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Tommaso Giordani's Solo Sonatas for the English Guitar as an Example of Guitar Literature from the Second Half of the 18th Century

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Abstract

The present study aims to present six solo sonatas by Tommaso Giordani (ca. 1730–1806) as an example of guitar literature from the second half of the 18th century. These compositions were originally written for the English guitar with *basso continuo* accompaniment performed on the harpsichord and come from a collection entitled *Six Solos for a Guitar with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord, and one Trio for a Guitar, Violin and Bass*, published by Longman & Broderip in London in 1780.

Keywords: English guitar, guittar, English guitar sonatas, transitional works between the Baroque and Classicism, works of Italian composers, Tommaso Giordani.

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Introduction

The guitar literature of the second half of the 18th century can hardly be found in general circulation today. It remains largely undiscovered and nearly absent from concert stages or academic curricula, especially in Poland[1]. One can speculate that its existence escapes the attention of present-day performers due to the dynamic situation at the European music market of that time. This period was abundant in many – now forgotten – experimental and innovative types of plucked chordophones, which differed in terms of construction and tuning. The lute was slowly falling out of fashion, and the Spanish guitar did not appear until the end of the 18th century. This gap in guitar repertoire can be readily filled with the rich solo and chamber literature for the English guitar. Apart from its unquestionable artistic merits, it also possesses a great educational value. By opening up a broad perspective for performing these compositions, we not only preserve the continuity of guitar works from the Renaissance to the present day, but also come into contact with the little-known world of the aesthetics of the transitional period between the Baroque and Classicism, described in the treatises by Leopold Mozart (1719–1787), Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714–1788) or Johann Joachim Quantz (1697–1773). However, the open tuning[2] of the English guitar, also known as guittar, is fundamentally different from the tuning of the classical guitar[3], which makes it necessary to create arrangements of its literature. While it is possible to perform these works on the modern instrument, there are performance challenges related to reproducing the original fingering or preserving the texture.

1. English guitar (guittar) – historical and cultural overview

The origins of the guittar date back to the mid-1750s. The instrument originated in London, as evidenced by the earliest surviving specimen created in 1756 by Remerus Liessem (before 1730–1760), the first handbook – *Sixty Six Lessons for the Cetra or Guittar* (1757) by Giovanni Battista Marella (ca. 1745–

[1] Occasionally, one may come across guitar quintets by Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805), partitas by Giuseppe Antonio Brescianello (1690–1758), or possibly individual pieces be lesser-known composers such as Jan Křtitel Vaňhal (1739–1813) or Giacomo Merchi (1730–1789). On the other hand, music composed for the English guitar exists only in the form of a few recordings of works by James Oswald (1710–1769), Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762), Rudolf Straube (1717–1785), Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782) or T. Giordani.

[2] A type of tuning in which the successive sounds of open strings form a specific chord, e.g. C major with C tuning, G major with G tuning, etc.

[3] Classical guitar tuning: E A d g b e^1.

ok. 1778), the painting *Portrait of a Lady* (1757) by Arthur Devis (1712–1787), depicting a lady with an English guitar, or press mentions from 1754[4].

The rapidly expanding London was at that time the largest city in Europe, housing the royal court, the Church, the main port, as well as higher education institutions such as Royal Society of London for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge or Royal Academy of Arts. In the age of enlightenment and industrial revolution, which led to technological, economic, social and cultural development, the city became attractive to tourists, emigrants, scientists and artists from the entire continent. An affluent middle class oriented towards consumerism and fashion emerged. This multicultural metropolis was quickly transformed into a centre of fashionable society, and music – alongside theatre and gardens – became the main form of entertainment. It was considered to be in good taste to own a musical instrument such as a harpsichord or guitar, not only to serve as decoration or for communal music-making, but also as a means of elevating one's social status or showing off the skills of well-educated young ladies to eligible suitors.

The English guitar enjoyed remarkable popularity and recognition across all social strata, particularly among high-born ladies, leading to the creation of numerous musical publications for the instrument – both for professional performers and amateurs – as well as instructional materials. By the end of the 18th century, the guitar culture had become a British national trait. Many different types of the guittar existed and in order to meet market demands, luthiers continued to innovate, perfecting and patenting new features such as keyboards[5] (which aroused the enthusiasm of female aristocrats, as they not only protected their nails from metal strings, but also produced a sound similar to that of the fashionable pianoforte), stepped fingerboards or increasingly precise tuning mechanisms.

The instrument remained popular until the mid-19th century, reaching beyond Great Britain to its colonies in North America and India, as well as most European countries, including Poland[6].

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[4] P. Poulopoulos, *The Guittar in the British Isles*, *1750–1810*, computer printout, doctoral dissertation, supervisor: D. Martin, PhD, Professor A. Myers, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh 2011, p. 78.

[5] The most popular type of an external keyboard mechanism, manufactured mainly by John Preston and Christian Claus since the 1770s, was "Smith's Patent Box" – on oval, wooden box screwed to the bottom of the resonant body, suspended above the bridge on two arms and extending as far as the rosette. A more complex internal mechanism was later constructed and patented by Ch. Claus in 1783; it was used in the so-called *piano forte guitar*.

[6] In Polish sources, the English guitar appears at the turn of the 19th century under such names as *gittara* or *gittarra*. Preserved compositions indicate the predominant use of open G tuning (occasionally C).

Fig. 1. English guitar from the collection of Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Photograph by M. Żegleń-Włodarczyk/private archive

2. General information about the instrument

The English guitar was the perfect embodiment of the trend for producing "experimental" instruments undergoing constant modification, which prevailed in the second half of the 18th century. Its form and external appearance differed depending on the time of production, manufacturing workshop, purpose (concerts of professional virtuoso performers, music-making at home, decoration of salons), nationality and the individual preferences of the luthier or the thickness of the buyer's wallet. They were also equipped with additional accessories (such as a capo or the previously mentioned keyboard mechanisms) and featured innovative construction solutions. More expensive instruments were adorned with veneers, inlays and costly materials – ivory, ebony or mother of pearl. They were also marked with labels or engraved trademarks of reputable manufacturers.

Despite the many variations of the guittar, it is possible to arrive at a certain kind of standardisation. It is a small instrument resembling the mandolin or the cittern, which functioned at the same time on the British Isles. It consists of three main parts: the body, the neck with a fingerboard and the headstock with a tuning mechanism. The typical scale length ranged from 37.8 cm to 53.0 cm, yet it was mostly around 42 cm[7]. The oval or round body is reminiscent of the shape of a teardrop, pear, almond, bell or an egg[8]. The number of brass chromatic frets

[7] P. Poulopoulos, op. cit., p. 13, 294.

[8] In English-language sources those shapes are referred to as: "Teardrop", "Festooned teardrop", "Pear", "Festooned pear", "Almond", "Bell S-top", "Bell J-top" and "Egg".

varies from 12 to 19, and the scale usually covers 2.5 octaves. A characteristic feature of all guittars is the metal strings (from 9 to 12) – usually single bass strings and double or triple on the higher notes – in six, occasionally seven, courses in open tuning consisting of major chord tones, with the highest courses tuned in unison. According to instructional materials and engravings on the headstocks of preserved instruments, the tuning was most commonly in C[9], but G and A tunings can also be found. Holding and playing techniques are similar to those of the lute (with the little finger resting on the body). Composers used standard notation with octave transposition – transposing down by an octave – and occasionally also tablature[10]. Table 1 presents a summary of the most essential information regarding the English guitar.

Table 1. Summary of general information about the English guitar.

length width depth	65.7–91.5 cm 26.5–36.0 cm 5.6–12.0 cm
scale length	37.8–53.0 cm, mostly around 42 cm
open tuning	C, occasionally G major/A major
number of frets	12–19
strings (material)	metal
number of strings	9–12, mostly 10 in 6 courses (including single, double and triple)
playing technique – right hand	fingers – similar to lute / keyboard
instrument holding	similar to holding a lute
notation	standard notation (with octave transposition), tablature

Source: own work

3. Design features and disposition of the guittar necessary for performing Tommaso Giordani's solo sonatas

The subject of this article, the sonatas by Tommaso Giordani from the collection *Six Solos for a Guitar with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord, and one Trio for a Guitar, Violin and Bass*, were written for a specific disposition of the English guitar. Having worked with the Longman & Broderip company[11] for many years, the composer must have dealt with guittars manufactured in its work-

[9] The successive notes of the open strings formed a C major chord: c e gg c^1c^1 e^1e^1 g^1g^1.

[10] Tablatures can be found in *The Art of Playing the Guitar or Cittra* (1760) by Francesco Geminiani (1687–1762).

[11] The publishing house which released the collection *Six Solos…* was part of the company.

shops. It is worth noting that in the years 1768–1797, that is for nearly 30 years, Longman & Broderip was at the centre of London's musical life, and the scope of its activities was not solely limited to publishing. The company provided various music-related services. Apart from printed and imported music sheets, books, and music magazines, its two shops offered instructional materials[12], instruments from the company's own workshops[13] along with accessories and restoration services or even playing lessons with a teacher. The company also sold tickets to concerts and provided entertainment for visiting artists. The English guitars most commonly produced in Longman & Broderip workshops and other establishments[14] had 10 strings in 6 courses and open C tuning. Composing for instruments with the most popular disposition made it possible for authors to reach a very wide audience of performers. The collection *Six Solos…* was written for such a model, and – more importantly – it is only playable on this kind of instrument. The high degree of complexity of the sonatas (which manifests itself in fast repetitive sounds, varied articulation and elaborate ornamentation) excludes the use of guittars with imprecise keyboard mechanisms. In addition, the chosen keys (mainly C major) mean that using an instrument with a different tuning would require changes in the fingering, leading to more difficult left-hand finger arrangements.

