

A Kalmus Classic Edition

Johann

PACHELBEL

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FOR ORGAN

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Preface and Instructions for Performance

In completion of the survey of chorale preludes of various kinds presented in Vols. II and III of the Selected Organ Works of Johann Pachelbel, this 4th volume contributes a last and very important form of composition, the chorale variation.

It was Professor D. Dr. Max Seiffert who first established the existence of and published three cycles of variations (Nos. 2, 5 and 6 of the present edition) in the 2nd annual set, Vol. 1 of the 'Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst — 2. Folge: Bayern.' In searching for a work printed in 1683 originating from Johann Pachelbel's pen, entitled "Musicalische SterbensGedancken", he presumed that in No. 7 he had found the fourth and final cycle of Variations originally believed to have been lost. (See Critical Commentary, 'Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst, 4. Jahrg. Bd. I — 2. Folge: Bayern', page XXIV.)

A further work in the same style (No. 4) could, however, be traced in a manuscript (H 8345, p. 6—10; Neudruck in den Sammelbänden der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft, V, p. 482) in the Staatliche Akademie für Kirchen- und Schulmusik in Berlin (State Academy for Church and School Music, Berlin).

The last fruitful discovery fell to the lot of Johannes Wolgast, the editor of the complete Clavier and Organ works of Georg-Böhm (Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig 1927). The discovery of two completely unknown Partitas (Nos. 1 and 3) and, as a further novelty, the complete version of Nr. 2, are the result of his researches. The extremely valuable document which contains these treasures belongs to the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Hamburg (State University Library in Hamburg) as Ms. ND VI 3197^h; it was, however, not exploited further by J. Wolgast for the purpose of clarifying the above-mentioned connection with the missing printed work of the Nuremberg Master. (An exact contents list of Ms. ND VI 3197^h is given by the above editor in the Critical Report on page XII of the publication referred to.)

A further examination of the problem of the missing print of 1683 makes it appear to me now however that it brings about a clarification. In Johann Gottfried Walther's (1684—1748) famous book "Musikalisches Lexikon oder Musicalische Bibliothec" (1732) it is stated under the section devoted to Pachelbel, that amongst the "in Kupfer herausgegebenen Sachen" (items engraved on copper) the following is to be found: "Musicalische SterbensGedancken" aus 4 variirten Chorälen bestehend, an(no) 1683." One further note must also be of particular interest: "als da von ihm ersilich zu Erfurt zur Zeit der dazumahl grassierenden Contagion, vier Sterbe-Lieder mit Variationen auf dem Clavier, ... ediret worden". (since four Funeral songs with Variations on the Clavier were composed by him first at Erfurt about the time of the plague prevailing there). An original copy of this publication has not been traced up to the present. Nevertheless the Hamburg copy happens fortunately to include on pages 1—32 four cycles of variations for the domestic keyboard instrument (Nos. 1—4 of the present edition); they are all playable on the cembalo without the assistance of a pedalboard.

Concerning the choice of chorale melodies in connection with the collective title, which is not contained in the Hamburg copy, nothing more definite need be said; in consideration of the passage in Walther's Lexikon a selection of this kind speaks in favour of the underlying motive of the work. Similarly, the chromatic Variation, with its very striking pessimistic expression, which appears in each of the four compositions, presents a further argument for my assumption that the exact sequence of the missing "Musicalische SterbensGedancken" is here presented in authentic tradition.

In the style of progression of parts, Pachelbel yet departs from his customary methods. It has already been remarked in Vol. IV how the South German master kept almost exclusively to the basis of the cantus planus and only very seldom in his organ chorales employed any ornamental decoration in the style of the North German examples (as No. 1 in Vol. III). If now, in Variations in many and diverse forms, the composer brings the cantus firmus more prominently to the fore, it may be because of the short resonance of the cembalo in the upper register. Thus these Partitas carry the impress of predominantly clavier-like features.

Concerning registration, only a few essential principles need be indicated. In the first place it should be stated that for the first four and the sixth of the chorale partitas a cembalo with 8' and 4' in the upper manual coupled to 16' and 8' in the lower manual is eminently suitable. In domestic use smaller instruments could also serve the purpose, yet a two-manual instrument should be regarded as normal. The second Partita of No. 3 in particular gives proof of this; likewise the second and third

Partita of No. 3 and also the fifth Partita of No. 2 are beyond discussion in respect of a tonal division of parts. Thus the player, for example also in the second Variation of No. 5, second and fourth Variation of No. 6 and third and fourth Variation of No. 7 etc., should proceed in the same way, irrespective of whether a (pedal) cembalo or an organ is at his disposal.

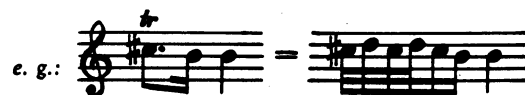
Although the variety of these compositions can be almost exploited to the full with the rich tone-palette of a large organ, one should guard against the blurring of the fundamental character which is unmistakable in every work, despite occasional contrasts, by too liberal a use of colour; for we have here not Variations composed according to the contents of the separate Verses, although occasionally this or that strophe may be harmonically related to the sense of the text and its momentary expression. Rather must such works be understood as complete and finite cycles of variations, organically arranged, which should become manifest through a well-thought out and uniform but nevertheless characteristic and preferably chamber music style of registration.

A few remarks should be added on ornamentation as it is found in Pachelbel's Clavier und Organ Works.

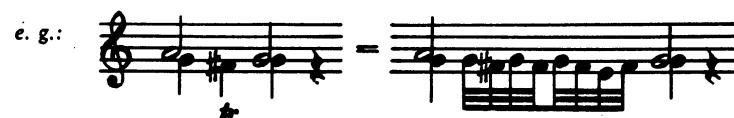
a) Mordents:



b) Shakes commencing on the principal note:



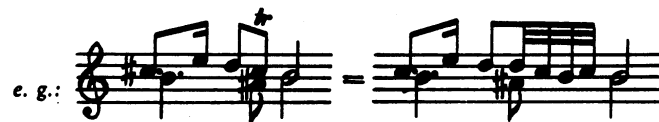
c) Shakes which as a rule must begin with the upper auxiliary note below:



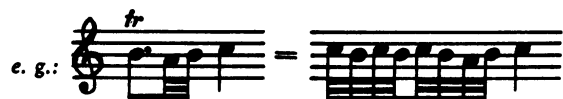
or, alternatively, performance with twice the number of notes:



or played as a turn when the progression of parts has a shorter time-value:



Similarly, the shakes as noted below must begin with the upper auxiliary note:



or, according to the character of the passage and the choice of tempo, with double the number of notes:



insofar as no other interpretation is desired by the composer's precise indications, as for example No. 2, eighth Partita, bars 6 and 8. The double shake not prescribed in bar 12 of the same Partita must also begin with the principal note for the sake of consistency. In No. 6, fourth Variation, bar 8, the same form is to be found as an original ornament.

1. Christus, der ist mein Leben

Choral mit 12 Partiten

Choral

Chri-stus, der ist mein Le - ben, Ster - ben ist mein Ge - winn; dem tu ich mich er - ge - ben, mit Fried fahr. ——— ich da - hin.

Musical score for the Choral part, featuring a treble and bass clef staff with a common time signature (C). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Partita 1

Musical score for Partita 1, featuring a treble and bass clef staff with a common time signature (C). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Musical score for Partita 5, featuring a treble and bass clef staff with a common time signature (C). The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). A circled number 5 is placed at the beginning of the staff.