

Camerata Musicale presents:
Trio Sonatas of the Late Baroque

A Camerata recording, West Germany, 1968

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JOHANN JOSEPH FUX is remembered today chiefly for his great textbook on strict counterpoint, the *Gradus ad Parnassum* (1725). This treatise was for over two hundred years the standard book on the subject; among others, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven all learned from it. But in our own time, the book's pedagogical reputation has suggested that Fux was a dry-as-dust reactionary who, if he composed at all, must have written very dull compositions. The truth of the matter is that Fux was indeed a composer and, furthermore, was one of the very best of his time. He was no conservative (although no revolutionary) - he was fully aware of, and conversant in, the styles of his day. His output covers all fields: opera, sacred music, orchestral and chamber music, and keyboard music. Through all of his work breathes a lively, robust spirit, which is combined with a flawless contrapuntal technique to produce a music of vigor, elegance, and expressiveness.

Fux was born in a small Austrian village in 1660. Almost nothing is known about his youth or early training; it is probable that at some point he studied in Italy, and he must have somewhere received a good academic education-his *Gradus ad Parnassum* is written in excellent Latin. In 1696 he became the organist at the Schottenkirche in Vienna; two years later the Emperor Leopold, apparently against much opposition, appointed Fux court composer-a spectacular rise from an unremarkable position to one of the best musical jobs in all Austria! With such a post, Fux obviously had no need to seek further employment; he stayed at the court, became *Kapellmeister* in 1715, and remained in Vienna until his death in 1741.

The Partita in F, K.358, is the last of seven partitas (suites) that make up the collection *Concentus musico-instrumentalis*, which Fux published in 1701. (The K., by the way, stands for none other than Ludwig Ritter von Köchel of the wellknown Mozart catalogue; Köchel also compiled a similar list of Fux's works.) While the other pieces in the *Concentus* are all orchestral, this one limits itself to a mere three instrumental voices : flute (originally recorder), oboe, and *continuo* (cello and harpsichord). As was then frequently the custom, all of the movements (with the usual exception of the first, an "absolute" *sinfonia*) bear programmatic titles. To what exactly they refer is not clear. One modern editor has seen in the Partita a description of life in Nuremberg (!) ; another commentator has suggested that the music represents the battle between Italian and French musical influences-a subject of undoubted importance to musicians at the turn of the eighteenth century. Whatever the answer may be, there is no disputing the beauty of this music; it is a perfect miniature demonstration of all of the qualities that made Fux so highly prized in his lifetime.

The work opens with a little three-movement *sinfonia* marked by a great suavity of writing, full of fascinating harmonic and contrapuntal turns. *La joye des fidels* subjects is more elegant than boisterous, a graceful minuet. The real gem of the composition is the succeeding piece, which combines (in an order at variance with the title) melodies representing the Italian and French styles. The newer French idiom comes first: represented by the then rnodish, imported-from-Paris oboe, it moves in 2/2 time, full of the dotted rhythms and quirky upbeat figures that marked the French style of the day. It is then joined by the flute, playing a peaceful Italian air; this is in 6/8 time - Fux allows the two melodies, with their opposing

rhythms to continue simultaneously, perhaps symbolizing by this the blend of their two styles then taking place in Austria. The final movement, a lively minuet-like piece marked by sharp rhythms and some succulent harmonies, represents "confused enemies" - who they were is not known, but with the loveliness of the music it does not seem to matter.

The career of the protean **GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN** is by now well-enough known not to require extended comment here. The Sonata in D minor appearing on this record is a lovely example of the gracious, intimate side of Telemann's immense output. The sonata comes from a collection entitled *Essercizii musici* (published in 1724), a set of twelve "solo" (i.e. one instrument and *continuo*) and twelve "trio" sonatas. It is in the then standard *sonata da chiesa* format - slow, fast, slow, fast. The opening *andante* is a piece of wonderfully polished, expressive writing. Notice how effortlessly Telemann is able to spin out long phrases, mix imitative writing with a more homophonic style, and build a clear, well-rounded form.

This is not mere work-a-day craftsmanship, but the sign of a first-rate composer. The second movement opens fugally, with a long subject, stated first by the oboe, marked by alert, syncopated rhythms; when the imitating flute enters, the oboe turns to a countersubject marked by triplets, cutting across the sharply defined eighth-note subdivisions of the pulse. In the

middle of the movement, a new theme appears (beginning with three short repeated notes) ; this and the original material are combined until the end.

One interesting feature - which reappears in the other works on this record - the fact that the continuo rarely participates in the fast rhythmic motion going on above it, but moves mostly in slow, steady quarter or half-notes. This rhythmic dichotomy between bass and treble is one of the features which developed into the melody-plus-static-accompaniment style of so many works of the succeeding Classic era. The third movement, a gentle *siciliana*, is a typical example of the species: dotted rhythms, short, closed form, compact phrases and a great deal of "expression." The piece closes with a lively presto. The opening of this movement is somewhat archaic in style, no doubt consciously; it is after the fashion of what was sometimes called a *fuga di cappella*: the upper voices enter without continuo support; the bass then participates in the imitation as an equal member. Although the movement becomes more conventional after this, a high degree of contrapuntal interest 't is maintained.

