

**Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges: Sonata No. 1 in B-flat major  
for harpsichord or fortepiano with obbligato violin accompaniment  
Op. 1a No. 1**

ed. Benjamin Shute & Anastasia Abu Bakar, June 2020

**Background**

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745-1799) is widely regarded as the first composer of African heritage in the European classical tradition. An astonishingly accomplished man, he was music director to Marie Antoinette, an influential composer, an acclaimed violinist, a champion fencer, the first colonel of color in the French army, and an abolitionist activist.

This sonata is the first of three presumed to be written around 1770 and published without date by LeDuc in 1781. The surface texture of these sonatas, as notated, is somewhat plainer than is typical of a composer such as Mozart, especially in the violin part; but that is doubtless because performers were expected to add their own ornamentation. Indeed, Bologne himself would presumably have played the violin part and would certainly have been adept at ornamenting, having no need to spell out the variable fine points on paper.

**Note on the edition**

There is one source for these sonatas, the LeDuc edition of 1781, consisting of a full score and separate violin part that almost exactly reproduces the violin line of the full score. The edition contains multiple typographical errors that render it less than ideal for performance. The present edition notes these errors and corrects them, also offering simple suggestions for bowing, articulation, and ornamentation where their omission would be unidiomatic. These should be taken as only the bare minimum, and performers should be encouraged to add a great deal more historically informed ornamentation and bowing variations, especially in repeated material or in certain series of long notes.

This edition uses as its foundation the 2014 typeset by Tim Willis (Creative Commons 4.0). The editorial changes described above have been made to the 2014 typeset using a PDF editor.

In all subsequent notes, “FE” refers to the first edition (LeDuc, 1781).

**Editorial policy**

Dotted slurs are used when no slurs are present in the FE but a) are present in corresponding passages, or b) specifically to the violin, style and/or context suggest separate bowing was likely not intended.

Ornaments not present in the FE but whose inclusion seems especially idiomatic are supplied in brackets.

Grace notes after bracketed trills are all editorial suggestions informed by performance practice but not present in the FE. Lack of editorially supplied grace notes does not necessarily indicate that their presence would be unidiomatic.

Notation of accidentals has been modernized.

Accidentals notated above their respective pitches are not present in the FE but possibly intended, though not beyond question.

Modern repeat signs are not present in the FE. Places where repeats would conventionally be taken are indicated by double bars. However, not every section bounded by double bars represents a workable repeat. The editors have inserted repeat signs where deemed appropriate.

# SONATA I

*Pour Le Clavecin ou Forté Piano  
avec accompagnement de Violon Obligé*

**Allegro**

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St.-Georges

\* The notation of whole notes tied across the bar line is not found in this sonata, but this need not suggest that connectedness is not meant. The intended effect is likely similar to a single sustained note in a wind instrument, but allowing for bow change on the bar line. Adding a trill to the second note is an option with many parallels from the period.

\*\* natural omitted in FE † Throughout this edition, all grace notes after bracketed trills are editorial suggestions informed by performance practice but not present in FE

†† f in FE

19

Musical score for measures 19-22. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The vocal line starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with trills marked [tr] on notes G4, A4, B4, and C5, and a left hand with a steady eighth-note bass line.

23

Musical score for measures 23-25. The system consists of three staves. The vocal line continues with quarter notes D5, E5, F5, and G5. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a complex sixteenth-note pattern and a left hand with a steady eighth-note bass line.

25

Musical score for measures 26-28. The system consists of three staves. The vocal line has a whole note G5, followed by a trill marked [tr] on G5. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a complex sixteenth-note pattern and a left hand with a steady eighth-note bass line.

28

Musical score for measures 29-31. The system consists of three staves. The vocal line has a whole note G5, followed by a trill marked [tr] on G5. The piano accompaniment features a right hand with a complex sixteenth-note pattern and a left hand with a steady eighth-note bass line.

31 [tr]

35 [tr] \*\*

[ 6 6

40 [tr]

6] ††

43 [tr] †† \*\*

\* natural omitted in FE

\*\* In mm. 39-40 in FE, right hand contains rests after the downbeat of m. 39. The keyboard was likely expected to supply simple continuo-style chords.

† rest omitted in FE †† a in FE

\* See note \* at m. 10    \*\* 1st 2 notes c' in FE    † f' in FE. It is also possible that the first 4 notes should be b-flat, d', g', b-flat'

†† e-flat in FE    \*† e-natural' in FE

64

67

70

73

\* sharp omitted in FE

77

82

86

89

\* g in FE    \*\* a" in FE

92

System 1 (measures 92-95):

- Staff 1 (Soprano): Measures 92-95. Measure 92 has a whole note G4. Measure 93 has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Measure 94 has a quarter note G4, quarter note F4, quarter note E4, quarter note D4. Measure 95 has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5.
- Staff 2 (Piano): Measures 92-95. Measure 92 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 93 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 94 has a whole note chord G4-B4-D4. Measure 95 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff 3 (Bass): Measures 92-95. Measure 92 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 93 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 94 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 95 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4.

96

System 2 (measures 96-99):

- Staff 1 (Soprano): Measures 96-99. Measure 96 has a whole note G4. Measure 97 has a whole note G4. Measure 98 has a whole note G4. Measure 99 has a quarter note G4, quarter note A4, quarter note B4, quarter note C5.
- Staff 2 (Piano): Measures 96-99. Measure 96 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 97 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 98 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 99 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff 3 (Bass): Measures 96-99. Measure 96 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 97 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 98 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 99 has eighth notes G3, A3, B3, C4.

100

System 3 (measures 100-102):

- Staff 1 (Soprano): Measures 100-102. Measure 100 has a whole rest. Measure 101 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 102 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff 2 (Piano): Measures 100-102. Measure 100 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 101 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 102 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff 3 (Bass): Measures 100-102. Measure 100 has a whole rest. Measure 101 has quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 102 has quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4.

