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Bernardo Pasquini's *Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato*: Simple Entertainment or an Elaborate Charade?

Abstract

The fourteen sonatas for two harpsichords from the collection *Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato* by Bernardo Pasquini (British Library of London, shelf mark: Ms. Add. 31501, I) are unique examples of double *partimento*. Few performers have taken up these works so far; they deserve much more attention. Employing contrapuntal techniques in their execution offers very interesting possibilities. The author describes and presents her own polyphonic interpretations of selected pieces from this collection: *Sonata II* mm. I, II, III; *Sonata V* m. II; *Sonata VII a due* m. I; *Sonata X a 2* m. II; *Sonata XIII a 2* mm. I and II. This material may serve as encouragement for further studies and performance of these works. They are worthy of becoming part of staple concert repertoires.

Keywords

Bernardo Pasquini, *partimento*, basso continuo, harpsichord, fugue

Among the impressive number of *partimenti* left behind by Bernardo Pasquini¹ (1637–1710), those preserved in the collection *Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato*, now kept at the British Library of London (shelf mark Ms. Add. 31501, I2),² occupy a special place. Apart from small-scale pieces in *intavolatura* notation (*Tastata*, *Corrente*, and *Aria*), this autograph comprises twenty-eight works entered in the form of figured bass parts. Half of them, labelled *Basso*, *Basso continuo*, or simply untitled, were composed for one harpsichord.³ The other half, referred to as *Sonate*,⁴ are unique duets for keyboard instruments, the only examples of such double *partimenti* known in the history of music to date.

What the *Bassi* and *Sonate* have in common is their cyclic form. They are usually made up of three or four movements (a few have

¹ Bernardo Pasquini, a representative of the Roman school, is thought to have been one of the first (or possibly the first) composer to have written genuine *partimenti*, though he himself did not use this term and named his pieces *basso*, *basso continuo*, or after the genre they belonged to, for instance fugue, versetto, toccata, and sonata. Pasquini's keyboard works, his *partimenti* (*versetti*), and the treatise *I saggi di Contrappunto* (1695) have been published in our times in: B. Pasquini, *Opere per tastiera*, F. Ceraz, A. Carideo, eds, I–VIII (2000–2002; 2006–2009). A detailed list of Pasquini's output in these genres can be found in: A. Carideo, 'Bernardo Pasquini as a Counterpoint Teacher. A Critical Introduction to *I Saggi di Contrappunto* (1695)', *Philomusica on-line*, 12 (2012), 77–84, https://www.academia.edu/32422252/Bernardo_Pasquini_as_a_Counterpoint_Teacher.pdf, accessed 14 June 2020.

² On the manuscript's title page, we find a note possibly entered by Pasquini's nephew, Felice Bernardo Ricordati (1678–1727): *Ad usum Bernardi Felicis Ricordati de Buggiano in Etruria*.

³ For more on these compositions and on Pasquini's keyboard music, see: J. Solecka, 'Partimenti Bernarda Pasquiniego – studium realizacji wybranych Bassi ze zbioru *Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato*', *Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów UJ*, 43 (2019), 5–40.

⁴ The sonatas are originally numbered I to XIV within the collection, but their titles demonstrate a certain degree of variety. The word 'sonata' is missing from the title of the first one (labelled *A' due Cembali*), whereas *Sonatas VI, VII, VIII, IX* are marked as *a due*, *Sonatas X, XI, XIII* – as *a 2*. The other titles consist of only the word *Sonata* and the successive Roman numbers.

a greater or smaller number of sections). All the movements within a cycle are in the same key, with some individual exceptions (as when mov. III of *Sonata VII a due* starts in D minor and ends in the key of the entire cycle, F major). The *Bassi* and *Sonate* are not grouped separately in the manuscript. I believe they should be considered as a loose collection rather than a consistent cycle. The dates 1703–1704⁵ next to the works in the source may refer to the date of composition or of preparing the copies. In the last decade of his life, Pasquini gave up participation in great courtly and theatrical projects⁶ and dedicated himself mainly to teaching. His fame as both an eminent composer and a harpsichordist nonpareil⁷ attracted a considerable number of pupils,⁸ one of whom was his nephew Felice Bernardo Ricordati.⁹ The fact that *Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato* come from that period of Pasquini's life and work may support the thesis that they were mainly conceived as educational material, especially since the didactic function seems to have come to the fore

⁵ Next to the first *Tastata* in the collection we find the date 6 May 1703, and following the last *Basso* [XIV] – this sentence: ‘Actum fuit In Die Sancti Francisci Xsaverij / 1704 3.a Xbris’.

⁶ In his lifetime Pasquini gained fame first and foremost as a composer of great vocal-instrumental forms: operas, oratorios, and cantatas.

⁷ ‘Chi avera ottenuta la sorte di praticare, o studiare sotto la scuola del famosissimo Sig. Bernardo Pasquini in Roma, o chi almeno l'avra inteso o veduto sonare, avra potuto conoscere la piu vera, bella e nobile maniera di sonare e di accompagnare’ (‘Those whom fate allows to perform or study under the guidance of the most renowned Mr Bernardo Pasquini in Rome, or at least see or hear him play, shall become acquainted with the most genuine, beautiful and noble manner of playing and accompanying’). F. Gasparini, *L'armonico pratico al Cimbalo* (1708).

⁸ Pasquini's pupils included Georg Muffat, Johann Philipp Krieger, Giovanni Maria Casini, Floriano Arresti, Francesco Gasparini, Tommaso Bernardo Gaffi, and Domenico Zipoli. Some claim that he also taught Francesco Durante, a would-be leading Neapolitan school master, and Domenico Scarlatti.

