

# The London Manuscript unveiled

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Updated 2005

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1. Analysis Conclusions
2. General Context
3. **Description of the works**
4. Appendix 1 : The late Baroque lute seen through S.L.Weiss
5. Appendix 2 : Ornamentation and examples
6. Appendix 3 : The slur concept in the late Baroque tablatures

## 3. Description of the works

**26 solo sonatas / 35 individual pieces / 5 ensemble works (duos)**

It would seem that decisions of an editorial nature concerning the content of this important book of music have been proven to be judicious. Contrary to the views of some, all of the works contained in this manuscript are of great value and worthy of inclusion in any series of recordings or concert program. Please remember that we will follow, notwithstanding the three category presentation, the pagination of the manuscript, except for four adjustments – one for inserting the strayed menuet p.242 in its sonata no 26, the other for joining pieces of same tonality (bourree p.39), the third one for including the Largo (duo) (p.117) in the *Duo 5* in d minor, and the last one for reasons of thematic affinity by rallying the fantasie p.305 to the prelude in C.

### 26 solo sonatas

<u>Sonate n° 1 in F major</u>	<u>(S-C 1)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 15 in f minor</u>	<u>(S-C 21)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 2 in D major</u>	<u>(S-C 2)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 16 in G major</u>	<u>(S-C 22)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 3 in g minor</u>	<u>(S-C 3)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 17 en B flat major</u>	
<u>Sonate n° 4 in G major</u>	<u>(S-C 5)</u>	<u>« Divertimento à solo »</u>	<u>(S-C 23)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 5 in c minor</u>	<u>(S-C 7)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 18 in C major</u>	<u>(S-C 24)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 6 in E flat major</u>	<u>(S-C 10)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 19 in g minor</u>	<u>(S-C 25)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 7 in d minor</u>	<u>(S-C 11)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 20 in D major</u>	<u>(S-C 26)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 8 in A major</u>	<u>(S-C 12)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 21 in c minor</u>	<u>(S-C 27)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 9 in d minor</u>	<u>(S-C 13)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 22 in F major</u>	
<u>Sonate n° 10 in B flat major</u>	<u>(S-C 15)</u>	<u>« Le Fameux Corsaire »</u>	<u>(S-C 28)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 11 in A major</u>	<u>(S-C 16)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 23 in a minor « L'infidèle »</u>	<u>(S-C 29)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 12 in C major</u>	<u>(S-C 17)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 24 in E flat major</u>	<u>(S-C 30)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 13 in D major</u>	<u>(S-C 18)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 25 in F major</u>	<u>(S-C 31)</u>
<u>Sonate n° 14 in F major</u>	<u>(S-C 19)</u>	<u>Sonate n° 26 in F major</u>	<u>(S-C 32)</u>

## 35 individual pieces

<u>Menuet (p.11) in F</u>	<u>Tombeau d'Hartig (p.176) in e b m</u>
<u>Men: (p.12) in F</u>	<u>Bourrée (p.178) in C</u>
<u>Gavotte (p.13) in F</u>	<u>Menuet (p.180) in C</u>
<u>Gavotte et double (p.22 in D</u>	<u>Gavotte (p.199) in d m</u>
<u>Prélude (p.33) in B b</u>	<u>Men: p.199) in d m</u>
<u>Ouverture (p.34) in B b</u>	<u>Praelude (et fugue) (p.290) in E b</u>
<u>Cour: (p.36) in B b</u>	<u>Menuet et Trio (p.292) in G</u>
<u>Bouree (p.39) in B b</u>	<u>Bourée (p.299) in F</u>
<u>Allegro (p.38) in G</u>	<u>Tombeau de Logy (p.300) in b b m</u>
<u>Courente Royale (p.40) in G</u>	<u>Prelud: de Weifs (p.302) in C</u>
<u>Prelude (p.80) in E b</u>	<u>Fantasia (p.305) in C</u>
<u>Menuet (p.92) in G</u>	<u>Menuet (p.303) in C</u>
<u>Fuga (p.118) in C</u>	<u>Gavotte (p.304) in C</u>
<u>Fuga (p.130) in d m</u>	<u>Capricio (p.306) in D</u>
<u>L'Amant Malheureux (p.132) in a m</u>	<u>Menuet (p.308) in D</u>
<u>Fantasia (p.134) in c m</u>	<u>Menuet 2 (p.309) in D</u>
<u>Menuet (p.136) in B b</u>	<u>Mademoiselle Tiroloise (p.310) in D</u>
<u>Plainte (p.137) in B b</u>	

## 5 ensemble works (duos)

1. Concert d'un Luth et d'une Flute traversiere. Del Sig.re Weis (S-C6) in B flat
2. Concert d'un Luth avec une Flute traversiere. Del Sigismundo Weis. (S-C8) in B flat
3. Concert d'un Luth avec la Flute traversiere. Del S.L. Weis. (S-C9) in F
4. Duo 4 in g minor (S-C14).
5. Duo 5 in d minor (S-C20)

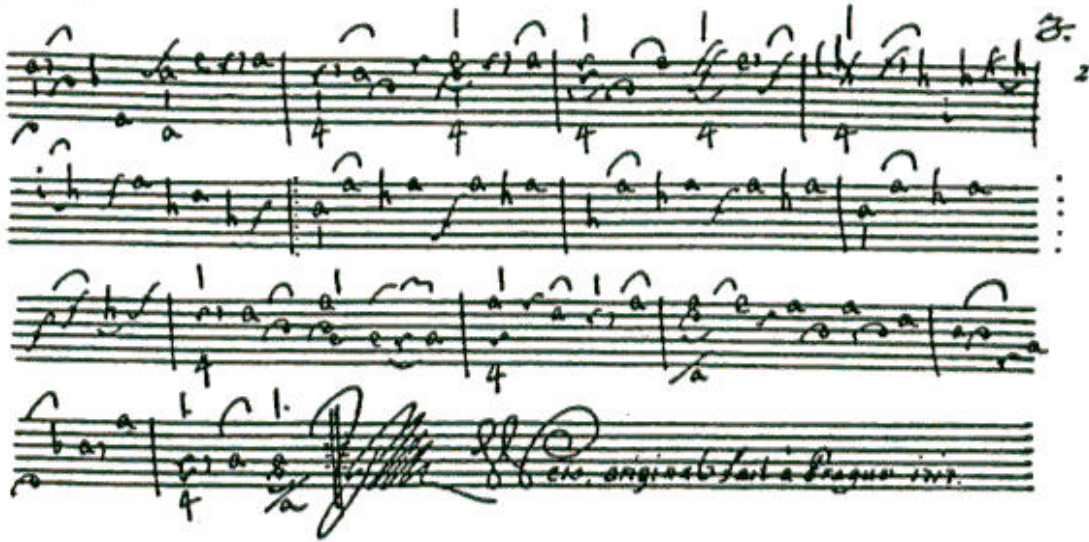
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## 26 solo sonatas

### Sonata no 1 in F major (S-C 1)

This sonata is also found in the Dresden Manuscript. We do find however, fragments of this work in the folios of Vienna and Warsaw, the latter containing three versions for each piece. All versions are similar except for certain left-hand performance indications (slurs). Because of the large number of slurs possible within a given piece, variations inevitably occur from one version to another. It is a rare performer indeed who can resist successfully the urge to modify these articulations to suit his personal technique. While the choice of left-hand articulations has a direct bearing on the musical outcome, it is also true that these decisions fall well within the purview of what is commonly recognised as interpretive 'personality'. Nevertheless one might attempt to remain as faithful as possible to the London version, as much for reasons of harmonic integrity as for accuracy of slurring.

As a primary source, the first sonata leaves little to guesswork. Four out of the seven movements are signed and dated by the composer with the allemande bearing the inscription in French, “Weiss, originally composed in Prague 1717”.




*The London Manuscript, page 3, end of the allemande, Sonata no 1*

In addition, the London and Vienna versions are entirely in autograph format. At the beginning of the *Praelude* which serves also as a starting point for the entire volume, no less than 27 chords are notated in the value of minims. This notational fashion compels various interpretations since standard procedure during this era would require an improvisation on these open rhythmic structures. As a result, I would choose to execute the beginning in a calm, restrained manner to permit the tonal interplay to unfold according to the common practice of the period as explained by the likes of the composer and theorist from Hamburg Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) (the same individual who both denigrated the lute while openly praising Weiss!). The key of F major is thus described as serene, dignified, and understated: “*This key is evocative of the most noble of universal sentiments with such ease that it is unnecessary to force the tones. Its magnanimous allure can be best compared to a perfect character in all aspects, redeeming, as the French would say, a ‘bonne grâce.’*”

Seven tranquil, meditative, introductory chords could be then followed by a cycle of arpeggiated vertical sonorities leading to a cadence which capriciously detaches the last of these 27 chords, melting smoothly into the rest of the prelude, retaining its spontaneous atmosphere to the last note:



*Example of ornamentation: beginning of the prelude, Sonata no 1*

The discretely grandiloquent *Allemande* is also highly representative of F major while the extremely lyric courante (written *Cour:*) seems to have been written far from the actual instrument. While this presents certain performance challenges, the slightly unidiomatic writing provides a refreshing digression in an otherwise continuous texture. While scarcely concealing its humourous nature, the highly spirited *bourrée* is succeeded by a sombre sarabande (*Sarab:*) in the relative minor. The successive musical waves are generated by a single rhythmic impulse:  following a descending-ascending melodic curve that conforms to the shape of the opening of each of the seven movements. This is indicative of the sense of large-dimensional synthesis and rigorous construction that characterise so much of the work of Weiss. For further evidence we need only examine the fundamental structure of the beginning of each movement:



The minuet (*Men:*), candid in character, is provided with the dynamic markings of *p* and *f* in measures 6 and 9 respectively. This is rather unusual since notated indications of amplitude were generally seen as redundancies, except where specific effects were desired. Furthermore, the range of personal expression available to the Nineteenth-Century composer was not in evidence in the music of this period, the composer not being expected to specify those areas of interpretation, which were very important but left to the discretion of the performer and to the inspiration of each performance. The *Gigue* ends the sonata in an upbeat mood while irresistibly inviting the listener to dance. Notice the bass leaps which serve to accentuate this dancing atmosphere.

If the sonata has to be considered in its basic form and with the London Manuscript as first reference, it can be stated that this gigue concludes the Sonata no 1 (seven movements). D.A. Smith's thematic analysis however, acknowledges five more movements to it (even a sixth one could be added, it was either forgotten or rejected by Smith), namely: the two minuets and the gavotte following the gigue in the London ms; a prelude beginning the Vienna version; a chaconne (plus possibly another prelude placed at the end) in one of the Warsaw copies. A performance of the collected sonata in thirteen movements is of course within the realm of the possible, but it is our fear that a sonata of forty minutes duration containing three minuets, not to mention three preludes, could verge on the bizarre. Since these are obviously not additional movements, rather interchangeable replacements, it remains, in our opinion incumbent on each performer to create his or her personal mix while adhering to standard guidelines of piece ordering. At any rate, I will discuss the three London supplements (2 minuets and gavotte) in the next individual pieces' section.

### *Sonata no 2 in D major (S-C 2)*

The seven constituent movements of the second sonata are also scattered throughout six different cities in Europe. When the lute is tuned to a tonality that is far removed from the

basic d minor tuning, there is a marked change in the melodic possibilities available due to the different distribution of open strings in the bass. One might assume that this would serendipitously inspire unforeseen scalar configurations in the new key. Weiss was fond of the colourful modulations that occur when one explores the beautiful inner timbres of the instrument while using, for example, the leading tone in the lower register. The key of D major (“... *naturally strong and wilful, being perfectly adaptable to the brilliant expression of all things amusing, martial and happy*” - Mattheson) is very different from F major. Weiss seems to agree, because the **Prelude** is unrelieved by occasional sweetness or respite, preferring to remain brilliantly and unambiguously forceful.

As for the Sonata no 1, alternate movements are to be connected with the Sonata no 2: The gavotte and double following in the London version, which will be discussed in the next section, and a chaconne ending the Warsaw copy. Weiss’s handwriting in London can be found in the allemande, the first half of the courante, a segment of the sarabande, and the minuet and gigue.

If the allemande (**Allem:**) is frail and restrained, it nonetheless adheres to the character of its tonality because, as stated by Mattheson, “*a great delicateness can be summoned during calm moments of D major*”. The contrast between prelude and allemande is clear and natural. The courante (**Cour:**) is unusual from two points of view. It is written in semi-quavers, not in the more habitual quaver notation. Secondly, it is a virtual tour-de-force for the ring finger of the right hand, providing ample evidence that Weiss used this finger regularly, in stark contrast to the practice of his contemporaries. This technique permits the use of continuous arpeggiation in the courante. The **Bourée** retains a dynamic, festive quality while the sarabande (**Sarab:**) offers languishing chords with sensitive appoggiatura followed by a second, more despondent section. The minuet (**Men:**), as brief as it is carefree, is quickly superseded by a **Giga** that conveys the more traditional aspects of D major.

### **Sonata no 3 in G minor (S-C 3)**

This sonata has no other version and is presented here in two of Weiss’s assistants’ writings. It is unique due to the absence of a final movement, the closing movement having been replaced by two minuets. It would have been in keeping with standard practice to simply borrow a gigue from another manuscript, but I think we should instead leave the work as indicated for one very important reason. The inscription after the second movement reads “Il primo minuetto da capo è poi requiescant in pace”. This instruction begins as a common musical directive but ends humorously in Church Latin with the wish of the composer to “Repeat the first minuet and rest evermore in peace.” In other words, “seek not a final movement”. As further justification, it is to be noted that there are no movements missing in any of the other sonatas in the London Manuscript, apart from no 9. We could even say that most have a fair number and that adding a movement could have been easy, this having been made elsewhere in the manuscript anyway.

The stage is set with a dramatic short **Prelude**, this time presenting us with the key of G minor in a way that would seem unconventional to Mattheson for whom the tonality was “*without a doubt the most beautiful of tonalities, caressing with a suppleness that enables one to combine moderate nostalgia with peaceful joy*”. The **Allemande** confirms the dramatic sentiment of the prelude. The fatalism and sadness are evocative of the two *Tombeaux*



usual practice (except once) of omitting bar-lines although the beat is quite regular; the metrical unit being the quaver which would suggest a moderate speed. Following the prelude is an elegiac and meditative *Allemande* distinguished by the frequent usage of the high register at the beginning of a phrase. The courante (*Cour:* ), with its supple arpeggios, offers yet another resemblance not of theme but of overall workmanship, this time to Vivaldi. The famous prolonged modulations of the ‘red priest’ are found from beginning to end. As we have come to expect with Weiss, it is the *Bourée* that follows the courante and not the sarabande. His brief and melodious phrases are varied in spite of their identical openings:



The *Sarabande* resolutely maintains a “lively and evocative spirit”, both characteristic of the key of G Major. The *Menuet* itself is so lively that, in our opinion, the music is better served by a faster tempo. The soprano and bass voices joyously rebound by means of close entries. The *Gigue* maintains the same exuberance until the end and lends itself even more to ornamented repetitions. The arabesques thus added augment its panache as much as its conclusive character.


### *Sonata no 5 in C minor (S-C 7)*



If the solo sonata no 4 can be called “the sonata of similarities”, then the Sonata no 5 could be entitled the “French Sonata”. In fact, it is one of the first compositions of Silvius Leopold, who had not yet left for his long sojourn in Italy (1710-14), and the influence of the old French masters of the lute appears to be untainted by the very Italianate influences upon which he would depend heavily at a later date. Not only is this sonata his oldest dated work (autographed 1706), but at its heading, in the Dresden version, Weiss states, “*Von anno 6. In Düsseldorf, ergo Nostra giuventu comparisce*” (“From the year 6 in Düsseldorf, therefore our youthful debut”). Silvius and his young brother Sigismund were at that time employed as lutenists at the Rhenish court of Düsseldorf.

The Dresden version is important, therefore, because of this marking. However, the minuet is missing, to be amended by Weiss himself in the London version, as with the courante : these are two insertions that can indeed be easily identified among the writings of one of the other five copyists. Only the allemande appears in a third manuscript, in this case in the Paris Manuscript. The omission of a prelude by Weiss, and his inclusion of a gavotte, allows us to establish a link with Bach’s Six French suites, composed shortly thereafter. These also start with an allemande, three of them contain a gavotte, and one is also in C minor. Without claiming that these models were canonical, one can understand nevertheless that the French style sought after by the late German Baroque musicians encouraged them to apply certain structural conventions.

From the outset of the *Allemande* we are seized simultaneously by the tragic darkness of the soprano voice’s low register and by the melodic style that is indicative of the “French Lutenists”. Many works found in the voluminous repertoire of the Seventeenth-Century Baroque Lute begin this way. I would choose nevertheless to respect the “notes égales”, of more common practice in the late Baroque although the “notes inégales” would have been appropriate. The Dresden version presents us with an interesting variant from the London one which is more spare. The comparison allows us to gauge the limits of our aesthetic jurisdiction when, as interpreters, we are tempted to change the fingerings or even the notes.

It is not always advisable, this instance being a case in point, to mix different versions within the same interpretation, when discrepancies regarding phrasing or fingering are too strong. A performer will have to choose, therefore, one of the two versions, feeling free to add ornamentation while remaining coherent within the chosen version. My own choice was London, however with free, yet coherent, ornamentation.

*“The inherent sadness of the C minor key does not prevent us from being energetic (lively) whenever the composition permits”*, as is the case with the Courante (**Cour:** ). The interplay of the hemiolas in combination with the interior voices hidden in the principle lines (not visible in the score but revealed by the acoustic properties of the instrument which enforce a precise duration to each note thus rendering separate the interior lines) confers a great spirituality to the work (See Appendix 1. *The late Baroque Lute seen through S.L.Weiss*). The following **Gavotte**, even more in the style of the “French Lutenists” than the beginning of the allemande, compels us to choose the “notes inégales” since its meaning could be lost by playing the “notes égales”. Certain cadences strongly recall, among others, Robert de Visée, such as the beginning of the following **Sarabande** which uses the dotted quaver formula  rather than equal crotchets or quavers. Finally, regarding the gavotte, we should mention its stylistic affiliation with the courante of Bach’s first lute sonata. Both alternate passages of “leaping” quavers with more regular semiquaver treatment, all of which adds to the ambiguous charm of the “notes inégales” that, in the French style, causes a controlled rhythmic displacement rather than a more meticulous seeding of dotted rhythms.

