



good starting-point for paying greater attention to musical structure and style and their links with their sociocultural context.

These strengths notwithstanding, I think the book also exhibits some problems that are worth noting, even if they may be unavoidable in a work of this scope. One is the apparent disparity in structure and focus between the second block and the other two blocks. Undoubtedly, this derives from the different times at which they were written, and could be interpreted positively as a reflection of the musical diversity of the entire period under review, as well as a means for the author to ‘free himself from a totalizing and absolutist treatment’ (see Marín’s review, already cited, 208). Even so, at times, one has the impression of reading more than one book.

Another aspect that gives cause for reservation is the disparity in dealing with the various dimensions of musical life. Some of them – the emphasis on author–work pairing, the lack of attention to oral music and plainsong – could be explained by the scant previous research on these topics. But other omissions are more difficult to explain. Perhaps the most striking is the brevity of the section dedicated to Latin polyphony at the end of the second block (236–240), despite its prestige at that time and the fact that there is a large corpus of polyphonic sources from the seventeenth century preserved throughout colonial Latin America. Likewise, it seems dubious to consider the nunneries only or mostly inhabited by Spanish women as the most successful example of the colonial project, since such a project involved integrating Indigenous people, albeit in a sub-altern condition.

Of course, these possible problems do not overshadow the undoubted virtues and importance of this book for all those interested in the music of the colonial period. It is to be hoped that *Una historia de la música colonial hispanoamericana* will be reissued several times, and perhaps translated into English, given the interest in this subject in the English-speaking world. This would offer the opportunity to fill in some gaps and further enrich this already impressive text with new materials that, for whatever reason, may not have been included in this version.

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RECORDINGS

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PIETER HELLENDAAAL (1721–1799)

‘CAMBRIDGE’ SONATAS

Johannes Pramsohler (violin) / Gulrim Choi (cello) / Philippe Grisvard (harpsichord)

Audax ADX13720, 2020: one disc, 69 minutes

The six sonatas for violin and continuo recorded here for the first time are preserved in a manuscript at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, just a few hundred yards from the site of the house where their composer spent the last twenty years or so of his life – a convenient location, directly opposite the college chapel of Peterhouse, where Hellendaal was employed as organist. The Dutch violinist, born in Rotterdam, had already had a varied career before arriving in Cambridge in the early 1760s. Appointed organist of the Nicolaikerk in Utrecht before his eleventh birthday, he later relocated with his family to Amsterdam, from where an influential sponsor facilitated a period in Padua studying with the renowned virtuoso Giuseppe Tartini. For a couple of years around 1750 he sought to establish himself in the university town of Leiden, eventually leaving in 1751 to pursue a career as a virtuoso in London, where he was a popular figure at the main concert



venues for most of the 1750s. He also published his *Six Grand Concertos*, Op. 3, in London, having previously issued two sets of sonatas while in Amsterdam.

Towards the end of the 1750s Hellendaal seems to have sought a change of scenery, auditioning unsuccessfully for the post of director of the Music Room orchestra in Oxford in 1759 and then spending a couple of years as organist of St Margaret's Church, King's Lynn in Norfolk (where he succeeded Charles Burney). He finally settled in Cambridge in 1762, immersing himself in the musical life of the town and university, teaching violin and music theory and later issuing several more publications. His son Peter, also a violinist and a clarinetist, set himself up as a music seller and assisted with several of his father's later volumes, including a popular collection of metrical psalms for congregational use (1790).

Hellendaal may well have been acquainted with Viscount Fitzwilliam, whose bequest to Cambridge University formed the basis of the Fitzwilliam Museum collection on his death in 1816. Fitzwilliam matriculated at Trinity Hall in the same year that Hellendaal arrived in the town, and they certainly had several mutual acquaintances; according to Burney a 'Mr. Hellendael' (father or son) also performed among the first violins at the Handel Commemoration at Westminster Abbey in 1784, of which Fitzwilliam had been one of the early instigators (though in the event he was in Italy at the time). In any case, the manuscript containing the present sonatas – not named in the otherwise informative CD booklet, but identifiable as Fitzwilliam MU MS 715 – did not form part of Fitzwilliam's personal collection; rather it was presented to the Museum by Professor Edward J. Dent in 1944. An earlier inscription in the volume identifies it as belonging to Sophia Hague (c1795–1865), younger daughter of the University's Professor of Music Charles Hague (1769–1821; Professor from 1799), who was himself the leading violinist in Cambridge in the 1790s.

The Hagues were certainly close to the Hellendaals. In the early 1780s Charles was taught composition and thoroughbass by Hellendaal, and on 16 November 1792 he performed a violin concerto in a concert for Hellendaal senior's benefit at the town hall in Cambridge (advertisement at the British Library, 937.c.9). Sophia Hague, too, seems to have been a talented violinist. She is pictured with her instrument alongside her elder sister Harriet (born 1793), an accomplished keyboard player and published composer, in a mezzotint at the British Museum (reg. no. 1902,1011.4131; see www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1902-1011-4131 (8 March 2021)). She also owned a large composite volume of printed violin sonatas now in the library of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, which clearly belonged first to Charles; she may have acquired the Fitzwilliam manuscript by the same route.

