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THE VIOLIN SONATA IN THE BAROQUE ERA

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¹E. G. J. van der Straeten, The History of the Violin (London 1953), I, p. 7.

The Development of the Violin

The violin, which has played a central role in the development of instrumental music since the baroque era, was virtually unknown until around 1550. Precursors of the violin, however, may be traced over more than two thousand years through the Roman and Greek citharas even to the Egyptian kithara. The masterpieces of the Venetian and Paduan violin makers in the second half of the sixteenth century evolved over the centuries from the basic three-part sound body composed of a table and a back joined by distinct ribs or bouts found in the ancient instruments.

Similarly, the evolution of the name "fiddle" may be traced from the kithara to the Roman cithara which became fidicula, fidel and finally, "fiddle" among the Anglo-Saxons, vielle and virole in Gallic tongues, and viola in Italy where the instrument reached a climax of its development in the hands of Andrea Amati, Antonio Stradivari and Guiseppe Guarneri.¹ Appropriately, the present English term, "violin," comes directly from the feminine Italian la violina and the masculine term, il violino, which is the present Italian term.

¹E. S. J. van der Straeten, The History of the Violin (London: 1953), I, p. 7.

The bow which appeared in antiquity was until the thirteenth century little refined from the weapon bearing the same general appearance. However, from that time other designs were sporadically introduced to improve the efficiency and ease of handling for the performer. For example, in the hunting-bow design in which the hair was affixed to the side of the stick and therefore tapered into it, any pressure on the hair pushed it against the stick at the end and significantly reduced the usable playing surface. Although exact measurements are difficult to obtain for the earliest bows, a reasonable example reveals the loss of up to two inches from a fifteen-inch bow. A solution was found in the introduction of a head or tip that held the hair away from the stick. Tightening the hair presented another problem. In the fifteenth century a cremaillère, a notched metal strip fastened on the top of the stick, provided a means of suspending the frog by a loop hooked into one of the notches so that the hair could be pulled at various tensions. In the sixteenth century many bows were built with immovable frogs providing constant tension, which, however, decreased as the hair stretched under that constant tension. Only in the seventeenth century, a time of rapid improvements, was the screw mechanism used today introduced.

The outwardly curved bows of the sixteenth century proved particularly effective for the short, articulate strokes of dance music, but were little suited to long sustained singing melodic lines. Although well-balanced convex bows were produced in the seventeenth century, there began to develop in the music of the latter part of that century a demand for a bow with greater resilience, length and weight distribution. Late in the seventeenth century the familiar inward camber of today's bow appeared and made possible, through the process of change arising from reciprocal improvement of the equipment and of the technique of using it, the great expansion of the art of playing the violin that flowered into nineteenth-century virtuosity and twentieth-century pyrotechnics.

Although the introduction of the inward camber is sometimes accredited to Tartini (1692-1770) who was a keen student of technical problems of the violinist's equipment, it is often not possible to assign such a development to any one person with certainty.² Particularly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many artisans contributed to the development of the violin and the bow quite independently of each other due to national hostilities and a general lack of communication. The nearly simultaneous introduction of the slide and ferrule on the nut of the bow to maintain a flat, even

²Ibid., p. 22.

ribbon of hair by John Dodd in England and François Tourte (1747-1835), to whom it was supposedly suggested by the violinist Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824), only reveals the confusion and duplication that existed in the evolution of modern equipment.³ Tourte, however, is generally acknowledged as the greater bowmaker for his particular ability to combine the practicality of excellent balancing with beauty and grace of line. The French after Tourte, who standardized the modern bow, became the masters of bowmaking.

It may be reasonably assumed that the development of musical composition for the violin depends on three interrelated factors. First, the technical capabilities of the instrument itself limit the musical effects that may be achieved. Second, as particularly in the baroque era, the function of the violin and its music are consequently prescribed. Third, the music itself is inspired by the styles of composition generally prevalent in the vicinity of its composition, particularly during the time of limited communication and a relatively small number of centers of musical activity. Thus, in order to examine the rise of the concepts of sonata form and particularly their application to the accompanied violin, it is first necessary to examine the history of the violin itself.

³Ibid.

Because its form resulted, as did that of the bow, from a long and continuous series of modifications, and because the only evidence of the earliest violins may be found in contemporary iconography, it is not possible to assign exact dates and makers to the earliest violins. In fact, it is a matter of dispute as to what constitutes a violin in the problem of defining its exact emergence.

