



MARY OLESKIEWICZ  
DAVID SCHULENBERG, BALÁZS MÁTÉ



II. „NAGY” FRIGYES POROSZ KIRÁLY

Hét fuvolaszonáta

A SANSSOUCI KASTÉLY ZENESZOBÁJÁBAN KÉSZÜLT FELVÉTEL

Seven Flute Sonatas by KING FREDERICK “THE GREAT” OF PRUSSIA

RECORDED IN THE HISTORIC MUSIC ROOM OF SANSSOUCI PALACE

126. a-moll szonáta fuvolára és continuóra (Sp. no. 21)

Sonata no. 126 in A minor for flute and basso continuo

1 [Recitativo–Adagio–[Recitativo]

2 Allegro non molto

3 Allegro assai

146. C-dúr szonáta fuvolára és continuóra (Sp. no. 40)

Sonata no. 146 in C major for flute and basso continuo

4 Grave e sostenuto

5 Allegro

6 Presto

182. B-dúr szonáta fuvolára és continuóra (Sp. no. 76)

Sonata no. 182 in B-flat major for flute and basso continuo

7 Largo

8 Allegro

9 Allegro assai

184. g-moll szonáta fuvolára és continuóra (Sp. no. 78)

Sonata no. 184 in G minor for flute and basso continuo

10 Arioso

11 [Allegro]

12 Presto

189. h-moll szonáta fuvolára és continuóra (Sp. no. 83)

Sonata no. 189 in B minor for flute and basso continuo

13 Un poco largo

14 Allegretto

15 Allegro assai

261. F-dúr szonáta fuvolára és continuóra (Sp. no. 118)

Sonata no. 261 in F major for flute and basso continuo

16 Grave

17 Staccato–Allegro di molto

18 Tempo giusto

214. d-moll szonáta fuvolára és continuóra (Sp. no. 107)

Sonata no. 214 in D minor for flute and basso continuo

19 [Andante]–Recitativo

20 Allegro

21 Presto

Összidő / Total time: 73'10"

Mary Oleskiewicz

harántfuvola, Quantz nyomán / transverse flute after J. J. Quantz, a<sup>1</sup> = 385 Hz

Balázs Máté

gordonka, Stradivari nyomán / violoncello after Stradivarius

David Schulenberg

Fortepiano, Gottfried Silbermann nyomán / fortepiano after Gottfried Silbermann

D D D

Artistic director/producer: Mary Oleskiewicz

Recording producer: Zsuzsa Dvorák

Balance engineer: Csongor Farkas

Edited by Antonio Oliart Ros

Recorded in the historic royal music room of King Frederick II “the Great” (1712–86),

Sanssouci Palace, Potsdam, Germany on July 18–20, 2009

Scores: 18<sup>th</sup>- century manuscripts in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, edited by Mary Oleskiewicz

Front cover: design by Miklós Juhász – detail from Adolph Menzel, *The Flute Concert in Sanssouci*

(*Das Flötenkonzert in Sanssouci*), 1850–1852, oil on canvas, National Gallery, Berlin

Photo: Wolfgang Pfauder

Printing editor: Marianne Szilasi

Booklet editor: Enikő Gyenge

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#### FREDERICK II ("THE GREAT") OF PRUSSIA:

##### SEVEN FLUTE SONATAS

This world-premiere CD presents seven sonatas for solo flute and basso continuo composed by Frederick II, known as "the Great" (1712–1786). King of Prussia from 1740. It marks the 300th anniversary of the king's birth with a program of mostly unpublished and unrecorded works composed between 1733 and 1756. These are the only performances of the king's works ever recorded in the historic private royal music room of Sanssouci Palace in Potsdam, Germany, where the flute-playing king held his nightly music soirées from 1747 onward. The CD recreates the sound of the king's famous palace concerts, using scrupulous copies of the original instruments and performance practices employed by Frederick and his chamber musicians, recorded in the intimate setting in which they originally played.

