

Introduction

Johann Gottlieb Graun was born in the small Saxon town of Wahrenbrück in 1702 or 1703, the second of three brothers, each of whom was to become a distinguished musician. He counted among his ancestors an organist and several generations of Protestant pastors, but his father August served a more materialistic cause: he was a tax collector and brewer. Educational possibilities in Wahrenbrück were limited, and all three brothers were sent elsewhere for further education. The eldest, August Friedrich (1698/99-1765) went to Grimma in 1711, at which point he may be allowed to depart from this biographical sketch. Johann Gottlieb and his younger brother Carl Heinrich (1703/4-1759) remained together, a situation which pertained throughout much of their lives, and which has ever since caused considerable confusion and difficulty in attribution of much of their music. Johann Gottlieb went to the Kreuzschule in Dresden in 1713, and Carl Heinrich followed him there in 1714. This excellent school offered general education with an emphasis on music. It was associated with the Dresden Kreuzkirche, and trained singers for its choir, the Kreuzchor.

During his time at the Kreuzschule Graun would have come in contact with the fine musicians of the Dresden court, as well as visitors such as Telemann and J. S. Bach. The Saxon capital was a major political and cultural centre, and its court orchestra was widely admired. Among its finest younger virtuosi was the violinist Johann Georg Pisendel (1687-1755), who was appointed in 1712 and took over as *Konzertmeister* in 1728. Like almost all leading German musicians, Pisendel studied in Italy; in 1716 he studied with Vivaldi in Venice, and in 1717 with Montanari in Rome. Half a century later Burney interviewed Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773), who attributed the excellence of the Dresden orchestra to Pisendel's training. Probably soon after his return, Pisendel accepted young Graun as a violin student. Graun's other violin teacher was the famous Italian violinist and composer Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770).¹

Graun's first known appointment was at Merseburg, where he was appointed as *Konzertmeister* in 1726. He must have already built up a reputation, because J. S. Bach sent his son Wilhelm Friedemann there to study violin with Graun from 1726 to 1727. One of the few works of Graun which were ever published in the eighteenth century, a set of six sonatas for violin and harpsichord, appeared during this time. Graun did not stay long in Merseburg; in 1727 he obtained another appointment, this time at Arolsen in the State of Hesse-Cassel, again as *Konzertmeister*.

In 1732 Graun became the first musician to be appointed to the service of the Prussian crown prince Frederick. Graun moved with the crown prince and his *Kapelle* to Rheinsberg in 1736, and on to Berlin and Potsdam on Frederick's accession to the throne in 1740. Frederick the Great valued his services highly; from that year until his death in 1771, he earned an annual salary of 1,200 Thalers, or four times the rank-and-file orchestra rate. As *Konzertmeister* he was responsible for training and preparing the orchestra. His training was modelled on that of Pisendel, and emphasised precision, unified bowing and expressive playing. The meticulous attention to dynamics which is so much in evidence in Graun's scores became an important part of the Berlin style.

In 1766, Hiller summarized Graun's creativity:

The Concertmaster's great strength on the violin and his superb composition[s] are known everywhere. ... Our Mr. Graun's compositions comprise very many unusually fiery concertos for one and two violins, also double concertos for other instruments; concertos for the violoncello, the viola da gamba, etc.; very many extremely splendid symphonies, some with many obbligato instruments, and some overtures; beautiful trios and quartets for different instruments; many solos, and also some cantatas, etc.²

Between them, Graun and his brother (Frederick's Kapellmeister Carl Heinrich Graun) wrote at least 161 concertos. Forty-six of these, including the present concerto, can be definitely ascribed to Johann Gottlieb, but he almost certainly wrote many more of them. His concertos show a dazzling variety of instrumental colour: he wrote solo concertos for violin, viola, viola da gamba, flute, oboe, bassoon, horn, harpsichord and organ, as well as group concertos for several unusual or unique combinations of instruments. Like many of Graun's concertos and indeed his work in all instrumental genres, this concerto appears in different variants: two of the three sources have violin and viola da gamba as solo instruments, and the other has violin and viola.

The fact that the work was probably originally written for violin and viola da gamba does not in any way diminish the legitimacy of the viola variant presented here. Concept such as intellectual property and the primacy of the original source are foreign to the environment of the Berlin School and perhaps to the eighteenth century

¹ Ernst Ludwig Gerber, "Graun (Johann Gottlieb)," *Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, Part 1 (Leipzig, 1790) 538.

² Johann Adam Hiller, "Verzeichniß der Personen, welche gegenwärtig die königliche preußische Capellmusic ausmachen, im Julius 1766," *Wöchentliche Nachrichten*, 1:10 (1766), 75.

generally. Copyists were skilled musicians, sometimes composers themselves, who routinely altered and adapted scores to suit the requirements of a particular time and place, with the approval or disinterest of the composer.

Q3, the viola variant, was one of a large number of works in handsome, careful score format prepared for the Amalienbibliothek, the private library of Princess Anna Amalia, the sister of Frederick the Great and herself an accomplished composer and musician. These scores are written in a spacious hand with only a few bars per page and bound into large, heavy books, and would have been quite impractical for performance purposes. Rather, they were prepared for two purposes: for the private study of the princess, and as an enduring record of the musical achievements of her generation and previous generations. It is likely that the copyist of Q3 copied it from a fourth source for viola, now lost. In any case, Anna Amalia's great foresight has preserved for us a valuable companion piece for Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante*, for the same solo instruments! With its fascinating and unusual textures, this work is a valuable addition to the relatively scarce baroque and classical double concerto repertoire.

Michael O'Loghlin
Brisbane, Australia, December 2005



Q3: Zweiter Satz, Anfang des Violasolos (An dieser Stelle hat der Kopist irrtümlich drei statt zwei b vorgezeichnet)
Q3: Second movement, beginning of the viola solo (At this spot the copyist has erroneously inserted three flats instead of two)

Our Edition

There are three sources for the Concerto Graun WV A:XIII:3¹ –

Q1 – D-B SA 2775 “Concerto: dal Sr Gio: Gottl. Graun.” Score with “Violino concertante, Violino 1, Violino 2, Viola, Viola da Gamba, [Basso],” and, added by another hand in red, “Corni in Es” (horns in E-flat). The bass part is not figured. Classified in the catalogue of Graun’s works as: “a copyist’s copy from the sphere of the

¹ Christoph Henzel, Graun-Werkverzeichnis (Graun WV), *Verzeichnis der Werke der Brüder Carl Heinrich Graun und Johann Gottlieb Graun*, ortus Musikverlag Beeskow, forthcoming.