

## Introduction

In 1754 Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg published a biography of the widely respected composer, double bass player and organist J.G. Janitsch.<sup>1</sup> He reports that Janitsch was born in 1708 in the Silesian town of Schweidnitz, and studied music there and in Breslau. He continued his studies in 1729 at the university in Frankfurt an der Oder, where like several of his future colleagues in the Berlin *Hofkapelle*, he studied law. During this time Janitsch composed several pieces for important civic, academic and royal events. In 1729 his *Serenata* was performed by the university students for the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm I, and on 26 December 1731 they performed other major pieces by Janitsch for the king's son, Crown Prince Frederick. He travelled to Berlin in 1733 to take up an appointment as secretary to the minister Franz Wilhelm von Happe. Music reclaimed him from law in 1736, when he accepted an offer to join Frederick's *Kapelle* in Ruppin and Rheinsberg as 'Contraviolinist.' In Rheinsberg Janitsch took a creative step which was to prove significant for the musical life of Berlin: in 1738, he instituted the first musical academy in Prussia.<sup>2</sup> In 1740 Frederick was crowned king and moved with his *Kapelle* to Berlin, and Janitsch transferred the idea there. Every Friday except during the opera season, professional and amateur musicians from the nobility and middle classes would meet to play chamber music.

Unfortunately the many vocal and instrumental works Janitsch composed for festive occasions and funerals in Frankfurt an der Oder and Berlin have all been lost. Many of his instrumental trios and quartets have survived, and it is in the quartet genre that he was particularly respected in the eighteenth century. J. W. Hertel wrote in 1784 that 'he was a good writer of counterpoint, and his quartets are even now still the best examples of their kind.' His 41 surviving quartets are found in well over 100 copies, many of them in the collection of the Berlin Sing-Akademie, whose members were not only choristers but enthusiastic chamber musicians. There is a record of their performance of one of them in 1815, with the comment from a player: 'very good!' It seems that the quartets remained canonical, at least in Berlin, for long after the death of their composer.

Janitsch published three of his quartets in 1760. In his foreword he described the genre as follows:

... my completed four-voice sonatas, or so-called *Quattros* ... which consist of three upper voices and a bass, of which the former are so arranged, that they continually imitate each other; therefore astute musicians have the opportunity, on the repeats of their entries, to show their skill in ornamentation. A type of composition which has not often appeared as yet ... . The choice of instruments is so arranged, that no sonata will be similar to another.

Janitsch used a dazzling variety of instruments in his quartets, including the flute, oboe, oboe d'amore, bassoon, violin, viola, violoncello, viola da gamba, violino piccolo and viola pomposa in various combinations. The scoring of many of them, including this one, bears a superficial similarity to the developing string quartet. However, the comments by Hertel and Janitsch quoted above remind us that in their true nature they are quite unlike that form. The quartets of Janitsch remain rooted in the era of baroque counterpoint and the general bass. They aim for diversity of texture and instrumental colour combined with thematic homogeneity, whereas the string quartet exploits the rich harmonic possibilities and tonal homogeneity of the four string instruments. Janitsch's instrumentation was to some extent archaic: it is notable that some of the instruments he used were already old-fashioned, and did not survive beyond 1800 in the mainstream. He was forward-looking – and this one may glean not from any one quartet, but from the corpus of his quartets – in his pursuit of tone-colour as an end in itself, a concept which was to become powerful in the nineteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, 'Lebensläuffe. (b) Johann Gottlieb Janitsch.' *Historisch-Kritische Beyträge* 1 (1754) p. 152–6. For more information on Janitsch, see Michael O'Loughlin, *Frederick the Great and His Musicians: the Viola da Gamba Music of the Berlin School* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), and Thomas Fritsch, 'Johann Gottlieb Janitsch: Contraviolinist, Komponist und Akademiegründer,' *Die Rheinsberger Hofkapelle von Friedrich II*, (Rheinsberg: Musikakademie Rheinsberg, 1995)

<sup>2</sup> Fritsch, 'Johann Gottlieb Janitsch' p.191.

