

Performer's Guide to *Sonata No. 5 in G Minor op. 24* by François Devienne

Benjamin Bradshaw

Composer

François Devienne (1759-1803) was a flautist, bassoonist, and composer from France. He was an active performer in orchestral and chamber music. His bassoon music was performed by the influential bassoonist Étienne Ozi, as well as himself. He is well known for publishing a method for the one-key flute. Later in life he taught at the Paris Conservatoire as a professor of flute. He is now credited with writing what was thought to be Mozart's second bassoon concerto.

Devienne's music helped raise the level of wind playing in France during his lifetime. He wrote mainly concertos, sinfonie concertante, and opera. Many of his works feature elegant melodies without much thematic development. There are frequently passages that show off the technical abilities of the instrument he is writing for.

Sonata No. 5 in G Minor op. 24

This sonata is part of a collection of six sonatas for bassoon. The other sonatas are in C Major, G Major, and F Major. This is the only minor-key sonata in the set. It is also one of the most frequently performed of the six.

Resources

Montgomery, William Layton. "The Life and Works of François Devienne, 1759-1803." PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1975.

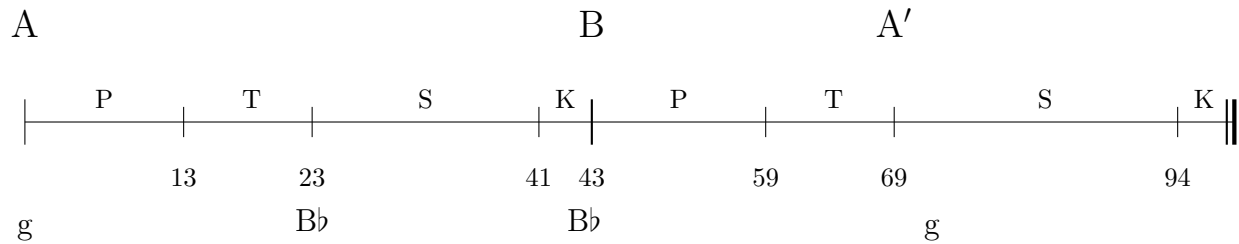
- Gives biographical information about Devienne, as well as the location of all his manuscripts.

Recordings

- "François Devienne: Six Sonatas for Bassoon and Basso Continuo op. 24" by Klaus Thunemann
- "François Devienne: Sonates op. 24 pour Basson avec Accompagnement de Basse" by Mathieu Lussier
- "François Devienne: Six Sonatas pour un Basson avec un Accompagnement de Basse" by Dany Bond (Period Instruments)

Movement 1

Continuous Rounded Binary



Pedagogical Issues

In general, notes without an articulation should be on the shorter side and detached. This is especially true in the case of pickup notes, such as those in measure 12 or 18, as well as repeated notes like measure 24 or 50.

Measure 27 presents some challenges in articulation as well as intonation. The beginning of the B flat needs to be clean and not harsh. This can more easily be achieved by using an open “oh” voicing and ensuring that there is no downward pressure from the upper lip. Tilting the head up a small amount can help this. To get to the high A flat, the syllable needs to change a little bit, but perhaps not as much as the distance between the notes implies. An “ah” syllable should be sufficient.

There are many places where eighth notes are slurred together in a syncopated fashion, such as measure 28. Clipping the arrival note a little bit creates a nice effect and exaggerates the syncopation.

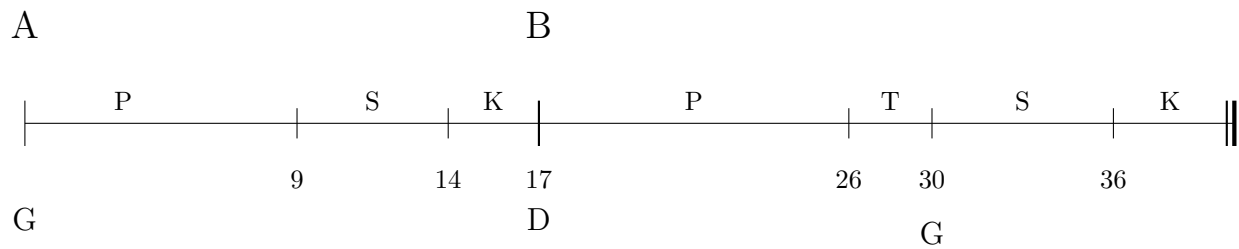
Measures 35 and 36 have some repeated leaps that can be difficult to play in tune. There should be voicing shifts between the octaves to ensure that the upper octave is high enough. The E flats especially will want to be low in intonation.

