



City of Birmingham
Symphony Orchestra

CENTRE STAGE

CBSO BAROQUE ENSEMBLE

CBSO Centre, Birmingham

Thursday 4 November, 2.00pm

Annabel Knight – Baroque Flute/Recorder

Julia Åberg – Baroque Violin

Kelly McCusker – Baroque Violin

Jacqueline Tyler – Baroque Cello

Warwick Cole – Harpsichord

JS Bach Trio Sonata in G Major BWV1038 (Flute, Violin and Continuo)

CPE Bach Trio Sonata in B Minor Wq143 H567 (Flute, Violin and Continuo)

JS Bach (Now attributed to JG Goldberg) Trio Sonata in C Major BWV1037 (Two Violins and Continuo)

Telemann Concerto di Camera TMV43.G3 (Recorder, Two Violins and Continuo)

Having reached the age of 45, and reflecting on his domestic situation, Bach wrote the following to an old school friend:

I am married for the second time, my first wife having died in Cöthen. From the first marriage I have three sons and one daughter living ... My eldest son is a student of law and, of the other two, the eldest is in the prima class, and the other in the secunda, and the daughter is still unmarried. The children of my second marriage are still small ... but they are all born musicians, and I can assure you that I can already form an ensemble both vocally and instrumentally with my family, since my wife sings a good, clear soprano, and my eldest daughter, too, joins in not badly. I shall transgress the bounds of courtesy if I burden you any further

Clearly, the musical achievements of his family were a source of great delight to Johann Sebastian Bach – though interestingly (and unlike some), he was careful not to be too boastful about it. For us, nearly 300 hundred years later, we can only imagine what such musical gatherings might have been like. Friedemann, Emanuel, Anna Magdalena, Dorothea, all accompanied by Johann Sebastian, must have made an ensemble quite unlike any other. What music did they play? We can get some idea from Anna Magdalena's musical notebooks, but other ensemble music might well have formed part of their repertoire. One such is the G major sonata (BWV 1038). The bass part of this piece also serves as the accompaniment to a solo violin sonata. It seems that the making of two musical works from one original is the sort of musical-intellectual challenge that the Bach family delighted in.

Intellectual challenge is not far from the surface in the sonata by CPE Bach that we play this afternoon. The short, pithy idea which begins the first movement is explored exhaustively, but because of its brevity gives the music an almost breathless feel. The second indulges in the kind of expressivity for which the younger Bach became famous, and concludes with a cadenza for the two melody instruments together. For light relief, the sonata closes with a frenetic jig-like movement. Similarly challenging to player and listener alike is the music of Johann Gottlieb Goldberg. A child prodigy, he was given patronage by Count von Keyserlingk. The evidence linking his name to the famous set of variations is circumstantial, but what is clear is that he modelled his own musical language on that of Bach. To judge from this piece – which incidentally was long thought to be by Bach himself – he had a flair for complex counterpoint, particularly notable in the canonic writing of the third movement.

Telemann's music may well have featured in the Bach domestic environment. Telemann stood as Emanuel Bach's godfather 1714 – hence his second name Philipp, Telemann's given name. Telemann seems to have been an honourable godfather because some 54 years later, he ensured that his godson would take over his post as Director of Music in the Hamburg city churches. The G minor concerto is a chamber rather than orchestral work and may well have been written in the early years of the 18th century. Typically, for a German composer, it marries the Italian concerto style with dance elements derived from the French suite. As such it exhibits that 'mixed style' that contemporary musicians delighted in.