

Summary

Partimento - duet of performer and composer, from sketch to improvisation and composition.
Realisation of selected Partimenti by Bernardo Pasquini.

Partimento practice originated in Italy and the most important center of this art was Naples. In general partimento is a kind of abbreviated form of musical notation. It uses the notation of basso continuo: it provides one voice, which in most cases is the bass part supported with figures of b.c. notation. The figures may be neglected if the performer is supposed to follow the so called *rule of the octave*. Practicing partimento was a way to perfect compositional skills: thorough bass, harmony, counterpoint, form, texture, motivic coherence. Practicing this art was rewarded with an unparalleled fluency in improvisation on the keyboard instruments. It was the basic method of composition teaching at the famous Conservatories in Naples. The Conservatories were founded in the 16th century as orphanages but from the 17th century onward they turned into important professional schools of music. The students of the Conservatories attained the highest degree of musical knowledge enabling them to pursue great careers as composers and performers (both in the vocal and instrumental realm) in Italy and abroad. Besides Naples the art of partimento was taught in other Italian cities e. g. Rome and Bologna. Its influence was also seen in other countries, mostly in Germany.

Besides being exercises, the partimento notation was also included in pieces of music not necessarily intended for teaching purposes. Bernardo Pasquini (1637-1710) was one of the very first composers to write partimenti, however he did not use the word “partimento”. His works for one or two keyboards, written as b.c., were called by him for example “basso”, “basso continuo”, “sonata”, “versetto”.

This thesis is dedicated to selected works from the 14 Sonatas for two keyboards and the 14 Bassi for one keyboard by B. Pasquini. The manuscript of these pieces entitled *Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato* is held in the British Library of London, as position Ms. Add. 31501, I. Nine works from this collection were chosen, 6 Bassi and 3 Sonatas, and realized and recorded as fully composed pieces. Realization of these Partimenti intends to engage a polyphonic texture according to the rules of basso continuo and counterpoint adequate to the aesthetics and techniques of the music from the baroque era. Created pieces are intended not only for one keyboard instrument, but also for chamber

ensembles like duets (violin and b.c., violin and harpsichord obligato) or trio (three violas da gamba or bassoons and b.c.). The double partimenti i.e. Sonatas were worked out in such a way that they can be performed employing keyboard instruments (harpsichord, organ or even the modern piano) and harp. Realizations represent different genres of instrumental music of the 18th century, they apply strict counterpoint (fugue, fughetta and imitation texture) or freer techniques (arioso, figurative sonata, polyphonic fantasia).

The work encompasses the following partimenti:

**Bernardo Pasquini (1637-1710) - Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato, Lbl
– MS Add. 31501/I (6 V 1703- 3 XII 1704)**

[Basso V] –for violin and harpsichord obligato

Sonata IV – for two keyboard instruments

Basso [XII] - for harpsichord solo

Sonata XII – for harpsichord and harp

Basso continuo [II] - for harpsichord solo

Basso [III] – for violin and b.c.

[Basso IV] – for harpsichord solo

Sonata IX a due – for two keyboard instruments

[Basso XIII] – for three violas da gamba or bassoons with b.c.