Depending on the edition there may be an error in measure 81. The dot should be on the eighth note, not the quarter note.

Similar to measures 35 and 36, measures 86, 87, 90, and 91 have large skips. Here the important thing is to emphasize the syncopated bass notes. The bassoon is without accompaniment here, so it is possible to take a little bit of time, but not much. Care should be taken to ensure that the voicing of the high G throughout the passage.

Movement 2

Continuous Simple Binary



Pedagogical Issues

To match the dolce character of this movement, the notes without articulation markings should be more connected than in the first movement.

In the first complete measure, there should be a tapered release of the first D to create some space before the second D.

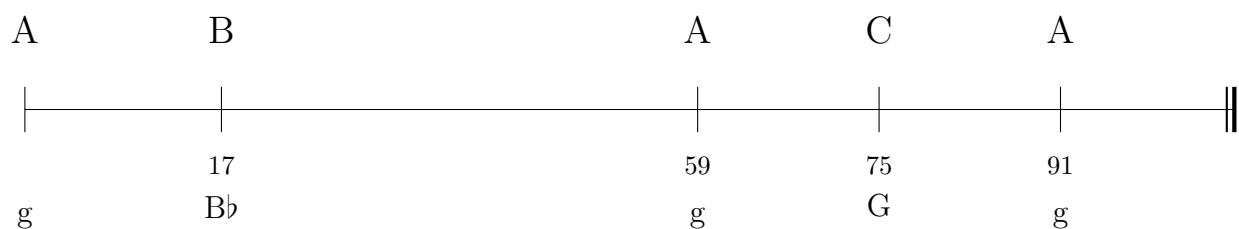
The first phrase ends on the second beat of measure 4, and then immediately begins the pickups to the next phrase in the repeated Ds. These Ds should start quietly, and then grow to the arrival at measure 5. They should also have some separation between them.

The skip in measure 27 requires a large change in voicing. The low C sharp key can be added to the low E to help lower the pitch, but it also needs to have a lower syllable. The high E needs a much higher syllable to be a true octave to the low E. It may also help to only use the third finger in the right hand to raise the high E.

There are many suspensions and appoggiaturas at the ends of phrases. These should be given more weight and resolve to a softer, lighter note.

Movement 3

Rondo



Pedagogical Issues

Each of the rondo theme sections ends in three repeated Gs. These should all be separate and decaying from the first one. They should not grow to accent the last one.

There should be a change in mood at measure 49. It is more inward, and reflective than the active music before it. A sudden meno mosso can also help with this. There should be lots of rubato in the repeated D and C sharps in measures 56 through 58 heading into the rondo theme.

The Majeur section should be more gallant and grandiose in character. The slur two tongue two articulation gives it some bounce and levity.

In the second ending of the Majeur section time can be taken after the first note. This gives the return of the rondo theme more musical drama.

Other Works for Bassoon by Devienne

Concertos

Concerto No. 1 in C Major

Concerto No. 2 in B Flat Major

Concerto No. 3 in F Major

Concerto No. 4 in C Major

Concerto No. 5 in B Flat Major

Sonatas

6 Sonatas for Bassoon and Basso Continuo op. 24

Sonata in C Major op. 1 for Flute, Bassoon, and Harpsichord

Duos

6 Duos for 2 Bassoons op. 3

12 Duos for Clarinet and Bassoon op. 21

Trios

Trio op. 19 No. 1 for 2 Flutes and Bassoon

3 Trios concertants op. 77 for 2 Flutes and Bassoon

6 Trios concertants op. 61 for Flute, Clarinet, and Bassoon

6 Trios op. 27 for 2 Clarinets and Bassoon

3 Trios op. 75 for 2 Clarinets and Bassoon

3 Trios for Flute, Bassoon, and Harpsichord

3 Trios for Bassoon, Horn, and Piano

6 Trios for Bassoon, Violin, and Violoncello

Quartets

3 Quartets op. 73 for Bassoon, Violin, Viola, and Violoncello

Sinfonie Concertante

Sinfonia Concertante No. 1 in F Major for Bassoon, Horn, and Orchestra

Sinfonia Concertante No. 2 in F Major for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, and Orchestra

Symphonie Concertante No. 2 in C Major for Oboe, Bassoon, and Orchestra

Sinfonia Concertante No. 3 in F Major for Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon and Orchestra

Sinfonia Concertante No. 4 in G Minor for Flute, Oboe, Bassoon, and Orchestra