⁹ The composer's nephews, Felice Bernardo Ricordati and Giovanni Francesco Ricordati, were also his heirs, who after his death inherited, among others, their uncle's music manuscripts. Felice Bernardo Ricordati studied with Pasquini (cf. footnote 2) and was most likely the one to make entries in the manuscripts preserved at the British Library of London, shelf marks Ms. Add. 31501, I-III. Some hypothesise that F.B. Ricordati may himself have written some of the *versetti* (102 *Versetti in basso continuo per rispondere al coro*) found in those sources; cf. A. Morelli, *La virtu in corte. Bernardo Pasquini (1637–1710)* (2016), 327.

in the later years of *partimento* development as a genre,¹⁰ particularly in Naples.¹¹ Some researchers thus consider Pasquini's *Sonatas* for two harpsichords as musical exercises for the teacher and pupil to perform together, the former as leader, the latter – as an imitator.¹² Others interpret these works as learned entertainment for advanced and experienced musicians.¹³ Tagliavini claims that Pasquini elevated the practice of figured bass realisation to a level much higher than what was needed for didactic purposes.¹⁴ This is the view that I have also embraced on the basis of my own experience of work on the *Sonate* from the cycle under study. Their significance and functions were and can still remain diverse today. The music material is flexible enough both to provide the pleasure of music-making and be used as an effective teaching aid for figured bass realisation on the elementary level. It can also give much satisfaction to patient students of polyphonic complexities and masterful music construction. The *Sonate*, thought out by the composer down to minutest detail, can serve all these functions.

Pasquini's *Sonate* demonstrate some similarities to Arcangelo Corelli's violin sonatas. The music of these two composers, active at the same place and time, and even performing music together, does have certain features in common, but they developed their own individual,

¹⁰ For more on the *partimento* genre, cf. J. Solecka, 'Partimento – praktyka czy sztuka', *Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów UJ*, 41 (2019), 23–42.

¹¹ The Neapolitan system of musicians' education, which achieved fame throughout Europe, was based on the so-called 'conservatories'. The word *conservatorio* referred to centres for the care of children who had no families of their own. Apart from taking care of the orphans, the *conservatori* aimed to teach the children specific crafts or professions so that they could take up work once they reached an appropriate age. Various professions were taught at first, but with time music began to dominate in this system of education. Neapolitan conservatories began their activity in the sixteenth century. Four of them still existed in the eighteenth: Santa Maria di Loreto (est. 1537), Sant'Onofrio a Porta Capuana (est. 1578), Santa Maria della Pietà dei Turchini (est. 1583), and Poveri di Gesù Cristo (est. 1589). These conservatories taught to sing, play instruments, and compose music.

¹² This view is expressed in: E. Bellotti, B. Porter, 'Pasquini e l'improvvisazione: un approccio pedagogico', in *Atti Convegno Internazionale. Pasquini Symposium – Smarano, 27–30 maggio 2010* (2012), 195–210.

¹³ G. Sanguinetti presents this point of view in *The Art of Partimento* (2012), 14–15, 59.

¹⁴ L.F. Tagliavini, 'Bernardo Pasquini all'apogeo della prassi del basso continuo', in *Cristina di Svezia e la musica. Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Roma, 5–6 dicembre 1996)* (1996), 161–167.

separate styles and aesthetic stances. Corelli's melodies are determined by the instrumental (violin) idiom, similarly as in Pasquini's *partimenti*. However, in the latter case, convenience of execution on the keyboard or, for that matter, on any other instruments, does not seem to have been the composer's priority in shaping the melodic contour. These melodies frequently exhibit a primarily contrapuntal, slightly abstract, and for this reason – universal quality. Pasquini rarely makes use of the binary form. When he does, as in some *Sonate* (and in his numerous intabulated works), it is reserved mainly for dances (names of dances do sporadically occur in the *Sonate* and *Bassi* from the collection under study¹⁵). This is the formal design that we find in mov. III of [*Sonata I*] *A' due Cembali*, movs III and IV of *Sonata IV*,¹⁶ mov. IV of *Sonata VIII a due*, mov. II of *Sonata IX a due*, mov. III of *Sonata X a 2*, mov. II of *Sonata XII*, as well as movs II and III of *Sonata XIV*. However, the form of the instrumental miniatures that make up Pasquini's sonata cycles in most cases does not comprise the distinct central caesura characteristic of binary structures, which suspends the course of musical narration on the dominant or relative chord. Pasquini frequently employs a different form-building rhetorical device, namely, the subordination of the work's structure to the idea of intensifying musical narration through the densification of ever shorter phrases. This adds dynamism to the dialogue of the two instruments and leads to the culmination, which comes in the final cadence. Such a construction creates the effect of a textural *crescendo* and does not favour repetition, either of individual segments within the given miniature or *da capo* of the entire form (naturally, with the exception of those few repetitions that are marked by the composer in the score). In some miniatures we find the germs of reprise form, even in fugued passages. Nevertheless, mechanical repetition of note groupings would be improper in such fragments. For this reason, interpretations in which

¹⁵ *Scherza sopra il Ballo dei Toppi* – mov. III [Basso XI], *Ballo alla Schiavona* – mov. V Basso [XII].

¹⁶ These movements have the same formal design and harmonic progressions, but differ in time signatures and melodic material. They may be viewed as the opening sections for a cycle of variations (*partite*). In a bold interpretation one might add more *partite* in the finale of this *Sonata*, as suggested by Pasquini himself in a note found at the end of his *Partite del Saltarello*: 'Se ne possono fare moltissime altre ma chi vuole imparare studi' ('Many more of them can be created; however, he who wishes to learn, let him study').

entire movements of Pasquini's sonatas get repeated (*da capo*), possibly as a way of compensating for their small dimensions, demonstrating the performers' inventiveness, or emphasising the sound qualities of their instruments – seem to be ill-considered and, in my view, at odds with the formal principles of these works.

