

Master Thesis in Music Performance

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The interpretation of Bach's gamba sonata BWV 1029 on the cello

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ABSTRACT

The interpretation of Bach's gamba sonata BWV 1029 on the cello deals with the interpretation of gamba sonatas on the cello from the modern perspective. It is written in the English language by Ana Marinkovic and it is 55 pages long. It is a master thesis from the *Agder University College, the Conservatory of Music* in Kristiansand Norway, the classical department.

Key words in my thesis are: *Baroque style, analysis, interpretation, gamba and cello.*

I am trying to explore the historical interpretation of Baroque music, through the sonata BWV1029 which was written in that period by Johan Sebastian Bach (1685-1750). According to L.Dreyfus he wrote the gamba sonatas in the late 1730's in Laipzig.

If one wants to understand a piece and interpret it well, one first has to analyze that piece. So I have been looking on the formal aspect of the sonata, harmonic and stylistic aspect, and tried to take a closer look of these in my interpretation.

Regarding the interpretation, I first compared the playing on the gamba with the playing on the cello, to sort out the general differences between the gamba and the cello technique. I read some crucial literature on interpretation such as books and essays of Thurston Dart, Richard Taruskin and Howard Mayer Brown. In this thesis I am trying to show that we, as modern musicians, do not need to long for “*pure Baroque style*”, while interpreting, but to be creative and try to find our modern point of view on Baroque music from a “*historical aware*” viewpoint!

This thesis is divided into six sections.

The first section consists of short biographies of the authors whose works were crucial to my work, and also the editions I have been using.

In the second section I am analyzing the BWV 1029 sonata, and I am giving some reviews on forms characteristic for the Baroque period, such as the sonata and concerto.

The third section is about interpretation, and differences on the cello, and *gamba* interpretation. I write about the Baroque and modern bow, about vibrato and graces and tunings. In this section I also present two recordings, which I chose as my favorites. Finally I write about my view concerning the thesis.

In **the fourth section** I present some thoughts and conclusions of my own.

In **the fifth section** (the appendix) I include note samples and schematic graph of the second movement of the sonata.

The sixth and the last section contains a *Bibliography*.

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In the end, I would like to thank my family in Belgrade: my parents Nebojsa and Evelina, my brother Ivan and his wife and son Marija and Lazar, who believed in me all these

years and gave me great support. I especially thank my future husband Dusan who has been waiting two years for me, giving me incessant love and support.

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INTRODUCTION

During this writing period of mine, I had the opportunity to try to play the sonata BWV 1029 on the viola *da gamba*, and compare it with cello playing. That was a great new experience for me. The sound of the *gamba*, the way the bow is held, the sensation in the left hand while lowering the fingers, the smell of wood, the way the instrument is held – the whole sensation – helped me to deeply experience the Baroque time and its music. And the understanding of the time helped a lot with the interpretation.

Methods and aims

The most useful methods, which I use in my thesis, are: ***Historical and hermeneutic***. To better know the time in which Bach wrote his music and how he used the musical rhetoric and figures, I did some research on the central literature.

Next method is ***Analysis***. This also includes a study and analysis of Bach's use of musical parameters as harmony, melody, rhythm and so on, in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of his music in terms of composition.

I have also used a ***comparative*** method which means comparing the *gamba* sonata BWV 1029 to other works of J.S. Bach's music which contains similar elements (*Brandenburg concertos 3 and 6, Italian concerto*) and also a Vivaldi's concert op.3 no. 6, first movement.

At last I have been using an ***Artistic and interpretative*** method. This method in a way relies on musicology and music history, as well as general knowledge on the analysis of musical parameters. Also the artist's own genuine expression and temperament in

the interpretation process is important here, which includes the interplay between “mind and spirit”!

NOTES ON SOURCES

The authors cited in my paper have research experience related to J.S.Bach and his work. I would first like to mention *Philipp Spitta* (1841-1894) and his famous biography *Johan Sebastian Bach* (Leipzig, 1873-80). Having finished his studies and obtained a PHD in 1864, Bach research became his main interest. The first volume of his epoch-making study of Bach appeared in 1873; two years later he was professor of music history at the University of Berlin and administrative director of the Berlin *Hochschule für Musik*, a position he held until his death. Spitta's approach in the Bach biography reflected the traditional concept of art history as the history of individual artists, but was tempered with a strong, fresh emphasis on historical context.

The opening chapter, for instance, represents the first detailed study of *German choral and keyboard music of 17th century*. By his rigorous application of source-critical studies (his aesthetic judgments were strongly influenced by neo-Kantian philosophy), he laid the foundations of a system of historical criticism. He was also active and successful as a researcher, teacher, writer and editor, and was interested in almost every period of music history from Early Middle Ages to the music of his own time. As a leading figure of the late 19th century in musicology he left after him a new academic discipline. Together with Chrysander and Adler, he founded in 1885 the VERTELJAHRSSCHRIFT FÜR MUSIKWISSENSCHAFT.

Hans Eppstein, (1911-) was a Swedish musicologist of German descent. After his studies of piano and music theory, he took a doctorate in Berne in 1934 with a dissertation on Nicolas Gombert's motets. After working as a schoolteacher (1934-6) he emigrated to Sweden, where he became an editor and editor-in-chief of the *Tonkonsten* music dictionary and Lecturer in music history at Gothenburg Conservatory. In 1966 he took a second doctorate at *Uppsala University* with a dissertation on Bach's sonatas for solo instrument and harpsichord. His publications include books on Brahms and Schutz and articles on the work of Bach and Kraus.

Peter Frederik Williams (1937-) He was an English musicologist and organist. He studied with Thurston Dart and Reymond Leppard at *St John's College*, Cambridge. He took the doctorate in 1963 with a dissertation on English organ music and organs 1714-1830; from 1964 he studied the harpsichord with Gustav Leonhardt. In 1985 he became professor at *Duke University*, North Carolina, and director of its *Centre for Performance Practice* studied in 1988.

Williams is a clear and vigorous writer on music. He was also concerned with continuo accompaniment. He has edited numerous volumes of keyboard music by Bach, Handel and others, and is the general editor of Bach's organ music for the *New Oxford J. S. Bach Edition*. His works show a relationship between study of source material and instruments and practical performance.

Ulrich Siegele (1930-), is a German musicologist. From 1951 he studied musicology under Gerstenberg and classical philology at the University of Tübingen, where he took the doctorate in 1957 with a dissertation on Bach's techniques of composition and adaptation. Then he worked as a lecturer at the *University of Heidelberg*, later on as professor (1971-95). He retired in 1995. His work was focused on the study and analysis of the composition methods used by composers as Monteverdi, J. S. Bach,

Beethoven and serial composers, and the biography and historical background of J. S. Bach and his family.

Johann Adolph Scheibe (1708-1776), was a German composer and theorist.

At 11 he entered the school at the Nikolaikirche where his education confirmed his fathers hopes for him of a career in law. In 1725 he continued his studies in jurisprudence, and took lectures of poetry and rhetoric, from Christoph Gottsched. However, his university education was abandoned when a family financial crisis forced him to stay home. He read everything he could find about music and began to practice the organ with a hope to become a professional. He also started to compose music and study philosophy.

In 1729 Scheibe applied for the organ position open at the Nikolaikirche where Bach was one of the examiners; but Johann Schweider secured the post. He also failed in his attempts to gain organ appointments at Prague, and Gotha in 1735 as well as Sondershausen and Wolfenbuttel in 1736. According to his biography he composed large quantities of music. As a composer Scheibe is unknown and many of his works are lost. He was a major German music theorist and an influential critic during the first half of the 18th century. He has been neglected partly because of his famous criticism of J. S. Bach`s musical style in the *Critische Musikus*. Since 1737 he led a verbal war with the writers and musicians who protested against any critique of Bach. Bach himself never replied to his criticism but many famous personages defended him from the attacks. In an anonymous letter Scheibe said of Bach (although without actually naming him) that “*this great man would be the admiration of whole nations if he had more amenity, if he did not take away the natural element in his pieces by giving them a bombastic (schwüßig) and confused style, and if he did not darken their beauty by an excess of art*”!

