

Summary

Johann Caspar Ferdinand Fischer's (1656–1746) Orchestral and Harpsichord Suites – Inspirations and Original Developments

The *corpus* of Fischer's instrumental works consists of five collections: *Le Journal du Printemps* – orchestral suites in French style, *Musicalisches Blumen-Büschlein* and *Musicalischer Parnassus* – harpsichord suites, *Ariadne Musica* and *Blumen Strauss* – preludes, fugues and other contrapuntal works for the organ. If one compares only the volume of his output with the achievements of Fischer's contemporaries, one might get the impression that the artistic legacy of the Kapellmeister's long life is quite modest.

In Fischer's three suite collections – one for orchestra and two for harpsichord – we witness a reception of the French style in its various aspects (related to aesthetics, form and notation of ornaments). On the other hand, Fischer consciously modifies the tradition he started from by introducing new compositional ideas, especially in consort music. This in turn had a crucial influence on the development of the form of the solo harpsichord suite. This is exactly why Fischer's three collections are so vital in the subsequent development of music. It seems that only by examining them thoroughly can we gain a complete picture of the changes which occurred in instrumental music at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The greatest scope of his achievement can be observed in Fischer's harpsichord suites, in particular those from *Musicalisches Blumen-Büschlein* – a work which may at first seem unremarkable. Yet, on closer inspection it turns out that these 39 pieces arranged into eight suites contain almost all of the crucial features defining late 17th century European music. Fischer managed to bring together in the form of the harpsichord suite the French tradition, the German variation form, the *stylus phantasticus*, as well as the Italian trio sonata and elements of the orchestral idiom. The latter are also present in *Musicalischer Parnassus*, the collection which already includes compositions characteristic of the galant style just entering the European musical scene.

Fischer inherited Froberger's model of the harpsichord suite which he then modified and broadened for the benefit of future generations of composers. It is characterized by its diverse construction. Fischer was able to approach the suite form in

such an uninhibited way thanks to his original orchestral compositions the form of which, unlike that of the traditional harpsichord suite, he was able to treat more freely.

The direct influence of Fischer's orchestral work on his harpsichord pieces has not been investigated thoroughly enough which is why this issue is carefully examined in this thesis.

It consists of six chapters. Chapter One discusses the composer's biography and work: his sacred music, dramatic music and instrumental music. In Chapter Two I trace the presence of Jean-Baptiste Lully's music and of his characteristic style in the works of German composers predating Fischer. I also present facts and form hypotheses concerning the question of how and when the Baden Kapellmeister may have come into contact with the lullian style and the then emerging of the orchestral overture. Chapter Three is entirely devoted to an analysis of Fischer's *Le Journal du Printemps*. I describe the collection's following elements: the distribution of the instruments, the structure of each of the eight suites and the forms employed in them. Chapter Four describes the circumstances in which the two harpsichord collections – *Musicalisches Blumen-Büschlein* and *Musicalischer Parnassus* – were composed. I present the historical and biographical context in which the collections in question were created, I delineate the basic form of the late 17th century German harpsichord suite on which Fischer's pieces were based, and also I indicate the French and (slightly less significant) Italian influences. Chapter Five analyzes particular pieces from both collections, focusing on the structure of the cycles, the forms they employ and their characteristic features. This chapter also includes remarks on the ornaments and time signatures employed by Fischer. Additionally, I compare the Baden *Kapellmeister's* table of ornaments with that of contemporary French composers. Finally, Chapter Six offers a comparative analysis of the Fischer's orchestral suites (*Le Journal du Printemps*) and harpsichord suites (*Musicalisches Blumen-Büschlein* and *Musicalischer Parnassus*). This comparison leads to the conclusion that Fischer's harpsichord suites were shaped not only by the German and French traditions, but also by his own original orchestral works. The shape which Fischer thus gave to the form of the harpsichord suite is a milestone in that form's development. In my Conclusions I attempt to specify the place which the analyzed works occupy in the history of music, especially harpsichord music, both in the context of Fischer's predecessors and his followers.

Translated by Mikołaj Wiśniewski