

BALDASSARE GALUPPI
Organ sonatas
(Brilliant Classics, 95140, 2016)

- Clic Musique !

Baldassare Galuppi surnommé "Il Buranello" (car né à Burano) est un compositeur vénitien très prolifique plus connu de son vivant que Vivaldi. D'abord organiste à Venise, il est nommé par Catherine II de Russie compositeur de cour à Saint-Pétersbourg. Père de l' « opera buffa » et de retour à Venise il écrira vers la fin de sa vie des oeuvres religieuses dont ses sonates d'église qui font le lien entre le claveciniste qu'était Galuppi et l'organiste qu'il est devenu. L'écriture et la forme en font des pièces qui peuvent être jouées sur l'un ou l'autre instrument. Sonates en un, deux ou trois mouvements elles sont toujours virtuoses et très riches rythmiquement et harmoniquement. L'amateur aura une attention particulière pour les deux orgues joués dans cet album.

Restaurés par Michel Formentelli, désormais installé aussi en France (St Uze), les caractéristiques de l'orgue italien sont parfaitement respectées. Les deux instruments sonnent "clair et cristallin" et Luca Scandali les touche avec légèreté et délié ce qui rend cette musique extrêmement vivante et tonifiante et qui pétille comme un vin (de champagne) italien un "Prosecco" issu de la même région que Galuppi ! Et la prise de son remarquable elle aussi, fait de ce double album une belle réussite... pour se rafraichir !

Jean Bacot

- Fanfare Magazine, 40:4 (March/April 2017)

Although Baldassare Galuppi (1706–1785) still remains a relatively little-known name today among 18th-century composers, he was in his own day one of the most famous practitioners of his art. Born on the island of Burano in the Venetian lagoon (he sometimes signed his manuscripts with the nickname “Buranello”), he received his early training from Antonio Lotti at the venerable St. Mark’s Basilica. His reputation was initially established in opera—first the older opera seria, and then the newer opera giocoso; his success was such that he became known throughout Europe as “the father of comic opera.” His chief collaborators as librettists were first Metastasio, a partnership that proved unhappy, and then Carlo Goldoni, which was far more simpatico. In 1740 he became the director of music at the Ospedale del Mendicanti, which position he held until 1776 and led him to produce a considerable amount of sacred music as well. In 1748 Galuppi also took on the post of vice-maestro of music at the Doge’s Chapel in St. Mark’s, and rose to the chief position of maestro di cappella in 1762, which he retained to the end of his life. His prestige was sufficient that he negotiated extended leaves of absence to England (1741–43) and Russia (1765–68); he was also much admired by Charles Burney, who visited him in Venice.

Galuppi was quite prolific; he is credited with 109 operas, 52 Masses, 73 psalm settings, and 175 keyboard sonatas. Those figures need to be taken with some caution. On the one hand archival research across Europe is regularly recovering previously unknown manuscripts; on the other hand, many works once credited to Galuppi have been shown to be misattributions (including several actually penned by Vivaldi).

What we have here, then, is a sampler of Galuppi’s output for the keyboard. While there are several discs of his sonatas currently in print where they are performed on piano and harpsichord, there are no others where an organ

is used. (A few isolated instances occur on organ anthology collection CDs.) This music is exactly what one would expect from a skilled but second-level purveyor of the galant style: unfailingly charming and melodious, well crafted and facile, but not especially memorable. Galuppi was no C. P. E. Bach in originality or inventiveness; the style is more conservative, showing decided affinities

to Handel. The sonatas (predominantly in major keys and upbeat in mood) vary in style and structure between the one-movement form pioneered by Domenico Scarlatti and the alternative three-movement sonata da chiesa.

The performances themselves are superb. Organist Luca Scandali understands this repertoire perfectly and renders it with grace, vitality, and imaginative use of varying registrations (including some gorgeously pungent reed stops), all captured in clear, warm recorded sound. The booklet provides notes by Marco Ruggeri (see my review of his recording of organ music by Giovanni Morandi elsewhere in this issue), plus an artist bio and specifications for the two organs used in this project. This makes for perfectly delightful if not profound listening; but then, not all organ music need be Bach and Reger. This is easily the best entry to date in Brilliant's ongoing series devoted to Italian organ music; enthusiastically recommended.

James A. Altena

- Concerto – Das Magazin für Alte Musik, 269

»Oh Galuppí, Baldassaro, this is very sad to find! / I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind; / but although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind!« - Mit diesen hehren Worten beginnt der englisch-viktorianische Schriftsteller Robert Browning in seiner Ode *A Toccata of Galuppi's* den Lobpreis auf den 1706 geborenen Baldassare Galuppi. „Il Buranello“ – so nennt man ihn auch nach seinem Geburtsort - gilt tatsächlich als einer der einflussreichsten italienischen Musiker des 18. Jahrhunderts, der, zeitlich zwischen Scarlatti und Clementi eingeordnet, an die 100 Claviersonaten komponierte, die stilistisch neben C. Ph. E. Bach, Haydn und dem jungen Mozart bestehen können.

