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REVIEW: EDITION

Sonate per Clavicembalo, volumes 9 and 10

Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757), ed. †Emilia Fadini and Marco Moiraghi
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The appearance of these two volumes of Domenico Scarlatti keyboard sonatas is much more momentous than might be apparent even to a well-informed music lover. The first remarkable aspect is the publication of volume 9 after a hiatus of more than two decades. Emilia Fadini's edition, the first part of which appeared in 1978, reached its eighth volume as long ago as 1995, and then a misadventure with the materials meant that one had to wait until 2016 for the ninth instalment to appear. For this, the editing duties were shared with Marco Moiraghi, who, alongside Enrico Baiano, had cowritten *Le sonate di Domenico Scarlatti: contesto, testo, interpretazione* (Lucca: Libreria Italiana Musicale, 2014). The edition was originally planned to conclude with volume 10, which has now arrived. This was to comprise the *Essercizi*, K1–30, together with a number of sonatas that do not derive from primary sources; the two most important of these are collections which are today located in Venice and Parma. Now, however, with Moiraghi having taken over primary editorship, the *Essercizi* have a whole volume to themselves, and a future volume 11 will 'host . . . sonatas scattered among various sources' (x). This makes sense given the imposing extent of volume 10 and the fact that since the planning of the series in the 1970s, quite a number of further works have been unearthed that are credited to Scarlatti. It will be most interesting to see the selection of, and approach taken to, these works; some of them seem much more plausible than others from the perspective of style, if not necessarily that of transmission. In any case, the champagne has to stay on ice just for the moment.

The champagne will be called for because volume 11, when published, will bring to a close the first complete scholarly edition of Scarlatti's sonatas. This, once more, might seem incredible to our informed music lover, given that the composer's music is still in wide circulation; Scarlatti is hardly the most obscure of old masters. Kenneth Gilbert's eleven-volume edition (Paris: Heugel, 1971–1984), for all its many merits in terms of individual editorial decisions, displays a very minimal scholarly apparatus compared to its Ricordi counterpart, including the fact that it takes next to no account of sources beyond the Venice and Parma collections. But there are plenty of factors that have inhibited wider engagement both editorially and also with respect to Scarlatti scholarship as a whole. First in order of importance is the source situation: there are no autographs, and there is no known and agreed chronology. Ralph Kirkpatrick's numbering was based on the dates and order of copying of the sonatas in the principal sources, which he equated with a chronology of composition, weighted strongly towards the end of the composer's life from the late 1730s to the mid-1750s. This theory has few, if any, adherents today, yet there is no getting around the difficulties of handling and comprehension that arise without some sort of guiding framework, given the sheer number of sonatas that Scarlatti has left us. Many attempts have been made over the years to discern other patterns within the corpus that could suggest a creative timeline, none of them convincing. Matters

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have not been helped by the fact that Kirkpatrick indulged in some sleight of hand when arriving at his total of 555 sonatas. He did so by numbering two sonatas in F minor that are found only in Parma copies as K204a and K204b. The resulting magic, memorable 'round number' of 555 has acted as an enticement to many musical sleuths, some of them from outside the field of music scholarship, all aiming to solve the chronological 'puzzle'.

While Gilbert simply adopted the Kirkpatrick sequence for his edition, Fadini takes the Venice copies as a control for numbering of the sonatas, beginning with collections compiled in 1742 and 1749 and then moving to those copied in the years 1752–1757. All works deriving from other sources come later, without the insertions made by Kirkpatrick, who also essentially followed the sequence of Venice copying. Fadini is avowedly agnostic on the matter of chronology: Venice provides a template simply because its fifteen volumes contain the highest number of sonatas (496) found in any collection. It is also made explicit that this is not an endorsement of Venice as the best or primary source. Because of this rationale, the thirty *Essercizi* – which, with a few exceptions, are not found in Venice – come near the end of the Fadini sequence, as F517–546, whereas they occupied the opening position for Kirkpatrick (K1–30). However, the new volume 10 is realistic about the prospects of Fadini numbering displacing the familiar Kirkpatrick sequence; it uses K numbers either in tandem with, or often in preference to, the F numbers within the editorial matter.

