

**TELEMANN**

argo

**DON QUICHOTTE suite**

**Concerto in G for Viola**

**Overture in D for two Oboes and two Horns**

**The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields**

**NEVILLE MARRINER**





**TELEMANN**  
**DON QUICHOTTE SUITE**  
**CONCERTO in G for Viola & string Orchestra**  
**OVERTURE in D for two oboes, two horns & string Orchestra**  
**THE ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS**  
 directed by  
**NEVILLE MARRINER**

**SIDE ONE: DON QUICHOTTE SUITE**

**CONCERTO in G major for viola and strings**

**STEPHEN SHINGLES viola**

**1. Largo**

**2. Allegro**

**SIDE TWO: CONCERTO in G major—conclusion**

**3. Andante**

**4. Presto**

**OVERTURE in D major for two oboes, two horns and strings**

**STEPHEN SHINGLES viola**

**TIMOTHY BROWN, ROBIN DAVIS horns**

**CELIA NICKLIN, TESSA MILLER oboes**

In a century when a composer can acquire an international reputation overnight, it is difficult for us to assess Telemann's European position through the eyes of the eighteenth century critics. "This famous man is one of the three musical masters who nowadays bring honour to our Fatherland. In London, Handel is admired by all the connoisseurs and Herr Kapellmeister Bach in Saxony is the chief of his tribe. Their music is not only known in Germany, but Italy, France, and England frequently place orders for their works and take much pleasure in them" (J.C. Gottsched: *Biedermann*, quoted in *Georg Philipp Telemann*, by Richard Petzoldt).

Even if we cannot accept this trinity, the genuine internationalism of Telemann still exceeds that of almost every composer other than Corelli. In Telemann's case, moreover, it was a personal contact as often as a commercial one. His *Musique de Table*, for instance, carried a subscription list of 206 names from most countries of Europe (except Italy, of course), amongst them "Mr. Handel, Docteur en Musique, Londres"; "Bach de Leipzig" subscribed to the Paris flute quartets. But on a more intimate level, he was also god-father to C.P.E. Bach, and corresponded with Handel about matters botanical (Handel sent him "a chest of flowers . . . choice and rare" for his collection of plants).

Even more than Bach or Handel, Telemann sustained his European reputation with incredible diligence and versatility. He could, according to Handel, write an eight-part motet in the time it took most people to write a letter, and when he came to give an estimate of his own compositions, he had to calculate his suites, overtures and sonatas to the nearest hundred; his only explanation was "a nature that cannot bear idleness".

Not at all deterred by this enormous output, Charles Burney summarized Telemann's career in his *Journal* with a single paragraph, and still managed to put his finger on the two most important facets of his style: "This author, like the painter Raphael, had a first and second manner, which were extremely different from each other. In the first, he was hard, stiff, dry and inelegant; in the second, all that was pleasing, graceful and refined". Burney's division represents the natural attitude of a generation that had been fed on 'galanterie' towards an eclectic composer ("varied and voluminous" were Burney's words) who only gradually assimilated the French manner into his natural language. His Teutonic contrapuntal writings would have seemed dry and inelegant alongside his later French suites and overtures; but had Burney known more of music, he would have seen from the growing influence of Italy's "pleasantly touching but lively manner" that Telemann had evolved a gradual synthesis of styles, rather than simply abandoned the old in favour of the new.

The French influence is most marked in his instrumental music, although Scheibe even congratulated him on managing to incorporate it into German church music. After his visit to Paris in 1737, where he had had "a long-standing invitation from various virtuosi there", Telemann reduced the Italian concerto element in his larger-scale orchestral pieces to a *concertante* style, favouring the wind instruments as the French did, and preferring the multi-movement suite or 'ouverture' to the three or four-movement concerto.

This mixed style, which Couperin also favoured, and which Gluck later defended as 'a music which pleases all nations', was much discussed by Telemann's German contemporaries. Quantz decided that "mixed and combined taste must inevitably be more generally pleasing, for that music which is held to be good not in one single province or nation alone, but which is recognized by many peoples . . . this music, based on reason and sound sensibilities, must be beyond all argument the best."

German criticism was not so tolerant, however, of Telemann's whole-hearted acceptance of the French philosophy of 'imiter la Nature'. "In all his works there was a great fault which he had learnt from the French," announced the *Hamburger*

*Unterhaltungen* only a few years after his death: "He was so much in love with musical painting that he frequently got stuck to a particular picturesque word or thought, and thereby forgot the feeling of the whole; often he lost himself in trying to paint things which no music can possibly express. . . . But one must admit that no one could paint with stronger outlines or with greater expression than he could when applying these beautiful effects in their proper place".

His orchestral overtures are the best display of this naturalistic style, and his overt programmatic titles (plus a certain lack of seriousness!) probably encouraged a criticism which was never levelled at the first of the Brandenburg concertos — as much a French-overture suite as any work on this record, but without the ineliminable 'theatrical' directions.

These programmatic works were tailored to suit the occasion: Telemann could match any civic need with bourgeois thoughts of trade, commerce and the divine right of bankers; he could devise 'suites bourlesques' to divert the audiences at his Collegium Musicum with the activities of Don Quixotte, Gulliver or Scaramouche; commissions from a landed lord would contain a maximum of hunting symbolism, and even the opening up of the Mississippi Territory in North America produced an encouragement to share-holders in the form of "L'Espérance de Mississippi".