The Critische Musikus, like his other theoretical documents, is influenced by the principles of musical thought characteristic of the developing classical style in

music. With a grasp of Scheibe`s total musical philosophy, one can understand why the music of Bach in 1737 was open to criticism for being `bombastic and confused` and why these remarks accurately symbolize the end of the Baroque age in German music

Notes on sources (modern)

Laurence Dreyfus (1952-), was born in Boston Massachusetts (USA), grew up near Philadelphia and attempted to pursue a dual career as both a scholar and a performer. He studied the cello with members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and then at the Julliard School in New York with the noted American cellist, Leonard Rose. He said that Conservatoire life fascinated him, though he thirsted for greater intellectual stimulation, and so he enrolled in a doctoral programme at Columbia University in New York, leading to a thesis on J. S. Bach supervised by Christoph Wolff. During the course of his musicology studies at Columbia he had begun to teach himself the viola da gamba and later he studied in Belgium with Wieland Kuijken, obtaining two diplomas from the *Brussel Conservatory*.

Much of his scholarly work has centred on the music of J.S.Bach, including *Bach`s Continuo Group* (Harvard University Press, 1986) and *Bach and the Pattern of Invention* (Harvard University Press, 1996), which won the *Otto Kinkeldey Award* from the *American Musicological Society* for the most distinguished book published in 1996. Currently he is extending the kind of paradigmatic analytical ideas he has been developed for Bach`s instrumental works to his vocal music. He has also written theories of performance practice and the *Early Music* movement (His first venture into this area was `Early Music Defended Against Its Devotes`.) He is also interested in theories of musical analysis, and has even dabbled a bit in Mozart studies. Another focus of his work has been a study of the Wagnerian conductor and friend of

Johannes Brahms, Herman Levi (1839-1900), about whom he is writing a book provisionally entitled `Chronicle of a Jewish Wagnerian`.

As a *gambist* he can be heard in recordings of Bach and Marais with harpsichordist Ketil Haugsand on *Simax Classics*: Their recording (with Catherine Machintosh) of Rameau`s *Pieces de clavecin en concert* was nominated for a 1994 *Gramophone* award. As a cellist as well as a viol player he can also be heard in a CD of Purcell songs on the Philips label with Sylvia McNair, which won a Grammy for the best vocal recording of 1995. Since 1994 most of his performance activity has centred on PHANTASM, a quartet of viols founded and directed by him. They won the *Gramophone Award* for the *Best Baroque Instrumental Recording* of 1997. Since then they have become recognized as the most exciting viol consort active on the international scene. He wrote some books and also lot of articles including: `J.S.Bach and the Status of Genre: Problems of Style in the G-Minor Sonata, BWV 1029`, *Journal of Musicology* 5 (1987), pp. 55-78, which was my main source for the thesis.

Musical sources

I used the *Urtex* edition of three *gamba* sonatas for analysis in my master thesis, and I am playing from the same edition. The first edition was by Wilhelm Rust who ordered sonatas and published them in *Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis* in the 1860. Rust was able to consult Bach`s *authograph* parts, which were still extant at that time. They are now lost. Besides Rust`s edition, the *Urtex* edition contents more information on the G-Major sonata: The copyists of manuscripts, the earliest is A, Penzel`s handwritten parts from 1753; for copies from 1800 the copyist is unknown; for copies formerly owned by Johann Nikolaus Forkel from 1780, copyist unknown; for copies formerly owned by Friedrich Conrad Griepenkerl from 1800, copyist unknown.

ANALYSIS OF BWV 1029 SONATA

The knowledge of the piece is the cornerstone of good interpretation. I will therefore analyze Bach's gamma sonata BWV1029: its style, form, and harmony, taking into consideration the perspectives of several authors.

The three sonatas for viola da gamba and obligato harpsichord (BWV1027-1029) present some of J. S. Bach's most remarkable chamber music. The manuscripts were spread and Bach didn't group them in the collected set. This was done by the *Gesellschaft edition* of the complete works, published in 1860's. Here the gamba sonatas appear together collected in the following order: no. 1 in G- Major; no.2 in D-Major; no 3 in g- Minor. It was Wilhelm Rust¹ who ordered and published them, giving them the numbering of the *Bach –Werke- Verzeichnis* (1950) BWV1027, BWV1028, BWV1029.

A SHORT REVIEW ON FORMS

SONATA FORM

The sonata-form movement consists of three main sections, embedded in a two part tonal structure. The first part of the structure coincides with the first section and is called the 'exposition'. The second part of the structure comprises the remaining two sections, the 'development' and the 'recapitulation'.

The exposition divides into a 'first group' in the tonic and a 'second group' in another key, most often in the dominant. Both groups may include numerous different ideas; the first theme can be called, the 'main theme' because it's the most prominent,' first

¹ Wilhelm, Rust was editor, composer. He studied the piano and organ with his uncle Wilhelm Karl Rust.

subject'; 'primary material' etc. The most prominent theme in the second group is often called the 'second theme' (or subject) whether or not it actually is the second important idea.

The development usually develops material from the exposition, and it modulates to one or more new keys. The last part of development prepares the recapitulation.

The recapitulation (or reprise) begins with a simultaneous 'double return', to the main theme and to the tonic. It then restates most or all of the significant material from the exposition, or with a coda following the recapitulation.

This is the *sonata form*, as we know it today. The life history of the sonata form reaches far back into the 18th century. Some of formative elements were: *the two-reprise dance form*, traceable to medieval antiquity; the *1-5(3), 10-1 harmonic scheme*, established as a standard plan by the beginning of the 18th century; *clarification of periodic structure by articulations and symmetries*, principally in early 18th century Italian music; *melodic recall and rhyme in two-reprise forms*; *local contrasts in melodic material, texture, and declamation*, present in the early 18th century concerto and in comic opera ensembles; *an improvisatory style of composition in the fantasia* involving harmonic digressions and a free treatment of melody and rhythm as well as texture ; *the modal cadence*, as a point of harmonic leverage to connect sections, used from Renaissance times through the 18th century. (Ratner1980:217-247)

The main Baroque type was the trio sonata, especially that for two violins and continuo. In addition to those of Corelli, Handel and Bach, the 22 sonatas of Purcell are outstanding among the trio type (though the cello part is sometimes independent of the continuo). After 1700 the 'solo' sonata, for one melody instrument and bass, became more popular; violin, flute, oboe and cello were the most favoured instruments. More exceptional were sonatas for unaccompanied solo instruments, such as Biber's and Bach's for violin, Handel's for harpsichord and Bach's for organ.

Trio sonata

A term applied to Baroque sonatas for two or three melody instruments and continuo. Many trio sonatas are for strings, but wind instruments (cornetto, oboe, flute, bassoon) are also found. The melodic parts are usually of equal importance, although the bass may be less active. Trio sonatas were perhaps the most popular instrumental music of the period, written by composers throughout Europe and eagerly consumed, especially by amateurs. Their three-part texture could also be rendered by a single melodic instrument and obbligato keyboard, and some sonatas exist in both formats; Bach's organ trios (BWV525-30) demonstrate the transfer of the idiom to two manuals and pedal.

In the 17th century, Italian church sonatas *a due* and *a tre* were composed for two (ss, bb, sb) or three (ssb, sbb, sss) instruments and continuo; melodic bass instruments participated fully in the contrapuntal dialogue, which was simplified in the chordal continuo. Corelli's trio sonatas ordinarily had a single bass part, played by a chordal or melodic instrument².

Concerto

The word concerto (pl. concerti; from the Italian concerto) is a label for a piece in which a small musical group and a large musical group are given distinct roles, with smaller group to the fore. The most common kind of concerto pairs a solo instrument with a full orchestra. The term also implies the form of a piece, as most pieces called 'concerto' have three (sometimes four) movements, in which the first movement is typically a sonata form and the last rondo.