It is not surprising that the thirty sonatas that make up the *Essercizi* have now been given a volume to themselves. They have a special place in Scarlatti scholarship, since for once there is some really hard evidence to get to grips with, even if it is attended by some of the uncertainties and ambiguities that beset the field. The *Essercizi per Gravicembalo*, to give them their slightly strange full title, represent the one printed edition of Scarlatti sonatas produced during his lifetime in which it may assumed he was actively involved. The publication – generally agreed to have appeared in early 1739 – seems to have arisen as a gesture of thanks to the composer's former employer King João V of Portugal, who had made Scarlatti a Knight of the Order of St James in 1738, and it is a real deluxe product. Marco Moiraghi has responded in kind, producing an unprecedentedly comprehensive edition of these works that could scarcely allow room for any further material, whether musical or editorial. This is the first volume in the series to be furnished with a dedicated Introduction, which in its own right is a very significant addition to Scarlatti scholarship. Moiraghi begins by evaluating the various materials that precede the actual music in the 1739 edition, pre-eminently the note to the reader ('Lettore') from the composer himself. Since relatively little is known about the composer as a human being, and only one letter written by him survives, this short paragraph – distinctly informal in style – seems to offer a tangible sense of his personality and even, some would argue, his artistic credo. Moiraghi does suggest possible parallels between the composer's epistolary and musical manners, but also points to the wider context of this note to the reader, coming as it does after a 'long, grandiloquent dedication [of] four full pages' (xxxv) to the King of Portugal. Thus, for instance, the contrast between dedication ('Alla Sacra Real Maestà Di Giovanni V. Il Giusto Re Di Portugallo, D'Algarve, Del Brasile') and note ('Lettore') may be the composer's way of signalling his ability to switch linguistic registers, prefiguring the kinds of abrupt contrast that characterize not just some of the *Essercizi* but many other sonatas (xxxvii).

While more or less precise information about the publication date of the collection exists, that does not hold for the actual composition of the sonatas themselves. However, a sentence in Scarlatti's dedication might provide a clue: 'These are Compositions born under Your Majesty's Auspices, in the service of your deservedly fortunate Daughter, the Princess of the Asturias, and of your most worthy Royal Brother, the Infant[e] Don Antonio' (xxxvii). For Moiraghi, this implies that 'most or all of the works date from 1719–1738' (xxxvii), the earlier year being the point at which Scarlatti entered the king's service. While from 1729 he was no longer literally serving the king, having moved to Spain as Princess Maria Bárbara married Prince Ferdinand of Spain, Scarlatti was working for the princess from that time, and in that sense still connected with the

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Lisbon court. While this would support Moiraghi's *terminus ante quem* of 1738, a more literal interpretation would note that Scarlatti could no longer be said to have been in the service of the Infante Don Antonio after 1729. But there may be other factors at play when trying to determine just when the composer's 'service' to the Portuguese king came to an end. João Pedro d'Alvarenga has recently put some flesh on an older speculation that Scarlatti acted as an 'agent' for the king, suggesting that, in moving to Spain under the king's command, the composer was meant 'to supervise Maria Bárbara . . . not only musically, it seems, but also politically'. The knighthood itself was a reward, he argues convincingly, for reasons that 'had nothing to do with music but rather with other types of services' (d'Alvarenga, 'Scarlatti in Portugal', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Harpsichord*, ed. Mark Kroll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 203). In that possible sense, therefore – of Domenico Scarlatti as a diplomatic agent, or, one might even say, a spy – a great deal of the sonata production might be said to have served the interests of the Portuguese court.

Having reviewed all of the theories about the gestation of the sonatas, Moiraghi is inclined to support the view that they were written over many years, and that what was published in London in 1739 was a selection derived from a larger corpus. While there is indeed much to support the conclusion that they were 'conceived in sundry times and places', I find it somewhat harder to accept Moiraghi's view that the sonatas are not linked by a 'common style' (xxxvii). While there is indeed considerable variety between, and sometimes within, the individual sonatas, in the light of the complete sonata output they are in fact relatively even in style, for instance in the predominance of a driving *Fortspinnung* type of phrase syntax. Scarlatti himself might seem to have confirmed this by promising, in his note to the reader, to write in future 'in an easier and more varied Style' (xxxvi).