4. Tommaso Giordani (ca. 1730–1806) – a biographical outline

The author of the *solos* – **Tommaso Giordani** – was born in Naples in 1730 or 1733. He came from a family of itinerant singers who staged comic operas. Giordani himself, however, was a composer and harpsichordist, likely an orchestra member. Between 1745 and 1764, the troupe of actors under the direction of his father – Giuseppe Giordani (ca. 1695–1764) – went on a tour across many European countries such as Italy, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, France, England and Ireland. It was then that T. Giordani became the most famous member of the family. He settled in Great Britain in 1764, being simultaneously active in London and Dublin, where he worked for many subsequent artistic seasons as a composer, conductor, director and manager of the royal opera houses –

[12] The hundreds of publications released by the Longman & Broderip publishing house include instructional materials for the harpsichord, piano, flute, oboe, bassoon, Scottish bagpipes, violin, English guitar, harp, cittern and cello.

[13] They included English guitars, harpsichords, pianofortes, harps, organs as well as string, wind and even percussion instruments.

[14] At the end of the 18th century, at least 52 manufacturing workshops were involved in the production and trade of guitars in the British Isles alone. It is estimated that more than 13,000 of these instruments were created there between 1750 and 1810.

Smock Alley and Crow Street in Dublin and Haymarket and Drury Lane in London. He rendered various services in all city theatres. In addition to these activities, he composed pieces for amateurs and educated musicians who were centred around Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, London's cultural hub. In 1771, he began working with the Longman & Broderip publishing house, where he continued to publish until around 1780. His association with this institution was crucial for creating the collection *Six Solos…*, especially since he wrote it for the English guitar – an instrument which, at that time, was at the peak of its popularity and consequently brought considerable profits to the company. In the summer of 1783, the composer returned to Ireland, where he opened the English Opera House with the renowned tenor Michael Leoni (ca. 1750–1797). However, despite its artistic successes, the lack of a regular audience brought about the bankruptcy of the theatre. In order to secure an income, T. Giordani was forced to accept the position of organist at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Dublin, which he held until 1798. He was not only a respected artist, but also a promoter of Irish music, leading to his election as President of Irish Music Fund in 1794. He passed away in Dublin at his residence in Great Britain Street on 23 or 24 February 1806. His funeral was mentioned in the Irish Music Fund protocol of 24 February 1806, noting a withdrawal of 5 guineas for this purpose. The following announcement appeared in issue no. 6257 of "The Dublin Evening Post" on 25 February:

> Giordani, the famous Composer, has departed this life. Many of his musical productions are of the first order, and will be! retained by every perfect judge of the divine science[15].

The only known description of T. Giordani comes from the 1781 memoirs of a London librettist and a neighbour of the composer – John O'Keeffe (1747–1833). In volume II of *Recollections of the Life of John O'Keeffe*, the author describes him as a pleasant, tall and elegant elderly man[16]. The painting *Portrait of a Gentleman* (ca. 1740) by the Italian artist Frà Galgario (1655–1743), currently held at the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan, is said to be a representation of T. Giordani. However, this cannot be the true likeness of the composer as he would have been 7–10 years old at the time of painting. Nevertheless, the work provides an approximation of the appearance of a "typical" gentleman of the time, wearing a fashionable black bow, a short wig, a two-horned hat and a velvet waistcoat with gold or silver embellishments.

Tomasso Giordani was a highly regarded musician and an extraordinarily prolific composer. He wrote more than 50 operas (mostly *buffa*) and stage works such as masques, pantomimes or *pasticci*[17], often in collaboration with other

[15] "The Dublin Evening Post" of 25 February 1806, Dublin.

[16] J. O'Keeffe, *Recollections of the Life of John O'Keeffe*, vol. 2, London 1826, p. 46.

[17] *Pasticci* – pieces composed by several musicians; in the 18th century, a type of opera which consisted in combining musical segments from different operas with separate *librettos*.

composers (sometimes – which is typical of the time – without their knowledge or consent). His rich legacy includes cantatas, an oratorio, numerous songs (in both Italian and English), orchestral music (including overtures), compositions for solo instruments (marches, minuets, preludes), chamber music (flute, string and keyboard duets, trios with the English guitar, quarters, quintets, sonatas for various instruments, including pieces with *basso continuo*) and concertos (for wind, string and keyboard instruments). Furthermore, he is the author of two handbooks – one for the violin and harpsichord/pianoforte and one for keyboard instruments. Despite such an extensive body of compositions, there are no works for the English guitar as a solo instrument except for the sonatas from the *Six Solos…* collection.

5. The genesis of the *Six Solos*... collection

The collection *Six Solos for a Guitar with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord and one Trio for a Guitar, Violin and Bass* by T. Giordani was published in London in 1780 by Longman & Broderip. The publication contains 6 two-movement solo sonatas for the English guitar and *Trio* for the English guitar, violin and a melodic bass instrument. The author of the present study has recently determined the year of creation of *Six Solos…* to be 1780. Previously, available sources provided only an approximate date – ca. 1780. Information on this matter can be found by tracing the history of the Longman & Broderip publishing house, especially the locations of its offices and places of publication. The company operated in London between 1768 and 1797 and owned two premises at 26 Cheapside and 13 Haymarket. The main music shop was situated in Cheapside. The Haymarket branch, located near the Royal Theatre, was purchased on 2 November 1782; however, the company had already secured the rights to use the premises two years later, in 1780. They purchased them for £40 per season[18] from the theatre copyist Leopold di Micheli, who had just received a grant for music publications. Starting from that year – 1780 – both addresses appeared on works published by the company, and they can also be seen on the first page of the *Six Solos…* collection.

Furthermore, the list of Longman & Broderip's publications[19] attached to the collection does not include pieces composed after 1780. Therefore, the year 1780 appears to be not only the most likely, but also the only possible date of publication of T. Giordani's collection.

[18] Ed. M. Kassler, *The Music Trade in Georgian England*, Routledge, London – New York 2011, p. 3.

[19] It comprises more than 250 works published between 1768 and 1780 and authored by nearly one hundred different composers, including Johann Christian Bach (1735–1782), Luigi Boccherini (1743–1805), T. Giordani or Frederic Theodor Schumann (before 1760–1780?).

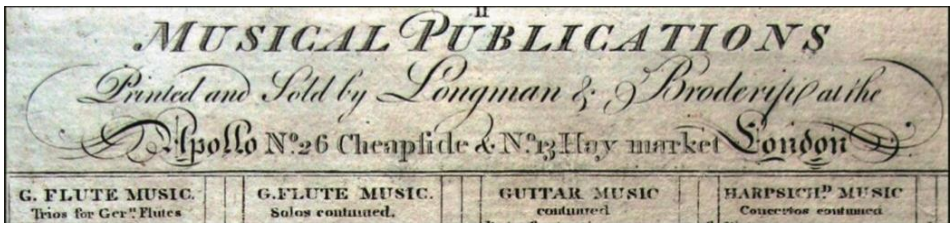


Fig. 2. A page from the Six Solos… collection with the addresses of both offices[20]

The title page of the collection constitutes an important source of information. The first significant clue – starting from the top – is the dedication to Countess Auguste Marcolini (*Auguste Comtesse Marcolini*), which seems understandable in the era of the English guitar's popularity among aristocratic women. According to a lexicon compiled by German scholars, *Das gelehrte Teutschland oder Lexikon der jetzt lebenden teutschen Schriftsteller*, Countess Auguste Marcolini (*la Comtesse Auguste Marcolini)* was a young Maltese lady (*Dame de Malthe*)[21]. However, apart from a preserved decorative silver medallion[22] with her family's coat of arms on the Maltese Cross, no information has been found about the countess's life or her relationship with T. Giordani. The catalogue number of the publication (*No. 53*) appears in the upper right-hand corner of the title page. In the middle is the title of the collection – *Six Solos for a Guitar*[23] *with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord and one Trio for a Guitar, Violin and Bass*. It indicates the instrumentation of the compositions. In the case of *Solos*, it is the English guitar accompanied by the harpsichord, which is meant to realize the *basso continuo* part, whereas *Trio* should be performed on the English guitar, violin and a bass melodic instrument. The composer's name is recorded as *SIG.R GIORDANI*, as it was customary for the publisher not to print the first names of authors. Identification is made easier by the fact that at that time Tommaso was the only member of the Giordani family who collaborated with Longman & Broderip. The collection was sold for 6 pounds (*Price £6*).

The last piece of information is the name and address of the publishing house and the "the royal family's" music shop:

> London Printed by Longman & Broderip, No. 26 Cheapside, Music-Sellers to the ROYAL FAMILY

[20] T. Giordani, *Six Solos...*, p. 1.

[21] G.Ch. Hamberger, J.G. Meusel, *Scheppach Georg August* (entry [in:] *Das gelehrte Teutschland oder Lexikon der jetzt lebenden teutschen Schriftsteller*, Meyersche Buchhandlung, Lemgo 1776, p. 103.

[22] The medallion was made by the Dresden artist Friedrich Reinhard Schrödel (1761–1837) and is dated to 1790.

[23] The word *guitar* here refers to the English guitar tuned to an open C.