This quartet has only two sources, both in the archive of the Sing-Akademie. One of them attributes the work to Janitsch, the other to ‘Sigr. Graun.’ Fortunately there are scribal and stylistic characteristics which make it clear that this quartet is by Janitsch, not Graun.<sup>3</sup> Janitsch is unusual in that his works are clearly identified on their title-pages as ‘Sonata da Camera’ (chamber sonata) or ‘Sonata da Chiesa’ (church sonata). The title-page of the ‘Janitsch’ manuscript, identifying this one as a sonata da camera, is typical for his quartets in this form. Stylistically, Graun’s quartet writing is an extension of his trio style: the imitative entries are monothematic, and the contrapuntal texture is often interrupted by short or extended passages of idiomatic, sometimes virtuosic passagework. Janitsch is a purer contrapuntist: he almost always starts with a main subject, introduces a countersubject within a few bars of the beginning, and builds the entire movement from contrapuntal working of these and other related themes. This tight thematic unity across the three upper voices and complete abstinence from any idiomatic instrumental identifiers allowed copyists to arrange his quartets into many different instrumental combinations.

This quartet is a good example of this instrumental variety. The ‘Janitsch’ source requires a flute for the top voice, a second flute or a violin for the second voice, and a violin or a viola for the third voice. On this last part the original copyist has written ‘Viola di Bracio’ [sic] in the header, and a second copyist has later added ‘Violino overò’ (‘Violin or’) above this. The title page, which lists both instruments, is in the second hand. This part is in treble clef and fits within the range of either instrument, but the tessitura is quite low in comparison with typical violin parts, and would arguably be more effective on the viola. The ‘Graun’ source is unequivocal as to the instrumentation: two violins and ‘Viola di Gamba.’ The gamba part is presented in treble clef at the same pitch as in the other set of parts. Treble clef was often used in German gamba music, and the convention was always that it should sound an octave lower than written. Therefore, we have provided this third part in three versions: alto clef in the higher octave for viola players (G274C), alto clef in the lower octave for gamba players (G274D), and treble clef for violinists (G274E). However, the part is also playable on the gamba in the upper octave, so players who prefer the higher tessitura could read it from either the violin or viola parts.

As with almost all Baroque chamber music, there are also many ways to perform the bass part. The ‘Graun’ source has ‘Basso Cembalo,’ and the ‘Janitsch’ source mentions ‘Basso continuo e Violoncello.’ Janitsch owned a chamber organ for use in his Friday Academy, and it could well have been used as an alternative or in addition to the instruments mentioned above. Leaving aside the many combinations for the bass part, there are nine different instrumental variants for this work: the top two parts can be played on two flutes, a flute and a violin in that order, or two violins, and the third part can be played on three different instruments. Any of these combinations can be played from the parts provided in this edition; but the composer’s superb combination of contrapuntal and charming *galant* textures is perhaps most effective when instruments of varying tone colours are used.

Players will notice many discrepancies in articulation, both between parallel passages in different parts, and between different appearances of a motive in the same part. We have not attempted to unify these, so that players may make their own decisions.

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<sup>3</sup> In his catalogue of the works of the Graun brothers, *Verzeichnis der Werke von Johann Gottlieb und Carl Heinrich Graun* (Beeskow, Germany: ortus 2006), Christoph Henzel places this work in the category D, works of doubtful authenticity. The following brief discussion refers only to Johann Gottlieb Graun, who was probably the composer of almost all of the other 16 extant quartets listed in the catalogue.

## Our Edition

Our edition is based on these sources:

**Q1** D-B SA<sup>4</sup> 3159. Manuscript entitled Titel *SONATA da Camera 33. – C major | à 4<sup>tuor</sup> | [Incipit] | Flauto Primo | Flauto Secondo o Violino | Violino overo Viola Sigl. Violino | Basso Continuo e Violoncello | Dell Sigr Janitsch | opera. VI<sup>a</sup>*. 4 separate parts: *Flauto: 1<sup>mo</sup>, Violino ô Flauto: 2<sup>do</sup>, Violino: overò Viola di Bracio: (treble clef), Basso Continuo (figured)*.

**Q2** D-B SA 3369. Manuscript entitled *Quatuor | a | Violino Primo | Violino Secondo | Viola di Gamba | è | Basso | del Sigr Graun. [Incipit of 2<sup>nd</sup> movement]*. 4 separate parts: *Violino Primo, Violino Secondo, Viola di Gamba (treble clef), Basso Cembalo (figured)*. GraunWV D:XIV:21.

We use the source Q1 as our main source, as we assign this work rather to Janitsch than to Graun (see above). Our edition for practical use follows the main source Q1 as accurately as possible. Our additions and corrections are justified in most cases by the reading in Q2 or by parallel passages. These are indicated by brackets (dynamic markings, figuring) or by dotted lines (slurs and ties). Modifications which cannot be indicated in these ways are explained in footnotes. Our accidentals apply for the whole bar. Our suggested accidentals appear in parenthesis.

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<sup>4</sup> Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Depositum der Sing-Akademie zu Berlin.