



JOHANN ADOLF
HASSE
SONATAS
FROM THE ITALIAN
MANUSCRIPTS

ANDREA
BACCHETTI



BANCA CARIGE
Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia



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After the huge critical and popular success of Scarlatti's "Restored Manuscript," Johann Adolf Hasse joins the protagonists of "Tastiera italiana" (Italian keyboard) in the broad musical fresco of the 18th Century that Andrea Bacchetti is composing with expertise and dedication. German by birth but Venetian by choice, Hasse was an ambassador of Italian music and taste in Central Europe and can be considered a bridge between various cultures and forms of artistic expression in the musical panorama of the 18th Century.

Thanks to the painstaking philological work of Andrea Bacchetti and Mario Marcarini, the work of the German composer, as yet little known to the general public, can now be appreciated in all its elegant simplicity and clarity. Banca Carige is pleased to help people discover this modern European artist and intellectual, and hopes you will enjoy listening to these unpublished works, now brought to life by "Tastiera italiana."

Cesare Castelbarco Albani. CEO of Banca Carige SpA

JOHANN ADOLF HASSE

(Bergedorf 1699 – Venezia 1783)

Sonatas from the italian manuscripts

Nuove edizioni sulle fonti a cura di Andrea Bacchetti e Mario Marcarini

Andrea Bacchetti, pianoforte

[Sonata] Del Sig. Sassone*

[Biblioteca del Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello di Venezia – 15777

Fondo Giustiniani B. 20 n. 3]

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | [Sonata] Del Sig. Sassone (<i>senza indicazioni di tempo</i>) | 4:29 |
| 2 | Del Sig. Giulio Pin - Allegro
(<i>Fa maggiore/F major/fa majeur/F-dur</i>) | 4:34 |

Fuga per organo del Sig. Gio. Adolfo Hasse detto il Sassone*

[Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venezia – It IV 1189 10992]

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 3 | Fuga per organo del Sig. Gio. Adolfo Hasse
detto il Sassone - Moderato
(<i>Re minore/D minor/ré mineur/d-moll</i>) | 1:29 |
|---|--|------|

Sonata per cembalo del Sig. Gio: Hasse Sassone*

(*Sol maggiore/G major/sol majeur/G-dur*)

[Biblioteca del Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello di Venezia – 15778

Fondo Giustiniani B. 20 n. 4]

- | | | |
|---|---------|------|
| 4 | Allegro | 4:43 |
| 5 | Largo | 1:40 |
| 6 | Minuet | 2:05 |

A favourite Concerto by Sig. Hasse set for the Harpsichord*

(Fa maggiore/F major/fa majeur/F-dur)

[Biblioteca del Conservatorio Benedetto Marcello di Venezia – Fondo Torrefranca 299 27194]

7	Allegro	2:21
8	Andante	8:37
9	Minuet (Allegro)	1:41

Sei sonate per il cembalo del Sig. Gian. Adolfo Hasse detto il Sassone**

[Conservatorio di Musica Luca Marenzio di Brescia – Fondo Pasini 32.a]

Sonata No. IV

(Do maggiore/C major/ut majeur/C-dur)

10	Staccato	10:09
11	Allegro Assai	3:34

Sonata No. V

(Do maggiore/C major/ut majeur/C-dur)

12	Allegretto	3:53
13	Allegro	3:59

(*) Prima registrazione mondiale
First world recording

(**) Prima registrazione mondiale su pianoforte moderno
First world recording on a modern piano

The Venetian Saxon

Raffaele Mellace

A paradox is embedded in the name itself of one of the Eighteenth century main composers (whose “immortality” young Mozart, publishing his *Sonatas* op. III, aimed to emulate).

During his juvenile stay in Naples, at least from *Attalo* of 1728, he was in fact usually indicated, and he signed himself, as «John Adolph Hasse, known as the Saxon» (possibly italianized into «Gio: Addolfo Asse. Saxon»), as in the fine portrait preserved at the Scala Theatre Museum).

Such pseudonym, very different from the anecdotic “dear Saxon” addressed to Haendel (Hasse was never called “dear”, at least in his lifetime), became for the composer an authentic *nom de guerre*, a true luxury brand on the music market over a whole century.

It was just a pure coincidence that Hasse tied his destiny for more than thirty years to the Saxon Court in Dresden, but, truly, the pseudonym under which he was known in Naples, in Eighteenth century Italy, simply indicated, by synecdoche, his German origins. Yet, paradoxically, it was the Neapolitan apprenticeship under Alessandro Scarlatti to make possible the most surprising case of assimilation of a foreign composer to Italian culture.

