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“ZIEGLER VARIATIONS”

ON THE GOLDBERG POLONAISES: IN SEARCH OF THE AUTHOR

By Maxim Serebrennikov

At the mention of the word “polonaise” many, probably, will initially recall music of the nineteenth century—compositions by Chopin, Wieniawski, and celebrated polonaises from the operas of Russian composers. However a century earlier this genre was no less, possibly even more, popular. Polonaises sounded at the balls of the aristocracy, they were frequently included in instrumental suites, and they appeared in great number in collections intended for amateurs and beginners.

One of these collections—24 *Polonaises in all keys* by Johann Gottlieb Goldberg (1727–1756)—was published for the first time in 1992 by the world-renowned Bach specialist Christoph Wolff, currently a professor at Harvard University and director of the Bach Archive in Leipzig.¹ As mentioned in the preface, the primary source for this edition is a transcription by a copyist at the Breitkopf publishing house (finished no later than 1768 according to catalogue records). The manuscript’s title page reads: “Polonoises. | composto | per il Cembalo. | del Sigr. Goldberg”².

Certainly, it is no coincidence that one whose expertise focuses on the life and works of J. S. Bach would show interest in this composition—Goldberg, according to contemporary witness, was considered to be one of the finest pupils of the German master. Furthermore, the idea of creating a collection of pieces to cover the full range of tonalities brings to mind Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier*.³

I discovered for myself the edition of Goldberg’s polonaises thanks to *L’ABC Musical* by Gottfried Kirchhoff (1685–1746), the contents of which inspired me toward studying the very relevant baroque phenomenon of writing for the full range of keys.⁴ My quest to search out every such work composed in the late-seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries unexpectedly led me to a collection whose title duplicated in near-entirety the title page of the edition of Goldberg’s polonaises: “Twenty-four Polonaises

in all keys for harpsichord, composed by Johann Gottfried Ziegler, Berlin, 1764” (Fig. 1).

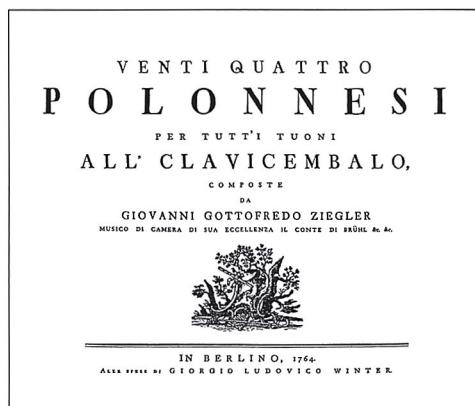


Fig. 1. J. G. Ziegler. 24 Polonaises in all keys (1764).⁵
Title page of the original edition.

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The greatest surprise, however, was still to come. Once it was possible to obtain a copy of this edition and to acquaint myself with the composition, I realized that the polonaises of Ziegler and those of Goldberg are largely the same composition.

Today the edition of Ziegler’s polonaises can be safely reckoned to a small number of rare books. According to *The International Inventory of Musical Sources* (RISM) only two copies exist, both kept in the Library of the Brussels Conservatory.⁶ It seems most likely that in the course of preparing Goldberg’s polonaises for publication, either Wolff had no knowledge of the existence of Ziegler’s edition or it did not attract his attention. It should also be noted that another Bach researcher, Peter Wollny, refers both to Goldberg’s manuscript and to Ziegler’s collection in his article devoted to the polonaises of W. F. Bach, but as to two distinct

compositions.⁷ Assumedly, the researcher was familiar with Ziegler's polonaises by title only. Unfortunately, very little is known about Ziegler's life and creative output. His name is not listed in any musical dictionary, including such basic encyclopedias as *The New Grove Dictionary* and *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. It is suggested that he was a relative of the German organist and composer Johann Gothilf Ziegler (1688–1747), who, like Goldberg, studied with J. S. Bach.⁸ But at our disposal there are also some exact facts. In 1775 another collection similar in idea to the 24 polonaises was published under Ziegler's name: *Minuets for keyboard in all keys*.⁹ Without the discovery of new documents shedding light on the biography of Johann Gottfried Ziegler, the only trustworthy testimony remains the title pages of his editions, which describe him as the court musician (*Cammermusicus*) under Heinrich, Count von Brühl (1700–1763), the powerful prime minister at the court of the king of Poland and Elector of Saxony, Augustus III (1696–1763).

Who is the true author of the polonaises: Goldberg or Ziegler?

