

Introduction

Michel Corrette, who was born in Rouen in 1707 and died in Paris in 1795, was an extremely versatile musician in 18th century Paris. He held important organist positions and was famous and successful as an instrumentalist and music teacher, but above all as a composer.

Corrette composed for all musical genres except opera and published his extremely numerous works himself. The MGG lists vocal music (sacred masses and motets, as well as secular cantatas and arias), stage works (so-called *Concertos comiques*, ballets and scene music), instrumental music (orchestral works and especially concertos for solo instruments), chamber music (solos with b.c., duets and sonatas for a wide variety of instruments), music for keyboard instruments (especially organ) and, last but not least, instructional works (for practically all instruments).¹

Corrette's compositions were aimed primarily at the ever-growing circle of music lovers among the Parisian bourgeoisie. He followed new currents and, for example, liked to incorporate elements of the Italian style into French music. He also took care of all kinds of newly emerging instruments, such as the hurdy-gurdy and the musette. His special preference was for the violoncello as the upcoming solo instrument.

The present collection of sonatas was first printed in about 1739. Two copies are now in the National Library in Paris under the call number VM7-6322 (RISM A/I C 3986). The original title is *LES DÉLICÉES | DE LA SOLITUDE, | Sonates, | Pour le Violoncelle, Viole, Basson | Avec la Basse Continüe chiffrée, | Composées | PAR M^R. CORRETTE. | Oeuvre XX^e. | Prix 6^H 10^S. | A Paris | ...* The title "Les délices de la solitude" translates roughly as "The joys of solitude". The score is in two parts. Bass clef is mainly used, higher passages are in tenor clef in both parts. The bass is figured.

This collection of sonatas is quite well known, and there have been and still are several editions, including a facsimile edition. Without exception, however, these contain the tenor clef of the original and are thus mostly inaccessible to today's gam-

bists. With our edition, we close this gap and address the gambists who are also mentioned in the original title.



Jaques-Philippe Le Bas (1707–1738), front cover of the violin lesson book *L'école d'Orphée* by Michel Corrette, Paris 1738

Our edition follows the original very closely, but we use the alto clef in higher passages. We have retained the original beaming almost everywhere and have adopted the original figured notation. Our accidentals apply to the whole bar. Although the original is practically error-free, today's notation practice often requires small adjustments in the repetition bridges. Our deviations from the original are marked as usual and our other alterations are listed in the Critical Report.

Although the bass part is figured and the bass function is excellently realised, the two parts correspond very well with each other in most places, so that the pieces take on the character of a duo. For this reason, they can also be played very well with two bass instruments - such as violas da gamba, or viola da gamba and violoncello - i.e. in our opinion, a chordal continuo instrument is not absolutely necessary. In some sonatas, a low C occurs several times in the lower part, which is normally not playable on a six-stringed viol. We have left this as it is

¹ *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (MGG), Personenteil, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel etc., 2000), col. 1651f.

because, firstly, the viola da gamba had a low A string at that time in France, and secondly, gambists who play a six-stringed instrument are accustomed to tacitly octave such passages.

Corrette was gifted with a cheerful, enthusiastic nature,² and these basic traits are also evident in

these sonatas, which we therefore highly recommend to all musicians.

Günter and Leonore von Zadow
Heidelberg, December 2021

The image shows a page of musical notation for a piece titled "4 Aria Affettuoso" by Michel Corrette. The score is written for a single melodic instrument, likely a viola da gamba, in 3/4 time and G major. It consists of four measures of music. The notation includes a variety of rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are numerous ornaments (marked with asterisks) and fingerings (marked with numbers 1-7) throughout the piece. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Michel Corrette, op. 20, Sonata I, Aria Affettuoso

² op. cit. col. 1652.