The notation of the sonatas in the manuscript suggests that the volume was designed for personal use, with frequent details of ornamentation and fully written-out cadenzas for some movements (particularly the fugues of Sonatas 3 in D minor and 4 in D major). These were the sorts of details that were personal to a performer, and their existence, together with the technical difficulty of the works, sets them apart from the published sonatas of Hellendaal's Opp. 1, 2 and 4. Perhaps, then, these manuscript works were held back from the press in order to preserve their novelty for use in concert. On the other hand, one might imagine that a violinist trained in the Italian tradition by Tartini would have made such embellishments extempore, in which case the composer could have written them down for use by a student such as Hague, or indeed his own son. Whatever their original purpose, Johannes Pramsohler's suggestion in the liner notes that the Fitzwilliam works may have been those offered for publication by subscription in 1778 might well be right. By then, presumably, the need for exclusivity (whether in performance or as teaching materials) had passed, with Hellendaal concentrating on his role as organist at Peterhouse. In the event the promised 1778 publication was never issued, and neither was a further set of six sonatas proposed in 1791.

While technically more difficult and more ambitious in a compositional sense, the eleven complete sonatas in the Fitzwilliam manuscript broadly follow the style of Hellendaal's earlier sonata publications. That is to say, they sit squarely within the tradition derived from Corelli's Op. 5 sonatas, as Hellendaal would have inherited it from the teaching of Tartini. Hellendaal's solo parts spend far more time in the higher positions than Corelli's do, and trade more often in semiquaver passagework and *bariolage*. He also displays a noticeable fondness for certain Vivaldian sequential progressions and pedal points, both articulated through



elaborate violinistic figuration, though on the whole the reliance on set patterns of voice leading is less transparent than it is in the works of many of Corelli's imitators (and indeed in Corelli's own works).

Four of the six works performed here adopt Tartini's favoured three-movement plan, though the last movement is often not as quick as the middle movement. The remainder adopt a Corelli-inspired four-movement plan (slow / fast / slow / fast), of which the last is a somewhat lighter movement: in Sonata 2 in A major this is an unusual tripartite Allegro–Andante–Allegro, and in Sonata 6 in D major a Tempo di Gavotta moderato, the latter being the only named dance invoked among the sonatas recorded here. Perhaps the most impressive movements are the fugues already mentioned (and another in track 12, the Allegro of Sonata 1 in A major), in which the double stopping inherited from the Corellian models is greatly extended to the point that these movements frequently resemble full-blown trio sonatas rather than works for solo violin and continuo. Such pieces, virtually untouched by the galant, must have seemed distinctly old-fashioned in the latter part of Hellendaal's life, and there may be some truth in Pramsohler's suggestion that Cambridge proved more receptive to this 'nostalgic' style than elsewhere. One small concession to the fashionable sensibility of the later eighteenth century is the marking *Affettuoso* that crops up in two movements (from Sonatas 2 in A major and 6 in D major), though there are few signs of stylistic differentiation between these and other slow movements; one of these, the last movement of Sonata 3 in D minor, is marked *Pastorale* and includes some attractive drone-like double stopping.

Although all six of the sonatas played here are new to disc, two more works from the Fitzwilliam manuscript (Nos 7 and 10) have been recorded, by Annette Lohmann with Furor Musicus (*Pieter Hellendaal: Violin Sonatas* (Globe GLO5271, 2018)). On the present disc Pramsohler and his accompanists present stylish and polished performances, always technically assured and with the strong sense of line necessary to allow Hellendaal's melodic style to breathe beneath the weight of its elaborate surface ornamentation. Pramsohler is liberal with additional ornaments, as he acknowledges in the booklet, taking the notated embellishments in some movements as models throughout. The results are highly persuasive and surely close to what their composer would have expected, schooled as he would have been in the tradition of 'graces' attached to Corelli's works. Very occasionally the listener is brought up short by an unexpected chromaticism, but, on the whole, these remain on the right side of good taste – and, more importantly, never exceed what can be found in the examples of such practice that survive from Hellendaal's lifetime. Pramsohler's bow control is unerring, and for the most part he navigates the difficulties of double-stopped sections well: the parts are exceptionally well balanced, and only once or twice do intonation problems creep in (notably during the concluding C major Allegro of Sonata 5).

All three players work hard to project variety of tone and articulation from moment to moment, and they manage to project an admirable clarity of texture despite the densely ornamented solo parts and some very active continuo playing from harpsichordist Philippe Grisvard – at times, indeed, his right hand almost resembles a further obbligato part, such is its level of melodic invention and sensitive interplay with the violin. The result is a series of movements any one of which is a delight to listen to, and which bear repeated enjoyment. Listening to the whole disc in one sitting, however, I find something of a lack of variety, which might perhaps have been mitigated by varying the continuo group for one or two works; Lohmann and Furor Musicus opt for an organ continuo in two sonatas on their disc, for example. This minor complaint aside, this is an attractive release and a useful introduction to Hellendaal's music. By comparison with London or Oxford, the music of eighteenth-century Cambridge is relatively little known. If this disc is anything to go by, it would be well worth the effort to seek out and perform more.

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