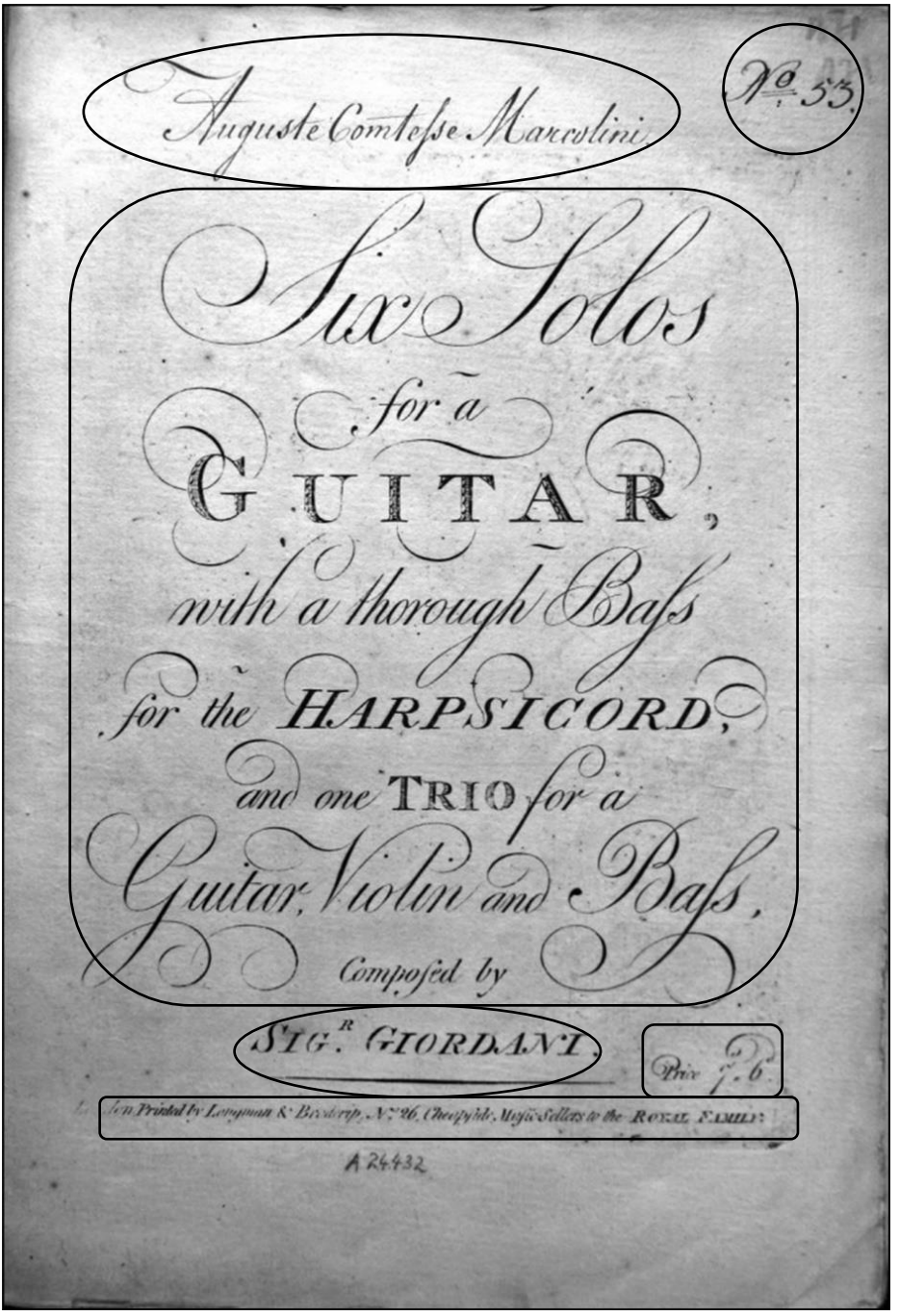


Fig. 3. The title page of T. Giordani's *Six Solos…*[24]

[24] T. Giordani, *Six Solos* ...

6. T. Giordani's sonatas in the context of the aesthetic principles of their time

Moving on to the analysis of T. Giordani's solo sonatas, it is essential to take into consideration the time when the composer lived, the kind of aesthetics he navigated, what he learned from his contemporaries, and the influence he drew from previous periods. The second half of the 18th century, i.e. the transitional period between the Baroque and Classicism, was a time when a number of distinctive styles interweaved and existed nearly simultaneously in many artistic centres. The galant style, rococo, *Empfindsamer Stil* or *Sturm und Drang* created a kind of aesthetic pluralism on the European stage, laying foundations for the development of Classicism. The form of sonata was only taking shape, and artists referred to the different stages in its development – alongside the "mature phase", it was also possible to find "initial phases" or a combination of the new and old style, which is particularly noticeable in Giordani's *solos*. As Józef Chomiński and Krystyna Wilkowska-Chomińska note in *Wielkie formy instrumentalne* [*Great Instrumental Forms*]:

> There is no composer of sonatas in the transitional period whose work would not feature elements of the Baroque and Classicism[25].

The 17th-century sonata was a cyclical form with an unspecified number of movements connected by tonality and varied in terms of character, texture, tempo and metre (which was related to the overarching Baroque music principle of contrast, especially with regard to motion or tempo). It was written for one, two or three (occasionally more) melodic instruments with *basso continuo*. The instrumentation was indicated as, respectively: *a uno* (*a 1*), *a duo* (*a 2*), *a tre* (*a 3*), *a quattro* (*a 4*) etc., although the *basso continuo* part was not included. Sonatas were performed in churches, during liturgy (sonata *da chiesa*), at courts, palaces, concerts and celebrations (sonata *da camera*), in opera houses (during intermissions – such sonatas often shared thematic material with the opera which was being performed) or while music-making at home. They were also widely used in education.

In the 18th century, the distinctions between sonata *da chiesa* and *da camera* became somewhat blurred – church sonatas started to include dance forms, and chamber sonatas would feature the *adagio* or *grave* movements, previously characteristic of sacred music. At that time, the term "sonata" began to be used with reference to the *da chiesa* form. On the other hand, sonata *da camera* took on the names of suite, partita, *ordre* or set. Three-movement forms (with the following succession of movements: fast, slow, fast) and single-movement con-

[25] J. Chomiński, K. Wilkowska-Chomińska, *Wielkie formy instrumentalne*, vol. 2: *Formy muzyczne*, PWM, Kraków 1987, pp. 202–203.

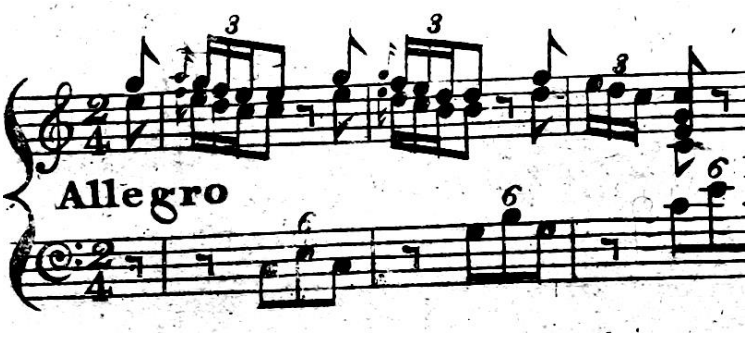
structions with a binary structure were dominant. The use of two themes became increasingly common, foreshadowing the thematic dualism of the classical sonata form. The most important compositions of that period include *Essercizi* (around 600 sonatas) by Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757) – single-movement forms with a binary structure, homophonic texture and dance-like rhythms, consisting of one or more themes, also with noticeable thematic dualism and even occasional programmatic elements.

T. Giordani's *solos* are structurally similar to 17th-century sonatas *da camera, a uno*. Their use in salons is suggested by the dedication to an aristocrat, resemblance to the Baroque suite in terms of cyclical form, dance-like character of contrasting movements and the binary structure. Furthermore, in Great Britain, the solo sonata (*a1*) was referred to by the word "solo". Therefore, in the *solos* we are dealing with forms written for a solo instrument (the English guitar) with *basso continuo* accompaniment. The composer clearly specified in the title that the *basso continuo* part should be performed on the harpsichord and not on the increasingly popular pianoforte, which is again indicative of the Baroque. At the same time, the movements with a binary structure, dance-like character and homophonic texture resemble D. Scarlatti's *Essercizi,* which reflect processes typical of the music of the first half of the 18th century. The sonatas contain elements characteristic of the galant and classical styles, manifesting, for instance, in the periodic structure of certain components or in the presence of such forms as the rondo or theme and variations.

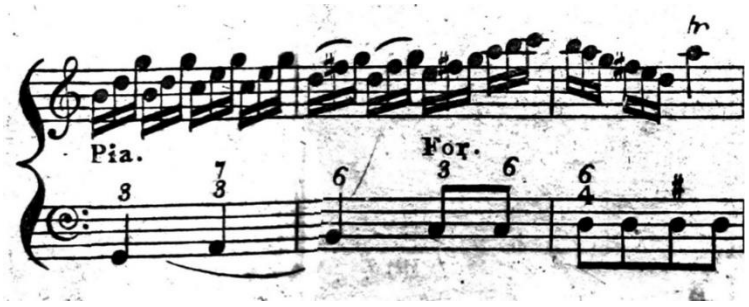
7. Architecture of the sonatas, elements of a musical piece – characteristics of the collection

All sonatas consist of two movements, although there are no thematic connections between the components. In the vast majority of cases, the individual movements possess an internal, two-part structure. They take the forms of: AABB (*Largo* from Sonata I, *Andantino* from Sonata II, *Largo* from Sonata III, *Larghetto* and *Giga-Allegro* from Sonata V), AABABA (*Minuetto* from Sonata IV) and $AABA^1BA^1$ (*Allegro* from Sonata IV, *Larghetto* and *Allegro* from Sonata VI). Forms with a different division include ABA (*Allegro Alla Caccia* from Sonata III), rondo (*Rondeau* from Sonata I) and a theme and variations (*Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II). Evolutionary structure is prevalent, with a noticeable influence of motivic development and figuration typical of the Baroque style. Also characteristic of this period is the irregular number of bars in the individual movements of the sonatas, although the resulting lack of symmetry does not disrupt the narrative. Only in *Rondeau* from Sonata I, *Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II and *Minuetto* from Sonata IV can we find a periodic structure, characteristic of transitional and Classical styles.

