

BUXTEHUDE

TRIO SONATAS OP. 1 & 2

Valerio Losito *violin* · Bettina Hoffmann *viola da gamba*
Simone Stella *harpsichord*

Dieterich Buxtehude 1637-1707
Trio Sonatas Op.1 & 2

TRIO SONATAS Op.1

Sonata No.1 in F BuxWV 252

1. Vivace – Lento	2'25
2. Allegro – Adagio	3'07
3. Andante	1'52
4. Grave – Presto	2'52

Sonata No.2 in G BuxWV 253

5. Lento – Vivace	3'24
6. Adagio – Allegro	1'35
7. Largo – Arioso	3'08

Sonata No.3 in A minor BuxWV 254

8. Adagio	2'10
9. Allegro	1'55
10. Lento – Vivace	3'33
11. Largo – Presto – Adagio	3'15

Sonata No.4 in B flat BuxWV 255

12. Vivace – Allegro	5'11
13. Lento – Allegro	3'36

Sonata No.5 in C BuxWV 256

14. Vivace	1'38
15. Violino solo – Allegro	2'17
16. Largo – Allegro	2'53
17. Adagio – Allegro	2'52

Sonata No.6 in D minor BuxWV 257

18. Grave – Allegro	2'36
19. Con discrezione – Adagio (Con discrezione) – Adagio	2'57
20. Vivace – (Con discrezione) Adagio	1'54

21. Poco presto – Poco Adagio – Presto – Lento	3'00
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Sonata No.7 in E minor BuxWV 258

22. Allegro – Largo	2'41
23. Presto – Vivace - Adagio	2'12
24. Poco Presto – Lento – Prestissimo	2'07

TRIO SONATAS Op.2

Sonata No.1 in B flat BuxWV 259 *

25. Allegro	1'17
26. Adagio – Allegro	2'29
27. Grave	1'59
28. Vivace – Lento	1'21
29. Poco adagio – Presto	2'09

Sonata No.2 in D BuxWV 260

30. Adagio – Allegro – Largo	3'51
31. Arietta, Parte I-X	7'01
32. Largo – Vivace	2'23

Sonata No.3 in G minor BuxWV 261

33. Vivace – Lento	2'58
34. Allegro – Lento	1'32
35. Andante	4'19
36. Grave – Gigue	3'31

Sonata No.4 in C minor BuxWV 262

37. Poco adagio	1'30
38. Allegro – Lento	2'23
39. 3/4 – Vivace	4'52

Sonata No.5 in A BuxWV 263

40. Allegro	1'00
41. Violino solo – Concitato	3'35
42. Adagio: Viola da gamba solo	1'14
43. Allegro – Adagio	1'37
44. 6/4 – Poco presto	2'39

Sonata No.6 in E BuxWV 264

45. Grave – Vivace	3'27
46. Adagio – Poco presto – Lento	3'59
47. Allegro	1'54

Sonata No.7 in F BuxWV 265

48. Adagio – 4/4	3'33
49. Lento – Vivace	2'48
50. Largo – Allegro	3'12

Valerio Losito *violin*
 by Pier Lorenzo Vangelisti, Florence 1741

Bettina Hoffmann *viola da gamba*
 Bass viola da gamba by François Bodart after Nicolas Bertrand (Paris, ca.1700);
 (*) tenor viola da gamba by Ca' Rion Lutherie after Paul Hiltz (Nürnberg, 1656)

Simone Stella *harpsichord*
 by Jim Hall after Henri Hemsch (Paris, 1761)

Dieterich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

A declaration published in *Nova Literatura Maris Baltici* shortly after Buxtehude's death is the only information from the composer's own lifetime to have come down to us. 'He considered Denmark to be his fatherland', the article declared, 'when he came to our region. He lived to be around seventy.'

The surname Buxtehude derives from the town of the same name in Lower Saxony, which the musician's family left in the 16th century for Bad Oldesloe in Schleswig-Holstein. Here, between 1565 and 1590, there was a mayor named Buxtehude, whose nephew Johannes (1601-1674) – known as Hans – was to become Dietrich's father. Johannes was a teacher of German in Bad Oldesloe in 1638 as well as organist at the Marienkirche in Helsingborg, a town that is now in Sweden but was originally part of Denmark in 1641. Dietrich was probably born either in Bad Oldesloe or in Helsingborg in 1637, a date we know for sure thanks to Johann Møller's *Cimbria literata*.