² <http://www.groovemusic.com/shared/views/article.html?from=search&session-search-id=7361552538&hitnum=1§ion=music.26197>

The term apparently arose in the beginning of the 17th century, and its etymology suggests, to describe chiefly compositions which bring unequal instrumental or vocal forces into opposition.

Early in the 17th century, and persisting in some cases into the mid –18th, the term ‘concerto’ was applied as one of several indiscriminate choices for any piece that featured opposing or contrasting sonic groups, particularly voices with continuo. The first major influences on the concerto were made by Antonio Vivaldi who established the *ritornello form* used in the movement. He wrote the famous group of violin concertos titled *The Four Seasons*.

By Johann Sebastian Bach’s time the concerto as a polyphonic instrumental form was thoroughly established. The term frequently appears in the autograph title-pages of his church cantatas, even when the cantata contains no instrumental prelude. So, the actual concerto form, as Bach understood it, depends upon the opposition of tonal masses of unequal volume with a corresponding inequality in the power of commanding attention. Bach is thereby able to rewrite an instrumental movement as a chorus without the least incongruity of style. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)³

Ritornello form

The *ritornello* form was developed at the beginning of the baroque period. It consists of a theme returning (*ritorno*: Italian for ‘return’) throughout a movement, it is used in concertos, chamber works, vocal and choral pieces. It was one of the main forms in the Baroque period (it developed into the rondo form in the Classical period).

There are different sonata forms, and the one I am going to write about further in the thesis, is *the sonata –concerto*. Most 18th century concerto movements are based on the *ritornello principle* that is an alternation of *tutti* (T) sections with solo (S) ones (the latter often modulating), most commonly:

³ Internet address: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/concerto>

T S T S T S T
 Th a Th b Th c Th
 1 1-x x x-y y y-1 1

Though often on a larger scale, the initial *tutti* was structurally equivalent to the opening *ritornello* of an aria. The little returns to the main theme in the subsequent *tuttis*, and especially the rhyme between the cadence of the initial *tutti* and the final cadence, define the principle. During the second half of the century, the three solo sections increasingly took on aspects of exposition, development and reprise: Mozart synthesized the ritornello principle with the sonata form, producing a new form altogether. (It appears only sporadically by other composers).

Conclusion

In the BWV 1029 sonata Bach has displayed his ability to merge the mentioned Baroque forms into a harmonious, meaningful whole, that is by no means a ridicule of the concerto form, and whose often unpredictable formal sequence is comprehensible and coherent.

Contrasting approaches to the genre of sonatas, which Bach, used while composing, suggest that Bach may have conceived each as a complement to the others. All sonatas were written by using the pattern of the Corellian trio sonata, and the BWV1029 also reflects the influence of the concerto style by Vivaldi. Thus the uses for that time ‘modern’ forms and combinations of these forms in sonata.

The BWV 1029 is the most interesting for me. In the BWV1029 it seems like Bach had an idea to mix the Vivaldi concerto style and the trio sonata.

The first movement

Different authors have discussed the genre of the first movement of the sonata. Phillip Spitta writes about the sonata in his famous biography (1873) and considers it “a work of the highest beauty and the most striking originality “. He notes how it begins like a sonata although the economy of the main material is “quite in the style of concerto“, and how this “wealth of imaginations“ takes on a “characteristic picturesqueness“. Spitta further leaps into more metaphors:

Here we have a composition in Magyar style: a rushing as of wild and fiery steeds across an open space ; the impetuous tributary themes sound like strokes of a whip ; sometimes the figures fall confusedly into the discord of the diminished seventh...; sometimes they unit in the main subject in heavy – an effect seldom found in this master – beneath its tread the very earth groans.(P. Spitta 1873: 726-27)

Unlike Spitta’s primarily internal, personal appreciation of the sonata, Ulrich Siegele (1957), Hans Eppsten (1967) and Peter Williams (1984) emphasize the superior technique of composition, and are very careful in their description to avoid metaphorical fancy. All three authors explain the paradoxical connection between the sonata and the concerto analyzing (and boiling down) the piece to its fundament: since the sonata contains a *ritornello* like a subject that returns in predictable keys, it seems like there is “a lost concerto lurking behind the sonata. (Dreyfus 1987: 57)

This existence of a concerto inside the sonata form is a very individual, original and historically significant aspect of the piece.

Johann Adolph Scheibe says for this sonata that it is the “*Sonate auf Concertenart*“ – a sonata in the concert manner. He further says that one expects the *ritornello* form in the trio *concertante* to be treated in invertible counter point, which does not appear in a ‘regular ‘ concerto. Bach’s Italian concerto called the *einstimmiges Concert* - a

concerto played on one instrument - is composed in a similar genre. (Scheibe 1740:657)

In the BWV 1029, the essence of concerto is in its chief melodic identity – the *ritornello* delimited by tonal closure. It is in a way reminiscent of Scheibe's *Sonata auf Concertenar*, where you have distinguishing sections in which the material from the *ritornello* is either present or absent.

The sonata cannot easily indicate the alternation of texture between the “*Tutti*” and the “*Solo*”, which characterizes the real *concerto grosso*.

The opening of the first movement presents a subject that cadences in the tonic, but Bach goes out of his way to establish the concerto-like credentials of his theme (*Example 1*).

Some have also noticed a similarity with the 3rd *Brandenburg Concerto* with its alternating Vivaldian motivic cells (*Example 2*).

Looking at *Example 1* you can see that the *gamba* expresses the main melody as a *ritornello* with only a continuo support. Bach, however, with his melodic and harmonic reproduction of the *ritornello* material of the topic alludes to an orchestral *tutti*. In measure 9 the opening fragment also appears in the bass and last for two measures. Then in measure 11 the entire *ritornello* duplicates in the right hand of the harpsichord against a new countersubject in the *gamba* line. The process in measure 11 evokes the quasi-fugal entrance of two upper parts in a trio sonata Allegro, except for the fact that the two subjects are not stated a fifth apart but remain in the tonic.

As a general rule of the genre, Bach's concertos refrain from repeating the opening segment of the *ritornello* (the *Vordesatz*) just after the first tonic cadence in order to avoid harmonic redundancy. If the first solo entrance alludes to the *ritornello*, it mostly does so either by withholding the crucial end of the *Vordesatz*, namely an emphasized dominant chord confirming the tonic (as in BWV1041), or (in earlier works) by varying the thematic content (*Brandenburg 6* \3 and *Brandenburg 1* \1). In fact, for Bach, this restriction constitutes a crucial difference between the *concerto*

and the *aria*, in which *ritornello* procedures are more lax. Vivaldi's own concertos held no such scruples regarding redundancy. See, for example, Opus 3, No. 6, Movement I, in which the soloist repeats the whole *Vordesatz* directly after the tonic close of the opening *ritornello*. In any case, no examples of Bach *concertos* present two complete tonic statements of the *ritornello* adjacent to one another. (Dreyfus, 1987: 61)

Not before the cadence in measure 19 (*Example 1*) does the contrast between the *ritornello* and the *solo* episode of the concerto become understandable again. The first 18 measures of the *gamba* sonata can be seen to represent a synthesis of *concerto* and *sonata* principles of composition. In that sense, the second sentence in the *ritornello* in the measure 11 (see *Example 1*) set against a countersubject could be taken as sonata-like, whereas the tonal construction and the melodic content of the *ritornello* point towards a *concerto*.

In measure 95 (*Example 3*), for instance, Bach restates the *Vordesatz* in the tonic and presents it in a three-fold octave setting. As the return of the *ritornello* into the tonic must be emphasized before the ending of the movement, he does that very thing. By placing the *ritornello* in the sonata texture, Bach avoided a *Vivaldian concerto* opening.