The *solos* do not yet adhere to the Classical sonata form; instead, their structure is closer to the concept of Francesco Galeazzi (1758–1819), situated between Baroque and Classical thinking[26]. *Allegro* from Sonata IV can serve as an example here; two sections stand out in its first part – *motivo principale* in the key of T (C major) and the figural *periodo di cadenza* in the key of D (G major).



Example 1. The *motivo principale* section in the key of T (C) in part I of *Allegro* from Sonata IV

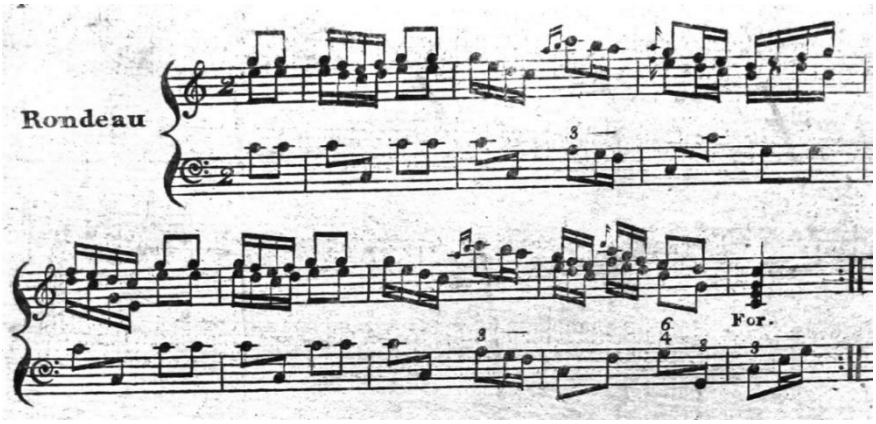


Example 2. The *periodo di cadenza* section in the key of D (G major) in part I of *Allegro* from Sonata IV

The second part, on the other hand, begins with *motivo principale* in the key of D (G major), followed by *modulazione* and a reprise-like section in the key of T (C major).

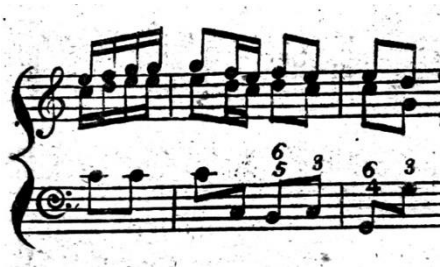
The forms of rondo or theme and variations demonstrate a different structure. *Rondeau* from Sonata I exhibits features of the old French rondo in the galant style. It is characterised by a homophonic texture, simple, periodic structure, rich ornamentation and figuration and small size. It consists of an 8-bar refrain (with repetition after the first presentation) with a symmetrical structure and melodic figuration in the main key (C major).

[26] B. Churgin, *Francesco Galeazzi's Description* (*1796*) *of Sonata Form*, "Journal of the American Musicological Society" 1968, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 181–199; A. Chodkowski, *Teoria formy sonatowej Francesco Galeazziego i jej zastosowanie do analizy dzieł Haydna i Mozarta*, "Muzyka" 1991, no. 4, pp. 69–76.



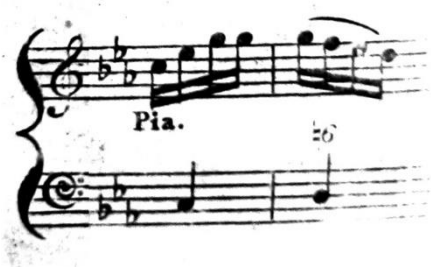
Example 3. The refrain in *Rondeau* from Sonata I in the main key (C major)

The two couplets are more extensive. The first 10-bar couplet retains the key of T (C major), which is acceptable in the old French rondo.



Example 4. The initial fragment of couplet I in *Rondeau* from Sonata I in the main key (C major)

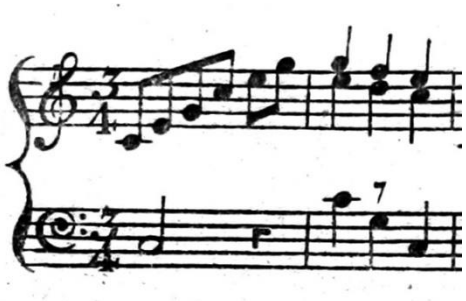
Conversely, the second, longer 22-bar couplet is written in the parallel key of E-flat major (even though it begins with a short fragment in the key of C minor)[27].



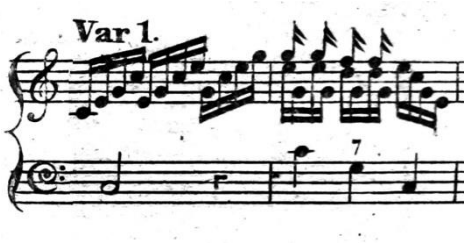
Example 5. The initial fragment of couplet II in *Rondeau* from Sonata I in the parallel key (E-flat major)

[27] J. Chomiński, K. Wilkowska-Chomińska, *Formy muzyczne,* vol.1: *Teoria formy. Małe formy instrumentalne*, PWM, Kraków 1983, pp. 536–537.

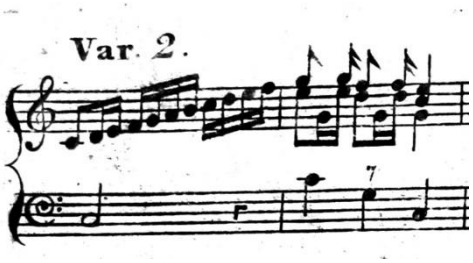
The movement *Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II takes the form of a theme and variations. It has a periodic structure and consists of an 8-bar theme and three 8-bar variations based on the stable harmonic structure typical of the late Baroque[28]. T. Giordani used the figuration of the melodic line as the variation technique, changing the original intervallic pattern of the theme by introducing numerous passing tones. This rhythmic fragmentation results in a greater diversity of the variations. They are known as the so-called figural variations, in which only the texture undergoes modification[29].



Example 6. The initial fragment of the theme in *Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II



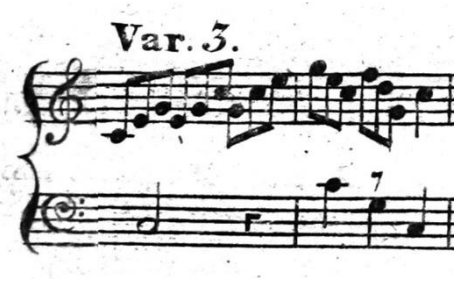
Example 7. Sixteenth-note figuration of the melodic line in the first variation of *Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II



Example 8. Scalar figuration of the melodic line in the second variation of *Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II

[28] Ibidem, p. 477.

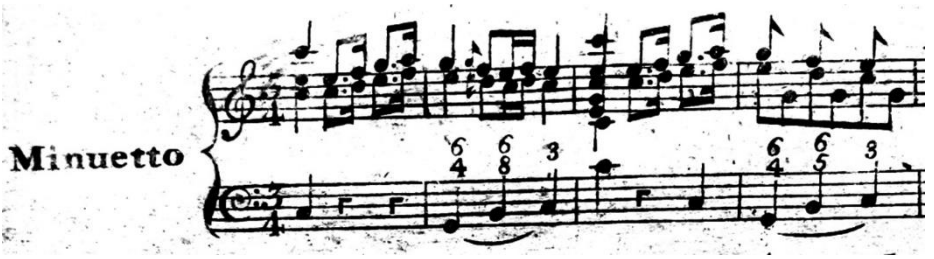
[29] Ibidem, pp. 486–487.



Example 9. Triplet figuration of the melodic line in the third variation of *Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II

The final variation, written in triplet motion, should not serve as a conclusion due to its peaceful character. As noted by K. Wilkowska-Chomińska and J. Chomiński – "the final, most elaborate variation plays a particularly important role, being a kind of conclusion to the entire variation form"[30]. This fact and the Baroque performance practice mean that it should have been followed by another repetition of the theme.

The *solos* contain incredibly interesting stylisations and references to other instrumental and vocal-instrumental forms and genres. They make use of such dances as the minuet – in *Tempo di Menuetto* from Sonata II – and its faster Italian counterpart *minuetto* in *Minuetto* from Sonata IV.

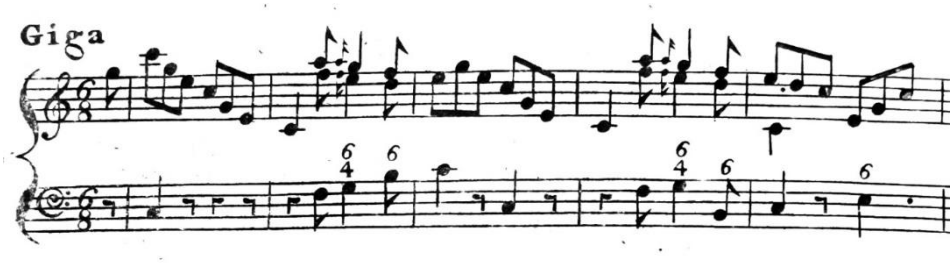


Example 10. The initial fragment of *Minuetto* from Sonata IV

The *Giga-Allegro* from Sonata V and *Allegro Alla Caccia* from Sonata III feature another dance – *gigue*. Both of these movements bear the marks of Italian lute-style *gigues*, as evidenced by the homophonic texture, smooth movement of eighth-note groups with an upbeat, the metre – respectively 6/8 and 12/8 – as well as 4-bar phrases. There is also no sign of the siciliana figure, which is typical of keyboard instruments[31]. However, due to its three-part ABA structure, rather than two-part, *Allegro Alla Caccia* merely alludes to this dance.

