

## Introduction

Johann Gottlieb Graun was a significant composer of both vocal and instrumental music, and one of the finest violinists of his time. After appointments as concertmaster at two smaller German courts, he became in 1732 the first musician engaged by Crown Prince Frederick, later Frederick II (“the Great”) of Prussia. He retained the position of royal concertmaster until his death in 1771.<sup>11</sup>

Graun was prolific in every genre except opera, which was the exclusive province of his younger brother, *Kapellmeister* Carl Heinrich Graun. As well as his many solo and trio sonatas, he wrote about 13 examples of a rarer and more specialised form, sometimes called the “German quartet” or “concertante quartet” to distinguish it from the string quartet. While full harmony in four voices is the norm in the string quartet, it is the exception in the concertante quartet, which plays with contrasts of all possible one, two and three-voice textures above the basso continuo.

In 1752 Graun’s Berlin colleague J. J. Quantz provided an excellent description of the German quartet:

“A quartet, or sonata with three concertante instruments and a bass, is the true touchstone of a genuine contrapuntist, and is often the downfall of those who are not solidly grounded in its technique. Its vogue has never been great, hence its nature may not be well known to many people. It is to be feared that compositions of this kind will eventually become a lost art.”<sup>12</sup>

This work is unique among Graun’s 12 quartets in that it is scored purely for strings in all extant sources. In other Graun quartets the highest voice is either scored specifically for flute, or it offers the flute and violin as alternative instruments. In this work, only the third voice has alternative instrumentation: the sources support performance by the viola da gamba or the viola. This will be discussed further below.

As with almost all of Graun’s chamber music, no autograph has survived and there was no printed publication. However, this work must have been quite popular, as it has come down to us in seven manuscript copies, an unusually high number. For a full list of these sources, see “Our Edition” below. The most careful, clear and consistent of these, Q7, is in the hand of Ludwig Christian Hesse, the gamba virtuoso who worked together with Graun for over 20 years in Frederick’s *Hofkapelle*, and almost certainly inspired him to write his many sonatas and concertos involving the viola da gamba.<sup>13</sup> Hesse had the honour of being a member of Frederick’s “Potsdam Musici . . . A small, select group of virtuosos [who] performed in the king’s evening concerts, which took place in his private apartments from the beginning of his reign.”<sup>14</sup> This and similar sonatas may have been performed there, or at the private academies which appeared from 1738 in Berlin. In 1766, J. A. Hiller said of Hesse: “The skill, attractiveness and fire in performance which our Mr. Hesse possesses to such a high degree make him, in our time, incontestably the greatest gambist in Europe.”

Hesse’s copy Q7 is unique among the sources in that he uses both the tenor and bass functions of the viola da gamba, by writing the bass into the gamba part whenever the gamba is not playing for more than a bar or two. We have printed these sections of the bass as smaller cue notes to distinguish them from the actual third voice. An ideal performance of this work would include both a chordal and a melody-sustaining instrument on the bass line, in which case it would not be necessary for the gamba player to play these sections; but if the sustaining bass instrument (a cello, second viol or bassoon) is not available, it might be advisable to play them.

Many of Graun’s gamba parts offer the viola as an alternative instrument, and this work is no exception. In the Amalienbibliothek score Q1, “e viola” has been added later in another hand to the words “viola da gamba;” and in four other sources, only the viola is mentioned. The texture of this third voice is so similar

<sup>11</sup> For information on Graun, please see the preface to Johann Gottlieb Graun, *Konzert für Violine, Viola da Gamba und Orchester*, eds. G. and L. v. Zadow (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2005), G069, which is also on the Güntersberg website. See also M. O’Loughlin, *Frederick the Great and His Musicians: the Viola da Gamba Music of the Berlin School* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), Chapter 7.

<sup>12</sup> Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, trans. Edward R. Reilly (New York: Schirmer Books, 1982), p. 318.

<sup>13</sup> For more information on Hesse see O’Loughlin, *Frederick the Great*, Chapter 6.

<sup>14</sup> Mary Oleskiewicz, ‘The Court of Brandenburg-Prussia’, in Samantha Owens, Barbara M. Reul and Janice B. Stockigt, eds, *Music at German courts, 1715–1760: Changing Artistic Priorities* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), p. 98.

to Graun's other works for gamba, and so different from the violin parts, that it seems certain that Graun conceived it for Hesse to play on the gamba. The earliest viola version was probably made by a skilled arranger/copyist either directly from the autograph or from a copy of it, and the other viola copies were then made from this, as they are all quite similar, but different from the gamba version. The viola adaptation is highly effective, involving octave transpositions for a more sympathetic use of register, removal of a few double-stops (although most of these remain), and in one case rewriting parallel sixths as thirds. This version of the quartet gives the viola player a rare opportunity to outshine violinist colleagues! It also provides string quartets, preferably with the addition of a chordal continuo instrument, the opportunity to explore the different textures to be found in this unusual quartet form.

As in many sonatas by Berlin School composers, the slow movement is placed as the first of the three movements. This system may have been invented by G. B. Somis<sup>15</sup> and was also used by Tartini, who is thought to have been a teacher of Graun. It lays emphasis on the slow movement, usually an Adagio, which no longer has the character of an intermezzo or (in the case of a four-movement sonata) a short prelude to an Allegro. The Berlin opening Adagio movements are weighty pieces in binary form, but without repeated sections. Many of them are strongly emotional showpieces of *Empfindsamkeit*, the North German "sensitive" style, and this one is no exception. This is usually followed by a fugal Allegro and a lighter dance-based movement, in this case a Siciliano.