However, this matter is of little moment once Moiraghi dives into the depths of the source situation, classifying the sources into four approximate chronological groups and then discussing each of the sources and their possible interrelationships in unprecedented detail. He is able to build on the fundamental work of Joel Sheveloff (above all as contained in the latter's unpublished 1970 Brandeis University thesis 'The Keyboard Music of Domenico Scarlatti: A Re-Evaluation of the Present State of Knowledge in the Light of the Sources') as well as a recent flourishing of scholarship by way of journal articles and doctoral dissertations, mostly investigating individual sources. The complications of how various versions of a sonata in different sources (in current parlance, various 'witnesses') relate to each other and to the published version of 1739 are innumerable. While the five individual sonatas from the *Essercizi* that also appear in the first Venice volume were copied three years after their publication, in 1742, for example, there is every indication that they were 'based on older, perhaps rougher antigraphs (original manuscripts?)' than those from which the published versions drew (xlviii).

A star witness in Moiraghi's treatment is a manuscript collection of keyboard music now in Turin that seems to date from the early 1720s. It contains four sonatas ascribed to Scarlatti elsewhere, three in the first Venice volume of 1742, and the other is the Sonata in D minor K9 from the *Essercizi*. The Turin version of this work is patently different, most evidently in its time signature of 12/8 rather than the 6/8 found in the published form of 1739 and in the very different ways in which the respective halves conclude. The cadential preparation and postcadential elaboration are in fact somewhat simpler in the *Essercizi* version, but arguably more characterful. Variants of the sonata found in other sources suggest that 'Scarlatti thoroughly reworked this piece more than once' (xxxix), and as one makes one's way through Moiraghi's commentary on such sources, including short case studies of individual sonatas, the bigger picture emerges. Scarlatti appears to have been a great reviser, even someone who worried away at his creations – more reminiscent, in fact, of much later figures who are renowned for the constant retouching of their own music: 'Even sources very close to the composer' suggest that 'Scarlatti meticulously intervened to change details each time a new copy [of a sonata] was prepared' (xlviii). This means that the possibilities of copyist error or licence tend to be downplayed, though they are certainly not ignored. In the case of the Sonata in G minor K4, for instance, the many differences between sources 'show not only that

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copyists were sometimes careless or even incompetent . . . but also that their sources must have been unclear' (li). Thus an original Scarlatti autograph may have been written hurriedly or not fully legibly before the composer then returned to the work as part of his practice of 'eternal revision'. Certainly many sonatas contain variants that seem perfectly idiomatic rather than a case of poor transmission or copyist licence – the version of K11 found in the Morgan Library's Cary 703 manuscript, for example, whose significant differences from other copies seem to be 'the result of the composer's retouching, not an outside intervention' (xlix).

The resulting picture is that of works continually in progress. The *Essercizi* as a whole is not so much a complete and perfect 'monolith' – that image admittedly encouraged by the high quality and finish of the 1739 publication and its royal connections – as a 'wonderful open workshop' (li). This notion is strengthened not just by the extremely detailed discussions contained within the edition's Introduction, but also by the lavish critical notes to each sonata. Perusing the entries for any individual sonata conveys a dizzying sense of possibilities for performance, perhaps most vividly of all in the case of the 'Cat's Fugue', K30, that concludes the collection. At the same time, the editor does not let go of the notion that Scarlatti's own revisions demonstrate a process of 'improvement and refinement' (li) that took place over the decades leading up to the publication of the thirty *Essercizi*. Some equivocation is understandable here; after all, it is not a question of saying that every source reading has equal value, and indeed the versions of the sonatas printed in this edition do follow the *Essercizi* readings by and large, allowing for the correction of errors that are either self-evident or are shown up by other sources. In a number of cases, in fact, such as with our Sonata K9, an alternative version is given complete, either adjacent to the work in question or else in an appendix to the volume.

What does the player of a sonata do in such cases? Sticking to one textual 'witness' is a method often favoured nowadays, since at least that can claim to be true to the material and cultural circumstances of a particular historical moment. On the other hand, such a decision loses the bigger picture of Moiraghi's 'open workshop', whereby a performer, having taken in all the existing variant readings, and noted the composer's apparent continual renewal of his texts, can take them in a spirit of liberation, adding their own 'layer' to the history of the piece in question. This might mean freedom in the realization of notated ornamentation (which includes the option of omitting it), of texture, and sometimes even of pitch and rhythm. It could certainly include doing a few things differently on the repeated playings of each half of a sonata.