Tempo indications (*Sonata III*, mov. II – *Adagio*; *Sonata VII a due*, mov. III – *Adagio. Presto*; *Sonata VIII a due*, mov. III – *Grave*) are rare in the *Sonate*. Surprisingly, despite the use of notation as ambiguous as figured bass, the composer did not resign in this collection from notating ornamentation, which he marks with only one symbol: *t*. Its precise interpretation has been the subject of studies by both scholars and performers. In general, however, Pasquini's care to notate an aspect of performance as sophisticated as ornaments should make us reconsider the function of these works. If they had really been conceived as mere exercises in counterpoint and composition, would such clues for interpretation be needed at all?

From the set of fourteen *Sonate* for two harpsichords, for the needs of this paper I have selected those which, in my subjective opinion, present the most interesting picture of Pasquini's mastery of the *partimento* genre and are most inspiring for performers aiming at a creative realisation of this music in contrapuntal style:¹⁷ *Sonata II*, movs I, II, and III; *Sonata V*, mov. II; *Sonata VII a due*, mov. I; *Sonata X a 2*, mov. II; *Sonata XIII a 2*, movs I and II. The collection of *Sonate per uno o due Cembali con il basso cifrato* was published in 2006 as part of Edoardo Bellotti's larger editing project dedicated to Pasquini's keyboard music.¹⁸ It is this edition that has served as the basis for the analyses contained in my paper.

In the descriptions below I use such terms as 'instrument I' and 'instrument II' without defining what specific keyboard instruments are to play these parts.¹⁹ It is my assumption that the counterpoints

¹⁷ *Sonate IV, IX a due*, and *XII* in my interpretation are the subject of my DMA dissertation entitled 'Partimento – duet wykonawcy z kompozytorem, od szkicu do improwizacji i kompozycji. Realizacja wybranych *Partimenti* Bernardo Pasquiniego', supervised by Professor Dariusz Bąkowski-Kois, DMA, Habil., and presented at the Instrumental Department of Cracow's Academy of Music in 2017.

¹⁸ Bernardo Pasquini, *Opere per Tastiera*, 6 (2006).

¹⁹ The compositions discussed here may hypothetically be performed on other instruments typically executing the basso / harmonic base as well, not only on keyboard ones. Harps or lutes could possibly be considered. The composer does not

needed to create a complete four-part polyphonic texture need to be 'discovered' rather than 'created', since they are inherent in Pasquini's music and are profoundly conditioned by the necessary textural and harmonic logic of the given work. This does not mean, however, that I treat the counterpoints I have found as the only possible ones or as models for correct interpretation. Let other performers demonstrate their melodic invention by developing other variants of these musical charades.

Sonata II

The tripartite *Sonata II* in C major may serve as one of the most interesting examples of Pasquini's cyclic *partimento* as far as the mastery of polyphonic voice leading, texture construction and integrity of the sonata cycle are concerned.

Movement I

This 17-measure section in C time only contains two bass parts in the original musical text (example 1).



refer to this subject at any point, so the issue needs to be put to the test of actual performance, taking into account the actual technical and textural possibilities of the given type of instrument.



Ex. 1. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata II*, mov. I – the source text of the *partimento*.

The contrapuntal material provided by these two melodic lines consists of two two-bar-long musical ideas in mutual counterpoint to each other. Motif *a* serves as the theme, while motif *b* is the counterpoint. In order to obtain a full linear four-part texture in actual performance, we thus need two more counterpoints, marked as *c* and *d* (example 2).



Ex 2. *a* – theme, *b* – original counterpoint, *c* and *d* – ‘discovered’ counterpoints.

One unique quality of this miniature (see my realisation of this piece in the *Appendix*) is the use of double counterpoint based on the material of the theme and of counterpoint *c*. Counterpoints *b* and *d* cannot be submitted to this procedure since the former must always be placed in the bottom part, and the latter – in the top one. The piece consists of two polyphonic thematic statements, one in the principal key (mm. 1–7), the other in the key of the dominant (mm. 11–15), separated by a modulating episode (mm. 7–11). The whole miniature ends with a three-bar coda. In the first polyphonic statement, the theme enters in both bottom parts and the top part of instrument I. The second theme entry (in the top part, mm. 3–4) is accompanied by counterpoints in both bass parts *c* and *b*. The third entry (in the bass, mm. 5–6) is already accompanied by all the counterpoints introduced before, which results in a full four-part texture.

In the second theme statement, we have a symmetrical sequence of contrapuntal elements; while the bass parts exchange melodic material *a* and *b*, the top parts swap the counterpoints *c* and *d*. The melodic material of the episode and the coda is based on brief motifs derived from the theme and its counterpoints. Its short phrases make it possible to interpret these sections as dialogues of parts and as free imitation.

In my realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*) the tempo of performance is preferably not too fast so that the melodic leaps and wide ambitus of figurative motifs do not get blurred. The flashy, motion-like timbral effect must not obscure the polyphonic contour of the phrases. The octave leap from the opening is echoed in the final movement of this *Sonata*.

Movement II

It consists of 18 measures in 4/4 time (metre unmarked in the original) and exemplifies a fugue-like polyphonic technique. The two bass parts remain. It is in their melodic material that the composer stated the subject, answer, as well as one counterpoint (*a*; example 3). In my realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*) these components are retained in the bass parts while the top parts introduce two ‘discovered’ counterpoints (*b*, *c*; example 3).

Ex. 3. The subject, answer, and counterpoints *a*, *b*, and *c*.

There is no possibility of introducing double counterpoint here. The whole movement consists of two subject statements (the first in mm. 1–7, the second in mm. 10–15), a connecting episode (mm. 7–9), and a coda (mm. 16–18).

The image shows a page of musical notation for a harpsichord or cembalo. It consists of two systems of two staves each, both in bass clef. The first system covers measures 13 to 18, and the second system covers measures 16 to 18. The notation includes rhythmic values, accidentals, and figured bass symbols (numbers 1-7 and 6/5) placed above and below the notes. The piece concludes with the word 'Segue' at the end of the second system.

