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# The Recorder

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## Editorial

It is with particular pleasure that we welcome back to our pages Dr. David Lasocki, with his 'New look at the life of John Loeillet'; also Thiemo Wind's study of Bigaglia's A minor Sonata for descant recorder and continuo.

We hope that Dr. Maurice Byrne who wrote about Pierre Jaillard (better known as Peter Bressan) in RMM Vol. 7, No. 10, will add a further installment of his researches into the life of this celebrated recorder maker. These reveal that Bressan's marriage brought problems and litigation. Those who cannot wait will find the full story in the Galpin Society Journal Vol. XXXVII. We also hope to have a further article on Telemann's music from Walter Bergmann.

A number of reviews are held over for reasons of space and will be included in our September issue together with accounts of a number of events which will have taken after this issue has gone to press, such as the SRP National Festival at Guildford with its competitions and Walter van Hauwe's solo recital at Wigmore Hall.

*Edgar Hunt*

Our cover: The recorder player comes from the *Musicalisches Theatrum* of Johann Christoph Weigel (c. 1720), a collection of engravings of musicians where the recorder is captioned as *Flute douse*.



# Bigaglia's Sonata in A minor

*a new look at its originality*

THIEMO WIND

*Bigaglia (Diogenio), a Venetian and Benedictine monk . . . . . is a famous composer and virtuoso of our time . . . . .*

*Johann Gottfried Walther<sup>1</sup>*

Today the Venetian composer Diogenio Bigaglia, who was both a contemporary and a fellow-citizen of Antonio Vivaldi (c. 1678-1741) and Tommaso Albinoni (1671-1750), is scarcely known. Very little is known about his life. He was born about 1676 on Murano, a small island north of Venice. In 1694 he entered the Benedictine monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, where he was appointed prior in 1713. He died about 1745. During his lifetime, Bigaglia enjoyed a considerable reputation as composer. His compositions, chiefly handed down in manuscript, can be found in several European libraries.<sup>2</sup> He composed mainly vocal and vocal-instrumental works: oratorios, masses, motets and cantatas. Only a few instrumental works have survived. As far as we know, his only works that were printed during his lifetime are twelve sonatas for the violin or recorder with basso continuo, which appeared in Amsterdam in 1725:

