

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation for the study

I have always had an acute interest in the organ works composed during the Baroque period, having gained firsthand experience through both listening to, and by extensive performance of a multitude of these works. My attendance of, and participation in international academies, workshops and various masterclasses, have also contributed more than significantly to my understanding of Baroque registration in its entirety. These enriching activities and other forms of exposure to this genre have led me to engage in an in-depth study of this field of music by researching the art of organ registration that developed during this period.

Georg Friedrich Kauffmann (1679-1735) is a composer who exerted significant influence on his contemporaries and, to a certain extent, upon the subsequent generation of musicians, as will be proved in this thesis. Kauffmann deserves greater appreciation: for centuries he has been neglected, and his compositions likewise deserve broader dissemination and exposure. His importance as a composer is evident in his greatest work, the *Harmonische Seelenlust* (Leipzig: 1733). This collection of 63 chorale preludes, based on well-known German hymns of the time, is one of the most important eighteenth-century primary sources on registration and its application in the extant repertoire. Kauffmann himself provided this work with some of the most detailed instructions for the combination of stops, hence giving us a unique insight into the little-known world of registration trends that existed in Germany during the Baroque.

Kauffmann has not only been neglected but almost totally disregarded by musicologists, organ scholars and biographers alike: the scant detail that exists about him testifies of this oblivion. The inevitable consequence of this dereliction is a profound scarcity in research studies into his life and works as a composer and performing musician.

1.2 Aim of the study

It is my intention to make a contribution to the study of an exceptional composer and organist who has, for almost three centuries, been neglected, and who has unfortunately been relegated into the shadows of many of his contemporaries, such as J.S. Bach. Independently considered, the impact that Kauffmann has had on the organ music scenarios of his time and hitherto, may have been sorely underrated.

Musicological studies on Kauffmann's style of registration specifically are very scant, and this aspect, in my opinion, deserves a closer and thorough scientific approach through a study of his most famous work, the *Harmonische Seelenlust*.

A critical and didactical study of the registrations in the *Harmonische Seelenlust* will seek to find and explain a better and more appropriate understanding of his singular contribution to the organ music and the registrations of his era. Moreover, this thesis will provide a rediscovery of his compositional output in the *Harmonische Seelenlust* and the extraordinary stylistic influence in terms of registration that he had on his contemporaries.

The aim of the study therefore is to provide a system of registration - primarily based on Kauffmann's individual style, through detailed analysis - to musicologists and performing organists who desire to have a practical guide to the historically informed practice of the *Harmonische Seelenlust*.

The evaluation process in this thesis will consequently allow the performing organist to interpret and practically apply the suggested principles and registrational trends of

Kauffmann in the organ works of other composers for the instrument, especially in an era in which detailed registration indications are a rare commodity.

1.3 Problem statement

Biographical information pertaining to Kauffmann is meagre and usually gleaned from publications and other citations that primarily focus on his teachers and his position as musician, but not on his rank as an organist-composer. Books, articles and other writings on Kauffmann specifically, are insufficient, and as far as I could determine, there does not exist a biography of him. In existing literature, he is more often than not only mentioned perfunctorily and then only in some complementary context with his peers. This situation consequently makes it difficult to assess and elaborate on aspects such as his formative years and his life as an organist.

1.4 Target group

A study of this nature and proportion will hopefully be of value to the performing organist, not only in a religious context, but also in the concert environment intended for a larger audience. This study will not only benefit the professional, but also the amateur organist in his/her quest to learn and gain experience in the field of historically informed practices. Musicologists specialising in the field of Baroque techniques and other historically related aspects, should find the study instructive and contributory to the literature covering this period of music.

1.5 Methodology

The study will primarily be of an empirical nature. The chorale preludes encompassed in the *Harmonische Seelenlust* will constitute the research basis.

Provided is a concise biography on Kauffmann and a variety of credential examples will be cited to verify and affirm his influence on his contemporaries.

The important characteristics of the *Harmonische Seelenlust* as a collection will enhance the study by a brief discussion of applicable aspects. These include the chorales that are used, Kauffmann's organ in Merseburg, tempo indications, ornaments and *affektenlehre* to complement the instructive nature of the thesis.

Research based on the treatises of registration in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will give the reader an adequate background and a framework to the different styles and tendencies during Kauffmann's tenure as composer and organist. This section in itself will enrich and complement the research basis to the extent that the reader will be provided with an ample appreciation of the significant primary principles on which the registration instructions in the *Harmonische Seelenlust* are embedded. These references will include writings of authoritative musicologists such as Johann Mattheson (1681-1764), Johann Friedrich Agricola (1720-1774) and Jacob Adlung (1699-1762).

The author will then ultimately set out to examine whether Kauffmann employs a particular system of registration in specific genres of chorale preludes. Establishing this, the versatility thereof will be examined to ascertain the practicality and applicability of these combinations on actual corresponding works of his contemporaries.