The main danger with such a situation, arguably, is that performers are likely to favour consistency of treatment. Sheveloff described Scarlatti's style as being 'built out of an abundance of tiny, special details' ('The Keyboard Music of Domenico Scarlatti, 258), and many of those details in fact pull in the direction of irregularity, the unexpected, even the counterintuitive. Parallel passages, for instance, even those occurring side by side, should not be assumed to need parallel treatment. The substantial recorded history of the Scarlatti sonatas demonstrates that performers have in fact often altered received texts so as to make the music flow more comfortably (with at least some of that work having already been done, of course, by the editions they have used). A classic example here comes in K17, in the second half, where a four-bar phrase unit finishing with a half cadence (bars 73–76) is immediately repeated, but the point of cadential arrival that one expects to hear (and play) at bar 80 is not reached. Instead, the music jumps abruptly to a new phrase. Technically there is an elision, since the bass does in fact arrive on the expected note, E, but the effect is much less comfortable than that sounds. It is quite understandable that Gilbert, and Alessandro Longo before him (*Opere complete per clavicembalo di Domenico Scarlatti* (Milan: Ricordi, 1906–1910)), added a bar so as to finish the second phrase unit off more naturally, but in fact twelve sources for this sonata agree on this seeming anomaly. Only a single source, the French 'Boivin 6', provides a precedent for such an insertion, and neither earlier editor would have consulted it. Again here, our edition prints this particular reading of the sonata separately in its entirety.

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A consistently troublesome area for the editor concerns the presence or absence of accidentals in minor-mode passages – specifically in cases where an augmented second exists between sixth and seventh degrees of the scale played adjacently (the harmonic-minor scale). Not only do sources often disagree about these inflections, but the situation is also rendered more ambiguous by the original key signatures, which so often contain one less accidental than we would now expect to see. Unlike the previous nine volumes of the series, which modernized the key signatures, volume 10 sticks with the originals. This helps to highlight the ambiguity and also helps to explain why confusion might have arisen on the part of copyists, since, in a flat-minor key, the accidental that is not present is the one that modifies the sixth degree of the scale. For K12 in G minor, for instance, the only accidental given at the outset is B♭. A passage in the sonata's first half (bars 9–12) contains the repeated succession C♯–B♭–A, representing scale degrees 7–6–5 in D minor. Here the augmented second is present, and is heard in six consecutive reiterations of the figure, though two sources change the B♭ to a B♮, understandably enough given how awkward, not to say exotic, the original succession sounds. When this passage is transposed in the second half of the piece, the succession becomes F♯–E(♮)–D in the tonic key. There is, in other words, no longer any augmented second. Is this difference a consequence of the lack of an E♭ in the work's key signature, and the two passages should, in fact, match? Or is this simply a varied (corrected) version of what was so insistently played in the first half?

There are many such cases to be found in this set of sonatas, and not all of them can be referred to the use of period key signatures by way of possible explanation. Certainly, as noted above, seemingly unaccountable details are characteristic of Scarlatti's sonatas, even if the status of individual cases may be open to debate. It is to his credit that Moiraghi mostly opts for the *lectio difficilior* both in this particular area and more generally. A related editorial problem arises from Scarlatti's seeming propensity for switching modes within – and not simply between – individual phrase units. Sonatas K21 and K39 both offer instances of phrase units that start in minor and then morph into the parallel major either at or leading up to the cadence point. The aural impression approximates to a kind of false relations, and it should be stressed again how counterintuitive such moments can be, even if one accepts the global picture that Scarlatti is known for his cultivation of dissonance, and, more broadly, strange effects of sonority. Resistance, leading to possible editorial or executive correction, seems like a natural reaction. Indeed, the case found in K39 prompts Moiraghi to comment, after noting the changes made to the phrase at bars 44–45 in several editions, 'Generations of performers at the piano and the harpsichord have impressed this famous passage in the collective memory, with the reasonable though arbitrary corrections made by Czerny, who was followed by Longo and partially by Gilbert' (212). The editor frequently adopts such a discursive mode in the critical report rather than just drily noting variants, in many instances supporting the legitimacy of readings found in 'secondary' sources, in line with his vision of the sonatas K1–30 as an 'open workshop'. One oddity is that familiarity with post-eighteenth-century editions such as those cited above seems to be assumed; I have been unable to find any formal bibliographical references for them.

A further oddity that the reader may have picked up is the publication of K39 in a volume devoted to the sonatas K1–30. This arises because the former has been treated as an earlier, 'alternative version' of K24 (210) – both works are in A major – and given the Fadini number of F540a. This seems a strange decision, given that the two works really only share the same opening flourish, reworked periodically throughout. In between these recurrences, the sonatas go their separate ways: K24 is much the more varied texturally and topically, whereas K39 is single-minded, not to say obsessive, in its deployment of sequential motor rhythms.