Between 1641 and 1642 Johannes Buxtehude moved to Helsingør, a few miles west of Helsingborg, to take up the post of organist at the church of St Olai (where he remained until 1671). This is where Dietrich spent his childhood, in all likelihood attending the school of Latin attached to the church, which had a well-stocked library and provided lessons in music and voice. The musicologist Andre Pirro suggests that Buxtehude completed a course of studies in 1650 with Johann Lorentz the Younger (circa 1610-1689), an organist in Copenhagen who introduced the young man to the works of northern German masters such as Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck and Heinrich Scheidemann. Though some biographers have maintained that he also studied in Hamburg and in Lübeck, others believe this to be unlikely, arguing instead that Dietrich was a pupil of Claus Dengel's in Helsingør, where he would have been introduced to the classical works of the period. This latter version would appear to make sense, given that his father's income would hardly have allowed Dietrich to travel widely.

In 1657 or early 1658, Dietrich Buxtehude took up the post of organist at the Marienkirche in Helsingborg, returning to Helsingør in 1660 to become organist of the Marienkirche in that town. Despite leaving Helsingborg, his relationship with the

authorities there continued to be cordial, and in 1662 he was invited back to test the newly restored organ in his old church.

During the eight years he spent in Helsingør, Buxtehude made a number of important friend-ships: he came into contact with Marcus Meibomius, the publisher of early treatises on musical theory, and Gustaf Diiben, thanks to whom a great deal of Buxtehude's music has come down to us. Following the death in 1667 of Franz Tunder, the organist of the Marienkirche in Lübeck, the church fathers appointed Buxtehude as his successor on 11 April 1668. A further responsibility, also shouldered by his predecessor, was his role as 'Werkmeister', or church bookkeeper. To take on both jobs Buxtehude had to obtain citizenship, which he did on 23 July of that same year.

The Marienkirche in Lübeck was equipped with two 3-manual organs: the choir gallery's 50-stop Grand Organ (first built by Barthold Hering, then expanded by Jacob Scherer, Gottschalk Borchert and Jacob Rabe in the 16th century, and finally restored by Friedrich Stellwagen between 1637 and 1641), and a 45-stop organ (originally built by Johannes Stephani in 1475-1477 and subsequently expanded in various stages), located in the Totentanzkapelle (or 'Dance of Death Chapel'). In the afternoon, before the stock exchange opened, the city burghers were wont to meet up in the Marienkirche, and it was for their entertainment that in 1646 Franz Tunder began playing the organ in a series of concerts that were known as 'Abendspiele', or 'evening recitals'. Although these concerts began as simple, informal performances, their huge success soon attracted considerable financial support from various merchants - which allowed Tunder to enrich them with the addition of other instruments. Buxtehude continued this tradition, deciding in 1673 that on account of their success it would be better to transform the concerts into feast day events. What started as simple recitals soon became sumptuous dramatic performances, containing a wealth of counterpoint and instrumental development. The Abendmusiken were held on Advent Sundays with the exception of the first, which was celebrated with a solemn liturgy.

In Lübeck there was an unwritten rule that the organist should marry one of his

predecessor's daughters, and true to form on 3 August 1668 Buxtehude chose Anna Margaretha Tunder, Franz's daughter, to be his wedded wife.

Buxtehude's job involved playing chorale preludes, alternating the solo organ parts with the choral sections and conducting both from the organ balcony, probably during communion. In all likelihood he played his own compositions following the 'Komm, Heiliger Geist' (Come, Holy Spirit), which was the traditional introduction to the religious service, and also at the end. It is fairly certain that his duties were limited to the morning and afternoon functions of Sundays and feast days.

