C. P. E. Bach - Sanguineus and Melancholicus (1997)



01. C. P. E. Bach : Quartet in D Major, Wq 94 (1788) for flute, viola, cello, fortepiano : Allegretto [0:05:14.69] 02. Sehr langsam and ausgehalten [0:04:36.37] 03. Allegro di molto [0:04:55.86] 04. Larghetto from sonata in G Minor, Wq 88 (1759) for viola da gamba and harpsichord [0:06:19.42] 05. Sonata in C minor, 'Sanguineus and Melancholicus' Wq 161.4 (1749) : Allegretto - Presto [0:05:02.44] 06. Adagio [0:04:00.73] 07. Allegro [0:06:30.42] 08. Sonata in A minor, Wq 134 (1747) for solo flute : Poco Adagio [0:04:14.80] 09. Allegro [0:03:19.24] 10. Allegro [0:02:59.86] 11. Trio Sonata in C Major, Wq 147 (1731) for flute, violin, cello and harpsichord : Allegro [0:03:59.33] 12. Adagio [0:05:08.82] 13. Allegro [0:05:31.40] 14. Telemann : Allegro from Quadro in G Minor [0:01:54.86] 15. Boismortier : Allegro from Sonata in G Minor, Op. 34 [0:01:16.10] 16. Vivaldi : Allegro from Concerto in G Minor, RV 107 [0:02:12.56] 17. J.S. Bach : La Joye from Ouverture in D Major [0:01:13.40]
Florilegium: Ashley Solomon - Flute Rachel Podger, Lucy Russell - Violins Daniel Yeadon - Cello Neal Pres da Costa - Harpsichord, Fortepiano

More than half a century separates the earliest and the latest of the works here. The C major Trio Sonata was one of Bach's earliest compositions, written at the age of 17 more or less under his father's supervision, and the D major Quartet was composed in the last year of his life, while he was Music Director in Hamburg. The remaining items date from his time at the court of Frederick the Great. The C minor Sonata is extraordinary, a programmatic work 'portraying a conversation between a Sanguineus and a Melancholicus' who disagree throughout the first two movements, but the former's outlook prevails in the finale. The talented Florilegium players bring out to the full the bewilderingly diverse character of this sonata.

If the Sonata for unaccompanied flute was written for Frederick, as seems likely, he must have been quite skilled, able to cope with some virtuoso passagework. Ashley Solomon's performance is most persuasive. How far Carl Philipp developed is shown by the late quartet, an attractive composition which, besides promoting the keyboard (fortepiano here) from a mere continuo to prominent solo status, is already in the style of the Viennese classics in form, and

links the first two movements. The whole disc is strongly recommended. ---Gramophone Classical Music Guide, prestoclassical.co.uk

The Trio Sonata in C minor 'Sanguineus and Melancholicus' composed in 1749, is an attempt to show that instrumental music could have a meaning outside itself. Eighteenth-century aesthetic theory was rational, and music—especially instrumental music—was generally undervalued because it could not be translated into words. Bach set out to show that music could represent a dialogue, not just a single emotional state. For those who could not understand the language of music, he offered a translation. This may seem like an admission that his meaning is not as clear as he intended. In fact, without his clues, his general drift is clear; but the detailed programme includes a certain amount of amplification which the listener could supply only from his imagination.

In this work, the violins represent two of the four basic psychological types which had dominated medical theory since the ancient Greeks. Melancholy has retained its original meaning; the sanguinary man has a predominance of blood in his make-up which makes him ruddy-faced, courageous, hopeful and amorous.

The narrative of the first movement can be outlined as follows: Melancholicus makes the first statement in duple time, Allegretto and muted. The dominant half-close means that Sanguineus is asked whether he agrees with Melancholicus. The former, unmuted, makes it clear by a change of time (to a triple Presto) and key (from C minor to E flat major) that his opinion is different. Sanguineus soon deliberately moderates his jollity in an attempt to persuade Melancholicus, also ending with a question indicated by a dominant close. A brief pause is intended to give him time to cheer up the other. But Melancholicus relapses into his former mood. Sanguineus impatiently replies, restating his case, and breaks off with an invitation to the other to complete the phrase. But instead he interpolates a continuation of his own argument. Sanguineus is not sure whether Melancholicus is acting from malice, ignorance or forgetfulness; so, with some bitterness, since he has resisted persuasion twice, he shows him how the phrase should have continued. Melancholicus begins to relent, and makes a correct answer. But this difficult though small step (of only six notes) forces him into another pause to recover; then he returns to his original theme again. Sanguineus mocks him by comically imitating his thoughts, converting them to his rhythm. Here Melancholicus takes off the mute and follows the other, and they play together an extended section based on the Sanguineus subject. There is a pause; Sanguineus expects the other to lead, but he puts on his mute and reverts to his original topic, again ending with a question. Sanguineus replies with a contrary answer, but Melancholicus

answers his question with a snippet of his own hypothesis. Sanguineus angrily mimics it, expanding the compact phrase to span an octave. After a pause he starts again, and Melancholicus continues correctly for a few notes then slips again into his melancholy. Here Sanguineus, following the previous success of the method, plays on Melancholicus' sense of honour to win him over and scoffs at his ideas. He invites him again and Melancholicus follows him, without mute. But the same thought which has already distracted him brings back his melancholy. Sanguineus quickly draws him out of it. There is a section in which the players move together. Sanguineus has lost some of his fervour. But his flattery of Melancholicus gives rise to renewed melancholy. Sanguineus laughs at this. They alternate until Melancholicus falls into a deep sleep. Sanguineus continues to make fun of him, but stops twice to listen whether there is a reply and hears nothing. The first movement ends here; despite its programme, it has a coherent form, ABABA (though tonally more complex than that). The dialogue is confined to the A sections, which are considerably shorter than the time taken to describe them might suggest.

The second movement follows without a break, Melancholicus again playing muted. He starts mumbling to himself; Sanguineus replies frivolously. They continue, playing contrasting themes until (at the end of the movement) Sanguineus asks the other to join him. Getting nowhere, he asks him strongly (one single note); meeting only silence, he asks again more politely. Melancholicus, having removed his mute, lets himself be moved, and indicates his change of mind by imitating a six-note phrase of Sanguineus. Sanguineus continues it, Melancholicus repeats it to show his steadfastness, then both conclude the Adagio in unanimity. This unanimity remains throughout the Allegro; since Sanguineus has won the argument, he politely lets Melancholicus begin, and the two instruments converse in a friendly manner. ---Clifford Bartlett, hyperion-records.co.uk

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