheson described the «whispering Gamba» as a beautiful and delicate instrument.

However impervious *bravura* episodes are easily found, across the compositions gathered in this recording, their recurring *cantabile* expression mark is conversely referred, as elsewhere oftentimes, to the imitation of a gently singing voice, thus implying a general sense of tenderness and delicacy, which Telemann is likely to have perceived as naturally connected with a certain acoustic *dulcedo*, of the chosen leading voices in interplay. Such a purpose of overall musical sweetness could well justify the prevalence of minor tonalities, and the bent for peculiar timbral nuances. With respect to the subject of the poetic qualities of tones, J. Mattheson provides us with some insightful definitions:

B minor [...] is bizarre, peaceful and pensive.

A minor [...] is of rather mournful, modest and quiet nature, and at the same time conducive to sleep, but nevertheless not at all boring.

The Key of G minor [...] is almost the finest key of all, because it not only combines the great seriousness of the preceding key (D minor) with a lively grace, but also delivers uncommon charm and loveliness, so that it is particularly suited to the tender and animated things, to the nostalgic and the joyful matters [...].

C minor [...] is an extremely amiable key, and yet it is also sorrowful. Thus, in order to let the first quality prevail [...], it is not misplaced to resolutely try and enliven it with a slightly faster and more definite rhythm, otherwise one could easily be induced to sleep by its mildness.

Such sort of aesthetic view appears to be particularly appropriate for TWV 42:c6, which somehow summarises the emotive inflections mentioned above, being moreover the only work in the collection articulated in accordance with the French taste, as a suite of dance-like contrasting movements (*Andante, Allemande, Menuet, Gigue, Aria, Rejouissance*).

Among other levels of interpretative analysis, we have gone to great lengths for providing the *continuo* with a coloured gamut of timbral combinations. As for this, it should be considered that the German figured bass realisations coeval of this repertoire show a distinctive fullness of parts movement, and look very thoroughly composed, denoting an accomplished and, to a certain extent, self-contained conception of the *continuo* section. Accordingly, we have devised terraced levels of sonic intensity for the figured bass, with a variety of instrumental resources capable of providing both *solì* and *tutti* internal subdivisions.

The rising musical genre of quartet was still rather undeveloped during the Telemann's age, in comparison with its later and more familiar conventions of the Classical period, chronologically not so removed from the late Baroque epoch, whose aesthetic focus on matters of taste and style was still perceptible in the German cultural trends of the mid-18th century. Inside such a spirit of the times, Telemann succeeded in conjugating the dignified *Sonata à tre*, after the old and revered model of Arcangelo Corelli, with the emerging requirements of a more virtuosic writing and a subjectively crafted instrumental identity. From this particular standpoint, this music seems to invigorate the then fashionable *Galant* style, which fostered an ideal of *empfindsam* conversation, with the robust contrapuntal seeds of J.S. Bach.

It is precisely to highlight this specific Telemann's cultural tension, that we have decided to offer quite opposite readings of the two *Quartetti*: the one in C major is sustained by a varied and instrumentally rich figured bass, while the other in B minor is rendered as a pure quartet of equal parts, with the Violone playing the bass line.

Coming to a few technical matters of interpretation, we should warn the listener that we have deliberately exchanged the dance type written down by the copyist (we suppose mistakenly) for the fourth and fifth movement of TWV 42:c6. On the grounds of what we consider strong clues - i.e. the employed time signatures and the implicit character of the instrumental discourse - we have decided to read the *Aria* (time signature: 12/8) at the faster tempo of the *Gigue* (allegro), which conversely, with a time signature of 6/4, has been performed at the slower pace of an *Aria* (largo).

This recording presents the complete Telemann's six sonatas for Flute, Gamba and continuo, including the world premiere on CD, as far as we know, of TWV 42:F5.