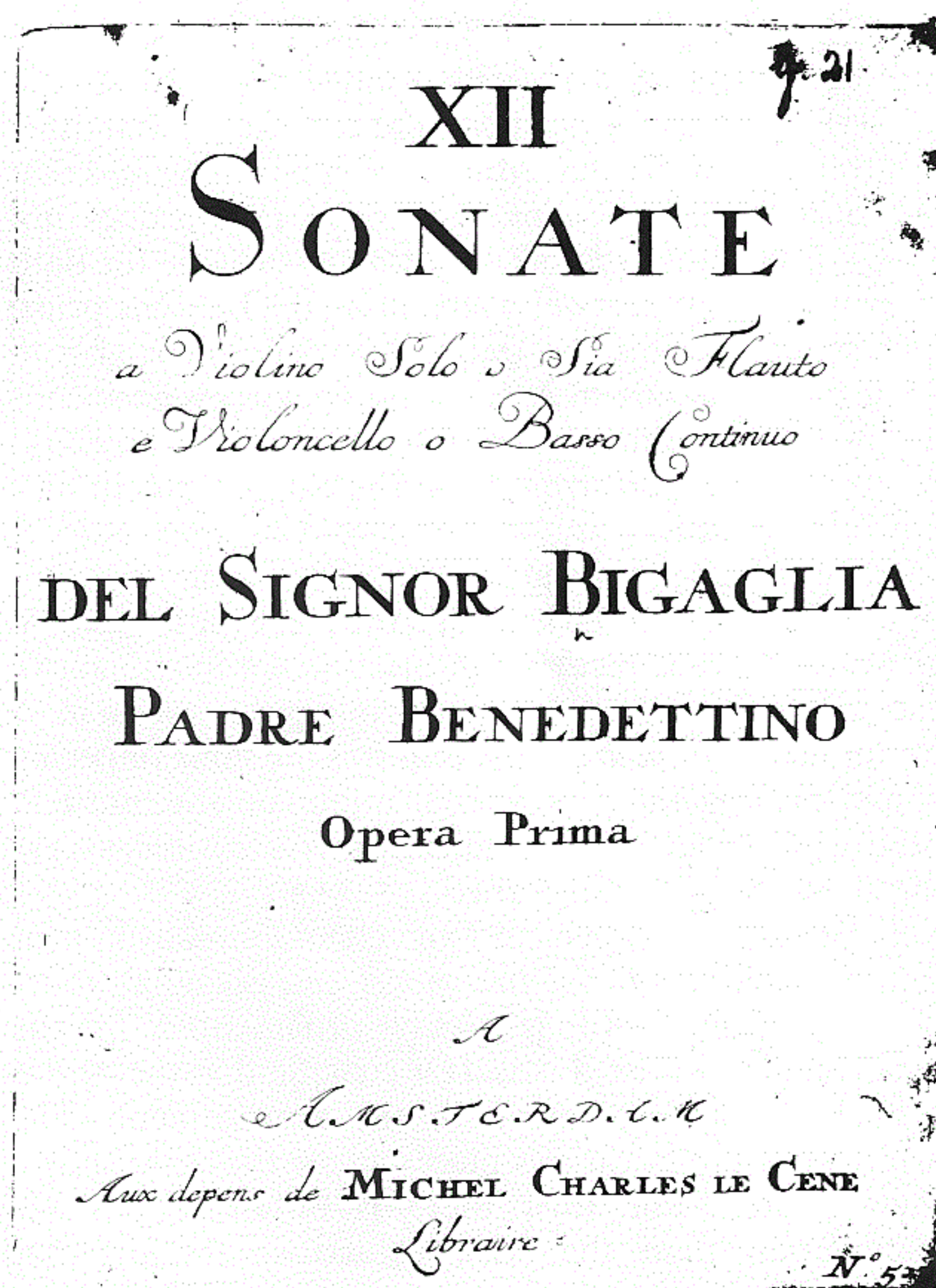
XII / SONATE / a Violino Solo o Sia Flauto / e Violoncello o Basso Continuo / DEL SIGNOR BIGAGLIA / PADRE BENEDETTINO / Opera Prima / A / AMSTERDAM / Aux depens de MICHEL CHARLES LE CENE / Libraire No. 522.

Two copies of this print are known: one in the British Library, London, the other in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Owing to the fact that two of these sonatas were published some years ago for recorder and basso continuo, recorder players have recently become interested in Bigaglia.<sup>3</sup> These editions were made from a manuscript in a private collection, which is no longer available for further study. Therefore we must rely on these two modern editions and the above-mentioned print of Le Cène for our knowledge of these sonatas. In the revised reprint of his edition of the G minor sonata, the editor, Hugo Ruf, remarks:

Some time after the publication of our edition of Bigaglia's Sonata in G minor, I ascertained that the British Museum, London possesses an edition of the Amsterdam publisher Michel Charles Le Cène in which this sonata is printed fourth. A comparison between the text of the manuscript

which I used (see the Foreword) and Le Cène's text (publication no. 522) reveals differences which indicate conclusively that the two are not related to each other. Consequently there is no need to give particular weight to Le Cène's text in this new issue. It is only in the third movement that Le Cène offers a reading which I prefer to that of the manuscript . . . . .

By 'not related to each other' Ruf means that the two versions, although containing music for the same piece, do not stem from the same source. The differences



The title page from Le Cène's edition (reproduced by permission of the British Library)



between the versions are mainly minor melodic changes and the addition or omission of some repetitions. Only the third movement has major differences. (I will return to this during the discussion of the third movement of the A minor sonata).

In the notes accompanying the reprint of the other sonata (in A minor), Ruf does not mention the fact that this latter sonata is also in the print of Le Cène (as sonata 7) and that here also differences exist between the two versions. A careful comparison between the two versions shows that the manuscript version – on which Ruf based his edition – is an arrangement of the version as published by Le Cène, the reason why I refer to Le Cène's print as the 'original' in this article. My conclusion will be that, as long as we have no autograph source, we must consider the print the closest to Bigaglia's intentions.

In this article, I will show by means of a rough analysis that we can no longer call Ruf's edition of the A minor sonata a work by Bigaglia. It is impossible to go into detail here: it would require the total reproduction of both versions since most of the bars are incompatible.