The strongest exhortations from the critical side-lines came from Johann Mattheson, who was so carried away in his *Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre* that he encouraged the modern composer to "portray the thousandfold wonders of Love, Jealousy, Hate, Gentleness, Impatience, Envy, Indifference, Fear, Vengeance, Courage, Timidity, Generosity, Shock, Majesty, Humility, Pomp, Poverty, Pride, Demureness, Joy, Laughter, Tears, Desire, Pain, Happiness, Despair, Storm, Calm, even Heaven, Earth, the Sea, Hell, and every possible condition therein (even though the eye will bear scant witness for the ear)".

Whether he used a simple string orchestra, or augmented it with wind and brass, Telemann's orchestral scoring aimed at impressive solidarity for the opening overture proper, and an increasing amount of pictorialism in the following dances. Even the metre of dance movements, according to Mattheson, carried connotations useful to the naturalistic composer. The minuet implied 'moderate merriment', the gavotte 'triumphant joy', and a passpied 'giddiness, unrest and vacillating spirits'. He goes on to add: "Nowhere are proper dance melodies in this form and their true character to be found more than in the music of the French and their clever imitators, of whom Telemann is the chief".

More detailed examples of this technique are mentioned below, together with Telemann's titles for each movement and details of the scoring of each work. In this recording, the orchestra is laid out in the usual baroque disposition, with the first violins on the right, the seconds on the left, and violas and continuo in the centre.

**Don Quichotte Suite (Bourlesque de Quixotte)**

Telemann treated episodes from the adventures of Cervantes' high-minded knight in a vocal serenata (*Don Quichotte auf der Hochzeit des Comacho*), as well as in this suit for strings. The *Overture* is a slightly stiff version of the traditional French pattern, with both slow and fast sections featuring falling scales (by way of pictorialism?). The *Reveil de Quixotte* shows the hero being woken by an insistent drone, and *Son Attaque des Moulins à Vent* develops into an Italianate *furioso*. *Les Soupirs amoureux après la Princesse Dulcinée* bring the most from the cliché of the galant style, the drooping sigh, crudely interrupted by the spectacle of Sancho Pancho "tossed in a blanket" (*Sancho Pancho berné*). The approach of the Don on his long suffering horse, *Le Galop de Rosinante*, is, if anything, less graceful than *Celui d'Ané de Sancho*; Sancho's ass, marked 'doux', is decidedly the more docile steed. *Le couché de Quixotte* is actually the most bucolic of the whole suite. Only the

middle section (without basses or continuo) could be found soporific.

**Concerto in G for viola and strings**

**Largo: Allegro: Andante: Presto**

When writing a summary of his career for Mattheson in 1731, Telemann confessed that his French inclinations made him an unenthusiastic concerto writer. "I also began concertos. Yet I must say of them that at heart I did not care for them although I have written a great many . . . but it is not true that they smell of France. Although it may be that Nature did not give me the right faculties, we cannot expect everybody to achieve everything, and that may be one of the reasons why in most concertos . . . I have found difficulties and crooked roads but little harmony and less melody . . . they have lacked the qualities to which my ear was accustomed in French music".

His viola concerto, apparently the earliest example of this form, does make a slight attempt to Frenchify its style, particularly in the bourrée rhythm of the last movement. In the slow movements, Telemann capitalizes on the strong associations the viola had already acquired in opera with the lovesick lament, and he cleverly avoids any danger of drowning the soloist with orchestral accompaniment: in the first movement, the soloist speaks between orchestral chords, and in the remainder of the concerto the solo sections are accompanied either by continuo alone (in the second and fourth movements), or by the upper strings only (third movement). Telemann particularly approved the harmonic enterprise shown by French composers, and even shocked the German press by writing: "If nothing new is to be found in melody, one must seek it in harmony" — a solution he demonstrates towards the end of the *Andante*.

This concerto is certainly an early work, probably written for performance in the "Weekly Grand Concerts in the Frauenstein" in Frankfurt, where Telemann worked from 1712 until 1721. Compared with the *Overture in D* for 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings it provides a striking measure of Telemann's development and eclecticism.

**Overture in D for 2 oboes, 2 horns and strings**

This late overture was written in 1765 and dedicated to Count Ludwig VIII of Hesse-Darmstadt, famous for his enthusiasm on the hunting-field. Telemann uses the out-door associations of woodwind and 'Cornes de chasse', scoring in a *concertante* style wherever possible, and casting several of the movements in a military mould that recalls Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* written 16 years earlier.

The *Overture* proper shows how Telemann tackled the problem of 'les goûts réunies', by attaching the traditional dotted rhythms of the French overture to melodic lines that are as lyrical as any Italian aria. The antiphony of the oboes and horns adds an extra theatrical element to this introduction, which is matched by the *Plainte* that follows: no movement in Telemann gets closer than this to the style of Gluck, or even the masonic inflections of Mozart.

*Réjouissance* is untypically in a minor key, with uneasily shifting harmonies until the middle section, where the woodwind trio takes over in B major. Two 'pictorial' movements follow: the *Carillon* ingeniously scored for solo oboes and pizzicato strings, is gracefully French, while *Tintamare* ("uproar and confusion") is either a reflection on blood sports, or a snub directed at the virtuoso Italian violin players; for safety, and variety, the violin line is divided between the seconds (in the first section) and the firsts (in the second).

Strings alone play the unprogrammatic *Loure*, with its subtle rhythmic alterations indicated by Telemann, and the traditional concluding *Minuets* again contrast the tutti with the wind section alone. Although traditional in metre, however, this minuet and trio is no less progressive than the similar movements Haydn had been writing for the past four years in Esterházy.

Christopher Hogwood