Conclusion

The aim of showing this was to demonstrate that a mere sonata can become similar to a whole range of codes and devices proper to the *concerto grosso*. Thus Bach has, in a way, actually brought about a new genre or a patent for the merging of a *sonata* and a *concerto* into one.

The second movement

The second movement is “*an Italian Adagio grafted into a French Sarabande, a kind of forced marriage of the two leading national styles*”. (Dreyfus 1985)⁴

According to many authors the genre of the second movement is indeed a mystery!

P. Spitta thinks that the movement is extraordinary; he ignores the formal question of the movement and says “*the Adagio ... satisfies our desire for melody with a devotional and earnest strain of which the beginning is a clear foreshadowing of Beethoven*” (Spitta 1873:727).

Hans Eppstein finds the work unparalleled but relies on a dispassionate language when he describes the surface – the four bar *ostinato figures* in bass, the overall lack of imitations, the peculiar exchange of upper parts between binary sections, and an attempt to effect improvisation. (Dreyfus 1987:64) (**Example 4**)

To explain these peculiarities, Eppstein invokes an anachronistic notion of ‘integration’ which he defines somewhat anachronistically as a principle which not only leads individual elements of a movement closer to one another but often has them permeate each other reciprocally (Eppstein 1984: 49).

Peter Williams sees a ‘*a straightforward trio not unlike, in principle, the slow movements of some concertos in which only the solo instruments are involved*’. (Williams 1985:352).

Siegel says “*Perhaps we do not go too far if in the second movement – despite certain drastic changes in both upper parts - we recognize in the harpsichord’s bass the contours of a string accompaniment*”. (Siegel 1957: 100)

L. Dreyfus presents this movement schematically in a very interesting way (**Example 5**) and explains how Bach mixed two contrasting genres in divergent styles: French *Sarabande* and *the Italian Adagio*!

In order to create an illusion of the Italian ornamentation being spontaneous, the tempo needs to be very slow in order to enable one to hear the metrical pattern of the

⁴ From the CD booklet of Dreyfus L. and Haugsand K. recording of J.S.Bach sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord BWV1027-1029

Sarabande. And the *ostinati* bass, a fine accompaniment to the *Italian Adagio*, compromises with the *Sarabanda*, which avoids distribution in measures smaller than 3\2; in this way the listener doesn't get the impression that the second movement is of a dancing character, but is interpreted as walking bass. The result is then a '*peculiar Bachian invention, at the same time, discovery amounting to newly charted territory*' (Dreyfus 1985).

In the initial binary section, the harpsichord plays the French voice while the gamba plays the Italian one.

The *Itallian Adagio-gamba* line is marked by flamboyant improvisation, and the ornamental style is despotically ornamented with different arpeggios and trills, while the accompaniment of the *French Sarabanda*- harpsichord part is done by means of long notes and the walking bass. At other times however it has the leading melody and the accompaniment is played by the *gamba*.

The formal gravity of the *Sarabanda* expresses ambition, grandeur and dignity while the improvised Italian style evokes the passions of fantasy, spontaneity and astonishment.

Because both these styles are present at the same time, it is almost impossible to detect style mixing.

The third movement

The third movement also represents a symbolic contrast.

Spitta again says about it that it "*achieves the most extraordinary procreation of new thoughts in and out of the given materials*". This movement therefore extraordinary displays Bach's "absolute reign" over the "motivic art", which again reminds one of Beethoven:

Thus a flower shoots forth from the stem of the theme in manner remarkable not only for its time: even in the Beethoven epoch , which – due to the changed

instrumental style- devoted itself more to motivic than to thematic work, one will scarcely be able to demonstrate anything more full spirit or rich in invention. (Spitta1873:728)

This is an overstatement even for P. Spitta but he is right to observe that the thematic material of the movement is ‘a cornucopia of beautiful melodies’. He also notices how masterfully the different elements were connected. It is interesting to observe a strong contrast between the fugal beginning and the contrasting part at measure 19, which Bach marked as ‘cantabile’ (see *Example 6*).

Wilhelm Fischer (1915) points out that the ornamentation and the accompaniment of the movement displays signs of *the Brandenburg Concerto no.6*. He also calls the cantabile part the ‘second movement’ in his book. (Fischer 1915: 48). The cantabile section also possesses a unique identity. With its arpeggiated figure, static harmonic motion, and a modish *ports de voix*, the second theme manages to allude to a soloistic but more old-fashioned Vivaldian gesture *via the style gallant*⁵ (Dreyfus1987:73).

In the second half of measure 93 (see *Example 7*) the movement returns to the tonic and flows into a fugal subject like the beginning (at m, 94-reprise) in a style reminiscent of, but not containing a *fugal stretto*. The gap between the cadence and the fugal beginning breaks the illusion that the movement doubles the characteristic of a concerto.

Although the movement is based upon a *fugal-ritornello* subject and a *concertant fugue*, and especially where it is expected that such a composition technique will be applied – in harmony with the elements he uses – Bach destroys such an image of the concerto and intelligently creates a sonata. The g-Minor sonata is indeed unique with its material and the way that material is put together.

⁵ The *gallant style*, expresses elegance, contained singable melodic phrases, short motifs, light textures, simple harmony, ornaments (short embellished figures, slurred notes, trills, and appoggiaturas). (Farstad 2000:48)

It can be said that the sonata is a fruit of Bach's understanding of the genre, '*Sonate auf Concertenar*'. The mixture of styles is also very interesting for the period in which everything was strict, and so Scheibe says:

With respect to the music itself one must take care, whether working in French, Italian or German style, not to mix one with other, for the clarity of the styles must be observed as much as the expression of the object itself. (Scheibe 1730:135)

And then several pages later in the same book Scheibe says:

One might ask whether it would not be possible to combine the most beautiful [qualities] of these three nations and apply them in one single piece? I answer, following the example of several masters; that this indeed is possible. The Italian sets great store by the agreeableness and sensual elaboration of the melody (and consequently also to "taste"); the Frenchman loves a sprightly and piercing free spirit; the German is particular about good and through workmanship and harmony. Thus, whoever unites these three pieces with one another must produce a perfectly beautiful work. (Scheibe 1730: 128-39)

Bach really did that. He produced a perfectly piece. It seems to me that Bach felt that styles were not only scientifically definable but also unchanging and real. The *gamba* sonata seems to attest to a view of genre and style in which one cannot discern Bach's initial view apart from interpretation of them. The act of understanding already constitutes an interpretation. Indeed, for Bach, the practice of musical composition seems much more akin to a sermon, a mode of understanding that results in something new by attempting to explain the old. (Dreyfus 1987: 77)

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE GAMBA SONATA BWV 1029

I would like to compare the interpretation of the BWV 1029 sonata on the viola *da gamba* and on the cello. My main instrument is the cello and I will be playing the sonata on the cello. However, I would like to go back into the past and try to play it on this wonderful baroque instrument.

In my view both the viola *da gamba* and the cello become a projection of a total human being. Of all the instruments their timbre is closest to that of a male voice and physically it calls for movement of arms, trunk and shoulders, so that to play them is similar to sing and dance at the same time.

Some general differences between baroque and modern instruments

The technique of cello playing and *gamba* playing are quite different in many aspects. First, they don't belong to the same family. The cello belongs to the violin family, and is a bass instrument. The bass viol belongs to the viol family, which is composed as follows: '*pardessus*'⁶, treble, tenor, bass, and double-bass.

The fret-board on the *gamba* (viol) is divided into semi-tones by seven frets. The frets are made of gut, and are about the same thickness as the second string (A). When one plays a fretted instrument such as the viol, the string is stopped by placing the finger slightly behind the fret so that the string is pulled tight over the fret; thus it is not the finger, but the fret itself which actually stops the string and produces the

⁶ The '*Pardessus de viole*' was initially shaped like small treble viol and had six strings, tuned g-c`-e`-a`-d`-g`.

sound. The sound, which result from this method of stopping, is cool, clear, refined, and somehow “impersonal”. The violins (cello), on the other hand, without frets have their sound produced by direct contact of the finger with the string at the point of stopping, producing a sound which is generally assessed to be warmer, more personal, more amenable to nuance and having more of the qualities of the human voice. Thus, in terms of sound, fretted and non-fretted instruments are very different.