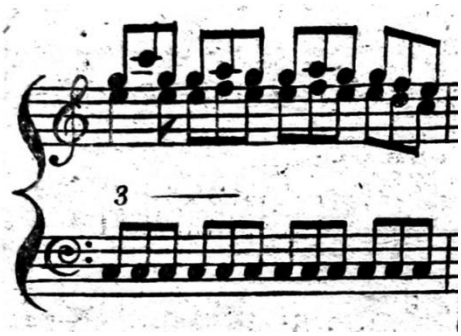
[30] J. Chomiński, K. Wilkowska-Chomińska, op. cit., vol. 1: *Teoria…*, p. 511.

[31] P. Wilk, *Sonata na skrzypce solo w siedemnastowiecznych Włoszech*, University of Wrocław, Wrocław 2005, pp. 132–133.



Example 11. The initial fragment of the *Giga-Allegro* movement from Sonata V

The reference to the 14th-century vocal-instrumental *caccia* is interesting; it existed as a separate vocal-instrumental genre since the Italian *trecento* and – through the use of numerous onomatopoeias – depicted hunting scenes. Connections with this genre are noticeable in *Allegro Alla Caccia* from Sonata III, where the composer leads high voices in parallel with a drone bass based on a single note (though it is not a typical drone with long rhythmic values).

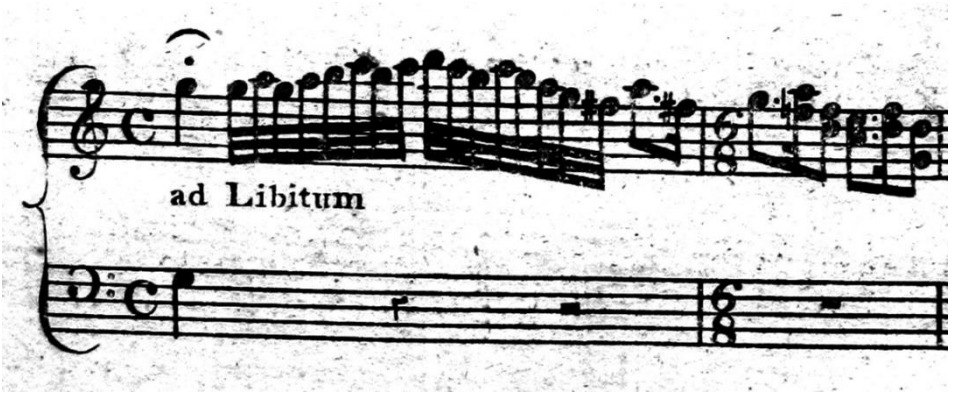


Example 12. Two high voices in the guitar part led against a bass based on a single repeated note in *Allegro Alla Caccia* from Sonata III

This part also features imitations and fifth intervals, which are reminiscent of the sounds of hunting horns.

The *cadenza ad Libitum* in *Larghetto* from Sonata VI is a unique element that is more characteristic of the form of concerto than sonata. In line with the rules of the period, T. Giordani introduced it in the slow part "on the dominant of the main key of the piece […] with a solemn character" in order to "surprise the listener once more" and "make a particular impression". This section has condensed rhythmic values and the metre of 4/4 (instead of 6/8 as in the rest of this part) since the cadence must not be "composed in the same metre and with the same division of notes" as the part in which it is located[32].

[32] J.J. Quanz, *O zasadach gry na flecie poprzecznym*, translated by M. Nahajowski, The Academy of Music in Łódź, Łódź 2012, pp. 150–151, 153.



Example 13. *Cadenza ad Libitum* in *Larghetto* from Sonata VI

In his handbook *Twelve progressive lessons for the harpsichord, pianoforte or organ*, the composer notes that in a *cadenza*, "the performer is at liberty to throw in such notes as his fancy may direct to bring him to the close […]"[33].

T. Giordani provided his sonatas with verbal descriptions of the tempo, character and even the form of each movement. The analysis of table 2 shows contrasts in tempo and character, and thus different affects, already at the level of the combination of components in each cycle. This also occurs between the sections of an individual movement and is an expression of Baroque-like thinking.

Table 2. T. Giordani's descriptions of the sonatas – a synthetic overview

Sonata	Movement I	Movement II
I	*Largo*	*Rondeau*
II	*Andantino*	*Tempo di Menuetto*
III	*Largo*	*Allegro Alla Caccia*
IV	*Allegro*	*Minuetto*
V	*Larghetto*	*Giga-Allegro*
VI	*Larghetto*	*Allegro*

Source: own work

Translations for most terms are included in his handbook.

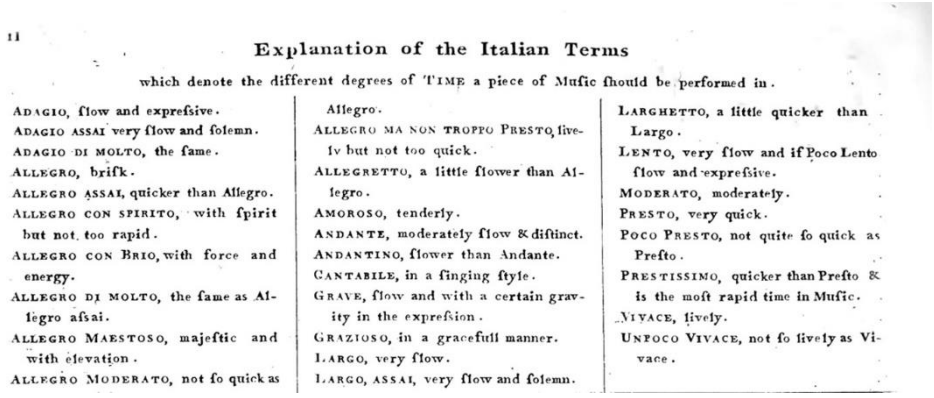
Such indications were essential for his contemporary composers and theorists. They were primarily meant to concern the affect, which is to be evoked by the tempo[34]. A mention on this matter can be found in C.Ph.E Bach's treatise:

[33] T. Giordani, *Twelve progressive lessons for the harpsichord, pianoforte or organ* op. 25, Longman & Broderip, London 1780, p. II.

[34] D. Bartel, *Musica Poetica: Musical-Rhetorical Figures in German Baroque Music*, University of Nebrasca Press, Lincoln – London 1997, pp. 46–47.

> Performers, as we have already learned, must try to capture the true content of a composition and express its appropriate affects. Composers, therefore, act wisely who in notating their works include terms, in addition to tempo indications, which help to clarify the meaning of a piece[35].

In the sonatas, the key of C major appears a total of nine times (including the final movements of each cycle), A minor once and C minor twice (see table 3). There is no doubt that this practice resulted directly from the tuning of the English guitar and was widely used by the composers of that time. This choice of keys made it possible to take advantage of the natural resonance of the instrument[36], thereby fully demonstrating the tonal qualities of the English guitar and the music performed on that instrument.



Explanation of the Italian Terms

which denote the different degrees of TIME a piece of Muſic ſhould be performed in.

ADAGIO, ſlow and expreſsive.
ADAGIO ASSAI very ſlow and ſolemn.
ADAGIO DI MOLTO, the ſame.
ALLEGRO, briſk.
ALLEGRO ASSAI, quicker than Allegro.
ALLEGRO CON SPIRITO, with ſpirit but not too rapid.
ALLEGRO CON BRIO, with force and energy.
ALLEGRO DI MOLTO, the ſame as Allegro aſsai.
ALLEGRO MAESTOSO, majeſtic and with elevation.
ALLEGRO MODERATO, not ſo quick as Allegro.
ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO PRESTO, lively but not too quick.
ALLEGRETTO, a little ſlower than Allegro.
AMOROSO, tenderly.
ANDANTE, moderately ſlow & diſtinct.
ANDANTINO, ſlower than Andante.
CANTABILE, in a ſinging ſtyle.
GRAVE, ſlow and with a certain gravity in the expreſsion.
GRAZIOSO, in a gracefull manner.
LARGO, very ſlow.
LARGO, ASSAI, very ſlow and ſolemn.
LARGHETTO, a little quicker than Largo.
LENTO, very ſlow and if Poco Lento ſlow and expreſsive.
MODERATO, moderately.
PRESTO, very quick.
POCO PRESTO, not quite ſo quick as Preſto.
PRESTISSIMO, quicker than Preſto & is the moſt rapid time in Muſic.
VIVACE, lively.
UNPOCO VIVACE, not ſo lively as Vivace.

Fig. 4. Tempo indications in *Twelve progressive lessons…* (1780) by T. Giordani[37]

Table 3. Sonata keys –a synthetic overview

Sonata	Movement I	Movement II
I	C major	C major
II	A minor	C major
III	C minor	C major
IV	C major	C major
V	C minor	C major
VI	C major	C major

Source: own work

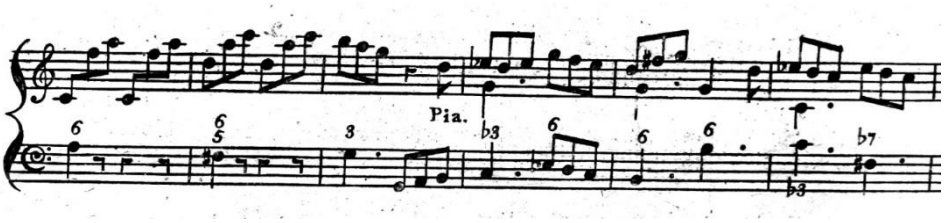
[35] C.Ph.E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments,* translated by William J. Mitchell, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, pp. 153–154.