The violin has three basic immediate ancestors, the rebec which appeared around 1200, the renaissance fiddle and the lira da braccia which appeared around 1400. The rebec, pear-shaped and formed with no overhanging edges, had three strings tuned in perfect fifths to g, d¹, and a¹. However, these actual pitches may have varied greatly from place to place, because the concept of pitch varied as much as three semitones from region to region, and also because the rebec was often tuned not to a particular pitch, a¹, but by fifths downward from whatever pitch the highest string could bear.⁴ The rebec had lateral tuning pegs that functioned and appeared much like the violin pegs of today. There were no frets, but here the similarity ended, for this small instrument had no sound post and probably produced

⁴ David D. Boyden, The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 9.

a small, raucous, pungent sound.⁵ By 1628 in Paris an ordinance permitted the use of only the rebec and not the violin in mauvaix lieux⁶ indicating at least the beginnings of the violin's rise to respectability. As were most musicians, violinists were generally professionals little more than privileged servants who often travelled in bands and lived in poverty. It was not becoming of a nobleman to play the violin. The rebecs were the very lowest members of a little esteemed family.

The second ancestor, the renaissance fiddle, was approximately the same size as today's violin; it had the same basic three-part construction, top, back, and ribs. However, it had frets, a heart-shaped pegbox with front-inserted pegs, and five strings of which one was a drone. The third ancestor, the lira da braccio, had both the general size and shape of violas found today. From 1500 it appeared to have seven strings, two of which were drones untouched by the fingers. Tuned g , g^1 , d^1 , a^1 , e^2 (or d^2) plus drones tuned to d and d^1 , the fifth string (g^1) interrupted the continuous fingering patterns which are found on the violin today. Viola, the aristocrats among stringed instruments, had six strings tuned in fourths and usually a third in the middle. Although predecessors of violins and for a while coexistent with them, the viols are not actually

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

directly related to violins due to the different body contour, the presence of frets, and different concepts of tuning and performance practice.

Thus it may be seen that luthiers assimilated into the violin the most advantageous features of the three ancestors in order to produce an instrument with a fairly pleasing bright tone and no undue technical performance complications. Therefore bouts or ribs, a soundpost to transmit vibrations from top to back, a flat soundbox producing sweetness and brilliance, lateral pegs which are easier to manipulate, no frets, few (four) strings tuned in fifths, intervals considerably easier to hear accurately than fourths, and a slender, not too thick neck became the essential distinctions of the violin.⁷

A specific date cannot be determined for the actual first construction of the first true violin. A three-stringed version appears in La Madonna degli oranci painted around 1529 or 1530.⁸ It may be assumed then that violino, violone, and violetta when used after 1530 may then have meant "violin." The first indisputable description of a violin appeared in 1556 in the Epitome musical de tons, sons et accordz is voix humaines, . . . violes et violons by Philebert Jambe-de-Fer. A violin by Andreas Amati was known to have appeared that same year.

⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

An Amati violino piccolo made in 1564 is probably the first violin in existence today. A viola made by Peregrino Zanetto of Brescia around 1550 suffered the fate of all but two of the earliest instruments that were discarded as frequent modifications of structure left older models somewhat obsolete. Violins were used principally for dance music and fairs; therefore, being considered low instruments unworthy of the care and respect given viols, they were usually discarded when their immediate purpose was accomplished.⁹ That Kaspar Tieffenbrucker (Italian spelling, Duiffoprugar), a lute-maker who lived in Lyons around 1550 to 1556, made the first violin is uncertain because a portrait of him painted in 1562 showing many stringed instruments shows no true violin. Also, for Gasparo da Salo to have made a violin before 1556, he would have had to have been less than sixteen years old. The description of his first violin is no earlier than 1562.¹⁰ Thus it is reasonably certain that Andreas Amati began the rapid development of the violin in Italy that led to a since-unmatched climax in the works of Stradivari who standardized the form of the violin in his masterworks of the early eighteenth century.

⁹van der Straeten, p. 39.

¹⁰Boyden, p. 19.

The Origins of the Baroque Sonata

Revealing many interesting parallels in its development with the development of the violin, the sonata idea has, like the violin, profoundly influenced instrumental composition from the sixteenth century to the present. Etymologically derived from the Italian feminine past participle sonare, meaning "to sound" as opposed to cantare, "to sing," ballare, "to dance," and toccare, "to touch," the sonata is intrinsically an instrumental medium of composition. Some few sonatas may be found that include voices, but they are, as in the case of Giovanni Gabrielli's Sonata pian e forte (1597), products of the transition into the baroque era during which forms and performance practices were undergoing a process of experimentation that only later in the mature baroque era found a degree of stabilization.

Just as the violin evolved from the merger of the characteristics of three renaissance stringed instruments, the sonata idea found its origins in the sectional structure of the renaissance variation canzona, to a lesser extent in the imitative instrumental ricercare, and also in the concertato principle of opposition and contrast which developed from Venetian poly-choir

antiphonal effects that could be achieved in the vaulted interior of St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice that may have itself inspired the concept. The sonata idea permitted development of the principles of contrast that, transformed during the baroque era, became bases of musical thought. The contrast revealed itself not only in the primarily compositional concern of contrasting sections but also in the sphere of performance practices (which in turn inspired composition) of opposition of timbre and tessitura.

