

TELEMANN: *Flute Duets*

TWV 40:141–46



Steven Zohn and Colin St-Martin, baroque flutes



Among the many hundreds of instrumental works left to us by Georg Philipp Telemann, his duets occupy a position in today's musical world out of proportion to their modest scoring for two unaccompanied melody instruments. Certainly there are few flutists or recorder players who have not played at least a selection of these works, and many other instrumentalists encounter them during the course of their studies as well. And with good reason: the duets as a whole are models of two-part counterpoint, even including full-blown fugues; they are conceptually and technically challenging enough to satisfy the most sophisticated player without excluding those of more modest ability; and they are by turns serious, witty, and charming.

During his long tenure as civic music director at Hamburg (1721–67), Telemann published three sets of duets for two flutes or other melody instruments as the *Sonates sans basse* (Hamburg, 1726; TWV 101–06), the *XIIX Canons mélodieux* (Paris, 1738; TWV 40:118–23), and the *Second livre de duo* (Paris, 1752; TWV 40:124–29). Additionally, a single flute duet was printed in Telemann's music journal *Der getreue Music-Meister* (Hamburg, 1729; TWV 40:107), and another set of six works survive in manuscript copy as the *Sei duetti* (TWV 40:130–35). During the eigh-

teenth century, as today, the *Sonates sans basse* were perhaps the best known of the composer's duets. They were re-issued at Amsterdam, Paris, and London (probably without the composer's consent), and later excerpted in Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg's two-volume manual on fugal writing, the *Abhandlung von der Fuge* (Berlin, 1753–54).

In the preface to his own *Sei duetti a due flauti traversi* (Berlin, 1759), the famous flutist Johann Joachim Quantz held up Telemann's flute duets as compositional models: "It is true that there is a kind of duet in which the parts do almost nothing but play in thirds and sixths with one another from beginning to end, and which are anything but hard to write. But anyone who is familiar with Kapellmeister Telemann's flute duets, for example, will quickly perceive that the former type is not that to which I have referred." And it may well have been Telemann's duets that the blind flute virtuoso Friedrich Ludwig Dülon (1769–1826) had in mind when he recalled the impact of the composer's flute music on his playing: "I owe the greatest part of my dexterity to [Quantz's works], but my security in keeping time entirely to [Telemann's pieces], for they are written throughout in a partly canonic and partly fugal texture."

Until recently, the 25 flute duets mentioned above comprised Telemann's known output in the genre. But in 2002 nine additional works (TWV 40:141–49) turned up in the music collection of the Sing Akademie zu Berlin, a choral society whose extensive collection of eighteenth-century music disappeared in the aftermath of World War II, only to surface in Kiev in 1999. The collection had not been examined by many scholars before the war, so its harboring of an otherwise unknown set of Telemann flute duets came as a complete surprise. As with the previously known duets, The Sing-Akademie works appear to have been well known in Berlin. Eight of them are quoted in a manuscript of pedagogical exercises connected to Quantz, who apparently taught this music to his royal pupil, King Frederick the Great of Prussia. And the manuscript containing the duets, copied by an anonymous scribe during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, previously belonged to the collection of Sara Levy (1761–1854), a virtuoso harpsichordist, music collector, patron, and great-aunt of Felix Mendelssohn who performed with the Sing-Akademie and donated many musical manuscripts to the society.

Despite the duets' impressive provenance, the fact that they number nine in all is cause for

suspicion, for Telemann habitually followed the convention of grouping instrumental works into sets of six or twelve. Such suspicion deepens when one examines Sonatas 7–9, which are noticeably less polished and imaginative than their predecessors in the set. Fugal movements in these three works have a routine quality to them, slow movements are often brief and lack Telemann's characteristic melodic suavity, and elsewhere there is inadequate rhythmic variety and harmonic direction. Moreover, the final movement of Sonata 9 reverts to a kind of melody-and-accompaniment texture that Telemann was usually careful to avoid in duets. Thus at least as far as musical style is concerned, there is good reason to believe that the last three works of the set were written by someone other than Telemann, perhaps in conscious imitation of his style. We have therefore chosen to include only Sonatas 1–6 in this first recording of the Sing-Akademie duets.