[36] In the *solos*, nearly all parts in the key of C major end with a chord performed on the guittar's open strings!

[37] Ibidem.

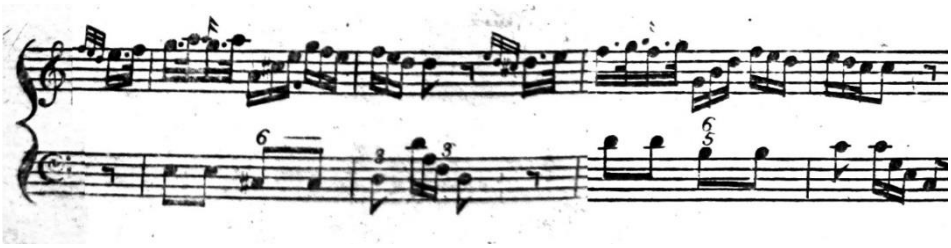
It should be remembered, however, that in the Baroque, keys were the carriers of the affect. They were related to the tone and timbre, and thus to the meaning of a piece. Considering the rhetorical significance of the key in the sonatas in question, one must refer to the theories that were prevalent at the time. According to one of the most important music theorists, Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), the key of C major "is used where joy can run its course", C minor imparts a "remarkably pleasant but, at the same time, melancholic tone", and A minor is "mournful… inviting to sleep"[38]. It is impossible to unequivocally determine whether T. Giordani had these exact meanings in mind when choosing the keys. Nevertheless, it is certain that the parts written in the key of C major were supposed to have a joyful character, whereas the ones in C minor or A minor – mournful or melancholic.

The harmonic structure of the *solos* is characteristic of the transitional period and predominantly revolves around the main key with dominant-tonic relationships. Evident here are tertian relationships (paralleling between C minor and E-flat major and A minor and C major) and a homonymous relationship (C minor and C major).



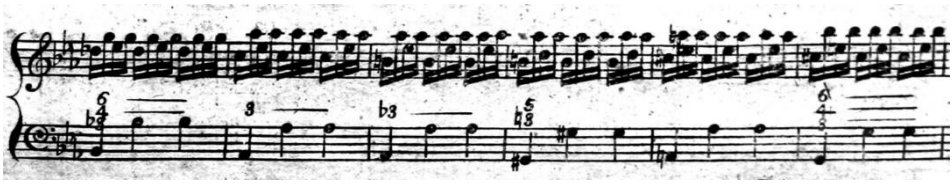
Example 14. The introduction of a homonymous C minor key into the major part (C major) in *Giga-Allegro* from Sonata V

On the other hand, progressions or modulations reference the Baroque technique of motivic development.



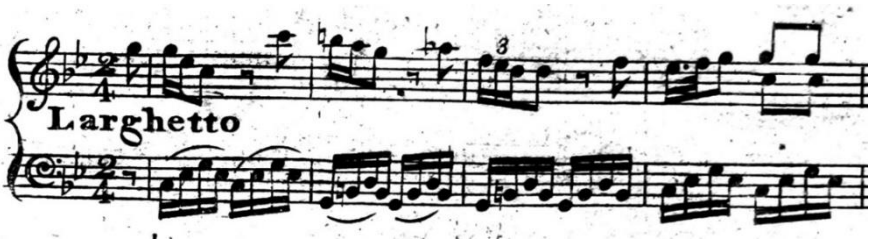
Example 15. The descending progression A^7 D, G^7 C opening the second part in *Largo* from Sonata I

[38] M. Toporowski, "*Orgelbüchlein*" *J.S. Bacha jako podręcznik muzycznej retoryki i summa teologiczna*, typescript, master's thesis, supervisor: Professor J. Serafin, Akademia Muzyczna Fryderyka Chopina, Warszawa 1987, pp. 28–29.



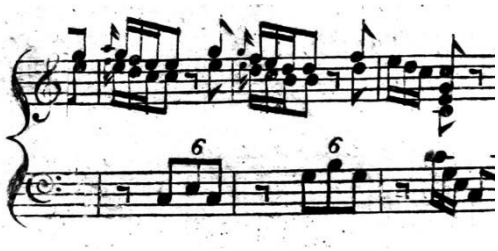
Example 16. Fragment of a modulation in *Largo* from Sonata III

Both homophonic and polyphonic textures are present in the composition. The former manifests itself in the "melodic activity of a single voice, which is accompanied by harmonics in the form of dense vertical chordal structures"[39] or figurations such as Alberti bass.



Example 17. Homophonic texture – Alberti bass in the harpsichord part of *Larghetto* from Sonata V

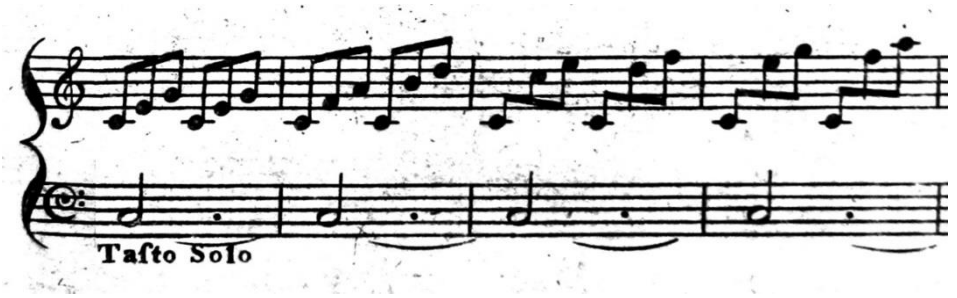
On the other hand, polyphonic structures can be found in linear progressions of independent voices, the dialogue between the instruments or thematic imitations.



Example 18. A dialogue between the part of the solo instrument and the part of the accompanying instrument in *Allegro* from Sonata IV

The *tasto solo* is an interesting textural technique; it is a single-voice, unfigured accompaniment played by the left hand on the harpsichord, taking the form of an organ point. The use of such a technique favoured the development of virtuosity by highlighting the figuration in the guitar part against the fading, prolonged sound of the instrument performing *basso continuo*.

[39] J. Chomiński, K. Wilkowska-Chomińska, op. cit., vol. 1: *Teoria…*, p. 155.

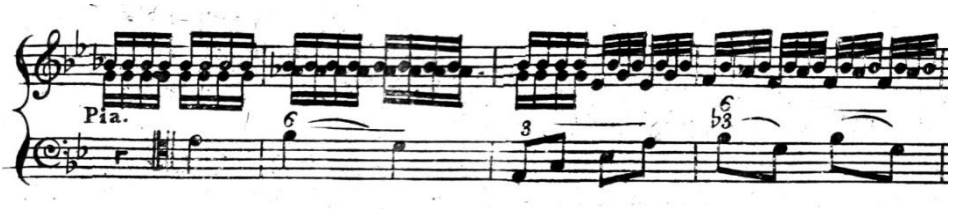


Example 19. Tasto solo on the organ point and figurations in the guitar part of *Giga-Allegro* from Sonata V

Another reason why composers resorted to this technique was the difficulty in figuring organ points:

> It is not easy to figure organ points, so they are usually set tasto solo. […] The reason for this can be ascribed not only to a justifiable simplification of the accompanist's tasks but often to the impossibility of reading the figures. Assuming that the right hand could accompany all organ points, gratitude would never compensate for the expended anxiety and trouble[40].

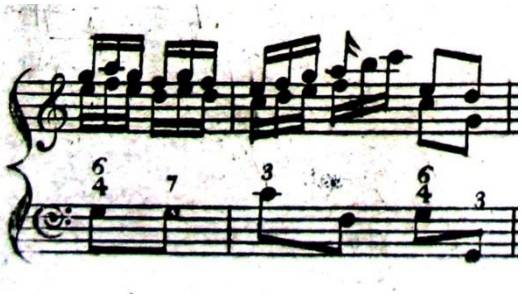
Another peculiar solution is the introduction of accompaniment-like sections into the solo instrument part; in this way, the harpsichordist is given the opportunity to improvise the melodic line.



Example 20. The initial fragment of an accompaniment-like section in the guitar part of *Larghetto* from Sonata V

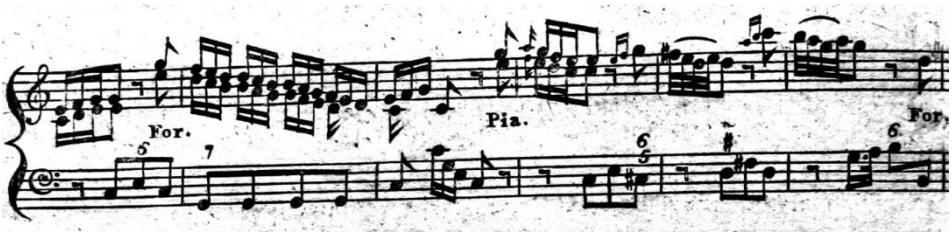
The lack of consistency in using double stops in the guitar part is also worth noticing. In many places – mainly where such progressions should be performed in high positions on the guittar – the composer abruptly abandons the lower voice in the middle of a phrase, leaving only a single melodic line. One might assume that it is a deliberate simplification of the texture in fragments which could pose performance difficulties. The single voice allowed the performer to maintain a more comfortable, lower position, thereby positively influencing the fluency of performance and the sound of the entire composition.

[40] C.Ph.E. Bach, op. cit., p. 319.