Another kind of rhythmic inequality is often obvious, this time in the sarabandes. The long meditative sighs at times lengthen the measure, but in our defence against critics who deplore a measure that is not always strictly held, we would respond, ‘How can one be expressive while playing metronomically from beginning to end?’ Let us not forget that several authors of the time, some as early as Caccini in 1601, made mention of this throughout the entire Baroque era. No lesser than François Couperin is known to have opined, *“One must not tie oneself too precisely to the metre ; one must sacrifice everything to taste, to the clarity of the passages and to attenuate the accents”*. This sarabande reflects the principle quality attributed to C minor at the time, *“A charming timbre in spite of its sadness”*. The same can be said of the **Menuet** which by its style favours another kind of rhythmic inequality typical of the Baroque - notably the Lombard rhythm, which consists simply of inverted “notes inégales”: , with the shorter value preceding the long, instead of , this being made naturally and more often in a descending line. The music itself dictates the utilisation of this device at the start of the second section as well as at the reprise.

The final **Gigue** resembles the courante; it is serious but very dynamic. The diatonically descending basses take on a dramatic amplitude that has provoked the commentary of historians that the Baroque “was ruled by the bass”. This affirmation concerns of course the writing style but also serves to acknowledge the rich bass tones that were the result of innovative instrumental design. A final comment concerning this sonata has to do with the astounding versatility of the right-hand technique. At the age of twenty, Weiss’s right hand technique was already perfect, although he did not yet have the compositional stamina that would characterise his later works. Proof of this can be seen in his usage of audaciously difficult interval leaps.



Sonata no 6 in E flat major (S-C 10)

The tonality of E flat major officially “conveys more serious subject matter and favours the pathetic in its expression”. However, with the exception of a somewhat strained sensation of tonal colour, we have to admit that this sonata is energetic and versatile, even sometimes luminous. We have here the only existing version (except the courante, in the last Dresden sonata, concordance which is not mentioned in the Smith Critical Commentary). Another choice has to be made at this point. We have here two preludes, the second of which is a short simple variant of the first, this one being broad and powerful. Since one of the two must be dropped in a standard performance of the sonata, it would seem preferable to retain the first as a complete isolated piece.

The second *Prelude*, being unmeasured, according to standard practice (as is the first prelude), fills exactly the space left on the page (See the General Context about the preludes). It barely constitutes an entrance for the establishment of the key. For a few short moments, the music revolves around the tonic chord. Subsequently an arpeggiated passage leads to a cadence bringing us abruptly to the *Allemande*, a serene yet disenchanted soliloquy. One notices the use of unisons similar to those of the allemande in Sonata no 4 S-C5. The following courante (*Cour:* ) links without respite larger phrases to the more sprightly melodies. We hardly have time to pause before reaching the conclusion of each section. The *Bouree* is even more lively and its brilliant progress brings us in one fell swoop to the final note. The *Sarabande* remains in the home key and not, as it is often the case, in the related minor. The beginning theme could be confused with that of the chaconne which will follow three pages further on. In the sarabande it is worthwhile to make abundant usage of variations in dynamics in the repetitions of the two sections. Shortly after the beginning of the second one, a sensuousness is revealed, a melodic dream such that a measure could, for example, become spontaneously ornamented by straddling its harmony over the bar line into the next. But, since this latter prolongs a chord for three beats we must compensate on the third beat by means of rhythmic diminution:



This is of course a very personal suggestion, though very much in the spirit of this music (See the Quantz examples). We are tempted to subtitle the *Menuet* “The Hiccup”. It shares, nonetheless, the graceful attributes characteristic of the other minuets. There are slurs placed knowingly in conjunction with the unexpected reverberation of certain notes during the changes of strings that suggest to us the “hiccup” phrasing. By accentuating the ornaments and their possible variants we hear subtle echoes from one phrase to another. Here again is a good example of a piece for lute that seems monotonous as written but unveils all its richness as soon as it is interpreted on the instrument. The *Ciaccoñe* replaces the more usual gigue as the final movement, and is the only autograph piece in this sonata. It is composed of an initial theme, six variations, and a conclusion. This chaconne is elegantly simple, balanced; the primary musical objective being the expression of the lyric potential of the voices.

### Sonata no 7 in D minor (S-C 11)

Referring as always to Mattheson, we can find in the key of D minor "*something devotional and still, while at the same time grand, pleasant and satisfying. The implication is that devotion will be heard in a sacred context and peace in an earthly milieu, without hindering the occurrence of a certain 'subdued lightness' "*. This tonal portrait seems to be an accurate reflection of what one perceives. Four copies of this sonata can be found at this time of writing (the London version, one in Dresden and two copies at the University of Warsaw). Some of the movements can be located individually in other European libraries. In the London version, in someone else's hand except for a few autograph corrections, this sonata begins directly with the allemande. The seemingly later Dresden version appears to include some modifications. Inscribed *Partie de S.L. Weiss*, it begins with a ***Fantasia*** which is, in effect, an unmeasured prelude that has an improvisational quality. This fantasia, with eloquent phrases, is, in my opinion, indispensable and has to be attached to the London version. Alternatively, one could play the introductory prelude from one of the Warsaw copies, each of which is similar in emotional quality.

The ***Allemande***, steeped in sadness (the words 'devotional' and 'grand' come to mind) immerses us in a meditative state before leading us to one of the most surprising of Weiss's courantes (***Cour:*** ), full of unusual modulations in an obstinately pulsating rhythm. No wonder why Quantz, duet partner of Weiss, made a transcription of it for solo flute. The *Gavotte* remains in the rhythmic character of the courante only to reach the 'still', calm sarabande (***Sarab:*** ). As is often the case with Weiss, the ***Menuet*** is full of rhythmic and harmonic recollections of prior movements, the most remarkable being the ascending line found previously in the courante and the allemande. Finally the monumental ***Gigue*** begins, with a real Bachian grandeur, leaving for the end the exhilarating semi-quaver passages so evocative of the above-mentioned subdued lightness.

### Sonata no 8 in A major (S-C 12)

More so possibly than any of the others, this sonata embodies the essence of *galanterie*. The term was used to describe on the one hand the instrumental solo or chamber music of the period (as opposed to music of a theatrical or religious nature) and on the other, as an indication of the state of elegance and delicateness attained by this music, so preferred by Weiss. His taste, in combination with his preoccupation for *galanterie*, gives to his works a hint of the *style galant*, the 'new music' of the day. Weiss, like his colleague Bach, is in fact more representative of the Germanic style, a synthesis achieved through moderation of the two prevailing Baroque tendencies of the 17th Century, namely the sober, subtly-ornamented *style français* and the more flamboyant *Italian style*. Although both masters were to remain resolutely Baroque, Weiss was to display more of the gallant tendencies that make his work a kind of an 'in-between' with its transitory foreshadowing of the Classical period. We can see in his later works, firmly anchored as they are in the Baroque spirit, some of the components of sonata-form. The essence of this classicism emanates from work as early as that of the eighth sonata, with its characteristic lightness, grace and equilibrium. Here there is no forced writing, only clear lyric themes, repeated without cumbersome counterpoint; in all a perfect expression of that controlled lightness we now recognize as the product of a refined, conscientious artistic spirit (which is not to say that his music lacks passion, as is so aptly disproved by the sarabande).

The Sonata no 8 - not an autograph manuscript- shares a certain similarity with the Sonata no 1. It exists in several sources, and has many alternate movements, totalling eleven in all, including three preludes and one *Conclude*. Here again, a choice should be made for a standard setting. Given the desire to maintain coherence with our synthesis of the London and Dresden manuscripts, the two main sources, we should, logically speaking, borrow the *Prelude*, as is the case with the fantasia of the seventh sonata, from the Dresden version. Its heading bears the words “*Suonata del Sigre Sigism. Weifs*”. However, Silvius crossed out his brother’s name and added “*S.L.*” instead, probably after reading his copyist’s mistake. Here, in any event, is a prelude that serves primarily the function of establishing the tonality. Typical introductory chords spin out a web of simple modulations in a fashion not unlike the prelude of the first sonata, although it is shorter.

Mattheson describes the key of A major as “*moving in a melancholic way in spite of its brilliance, favouring the emotion of sadness over any usage as mere entertainment*”. In the eighth sonata this seems to prove true only for the allemande and the chaconne, unless one chooses to argue that the sound of the lute is inherently melancholic. It is at least conceivable that the sadness of A major contributes in some way to the tender luminosity of the *Allemande*. What better way to describe the movement than as an act of ‘noble tenderness’. A fragile freshness of gesture betrays the competence of the composer who has yet again found the perfect equilibrium between mere cerebral writing and pure expression. The following courante (*Cour:* ) retains a sense of grace and nobleness, presenting an uplifting thematic cellule



that is in turn subjected to brief agitated developmental treatment. Those lutenists who choose to compare the sources will notice in this sonata, as in the others, some slight divergences from the original score, notably, in the case of the courante, in the reading of the bass line. The Podebrady Manuscript is definitely the preferred choice, in my opinion, for the bass line of this courante.

The same spirit prevails in the gently weaving phrases of the *Bourée*. The frank insouciance of this movement is brought abruptly to a close by the first chord of the *Sarabanda*, in the related key of F sharp minor. For me, this is the greatest piece of the whole London Manuscript, an extraordinary moment of interior state exploding all of a sudden in the listener's ear and mind. The change of modality announces an unexpectedly dramatic discourse of such grave import that one is immediately made mindful of an intense sadness, albeit so full of fierce and fiery haughtiness, of musical expression. Breathless phrases leap into even more soul-wrenching gestures before resolving fatalistically upon terminal sonorities. These moments of concentrated musical expression involve the use of ‘*balancement*’ or *organ shake*, a heavy accentuated vibrato, giving the impression that the lute is crying in despair.

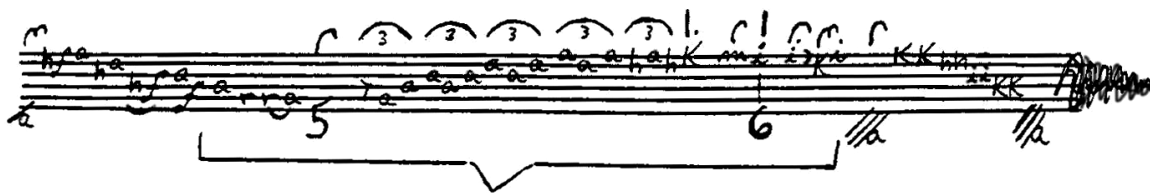
After the eloquent display of pain born of this tonality (Mattheson also speaks of it as “*leading to a languishing pain*” and as “*being of a singularly misanthropic nature*”) the sonata continues with a *Menuet* that recalls the earlier mood of insouciance. In fact, *galanterie*, as expressed above, was so highly appreciated in the Germanic and neighbouring countries that it comes as no surprise to find such a wealth of minuets in early manuscripts, given the high suitability of this dance form as a vehicle for this courtly sentiment. After the

minuet there follows a pair of concluding movements, specifically a *Ciacona* and a Gigue. Bach did the same in his second violin partita but reversely ended it with the immense chaconne. Weiss's chaconne, to which can be added a final variation found in the Vienna and Augsburg versions, recombines the brilliant and more melancholic styles found in the work. Despite current practice, which abjures the repetition of closing themes, it is advisable here, in my view, to repeat this theme in deference to the fact that it is meticulously indicated in all manuscripts, allowing pertinent emphasis on the final musical phrases. It becomes at this point a matter of some importance to understand that all the Baroque pieces, among which we include the chaconnes and passacailles of Weiss, which also have repeat marks in the last section were maybe in fact carefully played with ornamented repeats. The *Gigue* is a study in pure exuberance with notes ricocheting merrily in groups of three from beginning to end.

### *Sonata no 9 in D minor (S-C 13)*

This sonata is all in a copyist's hand, except for an embellishment suggestion at the bottom of a page, which is inscribed by Silvius himself. Three of the five movements of this sonata appear also in the Rostock Manuscript. I mention five movements rather than six, since the *Largo* that appears to end the sonata would in fact, as stated in my introduction, seem to be part of a duet (most likely with transverse flute) that will be compiled here with the other duets in a third part. It is at least possible that Weiss (or the owner Adlersfeld) had decided to insert this one isolated page as a replacement for the more typical sarabande movement, noticeably absent from this sonata. (The duo is composed in the appropriate key, D minor, and it would come as no surprise to see this piece as being adaptable as a solo, considering the many possibilities for ornamentation).

The sonata displays nevertheless a remarkably high degree of thematic cohesion. At the beginning of each movement the melodic outline of the dominant => tonic polarity is reiterated in an obvious fashion using the same descending schema. In addition, there is a high degree of resemblance between the prelude and allemande and the equivalent movements for the seventh sonata. Some passages are, for all practical purposes, identical. As with the apparent reincarnation of various Scarlatti Sonatas in different collections, these works should not be considered as mere inferior variations of other previously or subsequently composed pieces. The proud toccata-like allure of the fantasia from the seventh sonata is contrasted by the seriousness of purpose found in the *Preludie* of the ninth sonata which, although initially self-contained and sweet, becomes slowly agitated to the point of anxiety. Immediately prior to the last chord of this unmeasured prelude, there is an indication to return to an insertion added in Weiss's hand, who presumably found the ending a bit hasty, necessitating the addition of a few modulating arpeggios before the conclusion. With the insertion ending as it does in the middle of a phrase at the end of a page (one surmises the existence of another scrap of paper containing the rest of the information) it has become necessary to recompose the missing material. My reconstruction has been kept to a minimum by merely completing the descending scale passage, and returning to the final chord by means of an arpeggio and a cadence which resembles, in all respects, the previous cadences:



Possible interpolation for the incomplete Weiss's insertion


The suspicion that these preludes were often improvised and committed to paper only after the successful completion of all other movements seems to be confirmed in this case. It is possible to discern the general spirit of the entire sonata through Weiss's use of harmonic and melodic sequences. While contemplating the devout character of D minor, is it not possible to view the beginning of the *Allemande* as a veritable pious offering? The subtle differences that exist between the allemandes of sonatas numbers seven and nine are, in my opinion, all the more noticeable against the background of the overwhelming similarity of these movements. With the courante (*Cour:*) however, we are no longer dealing with similarities, rather with a *variant*: an earlier version or a reworking of the same piece in Dresden Sonata S-C34). The principle themes are identical in both variants, with differences occurring at the level of internal development. These differences are noteworthy to the extent that they give to each variant a unique musical character.

The *Bouree* must have been a popular 'hit' during the 18th century. Of all the works of Weiss, this one can be found in the greatest number of sources including the London ms I (2 versions), London ms II (lutenist Straube's collection), Strasbourg, Rostock, Götting, Moscow, Warsaw (in four different volumes), and Buenos-Aires. The difficulty encountered while trying to obtain copies of all manuscripts is equalled only by the joy experienced while comparing twelve versions of the same piece! This comparative study of phraseology and finger patterns has been a most enlightening exercise. While there are many small variations from an example to another, all remain for the most part very similar with two notable exceptions: the second London version (p.78) wherein the repeated sections are written out in an ornamental fashion, and the Moscow version which is essentially the same piece written in diminution, the quaver values replacing the crotchets. I would then recommend that in a performance the bourree appear in both the original and the diminutive (*double*) forms. The use of a minuet as a final movement gave cause for some concern, alleviated largely by the discovery of a theme of such beauty. This *Menuet* brings to mind so perfectly the "*all-encompassing, pleasant and satisfying*" universe of d minor as described by Mattheson. One is always left with the irrepressible urge to play the minuet a second time with scarcely a consideration for the so-called problems of musical redundancy.

### *Sonata no 10 in B flat major (S-C 15)*

Though present in its entirety in the Warsaw Manuscript, only half of the tenth sonata is contained in the Dresden version. This same half of the sonata is attached to three movements taken from the large *Divertimento à solo* (London ms pages 224 to 232), the totality of which are to be construed as a separate sonata in Dresden. Here we find two autograph movements, namely the allemande and the courante. "*This key is both sumptuous and entertaining while retaining a certain modesty; it can appear to be simultaneously magnificent and endearing. Among other qualities attributed to it we must be mindful of this one: Ad ardua animam elevat*". These are the words used by Mattheson to describe the key

of B flat major in his list of 'tonartencharakteristik', a text that is heavily overlaid with French expressions such as 'divertissante', 'modeste', 'magnifique' and 'mignonne'.

From the very beginning of the *Allemande* we sense a presence of nobility infused with calm, due in large measure to the affirmative usage of the lower register. This creates a very different atmosphere from what we would expect to find in a darker minor key. Compare, for example, this opening with that of the allemande from the fifth sonata, which is surprisingly similar but much more sombre. Weiss's allemandes share certain interminable qualities with some of the works of Schubert. These long durations do allow us, though, to experience completely a peaceful dream-like quality inherent in the music. The next piece, a lively courante (*Cour:* ), is somewhat reminiscent of a slalom course with its interesting mixture of equal quavers and triplets. In the Dresden version the tempo is indicated *moderato* and all the triplets are replaced with the rhythmic figure  which gives a minuet allure to the piece ! Interestingly enough, with the new musical expression of the late Baroque, the two rhythmic figures tend to be differentiated from each other, whereas before they would be similar since the triplets were played unevenly.

The dance-like *Paisane* is very festive in spirit. It should be noted in passing that the sonatas 10, 11 and 12 have a paysanne movement (but no prelude) and that no movements are presented in the minor mode. The sarabande (*Sarab:* ) is neither excessively dramatic nor jesting, retaining rather an element of charming good taste. The *Menuet* is equally graceful in a slightly headstrong way. Eloquent long phrases, complete with all the panache and majesty of an imposing speech, are reserved for the final *Gigue* movement.

### *Sonata no 11 in A major (S-C 16)*

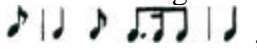
Of the six movements of this sonata, all but the pastorale can be found in other manuscripts. The Vienna and Dresden versions contain all five of the other movements while replacing the pastorale with the gigue from the eighth sonata. The Podebrady and Haslemere manuscripts have two pieces each. The London copy is written entirely in the hand of the composer. The Vienna and Dresden manuscripts are entitled, respectively, *Partita Mons. Weiss* and *Suonata del Sigre S.L. Weisfs*. As Tim Crawford pointed out, this sonata could be called the "Weiss Christmas sonata". Pastorales, paysannes and echo effects were indeed associated with the theme of the Nativity. As with the eighth sonata, I have not found that the key of A major has inspired the passions described by Mattheson, with the possible exception of the allemande which offers, truthfully enough, moments of melancholy. I have not however given the complete quotation of this author who goes on to explain that " *A major is very appropriate for the violin*". It is also my belief that Mattheson was in the habit of describing tonalities with a view to their orchestral context.