Ex. 4. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata II*, mov. II – the source text of the *partimento*.

In my realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*) I interpret this section as a double fugue whose subject (and thus also the answer) form one organic whole with counterpoint *b*. The two subject statements exhibit an interesting mutual symmetry resulting from the sequence of contrapuntal components, whose structures are to some extent analogous, but harmonically contrasted. The first is rooted in the principal key of C major, while the second, tonally more varied, presents the subject in closely related keys and makes use of modulations. The first of these takes place in mm. 10–11 in a theme that starts in G major but ends in A minor. The subsequent subject entries are in F major (mm. 12–13) and D minor (mm. 14–15). The episode and the coda (in the source text and, consequently, in my realisation) make use of melodic material derived from the theme and the counterpoints. The resulting music sounds good when performed at a slow tempo, so that the linear organisation and the song-like qualities of the phrases dominate over the timbral effects.

Movement III

This 25-measure section in 6/8 time demonstrates, similarly as the previous ones in the same sonata, a strong preference for linear polyphonic textures, but this time without elements of the fugue technique. Pasquini's material (only the bass parts for both instruments) makes it possible to distinguish the motif functioning as the subject and several

figurative phrases which in actual realisation will gracefully take the role of the counterpoint (example 5). In both parts the subject is distinctly stated in the principal key (mm. 1–7), then in the relative key (mm. 8–11). Its subsequent entries are abbreviated and only quote the first two rhythmic groups: in G major (m. 17), and E minor (m. 18). In the last two subject entries, the theme’s melodic contour is slightly modified, and the second progression is ascending rather than descending. This section is composed in a manner characteristic of many of Pasquini’s *partimenti*. The phrases become progressively shorter, the dialogue of voices grows denser, and the music narration thus intensifies throughout, up to the final cadence.

The image displays a musical score for two voices, labeled 'III' at the beginning. The score is written in 6/8 time and consists of five systems of music. The first system (measures 3-7) shows the initial entry of the subject in G major. The second system (measures 8-11) shows the subject in the relative key of E minor. The third system (measures 12-14) shows an abbreviated entry in G major. The fourth system (measures 15-18) shows two more abbreviated entries, one in G major and one in E minor. The fifth system (measures 19-21) shows the final two entries, with modified melodic contours. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, accidentals, and dynamic markings such as 'f' and '6'.



Ex. 5. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata II*, mov. III – the source text of the *partimento*.

The characteristic octave leap in the subject and the dynamically changeable melodies in the counterpoints enhance the lively, even humorous character of this piece, which I have attempted to capture in my realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*). In my interpretation the added melodic lines of the upper parts are motivically based on material derived from the bass parts. Such a realisation of the *partimento* highlights the colouring of the voice motion while preserving motivic unity, smooth narrative flow, and balance in the treatment of the individual parts and the two instruments. The formal construction designed by Pasquini is reflected in my realisation. The phrases and the instrument dialogue become progressively denser. Played at a lively tempo, this piece will bring to mind associations with dance.

Also of note is the shared motivic pattern in movements I and III, comprising both a broad octave leap and the narrow second progression. Both movements present this idea, which, though with different time signatures and melodic gestures, becomes a distinct common denominator unifying this sonata cycle. One might risk the conclusion that Pasquini was fond of typical motifs, even not very original ones. This need not reflect unfavourably on his composition technique. It would be hard not to notice and appreciate his mastery, which derives so many melodic variants out of such simple themes which, far from identical, always sound fresh and provide a creative impetus for the *partimento* realisation.

***Sonata V*, mov. II**

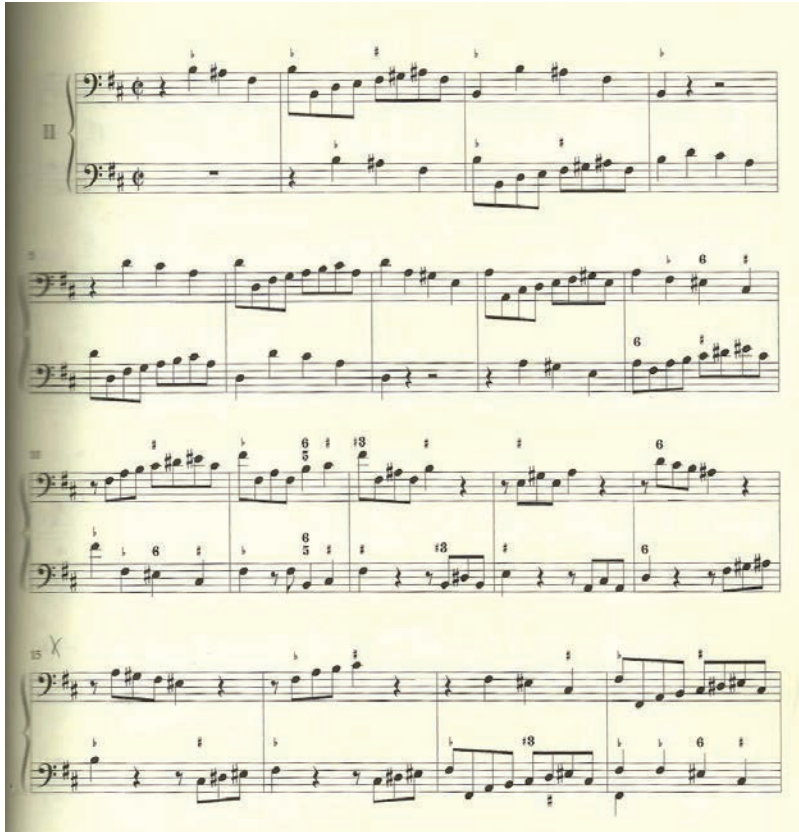
Movement II of *Sonata V*, though not a fugue, represents an extraordinary potential for polyphonic solutions in the imitative technique. It is a 28-measure *partimento* in B minor and cut time, presenting rather