The emergence of the sonata as an instrumental medium of composition also reflected the emergence of instrumental music as a fertile and legitimate means of performance for serious music. The refined violin emerged in the sixteenth century capable of not only the dance music to which it had been almost entirely relegated, but also of an almost vocal tone quality that made it quite suitable for solo use. Hence the violin did not necessarily have to be confined to ensembles such as the orchestras that accompanied dancing; it could, on the contrary, well support its part in much smaller ensembles that were suitable to both the chamber and the church. Also, as the violin's more brilliant tone replaced the softer, sweeter tone of the viols, instrumental music gained more identity as a medium

capable of more than mere doubling or replacement of voices in a principally polyphonic texture.

The release of instrumental and particularly string music from the shackles of dance mannerisms, which generally placed more emphasis on rhythm than on any other capability of the instruments, and freedom from the strict limitations of sixteenth-century vocal technique made it possible for composers and performers together to develop the technical capabilities of the instruments. Early sonatas, as non-utilitarian music, became "absolute" music in that composers were free to follow their inspirations. Typically, in the earliest part of the baroque era there was greater interest in developing idiomatic styles than in crystallizing forms, the province of the later, more mature part of any era.

As an artistic expression draws consciously and unconsciously from its environment, the sonata's development as a form was dependent also on operatic monody which appeared in the beginning of the seventeenth century. From the polarization of voices begun with the doubling of the bass and soprano voices, the texture was converted from equal-voice polyphony in which all voices moved somewhat independently of each other. Their relationship to the lowest voice was determined by intervals above the longest lowest note (which was not always in the lowest voice part), but it became a somewhat

vertical dependence on the chordal harmony determined by the movement of the bass line. Monody, then, represented the extreme case in which the texture was reduced to the bass and the melody. The harmony became defined by the bass and supported by the melody. Harmonic rhythm slowed. In instrumental music the inner voices that previously were equally important began to be dropped from the ensemble texture of four to six voices. The viola, which had been in the middle of the sixteenth century of importance equal to the higher pitched violin, was used less frequently and almost ceased to be made. Although many combinations could be found, prevailing ensembles began to be composed of treble instruments over a bass line. Of great favor with baroque composers was the combination of two treble voices of equal importance that constantly interwove and gave a degree of harmonic fullness to the compositions when placed over a functional bass line. With the availability of keyboard instruments such as the harpsichord, it was much more satisfactory for the bass line to be doubled and for the harmony, both implied and actual, to be reinforced at the keyboard. Thus arose the function and practice of the basso continuo that became germane to the baroque era even to being a means of defining the boundaries of the baroque era.

The two melody instruments above the bass composed of a low melody instrument and the keyboard support and filler became one of the most frequent settings of the sonata, the trio sonata. The melody instruments were usually any combination of violins, flutes, oboes, or clarino trumpets above a cello or a low viol, or in the case of predominantly wind ensembles, a bassoon, or with brass, a trombone. The trio sonata, as it may be easily seen, was composed of four players performing essentially three parts. An analogous setting, the solo sonata, with which the present discussion shall be more concerned, was from the manuscript of the composer two melodic lines, one for the "solo" instrument and one for the continuo composed of, as in the case of the trio sonata, two players. Thus the solo sonata required three performers. The presence of the continuo was so indigenous to baroque composition that its omission generally required an explanatory note from the composer. Literature for the violin alone was quite rare.

It may be justifiably said that the baroque era is the thoroughbass era or Die Generalbass Zeitalter. The prevailing notation of a bass line and figures to indicate intervals above the bass reflects both the earlier importance of intervallic relationships determined above the bass and the later practice of allowing the continuo

player at the keyboard to fill in the harmony with whatever improvisatory style seemed appropriate to the composition.

Ancestors of the Baroque Sonata

The ancestors of the sonata must be traced, as were the ancestors of the violin, not from extant specimens and examples, but from descriptions and references in the contemporary literature of the times. Thus, a cognate of the term, "sonata," sonnada, may be found as early as thirteenth century Provençal literature and later in the phrase, "Orpheus fera ses sonnades" from a 1486 renaissance mystery play.¹¹ Sonada or sonado first appeared as a title in some dances in lute tabulature by Luis Milan in 1535.¹² The word, "sonata," first appeared in the title of a Venetian publication in 1561 of a binary pass'e mezo and its elaboration composed by the blind lutist Giacomo Gorzanis.¹³

The term, itself, sonata, is of Italian origin. The sonata first underwent rapid development in Italy, just as did violin playing after the Italians' long

¹¹ William S. Newman, The Sonata in the Baroque Era (revised edition; Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1966), p. 18.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

experience with the technique of viol playing. Sonatas appeared not only for string ensemble settings, but also for organ solos, lutes, brass and wind ensembles and occasionally combinations with voices. These many varied settings as well as the wide variety of arrangements of the sections revealing different organizational principles applied to the musical materials are only normal and even inevitable to an early and formative part of an era.