The relationship between frets and intonation is also very important. A fretted instrument is a fixed-pitch instrument in the sense that one can do little to alter the pitches because they are determined by the placement of the frets. In a piece with modulation to remote keys, the *gamba* players find themselves confronted with increasingly insurmountable problems of intonation, while violinists, free from the confinement of frets, are able to adjust their pitches to the tonal demands of virtually any succession of chords.

Mersenne Marin (1588-1648)⁷ in his book says:

The violin is one of the simplest instruments that can be imagined, in that it has only four strings and is without frets on its neck. That is why all the just consonances can be performed upon it, as with a voice, in as much as one stops it where one wishes. This makes it more perfect than the fretted instruments, in which one is forced to use some temperament and to decrease or increase the greatest part of consonances, and to alter all the musical intervals, as I shall later show...

It must still be noted that the violin is capable of all genres and all the species of music, and that one can play the enharmonic, and each species of the diatonic and chromatic upon it, because it carries no frets, and contains all the intervals imaginable, which are in force on its neck, which is comparable to the primal matter capable of all sorts of forms and figures, not having any fret at all on the violin that produces a particular tone. Thus it must be concluded that it contains an infinity of different tones, as the string or line contains an infinity of points...

(Mersenne1957: 238-9)

⁷ Mersenne M. was French mathematician, philosopher, music theorist and savant. He was a transitional figure at the crucial confluence of Renaissance and Baroque ideas in France, summing up the accomplishment of the past and posing the difficult questions for the future inherent in the new attitudes of his own time. (Groove Music Dictionary)

Later he says, in the same book, of the viols:

The parts of the viol are similar to those of the violin... it differs... only in that it has frets which limit its capacity and which, from infinity which it might have, determines it in seven or eight equal semi-tones which are made on its neck by means of the eight frets...

(Mersenne1957:238-9).

A century and the half later, John Gunn (1765-1824)⁸ in his book writes:

The violin was not only better adapted to produce a proper effect at each of these places, from its greater strength and brilliancy of tone; but was found, on trial, when put in the hands of artists of skil , to have a power of producing a more perfect harmony than had ever been done by the viols. This arose from a cause that had not probably been before suspected, namely, that the fingers, by practice, and the guidance of a good ear, effected a more accurate intonation, than could ever have been accomplished by the direction of frets, fixed on the fingerboard with the utmost mathematical precision. These can never be so applied, that the intervals or stop can be exactly in tune, but in one key; in every other, they will be remarkably faulty; and if the error be divided and lessened by what is called temperament, the variation from exact tune will be easily distinguishable and offensive to a correct ear. (Gunn Ibid., p. 249).

⁸ Gunn, J. Scottish scholar, cellist and flautist. He wrote "*The Theory and Practice of Fingering the Violoncello*", with Dissertation on the Origin of the Violoncello, and on the Invention and Improvements of Stringed Instruments (London, 1789:249)
(Groove Music Dictionary)

Tuning

The six-stringed viol is tuned as: two fourths one third and two fourths: D-G-C-E-A-D (the viols with seven strings have an extra low A). The cello is tuned as: C-G-D-A.

Intonation

Intonation in viola *da gamba* playing is a crucial factor for good performance, especially in consort music where the harmonious blending of the separate instruments is a musical idea. Good or bad intonation in viol performance is as noticeable as in *krumhorn* and other reed instrument playing because of the prominent overtones and reedy tone quality.

Perfectly in tune intervals or chords sound and feel stable and-locked in, while the discordant, unstable beating of imperfectly tuned sonorities jars the ear. ‘When it’s good, it’s very good, but when it’s bad, it’s horrid!’

The well-in tune chords occurs because the notes correspond closely just to the pitches of pure intervals, especially the intervals between the root and third of the chord. In his article ‘*Possibilities for Mean-Tone Temperament Playing the Viols*’ Gable K. Frederick⁹ says that we are playing this interval of a third which departs the farthest from pure intonation and causes the triad or chords to sound less pure. To produce more of those special well-in-tune moments is the goal of every consort player. (Gable1979: 22)

⁹ Gabel K. Gable, professor on University of California. He took his PhD on Musicology University of Iowa: “*The Polychoral Motets of Hieronymus Pretorius*” , 1966, 2 vols, 630 p.

The bow

The way the bow is held explains the difference in the attack and manner of producing the sound. The Baroque bow is ideal for achieving the articulations needed for Baroque music. It is extremely difficult and nearly impossible to achieve the same strokes, articulations and sound with a modern bow. The curve of the Baroque bow echoes the curve of the bridge, giving it a natural tendency to “hug” the string. This tendency is further enhanced by lesser tension on the hair (compared with modern bow) and the more unequal distribution of the tension. The modern bow, with the curve of its stick opposing that of the bridge, and its greater hair tension, has a natural tendency to “jump” away from the string. This gives it a few qualities, which were not inherent in the Baroque bow; the ability to play *spiccato* and the ability (though containing this natural energy of the bow by pressure with the forefinger) to sustain long expanses of melody. The Baroque bow can of course be bounced, but because this relies more on a lift from the hand and arm than the natural springing properties of the stick, the quality of the articulation is different. Similarly, it is possible to sustain melody with a Baroque bow, but here it is not so much a question of pressure with the forefinger against the stick (which would only choke the sound), but of setting up a resonance in the instrument with a relatively light stroke - literally *drawing* the sound out of the instrument.

It is much easier to play legato on the viol (with the Baroque bow) because of the extremely flat bridge caused by the number of strings.

Vibrato and graces

The modern vibrato, used on the cello, is impossible to do on the viol. There has been

a lot of discussion whether to play vibrato on the viol or not, because some scholars and players have uttered that the vibrato was not supposed to be used in old music.

In the 'Journal of the viola da gamba society of America', Gordon J. Kinney¹⁰ in his article "The Case for the use of vibrato on the viol" says that there are a lot of documents, which refer to the viol and the recorder as instruments to be favoured above other instruments because of their greater capacity for emotional expression. Why? Because of their ability to imitate the human singing voice. The latter is considered the most natural and perfect of musical instruments, the ideal models for all others to copy. Thus the natural vibrato of a good singer is something to be emulated, rather than shunned, in playing the viol. (Kinney1970: 53).

The earliest reference to vibrato Kinney is found in Silvestro Ganassi's *Regola Rubertina* from the year 1542, the oldest known method devoted to the viol. In the second chapter of his book "*Del mouimento de la persona*" ("*Concerning the Movement of the Body*"), Ganassi discusses expressive playing, especially when accompanying singing, and stresses that the player must conform to the meaning of the text by the expression of his eyes, the posture of his head, the amount of bow pressure, etc. (Ganassi1542, second chapter). He also speaks about the vibrato:

Thus, with happy music or words, just as with sad words and music, you have to press strongly or gently with bow and sometimes neither strongly nor gently, but moderately - whichever will be (suitable) to the words, and the bow will execute sad music in a light manner, and to whispering *shake* the bow arm *and the fingers of the fingerboard hand* in order to make the effect conform to sad and sorrowful music. Then, the contrary should be done with the said bow: that is, for happy music press the bow in a manner proportioned to such music...(Ganassi 1542: 6).

¹⁰ Kinney J. Gordon wrote "*The Musical Literature for Unaccompanied Violoncello*" Ph.D in Theory, Florida State University, 1962.3 vols, 698p

After this in 17th-century in England Christopher Simpson ¹¹says in *The Division –Viol or the Art of Playing Ex Tempore upon a Ground*:

Shaked Graces we call those that are performed by Shake or Tremble of a Finger, or which there are two sorts, viz. Close and Open: *Close-Shake* is that when we shake the Finger as close and near the sounding Note as possible may be, touching the string with the Shaking finger so softly and nicely that it make no variation of Tone. This may be used where no other Grace is concerned. (“Tone” here is the same as the German *Ton*, meaning pitch.)