economical melodic material in the two bass parts (example 7). There is a brief theme with a clear contour (instrument I, m. 1 – beg. of 2) and counterpoint *a* (instrument I, m. 2 – beg. of 3; example 6). In the construction of this piece, we can distinguish two theme statements; the first is longer (mm. 1–11), the second – more modest (signalled in the bass line in m. 17, but in actual realisation the theme may enter one measure earlier, in the top part of instrument I, thus starting the second statement in m. 16; see the music material in the *Appendix*). This second statement continues in my realisation until the very end of the piece since the theme is introduced in the top parts in the last bars. Between the two statements we find a connecting episode (mm. 11–16), which provides an opportunity for motivic work based on the theme material. In the first statement the theme is originally presented in triple entries, first in B minor (mm. 1–4), then in D major (mm. 4–7). Subsequently the narration grows denser and theme entries come in pairs: two in A major (mm. 7–9), two in F-sharp minor (mm. 9–11; see the music material in the *Appendix*). Altogether this adds up to ten theme entries, all in the bass parts. With such intense imitations in both bass parts, the top ones in my realisation of this section have been limited to lines in counterpoint. In the second statement, the material of the *partimento* (example 7) only states the theme twice, in both cases in F-sharp minor (mm. 17–19). My realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*) makes it possible to place three entries in the top parts (mm. 16–17, instrument I; mm. 23–24, instrument I; mm. 26–27, instrument II), which makes a total of five theme entries. Two counterpoints, *b* and *c* (example 6) need to be discovered to construct a full polyphonic setting, and the theme needs to be subjected to thematic development. The polyphonic texture has allowed me to use the theme's inverted head as well as both forms of the same head (*recte* and *inverso*) in diminution. Head diminution was in fact introduced by the composer himself in the second statement of the theme in the bass part (the same motif, inverted, appears at the start of counterpoint *a*, example 6). Counterpoint *a* also fits in well in the top parts. The other counterpoints, added in my realisation (*b* and *c*), unfold exclusively in the top parts. One important quality of the polyphonic structure I have managed to obtain here is the possibility to apply double counterpoint: between the theme and counterpoint *a*, as well as between counterpoints *b* and *c*. The second statement is dominated by the inverted

version of the theme in diminution. Such motifs form a dense imitative network, propelling the narration of the form, which tends towards the finale and the culmination, making it possible for the last entries of the theme to be emphatically highlighted in the top parts (mm. 23–24 and 26–27; see the music material in the *Appendix*).



Ex. 6. The theme and counterpoints: *a*, *b*, and *c*.





Ex. 7. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata V*, mov. II – the source text of the *partimento*.

In my realisation, the piece sounds well when played at a rather slow tempo, so that its polyphonic structure and sometimes surprising harmonies are given the time and space peacefully to unfold.²⁰ The *partimento* has thus taken on the qualities of an intellectual puzzle, a musical charade devoid of any references to vocal or dance music. The phrases in the individual parts are mostly brief and they interlock like gears in a precise mechanism. Each note has its strictly defined place resulting not so much from affect and rhetoric as from the demands of structural and textural coherence.

***Sonata VII a due*, mov. I**

The twenty-three-measure-long first movement of *Sonata VII a due* in F major, in C time, comprises in its *partimento* form two complete bass parts (example 8), which bring two main motifs. The first of them may be interpreted as the leading one. It is a broken triad with a characteristic rhythm and a transition note filling in the third interval (m. 1; both instruments' parts). The second motif, functioning as a counterpoint, is a diatonic (ascending or descending) progression with a uniform rhythmic pattern (m. 2; both instruments' parts). These motifs are represented in example 8. Their special characteristic is how prone they are

²⁰ Though some might claim that such a realisation is at odds with the *alla breve* time indication.

to motivic transformations: shifts in the direction of melodic motion, modifications in the sequence of elements, evolution of intervals, etc. The composer applied all these techniques to shape the course of the bass parts. The performer is thus provided with ready-made ideas and suggestions for the realisation of this piece.

The image displays a page of musical notation for the first movement of Bernardo Pasquini's Sonata VII a due. The score is written for two staves, likely representing the two hands of a harpsichord. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and ornaments. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 4, 8, 12, 16, and 19 clearly marked. The piece concludes with the word "segue" at the end of the final measure.

Ex. 8. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata VII a due*, mov. I – the source text of the *partimento*.

Interactions between the two instruments are very lively from the beginning, the phrases – short and regular. The melodic material as well as the composer's clues with regard to texture and construction favour the use of free imitative technique in the realisation. Melodic ideas and ways of transforming motifs in the upper parts are derived from the bass parts. The motifs provided by the composer are perfect for constructing counterpoint. They encourage the performers to discover their own different variants, obtained through simple motivic transformations. The whole is complemented by a harmonic progression with several momentary modulations to C major (mm. 4–5, 17), D minor (mm. 5–6), and G minor (mm. 15–16). The strong cadence in the principal key (mm. 12–13), along with a quotation from the main motif in the part of instrument II, opens the second segment of this miniature, which may be interpreted as a reprise (example 8).

The type of narration in this piece makes it possible to obtain a light and airy texture with homogeneous melodic flow, humorous expression, and featuring a jaunty dialogue between the two instruments (see the music material in the *Appendix*). One possible drawback of my realisation is the conventional rhythm and the predictability of both segment lengths and melodic progressions. These are qualities, however, which should not offend the ear in such a small form, which constitutes but one movement in a larger cycle.