Apart from his engagements as an organist and teacher, the organization and direction of the Abendmusiken, and his activity as a poet (he authored six epic poems, and it is generally thought that he also wrote some of the texts for his cantatas), Buxtehude cultivated friendships with some of the foremost musicians of northern Germany. One of his best friends was the famous composer Johann Adam Reincken, who wanted to be buried in Lübeck near Buxtehude's tomb at his death. Another friend was the organ builder Arp Schnitger (1648-1719), who had moved to Hamburg to construct the organ of the Nikolaikirche. In May 1687 Buxtehude himself travelled to Hamburg to test the new instrument, which so impressed him that for the rest of his life he tried - alas, in vain - to persuade the Lübeck authorities to engage Schnitger to restore the old instrument in the Marienkirche. Another of Buxtehude's friends was Andreas Werckmeister, who in 1681 published the treatise *Orgel-Probe* in which he discussed the possibility of creating new types of organ temperament that would allow a range of tones and pitch quite unlike those in common use at the time. It is probable that Buxtehude chose the temperament known as Werckmeister III when in 1683 he re-tuned the organs of the Marienkirche, the aim being to achieve a wider tonal range from instruments originally built with a semitone temperament.

When in 1703 George Frideric Handel and Johann Mattheson heard that the elderly Buxtehude was thinking of retiring, they set out to meet him in Lübeck. There they learnt of the local tradition according to which succession implied marrying Buxtehude's oldest daughter, Anna Margaretha, once she had reached adulthood. Both

decided that this was not quite what they had in mind and left the following day.

In October 1705, the twenty-year-old Johann Sebastian Bach obtained a four-week leave of absence from his superiors at the Bonifaciuskirche in Arnstadt, where he was the organist. His aim was to go and hear Dietrich Buxtehude in Lübeck, a two hundred mile journey that he undertook mostly on foot. At the Marienkirche he witnessed some special performances, as that year Buxtehude had organised two 'Extraordinarien Abendmusiken' on 2 and 3 December: the 'Castrum Doloris' for the death of Leopold I and the 'Templum Honoris' in celebration of the new sovereign, Joseph I. These performances involved forty musicians, positioned on four galleries so as to form an orchestra of exceptional quality. Bach's leave of absence ended up lasting four months, and when he returned to Arnstadt in February 1706, his superiors noted some remarkable changes in his manner of playing, including much richer modulation and various virtuoso contrivances.

Dietrich Buxtehude died in Lübeck on 9 May 1707 and was buried in the left transept of the Marienkirche, next to four of his daughters and his father Johannes, on the following 16 May. On 23 June Johann Christian Schieferdecker, instrumentalist of the Hamburg Opera and his assistant since 1705, succeeded him at the organ, and on 5 September he married his daughter Anna Margaretha.

Buxtehude's tomb, together with the church and his organ, were destroyed by allied air raids during the Second World War, on the night of 28 March 1942. Today the reconstructed Marienkirche bears a bronze plaque, placed there in 1957, to commemorate where the tomb once lay.

In 1690 Buxtehude published two collections of instrumental chamber music; apart from a few occasional works, these are the only works printed during his lifetime. Both Opus 1 (probably published in 1694, dedicated to his employers, the mayor and senators of Lübeck) and Opus 2 (released in the next two years, dedicate to his patron Johann Ritter) contain seven sonatas for violin and viola da gamba with keyboard continuo.

Instrumental chamber music at the time could be used both in and out of church. It is likely that sonatas were played in the Marienkirche on major feast days and during liturgies. Buxtehude was nearly sixty when he published his sonatas, but he had been practising the genre for many years. In 1684 he announced that he would soon be publishing a collection of sonatas for two and three violins, viola da gamba, and continuo 'suitable for performance both as Tafelmusik and in church'. Of this collection (probably never published) eight sonatas survive, some of which may very well have been intended for it. As the dedication of the first volume refers to it as the 'first part' of his sonatas, and they are written for the same instrumental combination, each contains seven works, and they are organized according to key in such a way that between them they encompass all the major and minor keys of a seven-note diatonic scale, we can deduce that he regarded the two volumes as a unit.

The rediscovery of Buxtehude's music began more than a century ago with his organ works, later followed by more than a hundred cantatas found in the famous collection of Gustaf Düben today conserved in the Uppsala University Library. Düben (ca. 1628-1690) was a Swedish organist and court composer and a great admirer of Buxtehude. His collection contains the intact copies of his two books of sonatas as well as those unpublished.