The allemande (*Allem:* ) begins in melancholy while at the same time conveying an imposing assurance of majesty. As is the case with its analogous movement in the preceding sonata, the lower register is used profusely. This holds equally true for the other movements of the sonata, with the composer seemingly drawing enormous pleasure from the resultant richness of timbre. The *Air en echo* comes as a bit of a surprise since it is sub-titled as *Largo* whereas in the other three manuscripts it is clearly indicated as *Vivace*. What is one to make of this ? Four considerations should be taken into account. First, the air occupies the same space normally reserved for a courante and is in three of four sources marked *Vivace*.

Secondly, the score of this “echo” piece alternates continuously and clearly between *f* and *p* (loud and soft), which is extremely difficult to realise at a quick tempo (even the more so when the ornamentations are brought to bear). Thirdly, let’s not forget that for the 17<sup>th</sup> century lutenists, it was normal to play sometimes a piece in completely different tempi. A good example is the *Testament de Mézangeau*, an allemande by Ennemond Gautier however convincingly presented as a gigue in other manuscripts. Ideally, one might play the piece twice in a row, very slow and very fast. The fourth consideration is quite simply that the piece has all the essential ingredients (accents, phrase lengths, etc.) of a minuet. All things considered, a performance of this piece at a largo tempo would seem inappropriately slow coming after an allemande while a vivace tempo would be too rapid. My preferred compromise solution to date has been to perform the work as a moderate courante, close in spirit to the feel of a minuet.

The *Paisañe* is very lively, incorporating a regular alternation between leaping thematic ideas and short fleeting lyric themes. Appearing as it does in four different sources, there are four different articulations indicated for one of the phrases in this work:



In my opinion this underscores once more the fact that finer interpretational details were left to the discretion of the performer. Serenity, calm, and simplicity are the hallmarks of the sarabande (*Sarab:*), wherein the first measure reminds us in all respects (except register - it is much lower here) of its equivalent movement in the fourth sonata. Meanwhile, the frivolous minuet (*Men:*), which bears the sub-title *Madame la Grondeuse* (the scolding woman) in the Vienna version reminds one, in a melodic sense, of a game of leap-frog that is constantly being interrupted by a grumpy person, characterised by the descending bass figure. The delightful concluding *Pastorrell* is in 6/8, in the manner of a gigue with a rustic rhythmic figure of , substituting for the more usual continuous flow of notes commonly associated with the aforementioned dance form. This piece is unusual (perhaps the spirit of Christmas) in that it is constructed with one entirely repeated section whereas the conventional format would require the usage of two repeated sections.

### *Sonata no 12 in C major (S-C 17)*

The Salzburg Manuscript, which is the only alternate source for this sonata is in such deteriorated state (at least, according to the microfilms received) that the deciphering of this music is arduous. This Salzburg source contains 46 *Parties* and 4 *Concertos da camera*, all clearly numbered and intended for trio ensemble, as every work bears at the beginning *Liutho, violino è basso* (except one adding up a mandora). Eight of these partitas are from Silvius Leopold and more than twenty are from a certain Fichtel, who might become one day, who knows? a better known composer when his music get better observation, like Weiss. I have nevertheless discerned a version that is remarkably similar to that of the London Manuscript, which in the margin of the first page bears an inscription by the author stating “*veritable original. S. L. Weis*”. As for the tenth sonata, the allemande and courante are in Weiss’s hand, the rest of the sonata having been written by an assistant.

The key of C major was described at the time as follows: “*This tonality has a strong forward character but is not entirely unresponsive to those moments of rejoicing where one ordinarily gives free rein to happiness. An able composer, after having chosen wisely his accompanying instruments, can make of it a work of charm and can apply it equally easily to the creation of tender moments.*” The ambivalent scene thus painted is actually quite close to the description of D major.

As always, the repeats of each section should be ornamented, particularly those of the allemande (*Allem:*). Without recourse to frequent modulation, the piece retains an eloquence of musical gesture. What is true of the interpretation of the written notes holds equally for the ornamentation. An unsuspected universe of expressive possibilities becomes apparent only when the instrument is actually in hand. Likewise for the ornamentation; the mixture of open strings and stopped notes combine with the fortuitous disposition of the left hand to create breathtaking flourishes that would have been unimaginable from a simple visual reading of the music. The player should not be surprised by certain personal ornamental passages that appear to transcend the time period in question. These flourishes are quite natural, coming as they do directly from the instrument and not simply as the result of an unbridled impulsiveness. In this respect performers could adopt a typically Weissian creative strategy by composing idiomatically correct motives, often imitating melodic patterns found in his other works. A final word on the allemande; the apparent relationship between this piece and the preceding allemande is due to the identical bass line in the first three measures.

The rather voluble *Courante* that follows presents also the same bass line in relation to the courante of the first sonata. Here a repeated-note motif, however, is used as a dynamic element. This piece is followed by a cheery exhilarating **Bourree** that, as with the concluding paysanne, does not have a title inscribed at the beginning of the score, a fact which is somewhat surprising and quite rare. Though easy to deduce on stylistic grounds, final confirmation that these pieces are a bourrée and a paysanne comes from the Salzburg Manuscript in which these movements are identified as such. The terms mellowness, femininity, lightness and elegance best describe the *Sarabande*. As stated by the Dresden lutenist André Burguete, these qualities encapsulate the Dresden of the time, a flamboyant example of French and Italian influences co-existing in perfect equilibrium. It is not surprising, then, to learn that Weiss was very much at home here, and chose to remain despite some temptingly exorbitant offers from other princely courts.

The *Menuet* is one of the rapid variety which, with their thin harmonies and interchangeable voicings, are in contrast with the other minuets containing as they do, continuous soprano melodies and discrete accompanying voices (discretely written but nonetheless sonorous!). The latter sort might be played at a moderate speed. This minuet, for example, is comparable with that of the fourth sonata. Both the dimensions of the **Paysanne** and its resolute proud nature give adequate justification for its placement as a final movement and not a middle movement, as is the case with the paysannes of the sonatas nos 10 and 11.



### *Sonata no 13 in D major (S-C 18)*

The solo sonata no 13 inaugurates a series of five sonatas that are found in the middle of the London Manuscript. The year of composition, 1719, was a particularly fecund one, especially when one bears in mind that three other isolated pieces found in the manuscript



bear the same date of completion. These five sonatas were written in the hand of two copyists, but as is frequently the case in this manuscript, the correspondence between a specific handwriting and a particular piece is not always regular (see the General context section). Most movements are post-scripted *Weis* or *Weis 1719* or *S.L.Weis 1719*. Another typographical curiosity is the consistent use of a single 's' up to the last four signatures where upon we note the use of *Weifs*, as found systematically in the Dresden manuscript.

In the Vienna Manuscript this sonata begins with the prelude of the Second Sonata and ends with the angloise, omitting in the process the passacaille (which is nonetheless contained in the Haslemere Ms.). As I said in the General context, it would be quite natural, even necessary, here as for any other sonata having no prelude, to concoct one from ideas taken from the other movements. The D major tonality was described in my presentation of Sonata no 2 as a key with two opposing characters; the one “*brilliant and forthright*”, the other “*delicate during calm moments*”. These calm moments seem to be found only in the allemande and at the beginning of the passacaille, the sarabande being more of a nervous and feverishly agitated disposition. In the *Allemande*, which begins with a typically Weissian harmonic pattern, one cannot fail to notice the usage of parallel octaves in the classical style, suggestive to some extent of the use of this device in the music of Haydn and Mozart. Whilst working on an allemande written by Weiss one can imagine the making of a crystal sculpture. Each note must be carefully chiselled with the appropriate tone colour in the way that the reflections of light on a crystal surface would be affected by the trimming of the glass.

Playing the courante (*Cour:* ) is bound to leave the performer feeling a bit breathless due to the inherent virtuosity of the work. In three of the five manuscripts the *Angloise* is titled as such (London, Vienna, Buenos Aires) but on two copies (2nd copy Vienna, Warsaw) the piece is listed as a paysanne. This work, characterised by fresh, short phrases, in contrast to the long elaborate gestures found in the courante, shows the extent to which a lighter interlude can lift the mood of a predominantly serious sonata like this one. The construction of this oeuvre appears more Classic than Baroque, indeed it has an allure quite redolent of Haydn himself. The seamless flow of 'notes égales' and 'notes inégales' is dictated naturally by the inherent musical and technical features of the work. Indeed the right hand fingerings beckon us to spontaneously perform the rhythm  as opposed to the strictly notated version , which, if performed relentlessly, would no doubt cause considerable boredom, unless it is very fast. Alternate sources of this piece have yielded a pleasant surprise. My intuitive desire to repeat a two-bar pattern found near the end of the first section has been justified in that one of the Vienna manuscripts contains a strictly notated version of this repetition. The second section begins with a harmonic progression based on the pentatonic scale that is curiously reminiscent of a rock&roll cliché.

Technically speaking, the sarabande (*Sarab:* ) is fairly difficult in that it requires a constant legato touch, interrupted only by the repeats. The necessary legato technique requires extraordinary finger dexterity in the left hand. The ornate ending to the repeat of the first section, which extends beyond the normal measure, was indeed notated as such, and not arbitrarily modified, confirming once more the degree to which rhythmic elasticity was permitted in the service of higher musical expression. The *Menuet* certainly brings to mind the 'warrior' imagery used by Mattheson to describe the key of D major. The opening bars of the minuet and the sarabande are melodically identical, though rhythmically different. This

opening theme re-appears at the end in what is called a 'hidden theme' (the fugitive reappearance of the first theme). The first measure also appears in another minuet by Weiss.

All guitarists are familiar with the concluding *Passagaille*, which reveals admirable compositional maturity in full flower. This passacaglia, provided that one plays all the repeats, including the one of the concluding section - as written-, evolves through a steady increase in dramatic tension which, while uplifting, is yet well-controlled, one of the few pieces in this large volume to have been performed by numerous artists. The work can be found in the syllabi of most guitar classes the world over. One of the most appealing attributes of this composition lies in the versatility of the bass line, with its continuous syncopations giving forward propulsion to the musical discourse.

### *Sonata no 14 in F major (S-C 19)*

Excerpts from this sonata may be found in the Munich and Rostock manuscripts. It recalls the first sonata, as much by the choice of key as by the compositional technique. The pitch of F seems to have provided all the inspiration necessary to depict the gentle nobility attributed by scholars of the time to F major. A brief *Prelud:*, harmonically audacious although reminiscent of the purest improvisation, is followed by an *Allemande* of striking nobility. As is often the case, the listener becomes overwhelmed by a dream-like state within a few moments of the opening of the work. In the second section, an ambiguous melodic line hovers gracefully between tonic and dominant key centres, a Weissian gem that is all the more delightful because of the way it precedes a more typically Baroque chord progression. Weiss has seemingly intoxicated himself with joy at the sound of his instrument, as would have been equally true of Louis Couperin with respect to the harpsichord.

It is noteworthy that this allemande has no sectional repetitions. Unusual as this may be, it does not appear to have been an oversight. Although I have opted most of the time in my concerts not to do repeats, I do ornament the written music in a manner suggestive of the second time through a repeated section. This does not constitute a divergence from the original text, rather an embellishment of same as is the case with other works in this collection where one can omit repeats occasionally been due to time restrictions (usually with respect to allemandes and sarabandes only). This particular allemande, in F, has a rather substantial 'petite reprise' at the end, which is, in this case at least, well indicated. One passage in particular is evocative of the initial ascending melody found in the allemande of the second sonata.

The triumphant exuberance of the courante (*Cour:* ) is characterised by clever hemiola writing (binary rhythms superimposed on ternary values) and by the use of off-beat secondary melodies. There is also a certain obvious playfulness to be found in the tension between strong and weak beat tied values. This same spirit of joy can be found in the subsequent *Bourée* with all of its intricate right-hand thumb leaps. We cannot fail to notice that in the two examples from the Rostock library, the ornamentations are not only different from but also more difficult than the London version, leading us to believe that the owners of these manuscripts were either great virtuosi or that the movement in question was played by them at a more restrained tempo.

The sarabande (*Sarab:* ) is in itself somewhat enigmatic. It begins, in effect with a double surprise, in that the key is in the relative minor while the opening manages to dodge the expected affirmation of the tonic, truly a refined melancholic gem. Placid joy returns in the form of a *Menuet* in which we detect thematic kinship with the well known Minuet in G by J.S.Bach, part of the second Notebook for Anna Magdalena Bach which would be composed 6 years later in 1725. Immediately prior to the conclusion of the work, a descending line brings to mind the Musette from the same Notebook. The concluding *Gigue*, with its tightly woven fugato and continuous modulations, imposes a large technical challenge on the interpreter. Extensive use of string dampening is required to ensure a coherent interpretation. Some of the measures found in the gigue recall Weiss's penchant for creating multiple polyphonic lines from single melodic voices, aided, of course by the use of carefully reasoned fingering choices. At other times it becomes quite clear that the fingering choices were made solely in the light of timbral considerations.

### *Sonata no 15 in F minor (S-C 21)*

Here our discrepancies with the Smith-Crawford numbering system come to an end. The difference between the two systems is due to the fact that I have chosen for the moment to by-pass a fifth (and ultimate) duo-sonata in D minor, opting instead to combine it with the four others which will be presented at the end of this analysis, along with the incomplete sonata S-C4 and the individual pieces.

*“This tonality appears temperate and peaceful, while at the same time deep and oppressive, with a touch of despair giving the impression of mortal anguish, though in an highly excitable state. It truly expresses a bleak melancholy giving rise to shudders and tremblings in the listener.”* This description of F minor by Mattheson would seem particularly à propos since this music expresses bravura of the most breathtaking vigour, in short a musical excitement causing an uninterrupted stirring of sombre musical ideas. The Dresden Manuscript contains the same sonata in its entirety from which one can, as is often the case, choose several interesting variants, especially for the sarabande. In the London Manuscript, this last is placed, astonishingly enough and following J.S.Bach's fashion, before the bourrée. From the *Allemande* onward, the chosen key causes unusual left hand positionings. One can imagine that the composer was experimenting with instrumental resonance, a unique relationship between his playing and the harmonic vibration from the wood of the instrument. There is, near the end of the composition, a cadential chord with a low contra E on the tenth course requiring an index finger bar that covers eighteen strings! This is one of those positions that would indicate clearly the use of a standard lute, as opposed to a theorbo-lute, as is also true of the Tenth Sonata S-C15. This long suspended chord justifies Mattheson's description, causing indeed a 'shivering' sensation.

The subsequent *Courante* (the same spelling appears in the Dresden Manuscript) has also an abundance of syncopated inner voices. In this case the writing causes enormous left-hand fatigue, induced by the flatted notes and the resultant need for constant barring. The courante emits a certain energy imbued with fatalism, the energy of despair, as it were. This sense of despair is equally present in the *Sarabande*, indicated as an *adagio*, a veritable cry from the heart as is also the case with the sarabande from the Eighth Sonata S-C12. The principle theme reminds us of Bach and Schubert. We can detect once again an anticipation of the Classic style in the long pedal points that support the languidly flowing passage of

thirds. Both the *Bourée* and the minuet, with their agitated sense of darkness, conform to the ideal of F minor. The indication *Tempo di Menueto* ascribed to the minuet is quite possibly intended to guard the performer from becoming unduly zealous in the pursuit of agitation. The same is true of the *Gigue* which nonetheless presents itself in terms of an attractive elegance. More so than ever the composer indulges in progressions of modulations to remote key areas, giving strong evidence of his desire to make of each sonata a unique statement, notwithstanding the discrete and conventional nature of the musical language. This he appears to do whilst making light of the technical difficulties frequently encountered in this music. We can well empathise with Princess Sophie Wilhelmine, sister of Frederick II of Prussia and student of Weiss, who opined that he "*never had an equal and that his successors must remain content to imitate him*".

### *Sonata no 16 in G major (S-C 22)*

This grand sonata in G major differs from the previous fifteen by means of a non-standard beginning comprised of a prelude, toccata and fugue. It should be mentioned that, with the exception of two bars of the toccata which can be found in the 1769 Breitkopf catalogue, and the allegro (Moscow) this sonata exists only in the London Manuscript. There are eight movements in all, although in reality the first three constitute separate sections of larger overture movement. This compression of movements attenuates what could otherwise be perceived as an excessively lengthy eight-movement form. The concluding portions of all five subsequent pieces are duly signed S.L.Weis 1719. We note also that only one of the five copyists engaged for the London Manuscript has been used in the preparation of Sonatas 16 and 17.

Mattheson said of G major that it "*possessed a strength of suggestive evocation, being the ideal key for a work imbued with vitality.*" It is difficult to find a better description of the sixteenth sonata with its strong evocative grandeur and light vitality; characteristics which are even more prevalent in this work than in the other G major sonata (solo no 4, S-C5) of the London ms.

The *Preludie* begins with nine unmeasured chords, giving plenty of leeway for interpretational freedom. An abundance of arpeggios allows for a brilliant departure, announcing with a grand gesture the outline of the forthcoming fugue themes in addition to material from other movements. These 'nervous' arpeggios should not, in my view, go beyond a certain elasticity within a chosen rhythm. In any case these chord progressions are similar to those found in the preludes of solo sonatas 1 and 8 which are notated with values of crotchets and minims. The short development which follows is also similar to several other passages from preludes by Weiss who, as an announcement of the toccata and fugue, apparently wanted nothing more than a brief introductory passage to check the tuning of the instrument, a performance practice common to seventeenth century lutenists. One can enhance the resonance and richness of the apparent harmonic structure by slowing down the performance of these simple salvos of semi-quavers.

Where we might expect panache, the *Toccata* gives us instead an impression of solemn majesty, conveyed most effectively by the gravity and brilliance of the chosen harmony. In the Breitkopf catalogue the expressive marking is listed as *Adagio*. These two sections of the overture, the first frenetic and the second ponderous, lead us inexorably to the

'piece de resistance', the *Fuga*. This work, with its sense of magnanimous vitality concludes, nevertheless, with a return to a slow regal finale, in the tradition of the French Overture, indicated also as *Adagio*. The theme is reminiscent of similar melodic material used in one of the organ fugues by J. S. Bach, and also in the Prelude, Fugue and Allegro BWV 998 "for either lute or harpsichord". In the case of the aforementioned work, clearly composed with lute technique in mind, Bach seems to follow the idiomatic model offered by Weiss, involving as it does the usage of long values for the theme, superimposed voices in medium durations and rapid arpeggiations in the development. In this particular case, however, Weiss remains deliberately restrained, calling for brief though jubilant arpeggiated sections. Bach would treat similar material with a view to maximising the musical importance of each and every section. A remarkable example of 'orchestral' colour gradation can be found between bars 129 and 137. An uninterrupted series of bass tones creates a progressive thickening in the sonority, each open string contributing a unique colour to the tonal palette. The ending of another chord progression involves the use of an interesting chromatic bass motion that extends to the last possible note on the fingerboard, a contra C#. The written repeats come as a bit of a surprise, repeat indications that lead me to question the significance of these markings which are often found in similar circumstances throughout the work of Weiss. Like Robert Donington, I would give as best explanation that they meant an optional repetition. If we try indeed to think the same way an amateur did in this time, we can imagine that a fugue could be often asked as an encore by the listeners, due to the complexity of the work and the greater difficulty for the auditors to remember the themes and counter-themes. We could then call this an 'anticipated encore'!

