

WIGMORE HALL

Friday 29 November 2024
7.30pm

Ton Koopman 80th Birthday Celebration

Soloists of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra

Ton Koopman conductor, harpsichord

Catherine Manson violin	Antoine Torunczyk oboe	Mischa Schouw tour manager
Reine-Marie Verhagen recorder	Wouter Verschuren bassoon	
Kristen Huebner traverso flute	Robert Smith cello, gamba	

Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681-1767)

Trio Sonata in D minor for recorder, violin and continuo TWV42:d7
I. Andante • II. Vivace • III. Adagio • IV. Allegro

Trio Sonata in G minor for oboe, violin and continuo TWV42:g5
(pub. 1739-40)

*I. Mesto • II. Allegro • III. Andante - Largo - Andante •
IV. Vivace*

Sonata in F minor for bassoon and continuo TWV41:f1 (pub. 1728-9)

I. Triste • II. Allegro • III. Andante • IV. Vivace

Trio Sonata in F for violin, viola da gamba and continuo TWV42:F10

I. Grave • II. Allegro • III. Andante • IV. Vivace

Quartet in D minor for recorder, traverso, bassoon and continuo from
Tafelmusik II TWV43:d1 (by 1733)

I. Andante • II. Vivace • III. Largo • IV. Allegro

Interval

Trio Sonata in C for recorder, traverso and continuo TWV42:C1 (pub.
1728-9)

*I. Introduzione. Grave - Vivace • II. Andante • III. Xantippe.
Presto • IV. Lucretia. Largo • V. Corinna. Allegretto • VI. Clelia.
Spirituoso • VII. Dido. Triste*

Quartet in G for traverso, oboe, violin and continuo TWV43:G2 (pub.
1733)

*I. Largo - Allegro - Largo • II. Vivace - Moderato - Vivace •
III. Grave • IV. Vivace*

Trio Sonata in F for recorder, viola da gamba and continuo TWV42:F3
(pub. 1739-40)

I. Vivace • II. Mesto • III. Allegro

Quartet in G for recorder, oboe, violin and continuo TWV43:G6 (n/a)

I. Allegro • II. Grave • III. Allegro

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Although in his own time Georg Philipp Telemann was regarded as Germany's leading composer, in the 19th Century his music was unfairly judged against that of JS Bach, and denigrated as light, overly 'fashionable', and lacking in intellect and gravitas. In addition, the sheer volume of his output (over 3,000 works) led many to suspect a lack of quality, leading to the dismissive view, articulated by Christoph Daniel Ebeling, that 'in general, [Telemann] would have been greater had it not been so easy for him to write so unspeakably much. Polygraphs seldom produce masterpieces'.

Fortunately, today we recognise this is not the case, and that Telemann's long, prolific career allowed him to have a hugely important influence on the development of 18th-century musical style. Telemann was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the *vermischter Geschmack*, or 'mixed taste', which synthesised features of the French, Italian and Polish styles. This is especially evident in the finale of the Trio Sonata in D minor TWV42:d7, a thrilling *gavotte en rondeau* featuring a refrain in which French dance rhythms sit above an Italian running bass, interspersed by three couplets. The virtuosic figuration of the recorder in the second couplet is also Italianate; in the third, however, Telemann abruptly shifts to D major and introduces the Polish style as a comic, disruptive force, with repeated bass notes and upper part rhythms.

In the early 18th Century, the trio sonata was held in higher esteem than almost any other instrumental genre, due to the challenges of balancing harmony, counterpoint and melody in three equal parts. Telemann's Trio Sonatas in G minor (TWV42:g5) and F major (TWV42:F3) are both drawn from his *Essercizii musici*, a self-published collection written around 1727-8. In these works, he engages with the newly fashionable 'galant' style, which emphasised naturalness and simplicity, whilst still utilising older musical devices. For example, in the third movement of TWV42:g5, Telemann takes inspiration from the world of opera, where an aria-like central *Largo*, cast as a lyrical duet for oboe and violin, is sharply contrasted by two framing sections that feature a completely different tempo and metre, along with dissonant suspensions. Sharp contrasts are likewise present in TWV42:F3: although its outer movements are bright galant fugues, the solemn *Mesto* is written in a strict, archaic *stile antico* style. The Trio in F major TWV42:F10 is also stylistically reminiscent of the *Essercizii*, with expressive slow movements and fugal fast movements.

Shortly after finishing the *Essercizii*, Telemann embarked on another landmark project: *Der getreue Music-Meister* ('The faithful Music-Master'). Published in 25 fortnightly 'lessons' between 1728 and 1729, it was the first German music periodical, and designed to appeal to amateur musicians playing at home. Telemann's desire to reach the widest possible audience is reflected in the extraordinary variety of scorings in the collection, including the Sonata in F minor TWV41:f1, his only work for bassoon solo. Each of its four movements opens with a characteristic three-note descending figure in the bassoon part, giving the work a sense of thematic unity. The Trio Sonata in C TWV42:C1

takes the form of a suite, beginning with an unusual opening overture: normally, the central fast fugal section would be framed by two outer stately sections, but here it gives way to a sensitive *Andante* in A minor, before being repeated. The other movements are dances that present character portraits of women from classical history and mythology, including Xantippe, the argumentative wife of Socrates (represented by cheeky syncopations); Lucretia, whose terrible fate is evoked by a mournful sarabande; the Greek poet Corinna (a cheerful rigaudon); the Roman woman Clelia, whose escape from the Etruscan king is depicted in rushing triplets; and Dido, queen of Carthage, whose sadness and desperation is portrayed by alternating 'Triste' solos and 'Disperato' tutti sections.

Like his previous publications, Telemann's *Musique de table* (*Tafelmusik*, 1733) was designed to be encyclopaedic in scope. Each of its three parts, or 'Productions', provides a lavish overview of the most important contemporary instrumental genres: an overture-suite, a quartet, a concerto, a trio and a solo sonata, followed by a concluding piece. The collection represents a summation of Telemann's instrumental writing up to the 1730s, developing and refining the stylistic elements seen in earlier collections with greater originality. For instance, the opening movement of the Quartet in G major TWV43:G2, from Part I, takes the form of a French overture, but replaces the typical stately outer sections with a gentle *siciliano*. The concerto-like *Vivace* that follows, meanwhile, features a striking contrasting section before the reprise, in which both the tempo and metre change.

The Quartet in D minor TWV43:d1, from Part II, is similarly innovative. It is one of only two works in which Telemann uses the rarely-heard combination of flute and recorder (the other being the Concerto in E minor TWV52:e1). The second movement, again in a concerto style, deploys the ensemble in unusual ways, presenting complex structural and thematic interplay between the recorder and the other instruments. Telemann creates magical effects in the following *Largo* by utilising shifting pairs of duetting instruments, canonic technique, and chromatic harmonies without *continuo*. The last movement is a sparkling *rondeau* in the 'mixed taste', including a surprising turn in the major mode.

In stylistic terms, the genial Quartet in G major TWV43:G6 is really a concerto. Once again, though, Telemann wrong-foots our expectations: although the violin takes on the role of the 'orchestral' (tutti) instrument in the first movement, it often seems to be more virtuosic than the 'solo' recorder and oboe, only achieving parity towards the end. This work was copied in Dresden, where the Italian style was very popular, by JJ Quantz, who praised Telemann's quartets as 'excellent and beautiful models of their kind'. The composer himself put it more modestly: 'I have endeavoured to present something for everyone's taste'.

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