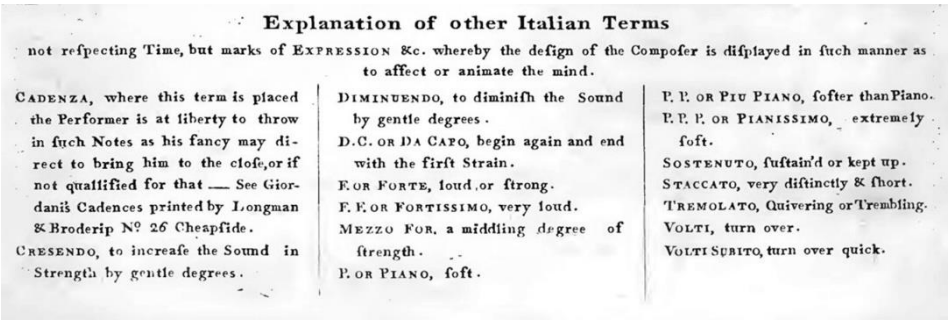
Example 21. Inconsistency in leading the melody with the use of thirds in *Largo* from Sonata I

All sonatas have dynamic markings – mainly *forte* and *piano*, indicated as *For*. and *Pia.* or *F.* and *P.* The composer used *diminuendo* only once.



Example 22. The dynamic markings *For.* and *Pia*. in *Allegro* from Sonata IV

The tempo was indicated with the term *ad libitum* at the *cadenza* and with occasional fermatas. Below are explanations of some of the dynamic, agogic and articulation markings in T. Giordani's handbook.



Explanation of other Italian Terms

not reſpecting Time, but marks of EXPRESSION &c. whereby the deſign of the Compoſer is diſplayed in ſuch manner as to affect or animate the mind.

CADENZA, where this term is placed the Performer is at liberty to throw in ſuch Notes as his fancy may direct to bring him to the cloſe, or if not quallified for that — See Giordani's Cadences printed by Longman & Broderip N° 26 Cheapſide.

CRESENDO, to increaſe the Sound in Strength by gentle degrees.

DIMINUENDO, to diminiſh the Sound by gentle degrees.

D.C. OR DA CAPO, begin again and end with the firſt Strain.

F. OR FORTE, loud or ſtrong.

F. F. OR FORTISSIMO, very loud.

MEZZO FOR. a middling degree of ſtrength.

P. OR PIANO, ſoft.

P. P. OR PIU PIANO, ſofter than Piano.

P. P. P. OR PIANISSIMO, extremely ſoft.

SOSTENUTO, ſuſtain'd or kept up.

STACCATO, very diſtinctly & ſhort.

TREMOLATO, Quivering or Trembling.

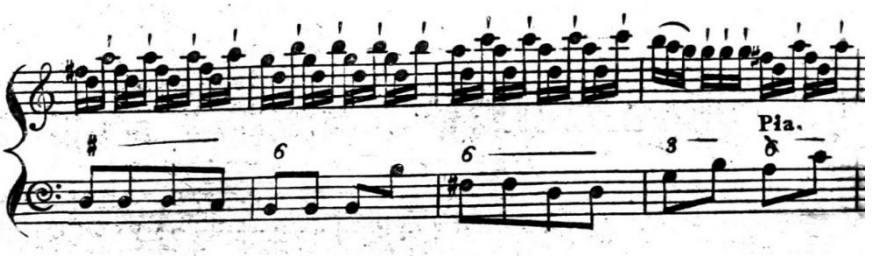
VOLTI, turn over.

VOLTI SUBITO, turn over quick.

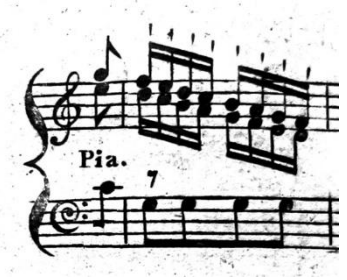
Fig. 5. Explanations of Italian terms in T. Giordani's handbook *Twelve progressive lessons…*

The articulation markings include wedges, dots as well as phrasing and articulation slurs. Wedges are used to emphasize important notes, articulate them more strongly or separate them from one another. As suggested by L. Mozart in *Gruntowna szkoła skrzypcowa* [*Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin*

Playing] – notes marked with this sign must be "clearly accentuated by pressing down the bow"[41], and then lifting it[42].

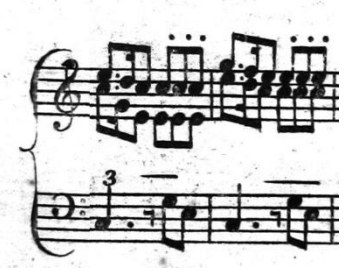


Example 23. Wedges suggesting the accentuation of important notes in *Allegro* from Sonata IV



Example 24. Wedges suggesting the separation of double stops in *Allegro* from Sonata IV

Dots should be understood as a gentler form of note separation. They are only present in *Larghetto* from Sonata VI – a part with a peaceful yet solemn character. According to L. Mozart, this sign should be realised with a "slight pressure of the bow on each [marked] note, and [the notes] should be separated from each other"[43].



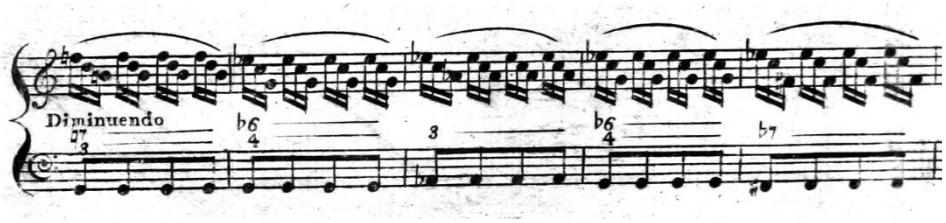
Example 25. Dots suggesting a shorter articulation in *Larghetto* from Sonata VI

[41] L. Mozart, *Gruntowna szkoła skrzypcowa*, translated by K. Jerzewska, Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Kultury i Sztuki, Poznań 2007, p. 53.

[42] Ibidem, p. 62.

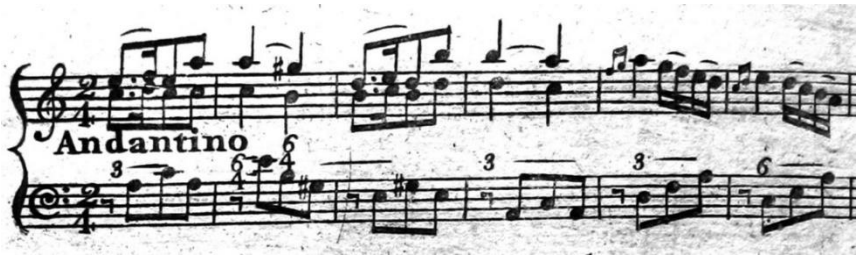
[43] Ibidem, p. 60.

Slurs are the last type of markings. They play different roles. Phrasing slurs isolate larger, e.g. one-bar, expressive units in the sonatas.



Example 26. Phrasing slurs used to separate one-bar sections in *Allegro* from Sonata IV

On the other hand, articulation slurs indicate the need to use *legato* articulation and, consequently, to emphasize the first note under the slur.

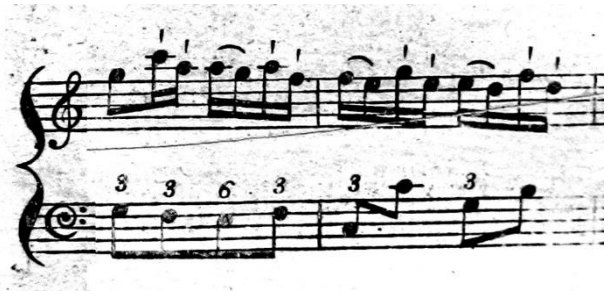


Example 27. Articulation slurs in *Allegro* from Sonata IV

L. Mozart makes the following remark with regard to performing this sign:

> Among the musical signs the slur is of no little importance […] It has the shape of a half-circle, which is drawn either over or under the notes. The notes which are over or under such a circle, be they 2, 3, 4, or even more, must all be taken together in one bow-stroke; not detached but bound together…[44]

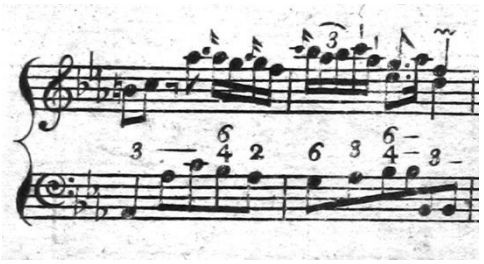
In the *solos,* T. Giordani also combines different types of articulation.



Example 28. Different types of articulation – wedges and slurs – in *Rondeau* from Sonata I

[44] Ibidem, p. 58.

T. Giordani was active at a time when ornamentation was an exceedingly important element of a piece of music; it was widely discussed in treatises by the most important musicians and theorists. The issue of ornamentation was simply obvious – "even a peasant closes his peasant-song with grace notes"[45]. It is worth noting that composers often only indicated suggestions for ornamentation, giving performers the freedom to use their own embellishments. The *Six Solos…* collection is abundant in ornamentation.



Example 29. Rich ornamentation in *Largo* from Sonata III

The embellishments recorded with small notes include long and short *appogiaturas*, *Schleiffers* (English: *slur*)[46], mordents and *arpeggios* (which served as an ornament from the Baroque to the first decade of the 19th century)[47].

Example 30. *Arpeggio* with the function of an ornament in *Minuetto* from Sonata IV

There are also symbols used to indicate trills and fermatas (which – in line with the spirit of the period – should be used in "slow, affettuoso movements and must be embellished if only to avoid artlessness"[48]).