As was the case in the thirteenth sonata, the courante (*Cour* : ) in this sonata is written in long phrases using repetitive, charming melodic cells that allow for pleasing modulations. In the *Bouree* certain harmonico-melodic formulae are revealed which anticipate the paysanne of *The Infidel* (solo sonata no 23, S-C29). Certainly Weiss was not lacking in inspiration when composing in the style of a bourrée, a fact that is confirmed when one appreciates to the fullest the elastic ricochet of the quaver motion inherent in this movement. The bourrée was a dance form supposedly associated originally with the jumping movements of drunken dancers in the village feasts of the Auvergne who were said to be "bourré" or "stuffed/full". A *petite reprise* added by editorial decision would be welcome here. To give an idea of the frequency of use of these repetitions, it can be mentioned that of the eighteen pieces of sonatas 16 and 17, I personally make use of nine: six were indicated by Weiss while three are of my choosing. This practice of adding a *petite reprise* varies greatly from one sonata to another, and we can even sometimes avoid it if we feel like it. Preludes, fugues and toccatas are, for obvious reasons, not susceptible to this treatment. Among the other movements, some are possibly not immediately receptive to the addition of epilogues, while others benefit greatly by this extra weight in the musical discourse. In any event, this aspect of ornamented repetition is one of the most important elements of the Weissian sonata.

The *Sarabande*, presented by three voices in close position in the key of the relative minor has been subtitled *un poco andante*. The driving bass reminds us more of a march than in the case with the usual sarabande. The first section, which should typically be one half the length of the second, is in this instance almost of equal duration (20 bars as opposed to 21), though it is true that the *petite reprise* does lengthen somewhat the second part. In addition, this sarabande is much longer (at least in terms of the number of measures) than the others. The rhythmic flow, and for that matter the entire atmosphere of the piece, depends greatly on

the personal choices made in the interpretation of the sign  $\text{)}$  that refers to upper appoggiatura, whether single or multiple (trill), slow or fast and  $\text{)}$ , used to indicate all of the same in lower appoggiatura. This notation is found in all of Weiss's tablature but the attractiveness of this work will depend to an even greater extent than usual on the interpretational decisions of the performer with respect to the ornamentation, even in the first time through repeated sections. The dramatic ending necessitates, in my view, a very emotional ornamentation treatment, that is: an unfurling of *diminutions*. The words used by Mattheson to describe the key of E minor depict very accurately this particular sarabande when he states "*If this tone accepts with difficulty any added gaiety due to its profound sense of introspective tristesse, one can nevertheless cultivate therein an element of hope. A certain vigour would help greatly in this respect, although the desired luminescence must remain unattainable*".

The *Menuet* is thoroughly charming, showing to what extent the left hand slurs contribute to musical expression. The *Allegro*, presaging as it does the presto of the *Celebrated Pirate* (solo sonata no 22, S-C28) is nothing short of a relentlessly mad race. Again, vitality is central to the description of this brilliant work, which is so stylistically linked to the Italian Baroque. The ones present at the 1987 LSA seminar in Raleigh will always remember the vertiginous interpretation of this work by Nigel North at his no less incredible Baroque lute concert, a magical state of grace.

### *Sonata no 17 in Bb major "Divertimento à solo" (S-C 23)*

This work is unique in that it is the only piece among the twenty-six solo sonatas and five duo-sonatas of the London ms that has been given a generic name. As was the case with the sixteenth sonata, no 17 could appear to have an overabundance of movements. Closer examination reveals that this is not the case. In actual fact, the Entrée is a close copy of the allemande, and the Saltarella sounds like a leaping gigue, all of which would indicate a perfectly logical movement flow since the six central ones are assembled in pairs, giving us the equivalent of seven 'real' movements. Though Weiss did not actually write Bourree I, Bourree II, etc, as he did in sonatas no 3 and 25, the composer's intention remains quite obvious in this respect. Usage of this reference formula was common with Baroque composers. If the Bourree I, Gavotte I and Minuet I were to be presented as isolated works, in the manner shown by the Dresden ms (the Bourree I also appears in the Munich ms) we would be left with an impoverished musical structure. Amputation of the second piece, which both allows for and makes compulsory the da capo reprise, would have the undesirable side effect of reducing the role of the first piece for that of a brief ditty.

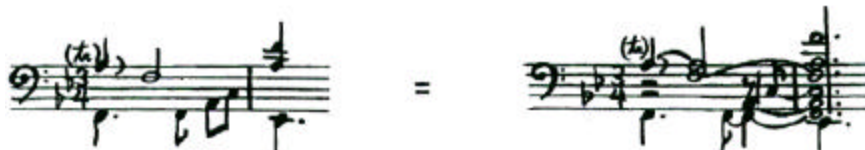
Seen first with respect to the tenth sonata, the description of Bb major by Mattheson seems even more pertinent in the context of this work, with its "*grandeur through simplicity*". Mattheson would doubtless approve of Weiss's use of the title 'Divertimento' for a sonata in Bb since it is the French sense of 'divertissant' (to divert, entertain) that would seem most appropriate to him. I also agree with Mattheson's use of the terms 'sumptuous' and 'modest' to describe the *Praelude*, which, as is the case with so many other preludes, seems to exist only to create an appropriate mood for the listener. A touch of *notes inégales* lightens the first bars, seemingly sounding "Hear ye! Hear ye!" as a commencement to the musical discourse.

With all of the agogic inflections of the allemande, including some moments of tenderness, the *Entrée* is in fact less elaborate than the preceding allemandes, sparing us the sensation of a long dream. We find in it some melodic contours and a five-note initial chord that prefigure the allemande of the twenty-second sonata mentioned earlier. Other melodic configurations serve as premonitions of the *Entrée* found in *The Infidel*. In addition to ornamentation of the repeats, it would seem appropriate to begin each section by squeezing the anacrusis closer to the bar line, giving it more of a semiquaver feel as opposed to a quaver.

The first *Bourée* and the second *Bourée* are not preceded by a courante, a somewhat surprising turn of events since the first sixteen solo sonatas all have one (even no 11, with its ambiguous *Air en echo* serving the same function). It comes as an even greater surprise to note that of the ten remaining solo sonatas only three contain courante movements. After the sixteenth sonata the composer seems to have entered a second 'phase' of the London ms, characterised by 'broken moulds', unusual movements (rigaudon, passepied, musette, presto) and unconventional movement arrays. A manifest desire to break with convention would preoccupy Weiss from this point onward.

A single reading confirms that, as was stated previously, if the two bourrées were not written together, they were at the very least intended to be performed side by side. The second answers the first by means of a certain complementarity of musical atmosphere and development. The beginning of the second, with its harmonic structure of I-V-VI rather than I-V-I only makes sense in terms of a continuation of the first bourrée. This use of a coherent whole in two sections is shown to similar advantage in the gavottes and minuets. One notices in bourrée II some very judiciously chosen right hand fingerings, chosen to enhance the proper accentuation. The full beauty of the first *Gavotte* and the second *Gavotte*, involving as they do the resonances of suspended harp-like string sonorities, can only be revealed by the original instrument. Again this richness of sound is not immediately evident when reading (as opposed to playing) the score. The difference in time signature between the gavottes (no 2 is in 2/2 and no 1 in 2/4) provides justification for a softening of accent in the second, illustrating again the complementary relationship of the works. This softening of accent facilitates alternation between the graceful triplets of gavotte II, and the hammered rhythms of gavotte I. The two bourrées and two gavottes all have final repeats. We also note that these of the second bourrée and second gavotte are shorter than their first movement counterparts. This symmetry also reinforces the equilibrium of the entire work.

The *Sarabande* exerts a calming effect in the midst of more agitated flights of fancy. This time the proportions are more modest without the long anguished phrases that characterise the sarabande of the previous sonata. This meagreness of musical text is, paradoxically, ideal for the realisation of certain elegant arabesques, in the style of certain harpsichord pieces by Louis Couperin. Looking closely at the second part, the tablature confirms the essential features of this research into superposed sonorities. The resultant increase in musical tension is achieved with a deceptively simple musical notation, as we see in the sequential pattern of measure 17:



In lute music a bass line will often sound like two simultaneous and complete musical voices. This polyphonic aspect must be realised and controlled with great care in order to fully do justice to the 'real' piece, one that is often obscured by the written notation.

The first *Menuet*, which can be ornamented with diminutions similar to those of the first gavotte, might be readily enhanced by the use of *notes inégales*, including the lombard rhythm (inverted inégales) in the descending lines. Guitarists will find especially interesting the slurred technique just before the end of the second section. This method of straddling the strings actually prefigures the technique used a century and a half later by the famous guitarist/composer Francesco Tarrega. In those measures with second beat minims, a sharp attack on first beat chords will create a desirable effect. C.P.E. Bach in particular was careful to explain that baroque scores were intentionally imprecise with durations being dependant on the context of the phrase. Certain notes can even be played extremely staccato.

As with the second gavotte, the second *Menuet* is presented in a different meter; 3/8 instead of 3/4. This helps to convey the flowing nature of the phrases, in contrast with the leaping themes of the first minuet. With the exception of measures three to five one is obliged to cease accentuating the second beat that is so typical of a minuet. In the second section we encounter a type of echo created by the mixture of strings in high position whilst seemingly travelling through a violent but brief thunderstorm. Most would concede that the resultant sound is not unlike that of a "phlanged" electric guitar! The return to a light touch is both swiftly achieved and natural, bringing Mozart to mind. The graceful concluding *Saltarella* is an exquisite little gigue full of the rebounding joyfulness implicit in the latinesque cognate of the title (*saltare* - to dance).

### *Sonata no 18 in C major (S-C 24)*

The solo sonata no 18 exists only in the London version (in a copyist handwriting), discounting the minuet and trio which can be found as part of another sonata in C in the Dresden manuscript, written in Weiss's hand. A copy of the minuet without the trio can also be found in the Munich manuscript. Mattheson described the key of C Major as "*bold but willingly joyful and even tender when necessary*" (see solo sonata 12).

The full noblesse of the *Ouverture* replaces, in this instance, the two more typical movements of the Weissian sonata: the allemande and courante. 'Ouverture a la francaise' would be an appropriate designation for this movement in slow-fast-slow structure. This orchestral sounding work could have come from the pen of Haendel. On the other hand, the rhythmic motif of the fast theme could be heard as almost identical to (albeit in Major) the thematic material of the preludes to Bach's suites no 1 and 3 for lute. (This is certainly not the only example of musical similarities between these masters of Leipzig, Dresden and London.) As is the case with the two aforementioned colleagues, Weiss demonstrates a total mastery of all facets of his art. His choice of developmental modulations and the balance of



structure provide convincing, refined testament to the sensitivity of his approach. As usual, nothing has to be altered, though it might be necessary to exaggerate the dotted values of certain notes in the two slow sections, increasing thereby the majesty of the musical gesture. As one among many examples of polished writing, the hemiola superposed on normal rhythm before the return of the slow section constitutes a slowing of the intermediary line without a change in time signature, since the two other voices remain normally accented:



The *Bourée* (which becomes the second movement under the circumstances previously described) is extremely polyphonic while remaining essentially dance-like with a cantabile character. The initial melodic line anticipates the sarabande which will follow and one finds herein the echo effect that will become the official mainstay of the sonata no 20 S-C26, a device that was to be used more systematically by Weiss during this stage of his development. These fragments, which are repeated here and there should not be seen as symptomatic of a paucity of imagination, or as the result of directionless improvisation. Rather, they could suggest a desire on the part of the composer to manipulate dynamic shadings, most particularly the *Forte / Piano* technique which was to become an essential ingredient of the classic style. In my opinion, the lutenist should treat these thematic repetitions as opportunities to create dynamic contrast, using the appropriate Baroque right-hand technique. Otherwise the subtleties of shading could become non-existent or severely weakened, or replaced by an overuse of rubato.

While reaffirming the practical superiority of tablature notation, it is at the same time interesting to note an example of the inadequacy of any notational system when it comes to creating a graphic realisation of the lute soundscape. The moment in question occurs at the end of the first part of the bourree, a musical gesture that could be notationally correct only if presented in a form of elaborate orchestral scoring. Even this ideal form of writing would not convey the effect that the sustained resonance tones have on the listener, an effect that allows one to reconstruct the aural image in his or her manner. These sequentially sustained harp-like tones bring to mind the reconstitution of melodic lines according to ones disposition. (See Appendix 1). This example would sound:



One notes that the A of the preceding measure, residing on a neighbouring string, will resonate during the last measure, leaving the listener the freedom to determine whether or not this straddling constitutes an appoggiatura of the last G.

As usual, the sarabande occupies a central position in the sonata, this time being titled *Aria*, with a performance direction of *un poco andante*. This can also be seen as part of the classical temperament residing in the imagination of the composer. Another classical element can be found in the use of notated silences, a rarity in tablature scoring, used presumably to express a well defined stop in the musical line. The complete repetition of the opening theme just before the end of the piece serves as yet another precursor to the music of the Age of

Enlightenment. The *Menuet* is unassumingly charming, leaving rhetorical flourish for the *Trio* which, while appearing suddenly in c minor, immediately transports the listener to the depths of morosity, albeit with a certain gracefulness. The *Da capo* repetition, as asked in the score, of the minuet seems by contrast light and playful. The concluding movement is a 9/8 *Gigue*, as opposed to one in 6/8, a feature that implies different phrase dynamics, to the point where the 9/8 flow is regularly interspliced with a 3/4 measure. Reminiscent of the Renaissance *Canario*, this delightful 'standardised hemiola' effect lends a certain joyous spirituality to this piquant final movement.

### *Sonata no 19 in g minor (S-C 25)*

This sonata can also be found almost entirely intact in the Dresden Manuscript, though the sarabande is not the same. Unlike the London manuscript, the Dresden ms is an autograph copy and I have taken the liberty, however parsimoniously, to lift a few advantageous variants from it. These borrowings involve a few different notes, mostly in the bourree, used to enrich the harmony of a few measures. It should be specified that a prelude was added by a copyist, after the fact, to the Dresden ms but it could be judged unnecessary for a performance for reasons of discontinuity and brevity (it is only three lines long). Moreover, this prelude appears excessively conventional, consisting as it does of mere arpeggios, arpeggios that spring directly from another prelude (Dresden page 25). Mattheson's description of g minor, which speaks of 'moderate nostalgia' and 'peaceful joy', was seen to be rather inadequate when ascribed to the tormented, sombre sonata no 3. In the case of the nineteenth sonata, these moods are quite predominant. The 'petulant charm' that was spoken of by Mattheson is very apparent. In g minor, the tone a perfect fifth from the tonic (D) is quite prevalent due to the composition of the open strings, creating suspension effects over the bass in the finale of all six movements. This is yet another lute characteristic that is more discernible by the ear than the eye.

The first movement is entitled *Andante*, a more 'modern' nomenclature than *Allemande*, though identical in terms of tempo (not fast, but moving). The title of the Dresden equivalent is *Allem: andante*. From the very outset the tablature shows surprising left-hand dexterity due to the wide finger-stretches. One could conclude that Weiss was not troubled by problems of finger extensions! Even if this piece appears to be of a familiar writing style, there can also be found certain innovative agogic inflections. Voice doublings and chord spacings are perfect as always, revealing the full depth to which the composer 'heard' his instrument. These note doublings, whether by octave or unison, add an important element to the musical discourse through reinforcement of secondary harmonics, overtones that carry within themselves a lot of expressive power. As mentioned previously, these subtleties do not lend themselves to notational transcription. It is interesting to note different strata of string resonance (whether consonant or dissonant) as can be seen in this example:



These idiomatic utilisations of neighbouring string relationships, which evidently Weiss knew from memory, are all useful, resolving as they do very differently from each other and according to key choice. A performer must assimilate this information in order to

recall it in such a way that the correct dynamic inflection is used during performance. At this point, it would seem worthwhile to show the bass line found at the beginning of the piece. The line seems at first glance to be dislocated but closer scrutiny shows that it is actually rich and full in its double tessitura:



Consistent with his concern for variety, Weiss replaces the expected courante movement with a lively mischievous *Passepied*. Quite different from a minuet, the movement is quick and uses an up-beat before the first measure of each section. There are periodically recurring doubled measures, a feature that permitted dancers to place one foot over the other ('passer le pied' or 'faire le pas'). Even after hearing enough of his bourrees to be convinced that Weiss was decidedly the master of the genre, it comes as an unrestrained surprise to discover here another **Bourree** that is distinguished by a delightful cheeriness. Musical phrases trace patterns like rocket flares to the accompaniment of sharply defined sustained rhythmic accentuation. The title, present in Dresden, is not in London. The eloquence of the *Sarabande* (related thematically to the sarabande of the Sonata no 7, S-C11) becomes fully apparent through added ornamentation. Long suspensions give a monologue quality to the work, a soliloquy steeped in fatalism. Musical phrases are presented as successions of differing rhythmic panels. These musical atmospheres are different to the point of being occasionally paradoxical, a situation that is exacerbated by the ornamentation of the repeats. All of this contributes to a surprising, interesting musical statement.

The rhythm again confers a playful aspect to the minuet entitled here *La babiliouse en Menuet*. The prattling of our 'Chatterbox' (Babiliouse) is evoked by the alternation between 'notes inegales' and 'notes egales', a strategy that gives simultaneously a delightfully sensuous dislocation to the phrases while maintaining an aura of turbulence. Obviously, any 'straight' reading of this minuet would make it quite boring to listen to. The babbling aspect is preserved in the elongated trills, all of which are clearly notated in the score. An examination of the left-hand fingerings of the Dresden version shows some of the composer's intentions in the areas of phrase articulation and accentuation. The same could be said of the *Gigue* which gives right-hand fingerings as well. Notwithstanding a virtuosic use of the right-hand thumb, these fingerings demonstrate quite convincingly our view that these giges were not played as quickly as previously supposed, and that rich sonorities with plenty of ornamentation were probably highly favoured.