##### FREDERICK AS COMPOSER

Frederick possessed a high degree of musical imagination and developed considerable skill as a composer. As a youth he studied harpsichord with Gottlieb Hayne, organist of the Berlin cathedral and musician to the queen. He began to compose at the age of twenty and wrote his first solo sonatas for flute and basso continuo by 1733. Between this time and the beginning of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763) he produced a total of 121 sonatas, of which he completed at least a third in Ruppiner and Rheinsberg as crown prince. In his letters to his sister Wilhelmine, margravine

of Bayreuth, Frederick admits that in his earliest attempts he sometimes received help, particularly with the bass. His bass lines and modulations become increasingly sophisticated over time. Compositional assistance initially came from Carl Heinrich Graun and later from Johann Joachim Quantz and Johann Friedrich Agricola, but manuscript sources reveal that corrections by Frederick's teachers were limited in extent. Frederick composed arias for his singers and even notated embellishments and cadenzas for them to perform. Between 1732 and 1736 he produced a concerto for flute and oboe and four others. These were probably the four authenticated concertos (all for flute) that survive today. In addition, he composed several sinfonias for court theatrical productions. A few marches attributed to him are likely spurious.

##### THE FLUTE SONATAS

The sonatas for flute and continuo follow the slow-quick-quick pattern, with all movements in the same key. This format, which would become standard at Berlin during Frederick's reign, also characterizes the vast majority of the flute sonatas produced by Quantz, Emanuel Bach, Franz Benda, the Grauns, and other Berlin court composers. Frederick's opening slow movements are lyrical and rhetorical, and often florid, and nearly always call for a brief cadenza just before the final cadence. The first movements of the G-minor and F-major sonatas are unusual in that they call for the addition of extensive florid embellishment by



II. Frigyes / King Frederick II  
(Antoine Pesne, 1740 – Schloss  
Charlottenburg,  
Photo: R. Handrick)

the flutist. In four sonatas the first movement includes instrumental recitative, as in the earliest sonata recorded here, in A minor (ca. 1734), as well as in the later Sonata in D minor (ca. 1754). Instrumental recitative also occurs in the first of Emanuel Bach's so-called Prussian sonatas for keyboard instrument (Wq 48); published in 1742 with a dedication to Frederick, these reflect the king's love of cantata and opera. Quantz too composed instrumental recitatives for the flute in several sonatas and concertos that became part of the king's collection. The Sonata in B-flat major on our program opens with a striking rhetorical gesture in B-flat minor before moving to the major mode. The singing first movement of the Sonata in C major suggests homage to his teacher, recalling a work in the same key by Quantz (QV 1:9/II); its second movement is in the style of a quick opera aria of Hasse. The quick movements of Frederick's sonatas generally avoid counterpoint, which was probably above the compositional niveau of an amateur. But sections often start with brief imitations, and the final movement of the B-minor sonata recorded here is a fugal gigue (another sonata in C minor incorporates a full-fledged fuge). As might be expected of an amateur composer, Frederick's sonatas are not all of uniform quality; however, they reveal steadily increasing competence and a developing style. The earliest ones show the enthusiasm and melodic inventiveness of a talented beginner, containing novel ideas and surprising harmonic figures. Frederick, like

Quantz, composed not only in the keys commonly used for the eighteenth-century flute but also frequently in more remote ones. Both seem to have favored C minor, which is also the key of J. S. Bach's *Musical Offering*, BWV 1079, dedicated to Frederick and based on a theme that the king himself presented to the elder Bach during the latter's visit to Potsdam in 1747. The trio sonata that forms the centerpiece of the *Musical Offering* is not only a *tour de force* for modern transverse flutists but a tribute to Frederick's remarkable ability as a performer.