In the choice of instruments for his Sonatas Opp. 1 and 2 Buxtehude avoided the use of the violone or cello as a low-range melodic instrument (which was the predominant usage in the Italian sonata) preferring to follow German tradition by using the gentler sound of the viola da gamba, an instrument that with its range of three octaves can also play in the tenor and alto registers. From the technical point of view his sonatas must have been intended for some of the highly-skilled players of Lübeck, probably members of the Ratsmusik, the ensemble employed by the town council. These players usually mastered more than one instrument (an example is Hans Iwe, one of Buxtehude's assistants, who played the violin, the viola da gamba and the violone). The Ratsmusik performed at official occasions, and also participated in the Abendmusiken; in addition, they played in private surroundings, such as the homes of

the town's upper class. Their repertoire ranged from European composers as well as music written in Lübeck. Buxtehude may also have performed his Sonatas himself with colleagues from Hamburg such as Johann Adam Reincken (depicted with him in the painting "Musical Company" of Johannes Voorhout, 1674) and Johann Theile.

The writing is based on the so-called 'Stylus Phantasticus', a style mentioned by various writers on music such as Johann Mattheson, Athanasius Kircher and Sebastien de Brossard: they called it 'a special instrumental style or manner where the composer is not subject to any formal restrictions'. Music in this style, combining written-down improvisation with parts in strictly regulated counterpoint, is characteristic of Buxtehude's chamber music as well as that for the organ, a very personal stamp of unpredictability, virtuosity, and expressiveness. It's based on a specific musical philosophy, according to which compositional freedom combines with technical discipline (in the form of fugue's section) form together a musical microcosm that was thought of as a reflection of the macrocosm, where even apparently coincidental and arbitrary phenomena were subject to the control of God.

But as musical centres such as Hamburg or Lübeck were real European cultural sponges, we can find in Buxtehude's writing also influences from other countries. One of these was the polyphony of the English consort music, which had been brought to northern Germany in particular by William Brade (1560-1630) who had worked in Copenhagen and several German cities before settling in Hamburg. A special Italian influence can be noticed in these sonatas observing the virtuosic style of solo playing. It's likely that the collections of music published in Dresden by Carlo Farina, one of the main representatives of this style, has had some influence on musicians in Lübeck. Also other elements of Italian music can be found in Buxtehude, for example the stile concitato of Claudio Monteverdi (like in the 2nd movement of Sonata in A minor Op.2 No.5, a solo with the indication 'Concitato'). Another recurring element in Buxtehude's writing is the ostinato, a form composed of variations on a continuously repeating bass, as we also find in his organ music.

Regarding the quantity of sonatas in the Opp. 1 and 2, the number 7 is not just the

number of the keys in the scale, but it could also have a symbolic value: the time (the seven days of the week), the seven planets then known to astronomers (we should remember that the Marienkirche had an astronomical clock), but also an alchemical and exoteric meaning, since 7 is the sum of the numbers 3, representing the Divinity, and 4, the cardinal points or the material world, so it represents the all existence.

Buxtehude's sonatas not only occupy an important position in his output, but also show that over and above his role as a church musician he was a wide-ranging and versatile composer involved in the compositional and philosophical problems of his time. As it will be later for Johann Sebastian Bach, his musical mastery combines art form and science, making him one of the most important figures in German and Northern music of XVII century. His fertile imagination gives birth to a music full of lyrically delicate, sorrowful, and dramatic emotions as well as melodious, harmonically gratifying, and full of vitality frequencies, a world of sound that consecrates him as a unique genius in the Pantheon of Music.

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The baroque violinist and viola d'amore player Valerio Losito graduated with highest honours after studying with Yvonne Ekman in Rome (modern violin) and Enrico Onofri in Palermo (baroque violin).

He has performed in concerts throughout Europe, America and Japan, both as a chamber musician and in international orchestras. As baroque violin performer Valerio has collaborated with major conductors and early music specialists and is considered one of the most interesting viola d'amore soloists worldwide; since 2006 he plays a Ferdinando Gagliano viola d'amore on loan from the Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundations.