The arranger, whose identity is unknown, retained the original key, A minor. This means that the sonata, also in its original form (with a range of e'-a''), can not be performed on the most popular recorder of that time, the treble recorder in f. Moreover, it has to be said that the title *Sonate a Violino Solo o sia Flauto* does not necessarily imply that all sonatas are suitable for both instruments. Of the twelve sonatas in the Le Cène print, six are suitable for the treble recorder. To be able to perform this sonata in A minor on a recorder, one needs another type: either a tenor recorder, which would make possible performance at the original pitch, or a descant recorder, in which case the solo part is transposed up an octave. The anonymous arranger opted for the latter: he intended the piece for the *fluta di quatte*, a descant recorder in b $\flat$ , tuned a fourth above the treble recorder.<sup>4</sup> So, performing this work in A minor on the *fluta di quatte*, requires the same fingering as performing the sonata in B minor on the 'normal' descant recorder in c. Technically this is feasible, also as far as the range is concerned.

Differences between the two versions already appear in the initial bars of the *first movement*. Bigaglia's four-note opening motif is richly ornamented in the arrangement (cf. ex. 1a-b). It is striking that the bass is transposed up an octave in the arrangement. The arranger did so in various places where the bass was in a low register. For this, there is no other possible explanation than the wish to reduce the distance between solo and bass as a result of the octave transposition. Thus this seems to prove that the *fluta di quatte* is a descant recorder and not, as Edgar Hunt

1<sup>a</sup> original (Le Cène) 1st movt. 1<sup>x</sup> - 2<sup>x</sup>

1<sup>b</sup> arranged (Ruf) 1st movt. 1 - 2

suggested in his article 'Fitting the Recorder to the Music'<sup>5</sup>, a tenor recorder. If the *fluta di quatte* had been a tenor recorder, the arranger would never have transposed the bass part, for, already in the first bar, the distance between solo and bass in some places would have been only a third. So, parts of the realization of the basso continuo would necessarily be higher than the solo part.

The repetition of the second motif in the arrangement (bar 2) does not appear in Le Cène's version, producing an extra half bar (cf. ex. 1a-b). (All bar numbers in this article, including those in the musical examples, refer to Ruf's edition [it is assumed that this edition is in the libraries of most recorder players]. Since musically analogous passages in both versions often do not have the same bar numbers, I placed an asterisk after Ruf's bar numbers when referring to these passages in Le Cène's print.)

Bars 3 to 9 only show minor melodic, harmonic and rhythmic differences. An important aspect of the arrangement can be found in bar 9. Here, the arranger appears to be a competent composer by the way in

2<sup>a</sup> 1st movt. 9<sup>x</sup> - 10<sup>x1</sup>

2<sup>b</sup> 9 - 10



which he brings the bass – to which Bigaglia generally gave simply a harmonic and supportive character rather than a melodic function – into the counterpoint: the bass imitates the solo (which has been changed from a descending motion into an ascending) in contrary motion (cf. ex. 2a-b). The arranger does not completely ignore Bigaglia's version of the solo part in this respect: he uses the original motif a third lower in bar 12 (cf. ex. 2a-d), where Bigaglia himself introduced a melodically different motif (cf. ex. 2c-d).

2<sup>c</sup> 1st movt. 12<sup>x</sup> (Le Cène)



2<sup>d</sup> 12 (Ruf)



Differences are numerous in the final bars of the movement. The motif in bar 11 and its repetition are completely absent in the original. Towards the end of the movement the arranger composed a cadenza above the dominant note E in the bass, the length of which (9

3<sup>a</sup> 1st movt. 14<sup>x</sup> - 17<sup>x</sup>



3<sup>b</sup> 14 - 17



crotchets) is vastly out of proportion in a bass, consisting mainly of semi-quavers: a clear indication that the version edited by Hugo Ruf is an arrangement of Le Cène's original, and not vice-versa. (cf. ex. 3a-b).

