



The Brazilian Benedictine Bishop Who Launched the First Piano Publication (1732)

THE FIRST PUBLICATION specified for the newly invented piano was Lodovico Giustini's 12 *Sonate Da Cimbalo di piano, e forte detto volgarmente di martelletti* (Florence, 1732). Because of its historic priority, this publication or the Amsterdam reprint issued about 1736 has been mentioned in nearly all encyclopedias from E. L. Gerber's *Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler* (Leipzig, 1812-14), II, 338, and F.-J. Fétis's *Biographie universelle* (Brussels, 1835-44), IV, 341, to the present.

After having studied these sonatas in her article "The Earliest Pianoforte Music," *Music & Letters*, XIII (1932), 194-199, Rosamund E. M. Harding used her revision of the same article to preface a 1933 facsimile edition of the British Library copy (K.c.5)—one of the five known extant copies of the Florentine *editio princeps*. Books devoting lesser or greater space to these Giustini pioneer sonatas for the piano include A. J. Hipkins, *History of the Pianoforte* (London, 1896), 99, Fausto Torrefranca, *Le Origini italiane del romanticismo musicale: i primitivi della sonata moderna* (Turin, 1930), 366-370, and William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (Chapel Hill, 1959, 1966), 57, 194-196. *The Piano Quarterly*, XXII/86 (Summer, 1974), 20-24, included Joseph Bloch's popularization of previous literature, "Lodovico Giustini and the first published piano sonatas," followed by a facsimile reprint of Sonata IV (in E minor). The latest exhaustive study of Giustini's epochal piano publication of 1732 appeared as recently as last year when Ala Botti Caselli's splendid article "Le 'Sonate Da Cimbalo di piano, e forte' di Lodovico Giustini: L'opera di un prete galante agli albori della sonata per pianoforte," *Nuova Rivista musicale italiana*, XII/1 (January-March, 1978), 34-66, crowned all previous labors.

Sifting and correcting previous archival discoveries (*Bullettino Storico Pistoiese*, XIX [1917], 66 and LXXV [1973], 93), this article synthesizes the composer's life thus (pages 37-39):

Lodovico Giustini (born at Pistoia December 12, 1685, died there February 7, 1744) belonged to a local family long prominent in Pistoia musical affairs. His father Francesco preceded him as organist of the church of the Congregazione dello Spirito Santo and his uncle Niccolò (who was a composer) held office as prior of the same Congregazione. Destined for holy orders from childhood, Lodovico was elected to the organistship of the Congregazione church on his father's death in 1725.

Two years later he cooperated with his uncle and twelve others in composing an oratorio, *Ercole*, with text by Francesco Maria Aldobrandi. Fortunately, the score of this 1727 oratorio is still extant in the Pistoia Cathedral archive (MS B. 165. 2). Lodovico's three arias in this cooperatively composed oratorio reveal certain characteristics common to his piano sonatas



published five years later—short symmetrical phrases with descending feminine endings, for instance. However, in comparison with the 1732 sonatas, his modulations seem tame.

The *atti* of the Congregazione dello Spirito Santo of Pistoia—analyzed by V. U. Pineschi in "Jacopo Melani e Lodovico Giustini organisti nella Chiesa della Congregazione dello Spirito Santo de Pistoia," *Bullettino Storico Pistoiese*, LXXV (1973), 89-94—document Lodovico Giustini's continuous presence at Pistoia, except for one break: in the summer of 1732 (the year his sonatas were published) he visited Florence (*ibidem*, page 93). Obviously he must have gone there to oversee publication. So far as other Pistoia churches in which he officiated as organist go, he must frequently have played the 1617 organ in San Domenico church. Pineschi's Plate V reproduces one of Lodovico Giustini's several signatures inscribed on the San Domenico organ case.

Since his whole life transpired in provincial Pistoia 20 miles southeast of Florence, his staying abreast of the latest musical currents proves how quickly smaller centers absorbed reigning tastes. Newman begins description of his sonatas thus: "Giustini's 12 sonatas are all in four or five movements. Most of the movements have dance as well as tempo titles. Three rondo movements, three minuet finales, and such titles as 'Dolce' and 'Affettuoso' suggest that the composer was well abreast of the popular tastes in his day." (*The Sonata in the Baroque Era*, page 195.)