Many of the editorial difficulties involved in the production of volume 10 are also evident in volume 9, when decisions were being made jointly by Moiraghi and Fadini. The ambiguities involved in the case of K12 as described above are replicated in a case like that of K516, where parallel passages at the end of each half yield one rising harmonic-minor scale in A minor (with augmented second)

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and then one rising melodic-minor scale in the tonic of D minor, but as this piece bears no key signature, it is uncertain whether a raised or lowered sixth scale degree, B♭ or B♮, is intended. Once more, this could be a difference that is deliberate or else a function of the notational system then in place. At least in the case of the Sonata in D major K535 there can be no doubt, as cascades of rising harmonic-minor scales recur throughout. Each individual scale features two clearly notated augmented seconds between $\hat{6}$ and $\hat{7}$, as if to drive the point home at least for this particular sonata.

The sonata K544, which features its own ambiguities with regard to accidentals, marks a turning-point in the sequence of works found in volume 9. Having, as noted earlier, adopted the ordering found in the Venice volumes as a control, the edition runs out of sonatas, so to speak, with the sonata K543. The sonatas that Kirkpatrick numbered 544 to 555 are found in the Parma collection, in its final book, and in various other sources, but not in Venice, and these are preceded in our volume 9 by a number of other works also not represented in Venice (K202 to 205, including that pairing of K204a and 204b, and K356 and 357). Following the appearance of K544–555 is a series of sonatas not found in either Parma or Venice, but in at least one other source. These include one of the best-known works, K141 in D minor, sometimes known as 'toccata'.

Another issue that often arises in relation to the sonatas found in volume 9, as well as in volume 10, concerns phrase rhythm. Just as Scarlatti may offer less than expected, via such techniques as phrase elision or overlap, so he may also offer more than expected, via what seem like excessive repetitions. These are particularly plentiful in the form of repeated cadential formations that drive towards the close of a sonata's two halves, often just based on reiterated, overlapping tonic–pre-dominant–dominant successions. As Moiraghi captures it in the Introduction to volume 10, while such formulations can be 'repeated with a bizarre insistence', they nevertheless 'exhibit incredible tonal energy, not easy to explain' (xxxvii). It is not surprising that sources can differ in this respect, whether because a copyist got lost amidst repeated gestures and miscounted or else because he decided to cut what might have seemed like one repetition too many. There also seem to be attempts to make such passages match across a sonata's two halves, as in the case of K519, where following bar 88 the Münster and Vienna copies insert a two-bar unit so as to match what happens at the equivalent point of the sonata's second half 'in order to create a perfect symmetry', as the editors note (254). Of course it is also possible, as Moiraghi makes plain in the case of the sonatas of volume 10, that these differences represent the composer worrying away at the 'special details' of a particular piece.

Naturally in an enterprise of this size there will be other editorial decisions with which one might take issue. One concerns what Sheveloff dubbed the 'great curve' (first explained in 'The Keyboard Music of Domenico Scarlatti', 279–288), which is yet another feature whereby the composer gives us less than one expects. It entails the elision of the end of a sonata's first half, on its second playing, with the continuation provided by the start of the second half, the effect being to undermine the point of cadential repose and to hurry us forward. In the case of the 'great curve' found between the halves of the sonata K542 the editors ignore the notation, so that the first half twice comes to a stop on a full bar of unison (bar 38) before proceeding to the material that opens the second half. Their justification, as they note in the Critical Report, is that the notation is incomplete – the big slurs denoting the 'curve' are only found above and below the bar that initiates the second half (bar 39). Yet the solution seems obvious: a second-time playing should jump from a quaver's worth of the unison C found in bar 38 to the second quaver of bar 39. This feature is also in fact mishandled by Gilbert in his edition.

These are bilingual editions, but while Italian and English are presented side by side in volume 9, in volume 10 they are given separately. That makes good sense given the significant increase in editorial matter found in the later publication. From time to time the English translations are awkward; a particular stumbling-block is the rendering of *legatura*, which can become 'slur' when it should be 'tie', or vice versa. And *senza legatura* comes out as 'untied', which causes a moment's confusion. These are fairly small matters given the monuments to scholarship that these editions represent. The

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many scholarly touches include a far greater respect for the original styles of layout and notation (for instance with respect to part-writing and distribution of notes between the staves) than is found in any other Scarlatti edition. Collectively they remind us, not just in general but specifically and urgently with regard to the sonata output of Scarlatti, that musical texts are provisional.

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