Lacking a copy of the duets dating from Telemann's lifetime, we can only speculate about when he composed them. The music has much in common with his instrumental writing of the 1730s, though unusual movement schemes in several works (Sonata 2: slow-moderate-dance; Sonata 4: fast-fast-slow-fast; Sonata 5: fast-slow-fast-dance) could indicate a

later date of composition. As in the *Sonates sans basse*, numerous movements feature imitative counterpoint. For example, the lovely “Piacevole” opening Sonata 2 features close, canonic imitation, and rigorous fugues are found in this work and in Sonatas 1, 3, 4, and 6. Yet the rhythmic language of the Sing-Akademie duets is more *galant* than that of the earlier collection, making frequent use of the drum basses, long appoggiaturas, and triplet, Lombard (reverse-dotted), and syncopated figures that Telemann increasingly favored during the 1730s and 1740s.

In keeping with the composer’s fondness for mixing national musical styles, there are a number of movements that nod toward France and Poland. Aside from two sarabandes (Sonata 4/iii and Sonata 5/ii) and a gavotte in rondeau form (Sonata 1/iii), there is a serious, prelude-like slow movement that presents the French *goût* in relatively undiluted form (Sonata 6/ii). The sarabande of the fourth sonata includes written-out reprises for both halves of the dance, allowing the flutes to switch between melody and accompaniment. Its tonality of F-sharp minor provides Telemann with numerous opportunities to exploit the half-step E \sharp –F \sharp , an expressive (and difficult-to-tune) interval on the one-key

transverse flute. Finally, the finale to Sonata 2 is both a fugue and an earthy polonaise. This movement, like the duet collection as a whole, reflects Telemann’s delight in mixing high and low, serious and comic.

-Steven Zohn

Steven Zohn studied at Vassar College and Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in Musicology. He performs on historical flutes along the east coast with New York State Baroque, the Washington Bach Consort, and the Bach Festival of Philadelphia, among other ensembles, and has recorded works by the Bach family, Boismortier, Telemann, and Vivaldi. From 1995 to 2004 he was founding Artistic Director of the period-instrument orchestra Publick Musick. As a musicologist, he has published widely on eighteenth-century music, including his book *Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre, and Meaning in Telemann's Instrumental Works* (Oxford University Press, 2008). Mr. Zohn's contribution to the study and performance of early music has been recognized by the American Musicological Society with its Noah Greenberg Award. He is presently Associate Professor of Music History at Temple University.

Colin St-Martin received his First Prize (Bachelor of Music) from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, Belgium, under the tutelage of Barthold Kuijken and a Master of Music with Performer's Certificate from the Early Music Institute at Indiana University. Mr. St-Martin performs with many of the early instrument orchestras and chamber ensembles in North America including Opera Lafayette, the Washington Bach Consort, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, The Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, Cathedra, Ars Lyrica, Mercury Baroque, Arcanum, Bach Vespers, among others. In addition to his performance activities, he has many recordings to his credit including the works of Bach, Handel, Vivaldi, Rameau, Rebel, Lully, Monsigny, Gluck, among others. Currently Mr. St-Martin is professor of early flute at the Peabody Conservatory and an instructor at the Timber Flute Festival.

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Sonata in B minor for two flutes,
TWV 40:141 (7:03)

1 I Vivace 2:05
2 II Largo 3:04
3 III Presto 1:54

Sonata in E minor for two flutes,
TWV 40:142 (7:42)

4 I Piacevole 3:14
5 II Andante 2:03
6 III Scherzando 2:25

Sonata in G major for two flutes,
TWV 40:143 (9:32)

7 I A tempo giusto 2:19
8 II Allegro 1:53
9 III Andante 2:32
10 IV Allegro 2:48

Sonata in A major for two flutes,
TWV 40:144 (10:51)

11 I Pomposo 2:02
12 II Vivace 2:34
13 III Largo 3:23
14 IV Presto 2:52

Sonata in G major for two flutes,
TWV 40:145 (9:41)

15 I Vivace 1:18
16 II Grave 2:05
17 III Presto 2:07
18 IV Menuet–Allegro 4:11

Sonata in E minor for two flutes,
TWV 40:146 (4:47)

19 I Allegro 1:41
20 II Affettuoso 1:39
21 III Allegro 1:27

Total Time: 49:35



Recorded 9–10 January 2007 at Leith Symington Griswold Hall, The Peabody Institute of the The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. Produced by Geoffrey Burgess. Engineered by Ed Tetreault. Cover: A Man Playing a Flute, Antoine Watteau (1684–1721).