



TREBLE FLUIDITY:
INTERCHANGEABILITY OF VIOLIN AND FLUTE

JAKOVS BORODECKIS

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SOLO BAROQUE: SUITE, PARTITA, FANTASIA

works for solo violin and solo flute performed on baroque violin by Jakovs Borodeckis

JOHANN PAUL VON WESTHOFF (1656-1705)

Suite II in A-Major for Violin Solo (composed in 1696)

- [1] Allemande 4:31
- [2] Courante 2:05
- [3] Sarabande 2:13
- [4] Gigue 2:35

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Partita III in E-Major for Violin Solo, BWV 1006 (composed in 1720)

- [5] Preludio 4:25
- [6] Loure 2:52
- [7] Gavotte en Rondeau 3:05
- [8] Menuet I 2:00
- [9] Menuet II 1:47
- [10] Bourrée 1:52
- [11] Gigue 2:01

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)

Partita in A-Minor for Flute Solo, BWV 1013 (composed around 1723)

- [12] Allemande 7:52
- [13] Corrente 4:27
- [14] Sarabande 5:37
- [15] Bourrée Angloise 3:06

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN (1681-1767)

Fantasia III in B Minor for Flute Solo, TWV 40:4 (composed in 1732)

- [16] Largo 3:05
- [17] Allegro 2:14

GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN (1681-1767)

Fantasia XII in G Minor for Flute Solo, TWV 40:13 (composed in 1732)

- [18] Grave-Allegro 3:35
- [19] Presto 3:00

Total: 1:02:21

*In loving memory of my dear friend, mentor,
and benefactor, Dr. Günther Ziesel*
(1941–2022)

FOREWORD

My first encounter with the Baroque music in its authentic¹ form occurred in my childhood years, having been brought by my parents to attend George Frideric Handel's *Alcina* at the magnificent Baroque castle of Rundale² in Latvia. The august splendor of the ambience, alongside the extravaganza of the costume- and set-design, led to my fascination with the realm of the high-Baroque. However, my own performative hands-on experience with the authentic, or historically informed, performance practice of Baroque music did not occur until much later in my musical training.

During my graduate studies in Graz, Austria, I took a year of baroque violin, however, I seemed not to be able to fully grasp it yet. The opportunities kept arising, though, and during my pre-candidacy at University of Maryland my performative experiences were significantly enriched through several Baroque opera productions, amongst them Handel's *Ariodante* and *Acis and Galatea*. Simultaneously, I was exposed to a properly befitted literature on the subject, which furthermore helped to instantiate my understanding of Baroque rhetoric, whilst placing the compositional and performative aspects within a historical context. Once advanced to candidacy, I had an opportunity to participate in the Baroque Performance Institute's summer program offered by the Oberlin College – an event that had a deeply illuminating impact on my holistic perception of the Baroque music and aesthetics.

As I began gathering the historical data for my dissertation research, a certain thematic path started to crystallize. It led me to recognize that the primary impetus of the solo violin genre from its genesis was

within the sonata genre. The sonata's ascendancy can be traced across the Baroque spectrum: even the prime solo-repertoire works of the high-Baroque – suites, partitas, fantasias – all link back to the emergence and evolution of the sonata (with the later distinction of sonata *da chiesa* and *da camera*). I observed that it is precisely the amalgamation of the *da chiesa* and *da camera* sonata subgenres that led towards the creation of new instrumental solo genres. Furthermore, as I accumulated more and more knowledge on the Baroque rhetoric and its practical application in the performative setting, I realized how incumbent the power of rhetoric with its formulaic patterns (figures and gestures) is, and how it sets up the all-enveloping foundation that extends even into the forthcoming Classical era.

Another aspect of Baroque music that I was vaguely familiar with, and that alluded to my particular interest in attaining more data and specifics, was the interchangeability of the instruments (in particular the treble family). From the creatively associative perspective of reflecting on the society as a whole, including its musical tastes and tendencies, this fascinating practice of versatility and instrumental fluidity resonated deeply with the contemporary 21st century paradigm centered around gender fluidity, non-binary perceptions, and interchanging family-role traits. The treble instruments' interchangeability, therefore, infused in me a desire to intermingle this practice across the high-Baroque unaccompanied solo works, thus uniting and showcasing all the quintessential elements of which the Baroque music is comprised: from its historical traits in the sonata genre; through the prism of rhetoric; and concluding with the aspects of the treble fluidity in the solo violin and solo flute suites, partitas, and fantasias.

¹ Performed on Baroque instruments. More on the term 'authenticity' on Grove Music Online: <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.46587>. Accessed 23 Feb. 2023.

² Designed by the infamous Italian architect Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli (1700–1771), who has also built the Winter Palace (Hermitage) in St. Petersburg, Russia. <https://rundale.net/en/the-palace/history/>. Accessed 28 Jan. 2023.

