

Introduction

Johann Gottlieb Graun was a significant composer of both vocal and instrumental music, especially for the violin and the viola da gamba, 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 1771.⁶

The trio for two violins and basso continuo was perhaps the most universal of all chamber music combinations in the Baroque, the social and functional equivalent of the later string quartet. Many North German composers responded to this “Corellian” form with a variation in which the second violin was replaced by a viola da gamba. This piece covers both types, since the second part is identified in the manuscript source S1 as “Viola di Gamba ov. Violino” [Viola da Gamba or Violin]. The use of the violin as an alternative instrument to the gamba is common in Berlin School chamber music. It is facilitated by the use of the treble clef for gamba parts, sounding an octave lower than notated.⁷

An extra spice is provided by the use of a *scordatura*, or partial retuning, of the (first) violin part. By Graun’s time this practice was quite old and becoming rare. However, Graun uses it very effectively to add brilliance to the violin part, making it easier to play chords in the home key of A major, and providing resonance even where chords are not present. Both source manuscripts use the *scordatura*, which involves tuning the two lower strings up a tone, but S2 provides an additional part for the violin tuned normally, lacking some of the chords which then become awkward or unplayable. We have provided this part as an alternative. It should be noted that some of the chords which the copyist has left out are in fact playable in normal tuning, and the violinist could consult the *scordatura* part to locate them. However, it is clear that Graun visualised the work with the *scordatura*, and a far better result will be achieved by using it. For the *scordatura* part, the normal convention is used in the manuscripts and in this edition: all notes on the two lower strings are notated a tone lower than they sound, enabling the player to read and finger as if on a normally-tuned violin. The two upper strings must be used for any notes which can be played on them, except where a fingering indicates otherwise. In S1 the title page and the *scordatura* part are inscribed “Violino Quinto Accordio”, referring to the fact that all four strings sound a single open fifth, doubled at the octave.

In the traditional Baroque trio model, the two melody instruments share the same melodic material, which allows for imitative entries and contrapuntal treatment. In the first movement Graun adheres to this model, but the second movement shows a marked deviation from it. Each instrument portrays through its main theme a different character: the violin brilliant and heroic, like a fanfare of trumpets, and the gamba more lyrical. The violin also has extended sections of brilliant passagework which are absent from the gamba part. However, there is also some shared melodic material and some of the delicate free counterpoint for which Graun was greatly respected. In the third movement, the melodic material is again generally shared, except for a highly idiomatic violin passage in the second half.

As in many sonatas of the Berlin School composers, the slow movement is placed as the first of the three movements. This system may have been invented by G. B. Somis⁸ and was also used by Tartini, who is thought to have been a teacher of Graun. It lays emphasis on the slow movement,

⁶ More detail on Graun’s life and work is available in the forewords to his many other works, which have been published by Edition Güntersberg and which are also available on the Edition Güntersberg website. An example is: *Johann Gottlieb Graun, Concerto C-Dur für Viola da Gamba, zwei Violinen, Viola und Basso continuo*, G. and L. v. Zadow (ed.) (Heidelberg: Güntersberg G166, 2010)

⁷ Our edition contains the second part twice: in the treble clef as well as in the alto clef, which is used by most gamba players today.

⁸ See also *Königliche Gambenduos*, vol. 1 (Somis, Senaillié), G. and L. v. Zadow (ed.) (Heidelberg: Güntersberg G033, 2002)

which no longer has the character of an intermezzo or (in the case of a four-movement sonata) of a short prelude to a contrapuntal *Allegro*. The Berlin School opening slow movements are weighty pieces in binary form, but without repeated sections.

I will conclude with a few notes on performance practice relevant to this work. The appoggiaturas, which are indicated as grace notes in small print, are an important element of the Berlin style. C. P. E. Bach writes that the appoggiatura is played on the beat, and is always slurred to the main note.⁹ Irrespective of its written length, it should take half the value of the following note, or two-thirds of a dotted note. Players will notice inconsistency in the placement of slurs and trills. This is normal in this repertoire, which was generally circulated in manuscript copies: performers added their own articulation and ornamentation according to taste. The fermatas in bar 37 of the first movement and 136-7 in the third movement are an indication for a cadenza, which could be performed by either or both of the solo instruments. The placement of the fermata in the first movement, on the six-four chord of the final cadence, is quite normal for Graun sonatas. The fermatas in the third movement are more unusual in terms of harmony and position, shortly after the recapitulation. This is just one of several aspects of this work which hint at the concerto as much as the sonata.

This is the first edition of this exciting and challenging work, and we hope that players and audiences will enjoy acquainting themselves with the remarkable voice of Konzertmeister Graun.

Michael O’Loghlin
Brisbane, Australia, July 2011

Our Edition

The trio GraunWV Av:XV:41 has come down to us in these sources:

S1 D-B Mus. ms. 8295/19, cover page: *Sonata. A#.* | *a Tre* | *[Incipit]* | *Violino overo Viola da Gamba* | *Violino Quinto Accordio.* | *e* | *Basso Cembalo.* | *Dell Sign Graun Sen.* 3 separate parts: *Basso e Cembalo, Violino Quinto Accordio* (in scordatura), *Viola da Gamba ov. Violino.*

S2 D-B SA 3773, cover page: *TRIO. 81* | *Violino Primo* | *Violino Scondo* | *Basso* | *Dell Sign Graun* | *[Incipit]*. 6! separate parts: S2A – Violino primo, in scordatura, S2B – Violino primo, sounding, S2C – Violino secondo, S2D – Violino secondo, S2E – Cembalo, figured, S2F – Basso, not figured.

The notes are almost identical in both sources. There are however numerous deviations in dynamic markings, articulation, and appoggiaturas. We use S1 as our main source, because it has the viola da gamba in the second part. S2 is used only in case of doubts. Our edition follows the original as much as possible. The inconsistencies in the articulation have not been adjusted. The Critical Report (which is only present in the German introduction due to space constraints) lists those places in which we used S2 rather than our main source. Additional corrections that we suggest are indicated in the music by footnotes. Editorial accidentals are placed in brackets.

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Günter and Leonore von Zadow
Heidelberg, July 2011

⁹ Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*, Berlin 1753, “Von den Vorschlägen”