

Georg Philipp Telemann – Tafelmusik (Goebel) [2010]

Written by bluesever

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CD 1: Telemann: Production 1 - 1. Ouverture - Suite; 2. Quatuor; 3. Concert 1.1. *Ouverture: Lentement - Vite – Lentement* 10:02 2.2. *Réjouissance* 3:43 3.3. *Rondeau* 2:24 4.4. *Loure* 4:26 5.5. *Passepied* 2:32 6.6. *Air. Un peu vivement* 4:51 7.7. *Gigue* 2:23

Production 1 - 2. Quatuor In G Major

8.1. *Largo - Allegro – Largo* 2:51 9.2. *Vivace - Moderato - Vivace D.c.* 6:12 10.3. *Grave* 0:24 11.4. *Vivace* 2:57

Production 1 - 3. Concert In A Major, TWV 53:A2

12.1. *Largo* 4:31 13.2. *Allegro* 8:18 14.3. *Gratioso* 2:49 15.4. *Allegro* 8:19

CD 2: Telemann: Production 1 - 4. Trio; 5. Solo; 6. Conclusion; Production 2 - 1. Ouverture

1.1. *Affettuoso* 2:51 2.2. (*attacca*) *Vivace* 3:17 3.3. *Grave* 3:07 4.4. *Allegro* 3:43

Production 1 - 5. Solo

5.1. *Cantabile* 3:06 6.2. *Allegro* 2:07 7.3. *Dolce* 3:13 8.4. *Allegro* 3:16

Production 1 - 6. Conclusion In E Minor

9. *Allegro - Largo - Allegro D.c.* 4:28

Production 2 - 1. Ouverture - Suite In D Major

10.1. *Ouverture: Lentement - Vite – Lentement* 10:51 11.2. *Air. Tempo giusto* 6:24 12.3. *Air. Vivace* 2:33 13.4. *Air. Presto* 5:28 14.5. *Air. Allegro* 3:18

CD 3: Telemann: Production 2 - 2. Quatuor; 3. Concert; 4. Trio; 5. Solo; 6. Conclusion

Production 2 - 2. Quatuor In D Minor

1.1. *Andante* 3:10 2.2. *Vivace* 3:56 3.3. *Largo* 3:24 4.4. *Allegro* 3:52

Production 2 - 3. Concert In F Major

5.1. *Allegro* 5:10 6.2. *Largo* 5:28 7.3. *Vivace* 3:03

Production 2 - 4. Trio In E Minor

8.1. *Affettuoso* 3:21 9.2. *Allegro* 2:46 10.3. *Dolce* 2:36 11.4. *Vivace* 3:28

Production 2 - 5. Solo in A major

12.1. *Andante* 2:01 13.2. *Vivace* 3:32 14.3. *Cantabile* 3:38 15.4. *Allegro - Adagio - Allegro – Adagio* 3:41

Production 2 - 6. Conclusion in D major

16. *Allegro - Adagio - Allegro D.c.* 6:09

CD 4: Telemann: Production 3 - 1. Ouverture - Suite in B flat major

1.1. *Ouverture: Lentement - Presto – Lentement* 8:44 2.2. *Bergerie. Un peu vivement* 2:41 3.3. *Allégresse. Vite - Meno mosso - Vite D.c.* 2:38 4.4. *Postillons* 2:29 5.5. *Flaterie* 2:57 6.6. *Badinage. Très vite* 2:41 7.7. *Menuet* 2:52

Production 3 - 2. Quatuor in E minor

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8.1. *Adagio* 2:08 9.2. *Allegro* 1:56 10.3. *Dolce* 1:51 11.4. *Allegro* 2:05

Production 3 - 3. Concert in E flat major

12.1. *Maestoso* 3:18 13.2. *Allegro* 4:25 14.3. *Grave* 2:50 15.4. *Vivace* 4:15

Production 3 - 4. Trio in D major

16.1. *Andante* 2:04 17.2. *Allegro* 1:52 18.3. *Grave - Largo – Grave* 2:48 19.4. *Vivace* 1:56

Production 3 - 5. Solo in G minor

20.1. *Largo* 2:25 21.2. *Presto* 1:33 22.3. *Tempo giusto* 1:25 23.4. *Andante* 1:11 24.5. *Allegro* 2:43

Production 3 - 6. Conclusion in B flat major

25. *Furioso* 1:44

Musica Antiqua Köln Reinhard Goebel – director

Georg Philipp Telemann was the most fashionable composer of his time. It seems that he is no less fashionable these days. In the last couple of years a remarkable number of Telemann discs - both new and reissued - have been released. The day when he was considered a composer of light and catchy tunes and when his large output was used against him has gone. More and more musicians are discovering his great creativity and his crucial role in music history.

The Tafelmusik collection is a good example of his art. Telemann's reputation was such that it was welcomed with enthusiasm. "Lovers of music can expect in the coming 1733rd year a great instrumental work from the pen of Telemann. It consists of nine heavy pieces with 7, and again of so many light ones with 1, 2, 3, to 4 instruments.... Publication will take place on three occasions, namely Ascension, Michaelmas and Christmas. The names of the subscribers are to be printed with the work." Thus an advertisement in a Hamburg newspaper. The price was considerable, but that didn't have a negative effect on the response. No less than 206 copies were ordered in advance, from all over Europe. Subscribers included famous masters like Johann Joachim Quantz, Johann Georg Pisendel and Michel Blavet. George Frideric Handel was also among them: he was a personal friend of Telemann, and Handel would not be Handel if he hadn't used some ideas from this collection for his own compositions.