### *Sonata no 20 in D Major (S-C 26)*

The seven first movements of this sonata are unique to the London Manuscript. The eighth can be found in the Warsaw ms (two copies), in that of Buenos Aires, under the titles *Bourée* and *boure*, and also the Haslemere ms where it is titled *Capricio Pichler*. Could this last have been a composition by Pichler, whose name appears occasionally in other manuscripts of lute music, or was it possibly a dedicated work? Judging by the spirit and the writing style, it would seem to have been composed by Weiss. "Power", "brilliance" and, curiously enough "delicateness in calm moments" are attributes of D major, according to Mattheson. These descriptions are particularly apt in the case of this sonata which is best characterised as an exercise in unrestrained joy set in a context of strong thematic unity.

Only the **Prelude** (which has no title) is written in the hand of the composer. It appears to be the result of a spontaneous burst of inspiration, seemingly completely improvised. Weiss's autograph, by the way, is very eloquent, replete with long undulating lines; in short, a handwriting that is strong and passionately vital. It stands in marked contrast to the modest, functional calligraphy of his copyist, who penned the subsequent movements. In attempting to render justice to this improvisatory spirit, it is quite normal for the performer to make use of ample fluctuations of rhythm and accent. To do otherwise would seem to go against the intentions of the composer who deliberately omitted rhythmic indications for a large part of the score and to touch up in it some surprising modulatory junctions.

One hears in the *Marche* the peculiar sound of 'bass chimes' which occur in both sections. The sound of three bells, each with a different delivery can be heard as in the following example:



The trill indications are very precisely notated and one should, I think, scrupulously adhere to them. When listening to this music it is not hard to imagine a procession headed by Augustus the Strong in the gardens of his castle on the riverbanks of the Elbe at Dresden, with the stately progress accompanied by the resounding chimes of the neighbouring cathedral.

The *Gavotte*, described as a dance of 'small hops', does indeed jump in a lively fashion to the accompaniment of syncopated basses rebounding to cross-rhythms. This leaping effect is strongly accentuated near the end of the work if we engage the basses in a rhythmic displacement made by the ornamentation of the repetitions. Curiously, the tonic chord in root position has been avoided in the beginning portion of the piece. The maintenance of a full sound throughout the work, written in continuous three-voice texture, represents a significant challenge for the performer. The gavotte is not a quick piece and certain slurrings tend to prove that the tempo, in actual practice, was quite moderate. The subsequent *Aria*, a beautiful work subtitled *adagio* contains the kind of sublime moments often yearned for; a state of complete grace. The technique employed involves an harmonic progression appearing in both sections wherein the two upper voices slide tenderly in step-wise motion creating a musical ecstasy that is further enhanced through the addition of trills in the repeats. Other musical phrases present us with an exhilarating range of expression of symphonic grandeur. The harmonies used in at least three measures of the aria have been heard previously in the prelude. As observed in other movements, cadences are sometimes prolonged in the manner: V-VI, V-VI, V-I. This further aspect of thematic unity is certainly presented in the same spirit of dynamic play that was discussed with reference to the sonata no 18.

The *Menuet* uses accentuation in a manner similar to that of the gavotte. The music proceeds in units of two measures by two measures, the first of each pair being resolute - the other weak. The resulting music is particularly elegant, the lightness of the atmosphere leaving no hint of the dramatic sequence that will arise in the second section. Having established that the repetition of the first section was written, it remains to be explained that

this is because of a repetition of the two last measures the second time through, a *petite reprise* indicated in advance, as it were. Nevertheless, a repeat marking is given at the double bar, an indication that could be deemed superfluous since this necessitates four presentations of the theme. The *Musette*, with its omnipresent pedal brings to mind a certain hybrid orchestral-bagpipe sound colour. The first attack, an idiomatic motif that will be repeated throughout, contains five simultaneous D's (distributed through three courses) that are supposed to sound like bugles. The piece would certainly seem undernourished were it not for these octave and unison doublings. It would be a good idea to intensify the bagpipe aspect by using double mordents and the Baroque *chute* effect. (See Appendix 2). The performance also involves an investigation of expression through the use of dynamic effects, in particular the markings *f* and *p*.

Exceptional in its construction, the *Rondeau en Echo* follows an A-B-A-C-A with indications of *adagio* and *allegro* for, respectively the B and C sections, with A being implicitly on the quick side as well. The echo is realised through the use of *f* and *p* markings. The melody is light and is obscured by a second, sudden, section - another example of studied contrast.

The eighth piece in this large sonata, entitled *Comment Sçavez Vous?* is a perfect finale number with an especially joyful ritornello. It has all the inflections of an angloise (the angloise in D of the sonata no 13 is quite similar) even though it is listed as a *Bourrée* in two other manuscripts, as noted previously. While the Warsaw versions are quite close to that of the London ms, the Haslemere variant is somewhat different, though nonetheless attractive. The Buenos Aires version, on the other hand, appears to have been quickly transcribed, possibly in a careless manner, or, equally plausibly, from memory. (There are some basses not indicated, for example.) With its charming whistling melody, this concluding movement is quite a delightful gem, not unlike Couperin's *Les baricades mystérieuses*, which uses also an antecedent/consequent thematic construction. A small mystery is only elucidated when the piece is actually played. Whilst trying to account for the apparent absurdity of the title, I became aware that there was a hidden theme in the bass line - most particularly the melody of *Frere Jacques* ! (already present, noticeably, in the 'bells section' of the Marche). As an added bonus, the upper voice is evocative of the 'ringing morning bells'. This explains my decision to use this celebrated nursery melody to make a bridge before a full repeat, the logic of this choice being justified by the resultant similarity of the melodies. It is amusing to speculate that Weiss may have anticipated this discovery by his future listening audience who might well ask him "This tune, it reminds me of something, could it be Frere Jacques?" to which he might conceivably respond "Comment savez-vous?" (How do you know?).

### *Sonata no 21 in C minor (S-C 27)*

This sonata can also be found in the Dresden and Salzburg manuscripts, without the prelude, which is found here in Weiss's autograph. The sarabande is also missing in the Salzburg ms, replaced by another one. This version has two supplementary movements added to it. The gavotte and rigadon can also be found in the Munich ms. The seventh and eighth movements are, in reality, two constituent parts of a larger whole, a situation similar to that found in the solo sonata no 17, S-C23.



In his meticulous description of C minor, Mattheson states that "*the tone is charming though rife with sadness. This first quality is nonetheless always dominant. Unless the work requires a more soporific interpretation, it would not be inappropriate to play it in a lively manner.*" Other C minor works contained in the London Manuscript include a fantasia and the fifth sonata, S-C7. A confident liveliness is declared by all three works, but only the sonata no 21 seems to be imbued with more charm than solemnity.

Indeed, even the *Praelude*, which is in the same improvisatory spirit as the analogous movement in the sonata no 20, is characterised by a pointedly dramatic discourse. A rising wave of arpeggios is presented, one which begins in the most sombre of moods, rising steadily towards the light, seemingly questioning life itself. The strong quill of Weiss, imposing and impressive to the eye, is mirrored in the flame of musical expression, revealing the full volcanic temperament of the genius at work. This prelude is unmeasured except, curiously enough, for one bar. At the beginning, it would appear that the composer wished to show the desired accentuation for the two initial arpeggios that surround an endearingly exclamatory seventh chord. If inclined to seek thematic associations, one can hear the beginning of the famous Bach bourree from the first lute sonata (BWV 996), outlined at the end of the prelude.

As is the case with the Salzburg ms, the *Allemande* is sub-titled *andante*. It is possible to feel, exactly as stated by Mattheson, that the inherent sadness of the tonality is carried away by the more charming aspects of the musical discourse; always present but at a lower level of importance. This remains true of all following movements – an aura of sadness is lightened by fluid, serene melodic tunes. The ‘notes inegales’ approach is the required procedure for performance of this attractive *Gavotte*, reminiscent as it is of the 17th century French lute style. Confirmation of the composer’s intentions in this regard could be found in the usage of ties from weak beats to strong in certain measures. After comparing sources, one notes that for performance the Dresden version can be chosen for one measure of the principal theme due to a special richness of harmonic treatment. Aside from a few of these isolated moments, which seem to be born of a desire to improve the product (as will be seen in the allemande of *The Celebrated Pirate*), the overall impression remains that the London ms is the most carefully worked out of all versions, including the Dresden, especially at the level of harmonic detail and instrumental liaisons.

The *Rondeau*, which is evocative of certain Lully and Montclair melodies, is structurally identical to the rondeau of sonata no 20, containing three sections with *Da Capo* repetitions of the theme. Here again we encounter the notion of melancholia being surpassed by musical charm. The audacious rhythmic leaps of the bass voice in the second part are noteworthy. A Weiss sarabande truly requires a high degree of reflective thought. From this rough outline, the performer is invited to cautiously bring forth a musical fruition. One is required to elucidate a coherent, eloquent musical discourse within the constraints of a deeply meditative atmosphere, a process which leads ultimately to the hidden truth revealed by correct accentuation and imaginative ornamentation. Indicated here as *Sarabanda*, the piece is in the relative major of C minor, E flat major, which Mattheson describes as "*corresponding well with serious subjects, favouring an expression of pathos*", a remarkably accurate summation. Moreover, this sarabande provides an excellent vehicle for the expression of beautiful colourings, notably during the recurrent middle register theme with its interval of the major seventh on a dominant pedal. This is all presented, of course, with a

certain appropriateness of *balancement*. This theme stirs the poetic imagination, with the passage of time seemingly arrested by the repetitious fraying of melodic cells. The Sarabandes reveal the musically contemplative aspect of Weiss's character.

Certain writing techniques found in this C minor sonata, particularly in the sarabande and *La belle Tiroloise*, are similar to those found in sonatas nos 22 and 23, giving fairly convincing evidence, in my opinion, of chronological closeness, matching the textual proximity of the works as found in the manuscript. The feverish *Menuet* stands out from the other movements with its wilful, even obstinate musical phrases while maintaining a 'hummable' lyricism that is easily retained in the memory of the listener. As mentioned earlier, the *Riguadon* and *La belle Tiroloise* form part of a larger unit, the latter being, for all practical purposes a second rigadon, with a clear *Da Capo* indication for the first. This dance movement is closely related to the gavotte, through similar accentuation and leaping motion and appears for the first time in the London Manuscript, although another variant appears in the Salzburg ms with a different spelling, *Rigedon* to be precise. (Dresden and Munich manuscripts list it as *Rigaudon*). Our *Tiroloise* is listed as an *Angloise* in the Dresden and Salzburg ms, a bit surprising considering the rhythmic  motif which substitutes for the more typical  of the *angloise*. The title is quite appropriate, however, since the numerous trills and double mordents call to mind the Tyrolian yodel, accompanied in this case with an 'alpine bagpipe' in the form of a bass pedal note. The nature of the theme necessitated a more elaborate first section than that usually found in this type of composition.

### *Sonata no 22 in F major "Le Fameux Corsaire" (The celebrated Pirate) (S-C 28)*

Of the more than ninety sonatas known to have been composed by Weiss, only *The Infidel* and no 22 were given poetic titles. As suggested by Douglas Alton Smith, the pirate in question was, in all probability, Blackbeard (Edward Teach), whose life and spectacular death in 1718 were subject to intense journalistic coverage during the lifetime of Weiss. Another candidate would have been René Duguay-Trouin, a privateer of the same period who excelled in swashbuckling bravado of the same sort.


Noblesse and ease are the sentiments used to describe F major, clearly one of Weiss's favourite keys. These descriptors apply equally to the previous sonatas nos 1 and 14. *Le Fameux Corsaire* exists in completed form in two manuscripts, the London ms and the Dresden ms. Both versions have certain melodic or rhythmic improvements, with the widest discrepancies occurring in the bourree and minuet, pieces which can also be found in the Vienna ms, written in the composer's hand. The presto is known as an *Allegro* in the Moscow manuscript.

The *Allemande* poses a curious problem in that the notes of the second and third bars are notated in Dresden at double the speed of their London ms equivalents. Relying on the musical evidence, this would seem to be the result of compositional fine-tuning and not simply a copying error since the measures in question have a much better flow than in the London version. The initial version could have seemed slow and unbalanced with respect to larger rhythmic considerations. This is by no means an isolated example of a Weissian touch-up. There are examples of passages being re-worked in the same manuscript, as in the minuet of this sonata where the London manuscript shows two adjustments in Weiss's handwriting. Equally, one notes slight changes from one manuscript to another. One possible explanation

for the differences between the measures in question is that at the time of writing the London version Weiss would have been performing in ‘notes inégales’ with its attendant slowing down effect while, conversely, the Dresden version could have been produced during a period when his performance of the work relied on the inevitably faster technique of ‘notes égales’. This supposition can be made only in the light of performance practice.

The allemande is a veritable elegy, extremely contemplative by design, delighting the ear with the grace of its serene majesty. Contrary to custom, the repeats could not be observed in my performances. This is based on the perception that the work serves as a calm prelude to the sonata, preparing the listener for the energetic brilliance of the subsequent courante. Indeed there is no overture preceding the allemande. The first section seems abnormally short and, moreover, the whole piece is made of through-composed melodic lines. These three factors tend to obviate the need for literal repetition.

The *Courrante* seems to relate the epic of the famous pirate through long undulating phrases, possibly intended to suggest the movement of ocean waves. There are some clever hemiolas in addition to cadential sections which are heard with octave doublings, a colouristic device that would become a pianistic cliché in the latter part of the 18th century. The *Bouree* is also characterised by melodic wave motion, sometimes initiated by the bass voice. Again, in keeping with a certain propensity to seek thematic associations, it is worth noting that the aforementioned bass melody can be found in the C minor fugue of the first book of the Well-Tempered Clavier by Bach. The order of composition would have been Weiss:1720(?), Bach:1722.

A dark shadow permeates the discourse with the arrival of the *Sarabande*, presented in the relative minor. Delightful triplet figures contribute a languorous (Mattheson would have said ‘pious’) allure, mainly due to accurate placement, in alternation with the neighbouring  rhythmic motif. This is followed by a *Menuet* of the most discrete kind. Further proof, if needed, for the over-arching thematic unity of the sonata can be found in the first two bars of the minuet which are identical to the opening of the allemande (notwithstanding a bit of rhythmic camouflage). The Dresden and Vienna manuscripts provide a gift in the form of an addendum with written ornamentation for the four closing bars. An excellent example of grace notes through diminutions is offered in the process, including a harmonic interpolation under the primary melodic line; a precious specimen for an interpreter.

The final *Presto*, titled *Allegro* in the Moscow ms is played more or less as such in my concerts, that is to say, without undue haste. Adorned by long phrases, the movement reacquaints the listener with an atmosphere of joyful exhilaration. The initial theme could have been adapted from the well-known hornpipe



The hornpipe, by definition a seaman’s song, provides an extra level of association with the title of the sonata.



*Sonata no 23 in A minor " L'infidèle " (The Infidel) (S-C 29)*

Considered by non-specialists and members of the guitar/lute fraternity alike to be one of the most appealing of Weiss's creations, *L'infidèle* provided one primary impetus for my conversion to the lute. Eugen M. Dombois, with his profoundly magnificent 1971-1972 recording of this sonata, was to convince many guitarists of the stunning expressive capabilities of the Baroque lute, and is responsible for their divorce from the modern guitar.

The colourful title of the work can be best explained by the occasional presence of surprising 'oriental' intervals, most notably at the beginning of the minuet. The parallel between musical treatments that were 'unfaithful' to conventional harmonic rules, and the usage of the same term to describe Muslims who were reluctant to embrace Christianity must be understood in the context of 1683 when the Turkish advance through Europe was arrested at the gates of Vienna. The leader of the successful Christian forces was Johann III, King of Poland whose successors were to rule Dresden during Weiss's lifetime, since Saxony and Poland were under the same crown. It is interesting to note also that Weiss was in the service of the Polish royal family during his stay in Rome.

A minor was seen to be "*a tonality that could produce majestic and serious affect, so much so that it could turn to flattery. By nature it is well-measured, plaintive yet honest and relaxed. It beckons sleep and can be used to stir the soul in various manners. It is, in other words sweet, even mellow*". The extraordinary accuracy of this description becomes immediately apparent upon performance of this 23rd sonata. As is the case with the two preceding sonatas, this one also can be found in the Dresden ms, though the *Musette* and *Sarabande* appear in inverse order. Both versions are from the hand of a copyist. Only the minuet can be found in still further sources, the two Warsaw copies, to be precise.

As in *The Celebrated Pirate*, the first movement, the *Entrée*, fulfils the function of overture, though in a dynamic, grandiose fashion, possibly bringing to mind the glory of the previously mentioned King Johann Sobieski. Unlike the *allemande* of Sonata no 22, it becomes clearly evident that in the case of this *Entrée*, the repeats are necessary. The *courante* (*Cour:* ) mixes nostalgia with liveliness while offering completely original compositional techniques, the best examples of which can be found in the elaborate cadences at the ends of both sections. It comes as a bit of a surprise to hear the *Love Story* theme 250 years ahead of its time!

The *Sarabande* seems to symbolise the implacable progress of destiny. The unique musical atmosphere lends itself nicely to the presentation of lute music at a slow tempo. The *Menuet* is also idiosyncratically 'lutish' in its skilful use of *campanellas*, where most of the notes are distributed one per string. The resultant shimmering texture fully exploits the inherent richness of the late Baroque lute. More so than in the other movements, the *Musette* seems to speak directly, revealing hidden layers of meaning by times deeply poetic, giving vent to the alternation between tender phrases and those of a more bellicose nature, the latter serving to remind us of the title of the sonata. It is curious to note that the *musette* is the only work in the sonata to make use of the two last courses. It is possible that the sonata was originally composed without the *musette*, for the eleven course instrument, only to be revised at a later date, after Weiss had preceded his contemporaries in adopting the thirteen course lute. One could even surmise that he chose to honour his newly found instrument by

composing a piece to celebrate the novelty of the low A! Though the Dresden ms offers a reworking of the other movements with a view to full utilisation of the thirteen course lute, the London version has proven to me to be equally pleasing to perform, the sonic equilibrium being quite correct in all respects. Similarly, the melodic and rhythmic variations found in the Dresden musette do not constitute a marked improvement, with the exception of one measure which seems to have fallen victim to a copying error in the London ms. The *Paysane* retains the omnipresent majesty of the sonata, providing in addition, an engaging dance feel; an heroically victorious conclusion to the work.


### *Sonata no 24 in E flat major (S-C 30)*

This sonata is more inclined toward the character of its tonality as described by Mattheson than is the sixth sonata, S-C10, which shares the same key. This work, which has more of a serious, austere aura than the earlier sonata, also exists in the Dresden version with a different prelude and the addition of the courante of sonata S-C10. In London, the typical unmeasured prelude has been obviously added afterwards since it takes up the space left by the allemande's second page. (See the General context about the preludes). It should be noted that from this point onward, to the end of the manuscript, almost all the pages are in the hand of the same copyist, a person whose work is more frequently encountered throughout the entire London manuscript than that of any of the other five copyists that have been identified. He does make slight alterations in calligraphic style during the course of the last three sonatas. Whether this was done for effect or was simply as a result of the passage of time between copies is a question open to conjecture.