Sonata X a 2, mov. II

An example of nearly complete melodic material contained in the lines of two bass parts and needed to produce a full four-part polyphonic texture can be found in the *partimento* composed as the second movement of *Sonata X a 2* in E minor (example 9). This 15-measure piece in 4/4 time (unmarked in the source) represents a form of invention, within which we can distinguish a grouping functioning as the theme and several counterpoints. The theme consists of the head (the motif of a springy fourth leap, as in m. 1 – beg. of m. 2, part of instrument I, or, in another variant, that of a second oscillation, in m. 3 – beg. of m. 4, part of instrument I) and its evolution (a diatonic progression down the degrees of the scale). This is represented in example 9. In the first statement of the theme in the bass parts we can distinguish five entries:

two in the principal key of E minor (mm. 1–3), one each in B minor (instrument I, mm. 3–4) and F-sharp minor (instrument II, mm. 4–5), then again in E minor, but presented in such a way that the head is performed by instrument I (m. 6), and the evolution by instrument II (m. 7). This exposition is followed by a connecting episode (mm. 8–10), which leads to a suspension on the dominant chord. In the second statement the theme recurs twice: first, surprisingly, in the relative key in instrument I (mm. 10–11), and then in D major in instrument II (mm. 11–12). The melodic material of the coda (mm. 13–15) contains no references to the theme. What attracts attention here is the sequence of apparent dominants leading to the final cadence. Apart from the melodic material of the theme, the bass parts of the *partimento* comprise three counterpoints (example 9): *a* – diatonic descent within the interval of a third (m. 2, part of instrument I); *b* – a figurative motif based on a broken triad (m. 9, part of instrument II); *c* – a figurative motif woven around a descending second progression (m. 8, part of instrument I).

The image displays a page of musical notation for two harpsichords, labeled 'I' and 'II'. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 3, and the second system contains measures 4 through 6. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and ornaments. Measure numbers are indicated above the staves. The score shows a complex interplay between the two instruments, with various rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.



Ex. 9. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata X a 2*, mov. II – the source text of the *partimento*.

For my polyphonic (four-part) realisation I needed one more counterpoint, referred to here as *d*, whose melodic contour diatonically fills in an upward fourth leap (example 10). This counterpoint first appears in my realisation in the top part of instrument I (m. 7) and is needed twice more (in m. 11, instrument II – with rhythmic transformation, and in m. 12, instrument I; see the music material in the *Appendix*).



Ex. 10. Counterpoint *d*.

It is from such melodic material, a substantial majority of which was provided by the composer himself, that the complete polyphonic texture of the realisation has been formed, supplemented only in some places with several free motifs (see the music material in the *Appendix*). I have only been able to place the theme in the top parts once, in mm. 2–3 in instrument I. Two *loci* are notable in the harmonic course of this movement. The first comes in m. 5, where after a theme in F-sharp minor we suddenly have an F major chord based on a third. The second one, already mentioned above, is the entry of the theme in G major after the caesura, on the dominant B major chord in m. 10.

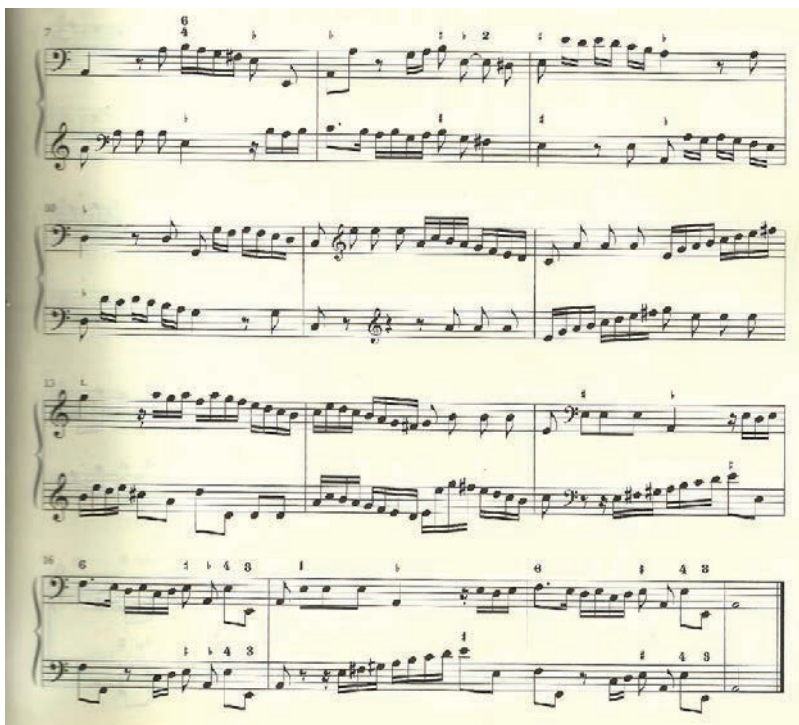
Sonata XIII a 2

The first two movements of *Sonata XIII a 2* in A minor (examples 11 and 13) demonstrate a motivic affinity of a similar kind as in the case of movs I and III of *Sonata II* (examples 1 and 5). The melodic material, however, is presented in a different manner. Unlike in *Sonata II*, both these movements of *Sonata XIII a 2* comprise in the original source elements of the bass and top parts. The part fragments provided by the composer clearly call for linear continuity in actual realisation. Characteristic of both sonatas is the difference in metre (duple vs triple) between movements featuring related motifs. This difference entails a different tempo and character of these pieces. Duple time comes before triple, which reflects the long-established tradition of instrumental cycle writing.