(Simpson 1955: 11-12)

I also find John Playford’s note interesting:

For the usual *Graces*, the *Shake* is the principal; of which there are two, the *close shake* and the *open shake*; the *close shake* is when you stop with your first Finger on the Fret, and *shake* with your second finger as close to it as you can. (Playford 1683:99)

Owing to the similarity in tuning and fingering patterns of the lute and viol, several early writers make statements to the effect that what they say about the lute is also valid for the viol. One of them is Thomas Mace (1612-1706)¹². His name for vibrato on the lute is the *Sting*, which characterizes well the sound produced on a plucked instrument. His description of how to do it coincides with those of the French writers who tell how to produce the vibrato on the viol:

The *Sting*, is another very Neat, and Pritty Grace; (But not Modish in These Days), yet for some sorts of Humours, very Excellent; And is Thus done, (upon a Long Note, and a Single String) first strike (i.e. pluck) your Note, and so soon as It is struck, hold your Finger (but not too Hard) stop the Place, (letting your Thumb loose) and wave your Hand downwards, and upwards, several Times from the Nut, to the Bridge ; by which Motion, your Finger will draw or stretch the string a little upwards, and downwards, so as to make the Sound seem to Swell with pretty unexpected Humour, and gives much Contentment, upon Cases. (Mace1676:109).

¹¹ Simpson Christopher (1602-1669) was English theorist, composer and viol player

¹² Mace, Thomas was an English lutenist, singer, composer and writer.

Marin Mersenne writes in his *Harmonie universelle*:

I add it here even though it is not as much in use in the past, because it has a fine grace when it is done suitably; and one of the reasons for which moderns have rejected it is because the ancients used to use it practically everywhere. But since it is just as wrong not to do it at all as to do it too often, it must be used with moderation... (Merenne 1636: 80)

Jean Rousseau, in his *Traite de la viole* describes the different kinds of viol playing and their characteristics, and then few pages later he makes several references to the use of the vibrato:

The viol can be played in four different manners, to wit: playing Melodic Pieces (i.e. solos), playing Pieces in harmony or with Chords, playing the Bass while one sings the Treble - and this is called accompanying oneself. Finally, one can play the Viol in a Consort of Voices and Instruments -and this is called accompaniment, There is a fifth (manner) which consists of developing a Subject on the spot (extemporizing divisions upon the ground), but this is little in use, because it calls for a man consummate in Composition and in the exercise of the Viol, and with a great liveliness of mind. (Rousseau 1686: 55)

The Viol should employ these same Graces, to which must be added further *Martellement* (i.e. mordent), the *Battement* (the two-finger vibrato) and the *Langueur* (the one-finger vibrato). (Rousseau 1686:75)

The meanings he attributes to *battement* and *langueur* are clear in the following citations.

The *Battement* is made when, of two fingers pressed against each other, one presses on the string and the succeeding one strikes it very lightly.

The *Battement* imitates a certain gentle agitation on Sounds by the Voice; and this is why it is employed in all circumstances when the value of the Note permits it, and it should last as long as the Note does. (Rousseau 1686:100)

The *Langueur* is made by varying the finger on the Fret. It is ordinarily employed when one is obliged to stop a Note with the little finger, and when the measure permits it; it should last as long as the Note. This Grace is for replacing the *Battement*, which can not be made when the little finger is pressed down. (Rousseau, 1686; 101)

The *Battement* (the two-finger vibrato) is proper to all the different kinds of Viol playing. (Rousseau 1686:105)

The *Langueur* (one-finger vibrato) is proper to all kinds of Viol Playing and can never produce any bad effect; it is very pleasing, especially in tender. (i.e. expressive, Pieces).

(Rousseau 1686:106)

Robert Donnington concludes on how and when to use vibrato:

Whether or not vibrato “arises from Nature herself” (Leopold Mozart, 1765), it certainly arises from the nature of bowed string instruments; and this fact, together with the evidence such as shown in this section, discountenances any suggestion that is anachronistic in early music. It should be used with sufficient restraint to keep it in style; but it should be used. String tone can sound very dead without it. (Donnington 1963:169)

Thus, the main thing is always to keep the vibrato under the control of the musical imagination. It must always be the servant, never the master, of the player.

Performing Bach’s *gamba* sonata

I would like to try to write about my own experience of playing the *gamba* and Bach’s sonata on it! Although my experience is not very long (only 3 months), it was inspiring and led me to some interesting questions, answers and points.

The *gamba* is a very beautiful instrument to play on because of the deeply intimate sound it has! In a way, playing the *gamba* helped me to understand Bach's music and the time in which he lived, and the sonatas he wrote.

However, during my work with the sonata on the cello I came to a point where it was no longer my aim to try to play it in the *'pure Baroque stile'* but to try to understand it and interpret it in a modern way, from a modern perspective, naturally within Bach's ideas, with no musical exaggeration. At first I strove to imitate the sound of the *gamba* on my cello, realizing that it was useful, though not at all cost, for the real *gamba* sound was impossible to achieve. Also, I play from the transcription for cello and piano, so I need to use all sonorities which the cello offers (and the same is for the piano).

The performance must be idiomatic; each instrument must be true to itself, and must not try to ape the others, says Thurston Dart¹³ in his book *'The Interpretation of Music'*

The harpsichord must not fuss with the stops in order to try to make his instrument imitate the gradual increase and decrease of tone possible on the piano. The clavichordist must play delicately and expressively; a clavichord must never sound like a dwarf harpsichord. The pianist must resist the temptation to use octaves in imitation of the harpsichord's 8' and 4' stops, for the effect on his instrument can never be the same. On a harpsichord or an organ the stops are so voiced that they automatically blend into one another, and this blend cannot possibly be produced on an instrument using an entirely different system of tone-production. And the pianist should play Bach, not Bach-Blank, even when Blank happens to be List or Busoni or von Bulow. What these men did was no doubt absolutely right at the time they did it, but to use their version today is the equivalent of putting on a pair of nineteenth-century spectacles in order to read an eighteen-century book. (Dart 1969:164).

And further on Thurston Dart says:

The performance must also be stylish; they must be illuminated by the fullest possible knowledge of the special points of phrasing, ornamentation and tempo that were associated with the music when it was first heard. The performer has every right to decide for himself that some of these special points are best forgotten; but he must at least be aware that they

¹³ Dart, R. Thurston, English musicologist, performer and teacher.

once existed, and that they were at some time considered to be an essential feature of a pleasing performance. Otherwise he risks throwing out the good with the bad, and the baby with the bathwater. (Dart 1969:164).

The sonata BWV 1029 must, of course be played in the Baroque manner or in a “historical aware” contexts because the very harmony, form and genre of the sonata require a Baroque performance. At the same time it is interesting to try to find a modern and simultaneously harmonious view of the sonata and an interpretation fitting the time I live and work.

Wanda Landowska,¹⁴ gave the following answer to the rhetorical question, ‘On what do I base my interpretation?’

By living intimately with the work of a composer I endeavour to penetrate his spirit, to move with an increasing ease in the world of his thoughts, and to know them ‘by heart’ so I may recognize immediately when Mozart is in good humour or Handel wants to express triumphant joy. I want to know when Bach is raging and throwing a handful of sixteenths at the face of some imaginary adversary or a flaming spray of arpeggios, as he does in *The Chromatic Fantasy*. The goal is to attain such identification with the composer that no more effort has to be made *to understand the slightest of his intentions* or to follow the subtlest fluctuations of his mind. (Landowska On music: 406)

I believe strongly in Landowska’s own personal understanding of the music and I can say that I have the same feelings about the music, composer, interpretation, and the so-called ‘authenticity’.

