ANTHOLOGY OF BAROQUE SONATAS

by

Bach, Cimarosa, Seixas and Soler

Transcribed and edited for the Guitar

Raymond Burley

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Front cover illustration:
Mlle Dangeville la jeune. Gravure de La Bas, d’après Pater.
The term ‘Sonata’ has been used since the 17th century to describe an instrumental chamber composition as opposed to ‘Cantata’ implying a work for voices. By the late 18th century Sonata had become restricted almost entirely to works for one or two instruments—usually harpsichord or, e.g. violin or flute together with harpsichord continuo.

The pieces featured in this anthology were composed entirely for solo instruments—the single-movement Sonatas by Soler, Cimarosa and Seixas were originally for harpsichord and the four-movement Bach Sonata was for the violin. In the latter piece I have retained the composer’s phrase marks—these are shown in normal music type and are placed close to the note stems/beams. Throughout the collection editorial left-hand slurs (legatos) are set as broken lines thus \-\-\-\-\-\ and are located next to the noteheads; these have been kept to a minimum in the works for harpsichord in an attempt to emulate the appropriate style of articulation.

All the works in the current collection have been adapted to a greater or lesser degree; the adjustments include transposing the piece to a more accommodating key, raising some bass notes by an octave and—in the harpsichord pieces—the thinning-out of some harmonies. After careful consideration I have decided to add a minimal amount of supporting bass notes to the Bach Sonata and lower some of the existing bass notes by an octave. The keyboard and violin editions of the works contained in this anthology are readily available and I would urge players to consult these before simply accepting my suggestions. The bracketed $tr$ (trill) signs in the Bach Fugue and time-signature in the Presto are editorial.

Standard guitar nomenclature is used throughout the anthology with the addition of a less common direction: the pivot barré. The pivot barré (indicated in the music as ‘pivot’) is recommended for two purposes: to facilitate the movement to or from a conventional barré, or to assist the left-hand first finger to move smoothly from a position on the treble strings to a new position on a lower string. A Roman numeral placed in parentheses is to indicate that whilst a barré is not necessary at this point, it again helps to obtain a smooth transition into, or away from, an essential barré position.

It will be apparent that the suggested guitar fingering will not always allow the notes to be sustained for their full printed duration. The full values are shown to indicate the musical intention: players wishing to alterfingerings in an attempt to adhere strictly to the given note values are, of course, at liberty to do so.

Raymond Burley
1. Sonata R 118

Original key: A minor

Antonio Soler (1729–1783)
2. Sonata Boghen XVI

Original key

Andantino grazioso

Domenico Cimarosa
(1749–1801)
3. Sonata Boghen XX
Original key: B flat minor/major

Domenico Cimarosa (1749–1801)
Allegro assai
4. Sonata No. 5

Original key: C major

Carlos Seixas
(1704–1742)
5. Sonata BWV 1001

Original key: G minor

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)
Fugue

Allegro

3

5

7

9

11
Siciliano