T. Giordani also used various compositional techniques such as the subdivision of rhythmic values or, as mentioned by J.J. Quantz, "free embellishment" in the form of the *ad libitum* cadence.

[45] Ibidem, p. 219.

[46] *Schleiffer*/*slur* – an ornament consisting of two or three quick notes played before the main note.

[47] R. Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music*, Faber & Faber, London 1963, pp. 412–417.

[48] C.Ph.E. Bach, op. cit., p. 143.

Guidelines for performing many of the ornaments used in the *solos* can be found in the author's handbook.

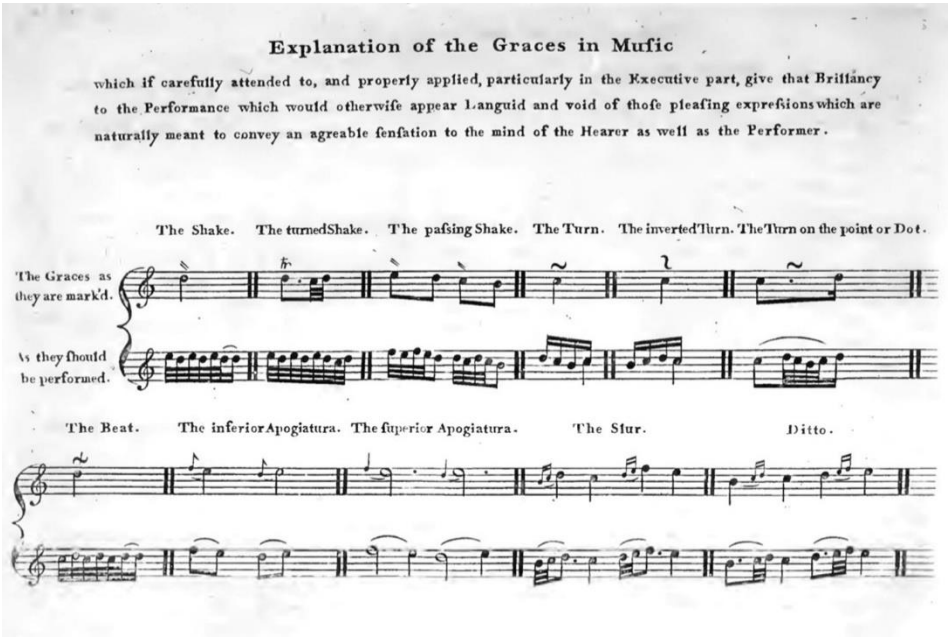
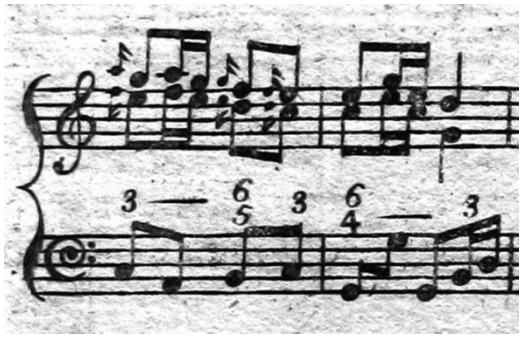


Fig. 6. Ornaments (and their execution) in T. Giordani's *Twelve progressive lessons…*[49]

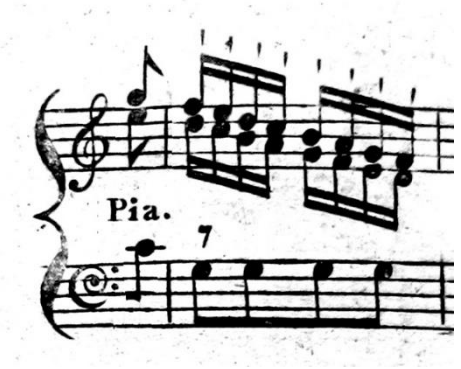
Special attention should be paid to the ornaments which are idiomatic for the English guitar; they typically include grace notes in double stops, which are easy to perform on this instrument. By using this kind of embellishments, the composer demonstrated his familiarity with the techniques and performance capabilities of the guittar, highlighting the full range of its tonal characteristics.



Example 31. Grace notes in double stops in *Andantino* from Sonata II

[49] T. Giordani, op. cit.

In the Baroque, the issue of tonal variety was of as much importance as ornamentation. While T. Giordani did not provide the *solos* with direct indications of changes in timbre, he employed a number of compositional techniques which allowed him to achieve clear contrasts between the sections of each movement of the piece. To this end, he used dynamics, articulation, rhythmic subdivision and even transposition of a section by an octave up or down. An interesting example is the one-bar motif from *Allegro* in Sonata IV. According to the markings, the first presentation should be performed *piano* with short articulation.

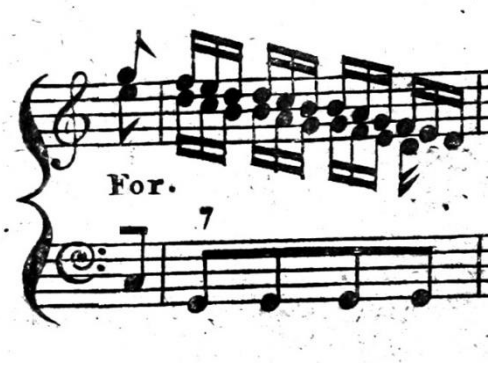


Example 32. Piano dynamics and short articulation in a one-bar motif from *Allegro* in Sonata IV

No markings appear for the repetition, yet there is a noticeable change in articulation compared to the first presentation.

Example 33. Change in articulation compared to the first presentation in the one-bar motif from *Allegro* in Sonata IV

At the third repetition, the motif appears in the *forte* dynamics. It was also subjected to rhythmic subdivision. Therefore, it is different from both previous sections while maintaining the same motivic material.



Example 34. Forte dynamics and rhythmic subdivision in a subsequent presentation of the one--bar motif in *Allegro* from Sonata IV

Conclusion

The enormous diversity of the individual sonatas makes the entire collection *Six Solos for a Guitar with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord and one Trio for a Guitar, Violin and Bass* by Tommaso Giordani an immensely interesting research material. It is an example of the rich literature of the second half of the 18th century, when transitional styles such as galant, rococo, *Empfindsamer Stil* or *Sturm und Drang* were dominant, and music resonated with the echoes of the Baroque, but also the upcoming new trend – Classicism.

The sonatas were written for the English guitar (guittar) – an instrument which enjoyed the interest of respected composers, virtuosos and amateurs from all social classes for nearly 100 years (initially in Great Britain, and later throughout Europe as well as in British colonies). It was used by the greatest artists such as J.Ch. Bach, the highly regarded German lutenist R. Straube, violinists Felice Giardini (1716–1796) and F. Geminiani or guitarists Ann Ford (1737–1824), G.B. Marella, Robert Bremner (ca. 1713–1789), and even the court composer of King George III – J. Oswald. By 1800, more than 60 composers had published their works in London and beyond.

The extensive body of compositions for the guittar comprised both serious instrumental works and short, individual pieces, as well as vocal-instrumental forms, arrangements of popular dances or excerpts from operas. Compositions ranged from solo and chamber music to secular and sacred pieces, spanning all levels of technical proficiency.

Even though this repertoire requires certain adjustments in terms of fingering, texture, tone colour use or ornamentation due to the different tuning, this music (including the sonatas from T. Giordani's *Six Solos*… collection) is worth exploring in order to save it from oblivion. In doing so, new compositions will be

introduced to existing concert and academic repertoires. The literature in question holds an immense educational value as it gives modern guitarists an opportunity to come into contact with an instrument that is now largely forgotten, together with the articulation and playing technique contained in its fingering. The revival of this music will contribute to reaching a better understanding of the changes in aesthetics throughout the entire 18th century, thereby filling the existing gap in repertoire and leading to the preservation of guitar literature continuity from the Renaissance to the present day.

A system of transcribing English guitar compositions for the classical guitar has been developed by the author of the present article and described in detail in her doctoral dissertation entitled "*Six Solos for a Guitar with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord" by Tommaso Giordani in the perspective of historically informed and contemporary performance* (2020)[50]. Attached to it was an art piece – all 6 *solos* recorded for the first time ever by the author of this article and the harpsichordist dr Paulina Tkaczyk-Cichoń. At present, the aforementioned renditions of these sonatas are presented at concerts, national and international conferences, and are also available online in the form of video recordings.

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[50] M. Żegleń-Włodarczyk, "*Six Solos for a Guitar with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord" by Tommaso Giordani in the perspective of historically informed and contemporary performance*, computer printout, doctoral dissertation, supervisor: Professor R. Orzechowska, The Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music, Kraków 2020.

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Sonaty solowe na gitarę angielską Tommasa Giordaniego jako przykład literatury gitarowej II połowy XVIII wieku

Streszczenie

Niniejsze opracowanie ma na celu przedstawienie sześciu sonat solowych, autorstwa Tommasa Giordaniego (ca. 1730–1806), będących przykładem literatury gitarowej II połowy XVIII wieku. Kompozycje te zostały oryginalnie napisane na gitarę angielską z towarzyszeniem *basso continuo* realizowanym na klawesynie i pochodzą ze zbioru pt. *Six Solos for a Guitar with a thorough Bass for the Harpsicord, and one Trio for a Guitar, Violin and Bass*, wydanego przez Longman & Broderip w Londynie w 1780 roku.

Słowa kluczowe: gitara angielska, *guittar*, sonaty na gitarę angielską, dzieła okresu przejściowego między barokiem a klasycyzmem, twórczość kompozytorów włoskich, Tommaso Giordani.