Movement I

Movement I of *Sonata XIII a 2* (in C time) is a precisely composed fugue made up of an exposition (mm. 1–9), an episode (mm. 9–14), and a brief reprise (mm. 15–19). The melodic components provided by the composer (example 11) are the theme (m. 1 – beg. of m. 3, part of instrument I), the answer (m. 3 – beg. of m. 5, part of instrument II), counterpoints *a* (m. 3 – beg. of m. 5, part of instrument I), *b* (m. 7 – beg. of m. 9, part of instrument I), and *c* (m. 15 – beg. of m. 17, part of instrument II). The type of theme may be identified as *andamento*, with a dignified head, a lively evolution, and a perfunctorily designed coda. Apart from its basic form, presented in the exposition, the theme is subjected to evolutionary melodic transformations in the episode.

The image displays a musical score for Movement I of Sonata XIII a 2. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The music is in common time (C). The second system continues the piece, with a treble clef on the top staff and a bass clef on the bottom staff. The music is in common time (C). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. There are also some markings above the staves, possibly indicating fingerings or articulation. The score is presented on a yellowed background, suggesting it is a scan of an old manuscript or book.



Ex. 11. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata XIII a 2*, mov. I – the source text of the *partimento*.

The first repercussion in the exposition involves the top parts, and the second – the bass ones. In the reprise, the theme is stated exclusively in the bass line of instrument I, and its repetition results from the realisation of the little reprise (example 11). The composer retains balance between parts. Though the top ones present the theme only once each, they are responsible for the four-bar-long two-part fragment in the episode, which contains the theme transformed in an evolutionary manner (m. 11 – beg. of m. 15). For a full polyphonic realisation, I needed to ‘discover’ two more counterpoints, *d* and *f* (example 12).



Ex. 12. Counterpoints *d* and *f*.

In my realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*), counterpoints *a*, *d*, and *f* appear in the top parts, *b* and *c* – in the bass. There is no opportunity to introduce double counterpoint.

We might be tempted to go outside the composer's source text and realise this piece with a rather more extensive reprise. Instead of a mechanical repetition of the last measures (the little reprise) one might compose one or even two full repercussions. Such performer interventions in the material of the *partimento*, leading to form extension, need not be considered as a mishandling of the original. Other performers may possibly like to use this opportunity.

Movement II

Movement II of *Sonata XIII a 2* (example 13), thirty-two measures long and in 3/8 time, demonstrates evident melodic affinity to movement I (example 11). It employs imitative technique in the manner of a *fugato*. The material of the *partimento* present fragments of the bottom and top parts alternately down to m. 6, and from m. 7 to the end – only the bass parts. The brief dialogue between parts in the opening of the piece is sufficient to grasp the composer's intention, which is – for the voice-leading to continue in a linear manner. The melodic components we are provided with (example 13) are the theme (mm. 1–2, part of instrument I), the answer (mm. 2–3, part of instrument II), counterpoint *a* in forward (*recte*) motion (m. 3 – beg. of m. 4, part of instrument I) as well as inverted (*inverso*; m. 12 – beg. of m. 13, part of instrument I), and counterpoint *b* (mm. 5–6, part of instrument I). Out of these elements one may construct a nearly complete polyphonic realisation of the piece. The brief theme of the *attacca* kind is a direct quotation from the head of the first-movement theme, but, because of changed metre and type of motion, its expression and manner of gesture are also transformed (see example 11).



The image shows a musical score for Movement II, consisting of two staves labeled 'II'. The music is written in 3/8 time. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The score begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. The first two measures show a bass line with a quarter note G2, a quarter note F2, and a quarter note E2. The second measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4. The third measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The fourth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The fifth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The sixth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The seventh measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The eighth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The ninth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The tenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The eleventh measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twelfth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The thirteenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The fourteenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The fifteenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The sixteenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The seventeenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The eighteenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The nineteenth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twentieth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-first measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-second measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-third measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-fourth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-fifth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-sixth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-seventh measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-eighth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The twenty-ninth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The thirtieth measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The thirty-first measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4. The thirty-second measure has a treble clef and a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4 and a quarter note E4.

Ex. 13. Bernardo Pasquini, *Sonata XIII a 2*, mov. II – the source text of the *partimento*.

This movement is clearly internally divided by a cadence in the key of the dominant (mm. 17–19, see example 13). The harmonic design and the formal division determine the presence of two fugato sections in the realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*). The first one, slightly longer than the second (mm. 1–17), comprises a subject statement filled with numerous entries and answers, with a brief connecting episode in the middle (mm. 10–11), after which there comes an opportunity to introduce the inverted theme in the top part of instrument I (mm. 13–16; see the music material in the *Appendix*). The second fugato section (from m. 19) returns to the principal key. There are several subject entries and answers, followed by a coda (mm. 27–32). Double counterpoint can be introduced in the realisation (see the music material in the *Appendix*): for the theme and for counterpoint *a*.

Conclusion

My purpose in sharing the experience of a practical realisation of the entire set of Bernardo Pasquini's fourteen *Sonate* for two keyboard instruments has been to demonstrate the polyphonic potential of these works. I hope that this material may serve as an encouragement for other performers to look for other, similar or better interpretations. A simple homophonic realisation of these *Sonate*, even if it is diversified with elements of polyphony, remains in essence a pleasant but trivial kind of entertainment on a rather elementary level, and does not allow the performer to demonstrate the contrapuntal assets of this repertoire. Such a simple realisation may not be called improper or historically unjustified, though, since the *partimento* practice allows for such interpretations. All the same, an attempt to perform the sonatas in contrapuntal style, apart from playing *sopra la parte* with elements of imitation or even fugue, is also a truly fascinating study in polyphony and composition, calling for insights and going beyond mere improvisation. Naturally, collective improvisation in a light style has its undoubted advantages which should not be ignored. It answers to the need for competition as well as facilitating mutual inspiration. Such collective music-making has its due place both at home, in educational context, and in the concert hall. Its undoubted strong points are spontaneity and the unique character of each performance. In such a realisation the partners are equal and mutually inspire each other.