#### FREDERICK AS FLUTIST

On a visit to the Dresden court in 1728, Crown Prince Frederick first heard the flutists Pierre-Gabriel Buffardin and Quantz, and expressed a desire to learn the flute. The Saxon Elector presented Frederick with his first flute and agreed to allow Quantz, then serving in Dresden, to travel twice a year to Berlin to serve as Frederick's instructor. This Quantz did until 1742, when he accepted a permanent position at the court of Frederick, now king. By all reports, Frederick achieved a professional level of artistry as a flutist. He practiced scales and arpeggios daily in all keys, marking the most difficult passages to be practiced in his music. Four manuscript books of Frederick's *soffeggi* (lost) served as etudes; these consisted of excerpts comprising the most difficult passagework from compositions by himself and Quantz, as well as others. According to Frederick's sister Wilhelmine, Quantz asserted that the king played as well as himself.

Sources less close to the king confirm his high level of ability. The king's opera singer Gertrud Elisabeth Mara, whose mistreatment at court gave her little reason to praise Frederick, and the composer Johann Adolf Hasse, who had occasion to accompany Frederick at the keyboard, both openly admired his abilities. Contemporary reports agree that the king's expression in playing adagios brought listeners to tears. The ample praise of Frederick's artistry on the flute during his prime is underscored by the repertory he played. Manuscript thematic catalogues of his collection of flute music, prepared for each palace in 1765, show that his repertory after this date included 294 concertos and 152 sonatas by Quantz, in addition to his own compositions. The technical demands and length of these works steadily increase over time. Claims that his and Quantz's flute music barely exceeds a two-octave range, or that the king's flutes were not capable of playing notes above d3 or e3, are completely unfounded: two movements recorded here (G minor/II and F major/II) reach climaxes on f3 and f-sharp3. Frederick eventually lost several teeth and suffered swelling in his hands from gout, and his playing thus deteriorated. Johann Friedrich Reichardt, Frederick's last music director, confirmed the report of 1772 by the English historiographer Charles Burney that the king now fell behind the tempo in difficult passages. In 1780, following the War of the Bavarian Succession, Frederick ceased playing the flute altogether. As he packed up

his flutes he confided to Franz Benda, "I have lost my best friend."

**THE EVENING CONCERTS**

In his youth, Frederick played as many as six concertos during an evening. In his old age, after the Seven Years' War (1756-63), this number was reduced to three or four. Sonatas and concertos were performed in rotation, according to key and their order of appearance in thematic catalogs that were kept in each of the royal palaces. In addition to flute music, his concerts, which took place in his private music rooms, included arias performed by soloists from the opera and, in later years, cello solos. Frederick also enjoyed frequent performances by foreign musicians, such as the violinists Locatelli and Pisendel, the flutist Blavet, and the Dresden musicians Buffardin, Sylvius Leopold Weiss (lute), and Hasse, as well as numerous Italian opera singers. These concerts took place every day except for Mondays and Fridays when the opera was in season, or when state business kept him away. As the concerts were organized solely for Frederick's private pleasure, admission to the concerts was rarely granted; most visitors, including Burney, had to listen through the door. The famous painting *Das Flötenkonzert in Sanssouci* (1850-2) by Adolph Menzel depicts a rare occasion in 1750 when the king performed before a small audience of friends and family during one of the infrequent visits by his favorite sister Wilhelmine. Sanssouci Palace, its name meaning "without care," was designed by the

king as a small, exquisite retreat. After its completion in 1747, Frederick withdrew here to read, study philosophy, write poetry, compose music, play concerts, and dine with his close companions. The music room, the second and largest space in the king's apartments, remains by modern standards quite small. Menzel's painting and modern photography (through the use of wide-angle lenses) produce the illusion that it comprises a much larger space. Nevertheless, the importance of the music room, which can be fully appreciated only in person, is reflected by its relative size within the palace, its elaborate rococo decor, and its immediate proximity to the king's sleeping and working quarters.