In the *second movement* differences predominate. They are represented in diagram I. The first phrase, 8

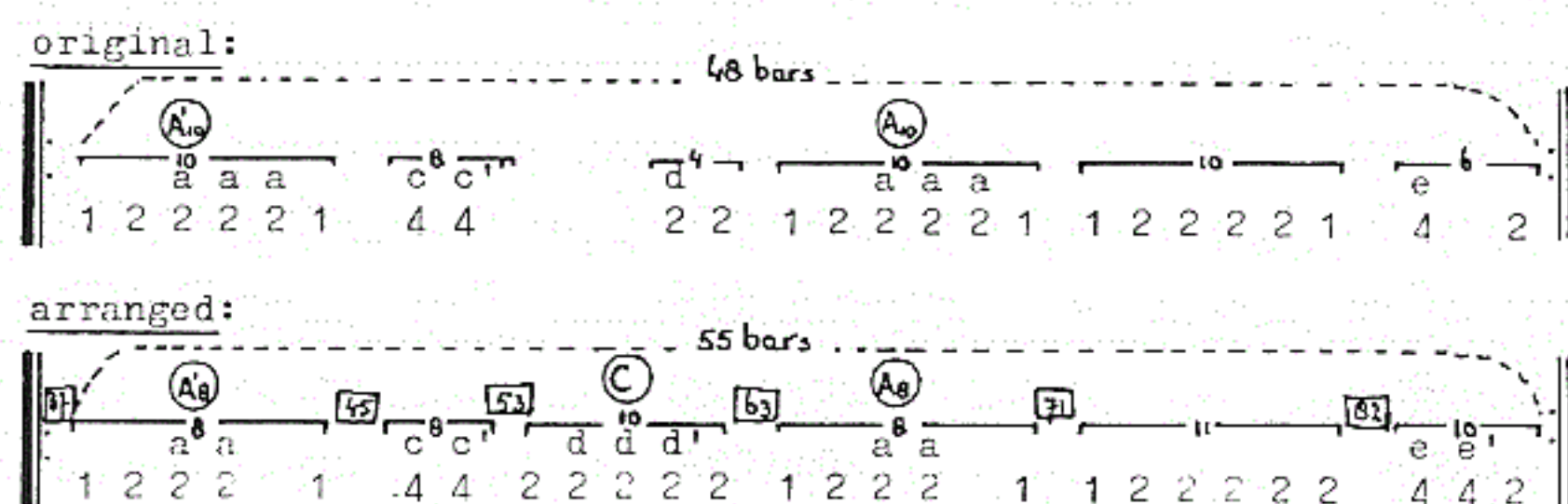
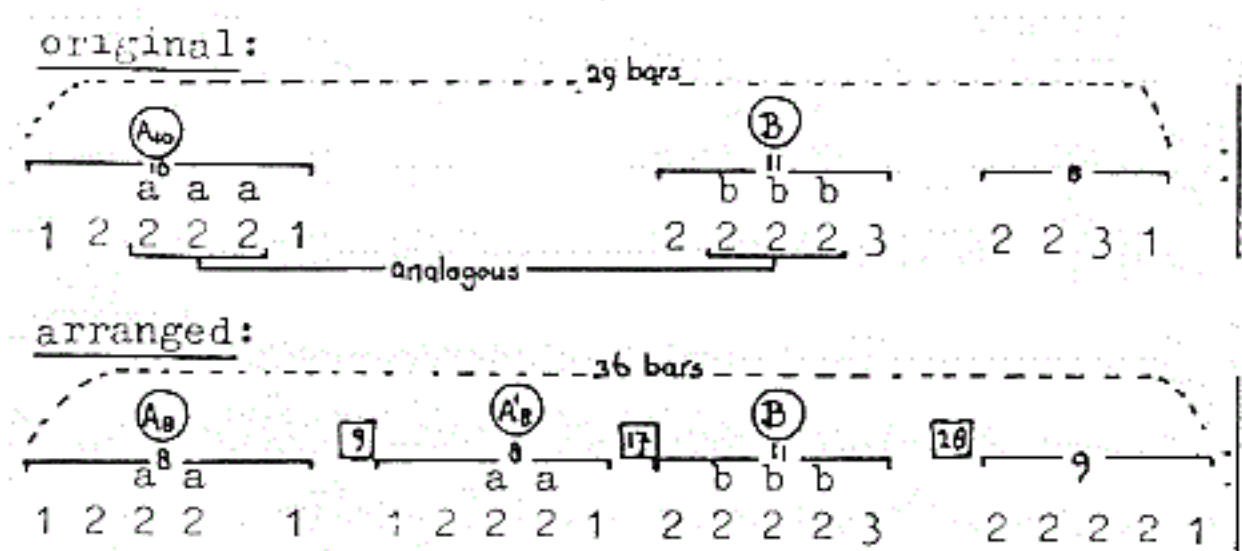


diagram I: structural analysis of the 2nd movement.