Germany, France and finally England adopted the sonata as a fertile compositional medium. They finally adopted even the Italian name with greater and lesser degrees of modification reflecting degrees of Italianization in their own music. It was essentially in the beginning of the seventeenth century the Italians who emigrated from the few centers of composition and musical activity in Italy to the countries of western and eastern Europe. Each nationality of composers contributed in time to the development of the sonata idea which proved to be fertile and capable of meeting the demands of many different aesthetic systems which were placed on it. The Germans developed violin technique to a degree unsurpassed even in Italy and applied it to their particular penchant for rigorous polyphony resulting in the use of chords and frequent other double stops produced by two- and three-voice writing. The French, whose performance

technique was much less advanced than that of either the Germans or the Italians, developed precision and the stylization of dance rhythms and movements. The English, who became acquainted with violin playing quite late in relationship to the Italians, Germans and French, generally absorbed elements from each of the other nationalities. With them viols remained popular long into the seventeenth century, and their interest remained more directed toward keyboard music and vocal music.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibid., passim.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 39.

The Baroque Accompanied Violin Sonata

The first published violin sonata appeared in Concerti ecclesiastici. . . . e sei sonate in 1610 by Giovanni Paolo Cima (c. 1570-c. 1630).¹⁵ The first published violin sonata with a written-out accompaniment appeared more than eighty years later from the pen of Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) illustrating by its lateness the complete domination of baroque composition by the thoroughbass practice.¹⁶ In the emergence of the violin sonata there is much evidence that the style of composition was still closely tied to vocal techniques which may be seen in the well-rounded phrases employing most often conjunct motion or modest leaps. Particularly in slow sections, the melodic motion was quite slow, leaving the student free to suppose that it was to be ornamented by the performer as was the then prevalent Italian vocal style. Truly, the violin assumed a position in Italian instrumental music quite analogous to the position held with great flourish by the virtuoso singers in the realm of the performer's province of improvisation or adding gorgia to otherwise almost starkly simple lines. Even in the solo sonata by Cima there is some evidence that the work is for the violin because there are such violin-

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

istic devices as scales and octaves in the one sonata that is specified for violin and unfigured bass.

Giovanni Battista Fontana (d. 1631) of the Brescian school, was important both to early violin playing and composition. His 18 Sonate a 1,2,3, per il Violino o Cornetto, Fagotto, Chiterone [a long lute], Violoncino [cello], o simile altro Instrumento. of which six are solo sonatas for violin and basso continuo, published posthumously, reveal a marked degree of violinistic writing as well as elements of vocal influence. The third sonata contains an advanced sense of form that falls into an A-B-C-B-A pattern. The first sonata contains seven contrasting tempo areas that may be grouped by virtue of major-cadence patterns into an embryonic sectional slow-fast-slow-fast pattern that anticipates the gross structure of the sonata da chiesa. Considerable passagework and long phrases suggest that the basic conception is violinistic. The second sonata provides the most interesting glimpse at several important stylistic features of the very early violin sonata. It, too, falls into four basic areas of tempo contrast which may be further divided. One is in triple meter. The tonality remains firmly in D. Major throughout except for occasional minor cadences on the dominant and relative minor. Chord progressions do not, however, reveal a well established

sense of harmonic motion and progression causing some of the chordal movement to seem distinctly modal because of frustration of the expected resolution of the leading tone. Nevertheless, the cadences confirm the intimation of the beginnings of tonality. Only one complete break or silence occurs between sections between the second and third; all others are completely linked by motion of the continuo alone or by both voices.

The style of the violin part reflects many vocal influences. Lines are long and smooth and often embellished by scale passages and other decorations that were considered at that time virtuosic. Frequently ornaments are not indicated at all or are given only in melodic outline, placing the burden of a free and natural-sounding rendering entirely on the performer. In the continuo there is little evidence of counterpoint other than in short-lived imitation found principally at the beginnings of phrases. The violin part neither extends onto the G string nor above c^{#3} which may be reached by extension of the fourth finger upward on the E string. In the early seventeenth century the fingerboard extended only under d³ reached by the fourth finger in third position. This sonata clearly reveals the technical bounds of the violin as it also avoids the

G string on which the response was so uncertain as to be quite prohibitive to any use in performance. With respect to the general vocal conception of this sonata, it is also reasonable to note the similarity between the tessitura of the violin and the tessitura of a fairly agile soprano voice and to conclude that the violin was still, in this stage of its development, under the very strong influence of the original musical instrument, the human voice.