As I stated at the beginning of the passage, my interpretation experience is too insufficient to be able to fully write about the *gamba*. However I will try to state a few things regarding the cello interpretation. It seems like the cello arrangements produce more leaps in the left hand because of the differences in strings and tuning, and this also gives more position shifts, and sometimes glissandos cannot be avoided.

¹⁴ Landowska, Wanda (1879-1959), Polish keyboard player and composer. She was a champion of 17th and 18th century music and the leading figure in the 20th-century revival of the harpsichord.

Due to the more massive and longer bow and the robustness of the cello itself, the sound is more massive as well. It is also harmonized with the effect of the piano, whose sound is in turn more massive than that of the harpsichord.

In contrast of the violoncello, the quality of tone peculiar to the *viola da gamba* and the left-hand technique- being similar to that of the lute- demand the following principles in playing: avoid frequent changing of position on the same string, avoid sliding from one position to another with the same finger without a simultaneous changing of the bow. Avoid also any kind of *portamento*, avoid as far as possible strained and extended positions of the left hand, execute musical phrases and groups of figures of similar nature (sequences, etc.) in the same position, use open strings as frequently as possible, especially in the execution of broken chords.

As an interpretative example I chose two recordings, which were my musical leaders, one of Laurence Dreyfus (*viola da gamba*) and Ketil Haugsand (harpsichord), and the other of Misha Maiski (cello) and Marta Argerich (piano). These two recordings were of much interest to me. This first one, with Dreyfus and Haugsand has always reminded me that whatever my ideas are (and they can be sometimes very unmanageable), I have to be very precise and clear in my music thinking, and to show great respect for the composers' and editors' meaning. Sometimes one gets lost when going so deep into the music. Often one relies on own feelings, and this can sometimes turn out wrongly, if one uses them without discretion and knowledge.

The recording with Maijski and Argerich inspired me to set my imagination free, and to play a game with notes and be creative, and sometimes to be "wild". So, in a way, these two recordings, turned out good to me because they taught me to have balance in my playing. Whenever I felt that my playing was too "wild" and too passionate, I would listen to the recording of Dreyfus, I think their playing is very much in the Baroque manner and that is why I chose them as a very good example of Baroque interpretation. On the contrary, when my playing was too much an imitation of Baroque interpretation, I would listen to the Maijski recording and "set my soul free".

SOME THOUGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

To be able to understand the true meaning of Bach`s music one has to understand the time in which it was written. In the Baroque period music was said to be a part of four principles: *cosmological*, *rhetorical theological* and *principle of natural philosophy*. Any educated person at that time would have been taught the rules of rhetoric as they applied to literary composition and public speaking, and writers such as Joachim Burmeister (1599, 1601 and 1606), Athanasius Kircher (1650) and Johann Mattheson (1739) showed in detail how they could be applied to music. Musical rhetoric has particular relevance for the treatment of dynamics. By and large, dynamics as we understand them in later music were not important in the Baroque period. An enormous amount of music of all types has no specific dynamics and was just presumed to be *forte*, while the volume of the two main types of keyboard instrument, the organ and harpsichord, could normally be modified only by changing stops or moving to another manual. Thus you should avoid arbitrary changes of dynamics, particularly when applied to whole sections irrespective of the character of the music, as with the traditional hushed *pianissimo* on the return to the opening of Handel`s *Messiah* overture.

In 18th century music however, it was the expression and the effect of the music on each human being that came to the centre of the music-philosophers attention. The outcome from all this was that music went from being an *abstract, objective, intellectual experience to a concrete, subjective experience built upon aesthetic criterion of taste* (Farstad 2000).

Johann Sebastian Bach has for a long time considered as the master in the art of musical rhetoric. For instance, the symmetrical aspects of his music, i.e. the structure of his fugues, canons, and all the polyphonic devices, have been profusely analyzed and emphasized by others.

The so- called “doctrine of figures” crested musical equivalents for the figures of speech in the art of rhetoric. From this we know that the repertoire of melody types

existed. “Figures “ are examples of pictorial symbolism in which the composer writes, say, a rising scale to match words that speak of rising from the dead or a descending scale to match words of demolition and death.

Bach wrote six **suites** for cello solo, and three **sonatas** for *viola da gamba* and harpsichord. *Cello sonatas* and *gamba suites* seems like a more plausible assignment! Many instruments reached their peak of development at the height of the baroque era, some died, and new ones were born better to reflect the new music and the growing popularity of the concert-hall with its demands for louder instruments. In that time the cello was an instrument in rise, and *gamba* in the wane, so in that sense France suites as an old form, for that time, were to be played on the *gamba*, and sonatas as a new genre in that period were to be played on the cello-rising instrument!

But Bach obviously didn't do that. One can think that it could be a coincidence, but it seems to me that it was the *gamba's* sorrowful cry from a bygone era. Bach's use of the *gamba* for sonatas thus plays a game with historical time by implanting an archaic instrument in a modern genre.

In an essay written more than forty years ago, T.S. Eliot remarked that ‘ the past is altered by present as much as the present is directed by the past’; and though he was writing of poetry, one does not need to be an Einstein to see how his remark applies to music. The eighteenth-century musician was taught to see the whole of musical history as a hill rising gently and undulating out of darkness, with the music of his own time standing on the sunlit summit; the modern musician is encouraged to view it as a rather alarming slope, studded like Easter Island with titanic heads, far larger than life. And he may even have an uneasy suspicion that the slope is a downward one, and that the noisy and polemical modernists who lead the way are, like the maiden in one of Ernest Bramah's incomparable stories, uttering loud and continuous cries to conceal the direction of their flight. (Dart 1969)

It is as if somehow the modern musician's approach to the music of his own time is obstructed by the past, and his approach to old music is through the gateway of the present. And the music of the past can never have the same effect on us as it did

on those performers and listeners who played it or heard it when it was new, for we are modern people with modern assumptions and expectations.

During my work on this these I experienced, that the Baroque music express order, the fundamental order from the universe, yet it is always lively and tuneful. I felt that it is arbitrary and overly personal and that the best thing to do, when interpreting it, is to let yourself into music and let the music speak for itself. The music itself is the best teacher and we just need to be open to feel it and understand it. I chose to write about the *gamba* sonata BWV 1029 primarily because I was strongly attracted to the *gamba* as an ancient, baroque instrument and the very idea of playing old instrument. I was also drawn to the sonata itself and its specific genre. My original idea was to try to interpret the sonata on the *gamba* it was written for, but unfortunately it was more difficult than I had guessed it would be. The technique is difficult to master because it differs greatly from the cello playing technique. I have therefore decided to interpret it on the cello, from which I have also significantly benefited, both technically and musically. I really enjoyed playing the *gamba* and Bach's sonata on it. I didn't have a chance to play it with a harpsichord, and that is a pity, but still it was a great new experience for me.!!!

I would like to conclude my paper with a few thoughts on Bach.

There have been numerous studies of him and his music, but still both remain elusive and mysterious. The *gamba sonata* BWV 1029 may not be one of Bach's masterpieces, but it certainly displays his genius and ideas.

Bach's art was not art in the modern sense; it was not art for art's sake. The essential difference between the older, including medieval art and the art of modern times is its direction: ancient and medieval art were oriented towards God, whereas modern art is anthropocentric. The main criterion of truth in ancient art is the faithfulness to tradition, the rootedness in the experience of earlier generation. In modern times, however, the main criterion of true art is its originality, novelty, and difference from everything that precedes it. Bach stood on the borderline of those two

cultures, worldviews, views of art. He doubtlessly remained a part of that culture rooted in tradition, cult, Divine service and religion, which has only after Bach's time separated from its Christian roots.

Bach was not trying to be original and to compose something new at any price. Whenever he was writing a new piece he "played" in his mind works by other composers that inspired him. He was not afraid to borrow themes from others and they often became the basis of his fugues, chorals, motets, cantatas and concertos. Bach did not think of himself as an isolated genius, rising above his contemporaries, but as an inseparable part of a great musical tradition he belonged to.