A characteristic of the North German *empfindsamer Stil* is the frequent and effective use of expressive appoggiaturas. Here, C. P. E. Bach's rule is relevant to the music of his Berlin colleagues: irrespective of its written value, the appoggiatura should be played on the beat, and take half the value of the main note before which it stands. If the main note is dotted, the appoggiatura takes two-thirds of its value. Bach also instructs that all appoggiaturas are slurred to the following main note, whether this is indicated or not.

Some individual copyist contributions should be mentioned here. Given Hesse's long and close association with Graun, he is likely to have made his copy directly from the autograph. However, he has probably added his own characteristic touches to the viola da gamba part: the chord in bar 37 of the first movement, the rather attractive lower voice in bar 56 of the second movement, and the instructions "alla octava" in bars 28–29 of the first movement and 24–26 of the third movement. In the first case he seems to have wanted to make it clear that these additions were his by writing the chord notes as small cue notes. The chord requires an extra g in the middle to be playable, but we have not added this. Hesse's reason for using the words "alla octava" rather than simply notating these passages an octave higher is unclear. He may have wished here also to identify his own changes. We have notated the passage in the first movement in the higher octave, which is how it appears in Q1 and seems the more attractive and likely solution. However, Hesse's original can be seen in our facsimile reproduction of the first page. In the case of the third movement, we have notated it in the lower octave as it appears in Q1 and Q7, but also included Hesse's written note.

Hesse was also in the habit of adding fingerings to his gamba parts, and we have reproduced these. Fingerings will also be found on two doublestopped passages in the first movement of the viola part. These are found only in Q5, a set of parts by an anonymous copyist, which originally belonged to the keyboard player Sarah Levy (née Itzig) (1761–1854) before being transferred at an unknown date to the Berlin Sing-Akademie. Comparison with the bass figures suggests that the fingerings are later additions in a different hand, but we cannot say when they were added. Graun died in 1771, but in Berlin there was considerable antiquarian interest in music by him and his colleagues until the early decades of the nineteenth century, much of it instigated by Levy and Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758–1832). The fingerings are included here not in a prescriptive sense, but because they may be of interest to modern players. They show a clear preference for avoiding shifts under a slur.

This quartet is a fine example of Graun's highly expressive style. Displaying poignant melodic lines, jaunty passagework, and attractive imitations across three voices underpinned by a strong bass line and

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. *Königliche Gambenduos*, vol. 1, eds. L. and G. v. Zadow (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2002), G033, which contains two sonatas by Somis.

interesting harmony, it is easy to see why the work was so sought after in its own time and possibly much later.

Michael O'Loghlin  
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### Our Edition

The quartet in G minor, GraunWV<sup>16</sup> Av:XIV:10, has come down to us in seven manuscript sources:

- Q1** D-B<sup>17</sup> Am.B. 240/6, score. *Quatro* for *Violino Primo*, *Violino Secondo*, *Viola da Gamba e Viola, Basso*. The gamba part does not contain alternatives for viola.
- Q2** D-B Mus. ms. 8293/30, score. *Quartett vom Concertmeister Graun*, no indication of instruments. The third part is for viola.<sup>18</sup>
- Q3** D-B KHM 1900, parts: *Violino I<sup>mo</sup>*, *Violino 2<sup>do</sup>*, *Viola*, *Basso*.
- Q4** D-B KHM 1901, parts: *Quartetto | a | Violino I<sup>mo</sup> | Violino II<sup>do</sup> | Viola | e | Basso | di Gio: Amad. Graun*<sup>19</sup>
- Q5** D-B SA<sup>19</sup> 3371, parts. *Quatuor in G minor | col fuga | per il | [Incipit] | Violino Primo | Violino Secondo | Viola obl.<sup>to</sup> | e | Basso Continuo | Dell Sign G. Amd. Graun | Maestro a Concerto*<sup>20</sup>. An additional fugue is not present.
- Q6** D-B SA 3389, parts. *Quadro | per il | Violino Primo | Violino Secondo | la Viola | e il | Cembalo | del Sig<sup>e</sup> Graun | Maestro di Concerto*<sup>20</sup>
- Q7** D-DS<sup>20</sup> Mus. ms. 1235, parts, written by Ludwig Christian Hesse. *Quatuor | Violino 1 | Violino 2 | Viola di Gamba | e | Cembalo*

The third part of this quartet is available in two versions: for viola da gamba (Q1 and Q7) and for viola (Q2–Q6). Apart from the fact that there are two different versions for the third part, all sources show an astonishing degree of concordance. The articulation however varies as usual.

For our edition we use the carefully written source of the gambist Ludwig Christian Hesse (Q7). Our score contains the gamba part of this source. Our separate viola part G273D is based on the source Q2 because it shows the most concordance with Hesse's other parts.

Our edition for practical use follows the above mentioned manuscripts very precisely. The octavated treble clef in Hesse's gamba part has been replaced by alto clef. We use today's convention, in which each accidental is valid until the end of the bar. Accidentals which we suggest in addition are placed in parentheses. All other editorial modifications and additions are indicated as usual (footnotes, dotted slurs, characters in brackets).

Günter von Zadow  
Heidelberg, January 2015

<sup>16</sup> Christoph Henzel, *Graun-Werkverzeichnis, Verzeichnis der Werke der Brüder Johann Gottlieb und Carl Heinrich Graun*, Beeskow 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv.

<sup>18</sup> GraunWV (vol. I, p. 138) states erroneously that the third part is for viola da gamba.

<sup>19</sup> Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Depositum Archiv der Sing-Akademie zu Berlin.

<sup>20</sup> Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt.