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BRILLIANT CLASSICS

Janitsch

TRIO SONATAS

Berlin Friday Academy

Johann Gottlieb Janitsch 1708–c.1763
Trio Sonatas

Sonata da Camera in F			**Sonata da Camera in G minor**		
1.	I. Larghetto e cantabile	3’59	9. I. Andante		2’43
2.	II. Allegro mà moderato	5’46	10. II. Allegro		6’42
3.	III. Allegro assai	4’05	11. III. Allegro assai		4’58
Sonata à 3 in E minor			**Sonata da Camera in B flat**		
4.	I. Larghetto e cantabile	4’10	12. I. Adagio		2’29
4.	II. Allegretto	6’42	13. II. Allegro		6’27
5.	III. Vivace	5’28	14. III. Vivace		5’12
Trio Sonata in D					
6.	I. Adagio	3’21			
7.	II. Allegro	4’53			
8.	III. Vivace	5’06			

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Adam Masters *oboe* · Joseph Monticello *flute* · Tim Willis *violin*
Lea Strecker *viola* · Alexander Nicholls *cello* · Daniel Trumbull *harpsichord*

Recording: August 2019, Andreaskirche, Potsdam, Germany
Producer: Daniel Weingarten
A = 392Hz
Cover: View of the Armory and the Opera Bridge, 1785 by Carl Traugott Fechhelm 1748–1819, Märkisches Museum, Berlin

Trio Sonatas by Johann Gottlieb Janitsch

Although little known today, **Johann Gottlieb Janitsch** (1708–ca 1763) was one of the leading musical lights of Berlin during the mid-eighteenth-century. The Prussian capital city was then growing rapidly in population and wealth, well on its way to becoming one of Europe’s great cultural centres. Janitsch, then as now, was known primarily for his chamber music, whose style, a special Berlin version of the late Baroque (or early pre-Classical), is often described as *galant* or *empfindsam*; the latter word means ‘sensitive’ or ‘expressive’.

Virtually everything we know about the life of Janitsch comes from a biographical essay published in 1754 by the Berlin writer and music theorist Wilhelm Friedrich Marpurg. We have no portraits and only a single vague account of his personal character (he was said to be ‘cheerful and unpretentious’). According to Marpurg—who doubtless received the information directly from Janitsch—he was born into a merchant family at Schweidnitz (now Polish Swidniz), in Silesia. At the time this was Austrian territory, and Janitsch was briefly employed as a court musician in the Silesian capital of Breslau (Wroclaw). But the region would be seized by Prussian king Frederick II ‘the Great’ in 1741 during the first of three mid-century Silesian wars.

Therefore it was providential that in 1729 Janitsch left for Prussia, studying law at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder. There he led the collegium musicum, a performing ensemble composed of fellow students which, upon his departure, was taken over by Bach’s second son Carl Philipp Emanuel. The latter, like Janitsch, composed and directed large-scale vocal works celebrating visits by members of the royal family; unfortunately the music for these so-called *serenate* is lost.

In 1733, Janitsch went to Berlin as secretary to a high-ranking figure in the government of King Friedrich Wilhelm I. The king is infamous for the harsh treatment of his son. But by the time Janitsch began serving the latter, in 1736, Crown Prince Frederick had returned to his father’s good graces, moving from the small town of Ruppin to the larger one of Rheinsberg. Janitsch joined him as *Cammermusicus* (‘chamber musician’); four years later, while still at Rheinsberg, Janitsch established an

'academy', a musical club that met regularly for rehearsals and occasional concerts.

Janitsch's Friday Academy—named for the day of the week on which it met—was held in his own home. It presumably involved amateur as well as professional musicians, performing repertory similar to that heard in Frederick's famous palace concerts: sonatas and concertos as well as Italian arias and cantatas. After Frederick succeeded his father as king in 1740, Janitsch and his Friday Acadademy moved with the court to Berlin, where the composer had a small organ installed in his home.

Participants and listeners must have included military officers and other members of the aristocracy and professional classes. These emulated the king's love of music but would not normally have been admitted to Frederick's private concerts. For them, Janitsch and his fellow court musicians composed hundreds of instrumental works as well as lieder (songs) and other vocal music. The busy calendar of Berlin concerts was interrupted only by the Seven Years' War (the third Silesian war) during 1756–63.

The king may never have performed any music by Janitsch. But he did commission the latter to write dance music for the annual *Reduten* held during Carnival season, beginning in 1743. Janitsch's dances were for military bands each comprising six 'oboists'—including bassoon—but it is unclear whether any of this music (probably minuets and polonaises) survives. Janitsch also played in the orchestra of the royal opera, for which he reportedly rehearsed the 'chorus'—which might have meant dancers as well as singers.

Janitsch's name disappears from the lists of royal musicians after 1762. Presumably he died while still serving the king, despite the reduction of his salary during the Seven Years' War, when royal concerts and opera performances ceased. He evidently did not live to see the revival of Berlin's musical life after the war. But manuscript copies of his music indicate that it continued to be performed at least into the later decades of the eighteenth century. Among those who owned and presumably played his music were the royal bassoonist Printz and Sara Levy, pupil of W. F. Bach and great-aunt of Felix Mendelssohn.

Most of Janitsch's surviving output consists of what were known as trios and quartets: compositions in fact for four and five performers, respectively. The lowest part is the basso continuo, typically played on a cello together with a keyboard instrument, on which improvised chords were added. Preserved chiefly in manuscripts, many of them still unpublished, Janitsch's compositions cannot be precisely dated. Most were probably written for his Academy and none before 1740, when a fire at Rheinsberg destroyed his belongings.

Janitsch is always described as a *Contraviolonist* (double-bass player), although the exact nature of his instrument is unknown. Quantz, the king's flute teacher, described the duties of the contrabass player in his famous treatise on flute playing. Writing in 1752, he doubtless had Janitsch in mind as one who could 'play whatever is written in the high register as well as the violoncellist'. Janitsch might have performed the continuo parts of his chamber works on his contrabass, but he is more likely to have played harpsichord or his house organ in these compositions.

Exceptionally for a composer of his generation, Janitsch's quartets are more numerous and better known than his trios. Both groups of pieces, which number about 80 in all, combine melodic parts in the soprano or alto range with a relatively simple bass line. Some are in keys or for combinations of instruments that were unusual at the time, as in the D-major trio for violin and viola recorded here—one of the few eighteenth-century works to treat the viola as an equal partner to the violin.

Otherwise, Janitsch's style is conservative, reflecting a tradition of contrapuntal chamber music that went back to Corelli in the late seventeenth century. The individual movements of Janitsch's trio sonatas have become longer, however, and are usually in the order slow–fast–moderate. The first movement often closes with a cadenza, originally improvised by the two soloists. All this follows Berlin tradition of the time, as does the serious character of these pieces, contrasting with lighter types of trio sonatas written elsewhere (including those of Telemann).

Although remarkably uniform in general form and style, the five pieces recorded

here reveal subtle distinctions in sound, scoring, and individual musical ideas that would have been appreciated by members of Janitsch's Academy. Each movement is modeled on the duets heard from 1741 onward at Frederick's Berlin opera house, in which two singers echo one another. In three of our works (in D, B-flat, and G minor) the opening theme is graced with florid melodic embellishments such as singers might have improvised. The E-minor sonata, on the other hand, opens with what is almost a minor-key version of one of Janitsch's few actual vocal works, the song 'Der getreue Liebhaber' (The Faithful Lover), from a collection edited by Marpurg in 1756.

The two oboe compositions on our program might have been written for Johann Christian Jacobi, one of the royal musicians who also performed in the Friday Academy, according to Marpurg—who added that Janitsch wrote particularly well for his instrument. The sonata in D is one of a surprising number of compositions from this repertory that includes an independent viola part. Like many Berlin 'trios', it can be played either as a regular trio sonata, with flute, viola, and continuo (as recorded here), or as a duet for viola and harpsichord, the latter instrument providing both the original melodic part and bass line. That the viola part was intended for performance by an amateur violinist is suggested by the odd notation of this piece: despite the use of the so-called viola clef, the notes are written as if in treble or 'violin' clef.

The Berlin Friday Academy

Adam Masters *oboe* · Joseph Monticello *flute* · Tim Willis *violin*
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The Berlin Friday Academy is a Berlin-based ensemble made up of young players from around the world – a group of passionate, historically-inspired musicians striving to bring about beauty through the performance, recording, and scholarly discussion of eighteenth-century music. The BFA endeavors to revive the music associated with eighteenth-century Berlin through the exploration of its composers, the use of appropriate instruments, and performing practices described by its many sons and daughters.

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