Though the *Prelude* is quite free, it is nevertheless important to make a clear distinction between the quavers and semi-quavers. As is the case elsewhere, it is apparent that Weiss was seeking irregular accents and phrase lengths, ingredients that give an interesting flavour to a work of this type. The composer takes great pleasure in delaying a contrapuntal resolution in one voice whilst simultaneously providing proper cadential closure in another. All of this gives an interesting dislocation of phrase lengths and harmonic rhythm. This subtle textural device confirms yet again the exacting, confident character of the composer. One can also find an example of a case where the harmonic restrictions of the instrument are turned to the advantage of the composer when the contra A natural bass (which is compulsory because it is an open string) is used instead of the expected A flat. The composer wins the gamble since the effect moves from that of an unexpected curiosity to a familiar treatment through frequent usage during the sonata.

The *Allemande* is replete with scattered right hand fingerings and difficult left hand material. It begins on the down beat rather than on the pick-up, which makes it a bit unusual in that it shares this feature with only one other allemande in the entire manuscript (the allemande of sonata 25). Moments of mystical fervour are encountered in the second part of this piece. The *Rigaudon* affirms a very accented character while the rhythm



tenaciously sustains some lively melodic lines. The sign  appears on two occasions indicating a vibrato. The sarabande (*Sarab:*), though similar to others in the volume, has a unique musical personality due to certain harmonic progressions. The artistic control necessary for the interpretation of complex sonorities hidden within tablature notation is put to the test during a passage in the second part of the piece. A bass pedal can remain under a trill that occurs on the following

beat, the effect of which enriches the musical discourse in a very dramatic fashion. This sonority is unrealisable on anything other than the original instrument. When the same sequence appears in the very next modulating measure however, it becomes quite apparent that the previous technique would be inappropriate since the resultant sound would be unbalanced in this context.

The *Gavotte* contains much of the same confidence of the rigadon. Of graceful character, it presents a rhythmic pulsation and a motif of descending basses which is similar to that of the rigadon of the twenty-first sonata in C minor (and not similar to the gavotte of this same sonata no 21). As a result, their titles are actually interchangeable. The elegant *Menuet*, which is stately but somewhat precious, is evocative of the movements of court dancers. The performance difficulty of this movement lies in the search for a clean but not rigid playing style. As elsewhere, the guiding principle behind each phrase should be in the emulation of natural singing.

The heading *Le Sans Soucie* seems to refer to the Sans Souci palace near Berlin, but this was constructed at least twenty years after the composition. The reference would exist only if the title was to be added later. Nevertheless, Weiss visited for sure in 1728 the king Frederick II of Prussia, a man who valued French culture as much as music, who invited prominent intellectuals like Voltaire to visit him in the aforementioned palace. Noted for his word play and clever wit Frederick wrote an enigmatic message to Voltaire:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{—p—} & & \text{—si—} \\ \text{venez} & \text{à} & \text{100} \end{array}$$

(meaning: Venez souper à Sans Souci.)

To this Voltaire responded : **G**a (J'ai grand appétit.)

Weiss seems to be anticipating through this delightful work something of the happiness that will infuse his spirit during his visit to Frederick II, himself a flautist, and his sister Wilhelmine, a lutenist and admirer of Weiss. The piece is subtitled *Allegro assai*, but is written in quavers rather than semi-quavers, a notational strategy designed possibly to inhibit an excessively fast performance. One can easily imagine a band of merry-makers in a coach headed for Sans Souci. This also brings to mind the theme and jumping rhythms of the caprice written by J. S. Bach “on the occasion of his brother’s departure”, with its ‘song of the post carriage driver’. This allegro follows the rhythmic model of the paysanne of the preceding sonata. While calling up images of the German countryside and Princess Wilhelmine, the work invites us to consider the irony inherent in the knowledge that Bayreuth, where the princess patronised lutenists successors of Weiss of the stature of Falckenhagen, would at one time celebrate the virtues of the most intimate of instruments, the lute, and, a few decades later, be home to the Wagnerian most excessive of romantic works. It would seem logical to appreciate the complementarity of these opposed musical tendencies, while noting that the composers of music for large resources were also sensitive to the aesthetic demands of more subtle instruments. (Wagner opined that the orchestra was a large guitar; Berlioz composed his operas on the guitar; Bach and Monteverdi used the lute or theorbo in major orchestral works).

### Sonata no. 25 in F major (S-C 31)

This sonata does not exist in other manuscripts. Variants of the allemande and gigue can be found, nevertheless, in the two first sonatas of the Dresden manuscript. The gigue of the Dresden ms contains a surprising mixture of identical measures and measures that differ in the first part, the second part being quite different after eight bars. In disagreement with D.A. Smith, I feel that this sonata is quite unified and that the bourree placed after the gigue is not really a Bourree II, rather an isolated work. This is due to lack of continuity with the preceding bourree. The dissimilarity is heightened by the difference in speed and by the inability to logically connect the bourrees in a I-II-I structural alignment.

Again, the spirit of F major suits this sonata very well. The *Allemande* is highly reminiscent of the other F major allemandes found in the volume, the only possible exception being the one contained in *The Celebrated Pirate*. This invites speculation as to whether Weiss may have simply written extensively in the idiomatic key of F major before distributing the works among the sonatas of the London manuscript. This tonality is to be found at the beginning, middle, and end of the collection in works that are very similar, betraying a close proximity in their dates of composition. The *Allegro*, which replaces the courante, seems to indicate the possibility that it is in reality a duo, yet it maintains full integrity as a solo work. In this respect, it is similar to the courante of the fourth solo sonata S-C5 in G major. This work does not seem to have been placed gratuitously as a second movement, appearing after the allemande with a duration that does not suggest a concluding movement. It seems to have been deliberately disposed in the manner of a work for lute and flute. This Allegro features a lively discourse between major and minor modes, which will become a typically Mozartean way of proceeding. One also finds at this point two measures that are identical to the middle theme of the allemande of the third 'cello suite by J. S. Bach.

The *Bourée* is as playful as many of the others and it follows quite logically the Allegro by virtue of similar thematic structures. This unity within the sonata is maintained through to the gigue. As is often the case with Weiss (see for example the bourree of the sixth solo sonata) this bourree would appear at first glance to be somewhat mediocre, lacking imagination. There are even those who believe the piece to be the work of another author. Usually this opinion is hastily formed through an initial sight-reading session. After repeated performance at the proper tempo the bourree comes alive with a simple though rich and balanced texture. It must be stated that the forward motion of Weiss's phrases, to say nothing of accent distribution and harmonic subtleties will remain obscure to those who have not attained a certain technical virtuosity. At a certain point one becomes aware of an essential distinguishing characteristic between the music of Bach (surely a reference point for all discussions on Western art music) and that of Weiss. Whereas the music of Bach remains inherently logical regardless of tempo, one must intuitively grasp the musical pulse of a piece by Weiss. This is also true in the case of Vivaldi, although in his case it was easier to discern about five decades ago. This accessibility of understanding could explain in part the general preference for the music of Bach. Musicologists should develop on this comparative study since Weiss must be understood not only from the perspective of his instrumental writing, but also from the standpoint of his compositional method.

To return to the bourree in question, misunderstandings occur even in what could appear to be errors of notation. (This is typical of certain contemporary editors of guitar

music.) Once again, a proper performance at the correct tempo with proper accentuation and intonation reveals the bourree to be completely balanced and error-free. Resplendent with beautiful rising arabesques, the bourree is also characterised by an interplay of accented tones erupting in three successive voices, surely a Weissian subtlety of the highest order:



A staccato technique becomes even more important here than in the case of the Allegro, with certain notes requiring an extremely detached technique. This piece also suggests the possibility of repeated sections entirely in the style of the *doubles*. The two minuets are also of more interesting character than what would appear to be the case on first encounter. The notion of thematic unity in the sonata is reinforced through the use of motifs that are found in the bourree, though a sarabande is conspicuous by its absence. The *Menuet 2do* (secundo), presented in the relative minor, seems to be a replacement for the sarabande, having as it does, almost twice as many measures as the first *Menuet*. This points to another possible difference between the music of Bach and Weiss. In the developments of the second section the Weissian approach seems to have as much melancholy but less Lutheran austerity than is the case with Bach. Astonishing modulations follow one another, within phrases that meander mysteriously, breaking off in full development. There is nevertheless a very real sense that the musical gestures are cohesive, strong in both the poetic and structural senses of the word. The *Gigue* is in ternary metre, giving a sprightly motoric rhythm with beautiful singing bass lines occurring in a hopping rhythm.

### *Sonata no. 26 in F major (S-C 32)*

This is the last solo sonata, found in the very last pages of the London Manuscript. Nine individual works can be found between Sonatas 25 and 26 (Please refer to the table of titles in the General Context) some of which show considerable maturity. Sonata no 26, which exemplifies the tonality of F major to the same extent as did the preceding sonata, is also contained in its entirety in both the Dresden and Wroclaw manuscripts. The gigue exists in the Podebrady ms though the Dresden copy has a different gigue. In London the second minuet is not present in the sonata but squeezed between sonatas 18 and 19, 70 pages away. Why is that for? It might have been composed separately and added later. This relationship seems to have been forgotten in the critical commentary of the Peters edition, and our first impression is to believe that this menuet is not in London. In the Wroclaw version, this sonata has the title *Parthie a liuto solo Sigre Silvio Leopold Weifs 1739* (to the best of our ability to decipher it given the poor condition of the microfilm and/or manuscript). It is possible that the year in question could be 1729 or 1719. Different versions of the same piece provide an opportunity not only to analyse a variety of fingering possibilities but also to choose between different approaches. This fascinating variety of sources offers an interesting basis for comparison despite the occurrence of errors in these complementary texts.

The *Allemande* follows the model of its equivalent piece in the first sonata. In fact the same could be said of both sonatas in their entirety. We find the same compositional style and tonality at the end of the London Manuscript (Sonata no 26) as we did at the beginning

(Sonata no 1) and middle (Sonata no 14, S-C19). This is further proof that the composer was thinking in terms of a homogeneous whole, representative of his first period, even if certain works already show the finesse found in the later large sonatas (the last 14 of the 20 Dresden Manuscript originals). The deliberate homogeneity is such that the first measure of the last sonata is exactly the same as that of the allemande from sonata no 1 ! Because the Dresden and Wroclaw copies do not have this identical departure, I feel it wise to borrow the beginning as found in these manuscripts to better differentiate this allemande, which is, admittedly, quite different afterward. There is nevertheless more than a passing familial resemblance between the allemandes of sonatas nos. 1, 14, 25 and 26. This could also be said of the courante (*Cour:* ), which has the same style, rhythm, harmonic progression and voice play as that of the first sonata. This courante has a unique lightness that carries us with verve through an uplifting sequential organisation, the like of which can be found possibly only in the courante of the eighth sonata S-C12. The listener is treated to a triumphant theme with majestic bass leaps, in addition to another theme in the first part that reminds us of the Gloria in Excelcis Deo melody in *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*.

The *Bouree*, as well-constructed as all the other Weiss bourrées, is surprising in that the first theme bears a strong resemblance to that of the presto in *The Celebrated Pirate*. More bass tones, or rather, the repetition of bass tones, are to be found in the Wroclaw version. This invites speculation as to whether the owner may have been using old or less resonant strings on his lute. There are, however, almost no slur indications in the Wroclaw version. The *Sarabande* is extremely intense, with long breathing phrases, delicately linked one to the other. As with the other movements in the sonata, the sarabande was more carefully edited in the London manuscript, showing very sophisticated fingering and slurring indications. This is quite clear even from the beginning of the piece.

As with the Sarabande, the Wroclaw first *Menuet* appears to have been quickly edited, with many inconvenient fingerings. The work offers an example of interpretation through alternation between ‘notes egales and notes inegales’, with all decisions being based on the quest for natural phrase expression. The second *Menuet* (from p.242) is full of elegant gracefulness and adequately reinforces the first minuet. Curiously enough, the Wroclaw version is clearly superior to the Dresden. These discrepancies between manuscripts provide further impetus for carefully researching all sources when embarking upon a project of this kind. As a general rule, the Dresden appears to be more meticulously edited than all other sources, with the exception of the London ms, of course. The unity of the sonata is maintained in the second minuet through the use of motifs built on thirds, motifs that are present in the bourree. In any case, the left hand configurations and the modulations in the second part provide ample evidence, in our view, that this minuet was composed by Weiss. It comes as a delight to hear the ubiquitously Baroque descending fourth bass progression (think of the Pachelbel canon) at the beginning of the piece.

The *Gigue* confirms our opinion that there was an intentional desire to solidly conclude the London Manuscript in a style similar to the beginning. The giges of sonatas S-C1 and S-C32 have in common the same number of bars, plus the same octave progressions at the ends of sections. The work was either written at the same time as the first sonata or reworked at a later date to provide the essential homogeneity between the two, the mordents being a possible indication of the latter scenario. In effect, mordents are indicated more frequently in later works. Regarding the slurs, some can be borrowed profitably from the

Podebrady ms. However, as is usually the case, many inexact renderings (missing bass notes, copying errors, etc.) are to be found in all of the versions other than the London and Dresden manuscripts.

## 35 individual pieces

Even though they are not indicated as such, the two minuets in F ([Menuet \(p.11\)](#) (13) and [Men: p.12](#) (14)) can be joined quite logically as Minuet I and Minuet II, which lead quite naturally to the *Da capo* of the first one. This would appear to be the reason why they were placed together. They are considered by Smith and Crawford as movements that could belong to the neighbouring first sonata, albeit as substitute movements for the minuet found therein. The second one appears as the only minuet of the same sonata found in three copies of the Warsaw Manuscript. Markus Lutz points out that the first fifteen bars of the Minuet I are the same as those found in the minuet, in B flat, of the duo sonata S-C14 in g minor (both of which exist only in the London Manuscript). Everything changes after these initial fifteen measures. There was indeed an adaptation, but was it from the departure point of a solo or duo work? I would hazard that we have here a non stop discourse typical of a solo work, but one that reveals also a supplementary proof of the solo/ensemble flexibility often encountered within the work of Weiss. This modular approach to musical function can be seen in even the earliest of Baroque lutenists. Consider, for example, Ennemond Gautier and his pieces like the allemande entitled *Testament de Mézangeau* which is also, by the composer's own admission, to be found as a gigue, arrived at through a simple rhythmic re-organisation. The three Warsaw versions of the second minuet are for a lute with thirteen courses, while the London equivalent, written in the composer's hand, is for an eleven-course lute. If it is worthwhile borrowing certain basses from the thirteen-course version, certain cadences are more minutely tooled in the eleven-course example. A sign, which seems to be a grupetto, appears just before the ending of this second movement. The grupetto can be easily confirmed as being the correct interpretation due to the ease with which it falls under the fingers. I find it pertinent to note that the demands of the tablature notation would lead us to suppose that Weiss had thin, elongated fingers.

The [Gavotte \(p.13\)](#)(11) in F, another possible movement for the first sonata, could give the impression that it is a duo, but I have my doubts. The repetition of a seemingly unique motive does not necessarily indicate any melodic lacuna, or the necessity of another voice, as witness the numerous Scarlatti sonatas thusly constructed; sonatas that do not require extra material. In fact, this piece solicits a certain attachment due to its inherent simplicity, as do the pieces composed by Bach for Anna Magdalena. As was the case in the second minuet, the repeat points and the letter *R* are quite clearly presented during the three last measures of the end of the piece, measures that are incidentally, redolent with charm. This gavotte presents us with a typically Wessian challenge for the left hand. It seems by times to be a legato study that involves a systematic anticipatory movement of the left elbow. This piece does not appear in any other manuscript.

The [Gavotte and Double \(p.22\)](#) in D major (no other source, and there is actually no title here) belongs, theoretically speaking, to the second sonata but its appearance after the gigue gives the impression of an isolated work or possibly a substitute for the bourree. Its rustic allure is not unpleasant and seems to act as an antidote – I'm sure it was the composer's intention - to numerous more serious pieces in this book. As with the preceding gavotte, I find no evidence of

weakness of writing, nor do I discern a hidden duo. Since no title appears in the manuscript, I feel that we may as well name it an angloise, given the predominant ascending line.

Of the following four pieces in B flat, two are movements of the incomplete S-C4 sonata, this sonata being complete in the Dresden manuscript. The missing movements in London are the minuet and the gavotte, and Dresden bears a different prelude. Another discrepancy is that the Dresden bourree is a sufficiently expanded variant of the London one to make it an independent piece. This leaves us with only two common pieces: the overture and the courante. Since there are in London four pieces in C and four pieces in D (towards the end of the manuscript) that seem also to be incomplete sonatas, one could wonder why these groupings are not considered as well sonatas in their own right. Nevertheless, D.A.Smith chose not to call sonata the pieces in C and those in D but he did for these problematic pieces in B flat, probably to establish a concordance with Dresden. With only two real concordant movements, I have chosen personally to identify in my analysis the S-C4 pieces like the C major and the D major pieces, that is, as individual pieces. I would have also stretched things for my recording by including the two missing pieces whilst omitting, of necessity, one of the two preludes. For a performer, it would seem awkward to record "entirely" a London sonata coming from Dresden and skip it in a recording of Dresden, including only orphaned movements of an actual complete sonata. Influenced by this logical necessity and as my intention was to remain as faithful as possible to the originals, I have decided to refrain from changing the presentation of the London version (See the introduction of *The London Manuscript unveiled*, part I, LSA Quarterly, Volume 32, N°2, may 1997).

The [Prélude \(p.33\)](#) (no other source) proclaims a proud magnificence and an energy that portends greater development in the two following movements. Indeed the [Ouverture \(p.34\)](#) shines with orchestral colours in the style of Haendel or Telemann with the principle theme in the basses that evokes a bassoon timbre. In this typical slow-fast-slow pattern, the *Allegro* is characterised by a lively fugue theme. In the Dresden version, the first part and the allegro both have repeat indications. As mentioned before, we can explain these as being optional in the spirit of an anticipated "encore" rather than in the usual systematic context.