103

System 4 (measures 103-105):

- Staff 1 (Soprano): Measures 103-105. Measure 103 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 104 has a whole note G4. Measure 105 has quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff 2 (Piano): Measures 103-105. Measure 103 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 104 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Measure 105 has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5.
- Staff 3 (Bass): Measures 103-105. Measure 103 has quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4. Measure 104 has a whole note G3. Measure 105 has quarter notes G3, A3, B3, C4.

\* See note \* at m. 10    \*\* natural absent in FE but is stylistically likely

106

109

113

118

\* Notes 2-5 shown as 8ths in FE    \*\*e-flat' in FE    † middle note of the chords on beats 3 & 4 is g' in FE

†† In taking the repeat, the upbeat to m. 54 should be played at the end of m. 121

Tempo di Minuetto

Measures 1-6 of the Minuet. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats. The right hand features a melodic line with a trill in measure 4. The left hand plays a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Performance markings include an asterisk (\*) in measure 2 and a double asterisk (\*\*) in measure 3.

Measures 7-12 of the Minuet. The right hand continues the melodic theme with trills in measures 8 and 10. The left hand maintains the eighth-note accompaniment. Performance markings include a dagger symbol (†) in measure 7 and double asterisks (\*\*) in measures 9 and 10.

Measures 13-18 of the Minuet. The right hand features a triplet in measure 13 and a trill in measure 14. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment. Performance markings include a trill symbol [tr] in measure 14.

Measures 19-24 of the Minuet. The right hand concludes the piece with a melodic flourish. The left hand continues the eighth-note accompaniment.

\* a in FE    \*\* b-flat in FE    † 1st 2 notes shown as 16ths in FE

23

27

Fine

31

35

\* b-flat in FE    \*\* natural absent in FE but stylistically likely (compare m. 31)

40 [tr]

44

49

pizz. arco [tr]

53

pizz. arco

\* natural omitted in FE    \*\* g'' in FE    † d' in FE

57

63

67

**Minore**

71

\* d' in FE

\*\* It is possible to play da Capo at this point and proceed from the Fine at m. 30 directly to m. 71. That would match the rondo structure of similar Tempo di minuetto movements from the period (e.g., Mozart KV 219, III) as well as the final movement of the third sonata in this collection. If a 'da Capo' is taken, it may be desirable to insert a short, improvisatory lead-in (Eingang) by the keyboard.

Musical score for measures 75-78. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line (top), a piano right-hand line (middle), and a piano left-hand line (bottom). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). Measure 75 starts with a vocal line containing a trill marked [tr]. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. Measure 78 ends with a repeat sign.

Musical score for measures 79-82. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line (top), a piano right-hand line (middle), and a piano left-hand line (bottom). The key signature is three flats. Measure 79 has a vocal line with a note marked with an asterisk (\*). The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and the bass line in the left hand. Measure 82 ends with a repeat sign.

Musical score for measures 83-86. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line (top), a piano right-hand line (middle), and a piano left-hand line (bottom). The key signature is three flats. Measure 83 has a vocal line with a note marked with a flat sign (b). The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and the bass line in the left hand. Measure 86 ends with a repeat sign.

Musical score for measures 87-90. The system consists of three staves: a vocal line (top), a piano right-hand line (middle), and a piano left-hand line (bottom). The key signature is three flats. Measure 87 has a vocal line with a note marked with a flat sign (b). The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern in the right hand and the bass line in the left hand. Measure 90 ends with a repeat sign.

\* all g-flats in this passage lack flat signs in FE

91

94

97

100

D.C. al Maggiore

\* natural signs omitted in FE

\*\* Here it is appropriate for the keyboardist to insert short, improvisational connecting material (Eingang). The sudden presence of the low F/f could suggest that the improvised material is expected to begin in the left hand.

# SONATA I

*Pour Le Clavecin Ou Forté Piano  
avec accompagnement de Violon Obligé*

Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de St.-Georges

**Allegro**

7

16

21

28

36

41

48

54

59

\* Bologne never uses the notation of whole notes tied across the bar line in this sonata, but the absence of a tie need not suggest that connectedness is not meant. The intended effect is likely similar to a single sustained note in a wind instrument, albeit allowing for bow change on the bar line. Adding a trill to the second note is an option with many parallels from the period.

\*\* All grace notes after bracketed trills are editorial suggestions informed by performance practice but not present in FE. † natural absent in FE †† f' in FE

66

73

78

84

87

94

101

106

111

116

\* a'' in FE    \*\* See note \* at m. 10

# Tempo di Minuetto

The musical score is written in G minor, 3/4 time, and consists of ten staves. The first staff begins with a measure rest of 8 measures. The second staff contains a triplet of eighth notes and a trill. The third staff ends with the word "Fine". The fourth staff features a trill. The fifth staff includes a trill and a measure rest. The sixth staff contains several measures with asterisks below the notes. The seventh staff includes performance directions: "pizz." (pizzicato), "arco" (arco), and "pizz.". The eighth staff includes the direction "arco". The ninth staff continues the melodic line. The tenth staff ends with a double bar line and two asterisks (\*\*).

\* natural sign omitted in FE

\*\* It is possible to play da Capo at this point and proceed from the Fine at m. 30 directly to m. 71. That would match the rondo structure of similar Tempo di minuetto movements from the period (e.g., KV 219, III) as well as the final movement of the third sonata in this collection. If a 'da Capo' is taken, it may be desirable to insert a short, improvisatory lead-in (Eingang) by the keyboard.

71 Minore



76



83



90



98



D.C. al Maggiore

\* All g-flats in this passage lack flat signs in FE