PROGRAM NOTES

J.P. Westhoff: Suite II in A Major for Violin Solo

Infused with the polyphonic texture through and through, this suite exemplifies the mastery of the German violin idiom, already presented in sublime form in its early historical breakthrough appearance. Composed in the traditional dance suite cycle of *Allemande-Courante-Sarabande-Gigue* it unfolds as a conceptually wholesome, technically and musically balanced, and thematically unified composition. Westhoff showcases the “less-is-more” principle via his use of basic double-stops and chords such as thirds, sixths, and triads with their inversions, which acoustically bring out the very best resonance in the violin, acting as rewarding and encouraging agents on the performer’s end. The natural, organic, and smooth perception of the music on the listener’s side is achieved through the steadfast, symmetrical rhythmic formula, laconic formal construction, and constancy in textural density, all under one tonal umbrella. Another interesting maneuver that Westhoff uses in creating a “ground zero” point of reference piercing through the entire cycle is to begin three out of its four movements with an almost identical upbeat, thus re-centering and re-starting the new thematic outlay. The composer’s stylistic preference of voice leading, apart from the direct polyphony in double-stops and chords, features the split of the melody between the registers, sometimes entirely on one side or the other, and at other times competing for leadership and skillfully passing the melody from the upper to lower voice and vice versa. This method serves both as a technical solution for indirect polyphony, as well as an artistic tool, bringing in the timbre contrasts and therefore avoiding stagnancy in character.

J.S. Bach: Partita III in E Major for Violin Solo, BWV 1006

The E major Partita showcases a brilliant and rather extravagant compositional approach, comprised of diverse variables contributing to its uniqueness, from the tonality to formal structure. The first extravagant feature of the piece is its key – with the five sharps it does indeed radiate brilliance and infectious joy. However, on the performer’s side it ends up being perhaps the most challenging of the entire cycle of sonatas and partitas to cope with. The intonation issues mostly arise in the correlation of the high-pitched key with the open strings, particularly due to the use of *bariolage* technique³ but also often revealed through the augmented and diminished melodic figures. Ironically, Bach also plays with his selection of E major key as representative of the highest string on the violin and, therefore, applies

it to extensive use of the upper registers, unlike any other piece written by him for a treble instrument. In terms of its affects, the entire partita remains strictly on the bright side of the spectrum, excluding any “shadow” sides and leaving no room for double meanings such as is often found in the previous two partitas. Comprised of a set of *galanterie*⁴ dances, the cycle opens and ends with the more standard movements, *Preludio* and *Gigue*, respectively. Both movements are set on a perpetual rhythmic motion, sparkling with vitality and carrying an affect of an unstoppable driving force and bravery, leaving the listener in a state of breathless awe and rejuvenation of the life spirit. The dances included in this set are: *Loure* – an elegant, courtly dance, also called the “slow *gigue*”; the seldom-used variant of *Gavotte en Rondeau* with a recurring theme intervened by variation-like sections; a pair of *Menuets* – a traditional and a more pastoral type; and an energetic *Bourrée* building up the vivid motion for the closing exuberant *Gigue*.

J.S. Bach: Partita for Flute Solo in A Minor, BWV 1013

Bach’s one and only solo flute work, although clearly composed on the example of his violin partitas, stands out with its peculiarities and re-imagination of the dance suite form. The first movement, *Allemande*, already takes an unexpected direction; instead of exhibiting traditional *allemande* dance characteristics, with its sixteenth-note flow it resembles more closely a prelude’s rhythmic figuration. Similar to the E major Partita, also here the opening movement is the lengthiest, and the one that sets up the stylistic direction as well as the character for the entire piece. The tender and pure A minor only enhances the emotional palette offered in the cycle, consisting of the affects of melancholy: sentimental, youthful but restrained, elegant, and of a delicate nature. Following the *Allemande* is an Italian *Corrente*, represented here in a somewhat capricious, spiky manner: sharp *staccato* gestures, broad melodic leaps going back and forth in register, and the accelerated, forward pushing sixteenth-note gestures, all exhibiting the ambivalence and impulsivity of youth. The forthcoming *Sarabande* corresponds more with the solemnity of the opening *Allemande*, taking it even further into a deep melancholy and sincere gravity that is almost suitable for a sonata *da chiesa* cycle in its expression and depth; this is similar to the stylistic direction found in the works of Bach’s contemporary Tomaso Albinoni. The *lamentoso* character is primarily achieved through the expressiveness of chromaticism, downscale motion of the melodic sequences, and the powerful emotional play on tactically induced

³ A 19th-century term used in bowed instruments to describe several slightly unorthodox ways of mixing open strings with stopped notes for special effect. See Grove Music Online: <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.02060>. Accessed 13 Jan. 2023.

