

The Keyboard Sonatas of Baldassare Galuppi: Pedagogical Alternatives to the Standard Repertoire

by Ruth Jane Holmes

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Since Galuppi died in 1785, it seems almost appropriate for this article to appear in 1985, when AMT is commemorating the birthday anniversaries of Bach, Handel, and D. Scarlatti.

Knowing that most of the local associations of MTNA sponsor sonata and sonatina contests, and that many tire of hearing the same old "war horses" played year after year, the author of this article intends to highlight the availability of the delightfully refreshing sonatas of Baldassare Galuppi as pedagogical alternatives to the worthy but worn compositions of Scarlatti, Kuhlau, Clementi, and the Viennese school: Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Since the name of Baldassare Galuppi is not exactly a household word, even to musicians, some biographical information about Galuppi is essential, along with a word about his style, especially regarding form and ornamentation. A table of ornamentation is included. Five sonatas have been chosen for discussion from Opus 1 and Opus 2 as published by John Walsh of London in 1756 and 1759, respectively.

The sonatas selected for review have only recently come into modern edition in their entirety, and are among only twelve to see publication during Galuppi's lifetime. They were chosen for introduction here because of their attractiveness, pedagogical value, and accessibility. The work of three editors is represented in five publications that include the five recommended sonatas.

BIOGRAPHY

Baldassare Galuppi was born in 1706 and lived until 1785, spanning the culmination of the Baroque era with the music of Bach and Handel, and reaching into the early Classical period paralleling the sonata-form compositions of Haydn and Mozart. He was born on the island of Burano, just off the Venetian coast, and spent his entire life in Venice, excepting three years in London as Handel's successor at the King's Theatre in Haymarket Street, and three years spent at St. Petersburg, Russia at the court of Catherine II.

Galuppi's international popularity during his lifetime was based on his work as a composer of comic opera, though he excelled in writing serious opera also; he composed about 100 operas in all. In Venice, Galuppi served as Maestro di cappella at the Incurabili (one of four orphanages for girls), and was accorded the same post at St. Mark's Basilica, the highest honor a musician could receive in Venice. Because of his vast output of both operatic and liturgical music and his extreme popularity, he is reputed to have been one of the wealthiest composers of 18th-century Italy.¹ In addition to his operatic and liturgical

works, Galuppi's keyboard works total at least 123 known sonatas.² Though the sonatas were likely composed for harpsichord, it must be noted that Galuppi was born only three years before Cristofori invented the piano in 1709, and he published his first set of six sonatas in London in 1756, just 12 years before J. C. Bach is reputed to have performed the first public piano recital there.³ Most of the sonatas, like those of Domenico Scarlatti, sound extremely well on either instrument, and are often even more successful on the piano.

STYLE

The style of Galuppi's sonatas is pre-Classic, exhibiting the ornamentation of the Baroque, but in lessening profusion in the later sonatas. The practices of Galuppi's time are further illustrated by his use of elementary sonata-allegro forms, ranging from the simple binary dance forms of the Baroque to mono- and bi-thematic sonata-forms with embryonic development sections and complete recapitulations, as found in the works of Domenico Scarlatti, Pergolesi, and early Haydn. The texture is generally two-voiced, with right-hand cantabile melody supported by a simplistic left-hand accompaniment of broken chords or Alberti bass figuration.

The thin texture makes the sonatas accessible to young musicians and small hands. The rise and fall of the cantabile melodies allows for the development of expressive playing with little encumbrance of double notes or a multiple-voiced texture. The technical demands are limited to scales, arpeggios, trills, repeated notes, and occasional cross-hand technique. And most of all, the sonatas offer the teacher the opportunity to present formal structures at an elementary level and tasteful ornamentation in an otherwise unencumbered context.

The 18th-century treatises of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach,⁴ J. J. Quantz,⁵ Francois Couperin,⁶ and the studies of 20th-century authors, Robert Donington,⁷ and Arnold Dolmetsch,⁸ provide the basis for the interpretation of Galuppi's ornaments. All attest to the improvisatory nature of ornamenting a melody tastefully as a matter of interpretation, allowing for both the addition and omission of ornaments, as well as the substitution of one ornament for another to clarify the character and spirit of the movement. In the manuscripts and in Walsh's 18th century editions of the Galuppi sonatas, only the appoggiatura and simple trill appear. Where appropriate, appoggiatura prefixes and suffixes may be used to elaborate the simple trill to enhance and intensify the progress of the melodic line as found in the Holmes editions and given in the Table of Ornamentation.

There are only two basic rules regarding 18th-century ornamentation: (1) all ornaments must be played on the beat, not before, the first tone of the embellishment sounding with the other harmonies; (2) all trills should be begun on the upper neighboring tone unless prefixed by the lower neighboring appoggiatura, as in Figures 2 and 6 of the table.

There are two types of appoggiaturas, the short appoggiatura and the long. The appoggiatura is played short (1) when it precedes the shortest note value in a piece of passage, quickness being essential, (2) when it forms an octave with the bass to avoid the emptiness of the interval, or (3) when it precedes a triplet in order to preserve the integrity of the rhythm of the triplet.

The duration of the long appoggiatura is determined by the principal note that follows. If the principal note is divisible into two equal parts, the appoggiatura takes half the value of the principal note (see Figure 8); and if it is divisible into three parts, the appoggiatura receives two-thirds of the value of the principal note (see Figure 9). If a rest follows the principal note then the appoggiatura fills the time of the principal note, and the resolution occurs in the time of the rest (see Figure 10).

TABLE OF ORNAMENTATION



Fig. 1—Trill with prolonged upper appoggiatura.



Fig. 2—Trill from appoggiatura below.