Although trained in Hamburg (which, at the beginning of the Eighteenth century, was the German town more receptive to Italian opera), the Saxon was soon acknowledged as the champion of the new galant style, along with Porpora, Vinci and Leo; he composed musical comedies in Neapolitan dialect, assumed the linguistic habits of the country of adoption (all the extant correspondence is in Italian), and finally converted to Catholicism, thus completing, broadly speaking, his adhesion to a cultural system very distant from that of his homeland on the North Sea: a process which, in the climate of the late Nineteenth century nationalism, cost him the accusation of having given in to the lure of Naples and Venice, “betraying the artistic rules of his Northern homeland” (H. Mendel, *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon*, Berlino, 1875), and probably a long lasting *damnatio memoriae*.

Venice actually played a crucial role in the biographical and professional story of the Saxon, who developed a deep affinity with the Serenissima. In the Lagoon town, Hasse international career as an opera composer took off; he was sought after for decades by three of the four hospitals of the town, he met the love of life, the extraordinary Venetian artist Faustina Bordoni, one of the most acclaimed stars of the century; and there he finally retired during his last ten fertile years, and there he rests still today, on the Grand Canal, under the nave of San Marcuola Church. The Venetian provenance of the sources used in this recording should not therefore be

considered surprising, yet attesting a familiarity which continues until the present day, through the presence of his works in the libraries of the former Serenissima Republic, from Venice to Brescia.

At the same time, the programme of the present recording reflects a broader geographic and cultural dimension, disclosing the horizons and the roots of Hasse music. First of all, it attests the composer at the keyboard: an unusual image, if compared to the fame achieved by the Master in vocal music, operas, sacred music and oratorios. Yet the keyboard was the faithful companion of an entire creative lifetime, from the intimate moment of composition to the public occasions of operas conduction at the harpsichord, and the instrumental performances, as an interpreter whose skills were not irrelevant if, at the French Court in 1750, he impressed the Duke of Luynes as a «maitre de clavecin fort habile».

Hasse undoubtedly cared for the keyboard, since, commenting in 1768 about an umpteenth gout attack, expressed to his friend Gian Maria Ortes his bitter regret: “The most disappointing thing is that it crippled two fingers of my left hand, in a way that I might no longer be able to use them on the keyboard”.

The Saxon’s production for harpsichord probably hails back to Naples, at the time of Alessandro Scarlatti (some extant manuscripts alternate works by the student and the teacher), of his son Domenico and of Francesco Durante, and presents a great variety of forms and stylistic tendencies, ranging from a more archaic production of *toccatas* and *fugues*, transmitted by the manuscripts alone or combined. The combination of more pages may give however life to more articulated pieces, indicated in the sources with the interchangeable names of “toccata” and “sonata”, offering a complexity of contrasting attitudes in a three-part pattern, usually in the order fast-slow-fast, following the structure of operatic symphony, solo concerts and chamber sonatas, like in the sequence *Allegro-Largo-Mimuet* of the Sonata in G (in a Neapolitan manuscript now in Milan the first two movements are named *Toccata* and *Sarabanda*, as a clear sign of its Baroque-rooted inspiration).

A different case is that of the Sonata in F Major, transcription “for the Harpsicord” published by Thompson and other publishers in London, of the symphony from the opera *Titus Vespasian* (Pesaro, 1735), then reused at the beginning of *Asteria* (Dresden, 1737). The utmost achievement in the Saxon’s keyboard production is however represented by pieces of more modern conception, proper *sonatas*, as Hasse named the four ones composed for the “Dauphin”, princess Maria Josepha, daughter of the king of Poland and Elector of Saxony, and wife to the

crown prince of France, in the occasion of the above mentioned trip to Paris: the only collection arranged by the composer himself, which knew a widespread diffusion in handwritten copies in the most important European libraries, and fully included in the Brescia manuscript here recorded (the Sonata in A Major, which concludes the programme, crowns also the original series). In this collection, nine movements in moderate tempo of similar atmosphere, usually standing between *Allegretto* and *Allegro*, allow little space to counterpoint, rather realizing, through a two-parts writing characterized by the predominance of the right hand and the sharp line of a mellow lyrical *melos*, a brief summary of the galant style: a stylized writing, emblematic of that "age of conversation" portrayed by Boucher and Watteau, whose interpretative key may probably be found in the aristocratic carelessness of the *Andantino alla Polacca* (*Allegretto* in the original indication, as the central section of the *Second Sonata for the Dauphin*) that opens this recording.

Del Sig.^{ro} Giacinto
Danni in casa del Signor
Rialto.

JOHANN ADOLF HASSE ~ Sonatas

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Andrea Bacchetti

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The Penguin Guide (UK)

“Bacchetti is an enterprising artist, willing to explore the keyboard repertoire, and his playing is always distinctive, cultivated and full of life.”

The Independent (UK)

“The effect is quite entrancing, with successions of delicate trills held firmly in place by Bacchetti's measured playing.”

Classica (FR)

“Une délicatesse extrême au contrôle du son”



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 **LA TASTIERA
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