The courante ([Cour: p.36](#)) begins in a manner similar to the one of the *Celebrated Pirate*, though the melodic line is inverted. The full maturity of the composer is revealed in this work. The thematic equilibrium is not at all disturbed by the long chain of phrases. Some left-hand fingerings are indicated finely in the tablature. It should be noted that from the prelude onwards, in London, the twelfth and thirteenth courses are not used, which leads to the supposition that the intended instrument was originally the eleven-course model. On the other hand, it is because of the courante and overture, which provide also an excellent pretext for an instrumental colour change, that we have decided to use a standard lute for this recording, and not the elongated theorbo lute. Both pieces have a chromatic bass line playable only on a standard model, which has a wider fingerboard. This instrumentation was then necessary for some works in Volumes 4, 5, 6 and 10 of our recording series. Nevertheless, there are only nine pieces in the London Manuscript that require a standard lute, so I feel I should mention them as follows. Two of them (indicated by an asterisk) could even have their chromatic bass or phrase section taken up the octave without adversely affecting the music. These include : the overture and courante in B flat (S-C4), the allemande\* in c minor (S-C7), the allemande and gigue in B flat (S-C15), the prelude\* in d minor (S-C20), the allemande and sarabande in f minor (S-C21) and the fugue in G (S-C22).



The [Bouree \(p.39\)](#) can also be found, in a simplified version, in the Podebrady manuscript. The spellings are *Bouree* (London), *Bourée* (Dresden) and *Burè* (Podebrady). The Dresden version is very different, with more arpeggios and repeated melodic cells, but I have chosen to resist any inclinations to mix versions in my recording. It does seem that coherence suffers and that it would be better to choose the version that one prefers, adding ornaments where necessary.

The [Allegro \(p.38\)](#) in G major (which, along with the following courante is found only in London) is situated in the manuscript between the courante and the bourree in B flat. It seems certain that it was added later and only because the empty page could contain it. We have, as a result, switched the bourree and the allegro in this presentation. One questions whether the allegro might be the work of another composer, though typically Weissian writing and fingering techniques can be found. (Note the melodic dialogues that bring to mind the gavotte of the sonata S-C27). A title such as paysanne or gavotte would indeed seem appropriate. On the other hand, the abundant use of the two bottom courses, to the point of sonic confusion, seems to be atypical of Weiss. Could this be the work, as the minuet p.136, of his brother? Another ambiguity surfaces in that I was quite convinced that the piece was a duo, but it has enough active melodic bass usage to make it seem equally plausible as a solo work. Could this be a solo that has been re-worked into a duo, or the inverse? Could it, in the final analysis, be both a solo *and* duo? It seems possible.

The same doubts surround the [Courente Royale \(p.40\)](#), which was transcribed by the same later copyist, but to a much lesser degree since there are few opportunities for the addition of another voice. If it wasn't composed by Weiss, it was composed by a student/disciple who was striving to use all of the idiomatic formulae of the master. In actual fact, the piece re-utilises not only the arpeggios, but also the motifs of the courante of sonata S-C11, those of the *Celebrated Pirate*, the allegro of the sonata S-C22 in addition to a motif of the allegro of sonata S-C35 (Dresden).

My omission of the d minor bourree of page 78 was precipitated by the fact that it is exactly the same as the one found in the ninth solo sonata. It should be acknowledged, however, that we have here a beautiful example of repetitions that were all written down by the composer. In proceeding to the [Prelude \(p.80\)](#) in E flat, we find another piece that exists in one unique version; a work that belongs to the sixth solo sonata but was not recorded due to a decision to use a substitute prelude (a short work added to the free space on the second page). The reason for this editorial decision is that I preferred to record the more imposing of the two as an individual work, rather than the other way around. The repeat marks are found yet again at the end of the piece, though we have an example of an improvised work! The idea of optional repeat is quite applicable here also, because of the density of the work. The opening pool of tenderness becomes transformed, little by little into an occasionally furious exaltation of energy. One senses a vagabond spirit that is somehow full of assurance. The prelude can be seen as a musical representation of the encounter between Weiss and his wife as described by Marpurg in his book of savoury anecdotes concerning the social elite of his time. Leopold goes for a walk on a bright Sunday and sees passing in front of him a female beauty that transports him, giving him the eloquence necessary to convince her to accompany him to the park. He then succeeded in meeting her parents, who, in the face of such exuberance consented that very day to the marriage of Weiss and their daughter. The story ends - and the prelude seems to echo this conclusion - with the words "and they lived one of the most beautiful unions the world has known." This prelude

brings to mind various moments from those of the ninth (S-C13) and twentieth (S-C26) solo sonatas.

The [Minuet \(p.92\)](#) in G, another untitled piece unique to the London ms, seems upon first reading to be the continuation of the Royal Courante. It uses the same abundance of thematic unisons and is in the calligraphy of the same copyist. It could be heard initially as a courante but the frequency of bass usage and the accented notes lead to the conclusion that it is most assuredly a minuet. It would be difficult to affirm that this work is not a Weiss piece, although strong suspicions are raised by those numerous heavy basses, not in his style at all. It would not, on the other hand, come as a surprise to learn that it had also existed in a parallel duo format.

The [Fuga \(p.118\)](#) in C major and the [Fuga \(p.130\)](#) in d minor represent two singularly grand moments in the London Manuscript. Each is of perfect fabrication and each has an individual psychological aura. The first conquers through serenity and the second is characterised by a sombre enraged energy. It is this latter fugue which resembles the writing of Bach, with a beginning similar to one of the Cantor fugues. Wenzel Pichel (1741-1804) also wrote a fugue for solo violin using this same theme. These two fugues are not found in any other manuscript although variant of the fugue in d minor can be found in the Buenos Aires ms but it would seem to be of less rigorous compositional technique, even if both display equal aesthetic merit. The fugue in C (which also has repeat marks at the end) has a martial rhythm tainted with harmonic tenderness whereas the d minor fugue wallows in the tension of acidic intervallic juxtapositions. The first fugue, which is more technically challenging because of the left hand leaps, is light and aerial while the second is dense and heavy. This second has one, and only one, right hand fingering indication. The composer asks, in a touching detail, that a note be played very precisely with the middle finger, presumably to get the best colour possible. The fugue in d minor begins in the middle of a page, the top half of which is empty. It must be supposed that Weiss left part of the page blank on purpose, with the intention of adding a prelude at a later date; but this half page remains unfinished for posterity.

[L'Amant Malheureux \(p.132\)](#) (*The Unfortunate Lover*) can also be found in the Paris ms and has inspired other Germanic composers such as Pachelbel with his *L'Amant Malcontent*. This famous composition was not written by Weiss, rather by the important and influential Jacques Gallot, and entitled *Le Vieux Gallot* (Vaudry de Saizenay ms). His dates are unknown but his death would have occurred at or around the time of the birth of Weiss. As another example of the influence of Gallot, his *Psyché*, another magnificent work, reminds the listener of the chaconne in g minor, in addition to certain allemandes, by Weiss. It is fascinating to have Weiss's version of this piece with all of its variants and completely ornamented repeats, the performer being relieved of this responsibility for once! This is quite understandable – one would be reluctant to change a single note or inflection found in this ethereal, sacred and mystical song. One can however make good use of the *notes inégales* to enhance the pathos. The elegance of Gallot has been barely modified, but somehow amplified a century after the facts through the skill and respectful intelligence of Weiss. This is a truly magnificent artistic collaboration that transcends the barriers of time. The sonic imagery speaks of tears in the beginning, falling one by one. This is followed by the despair that permeates the spirit, concluding eventually with heavy sighing. Musical intervals were chosen for symbolic force, primary ones being those of the fifth, third and octave. This composition is a true masterpiece of its time, the equal of many better-known 'hit' favourites! The Paris version, in g minor, is correct and meticulous (could it be by a younger

Silvius?) but the London copy, in a minor, with its written repeats, has a certain extra, if ineffable, ingenuity.

The [Fantasie \(p.134\)](#) in c minor, a unique version bearing the inscription *Weiss 1719 à Prague* at the end, was published in e minor for guitar in the 1960's and recorded by Julian Bream. This recording, with its perfect legato interpretation of the Fantasy, along with Logy's Tombeau and the Passacaille in D, was largely instrumental in inciting many novices toward the works of Weiss. It is true that Segovia had previously played a few Weiss pieces in concert, on the guitar, and one should not dismiss easily his influence, even if he was also capable of passing off Manuel Ponce pastiches as those of Weiss. (This, because he couldn't be troubled to adapt other original works, an attitude consistent with his loathing of the lute.) I remember playing the Fantasy on the guitar, stopping at each measure to imagine how this work might sound on the lute. The first half, which is unmeasured, consists of a continuous flow of brilliantly undulating musical phrases. The second, which is metered, presents a fugue subject which rises quickly to an expansive state before returning suddenly to the melodic discourse of the beginning and concluding in a paroxysm of closing chords.

The [Minuet \(p.136\)](#) in B flat is untitled, though the style is quite clear. It is also found in the Warsaw ms with the words *Junior Weiss*, making it a possible composition by Leopold's younger brother, Sigismund. Its lightness breathes of a certain freshness with a late eighteenth-century feel and lets indeed the listener in doubt as being from silvius. It brings Mozart or Haydn to mind and the technique required is somewhat effortless. Nevertheless, the element of doubt surrounding this piece obliges one to reflect on a perceived kinship with the little minuets of Bach, which were composed in the same era, and the musical balance is quite a 'Senior Weiss' one. The [Plainte \(p.137\)](#) is also devoid of title at its heading, though the following information can be found in French at the end : 'A plainte by Mr. Weiss on the generosity of the great Nobility at the cape of good hope, whilst awaiting their promised flotilla of gold : composed on January 11, 1719.' These sentiments can be found in the music, which combines disillusionment with serene meditation in a manner that is philosophical without rancour. Weiss was visiting Vienna with the Saxon court while preparing for the marriage of the inheritors to be held on the twentieth of March. One wonders which of the two courts was held in disdain by Weiss for the failure to provide monetary payment. It is true that the Viennese court had tried to lure him with an incredibly large salary. The plaint is found beside the tenth solo sonata in B flat in which it could replace the sarabande, and is called as a matter of fact a sarabande in the same sonata copied in the Dresden ms that seems to have lost or rejected the London one. Its unique identity is created by long appoggiatura figures at the beginnings of sections. These in turn yield very unusual harmonies since the appoggiaturas remain stronger than their subsequent resolutions. This is but another subtle Weiss's idea...

The [Tombeau \(p.176\)](#) 'on the death of M: Cajetan Baron of Hartig, arrived on the 25 of March 1719. Composed by Silvio Lepold Weiss in Dresden' (written in French) is, like the following second tombeau, one of the high points of the manuscript. It is subtitled *Adagio assai* and the key of e flat minor, with many lowered bass courses, is fabulously apposite, even if it was found to be bizarre (or at the very least unusual) at the time of composition. It is not surprising that Mattheson doesn't provide this key with an *affekt* description, going so far as to exclude it from his list of tonalities. He says of keys that he doesn't describe that "*their effects are little known and must be left to posterity since they are rarely used*". But Weiss was not afraid to outstrip posterity. This key does require the usage of very difficult left hand barrings. I have

chosen to tune a few commas flat in order to advantageously darken the musical climate, which comes as a bit of a surprise after hearing the preceding plaint. This work, which has no other known source, is an homage to Cajetan Christoph Anton Freyherr von Hartig (1686-1719), the youngest of five brothers. His sudden death is related in a Viennese paper : “*Lord at Rückers he died unmarried in Prague at his house by the old castle steps on March 23 at 5:00 in the morning, in the year 1719, of a fall from his horse that occurred the previous day as he was riding home from the Imperial Zoo at Bubenetz. He fell hard on the old castle steps where the wild horse had galloped with him. For several hours until his death he could not speak. He was 33 years of age. He was taken that same evening to Saint Thomas in the cloister of Saint Barbara*”.

Even more so than in the *Amant Malheureux*, and to the same extent as Bach, Weiss provides us with a musical scenario that is charged with detailed symbolic content. My personal interpretation of this scenario is as follows : the first chords bring to mind the trumpets that announce the solemn event. The next chords, heavy and lethargic, suggest agony and are soon superseded by harmonic progressions that seem to recall the life of the deceased. A rising third figure brings to mind the edifying character that he maintained throughout life while the serene passage that closes the first part reminds us of our mortality and conscious submission to the will of destiny. The beginning of the second section suggests a dying breath and the suspended chords over a long pedal evoke the passage of time which confirms our destiny. The thundering which follows shows a revolt in the face of death and the ultimate combat that prevails until extinction (the *ff* chord). The descending melodic line that follows represents resignation. Strong choppy chords signal the arrival of death and the attendant drama of the loss of a loved one. This is accomplished while giving the impression that the final heart pulsations are being emitted. The suspended chords of the penultimate measure would suggest that where rhythm ceases, so also does life cease to exist. The diminished quality of the chords depicts the disintegration of the body that returns to ashes. Finally, the ascending line at the very end could be taken to represent the soul which rises to heaven.

The voluble [Bourree \(p.178\)](#) in C major is also untitled and requires technical versatility. It does not exist in any manuscript other than the London source. The following [Menuet \(p.180\)](#), which is also in C major, can be found as a *Trio* of another minuet of the Warsaw ms. Harmonically thin, it seems deliberately simplified, as though Weiss were writing for his son or a beginner. The structure strongly suggests a duo or other ensemble work, without necessarily excluding any of the charm of a solo piece. Once again, the easily recognisable *Gloria in Excelcisi Deo* theme can be found close to the beginning of the piece. The work contains a fully ornamented repetition of the first section at the bottom of the page.

The [Gavotte \(p.199\)](#) and the Minuet ([Men: \) \(p.199\)](#) in d minor are found beside a sonata in the same tonality, though they clearly do not belong to it, not least because this sonata is one of the two hidden duo-sonatas of the manuscript. The gavotte exists, with supplementary ornamentations, in three different copies in the Warsaw manuscript. Here, the Da Capo reprise is clearly indicated. On the other hand, the *Petite reprise* of the minuet (no other source) was added by myself. The gavotte is rhythmically dynamic and the minuet seems innocuous at first glance, though more character is revealed through deeper acquaintance with the piece. Harmonically speaking, it has a certain kinship with the bourree of the ninth S-C13 solo sonata.

There is now an almost 100 pages jump in the manuscript, with no description of the minuet in F of p.242 which has been previously integrated to the sonata no.26 S-C32. The Prelude and Fugue in E flat is only identified by the term *Praelude* (p.290) (no other source). We note nevertheless an *allegro* indication at the beginning of the fugue. In the heading appear also the words *Del Sig.re Silvio Leopold Weis* with a double-underlined *Parte 10*. This strange nomenclature has not been hitherto discussed by the analysts. (See the General Context).

The beginning of the prelude is imbued with an austere majesty that accurately portrays the character of E flat major. All of a sudden, the discourse becomes rudely interrupted by a series of enigmatic chords, over which has been indicated *adagio* and *einen jeden ein mahl Stoccatto* or, 'each chord once, staccato'. An alternative reading, as put forth by Ruggero Chiesa, would be *F toccato*, as in 'play loudly'. Since *Stoccatto* exists in other sources, and is a synonym that has been corroborated by writings of persons like Leopold Mozart, I would lean favourably toward the first meaning. These hammered chords cede to a descending line marked *presto*, which in turn is followed by arpeggiated arabesques leading to heavy chromatic descending lines (never encountered previously in the work of Weiss! ) that convey an intense feeling of anxiety. This strangeness becomes gradually subsumed in the continuous flow of arpeggios that prepare the serene aerial beginning of the fugue. This light theme is constantly taken up in the bass, which, in the context of this three (occasionally four) voice texture makes it increasingly weighty and pompous. There is a certain flavouring to this fugue, possibly caused by the repeated perfect authentic cadences in the same tonality, that brings Monteverdi to mind. An *Adagio* section terminates the work, in the manner of an overture.

The Minuet (title missing) and Trio (p.292) in G (no other source) represents a special case in the London Manuscript. There is a unanimous body of opinion that claims the work either to be a composition by someone other than Weiss, or, as a best possible alternative, a duo from which the second part is missing. I admit that during my initial readings, I also found the piece to be the work of a less able hand, of limited technical prowess. Once 'in the fingers' however, one realises that the delightful ritornello is anything but monotonous and that what seems to be of simple or incomplete construction is in fact a refined, learned discourse. It would have been an error had the composer included incomplete phrases that would necessitate further development. Weiss has proven time and again that even the tiniest of his pieces are of perfect manufacture. Both pieces have a Da Capo, and the Trio is, in this instance, in g minor. The offbeat theme of the minuet seems to be distantly related to the mediaeval *hoquet*, reminding us also of the simplicity of the *Loure* found in Bach's partita for lute or violin BWV1006a. A noteworthy moment in my recording occurs at the end of the first section where a cadential overlap on the last measure gives the impression of shortening it by one beat. The *Bourée* (p.299) in F (entitled Bourrée II by Smith and Crawford) is characterised by a steady alternation between singing lines and undulating arpeggio passages. Having performed the piece, I now believe that it is of Weiss's construction. I also feel that it is not related to the bourree in the neighbouring sonata in F, if for no other reason than the presence of diametrically opposed tempi in the works in question. This bourree could never attain the same speed as that of sonata S-C31 due to the technical demands placed on the performer, to say nothing of a certain ridiculousness that would be the result of an attempt to play this bourree at the faster tempo. Conversely, the other bourree would fall apart at the tempo of this one, which has neither the theme nor the modulations of a second bourree. If more convincing is required, one has only to compare these works with bourrees, gavottes, and minuets of the *Divertimento à solo/sonata* no 17, S-C23, which are truly complementary. This supports also an idea which I have been developing whilst

systematically performing Weiss, which suggests that in his compositional universe, it makes sense to sub-categorise pieces of the same type according to tempo and sonic thickness.

The [Tombeau \(p.300\)](#) on the death of Mur (*Monseigneur*) Count of Logy arrived 1721. Composed by Silvio Leopold Weifs (written in French) is one of the pearls of the manuscript (no other source). It is in b flat minor and is sub-titled *Adagio*. It was inspired by the Prague Count Jan Antonin Losy (1650–1721), himself an excellent lutenist and composer who was to influence Weiss. Losy was one of the important links in the French lute tradition, which was transmitted to Eastern European composers, Weiss being the supreme example. A supreme example, but by no means the end point in the tradition, since this musical lineage would last up to Scheidler, who lived in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Speaking of the next generations of lutenists, if one looks at the engraving known to be Falckenhagen, with lute in hands, it would appear that his fingers are possibly poised to play the first chord of this particular tombeau by Weiss. This is one of the masterpieces of this artistic genre, regardless of instrumental medium. As with the preceding tombeau (for Baron d'Hartig) this unusual key casts a sombre colour that exaggerates a certain sadness. Slurred phrasings fall onto strong beats, giving an agonising allure to the work, especially in the last section. All of the work devolves to a breathlessly expired ending where melodic lines weaken, deteriorating into dense chords that must be arpeggiated in clusters. At this point the piece, though extremely well thought-out, with each note occupying a precise place in a larger musical constellation, assumes an improvisatory aspect, with audaciously pleasant surprises. The richness found herein is truly unique, and could not have been created by anyone other than S.L.Weiss. Luise Gottsched, speaking in 1760, proclaimed this piece to be of incomparable beauty, even when compared with the other Weissian masterpieces. As was the case with the Tombeau d'Hartig one could, while listening to this piece, imagine a scenario that recounted the life of a person according to the character of the different musical phrases. While acknowledging the influence of Julian Bream, my decision was to avoid doing the repeats. I can also affirm that the defining moment in my lifelong passion for guitar and lute, indeed the primary motivation for my recordings, came through an audition of that magical recording of Julian Bream playing the Tombeau de Logy on a modern guitar in 1965.