Going beyond Newman (who was not apprised of the unique copy at Stockholm [S-Skma] of the Amsterdam edition "Stampate a Spese di Gerharo Friderico Witvogel, Organista della Chiesa Nuova Luterana a Amsterdam. N. 83"), Ala Botti Caselli leaves unanswered only one important query raised by the 1732 publication: who was the Giovanni de Seixas responsible for the lengthy dedicatory preface? Santiago Kastner hypothesized (footnote 36) that he was some noble dilettante who protected not only Lodovico Giustini but also Carlos [de] Seixas (Coimbra, June 11, 1704; Lisbon, August 25, 1742). Whatever Carlos Seixas's connection with Giustini's protector, one fact is sure—the Portuguese harpsichordist and organist's parents bore the humble names of Francisco Vaz and Marcelina Nunes, which are far cries from the aristocratic cognomen Seixas. Beyond this hypothesis neither Santiago Kastner nor Ala Botti Caselli dared go.

The identity of D. Giovanni Seixas, signer of the dedication remains unknown. After many unanswered enquiries, after a thousand conjectures dreamed up for want of historical evidence, all that can be safely said is that the dedication to the infante of Portugal [D. António (1694-1757), favorite brother of King John V of Portugal, a pupil of Domenico Scarlatti, and an amateur composer] provides yet another proof of the widespread interest aroused in their century by the Italian sonata composers Scarlatti, Platti, Giustini, Galuppi, and Clementi, and the spread of their fame to all the most active European musical centers—including even distant St. Petersburg.

But despite Ala Botti Caselli's just quoted summation, is the identity of D. Giovanni de Seixas indeed unknown? Newman's third edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), page 404, adds this note: "In *Anuario* [Yearbook of the Inter-American Institute for Musical Research, Tulane University, New Orleans], IV (1968), 3-6, Robert Stevenson shows that Giovanni de Seixas was actually the Brazilian-born João Seyxas da Fonseca."

Not to repeat what was already said by Robert Stevenson in *Anuario*, IV, the biography of the "unknown Giovanni de Seixas" can now be usefully expanded by the following précis of his lengthy life history. The biography here summarized is found at pages 172-176 in a prize source for Brazilian music history omitted from



both 1945 and 1962 editions of Gilbert Chase's standard bibliography (five United States copies are itemized in Oliver L. Kapsner's *A Benedictine Bibliography* [Collegeville, Minnesota, 1962]): *Mosteiro de S. Bento do Rio de Janeiro Abbadia Nullius de N.S. do Monserrate. O seu histórico desde a fundação até ao anno de 1927. Traços biographicos dos monges fallecidos* (Rio de Janeiro: Papelaria Ribeiro [Rua do Ouvidor, 72], 1927).

João de Seixas da Fonseca Borges was born at Rio de Janeiro May 6, 1691. His parents who were Francisco de Seixas Fonseca, native of Lamego, Portugal, and Maria da Rocha Fiuza, native of Rio de Janeiro, spared no expense in his education. Among other subjects he was solidly grounded in music and learned to play various instruments with finesse [*Teve de muzica huma noticia bem completa, e tangia com delicadeza alguns instrumentos*]. Aged 16, he received minor orders (June 17, 1707). Three years later he enlisted in the Companhia dos Estudantes to fight the French. Because of his "good qualities and elegant mien" [*belas qualidades, e gentil presença*] the Jesuits coveted him enough to send him to Bahia for further studies. But once there he preferred the Benedictine habit and on June 16, 1712, aged 21, took the cowl in São Sebastião monastery. Having professed with the name in religion of João da Madre de Deos, he was ordained deacon July 25, 1716, and priest August 4, 1716. His philosophical studies at Bahia were followed by three years of theology at Rio de Janeiro.

As a result of controversy between factions within the Third Order of St. Francis, one party being led by his father, and also to take care of various other family interests, he left Rio de Janeiro for Lisbon in 1724. During his second year there, Pope Benedict XIII gave him permission to visit Rome. Sailing from Lisbon June 25, 1727, he reached Rome September 19. So favorable an impression did he immediately create at the papal court that on June 15, 1728, the Vatican prelate Archbishop Acoramboni apprised him of his nomination to be a bishop. After the necessary preliminaries, he awaited the first consistory to be preconized. However, a rupture just then between the Portuguese court and Rome paralyzed the procedure and forced him to retire to Florence whence he wrote the Portuguese secretary of state, Diogo de Mendonça Cortereal, informing him that he had retired to Florence with the permission of the ecclesiastic who later became bishop of Oporto, José Maria de Évora.

Introduced to the highest aristocracy by a Florentine nobleman named Pandolfo, Seixas also enjoyed while there the favor of the last Medici grand duke of Tuscany, Gian Gastone. In 1729 news reached him of his mother's death, in 1730 of his father's. On February 21, 1732, Benedict XIII died. On July 12, his successor Clement XII was elected. Within weeks thereafter, the rupture between Lisbon and the papacy was healed, thus permitting Seixas's leaving Florence October 30, 1732, and arriving at Rome November 4. Earlier that same year he offered D. António, Infante of Portugal, the excellent keyboard sonatas of Lodovico Giustini of Pistoia, preceded by a very commendable dedication [*en este mesmo anno tinha oferecido ao Sñr. Infante D. Antonio as excelentes Sonatas de Cravo de Ludovico Justine de Pistoia com huma dedicatoria bem recommendavel*].