The early violin sonata suffered numerous limitations resulting from the technical limitations of the instrument itself. The practice of holding the violin down on the chest proved no hindrance to shifting upward but made the reverse downward motion almost impossible to execute because the violinist's left hand dragged the instrument away from him. Thus it may easily be surmised that the upper limit of the usable range depended also on the player's ability to extend his fourth finger upward since shifting was not then practically possible. Nevertheless, violinists and composers found other means of extending the musical (and sometimes nonmusical) vocabulary. One such composer, Carlo Farina (c. 1600- c. 1640), who emigrated from Italy to Dresden, introduced glissando, col legno (playing with the stick instead of the hair of the bow), tremolo (a rapid bow stroke), pizzicato, and sul ponticello (playing

very near the bridge so as to produce the upper partials more than the fundamental and thereby get a glassy tone). The sonatas often attempted to sound programmatic as did the "Barnyard Sonata."¹⁷ As Farina experimented more with violinistic devices, his sonatas revealed a rather loose formal treatment based on long fantasy-like additive movements frequently in the style of the variation *ricercare* in parts. Harmony in these very long movements was frequently restricted. His particular penchant for experimentation was quite typical of the exploration of a new instrument's capabilities during an early period that long precedes concentration on the subtleties of form.

Tarquinio Merula (c. 1595-c. 1652) was one of the chief sonata composers of his day. His earlier *canzona-sonatas* (1637) reveal programmatic titles.¹⁸ Later (1651) more mature sonatas show formal and idiomatic advance as the form gained exceptional unity from the prolonged exploitation of a few basic motivic ideas containing considerable rhythmic and metric drive along with the idiomatic devices of frequent repeated notes and octave skips.¹⁹ Merula, another Italian who emigrated, settled in Warsaw.

¹⁷Boydén, p. 30.

¹⁸Newman, p. 20.

¹⁹Ibid.

Biagio Marini (c. 1597-1665) of Venice, a student of Fontana, was particularly aware of the dance heritage of the violin and in his Op. 22 (1655) made the first distinction in the title between "sonatas" (sonatas da chiesa) and sonatas da camera (suites of dances or as in Germany, "partitas") in his Diverse generi di sonate, da Chiesa, e da Camera. However, very soon after the distinction between sonatas da chiesa and sonatas da camera was established, composers began mixing dance movements and absolute movements in their sonatas, and the whole system of definition underwent a process of degeneration that may be seen in almost any era when a form is crystallized and almost immediately expanded beyond its original limits. As he was something of an experimentalist with form, his Opus 8 contains no breaks or cadences. The "Sonata. . . . d'Inventione" contains perhaps the earliest Italian use of the Germanism, scordatura, mistuning of the violin for special effects. As part of the gradual trend toward greater specification that flowered two centuries later, Marini introduced the terms prima parte and seconda parte designating the separate voices in trio sonatas.²⁰ The sonatas contain recitative-like passages and gorgia-like ornaments, references to vocal styles and also echo effects which reveal sensitivity to the concertato contrast principle.²¹

²⁰ Ibid., p. 71.

Marco Uccellini (c. 1603-1680) wrote twelve solo violin sonatas in which he furthered performance technique by extending the range of the instrument up to the sixth position or g^3 . Melodies revealed a conception within long lines covering the entire range of the violin. He was particularly capable of making motives undergo minute changes within a framework of more developed tonality that made it possible for him to expand the size of the sonatas to more than one hundred measures.²²

Maurizio Cazatti (c. 1620-1677) of Bologna introduced the germs of the cyclical idea of relating ideas between separate movements. His work was surpassed in Venice by Giovanni Legrenzi (1626-1690) who showed mastery of compositional practices and of string idioms. Somewhat unusual for an Italian, Legrenzi could develop well-wrought and convincing fugues. A particular accomplishment was his accommodation to good effect the particular violin capabilities of scales, arpeggios, leaps across strings, slurs, and lyrical passages in the best range of the instrument.

Giovanni Battista Vitali (c. 1644-1692) of Bologna was an excellent violinist and cellist who knew how to write violinistic themes although his chief stylistic contribution was more probably a return to the use of instrumental counterpoint in his two solo sonatas in the

²¹ Manfred F. Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era (New York: Norton & Co., Inc., 1947), p. 30.

Artificii musicali. . . ., Op. 13 (1689). A theorist and pupil of Cazzati, he was particularly interested in investigating the "mysteries of counterpoint,"²² although he did introduce the minuet to the sonata form along with other French dance movements (in the trio sonatas). . . . In a historically backward-looking device he employed the idea of contrast of energy and austerity from the variation canzona to the fortunate end of considerable formal unity.²⁴

Giuseppe Torelli (1658-1709) of Bologna wrote eleven solo sonatas which show no small feel for typical Italian sensitivity to affectations possible on the violin; however, his work is thoroughly permeated with the stylistic element that led to his greatest contribution to violin literature, the solo concerto. The solo sonatas show tendencies toward the expansion of the violin's solo passages into unaccompanied opportunities for dramatic virtuosic display within a formal scheme that suggests the ritornello form.²⁵

²²Newman, p. 123.

²³Bukofzer, p. 140.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Newman, p. 141.

