

Thesis of a DLA Dissertation

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***GALLANT FLUTE SONATAS - COURT MUSIC OF
FREDERICK THE GREAT***

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I. Background information of the research

During my 15 years of musical carrier, numerous concerts, radio and CD -recordings reflected my dedication towards ancient music. Despite the fact that I play day in and day out on a modern flute, I believe there is a golden middle way that does not try to imitate the historical artist and does not try to fit early music into today's music fashion that is induced by modern instruments. (That is why I play with harpsicord what is tuned in a historical way). With the playing style I acquired playing the wooden flute, with the perspective of the modern artist, I am trying to show that we can create something beautiful and tasteful.

My research into gallant style themes luckily corresponded with the recording of Franz and Georg Benda's sonatas by Hungaroton Records. The so far unexplored and unpublished sonatas performance what the contemporary copyer's manuscript contained only in 2 lines (1 bass and 1 flute voice) raised numerous questions in me and I hope I have answered them in my thesis.

The instruction of flute playing puts the emphasis above all on perfect instrument playing therefore it is difficult to give and receive instructions when it comes to playing style. I am sure the reading of gallant style flute sonatas written in Benda's style is not going to be difficult for someone coming from the Academy of Music, but their performance in style and the understanding of the composer's ideas is not going to be an easy task. Also, it is worthwhile to call attention to the fact that without creative attitude these sonatas would not show their true beauty (for instance individual decoration, cadenza, harmonia). The richest well of information of the gallant style are: Quantz Johann Joachim: *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* work and Franz Benda's particular „decorate-school”.

Frederick the Great and Franz Benda are peculiar, charismatic personalities, the study and research into their life and work opened up the 18th century's performer and art.

II. Bibliography

Primary sources:

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Donington, Robert: *A barokk zene előadásmódja*, Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1978. ford.: Karasszon Dezső

Heartz, Daniel: *Music in European Capitals, The Galant Style, 1720-1780*, New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2003.

Helm, Ernest Eugene: *Music at the Court of Frederick the Great*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960.

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Ledeburg, Carl Freiherr von: „*Auto-Biographie von Franz Benda*”, Neue Berliner Musikzeitung, ed. by C. Freiherr von Ledeburg Vol. X, 1856.

Lee, Douglas Allen: *A Musician at Court: An Autobiography of Franz Benda*, Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 1998.

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Additional sources:

Bonds, Mark Evan: Replacing Haydn: Mozart's 'Pleyel' Quartets, *Music & Letters*, Vol. 88. No. 2., Oxford University Press, 2007.

Cahusac, Louis de: *La danse ancienne et moderne*, Hague: 1754, rev. ed. New York: 1978.

Carlyle, Thomas: *History of Frederick II of Prussia*, I, London: Chapman and Hall, 1869.

Fétis, François-Joseph: „*Frédéric II.*” *Biographie universelle des Musiciens*, Vol. III. Strasbourg: 1803.

Forkel, Johann Nikolaus: *Über Johann Sebastian Bachs, Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke*, Berlin: Henschel Verlag, 2000.

Heinse, Wilhelm: *Sämmtliche Werke*, Leipzig: Insel-Verlag, 1925.

Hofstadter, Douglas R: *Gödel, Escher, Bach: Egybefont gondolatok birodalma*, Wired, 1995: Tipotex Elektronikus Kiadó, 2005.

Koch, Heinrich Christoph: *Musikalisches Lexikon*, Frankfurt: Bärenreiter, 1802.

Krabbe, Niels: *Simoni Dall Croubelis „Compositeur ved Musiquen”*, København: Musik & Forskning, 1787.

III. Method

The music, language, rules of the 18th century is best known by the study of the contemporary documents, studies, musical works. In the Hungarian technical literature I did not find efficient and comparative analyses, so a thorough look into the theme invited itself.

Franz Benda's 6, and Georg Benda's 11 flute sonata's contemporary duplicates gave me my starting point. First I investigated the expression „gallant” than I studied the cultural medium of Frederick the Great's court that has become the cradle of the gallant style in the 18th century. Furthermore I selected one from Benda's flute sonatas to analyse by formal and harmonious consideration to illustrate the universal characteristics and innovations of the gallant flute sonatas. I have compared the sonatas with J. S. Bach: *Musikalisches Opfer* Trio Sonata (BWV1079), and it is admissible that both originates from the same litter. Finally, studying the ornaments used by Benda and Quantz, I have reconstructed and decorated the sonata in e-minor. I am doing my best to instigate my students that even if it takes time and effort, to become acquainted with the circumstances of the work's coming into being, it's styles and it's composer. A good performer is always open to contemporary music of all age and is not satisfied by knowing it's rules but he is capable of it's application.

IV. Results

Characterization of gallant music calls for not only „thinking in music” but also look into poetry, architecture, fine arts etc. I think if you want to interpret a work in an authentic way, you have to be familiar with it's background. One of the most significant experiences of my life has been visiting the Ivy-Room in Carszkoje Szelo, near St. Petersburg, giving verification that it is worthy to pay attention to the beginning of 18th. century and it's marvellous civilization. The so called 8th wonder of the world, the Ivy-room was given by Frederick The Great's grandfather to the Russian Czar, I. Peter the Great. I have found

Benda's flute sonatas in the Royal Library of Copenhagen and in the City Library of Berlin. The characterization of the gallant flute sonatas become clear during the acquired experiences of rehearsals. My own reconstruction can be found in the appendix and it is similar to Benda's violin sonatas, showing the ornamentations in 3 layers.

I think the most important result of my work doing my Doctoral Thesis has been the recording and making known also in theory Franz and Georg Benda's wonderful sonatas.

V. Documentations

CD recording:

Georg és Franz Benda Flute Sonatas (Veronika Oross-flute, Kousay Mahdi-baroque cello, Angelika Csizmadia -harpsichord) Hungaroton-2010.

Concerts:

13. June, 2011. J. S. Bach: III. Brandenburg Concerto BWV 1047, Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra, Festetics Hall

11. July, 2008. J. S. Bach: IV. Brandenburg Concerto BWV 1049, Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra, (Erika Sebők, János Rolla), Kiscelli Múzeum

5. June, 2007. J. S. Bach: G-dúr trio sonata BWV 1039, sonata in e-minor BWV 1034, Trio Sonata in c-minor BWV 1079, Budapesti Bach-hetek, (Veronika Oross – flute, Kousay Mahdi – baroque cello, Angelika Csizmadia – harpsichord, János Pilcz – violin), Kiscelli Múzeum

13. December, 2007. J. S. Bach: Orchestral Suite No. 2., b-minor, BWV 1067, Budapest Concert Orchestra, conductor: Tamás Gál, Hungarian State Museum

9. October, 2006. Couperin: Suite, (Veronika Oross –flute, Angelika Csizmadia – harpsichord), Doctoral Concert, Academy of Music

12. July, 2005. J. S. Bach: sonata in e-minor BWV 1034, J. Chr. Friedrich Bach: d-minor sonata, Couperin: Suite, Szentendre