

Introduction

“And how would it be possible for me to remember all that I invented for strings and winds? I especially applied myself here to making trios, and arranged it so that the second part seemed to be the first, and the bass followed along in a natural melody, and in a harmony appropriate to them, that is to say, to their every tone, and could not be otherwise. One wanted to flatter me that in this I had shown my best ability.”

So Georg Philipp Telemann in his autobiography of 1740.¹ And, indeed, the catalogue of Telemann’s works lists the imposing number of 152 pieces for two instruments and thorough bass.² Most of them are available today in modern editions and are widely known.

However, the present Trio Sonata in G Major for violin, violoncello, and basso continuo has not been published until now. This is probably due to the unconventional scoring, since Telemann employed the violoncello here in a soloistic manner and not, as was usual, merely as a bass instrument.

The source of Sonata TWV 42:G7 is preserved in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Darmstadt under the shelf mark Mus.ms 1042/12.³ It is a handwritten score of four pages in portrait format. The manuscript is cleanly written, but displays corrections in several passages. It is not easily legible, since the notes on the reverse side of the page bleed through heavily. The scribe is not known. On the first page, *Sonata* is written at the upper left, and *del Sigre Telemann* at the upper right above the music. The staves are marked *Violino*, *Violoncello*, and *Basso*. The sonata is in G Major and has three movements: *Vivace*, *Adagio*, and *Allegro*.

In several passages, the violoncello doubles the continuo line or embellishes it in a manner that one does not normally find in Telemann. Thus, the sonata begins with a violin solo in which the cello plays along on the continuo part. This is followed by a short cello solo, and only thereafter are the two instruments equal partners. On the whole, the piece clearly has the character of a trio sonata.

The two solo parts display the strong influence of the Italian style with chords broken up into sixteenth notes, which are typical for stringed instruments of the violin family. Also to be found in the violin part are freely performed arpeggios (*Vivace* mm. 24–26 and *Allegro* mm. 86–90). The two solo parts are thus written very idiomatically and should really be played on the violin and cello, respectively.

In the TWV, the date of origin of the Darmstadt copy is given as ca. 1730. However, the sonata was probably composed earlier. The above-quoted text about “making trios” refers to Telemann’s time at the court of Eisenach from 1708 to 1712. The Italian style also tends to point to an earlier date of composition.

Our edition follows the source as closely as possible. We employ today’s conventions concerning accidentals. Editorial accidentals that deviate from the source are given in parentheses. All corrections we have made in the musical text, to amend obvious scribal errors or to alleviate the most conspicuous parallel fifths, are listed in the Critical Report. The legato slurs (for example, in the *Allegro* in m. 92 f.), which from today’s point of view appear rather inconsistent, are original.

Most suitable for the performance of the basso continuo is a harpsichord or other chordal instrument. A cello, on the other hand, seems less appropriate due to the occasional doubling of the bass line. Since the bass is not figured in the source, we have included figures and a continuo realization for less experienced harpsichord players in a second score.

Thanks to the progressing chords divided into rapid sixteenth notes, this trio sonata displays a very full sound and has a joyful and festive character reminiscent of Corelli.

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¹ Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte* (Hamburg 1740), p. 362 [Telemann, autobiography 1740].

² Georg Philipp Telemann, *Thematisch-Systematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke* (TWV), *Instrumentalwerke*, vol. 2, ed. Martin Ruhnke

(Kassel etc., 1992) p. 3ff Abteilung 42: “Kammermusik für 2 Instrumente und Generalbass.”

³ RISM A/II: D-DS Mus.ms 1042/12.