Corelli: The Climax of the Italian Baroque Sonata

In the period between 1650 and 1700 Italian violin sonata styles became fairly stabilized through the composers of first the Brescian school, later, the Mantuan school, and finally the center in Bologna in addition to the original center of musical activity in Venice. The Italians borrowed singing melodies from vocal styles which were developed to a remarkable degree. The devices possible on the violin such as pizzicato and col legno had been explored in the earlier part of the century. Ornamentation was almost never indicated in Italian editions because it was both a matter of course and a matter of pride that performers, both singers and violinists, could add their own free and artistic embellishments to the otherwise even starkly plain melodic lines. The dichotomy between music suitable for the church which contained no secular references to dancing, and music suitable for the chamber which had evolved from dance rhythms, had been defined by Marini and reemphasized by the use of chiesa and camera or more simply "sonata" and "suite" in the works of succeeding composers. Tonal organization began to take shape and the sonata began to have a formal meaning based on internal harmonic procedures that made it progress by the driving force of tonality.

The many sections expanded and became less numerous and finally developed the autonomy of separate but related movements linked only by close tonal relationships or motivic similarity. The thoroughbass practice and the consequent polarization of voices which contributed to the possibility of independent idiomatic development of the violin was firmly established. Toward the end of the seventeenth century there were tendencies in Italy to accept the German penchant for polyphony on the violin which is little suited to sustaining double stops and producing convincing counterpoint. Many styles, schools and centers of composition with their even more numerous composers were thriving in Italy and awaiting, in the hindsight of the view from centuries later, a climax in the work of a single man. Such a man studied in Bologna and referred to himself as "the Bolognese" but spent the greater part of his life in Rome.

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) severely limited his published works to seventy-two instrumental compositions in the form of concertos and sonatas in six opera of twelve members each. Of these only Opus V contains solo sonatas, six sonatas da chiesa and five sonatas da camera plus a set of variations on the follia ground bass. In these few sonatas, however, is clear evidence of the crystallization of the form of the baroque solo sonata.

Typically, the sonatas are scored with figured bass. The form of the church sonatas in five movements reveals the then result of the accomplishment of the expansion and separation of the sections of single-movement sonatas into separate movements with their own internal devices for development and organization. The presence of five movements shows a notable extension of the four movement scheme of the sonata da chiesa, the expansion of the form beyond its boundaries by the addition of a movement based on a stylized dance rhythm. The five chamber sonatas are considerably easier technically for the violinist as they are built around dance movements that have been historically suited to the facility and articulation of the violin. Exceptions are found in the free-style preludios that introduce the other three or four movements, as the case may be.

The first six sonatas, the church sonatas, are the most interesting for detailed study in that they encompass many culminating and several forward-looking stylistic traits. The third sonata frankly entitles the last movement Giga. The first movement in the scheme slow-fast-fast-slow-fast is in all cases in common time and developed through cumulative expansion of one or two melodic ideas. The second movements, also in common time, are imitative, free three-voiced fugues in which the basso continuo is a melodic equal of the two

voices in the solo violin, and completes what is in reality a trio sonata. As is typical of Italian polyphony, the counterpoint seems denser than it actually is because of numerous false entries and the skillful use of mock stretto to give the effect of much more activity than is actually present. The counterpoint permits few, if any, major cadences that demark sections before the final cadence. Many lesser cadences appear in the harmony and in the melodic activity of all of the solo voices, one of which is, in the trio sonata texture, in the continuo. However, the cadences do not necessarily occur at the same time, so that the entire movement has a sense of never quite coming to rest until the final cadence which, as in the case of the sixth sonata, may be delayed by harmonic evasion and a grand pause that only heightens the drama and finality of the last authentic cadence. The counterpoint is frequently relieved by arpeggios, purely violinistic temporizing material to be rendered according to the method chosen by the performer. The third movements are typically in a perpetual motion style that displays the violinist's facility with both hands in a baroque virtuoso style. It is, in effect, a reflection of the extension of passagework that began to be introduced with the early baroque development of the idiomatic violin

style. The third movement of the sixth sonata illustrates a formal concept that is in sharp contrast to the classical additive concept.

In the baroque era form was not an external mold, but rather the underlying principle of the expansion of ideas into a cohesive, logical and (through the result of artistic inspiration) expressive statement of musical ideas. In the example of this movement, the unifying elements are the regularly recurring one-measure ostinato rhythm, the melodic shape of the bass line, the perpetual motion of the violin part and the sequencing and echo effects within the single violin part that give the effect of a trio sonata realized by two violins antiphonally answering each other with imitations and occasionally joining forces at the cadences. Corelli revealed in the ostensibly simple movement a profound understanding of the capabilities of the timbres that may be achieved merely by contrasting the tone qualities of different strings to produce the effect of entirely different instruments. It is nonetheless the responsibility of the performer to realize the trio sonata structure and to make the contrasts comprehensible to the audience.

The fourth movements are in a triple meter, a reflection of one of the renaissance means of producing

contrasts in the larger scheme of the set of movements. In the sixth sonata a three-note triadic motive interweaves among the voices. The simple melody actually moves faster than it would in common time; therefore, it must be ornamented, but to a lesser degree in order to realize its intended grace. The ornamentation or addition of "graces" was not indicated in Italian editions, only in editions from France and Holland.