⁴ A term for an up-to-date work or piece in the early 18th century; also refers to an expressive nuance, especially melodic figuration and ornamentation. See Grove Music Online: <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.10513> Accessed 13 Jan. 2023.

modulations. The closing movement of the Partita is not the anticipated *Gigue*, but instead a *Bourrée Anglois* which continues the whimsical and quirky mood established in the *Corrente*. Here as well Bach musically presents that inconstancy through the continuous use of modulations, minor-major play, and occasional temperamental jumps in the melody. The rhythmic figuration is divided between the short two-sixteenth-note-plus-an-eighth-note gestures and the longer sixteenth-note cascades, often in an *arpeggiato* form, enhancing its polyphonic function.

G.P. Telemann: Fantasias III and XII for Flute Solo, TWV 40:4 and 40:13

These Fantasias exemplify well the signature style of Telemann, namely the “mixed” style. One can trace the French, ‘Lullist’ influences in the rhythmic structure and the overall nuanced elegance and finesse; Italian, ‘Corellian’ sonority; and German fugal formal elements, taking their origins in the sonata *da chiesa*. Fantasias III and XII each begin with a slow introductory statement - *Largo* and *Grave* respectively - which is later intertwined within the movement, fitting well into the *capriccio* concept that characterizes these movements’ compositional structure. Additionally, these little transitions generate a peculiar affect by creating an unexpected momentum in the midst of a fast movement, similar to the silent power of a general pause but filled with serene musical tones. Tonally, the second musically contemplative insert in both Fantasia III and XII is elevated to a higher key - in the third Fantasia it additionally modulates into a parallel major key. The approach in the fast sections varies from the fugal motivic structure of the *Vivace* in Fantasia III, using a short subject comprised of thirty-seconds and sixteenths, to a more linear structure of *Allegro* in Fantasia XII, where the overarching melodic approach is centered around the ever-increasing leaps integrated within various rhythmic figures. Often the broad distance between the notes serves as the means to achieve indirect polyphony, creating an illusion of two voices being carried out simultaneously, similar to the use of *arpeggiato* figures to substitute chords and enhance the harmonic perception of a singular voice. Unlike the *capriccio* manner of the opening movements in both Fantasias, their closing movement takes a different direction: an energetic but steady in tempo *Allegro* in *gigue* form in Fantasia III, opposed to an unpredictable, improvisatory, and eventually accelerating *Presto* in *bourrée* form, with an utterly creative bird-imitation intervention in the middle section, concluding the entire cycle on a truly fantastical note.

AFTERWORD

The repertoire selected to supplement my dissertation “Evolution of the solo violin concept throughout the 17th and 18th centuries and the interchangeability of treble instruments in works for baroque violin and transverse flute” showcases the various uses and functions of the figures and gestures in the unaccompanied treble repertoire spanning from mid- to high-Baroque. Those rhetorical rules were still essential in the late-Baroque compositional principles, such as those of Bach and Telemann, and can to a certain extent even be discerned in the works of the Classical era. But as the notational principles were transitioning from the freer descriptive mode to the stricter prescriptive one, some other liberties were limited along with it, affecting such practices as interchanging the treble instruments. The legacy of this instrumental interchangeability, which in the 21st century context perhaps resonates more as fluidity (as in modern conceptualization of gender fluid or non-binary), remains a symbolic milestone capturing the free-spirited and open-minded attitude of the Baroque Zeitgeist.

My experimentation with the unaccompanied solo violin and solo flute works crystallized the essence of the Rhetorical approach established during the 17th century and carried over into the 18th. It manifests itself as the primary interweaving agent within Baroque music, and serves as the unifying, overarching thematic and structural umbrella of the compositional techniques, as well as a centralized performance etiquette standard. It is precisely this reliability on the Rhetoric’s omnipotence, that permits a successful application of such practices as the interchangeability of treble instruments - a concept with an obsolete potential, that, lamentably, is no longer applicable to the contemporary compositional techniques and their respective performative practices. It does, therefore, raise a question: if an idea of an overarching, “objective” musical expression were to be reintegrated into the 21st century’s musical conceptuality, would that lead to a creation of an entirely new era of Rhetoric? And if so, then would such a major re-shaping of the structural mechanism bring back the possibility of the interchange of the instruments? As the Baroque music itself was once regarded *avant-garde*, so could the Rhetoric’s re-creation establish itself in the chronology of the classical music world. A New Age of Rhetoric would demand an aesthetical experimentation on the composers’ side, in close collaboration with the performer, re-establishing that special bond which once served as a primary force of the mutually creative drive, and helped to re-imagine and re-structure the musical language and its perception. —*Jakovs Borodeckis, February 2023, Washington D.C.*

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