Wie gut, dass mit Luca Scandali jetzt einer der profiliertesten italienischen Organisten auf zwei CDs einen großformatigen Überblick über Galuppis reiches und farbiges Tastenwerk für Orgel gibt. An zwei wunderbaren, quasi für das venezianische Klangbild authentischen Instrumenten des legendären Orgelbauers Gaetano Callido spielt Scandali mit glutvoll musikantischer Spielfreude und stupender Technik. Die wunderbaren Farben der Orgeln in Morrovalle und Civitanova Marche ermöglichen ihm zudem den beeindruckenden Wechsel zwischen introvertierter Besinnung und offensivem Furor.

Callido hat eine Vielzahl an Werken gerade für die Provinz Marken gebaut, und man hatte für diese Produktion Wohl die Qual der Wahl zwischen hervorragend restaurierten Instrumenten, die man allesamt zwischen Pesaro und Ancona finden kann. Gerade Galuppis feine, zerbrechliche und galante Musik benötigt nämlich eine besonders innige Verbindung zum Instrument. Dass diese ästhetische Prämisse erfüllt ist, kann man bei jedem Track dieser Aufnahme mit Freude nachvollziehen. Ständig changierende und affektorientierte Klangfarben, stilistisch sichere Manieren, traumhafte Verzierungen und ein fein artikulierter Anschlag zeichnen das Spiel Scandalis aus. Am bekanntesten, Weil schon häufig eingespielt, kommt wohl die dreisätzig d-Moll-Sonate daher. Was Scandali hier musikalisch ausbreitet, gleicht einem Feuerwerk an spritzig funkelnden Ideen.

Und so ist es ein schier nicht enden wollendes Vergnügen, diesen venezianischen *stuzzichini* nachzuspüren.

Martin Hoffmann

- American Record Guide, November/December 2016

Venetian composer Baldassare Galuppi (1706-85) was extraordinarily prolific, with about 100 operas as well as many oratorios, liturgical works, and instrumental compositions to his credit. Venice was his home base for nearly the whole of his life, but he traveled widely in Europe with three-year stays in London and St Petersburg. Manuscript sources of his works are scattered among 59 libraries.

Among Galuppi's instrumental works are 175 keyboard sonatas. Some are single-movement sonatas on the model of Scarlatti, while others are multi-movement pieces. In general, they are more-or-less equally suitable for the harpsichord, organ, or fortepiano. Galuppi was himself noted as an accomplished performer on the harpsichord and organ. He worked extensively as a church organist, and it seems likely that he sometimes performed his sonatas on that instrument. The notes with this

recording do not indicate why these particular 21 sonatas were chosen, but it seems a reasonable conjecture that musical quality and suitability for the organ were the chief considerations. Annotator Marco Ruggeri characterizes Galuppi's compositional style as the Italian version of the style galant. The sonatas recorded here are charming, elegant, and well crafted, but they can hardly be called profound.

The sonatas are performed here on two historic instruments built by Gaetano Callido in Macerata. The organ at the Collegiate Church of St Bartholomew dates from 1804, and the instrument at the Collegiate Church of St Paul from 1792. The two organs have nearly identical stop lists, and both were restored in 2011 by Michel Formentelli. They are characteristic single-manual Italian instruments of the period with a very rudimentary pedal. The treble and bass of many of the registers can be drawn separately. [...]

Luca Scandali's playing is fluent, stylish, and animated [...]

Gatens

- Musicweb-international, August 2016

There seems to be a revival of interest in the oeuvre of Baldassare Galuppi. In recent years various discs with his music have crossed my path. He was the most fashionable Italian composer after the death of Antonio Vivaldi and was especially famous for his works for the stage. It was this quality which brought him to various places across Europe, including London and St Petersburg. In Russia he worked from 1765 to 1768; on his way to St Petersburg he visited Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach in Hamburg and on his way back to Venice he met Johann Adolf Hasse in Vienna. These also ranked among the great names of the time.

The list of Galuppi's operas, serenatas and oratorios in *New Grove* is impressive. Only a small number of them are known and performed in our time. In comparison, the size of his instrumental output seems rather limited. It includes some keyboard concertos and concertos for strings. The larger part of his instrumental oeuvre is for keyboard. Galuppi was educated as a keyboard player and was already active as organist in several churches at the age of 16. Throughout his life he held various posts as organist or as *maestro di cappella*.

During his life only two collections of six sonatas each were published, both in London.