4<sup>a</sup> 2nd movt. 1<sup>x</sup> - 8<sup>x</sup>



4<sup>b</sup> 2nd movt. 1 - 8





bars in the arrangement, originally lasted 10 bars: Bigaglia repeated the two-bar motif (bar 4-5; a in the diagram) twice, while the arranger did it only once (cf. 4a-b). (This procedure, the omission of an extra repetition, is also found at some places in the arranged version of the G minor sonata.) The twofold repetition gives special character to Bigaglia's version. It is a splendid example of what Arthur Hutchings calls *kinetic recurrence*: 'It is a special kind of repetition, either of melody, or of melody with supporting harmony, which certainly does not retard rhythm but actually seems to add energy and shapeliness'.<sup>6</sup> This procedure is not only characteristic of Bigaglia, but also of Venetian contemporaries, for example Vivaldi and Albinoni. The arranger reduced the initial phrase to a conventional eight-bar phrase, making it sound much more ordinary.

The repetition of the initial phrase, a third higher (bars 9-16; A<sub>8</sub>' in the diagram), does not appear in the original. Bigaglia's second phrase (bars 17x-27x) is similar to the initial: the beginnings are alike, and also a two-bar motif (b in the diagram) is repeated twice (cf. ex. 4a-5). This analogy is lost in the arrangement,

5 2nd movt. 17x - 27x, (original)

because of the insertion of the transposed repetition, and because of the fact that the arranger deletes one motif repetition in the initial phrases, while he maintains the twofold repetition here. In bars 28 to 36 there are few significant differences. Bar 33 is missing in the original. Thus, in the original this phrase consists of 8 bars.

After the repeat we can see that in both versions the initial phrase is transposed up a third (A<sub>8</sub>' and A<sub>10</sub>'). The arrangement introduced this transposition before (bar 9-16). Bars 53 to 62 (C) introduce another conspicuous structural difference: the arranger added six bars here and thus created a phrase of 10 bars, containing a twofold repetition of a two-bar motif (d), a structure that had been previously rejected (cf. ex. 6a-b). Both versions also differ in the last two phrases of this

6a 2nd movt. 53x - 62x

6b 2nd movt. 53 - 62

movement: the original lacks bar 79 and the four ornamented repetitional bars 86 to 89 (e').

It appears that the *third movement*, written in C major, was essentially recomposed by the arranger. Bigaglia's version is a typical example of a slow third movement in a four-movement baroque sonata. This sarabanda-like movement is headed *affettuoso*, and consists of a melodic frame that gives scope to extensive ornamentation. The way in which the arranger dealt with the movement may possibly demonstrate a generation gap between Bigaglia and the arranger: the latter, apparently as a child of his time, interpreted the movement as a minuet (*Tempo di Minuetto*), one of the few dance forms in the Baroque which remained viable in later style periods. The performance of the original version as a minuet gives little scope for ornamentation,

7 3rd movt. 13x to end (original)



and without such is of little musical interest. This must have tempted the arranger to recompose a large part of it. The first 12 bars to the repeat show hardly any differences (The arranged version is shown in ex. 8a). The 13 bars which Bigaglia composed after the repeat, based on the rhythm  $\text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩} \text{♩}$  (see ex. 7), are replaced by 24 bars, in which the arranger turned the movement into a 'galant' menuet, with 3 regular phrases of 8 bars. The last eight-bar phrase was derived from the initial phrase (cf. ex. 8a-b). The initial phrase

8a 3rd movt. (Ruf) 1 - 12

Tempo di Minuetto

8b 3rd movt. (Ruf) 29 - 36

however, moved to G major, while the last phrase had to end in the tonic, C major. (It is interesting that a similar procedure was used in the third movement of the G minor sonata. There, the third movement is also in the parallel key, B-flat major. In Le Cène's text, the repeat stood after bar 12. The phrase of bar 1 to the repeat ends in the dominant, as in the A minor sonata. Also here, the arranger left this phrase unchanged. The arranger removed the repeat, and recomposed the greater part thereafter. However, his final phrase is identical with the initial one [*da capo*], by which this movement ends in the dominant, F major, while Le Cène's version ends in the tonic, B-flat major. It was this particularity that

caused Ruf to publish a mixed version in his reprint: he based his version on the manuscript, but replaced the last 9 bars with the 9 final bars of Le Cène's reading, in order to create a B-flat major close.)