The secret of the astonishing originality of his music is precisely in his refusal to deny the past and his relying on the experiences of his predecessors he regarded with awe. Bach was a churchgoer. He was not just a profoundly believing Lutheran, but also a theologian well versed in the issues of faith. His library contained the complete collected works of Luther. It has been observed that if all the poetic works of Luther were to be lost, they would be easily reconstructed from Bach's notes. Bach indeed composed the music for the majority of Luther's hymns. It is those hymns that made the base of the church tradition created by Lutherans in Bach's time, and he was a part of that process.

Bach experienced the Church as an ecumenical organism, as a kind of an universal celebration of God, and considered his music to be but one of the voices singing the glory of God. As he said himself that "there can be no true happiness on this earth, except in serving God and singing His glory". He conformed not to the secular, but to ecclesiastic calendar. For every Sunday he had to write a 'fresh' cantata; for the Passion Weeks he wrote the passions, for instance according to Matthew and John; for Easter he wrote the *Resurrection Oratorium*; and for Christmas the *Christmas Oratorium*.

It is this rhythm of church holidays that determined the whole movement of his life. The culture of his time was moving further away from the Christian cult, while he was going deeper into the profundities of the cult, into the depths of prayerful meditation. The world was being progressively dehumanized and de-

Christianized, philosophers were competing in inventing theories to make humanity happy, while Bach was raising a song out of the depths of his heart towards God. His music really was and still is Divine.

The knowledge of all this really helped me, not only with my interpretation, but also my worldview. I seem to view music itself with a deeper and more mature attitude as a branch of art, and especially when the work of J. S. Bach is concerned I have a due respect.

In the chapter before, I said that my aim was not to imitate the so-called “*pure Baroque style*”, but to try to play the sonata from the modern perspective. Is such an attitude acceptable?

I have written this paper trying to prove that it is. However, there are many different opinions, and while respecting all of them, I reserve the right to disagree. Yes, you have to know the piece you are playing really by heart, and to understand the composer’s intentions very well, and then you can do whatever you want with that piece. First, of course, you have to know the manner of interpreting music in Baroque times quite well, and only then you can play with the music and then you can play the music. Performers must have a clear purpose in mind for all interpretative decisions. Then you can also play with time; you can play Baroque music in modern time and with modern manners. I use to compare music with paintings in an art gallery. A painting has a frame marking the limits of the picture, as well as separating it from the ‘real’ world around it. From that perspective you can say that the musical work contains a frame-silence or actual music, which in effect separates the composition from the world around it. In this way a performer can imagine that a Baroque piece is in a frame of modern time, and try to enjoy the painting with the brush (bow) on the canvas of time. I am going to imagine that while I play!

From all this I have wanted to present at least a bit of what Bach expressed, at least a spark of Divine energy that developed in his work. Therefore, I will try to use all my creative energy and play my best

APPENDIX

EXAMPLE 1

SONATE

BWV 1029

Vivace

Viola da gamba

Klavier (Cembalo)

6

6

6

6

6

6

3

6

4

5

7

6

4

5

6

4

5

6

4

2

4

2

6

6

6

9

tr

4

2

tr

5

5

3

2

3

2

1

2

3

1

1

2

1

4

1

3

12

Musical notation for measures 12-14. Treble clef has a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of one flat. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Measure 12 starts with a treble clef and a bass clef. Measure 13 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 14 continues the bass line in the bass clef.

15

Musical notation for measures 15-17. Treble clef has a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of one flat. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Measure 15 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 16 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 17 continues the bass line in the bass clef.

18

Musical notation for measures 18-20. Treble clef has a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of one flat. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Measure 18 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 19 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 20 continues the bass line in the bass clef.

21

Musical notation for measures 21-23. Treble clef has a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of one flat. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Measure 21 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 22 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 23 continues the bass line in the bass clef.

24

Musical notation for measures 24-26. Treble clef has a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. Bass clef has a key signature of one flat. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-7. Measure 24 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 25 continues the melody in the treble clef. Measure 26 continues the bass line in the bass clef.

EXAMPEL 2

III^e CONCERTO BRANDEBOURGEOIS

J. S. BACH
1685 - 1750

Allegro moderato

The image shows the first three measures of the third Brandenburg Concerto by J.S. Bach. The score is arranged in three systems. The first system contains three staves for Violino (Violin), labeled I, II, and III. The second system contains three staves for Viola, labeled I, II, and III. The third system contains three staves for Violoncello (Cello), labeled I, II, and III, and a single staff for Violone (Contrabasso) e Cembalo (Harpsichord). The music is in G major and 3/4 time, with a tempo marking of *Allegro moderato*. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and dynamic markings such as *mf*.

EXAMPLE 3

94

The image shows a close-up of measures 94, 95, and 96 of a musical score. The score is written for a single instrument, likely a violin or flute, in G major and 3/4 time. Measure 94 begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. Measure 95 features a trill (tr) over a G# note. Measure 96 continues the melodic line with various fingering numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) and a final double bar line. The bass line is also visible, providing harmonic support.

EXAMPLE 3 (continued)

Musical score for Example 3 (continued), measures 96-108. The score is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. Trills are marked with 'tr'. A fermata is present over a note in measure 102. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots in measure 108.

Measures 96-98: Bass clef line starts with a trill (tr) over a note. Treble clef line has a melodic line with a slur and a fermata. Bass clef line has a rhythmic accompaniment with fingerings 1, 1, 1, 1.

Measures 99-101: Treble clef line has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 4, 3, 1, 2, 1, 4. Bass clef line has a rhythmic accompaniment with fingerings 1, 4, 1.

Measures 102-104: Treble clef line has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 2, 3, 3, 2, 1, 2, 5. Bass clef line has a rhythmic accompaniment with fingerings 1, 3, 1, 1, 4, 1, 4.

Measures 105-107: Treble clef line has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 3, 3, 1, 3, 1. Bass clef line has a rhythmic accompaniment with fingerings 2.

Measures 108: Treble clef line has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings 1, 1, 3, 3. Bass clef line has a rhythmic accompaniment with fingerings 1, 1, 3.

EXAMPLE 4

Adagio

4

7


10

1.

2.

EXAMPLE 5

TABLE
National Identities in BWV 1029/2

Feature	Signs of French Sarabande	Signs of Italian Adagio
Surface melodic vocabulary	a) prevalent step-wise motion b) runs in style of <i>double</i> c) <i>die wesentlichen Manieren</i> = (essential ornaments, e.g. <i>tièrces de coulé</i>)	(a) large leaps (e.g. tenth in m. 8) b) arpeggiated and scalar flourishes c) <i>die willkürlichen Manieren</i> = arbitrary ornaments)
Phrase organization	marked 4-bar phrases	unmarked (clear divisions avoided)
Rhythmic markers	a) stress on second beats b) dotted pattern at phrase ends:  c) hemiolas preceding cadence	a) long sustained notes tied over bar line b) running notes starting off the beat
Bass functions	bass outlines hemiola at cadence	bass ostinato often accompanies Adagio

EXAMPLE 6

Allegro

The musical score is written for piano in 6/8 time, marked *Allegro*. It consists of four systems of music, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and trills. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. The systems are numbered 1, 5, 8, and 11 at the beginning of their respective staves. The first system (measures 1-4) features a treble staff with eighth-note patterns and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system (measures 5-7) includes a complex treble staff with sixteenth-note runs and a bass staff with eighth-note accompaniment. The third system (measures 8-10) continues the intricate patterns in both hands. The fourth system (measures 11-14) concludes with a trill in the treble and a final bass line.

15

3 4 2 *tr* 4 4 4 3 3 2 3

18

(tr) *cantabile* *tr* 1 4 4 4 4 3

22

tr 2 1 4 2 *cantabile*

26

tr 2 4 *tr* 4 2 1 2 *tr* 3 2

30

tr 4 3 3 4 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

EXAMPLE 7

92

96

100

104

108

B

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