On September 10, 1733, Clement XII confirmed his nomination to the titular bishopric of Areopoli, preconizing him in the consistory of September 28. Assisted by two other bishops, the new pope's nephew Cardinal Giovanni Antonio Guadagni on Sunday October 4, 1733, consecrated him during a ceremony at the Portuguese church of St. Anthony, Rome. Pope Clement XII gave him the bones of St. Clement Martyr during a farewell audience on December 27, 1733. These relics he ever after guarded with the intention of bequeathing them to the Rio de Janeiro monastery at his death.

Taking leave of his intimate friend Signor Pandolfo who had accompanied him to Rome, he departed for Florence on January 12, 1734. On February 2, Grand Duke Gian Gastone proffered him a magnificent banquet. On February 25 he sailed from Genoa.



After a 35-day voyage he disembarked in Lisbon April 1. There he lodged in the cell of the Benedictine Padres Geraes at the Mosteiro da Saúde. Among other honors, João V received him personally and he was invited frequently to concelebrate with the Cardinal Patriarch. On June 25, 1734, he also celebrated in the Lisbon Convento de Chelas, where his sisters were nuns. During the year following his election August 26, 1739, to be Nuncio Juiz do Tribunal da Nunciatura, he heard many cases. In September 1740, now 49 years of age, he sailed for Bahia where he resided in the Mosteiro de Nossa Senhora das Brotas until 1742. In that year he returned to Rio de Janeiro in order to resume the exemplary life of a rigorous Benedictine. From 1742 until his death at the age of 67 on March 5, 1758, he frequently performed episcopal acts. Acting as suffragan to the bishop of Rio de Janeiro Antonio do Desterro (1694-1773), who was like him a Benedictine, he officiated as far afield as the captaincy of Campos.

With the approval of his fellow Benedictines, he purchased in November of 1745 an estate at Bica about three leagues from Rio de Janeiro. At death he left the Rio de Janeiro monastery nearly 3000 cruzados in cash, cattle on his Bica estate that sold for 4000 cruzados, and an excellent library. His bequests included also an endowment for the chapel of the German Benedictine saint Gertrude [1256-1302], to whom he professed a special devotion. After elaborate exequies Monday and Tuesday, March 6 and 7, 1758, he was buried in the epistle presbytery of the Rio de Janeiro monastery.

Thus much for the biography of Lodovico Giustini's patron—classed in Ala Botti Caselli's 1978 *Nuova Rivista musicale italiana* article as an "unknwon" whose identity not even untold labors in Tuscan archives, a thousand conjectures, and numerous epistolary enquiries could pierce. In summary: Giustini's patron was himself a trained musician, and a versatile instrumental performer. His sisters were nuns in one of the most aristocratic Lisbon convents. A Brazilian of enormous personal wealth in the epoch that Brazilian mines rained emeralds, he himself freely consorted with royalty and the highest nobility while residing long years in Portugal and Italy. Was he also the patron who gave his name to Carlos [de] Seixas, brightest star in the firmament of Portuguese baroque keyboard music?

At the very least, he returned to Brazil in 1740 the beneficiary of the brightest novelties in European music-making. The musical ambience in mid-18th-century Bahia and Rio de Janeiro cannot but have profited from the presence of such a musical maecenas. Nor did he return home to lead the life of any solitary melomane. The *Dietario das vidas, e mortes dos monges* in his monastery—compiled about 1800 and published at pages 129-213 in the volume of archival notices that yielded his own life—reveals these statistics: of the 192 Rio de Janeiro Benedictines who died between 1629 and 1799, no less than 20 were noteworthy musicians (entries 8, 22, 26, 27, 33, 42, 43, 58, 93, 94, 95, 109, 112, 125, 133, 148, 151, 160, 166, 185). In his definitive "Uma notícia sobre a Música no Brasil dos séculos XVI e XVII," *Estudos Universitários*, XII/2 (April-June 1972), 51-52, Jaime Diniz already extracted the names of seven active before 1700. Like the Augustinian canons at Santa Cruz monastery, Coimbra, whose musical acquirements were chronicled by Gabriel de Santa Maria and Nicolau de Santa Maria but were late in beginning to be properly appreciated in Portuguese musical histories, so also Seixas's Rio de Janeiro Benedictine colleagues may yet write an unsuspectedly lustrous chapter in pre-1800 Brazilian musical history.

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