Typically, the fifth movement of the sixth sonata is in an imitative stylized dance rhythm, although its title indicates "Allegro," simply the expected abstract tempo indication expected of the final movement of a sonata da chiesa. Imitation is less strict and the form is essentially continuous because of the paucity of strong cadences. The device of arpeggiation is in this movement written out although the style of articulation is not specified by Corelli. Bowing indications were rare in the baroque era.

The range of these sonatas does not extend beyond a simple extension from third position, which is not at all remarkable for 1700 when the sonatas were published. However, this small tessitura is not indicative of the real difficulty and violinistic sophistication of Opus V. The counterpoint provides formidable obstacles to a clean and effective rendering of the voice leading and

and sonorities. In the original printings bowing and dynamics were not indicated. Right arm technique can be prohibitive to one who does not have excellent control in order to articulate with precision the many complexities particularly in the double stops where it is often required that one note be sustained while others are moving. Thus it may be seen that Corelli brought together the artistic technical capabilities of the violin and the well-developed principles of baroque form, internal and external, in continuous expansion and binary form as well as in the order of the movements. Yet at the same time he expanded the patterns defined in 1655 by using the church and chamber sonata forms somewhat freely. He at once absorbed the German taste for polyphony and the Italian ability to spin long, highly ornamented, yet not disjointed vocal lines. Fittingly several elements of his style were absorbed by Bach who was also the master of the long, often complicated, but always expressive line and, the consummate baroque master of the union of polyphony and harmonic function.

Other National Schools of Violin Sonata Composers:
German and French

The German school of violin playing, a designation which can be applied with an awareness that there were many centers of composition and violin playing, but that at the same time, there were tendencies among the German-speaking composers to use certain common stylistic traits, developed approximately fifty years behind Italian violin playing. However, the Germans and Austrians, once becoming aware of the composition of the Italians, developed technical virtuosity well beyond even the Italians.

The earliest German violinists were primarily travelling virtuosi such as Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (c. 1623-1680), who tended to contribute more to the art of violin playing than to the development of form. Schmelzer, for example, composed within the loose structure of the variation principle applied to meter, tempo and style.

Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber (1644-1704) of Salzburg was one of the finest early German composers as attested by the twenty-five "Mystery Sonatas" spiritually based on the life of Christ. Thematic unity interrelates the movements. Technical demands include ascent to the seventh position (a^3), *barriolage* (alternation of the

same note on both an open string and a stopped adjacent string), multiple stops and the German favorite for which Biber is particularly known, scordatura.

Johann Jakob Walther (c. 1650-1717) of Dresden was also a virtuoso who astonished the English with his displays of virtuosity, but who imitated the style of Farina in his taste for programmatic effects. Additions to the technique required by Biber include leaps of up to three octaves. Georg Muffat (c. 1645-1704) of Salzburg studied under Corelli and Lully and thereby absorbed certain Italian and French traits, principally slow introductions, singing melody and figuration in the Italian style, and dance movements from France. Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) Of Leipzig developed effective instrumental writing that relied heavily on scales and arpeggios which lent a certain degree of sameness to all of his thirteen solo sonatas.

The six sonatas for violin and realized keyboard accompaniment of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) present the grand product of Corelli's influence on the master of counterpoint. They are conceived as trio sonatas with the melody equally given to the violin and the right hand of the keyboard. They usually employ a binary tonal arrangement, although the greater organizing force is the meticulous working out of melodic

dialogue without making the listener consciously aware of the technical perfection that is present. The sonatas for accompanied violin are not the monuments that the six sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin are, but they do form an important landmark in the cycle of textural relationships among the voices. Not the first accompanied violin sonatas,²⁶ they are, however, good examples of the return of equality of the solo and the accompaniment, and an equal-voice texture that is only reminiscent of the renaissance but in complete contrast to the polarization of the early baroque. Indeed, the bass is the driving force, but all voices work together producing an artistic historic sequel to the evolution in progress most noticeably a century before. Technically, the apparently conservative tessitura is not at all indicative of the actual level of difficulty of performance. Clarity and beauty of tone, precision of articulation and finesse of bow control in the double stops are all necessary to a high degree for a performer to render effective the counterpoint, concertato devices and the long singing melodies.

The French under the influence of Lully and Leclair contributed principally to the sonata form the stylized dances and precise notation that contained all of the notes and articulations intended by the composer to be performed.

²⁶Supra, p. 17.

The French contribution to violin technique was particularly to the art of bowing. Under the influence of long acquaintance with the precision of dance-music articulation, they developed a system of determining the bowing best suited to the music by placing the downbows, the violinist's naturally firmer stroke, on the accented beats in contrast to the German system of rather rigidly alternating up- and downbows. Well closed in by the strength and unity of the monarchy, the French, who were technically far behind the Germans and Italians, were among the last in western Europe to accept the foreign musical developments. Jean Marie Leclair (1697-1764) was for a long time the greatest French violinist and composer, who called for almost virtuoso bow and finger control. His style, however, was from the Italian school in the earlier of his forty-eight accompanied violin sonatas (with figured bass). The French made significant contributions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to technique and pedagogy.