The [Prelud: de Weifs \(p.302\)](#) in C (no other source) is in my recording followed directly by the [Fantasie \(p.305\)](#), in C (no other source) which is a logical linking, the fantasy being a large improvisational fresco on the theme of the prelude. In the manuscript, the fantasy is found three pages further on, after the minuet and gavotte, in the same key. We find this prelude to be a lustrous demonstration of the nobility of the theme, a theme that appears as an ineffably pure incantation. In the middle can be found an harmonic progression that recalls the allemande of the third solo sonata in g minor, another moment that is bursting with pathos. The fantasia is, for all practical purposes, a fireworks display, with continuous successions of rising phrases evoking a deliriously passionate musical climate. The highest pitch available on the lute is attained in this fantasy, and I am fairly certain that it is the only time it is called for in the London Manuscript. I agree with most interpretations of the calligraphically blurred notes found in this tablature, as expressed by D.A. Smith in the Peters complete edition.

The [Menuet \(p.303\)](#) in C (no other source), in two voices instead of three, seems to me to be somewhat of an academic exercise – possibly a study, destined maybe for a student? The musical discourse is subtle nevertheless, never descending to the banal, using a delicate working-through of phrases and an excellent breath control between them. It is necessary to add a surplus of ornamentation to this piece, almost like making a reconstruction of the phrases to adequately

re-invigorate the musical discourse. The surprise modulation in the middle of the second part, a luminously expressive moment, serves as a reminder of the composer's modernist tendencies. The *Gavotte* (p.304) in C (no other source) is joyously dance-like. This lightness of spirit seems somewhat at odds with the inscription in French at the end that reads: *Composed in fear at Töplitz, July 12, 1724*. (It is also possible that these words are related to the Fantasy, because a line fragment can be found under the gavotte). It is entirely possible that this expression, which is a germanicism typical of a German writing in French was intended to mean 'in the fear of God', according to Pierre Pénisson, a specialist in 18th century German, in the sense that one commends their spirit to God. Töplitz, which is today known as Teplice, is situated in the Czech Republic, halfway between Prague and Dresden.

After these four pieces in C major, the last four solo pieces are in D major (b minor for the second minuet). As mentioned above, these groupings raise the question as whether they should be considered as sonatas, even partial ones. The fugally themed *Capriccio* (p.306) breathes joy and assurance, an assurance of the kind that beams from the countenance of Weiss as portrayed by Denner. This thematically modulating motif is constantly alternating with graciously arpeggiated sections in an unfurling of triumphant good humour. This type of mood deviates from the more serious side of Weiss, which is usually predominant even in his vigorous bourrees or rapid prestos. The London version is short, although curiously terminating in a long and grandiose cadence. Upon examining the two other sources of the work, contained in the Warsaw manuscript (which are essentially similar), we find that they are not really a variant, but rather an essential complement. The initial part of the Warsaw version is the same as almost all of the London version (except the cadence), while the second half helps enormously to reveal the correct grandeur of its thematic lines, as one can appreciate while playing the work. Indeed, one finds that it is quite possible to join this second half to the London version, slightly before its final cadence. If the splice to the London manuscript is made at the right point (a few notes after it has been left – notes that are included in the Warsaw addition anyway) we will have all of the thematic elements of the London manuscript with the added bonus of a second development. This second development justifies the cadence, which is much too long in the London version. On the other hand, the end of the Warsaw version seems hastily conceived, using two incongruous chords. Things become clearer when it is understood that the London and Warsaw versions were not variants of the same piece, but were intended rather to complete each other, which explains why the author felt no necessity to offer any kind of a cadence in the Warsaw manuscript. I would be willing to wager that Weiss, for evident reasons of equilibrium, elongated his *Capriccio* in the second source, with a view to joining it with the London version in his performances.

The second development in the Warsaw version begins when entering the key of F sharp minor. The best transition for London would then be at measure 44. Nothing needs to be changed in the music except maybe by adding two accompanying basses under the top line, in order to help smooth the modulation. I would even call those optional. If at the penultimate measure of Warsaw we come back to London at the third beat of measure 47 (which now becomes measure 75), everything fits perfectly and the grand cadence is naturally justified. Interestingly enough, measures 44-45-46 and the first half of 47 are not lost since they appear also in the Warsaw development. This seems to confirm, in my opinion, the intention of the composer to complete his work with meticulous attention. (See the reconstructed work in the LSA Quarterly, Vol.38 no 4, November 2003)

Filled with maturity, the large *Menuet* (p.308) and *Menuet 2* (p.309) (no other source), with their typically erratic themes, are part of a broader group of heavier minuets that, according to principles discussed previously with respect to the bourree, stand in opposition to the group of lighter sprightly minuets. This constant returning to three-voice texture at the conclusion of every cantabile line leads to a sonic thickening that reinforces a certain philosophical character in the work. Due to technical difficulties, it is not easy for the interpreter to allow the phrases to sing. It is not easy, but it is nevertheless very necessary because the work of Weiss is of a continuously singing quality. The Minuet 2 is harmonically reminiscent of the Rondeau of the solo sonata no 20 S-C26 in the London ms, which is in the same key. The second part of this piece explores some interesting modulations and syncopated rhythms in the bass tones. As is the case with Mozart, Weiss exchanges systematically the same phrases in major and minor. The Da Capo without repeats is made very clear by the inscription '*Il primo Minuetto si replica, ma senza ripetizione*'.

The dynamic *Mademoiselle Tiroloise* (p.310), a paysanne which can also be found titled as such in two copies within the Warsaw manuscript, displays the same writing style and technical features that can be seen in the paysanne of the solo sonata no 12, S-C17 and in the piece *Comment savez-vous ?* of the solo sonata no 20, S-C26. Some measures are better in the London ms, while others are more convincing in the Warsaw version. I have integrated, through the use of repeated sections, the Warsaw variants on my recording, which give an adequate effect of ornamentation.

## 5 ensemble works (duos)

All the ensemble works of the London Ms are from unique source, with the exception of the first *Concert*, also found in the Dresden ms. Three different copyist handwritings, aside from the hand of Weiss himself, have been identified. More than mere accompaniment, the lute parts provide at least two complete voices in a trio sonata context, sometimes even more, to the point of sounding almost like solo works. This ensemble music would be equally beautiful with the addition of harpsichord and viola da gamba, which would give the works a whole new dimension, as well as added ampleness. However, the important aspects to consider in my view were the intimacy of the musical dialogue, the full, rich sonority of the lute, as well as Weiss's writing style, which puts lute and flute in close relation. I deliberately chose to record the concertos without the 'cello or viola da gamba and I was also counting on the capability of the lute to project a consistent, stable bass line. The fluid sonority of the flute works well in combination with the plucked strings and the well-separated basses of the lute, to give an amply sonorous musical envelope. Except for the first movement of Duo 4, the dimensions and developments of the musical themes are substantial to the point where it was deemed necessary to take all of the repeats.

In notable duets with flute, Weiss first played with Pierre Gabriel Buffardin (1690-1768), appointed to the Dresden court in 1715. Buffardin served as professor of the brother of J. S. Bach, Johann Jakob "il fratello diletissimo" and later of Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773). Already at age 16, Quantz was proficient at violin, oboe, trumpet, cornet, trombone, horn, flute, bassoon, cello, viola da gamba and double bass, not to mention his studies in harpsichord and composition. Quantz has left us with hundreds of pieces, including numerous flute concerti. He also transcribed the courante of the sonata S-C11 by Weiss for solo flute. It



is in Dresden, while working as third oboist in the orchestra, that he first studied the flute with Buffardin and was named first flute of the orchestra after only a few months. Subsequently, he and Weiss were regularly sent to royal functions as star soloists, such as in Prague to play in Fux's opera *Costanza e fortezza* presented on the occasion of the crowning of Charles VI in the year 1723.

For today's Baroque flautist, it may be surprising to see that all the works with flute in the London Manuscript are in flatted keys, which are comfortable on the lute but seemingly strange for the Baroque traverso, given the husky, veiled tone obtained on certain notes due to 'fork fingerings' – which do not hinder a rich and convincing sonority. It must be said however that Quantz, who performed regularly with Weiss, possessed a flute with an extra key (see his *Méthode*, 1752). Quantz, unsatisfied by the flutes at his disposition (flutes with one key), added a second key in 1726 in order to correct the pitch of the semitones. He wished to use the differential minor/major semitone technique, which he found to be impossible on the conventional flute. According to this theory, the minor second is calculated unequally : for example, c sharp raises c by 4 commas, and d flat lowers d by 4 commas, which leaves a difference of one comma between c sharp and d flat, a whole tone being made up of 9 commas. In his method, Quantz states : “*Until then the flute had but one key; but when I learned to know the nature of this instrument, I found that there was still always a small imperfection in the pureness of certain tones, that could not be remedied without the adding of a second key, which I added in the year 1726*”.

The *Concert d'un Luth et d'une Flute traversiere. Del Sig.re Weis (S-C6) in B flat* is the first of three *Concerts* in the manuscript. It is also the fourth ensemble work of the eight found in the last fascicle of the Dresden ms entitled *Weisische Partien*. In the Dresden ms it is clearly a duo for two lutes, because the tablature carries the indication *Leuto 1.mo* (primo). It is fortunate that this version exists because half of the last movement – in fact all of the last page – is missing in the London ms. Tim Crawford hazards a guess that Weiss didn't have his chamber music with him when he went to Prague to re-copy the pages lost by the proprietor of the manuscript. As is the case with the second lute part in the Dresden manuscript, the flute part has been lost and had to be re-composed for all the duos (See the General Context).

The four movements have been given Italian titles of the 'style concertante' variety, namely, Adagio, Allegro, Grave, and Allegro. Three of them have the musical character befitting their tonality, as proclaimed by Mattheson. The b flat movements do, in fact, express a mood that is 'divertingly sumptuous, though discreet' but the Grave in g minor is not at all 'moderate and peaceful', but rather sombre and tormented. One gets the impression that the composer was as much at ease in this music as he was in his solo offerings. There is a marvelous suppleness of thematic development, especially noticeable in the instrumental exchanges. The tranquil majesty of the *Adagio* yields without pause to the largest movement, the first *Allegro*, which requires considerable agility. The resolutely sad, meditative *Grave* has more of a Classic than Baroque allure to it. One is tempted to describe it as melancholic 'style galant'. The final *Allegro* is freshly exuberant, displaying fully the characteristics of the 'style concertante'.

The *Concert d'un Luth avec une Flute traversiere. Del Sigismundo Weis. (S-C8) in B flat*, exists along with another of Sigismund's ensemble works, this one being in the Dresden ms, and it is clear that in both, as in his works without lute, his qualities as a composer are impressive. One can sense a steady hand as well as a proven musical discourse that stands up well

next to the ensemble pieces of brother Silvius. Both Sigismund and their father Johann Jakob were lutenists at the Palatin court, first in Düsseldorf, then in Heidelberg and Mannheim.

The first two movements, *Andante* and *Presto*, are played through without pause. The *andante* brings to mind the adagio of the first *Concert*: it is in the same spirit, as well as the same key, and the theme construction is similar. The *presto* is made up of a dense exchange of themes with both instruments in constant conversation. The lute part has no cause for envy towards those of Leopold, given its virtuosity. A marked difference with the first *Concert*, however, is the third movement, also an *Andante*, that stays in the key of b flat instead of descending into the relative minor key of G. Mattheson's description of b flat major, 'sumptuous but modest', is very fitting here, as a calm serenity reigns for six minutes, while a pastoral atmosphere pleasantly floats in the second section with pedal tones reminiscent of shepherd's pipes. The concluding *Allegro* contains no less than two short *reprises*. Judging from the repeated chords of the lute, Sigismund undoubtedly wished to let the flautist's virtuosity take the foreground, rather than needlessly embellish the lute part. In fact, the lute only dialogues with the melody from bar 50 onwards, challenging the flautist's respiratory endurance.

The *Concert d'un Luth avec la Flute traversiere. Del S.L. Weis. (S-C9), in F major*, also wears its naturally noble tonal quality quite well. The initial *Adagio* has a slow march feel, not unlike that of a wedding march. The following *Allegro* is a four voice fugue, three of the voices being held throughout by the lute, save for an orchestral style octave passage near the piece's end. Its joyous exuberance is suddenly interrupted by an enigmatic *Amoroso* in d minor, conjuring up emotions more tormented than amorous, perhaps even those of an impossible, desperate love. Its passion is abundant, even obsessive, demonstrated by a superb baroque *enflé* by the flute shortly before the piece's conclusion. The inconclusive cadence adds to the mystery in that it anticipates a next movement also in d minor. Yet, we return to the key of F major for the final jubilant *Allegro*.

We will call the next work *Duo 4 in g minor (S-C14)*. Nothing, other than clues in the music itself, indicates that this work is a duo. Perhaps Weiss also played this work in duet with violin, or Baroque oboe. While the initial *Adagio* is connected to the *Concerts* by its title and its spirit, the other movements are similar to most of the solo works in this manuscript. The adagio is perhaps Weiss's most beautiful ensemble piece along with the chaconne whose thematic cells can already be found here. With its well chosen modulations and entrancing flute part enriched by colourful harmonies on the lute, the piece is permeated with the wisdom of a profound incantation.

The *Gavotte* is bouncy but gracious. The themes skip almost humorously through a somewhat contradictory and omnipresent melancholy. The contrast of very low bass notes on lute and soaring passages on the wooden flute creates a very unique blending of timbres. While on paper, both the *Sarabande* and the *Menuet* seem like short pieces of little interest, they prove themselves as striking, mature musical constructions under the fingers of the performer. At bars 3, 5 and 7 of the sarabande, we find proof, in my opinion, that appoggiatura in Baroque tablature, at times, simply cannot be executed other than in long note values. It is clear that playing the ornaments rapidly in this case would interrupt the flow of the musical discourse. As mentioned above, the minuet is almost identical to the solo piece in F of the same name at page 11. In the second part, despite my wish to create a non-contrasting flute part in a passage sounding no more no less like...Poulenc (!), the feeling of a 'nod' to a future time remains nonetheless. This comes

as no surprise when one takes into consideration the “20<sup>th</sup> century style” themes in ancient music, notably in 17<sup>th</sup> century French lute music. A feeling of *galanterie* is omnipresent in this minuet, accentuated by chromaticism in my flute part inspired by Weiss himself (see for example the prelude and fugue in E flat major). This effect will be repeated in the chaconne, and I defend it in any context where themes are easily predictable. Weiss is a composer, as is his colleague and friend Telemann, who feels comfortable inside a pre-established mold, but offers delightful surprises at certain moments to spice up an otherwise traditional musical vocabulary.

Exceptionally, the *Bourée* is placed after the sarabande and even after the minuet. Could it be because the final chaconne starts off slowly? Whatever the case, it is obvious that this order creates a logical rhythmic balance. This bourree is very technically demanding, due to the incessant exchange of melodic lines between lute and flute. The last movement, a magnificent *Ciacona*, by sheer beauty, transcends the need for repetition of variations, incidentally not indicated in the tablature. Both lutenists and guitarists have been playing this work for years as a solo. Indeed, if we vary the chordal sections with arpeggios and ornamentation, the result becomes a very satisfactory solo, which brings me to reiterate the possibility of Weiss playing such versatile pieces in one format or another. If the piece were played as a solo, the *reprises* would be justified. However, it is clear that as a duet, the result is splendid.

With the *Duo 5 in d minor (S-C20)*, our presentation of the London Manuscript’s works ends. Three of its movements bear the inscription *Weis 1719*. We have added the *Largo* p.117, an isolated piece located seventy five pages prior to this duo, which serves perfectly as a sarabande. As was the case with *Duo 4*, only the musical structure of the lute part indicates in all likelihood that these pieces are duets, with its sudden alternation between voluble melodic motifs and simple chord progressions. Nevertheless, the *Prelud: presto* is visibly for lute solo, but acts as an excellent introduction for the following movement. A true whirlwind in the style of Bach’s toccatas, it unleashes its fury by passing through an *Adagio* section that builds tension before releasing it again in another *presto* sequence. In this dramatic context, the effects of *verre brisé* (vibrato) and percussive “buzzing” bass (one could say *alla Bartok*) are of course intentional given their typical Baroque spirit. The *Un poco andante* is majestic yet reserved. Pedals on the dominant at section ends enhance a dreamlike quality. Dialogue is tight between the two instruments, as it is in the following *La Badinage*, with reason, given its title: ‘The Jesting’. This movement serves as a courante, and has all its characteristic traits. It brings to mind Bach’s closely titled *Badinerie*, also for flute (and orchestra).

With its dialogue composed of rapidly ascending exchanges creating a harrowing conversation effect, the *Largo* simply astonishes the listener. In the aforementioned spirit of comparing similarities between themes from different musical periods, I unabashedly mention that the initial melodic motif found for the flute is inspired by a song from the seventies progressive pop group King Crimson. This largo could have contained *reprises* for the two sections, the first ending exactly at the halfway point of the piece in a conclusive cadence. However, Weiss preferred continuity without repetition, the drama already having been spent, so to say. And so by ending the largo with an inconclusive, as opposed to a conclusive, cadence, therefore suggesting complementary movement, continuity is preserved. Luckily, the following movement, *Le Sicilien*, rallies perfectly with the end of the largo and even creates a sort of epilogue. In addition, by placing this largo in a sonata, we create a similar situation as in the third *Concert*, where a movement also ends inconclusively. This sicilienne expresses a kind of bitter sweetness, or perhaps unrequited tenderness. The rich harmonic progression gives the

discourse a certain bounce. What a change of scenery the *Menuet* offers us ! In the relative major key of f, its mood is of the greatest nonchalance. Finally, a spirited and resolute *Gigue* brilliantly ends this last of S.L.Weiss's duets.

Michel Cardin

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