As a researcher he has carried out several research projects in libraries all over Italy and he rediscovered Vivaldi's motet Vos invito barbarae faces, now identified as RV 811. Valerio's first

recording for Brilliant Classics was in 2011, when he performed Domenico Scarlatti's Melobass Sonatas on the viola d'amore with the harpsichordist Andrea Coen. In 2012 he recorded the album Viola d'amore solo: a collection of solo music for this instrument. In 2014 he realized his first solo violin sonatas album with music by Carlo Tessarini followed by the recording of Francesco Maria Veracini's Violin Sonatas from unpublished manuscripts (Brilliant Classics, 2014). His last solo recordings for Brilliant Classics explore the 1715 Frankfurter Sonatas by Georg Philip Telemann, the Violin Sonatas Op.14 by Carlo Tessarini and the Violin Sonatas by the Veronese baroque composer Daniel Dal Barba.

Valerio teaches baroque violin at Cremona and Perugia Conservatories.



Bettina Hoffmann is German and lives in Florence where she pursues an active career both as a performer on the viol and baroque cello and as a musicologist. She graduated in cello at the Musikhochschule in Mannheim and then went on to study viola da gamba with Wieland Kuijken.

She has given concerts all over Europe and America, participating as a soloist and with her ensemble *Modo Antiquo* at major festivals and venues. A significant discography (more than 70 albums for Deutsche Grammophon, Naïve, Brilliant Classics, Tactus and others) is especially notable for *Idées grotesques* with works by Marin Marais, *Scherzi Musicali* for viola da gamba by Johann Schenck, and the first complete recording of the works by Diego Ortiz and Silvestro Ganassi. In 1997 and 2000

two albums of her ensemble *Modo Antiquo* nominated for GRAMMY AWARDS.

Bettina Hoffmann is the author of the *Catalog of solo and chamber music for viola da gamba* (LIM, 2001) and of *La viola da gamba*, a comprehensive history of the viol (*L'Epos*, 2010; German edition: *Ortus*, 2014; English edition: Routledge, 2018). Recently she published a volume on the low bow instruments in the work of Antonio Vivaldi (*Olschki*, 2020; *Ortus* 2023). In 2018 she discovered and edited the only German treatise on the viol currently known to us, *Instruction oder eine anweisung auff der Violadigamba*.

She is professor of viola da gamba, baroque cello, performing praxis and baroque chamber music at the Conservatory of Music «Giovanni Battista Martini» in Bologna and the School of Music of Fiesole.



Raised in Florence (Italy), today **Simone Stella** is considered one of the most respected performers of ancient music on the harpsichord and organ thanks to his impressive discography.

After studying piano with Marco Vavolo and Rosanita Racugno, organ with Mariella Mochi and Alessandro Albenga in Florence and harpsichord with Francesco Cera in Rome, and attending masterclasses held by Ton Koopman, Matteo Imbruno and Luigi Ferdinando Tagliavini, in 2008 Gustav Leonhardt awarded him the First Prize in the 1st International Organ Competition “Agati-Tronci” in Pistoia.

Stella started a brilliant soloist career that brought him performing in many important festivals throughout Europe, USA and Brazil, where he also held seminars and masterclasses on the baroque repertoire for organ and harpsichord.

His monumental soloist discographic production, rewarded by the international review (*Musica*, *Diapason*, *Fanfare*, *Klassik*, *BBC Music Magazine* among others), includes the complete organ and harpsichord works of Dieterich Buxtehude, Georg Böhm, Johann Adam Reincken, Johann Gottfried Walther, Johann Jakob Froberger, Johann Pachelbel, Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow and Federico Maria Sardelli recorded for Brilliant Classics, and works of Bach, Handel, Rameau and Cherubini for the labels *OnClassical* and *Amadeus Rainbow*. He has collaborated with the baroque orchestra *Modo Antiquo* and the symphonic orchestra *La Filharmonie*.

Active as a composer, Simone Stella has published works for the Italian publisher *Armelin* of Padua.

Since 2011 Simone Stella is the titular organist of the historical organs in the Basilica of Santissima Annunziata in Florence.