#### THE ROYAL INSTRUMENTS AND ACCOMPANISTS

The royal flutes, of ebony and ivory, were innovatively designed and constructed by his private flute teacher, Quantz. Many have survived, and the flutes heard on this CD are copies based on careful examination of all of them. These flutes possess a special tuning slide and two keys: what was then the usual one for E-flat, together with a new key for D-sharp. They allow the player to produce fine harmonic distinctions necessary to play in tune in virtually all tonalities. Of thicker wood, larger bore, and greater length than was usual, these flutes also play at the deeper French pitch of the time ( $a^1 = 385$  Hz) and produce the "thick, round, masculine" sound that, as Quantz explained, was modeled after the contralto voice (*Versuch einer Anweisung*

*die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*, Berlin, 1752). The accompaniment in the king's sonatas, written as a bass line (usually without figures), was intended for cello together with a keyboard instrument—initially harpsichord, later fortepiano. Frederick equipped his private music rooms with the latest fortepianos by Gottfried Silbermann: two of these are still preserved in the royal palaces. According to palace inventories, these instruments were kept in the Potsdam City Palace from 1746, at Sanssouci from 1747, and in the New Palace from 1765. Capable of fine dynamic gradations, these fortepianos are ideal for accompanying the flute; we perform using a copy of the one in Sanssouci, by J.C. Neupert, owned by the Musikfestspiele Sanssouci, Potsdam. The king's keyboard players included J.S. Bach's second son, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, who served as a guest performer at court for at least three years before receiving an official appointment, which he held from 1741 to 1767. Bach alternated with several other keyboardists, including Christoph Schaffrath (a member of Frederick's band from 1734) and later Christoph Nöchelmann and Karl Friedrich Fasch. The chamber cellists initially included Antonius Hock and the opera composer Carl Heinrich Graun, and after 1740 they were joined by Johann Georg Speer, Ignaz Mara and probably Joseph Zicka (from 1763).

**Mary Oleskiewicz.** After winning first prize in the National Flute Association's Baroque Flute Artist Competition, Ms. Oleskiewicz quickly established herself as an international performer of historical flutes and a leading expert on the music of Johann Joachim Quantz and music at the Berlin court. She has performed in Europe, North America, Japan, Mexico, and Australia. Her highly acclaimed editions, articles, and recordings have focused on the music of Quantz, C. P. E. Bach, Frederick "the Great," and the Bach family. A resident of Berlin (Germany) and Boston (U.S.A.), she performs with numerous ensembles including Arcadia Players and the Handel & Haydn Society Orchestra, and she serves as Associate Professor at the University of Massachusetts. On this recording, she performs on specially commissioned copies of a two-keyed flute originally made by Quantz for King Frederick "the Great," now in the Library of Congress, Dayton C. Miller Collection (playing at low French chamber pitch,  $a^1=385$  Hz).

**David Schulenberg.** A specialist on the music of Byrd, Froberger, and members of the Bach family, David Schulenberg has performed on early keyboard instruments across North America and in Europe and Japan.

Author of *The Keyboard Music of J. S. Bach* and of the textbook and anthology *Music of the Baroque*, he has also published editions of keyboard music by C. P. E. Bach. His book *The Music of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach* appeared in 2010. He teaches at Wagner College and the Juillard School in New York.

**Balázs Máté** studied at the Béla Bartók High School of Music and the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music. In 1986 he joined the Hungarian State Orchestra, followed by baroque cello studies at the Royal Conservatory at The Hague (Jaap ter Linden) and chamber music lessons at the Mozarteum Salzburg (Nikolaus Harnoncourt). Mr. Máté was a founding member of Concerto Armonico (Budapest), Trio Cristofori, The Rare Fruits Council, Quartetto Luigi Tomasini, and Aura Musicale. From 1997 to 2002 he was principal cellist for Les Musiciens du Louvre, and since 1991 he has served as solo cellist for Le Concert des Nations, directed by Jordi Savall. In 2010 he received the Liszt Prize. Mr. Máté has concentrated extensively across Europe, Japan, South Africa, Mexico, and throughout North and South America. He currently teaches baroque cello at the Music Academy Leipzig and records for Hungaroton.