Beyond into Classicism

In the baroque era the violin played a dominating role both in the frequency of its appearance as a preferred medium for composition and in its role of singing above the basso continuo. Its technique advanced, particularly with the German virtuosi, to a level preparing for the solo concerto virtuosi of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The equipment of violin playing was essentially developed by the eighteenth century.

Baroque form developed from a broad system of tonal organization produced by the unifying basso continuo which at first lost its essential melodic function, but gradually regained it again until in the works of J. S. Bach, it was an indispensable member of the contrapuntal texture. The distinction of the church and chamber sonatas briefly solidified and then burst almost immediately with the free intermixing of dance and absolute movements. The sonata became a collection of related movements which were once only short contrasting sections of single-movement sonatas reflecting canzona additive principles. The mature baroque sonata was developed from motivic cells used in cumulative continuous expansion

but began to show unification around contrast of tonal areas. Tonality was being defined with greater exactness, but there was little motivic expansion that could be continued within the framework of tonality. Preclassicism brought the beginnings of the significant trend that would assert the domination of tonal homophony over counterpoint.

About 1740 the piano began to spread in favor after its perfection as a performance medium well-suited to the rising tide of classical concepts of sonority and simplicity. The violin no longer offered the inspiration for the privileged position it enjoyed in the baroque era. The symphony developed out of the work of the composers and orchestra at Mannheim. Sonatas became written for the combination of piano and violin in that order of importance. The fairly infrequent accompanied keyboard sonatas such as those by Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) relegate the violin to filler, doubling the piano part in octaves (a difficult interval to play in tune) or thirds and sixths, or just silence while awaiting the completion of the keyboard presentation of main thematic material. Motivic development became thematic contrast.

Sonata form, as known in the classic era, became the dynamic juxtaposition of tonal areas and thematic and textural contrasts. Harmonic movement slowed and emphasized tonal additive structural development. The

binary form was consolidated into limited tonal areas. The first section became the exposition that contained principally two tonal areas, tonic and dominant (or the relative major in some minor-key movements). The beginning of the binary second section became a short area of tonal and sometimes thematic working out as in the third sonata of Opus 5 by Luigi Boccherini; and the final part of the original binary scheme returned, after definite dominant preparation in the retransition at the end of the development, to firm and continuous tonic to confirm the completion of tonal movement. This sonata by Boccherini (1743-1805) also illustrates the first return of equality between the violin and keyboard.²⁷

The piano-violin sonatas of W. A. Mozart (1756-1791) are classic examples of accompanied piano sonatas. The formal organization generally conforms to classical sonata form as described above or to variation forms. Mozart's love of melodic chromaticism did not obscure the tonal sectional arrangement. With the omission of the scherzo, he retained a three-movement scheme throughout.

The widespread interest in performing among amateurs particularly among the nobility influenced the

²⁷Information received in a conversation with William S. Newman of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

technical demands that the composer could place on the performer.²⁸ Large textural changes occurred based on the introduction of pianistic idioms to other instrumental writing. The trend toward simplicity was reversed, however, by Beethoven (1770-1827) who performed as a virtuoso and also freed music from tonal and social bonds.

Beethoven's ten sonatas for piano and violin published between 1798 to 1812 lie, except for the tenth, Op. 96, in his early period of composition. Therefore they exhibit typically classical traits of clear tonal arrangement, well defined phrase structure, slowly moving harmony and domination of the duo ensemble by the piano. The seventh sonata, Op. 30 No. 2 in c minor provides a typical example of the mature classical sonata form within which tonality is completely defined and the violin plays a fairly important, but not dominating role. The four-movement sonata may be analysed as a sonata-allegro form, followed by a sonatina, a scherzo and trio, and finally a rondo. The piano introduces each movement and, particularly in the second movement, has the greater part of the musical material. The first movement, "Allegro con brio," well illustrates tonal and thematic contrast. The first area and theme,

William S. Newman, The Sonata in the Classic Era (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1963), Chapter III, passim.

dramatic and bold in c minor, are balanced by the lighter dotted rhythm of the second subject, which directly coincides with the appearance of the second area in the relative major. The development begins with the inversion of the materials of the beginning of the movement in E flat and proceeds with motivic fragmentation of opening rhythmic and melodic ideas, through tertian relationships and descents by fifths, through the Neapolitan in preparation for the long dominant retransition, finally to the expected recapitulation in tonic c minor and major. The coda, after a brief excursion to the Neapolitan, unequivocally confirms once again tonic C.

Thus with the sonatas of Beethoven, a further climax of tonality and sonata form was reached that only inevitably yielded to the immediate force of continuous evolution and soon succumbed to another redefinition. However, the sonata proved itself capable as a concept that could serve as an inspiring vehicle regardless of the musical language in which it existed.

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