Many differences also appear in the *fourth movement*. In the first bars we can see again the arranger trying to involve the bass into the counterpoint (cf. ex. 9a-b). A

9a 4th movt.  $4^2 \times - 8^1 \times$

Allegro

9b 1 - 41

Allegro

small melodic alteration has been made in the arrangement of the motif of bar 5 (cf. ex. 10a-b). The six-crotchet phrase in Bigaglia's version (ex. 10a) gives a slightly short-winded impression. In order to create a more regular and stable eight-crotchet phrase, the arranger chose a twofold repetition of the two-bar motif (ex. 10b). Between bar 12 and the repeat the versions differ to a large extent (cf. ex. 11a-b). Almost all differences in the second half of the movement are similar to those in the first half.

When we consider the overall structures of this movement – as represented in diagram II – it appears that the structural alterations can be explained from the wish to create only regular four-bar phrases.

10a 4th movt.  $4^2 \times - 8^1 \times$

10b  $4^2 - 8^1$



11<sup>b</sup> 12<sup>2</sup> - 24

original:
arranged:

diagram II: structural analysis of the 4th movement.

Summarizing, we can say that the arranger turned Bigaglia's capricious, baroque composition into a more 'streamlined' one, in which he obviously shows his preference for regular phrases.

If one compares this sonata in A minor with other sonatas from Le Cène's edition, the suspicion arises that the second and the fourth movements have been interchanged. In nine of the twelve sonatas the second movement is in duple time (often 2/4), and the last movement in triple time. In the A minor sonata and in sonata 8 this is the exact opposite. (Sonata 10 is an exception: both the second and the fourth movement are in duple time.) Also so far as its character is concerned, the second movement of the A minor sonata corresponds with the fourth movements of the other sonatas. The same applies to the fourth movement of the A minor sonata with regard to the other second movements. If Le Cène were responsible for this exchange, then there is no evidence that this was done for technical reasons, because both movements take up the same amount of space.

From this analysis it appears how difficult it is to speak of the originality of a composition. Here we see an example of the way in which an arranger adapted a composition to his own taste and to that of his own time. Because the arrangement of the A minor sonata differs greatly from the original, we must place Bigaglia's name between brackets in Ruf's edition. In the A minor sonata as well as in the G minor sonata (which, because of the similarity of the alterations, seem to be arranged by the same person), there is certainly a 'need to give particular weight to Le Cène's text', since Le Cène is closer to Bigaglia's intentions than Ruf's source. It is even possible that the arranger used the Le Cène print as his starting point. (*translation: Walther Königs*)

<sup>1</sup> WALTHER, J. G. - *Musicalisches Lexicon oder Musicalische Bibliothec* (Leipzig: W. Deere, 1732); ©1953, p. 92:

Bigaglia (*Diogenio*) ein Venetianer, und Benedictiner Mönch . . . . . ist ein berühmter Componist und Virtuoso ietziger Zeit . . . . .

<sup>2</sup> worklist in:

HANSELL, S. - *Bigaglia* - in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London: Macmillan, 1980); vol. 2, p. 699-700

<sup>3</sup> BIGAGLIA, D. - *Sonate A-Moll für Sopranblockflöte und Basso continuo*, hrsg. von Hugo Ruf (Mainz: Schott, 1966/©1982; OFB 3)

BIGAGLIA, D. - *Sonate G-Moll für Altblockflöte und Basso continuo*, hrsg. von Hugo Ruf (Mainz: Schott, 1965/©s.d.; OFB 4)

<sup>4</sup> In his original preface to the A minor sonata, Ruf described the *fluta di quatre* as a descant recorder in c, referring to Curt Sach's *Reallexikon der Musikinstrumente*. In his additional notes to the revised edition, Ruf changes his standpoint, saying that it is a descant recorder in b $\flat$ , a tone lower than the descant recorder in c.

<sup>5</sup> HUNT, E. - *Fitting the Recorder to the Music* - RMM Vol. 7, no. 9, p. 227 -

<sup>6</sup> HUTCHINGS, A. - *The Baroque Concerto* - 3rd revised ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1973); p. 43