Contrapuntal realisation, on the other hand, is in principle a form of composition²¹ in which one of the performers becomes a co-author of the *Sonate* along with Pasquini and imposes on the other musical partner first his or her vision of the work's construction, and later also probably the performance concept, including solutions with regard to expression, narrative development, etc. The important element of spontaneous interaction between two personalities and their mutual influence is thus lost. What we get in return is cohesive texture, logical form, and a uniform melodic concept. To experienced performers both manners of interpretation may be tempting and satisfying, so the matter is one of conscious choice and acceptance.

²¹ In Neapolitan practice, *partimenti* intended for full realisation in score form were called *disposizioni* and could even involve large performing forces.

7

Musical score for measures 7-9. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 7: Treble has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. Measure 8: Treble has a quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter rest. Bass has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, quarter rest. Measure 9: Treble has a quarter rest, eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, quarter rest. Bass has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, quarter rest.

10

Musical score for measures 10-12. The system consists of two staves. Measure 10: Treble has a quarter note G4, eighth notes A4, B4, C5, quarter rest. Bass has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. Measure 11: Treble has a quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note D5, quarter note E5. Bass has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 12: Treble has a quarter note D5, quarter note E5, quarter note F5, quarter note G5. Bass has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

13

Musical score for measures 13-15. The system consists of two staves. Measure 13: Treble has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. Measure 14: Treble has a quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note D5, quarter note E5. Bass has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5. Measure 15: Treble has a quarter note D5, quarter note E5, quarter note F5, quarter note G5. Bass has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

16

Musical score for measures 16-17. The system consists of two staves. Measure 16: Treble has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Bass has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. Measure 17: Treble has a quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note D5, quarter note E5. Bass has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F5, G5.

Bernardo Pasquini *Sonata II*, mov. II. Figured bass realisation by J. Solecka.

Clavicembalo I

Clavicembalo II

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a sonata by Bernardo Pasquini. Each system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system begins at measure 14. The treble staff features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth notes and rests. The second system begins at measure 17 and concludes with a double bar line. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and note values.

Bernardo Pasquini *Sonata II*, mov. III. Figured bass realisation by J. Solecka.

Clavicembalo I

Clavicembalo II

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a sonata by Bernardo Pasquini. Each system consists of two grand staves, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The first system begins at measure 20. The upper staff features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the lower staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with sixteenth-note patterns. The second system begins at measure 23 and concludes with a double bar line. The notation is clear and legible, showing the intricate details of the piece's composition.

Bernardo Pasquini *Sonata V*, mov. II. Figured bass realisation by J. Solecka.

The image displays a musical score for two harpsichords, labeled 'Clavicembalo I' and 'Clavicembalo II'. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with two staves. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with measures 1 through 4. The second system contains measures 5 through 9. The third system contains measures 10 through 14. The fourth system contains measures 15 through 19. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines, with some measures containing rests. The figured bass realization is indicated by numbers and accidentals placed below the bass staves.

20

24

Bernardo Pasquini *Sonata VII*, mov. I. Figured bass realisation by J. Solecka.

Clavicembalo I

Clavicembalo II

4

8

12

Joanna Solecka, *Bernardo Pasquini's Sonate per uno o due Cembali...*

The image displays a musical score for two harpsichords, consisting of two systems of staves. Each system includes a right-hand staff (treble clef) and a left-hand staff (bass clef). The music is written in a single system with a common time signature. The first system covers measures 16 through 19, and the second system covers measures 20 through 23. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and articulation marks. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 23.

Bernardo Pasquini *Sonata X*, mov. II. Figured bass realisation by J. Solecka.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 1-3. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time. Clavicembalo I has a treble and bass staff. Clavicembalo II has a treble and bass staff. The music begins with a rest in the treble of both instruments, followed by a bass line in the Clavicembalo I bass staff.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 4-6. The score continues with more complex rhythmic patterns in both instruments, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 7-9. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes in both parts.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 10-12. The score concludes with a final cadence in both instruments.

Joanna Solecka, *Bernardo Pasquini's Sonate per uno o due Cembali...*

The image shows a musical score for two harpsichords, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system (measures 13-15) has a treble staff and a bass staff. The second system (measures 16-18) also has a treble staff and a bass staff. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The score concludes with double bar lines and repeat dots at the end of each system.

Bernardo Pasquini *Sonata XIII*, mov. I. Figured bass realisation by J. Solecka.

Clavicembalo I

Clavicembalo II

13

Musical score for measures 13-15. The system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) for each of two systems. The first system (measures 13-14) shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system (measure 15) continues the melodic line in the treble staff and has a more active bass staff with sixteenth-note patterns.

16

Musical score for measures 16-19. The system consists of two staves (treble and bass clef) for each of two systems. The first system (measures 16-17) shows a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a simple accompaniment. The second system (measures 18-19) continues the melodic line in the treble staff and has a more active bass staff with sixteenth-note patterns. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Bernardo Pasquini *Sonata XIII*, mov. II. Figured bass realisation by J. Solecka.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 1-7. The score is in 3/8 time and features a treble and bass clef for each instrument. The Clavicembalo I part begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Clavicembalo II part begins with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and accidentals.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 8-15. The score continues with the same notation as the previous system. The Clavicembalo I part has a treble clef and the Clavicembalo II part has a bass clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 16-22. The score continues with the same notation as the previous systems. The Clavicembalo I part has a treble clef and the Clavicembalo II part has a bass clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

Musical score for Clavicembalo I and Clavicembalo II, measures 23-29. The score continues with the same notation as the previous systems. The Clavicembalo I part has a treble clef and the Clavicembalo II part has a bass clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines.

28

The image shows a musical score for two harpsichords, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The second system also has a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The music is written in a single system with a repeat sign at the end. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/8. The score is numbered 28 at the beginning of the first system.

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