It is a complex question. Since nothing has yet been discovered that can unconditionally confirm the authorship of one, it is impossible to reach a indisputable answer. Possibly, the surname of Goldberg is wrongly specified on the title page of the recovered manuscript, and the author is really Ziegler. We cannot exclude, however, the chance that the source which served as the basis for Ziegler's edition contains the mistake, thereby the polonaises belonging to Goldberg.

Perhaps, though, the current situation developed in a third way: the collection of polonaises was really composed by Goldberg; Ziegler later issued a reworking as his own creation, an act which, within the framework of baroque aesthetics, was not considered as plagiaristic but a quite acceptable practice. In support of this idea one can refer to the words of the famous German theorist Johann Mattheson (1681–1764) from his treatise *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739): "To borrow is permissible; however the borrower must repay with interest."¹⁰ The last of these options has an essential advantage. Goldberg, from 1751 until his death, was in service to the aforementioned Count von Brühl, seemingly a direct predecessor of Ziegler in the post of the court composer. It is, thus, logical to propose that Ziegler, upon entering the count's service, had full access to Goldberg's archival materials, including a manuscript of the polonaises.

In general, the problem of authorship arises quite often for those researching the music of the baroque era. It is known in a great number of other cases when the same compositions have been attributed to different composers and even issued under various names. Here is one of such example. The popular *Sonata for violin and cembalo in G Minor* (BWV 1020), performed more often today on flute, appears in manuscripts sometimes under the name of Johann Sebastian Bach, sometimes under that of his son Carl Philipp Emanuel. The question of this work's authorship remains open.¹¹

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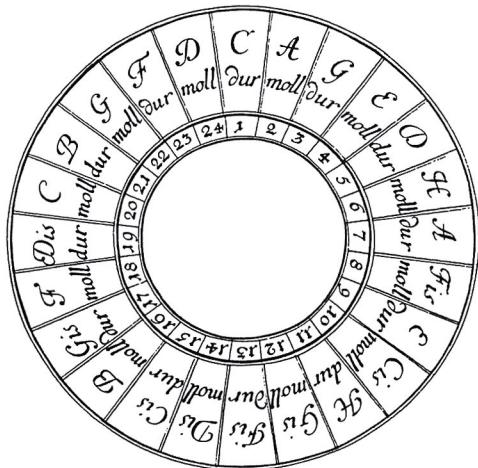


Fig. 2a. J. D. Heinichen's *Musicalischer Circul*, in *Der General-Bass in der Komposition* (Dressden, 1728), 837.

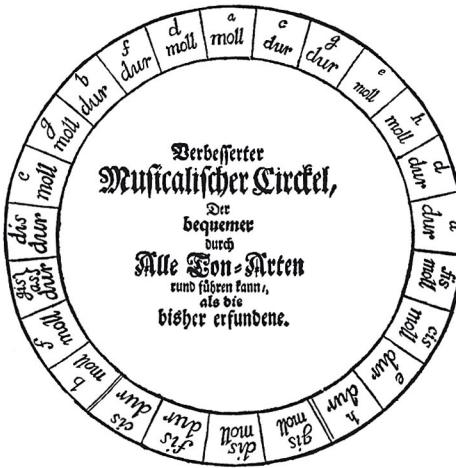


Fig. 2b. J. Mattheson's *Musicalischer Circkel*, in *Kleine General-Baß-Schule* (Hamburg, 1735), 131.

However, let us return to the discussion of the polonaises. Bear in mind once again that Ziegler's edition is not an exact copy of Goldberg's manuscript but a rewritten copy and, at that, a considerably improved variant.

First, the tonal plan of the collection is altered in the Ziegler edition. Goldberg's polonaises are structured on the circle of keys (Musicalischer Circul) offered by J. D. Heinichen in the treatise *Der General-Bass in der Composition* (1728) (see Fig. 2a). Pieces by Ziegler are ordered according to a later design—J. Mattheson's circle of keys from the manual *Kleine General-Bass-Schule* (1735) (see Fig. 2b).

At a glance, these circles essentially do not differ. In truth, both of them consist of pairs of relative keys, the sequence of which is subordinated by a circle of fifths. However they also have an essential difference. Heinichen starts with a Major and strictly keeps the order of modes in all pairs: Major always precedes a Minor. Mattheson, on the contrary, begins with a Minor and in due course changes the position of Major and Minor in various pairs. As a result the connection of keys between pairs appears to be different. Considering the functional and harmonious gravitations in the Mattheson it appears stronger (tonality at the I and V degrees), and in the Heinichen appears weaker (tonality at the I and VII degrees). (See table below)

Second, in the version attributed to Ziegler the keys of C, G, and D Major are represented by new pieces—more skilful and striking than the former, apparent in the use of more masterful and varied rhythmic and melodic figures. It is difficult to say today why Ziegler decided to replace three polonaises with others and why, in particular, these three. From an artistic point of view the pieces withdrawn do not seem lesser in quality to those which remain. Probably, in some way Ziegler wanted to augment his participation in this composition, but it is also possible that this was simply a defective copy in his possession—hence the substituted polonaises in the above-mentioned keys.