Fig. 3—Trill with turned prefix.



Fig. 4—Trill with turned suffix.



Fig. 5—Trill with prolonged upper appoggiatura and turned suffix.



Fig. 6—Trill from appoggiatura below with turned suffix.



Fig. 7—Trill with turned prefix and turned suffix.



Fig. 8—Long appoggiatura with principal note divisible into two parts.



Fig. 9—Long appoggiatura with principal note divisible into three parts.



Fig. 10—Long appoggiatura with principal note followed by a rest.

THE SONATAS

All of the rules given above regarding ornamentation can be applied to examples of both simple and elaborated trills and both short and long appoggiaturas found in the first movement of the *Sonata in C Major*, Opus 1, No. 1, which is the most elaborately ornamented example selected for discussion. An indefatigable trill technique is needed if one undertakes to perform all of the ornamentation in the first movement. The second and third movements are charming and less demanding technically however, and appropriate for almost any intermediate pianist.

The first movement is an adagio, and follows the bi-thematic sonata-form plan. The second movement is an andantino in the dominant key, following monothematic binary form. Zanibon's publication of Caruana's edition (#5299) omits the Andantino because the movement fails to appear in John Walsh's first edition of 1756. The third movement is an allegro and is in monothematic sonata-form. Incipits of each movement appear below. (See Example 1.)

Ex. 1

The score for Example 1 consists of three movements. The first movement is marked *Adagio* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 80$. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a complex trill in the right hand. The second movement is marked *Andantino* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 76$. It begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic and features a trill in the right hand. The third movement is marked *Allegro* with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 72$. It begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features a trill in the right hand.

The second sonata recommended is Opus 2, No. 5, in F major, one of Galuppi's most delightful pairs of movements, and is appropriate for the intermediate pianist. The first movement is a largo in monothematic binary form, and the second movement is an allegro in monothematic sonata-form. Incipits of both movements appear below. (See Example 2.)

Adagio [$\text{♩} = 40$]

Allegro Assai [$\text{♩} = 120$]

[*Tema*] [$\text{♩} = 60$]

The first sonata in the second opus is of longer duration and greater technical scope than the others. It consists of three movements in D major, an adagio in monothematic binary form, an allegro assai in monothematic sonata-form, and a wonderful finale, a theme and six variations demanding virtuoso cross-handed playing in the bravura style so often found in Scarlatti's sonatas. Incipits of the three movements appear below. (See Example 3.)

Ex. 3

Allegro [$\text{♩} = 120$]

In contrast, the second sonata in Opus 2 is a brief and cheerful work in D minor consisting of two allegro movements, both in monothematic sonata-form, the last being a frolicking gigue. Both movements have a youthful and fun-loving quality most intermediate pianists would enjoy. (See Example 4.)

Ex. 4

Allegro [$\text{♩} = 112$]

[*Allegro*]
[$\text{♩} = 108$]

The last recommended sonata is one enjoyed by everyone who plays or hears it, a two-movement work in G major, Opus 2, No. 5, similar in scope and difficulty to the F major sonata, Opus 1, No. 5. The first movement is an andantino in bithematic binary form and the finale is a presto in bithematic sonata-form. (See Example 5.)

Ex. 5

Andantino [$\text{♩} = 66$]

Presto [$\text{♩} = 112$]

The above five sonatas will provide new and refreshing material for study, performance, and competition. And, of course, there are over 100 more sonatas by Galuppi, many of which are also now available in modern editions. The sonatas are wonderful tools for teaching elementary sonata-form, ornamentation, and expressive playing with limited technical demands. Therefore, explore, teach, and select them for your local sonata-sonatina contests, and you will be rewarded by discovering the truth in William Newman's ranking of Galuppi "with the few best of our pre-Classical sonata composers in all countries."⁹

AVAILABILITY

One or more of the sonatas discussed here are available in each of the following editions; the third item below contains all five.

Dieci sonate per cembalo. Padua, G. Zanbon, 1972; No. 5207.

Dodici sonate per cembalo. Padua, G. Zanibon, 1974; No. 5299.

A Critical Edition of Selected Sonatas by Baldassare Galuppi, ed. by Ruth Jane Holmes. Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1976; No. 77-16031.

Sonata in C Major, Op. 1, No. 1. New York, Oxford University Press, 1980; No. 93,004.

Six Keyboard Sonatas, ed. by M. L. Serafine. New York, Carl Fischer, Inc., 1980; No. 05052.

NOTES

¹James L. Jackman, "Baldassare Galuppi," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), vol. 7, pp. 134-138.

²David E. Pullman, "Catalogue of the Keyboard Sonatas of Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785)" (unpublished M.A. thesis, American University, 1972), and Baldassare Galuppi, *Sonate per cembalo*, Vol. I, ed. Hedda Illy, in Vol. XXXVII of *Musiche vocali e strumentali sacre e profane sec. XVII - XVIII - XIX "Bonaventura Soma"*, 42 vols., ed. Lino Bianchi (Rome: Edizioni DeSanis, 1969).

³Sadie, Stanley, ed., "Johann Christian Bach," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 20 vols. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), vol. 1, p. 866.

⁴Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments (1753-1762)*, translated and edited by William J. Mitchell (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1949).

⁵Johann Joachim Quantz, *Essay of a Method for Playing the Transverse Flute (1752)*, translated by Edward R. Reilly (New York: The Free Press, 1966).

⁶François Couperin, *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*, edited by Margery Halford (Port Washington, N.Y.: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1974).

⁷Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

⁸Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (1946 edition; London: Novello and Co., Ltd., 1946).

⁹William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, Vol. 2, in *A History of the Sonata Idea*, 3 vols. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), p. 198.