THREE TRIO SONATAS
BASED ON CONCERTOS BY
ARCANGELO CORELLI
(1653-1713)
ARRANGED FOR ATB RECORDERS BY R. D. TENNENT

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FOREWORD

Although the universall Admiration of Corelli’s Works have allmost equaliz’d his Meritt, yet there are many Gentlemen Lovers of Musick who want a true Taste of his perfections, his Compositions being for the Violin only, if so agreeable an Instrument as the Flute could be accomodated with the same benefitt, it would add to the Honor of the Composer, the Pleasure of the performer, and supply that Instrument’s defect of good Musick, which has been so much of late Complain’d of. This thought was the only motive of the following Transposition …

John Walsh (London, 1720)

Can a concerto grosso be performed with just three recorders? Part of the answer comes from the title page of Corelli’s Opus 6, published posthumously in 1714:

Concerti Grossi con duei Violini, e Violoncello di Concertino obligati, e duoi altri Violini, Viola, e Basso di Concerto Grosso, ad arbitrio, …

i.e., two violins and cello are obligatory but additional strings (violins, viola and basso) are optional. Indeed, except for the optional ripieno parts, the works are stylistically similar to the forty-eight trio sonatas by Corelli published in Rome between 1681 and 1694 (Opp. 1–4) and it is quite possible that most of the material was initially composed for use in trio sonatas. In any case, the Opus 6 works may certainly be performed as if they were trio sonatas.

Numbers 9 to 11, arranged here, are three of the four concerti da camera (chamber concertos) in the Opus 6 set of twelve. Each consists of a suite of dance-based movements in the same or related keys, introduced by a stately prelude. Some of the dance movements are preceded by a short adagio; in No. 11 (Sonata II here), an adagio is extended by an andante largo.

But what about the use of recorders rather than strings? Many transcriptions of Corelli’s sonatas and concertos were published in the 1700s for “flutes” (i.e., recorders) and other instruments, but these generally assumed a conventional basso continuo, typically cello and keyboard. However, there is evidence¹ that recorder ensembles existed at that time, though very little music was composed specifically for them in the baroque era. It is presumed that they played music originally written for other instruments. So it seems quite likely that recorder ensembles were playing Corelli trio sonatas (and maybe even concertos) in the 1700s, and it is not inauthentic to continue this tradition today. The arrangements here are in the original keys, but a few octave transpositions were necessary to fit the ranges of the recorders and, in some of the movements, rapid string figurations were streamlined for performance on recorders.

R.D.T.

¹http://www.recorderhomepage.net/families.html
Three Trio Sonatas
for ATB recorders

Arrangement by R. D. Tennent

Arcangelo Corelli (1653–1713)

Sonata I

1. Preludio

Andante largo

D.C. al Segno

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2. Allemanda

*Allegro*

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\begin{music}
\newclef \octave\eighth
\newkey \clef 4 \octave\eighth \key c \major
\newtime \quarter\note C \clef \octave\eighth \note E \note G \\ \note A \note C \note E \note G \\ \note A \note C \note E \note G \\ \end{music}
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3. Adagio

4. Corrente
5. Allegro
6. Minuetto

Vivace

\[\text{\textit{Minuetto}}\]

\[\text{\textit{Vivace}}\]
Sonata II†

1. Preludio

Andante largo

†Opus 6, No. 11
2. Allemanda

*Allegro*

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- 10 -
3. Adagio–Andante largo

Adagio

Andante largo
4. Sarabanda

Largo

5. Giga

Vivace
Sonata III†

1. Preludio

Largo

†Opus 6, No. 9
3. Corrente

Vivace
4. Gavotta

Allegro

5. Adagio
6. Minuetto

Vivace

Da Capo al Fine