Heinichen (1728)	C-a - G-e - D-h - A-fis - E-cis etc.
Mattheson (1735)	a-C - G-e - h-D - A-fis - cis-E etc.



Ex. 1a. Polonaise in A Minor, b.3-4 : Goldberg



Ziegler



Ex. 2a. Polonaise in B Minor, b. 1-2 : Goldberg



Ziegler



Ex. 2b. Polonaise in A Major, b. 13-14 : Goldberg



Ziegler



Ex. 3. Polonaise Db Major, b.1-4 : Goldberg



Ziegler

And finally, all other polonaises were subjected to an editorial revision. Thus the degree of intervention of Ziegler in the musical text appears to have varied in the different polonaises. In one case he adds only grace notes, dynamics and octave duplication of the voice (*Example 1*). In others he individualizes the melodic and rhythmic pattern of the voices (*Example 2a*) or adds a supporting voice (*Example 2b*). At times he alters the whole fragment completely, keeping only the common harmonic scheme of the original (*Example 3*). As a consequence, the pieces of the collection became more interesting and attractive.

In closing we suggest that the reader become acquainted with a few polonaises from Ziegler's collection. In style and character they are typical *galanterie* pieces, i.e. for pleasant music making in the home, rather than for inclusion in a concert performance (German "Galanterie"—an object of little consequence). Incorporated into this collection, though, these miniatures serve a consequential role in the didactic task of mastering the full spectrum of keys.

On pages 14-15, are examples of the Polonaises, as edited by the author of this article. Further examples can be viewed at publications.earlymusica.org.

- 1 Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, *24 Polonaisen in allen Tonarten*. Ed. Christoph Wolff (Mainz: Schott, 1992).
- 2 The manuscript is located in the University Library of Lodz (Poland): Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Shelfmark: Sp. Hs. 1752/G.
- 3 The majority of musicians know Goldberg not as a composer, but as a character in the anecdotal history of the creation of *Aria with variations* by J. S. Bach (BWV 988)—the so-called "Goldberg Variations".
- 4 For more details about *L'ABC Musical* by Kirchhoff and a similar collection containing pieces "in all keys", see: Maxim Serebrennikov, "L'ABC Musical by Gottfried Kirchhoff: a work thought to be lost," *Musicus* 2 (2008), 20-25 [in Russian].
- 5 "Venti Quattro | POLONNESI | per tutt'i Tuoni | all' Clavicembalo, | composte | da | Giovanni Goffredo Ziegler | Musico di camera di sua eccellenza il conte di Brühl &c. &c. | In Berlino, 1764. | Alle spese di Giorgio Ludovico Winter."
- 6 Otto E. Albrecht and Karl-Heinz Schlager (comp, and ed.), *Einzeldrucke vor 1800, Répertoire international des sources musicales A/I*: 9 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1981), 310.
- 7 Peter Wollny, "...welche dem größten Concerte gleichen: the polonaises of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach," in *The Keyboard in Baroque Europe*, ed. Christopher Hogwood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 173.
- 8 Dieter Härtwig and Peter Wollny, "Ziegler, Johann Gottthilf," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2002): 27, 821.
- 9 "MENUETTEN | fürs Clavier | durch alle Töne, | von | Johann Gottfried Ziegler, | ehemaligen Cammermusicus in der gräf. Brühlischen Capelle. | Leipzig, [1775] | bey Bernhard Christoph Breitkopf und Sohn."). The date of the edition is given as in: Wilhelm Heinsius, *Allgemeines Bücher-Lexicon oder alphabeticches Verzeichniss der in Deutschland und den angrenzenden Ländern gedruckten Bücher, nebst beygesetzten Verlegern und Preisen*. Vol. 3 M-R (Leipzig, 1793), 149.
- 10 In the original: "Entlehnun ist eine erlaubte Sache; man muß aber das Entlehnte mit Zinsen erstatten". See Johann Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), 131.
- 11 For more details see: Tatiana Shabalina, "Sonatas for chamber ensemble by J. S. Bach: problems of textual criticism in connection with the history their of creation and with performance practice," (PhD, St Petersburg State Conservatory, 1992), 79–80 [in Russian].

Полонез XI / Polonnesi XI

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Полонез XV / Polonnesi XV

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“Ziegler Variations” on the “Goldberg Polonaises”: in search of the author



Полонез XIX / Polonnes XIX

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