One of the notable figures of the period in which the final flowering of the Baroque style began to give way to the oncoming Classic was the Venetian **BALDASSARE GALUPPI**. Born in 1706, Galuppi was still fairly young when he wrote his first opera, and soon began to collect numerous commissions from Venetian companies. Soon, too, he began to inhabit some of the more important musical positions in Venice, culminating with his appointment, in 1762, as *Maestro di cappella* at San Marco, where his predecessors had included such figures as Willaert and Monteverdi. Not long after this, however, his fortunes began to fade. He kept his job at San Marco, but his operas were now rarely performed, and he himself seems to have almost given up composing. Galuppi died in 1785; according to one recent scholar "his death and the ceremonials of his burial once more called the city of Venice to his honor but the world had almost completely forgotten his music." Galuppi was a victim of the frequently changing musical fashions of his time. Ironically, he himself, particularly in his many (and often quite beautiful) keyboard sonatas, had been one of the main pathfinders of the newer styles.

The present Trio in G Major is the only work of its type Galuppi has left us. If it is thus somewhat atypical, it nevertheless shows us a good sample of his powers. It is also interesting in its combination of Baroque and Classic elements. The work is in the three movement (fast-slow-fast) pattern that replaced the traditional Baroque *sonata da chiesa*. On the other hand, the theme that opens the first movement is fully Baroque in manner; notice how skillfully the long, gracefully curved melody sustains its rhythmic interest-not exactly commonplace at the time, particularly in Italy! Also pleasing is the neat way in which Galuppi interchanges the treble voices in the middle movement. Classic features, however, also make themselves clearly felt in the texture: the first movement is marked by a couple of upwards-moving sequences that certainly belong to the newer manner, while the last movement is almost a true Classic minuet in its texture, harmony and rhythm. (It was a frequent custom in the early Classic period to end symphonies, sonatas, and the like, with minuets.)

Like Galuppi, **JOHANN JOACHIM QUANTZ** was a figure of that transitional era between Baroque, *galant*, and Classic. Quantz was originally destined to be a blacksmith, like his father. But he chose music and after his father's death, when Quantz was only 10, studied the art rather thoroughly. After travels to Italy, Quantz entered the service of August II of Poland and Saxony (1716; 1718, promotion to the King's private orchestra) as an oboist and violinist. He soon realized, however, that he would never rise to the top with these instruments; there were too many exceptional players of both—so he chose the "German" or transverse flute, which was then beginning to displace the traditional recorder. Quantz studied hard and quickly became one of the finest flutists in Europe. He traveled widely: Holland, Italy, France, England, etc. In 1741, Frederick the Great, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to hire Quantz, finally made an offer almost unheard of at the time, and which Quantz could scarcely turn down: 2000 Thaler per year for the rest of his life, further money for each composition and for every flute that he made for the flute-happy King, complete independence from the State Chapel and its conductor, exclusive use of the King's private chamber orchestra. Quantz spent the rest of his life in the King's service, turning out flute concerto after flute concerto (ca. 300 survive!). In 1752 he published the book for which he has become most famous, his *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Essay of a Method for Playing the Transverse Flute). This book is far more than its title suggests, an almost complete survey of every aspect of music in its time, with practical instructions concerning virtually all points of musical performance.

Quantz's Trio Sonata in A minor is drawn from the only collection of such works he published, and is a further illustration of "mixed" styles. Cast in traditional *sonata da chiesa* form, it opens with an *andante* that begins in the customary imitative fashion but soon moves to homophony; the harmony is quite interesting and there are occasional nice uses of three-against-two rhythm, but, in the absence of the solid, contrapuntal Baroque idiom, the music does not yet have the clear, forceful construction that had distinguished the best works of that era, and would become a hallmark of the later Classic style. Everything is just a shade diffuse, a shade aimless. The rest of the movements are all more usual. The *Allegro* is standard enough, but notice how the harmonic motion occasionally breaks down, with frequent passages built above a pedal-point-like bass—another sign of the stylistic changes mirrored in this music. The *affettuoso* is standard 6/8 fare; the final *vivace* is perhaps the strongest movement of the piece. Here Quantz shows his solid contrapuntal training (under the notable Zelenka among others) in a rhythmically alive, well built movement that provides a fine, fiery conclusion.

Next to nothing is known about **SEBASTIAN BODINUS**—not even his dates. He held posts in Württemberg and Durlach and published, among other things, a six-volume collection entitled *Musikalischen Divertissements*, the first volume of which appeared in 1726 (the succeeding ones are undated). Our Trio comes from the second volume of this collection and was originally scored for two violins or two oboes. The music shows Bodinus to have been a fully competent and pleasing composer, if not of any notable individuality. (Such composers, however, were responsible for the generally high level of German music at the time.) It is hardly necessary to give a "blow-by-blow" description of this music—the listener already knows what to expect. Notice, however, how Bodinus tends towards short phrases and those slow, steady, rather static bass lines already alluded to in connection with the Telemann sonata.

JOSHUA RIFKIN