Telemann was a great admirer of the French style, and that explains the title of the collection. And the French *goût* is present everywhere in this set. The collection is divided into three 'productions', each beginning with an *ouverture* and *suite* for orchestra and rounded off with a conclusion with the same scoring as the *ouverture*. In between are three pieces of chamber music: a solo (for one instrument and bc), a trio and a quartet. In addition each production contains a concerto for two or three instruments, strings and bc. Although the concerto was an Italian form, Telemann once wrote that even his concertos "mostly smell of France". Even so, Telemann was open to the Italian style as well, and it is an indication of his originality that he

was able to mix the various styles. He does so in an often unexpected way. It has been argued - in particular by Karl Kaiser in his liner-notes to the recording of the Freiburger Barockorchester - that in the concertos and the trios the three productions have a specific character: the first French, the second Italian and the third reminiscent of Dresden as a representative of the German style. There is certainly something in that. But at the same time Telemann mixes the three styles in every production.

The orchestral overture may be typically French, modelled after Jean-Baptiste Lully, Telemann incorporated the Italian style in giving various instruments solo roles. In the first production these are two flutes, in the second oboe and trumpet and in the third two oboes. Quartets - or quatuors as they are called - were particularly popular in France, and Telemann later would make use of that popularity in his Parisian Quartets. Whereas in these most movements had French titles, in the quartets in the *Musique de Table* all the movements are in Italian. Whereas the Parisian Quartets are scored for flute, violin, viola da gamba and bc, in the quartet of the third production Telemann uses the Italian cello rather than the French viola da gamba. The quartet texture returns in the concertos of the first two productions. One could consider them as a combination of the French quatuor and the Italian concerto. In the first concerto Telemann uses the same scoring as in the quartet of the last production. A curtesy to Dresden can be found in the role of the horns which often had a representative function and therefore reflect the splendour of the Dresden court. They play a solo role in the Concerto. One other element needs to be mentioned. Telemann's concertos are mostly in four movements. That is also the case in the concertos in the first and third production. But in the Concerto in F of the second production - scored for three violins, strings and bc - he follows the Vivaldian model of a sequence of three movements: allegro, largo, vivace. This is one of the most purely Italian pieces of the set. Another one is the Solo in A for violin and bc in the same production. This could also easily be connected to Dresden: here Germany's greatest violin virtuoso, Johann Georg Pisendel, was the leader of the famous court chapel. He was one of the subscribers to the *Musique de Table* - he ordered no less than six copies - and certainly will have enjoyed this virtuosic piece.

Telemann clearly considered the *Musique de Table* as one of his main projects. He signed the printing plates himself and closely watched over the printing process. The importance is well reflected in the number of recordings in modern times. If I remember correctly this is the second of Telemann's major collections of music to have been recorded. The first was his *Der getreue Music-Meister* of 1728. That was tackled by an ensemble of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis under the direction of August Wenzinger. They also recorded the *Musique de Table*, again for Archiv. This was followed by a recording of *Concerto Amsterdam*, still playing on modern instruments, under the direction of Frans Brüggen. Later was recorded several times by ensembles on period instruments. Among them are the *Concentus musicus Wien* (Teldec), the *Orchestra of the 18th Century* and *Musica Amphion*. In 1988 *Musica antiqua Köln* recorded the whole set for Archiv, and that was one of the best recordings of this ensemble whose founder and director, Reinhard Goebel, has always been a great Telemann advocate. It is also one of the best Telemann recordings of all time. It is a somewhat unhappy coincidence that this

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recording was reissued at about the same time a new recording was released by Harmonia Mundi, with the Freiburger Barockorchester. That is especially the case because both ensembles are German, and their approach is basically the same. There is even one player involved in both recordings: the trumpet Friedemann Immer. That said, there are some differences in the way this approach is realised.

Both performances are based on the conviction that in particular German music is based on rhetoric and need to be played like a speech to music. This is reflected in the phrasing and articulation as well as the use of dynamic accents. Musica Antiqua Köln is more radical in its approach. The dynamic accents are heavier and the articulation sharper. There is also a difference in tempi. On the whole MAK take the fast movements more swiftly than FBO, whereas the slower movements are sometimes slower with MAK. The latter also treat the tempi with more flexibility in that sometimes the tempo momentarily slows. This way the tension is increased and some passages are spotlighted. The performances by Musica Antiqua Köln are a shade more detailed, and that's due not to the playing of the musicians but also to the recording. One has the impression of being in the middle of the ensemble - every line can be heard. The Harmonia mundi recording is less direct and the sound of the ensemble, in particular in the orchestral pieces, is less transparent.

In regard to the level of playing there is little difference between the ensembles. The Freiburger Barockorchester is one of the best in the performance of 18th-century music, and there are many virtuosos in its ranks. Although Musica Antiqua Köln was disbanded in 2007 most players involved in the recording of the *Musique de Table* still play a major role in the early music scene: flautist Jed Wentz, oboist Michael Niesemann and violinists Manfredo Kraemer, Florian Deuter and Werner Ehrhardt. It is only in some pieces that I found the Freiburger Barockorchester disappointing, in particular in the Concerto in A of the first production. It is a bit dull, and the playing of the solo parts not very engaging. On the whole I am more satisfied with the performances of Musica Antiqua Köln whose theatricality and feeling for colour express the qualities of Telemann's music best. It also plays all the repeats some of which are omitted in FBO's recording. The fact that the Archiv production is available at budget price could well be decisive in favour of the Archiv set. Telemann diehards will have to have them both. --- Johan van Veen, MusicWeb International

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