The op. 1 came from the press in 1756, the op. 2 three years later. Some other sonatas or single movements were included in anthologies in the 1750s and 1760s. In 1909 Fausto Torrefranca made the first attempt to catalogue his keyboard works and since then many more pieces have been brought to light. The latest catalogue was put together by Franco Rossi and published in 2006; the R in the track-list refers to this catalogue. Whereas Torrefranca listed 51 sonatas, Rossi was able to identify no fewer than 175. The fact that Galuppi's sonatas are preserved in archives and libraries across Europe and even in the Americas attests to their popularity. However, often the movements are ordered differently from one source to the other, and sometimes movements appear in one source which are absent in another. Moreover, in some cases the music itself also shows differences. An example is the *Sonata in G (R.A. 1.11.03)*, which has two movements in this recording. Luca Guglielmi also included it in his recording for Accent but apparently uses a different version, as he plays only the opening larghetto which is also considerably shorter than the version Luca Scandali plays. Franco Rossi, in his liner-notes to Andrea Chezzi's recording of the sonatas op. 1, concludes that "the publication of Galuppi's complete keyboard works cannot logically claim to be a critical edition".

The sonatas recorded by Luca Scandali are very different in texture. Some are in three movements, in the order fast - slow - fast (*Sonata in C, R.A. 1.1.08*) or slow - fast - fast (*Sonata in D, R.A. 1.03.07*), whereas the three movements of the *Sonata in G (R.A. 1.11.28)* have no tempo indications at all. Other sonatas come in two movements (*Sonata in d minor, R.A. 1.4.03*) and several consist of just one movement: an andantino (*Sonata in C, R.A. 1.11.18*) or an allegro assai (*Sonata in D, R.A. 1.3.15*); some have no tempo indications.

However, they are all written in the then fashionable *galant* idiom. This means that the right hand has the bulk of the melodic and thematic material, and the left hand is largely confined to an accompanying role. Charles Burney met Galuppi on his travels and was full of praise, calling him a "good contrapuntist". However, little of that quality comes to the fore in his keyboard works. There are some exceptions: the *Sonata in D* (R.A. 1.3.17) is a rather old-fashioned piece. It is fugal, includes some daring harmonic progressions and towards the end an improvisational episode in the right hand over a pedal point. Also notable is the *Sonata in g minor* (R.A. 1.12.01), which is in two movements. The first has two sections. It opens with a largo which includes some dissonances - which come especially to the fore due to the unequal temperament of the organ. It is followed by a fugal allegro. The galant idiom does not exclude a fair amount of expression, particularly in the slower movements. A fine example is the larghetto which opens the *Sonata in G* (R.A. 1.11.03) which I already mentioned. It has written-out varied *reprises* for both sections, and Michael Talbot, in his liner-notes to Guglielmi's recording, suggests that this may be due to the influence of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach. Another beautiful piece is the andante from the *Sonata in G* (R.A. 1.11.28). The fast movements are often energetic and have some operatic traits.

According to Talbot, Galuppi's sonatas don't show any signs of being written for a specific keyboard instrument. From this one may conclude that it is just the interpreter's taste and what sounds best that is decisive. Marco Ruggeri, in his liner-notes to the present recording, justifies the use of an organ by referring to Galuppi's activities as a church organist throughout his career. The then common indications of the intended instruments being harpsichord or fortepiano does not exclude other options, such as the clavichord or - in this case - the organ. Luca Scandali doesn't play chamber organs but church organs. It is certainly possible that sonatas such as these may have been played during the liturgy. In the course of the 18th century liturgical organ music became increasingly 'secular' in character, a development which continued in the 19th century where some pieces were unashamedly operatic.

Scandali uses two organs from around 1800 which are stylistically not fundamentally different from the organs Galuppi may have known. It was only in the 19th century that organ building in Italy was to change. Scandali explores the possibilities of the two instruments to the full, using the various colours of the dispositions of the respective instruments to good effect. In the slower movements he manages to create a strong amount of intimacy, thanks to an appropriate choice of registers and subtle playing. The result is a compelling recording of sonatas which are clearly above the average of what was produced in the mid-18th century. The revival of interest in Galuppi's music is well deserved.

Johan van Veen

- Klassiek-Centraal.be

Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785) werd niet alleen respectabel oud maar schreef onder meer breed gepaleerde orgelsonates. Heerlijk fris, jeugdig, vrolijk speels en zelfs frivool. Zo klinken die sonates vertolkt op het orgel, gebouwd door Gaetano Callido in 1804 en gerestaureerd in 2011 door Michel Formentelli, in de collegiale kerk San Bartolomeo Apostolo in het Italiaanse Morrovalle. Luca Scandali brengt met deze opname op zijn minst vreugde in de luisteraars hun harten. Zeg daar eens nee tegen? Het lukt niet en dus kan ik met een gerust geweten deze opname ten stelligste aanranden.