

DLA Doctoral Dissertation Thesis

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**J. S. Bach: Partita in A minor
for Solo Flute (BWV 1013).
An Investigation of General Issues
Concerning the Work**

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I. Antecedents of the Research

Partita in A minor for Solo Flute (BWV 1013) by Johann Sebastian Bach is undoubtedly one of the most significant pieces of flute music. It is such a footstone of the flute repertoire like the pair of six solo string pieces is that for strings. Even more, in the former case the attention is not divided between the different pieces of a series, rather it is concentrated into one single point, in one Partita. The high number of different publications also proves its eminent place among flute pieces. Probable there is no other piece to have such a wide-ranging variety of publications.

I had the impression during the reading of various analyses and epilogues that the authors, maybe due to extensional constraints, wrote quite laconically about the work itself, and only mentioned those sources that were needed to support their own arguments. I met only two publications that give an overall picture of the work and a comprehensive analysis concerning its issues: one was by Hans-Peter Schmitz's writing in the series *Neue Bach Ausgabe* (VI/3) published in 1963, the other is an

“Nachwort” of the score in 1989 by Barthold Kuijken (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel; Wb.2088).

II. Sources

The most important handbook among the extensive Bach-literature is perhaps the one by Christoph Wolff titled *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (2000, a Hungarian edition is also available since 2009).

In writing my thesis I have not concentrated solely on the flute piece, rather I tried to describe the context in details in which it was conceived. Thus the argument might seem detouring at some points in sketching the background, I consider these detours nevertheless to be inevitable in order to bridge the distance of an almost three-hundred years.

For the analysis of the manuscript I used the following works: Hans-Peter Schmitz: *Werke für Flöte*. (NBA VI/3, Lipcse: DVfM, 1963), Günter Hausswald and Rudolf Gerber *Werke für Violine* (NBA VI/1, Lipcse: DVfM, 1958), Yoshitake Kobayashi and Kirsten Beisswenger: *Die Kopisten Johann Sebastian Bachs. Katalog und Dokumentation* (NBA IX/3 Kassel:

Bärenreiter, 2007.). For the descriptions of each of the dance movements the work by Meredith Little and Natalie Jenne titled *Dance and the Music of J. S. Bach* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) helped me. In defining key characteristics Rita Steblin’s book titled *A History of Key Characteristics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1983), in the analysis of flute pieces Alfred Dürr’s *Die Kantaten von Johann Sebastian Bach*. (1971/1975; ford. Rácz Judit. Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1982), Robert L. Marshall „J. S. Bach's Compositions for Solo Flute: A Reconsideration of Their Authenticity and Chronology” (*JAMS* 32/3, 1979.), Ardal Powell és David Lasocki: „Bach and the Flute: The Players, the Instruments, the Music” (*EM* 23/1, 1995) were at hand. Besides these works I referred to the entries of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (ed. Stanley Sadie, Oxford: Grove, 2007-).

I aimed at using much contemporary quotations (which I referred in their source language in footnotes), as I considered them to be authentic sources. Volumes of *Bach-Dokumente* (NBA, IX/I: 1963, II: 1969, III: 1972)

and Quantz's *Versuch* (1752; trans. András Székely. Budapest: Argumentum, 2011) book were my main sources.

III. Method

My main goal with this thesis was to create such a comprehensive work about the piece that contains as much real and assumed information about it as possible. I compared and countered these varying judgements in the argument. The writing of the argument itself was even motivated by the diverting, even contradicting opinions first of all. I tried to collect and think over proofs supporting different theories and to draft all possible causal interrelations in analysing different themes. The original intent was to pull off all these different information and to prove the validity of *one* of these up-to-date. In the meantime I realized though that it is not possible. I took positions wherever I could do so, but I think that the bias towards one or another opinion in this topic is not effective. Thus in several cases instead of proving as a general method I tried to refute views in order to show their validity or invalidity in an indirect

way. In other cases where there were no valid source I tried make my own conclusions.

IV. Results

In order to compare the piece to other works I had to collect Bach's all allemande, corrente, sarabande and bourrée dance movements, his instrumental works written in A minor and works written in suite, partita or sonata form.

The dissertations necessarily consists of numbered chapters which are closely interconnected; one is based on the other's conclusions and vice versa; thus it was not an easy job to find the right sequence for them. The construction is based on the following arrangement (with the number of each chapter in brackets): first of all I introduced the manuscript and its copiers (1). Then through a critical investigation of the score I highlighted its occurent deficiencies and inconsistencies (2). By analysing the various themes I put their characteristics in the context of the dance types of the era and the synonymous themes by Bach looking for similarities and

differences (3-6). It was a necessary task of the paper to determine the date of the piece's birth as precisely as possible (7); afterwards, as a small detour, I considered the characteristics of the A minor key (8). Returning to the manuscript first I noticed the French influence in Bach's environment (9), then I looked for the proper naming of the piece and its genre (10). I investigated the development of play without accompaniment (11) choosing my examples among flute works (10). After a short justification (13) I touched upon the issues concerning the flute: first I introduce the baroque instrument (14) and its players (15), and then finally I analysed further flute pieces by Bach (16) as a conclusion.

V. Documentation of the Activity Concerning the Domain of the Argument

I first played two movements of the piece in 2000 at the Zoltán Jeney High School National Flute Competition where I took the first place and special prizes. Later, in 2005, at the Timisoara International Flute Competition I presented them, too, where I received the second prize (no first being) and the "Georgescu" special prize.

I played the piece several times during courses, too, under supervising of Pietr Zeifart (Conservatory of Parma), Claudio Ferrarini (Conservatory of Parma), Benedek Csalog (Tokaji Régi Zene Nyári Egyetem) in 2004, and Gergely Ittész (Péceli Nyári Akadémia), István Matuz (Békés-tarhosi Zenei Napok) in 2005.

The movements Sarabande and Bourrée Angloise I played on a baroque flute during the concert of Csongrádi Zenei Tábor is 2010.

As an experiment, I played the Allemande movement in December 2010 with circular breathing at the Catholic church in Balatonhenye.