*Sonata in G Major* and *Allegro ou Presto in A Major*

By Maria Teresa Agnesi (1720-1795) Edited by Barbara Harbach

The keyboard music of eighteenth century women composers is not widely known. Their music is excit-ing and challenging, but often lies neglected in forgotten attics and remote storage areas of libraries. Often, specific biographical information is unknown, though certain generalizations can be made about their lives. Often coming from musical families and having started their musical training at an early age, they generally became virtuosic performers and composers while still young; their enthusiasm and de-termination is understandable, especially since most were expected to give up composition and perfor-mance after marriage. These women were all active keyboardists as well as vocalists, interacting with prominent musicians and composers in public concerts and private salons.

Little information is available about Maria Teresa Agnesi (1720-1795), an Italian composer, singer, harpsi-chordist, and librettist. She was known primarily for her operas, possibly writing the librettos for three of her seven operas. She was apparently well-known at the courts of Vienna and Dresden. Besides her extant opera compositions, she wrote arias, concertos, and a few keyboard pieces. In 1752 she married Pier Antonio Pinottini.

The two pieces in this volume are *Sonata in G Major,* and *Allegro ou Presto in A Major.* Both of these short compositions are similar in style to those of Domenico Scarlatti with rounded binary form containing one theme, technically demanding arpeggios, appoggiaturas, suspensions, no dynamic indications, a few trill signs and grace notes, some Alberti bass accompaniment, and a few diminished chords. Most of the writing occurs in the middle-range of the keyboard. Both of the pieces are in the dance meters of 3/8 and 6/8, respectively.

*Sonata in G Major* has written-out turns and alternate-hand arpeggios. The grace note suspensions or appoggiaturas may be executed on the beat. The *Allegro ou Presto* is virtuosic in style with many passages of hand crossings for a range of two octaves for the arpeggios. In the right hand of measures 32 and 33, the slash on the second half of beat four may be interpreted as a *tirata,* an ornamental scale-like design starting a third below the written note.

These two pieces are a fascinating addition in the study of women keyboard composers of the eighteenth century such as Elisabetta de Gambarini, Elizabeth Turner, Elizabeth Hardin, Jane Freer, Elizabeth Weichsell Billington, Anna Bon, Jane Savage, Maria Hester Park, Cecilia Barthèlèmon, Hélène Montgeroult, Marie Bigot, and Madame de Villeblanche (available from Vivace Press). Many of these women were child prodigies, singers, and often acclaimed during their lifetimes. Unfortunately, these women were forgot-ten and overlooked in the succeeding years by music historians. Each woman composer that is recovered and her music published and made available for the first time since the eighteenth century provides another link in the history of women composers.

A manuscript of the *Sonata in G Major* was obtained from the Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe, and the *Allegro ou Presto* from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin.

Editor's Note: This performing edition is an Urtext in which few ornaments, phrasing, articulation, or dynamics have been added to the score that were not originally provided by the composer. Each per-former may determine these details following the composer's indications. However, the editor has uni-fied ornaments, phrasing, articulation, and dynamics within passages or in restatements except where the composer clearly wanted variety with each recurrence. Likewise, obvious harmonic uniformity was provided by the editor (for example, where chromatic alterations were not carried out consistently in the original edition within passages or chords). Unnecessary accidentals were omitted, and the notation was altered occasionally to conform to modern standards.

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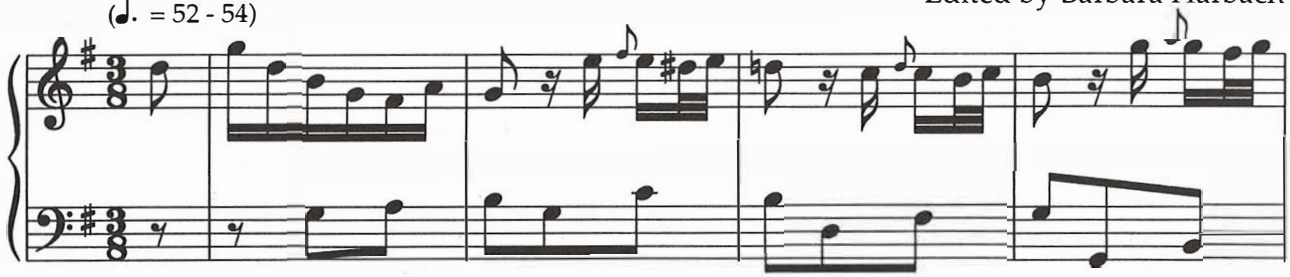
# Sonata in G Major

MARIA TERESA AGNESI
Edited by Barbara Harbach

(♩. = 52 - 54)



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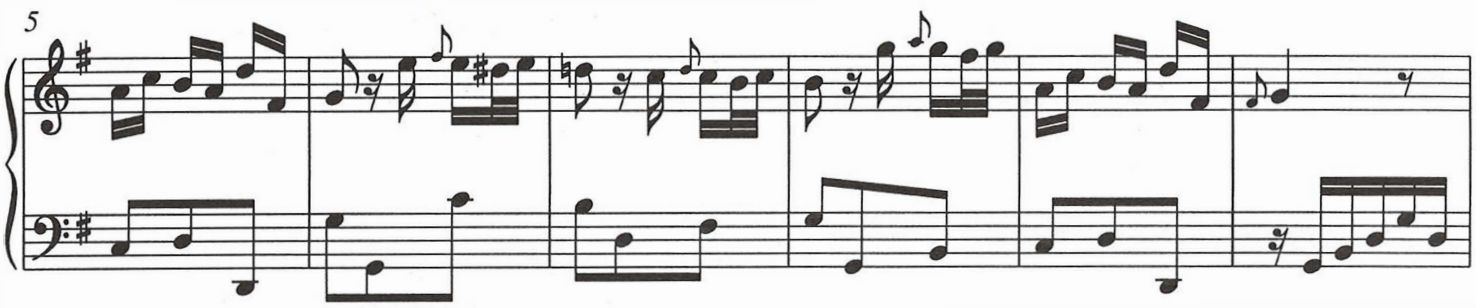

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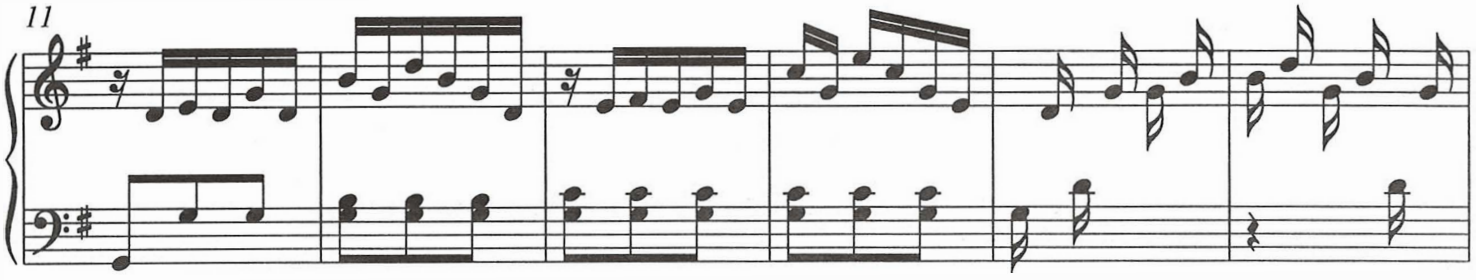

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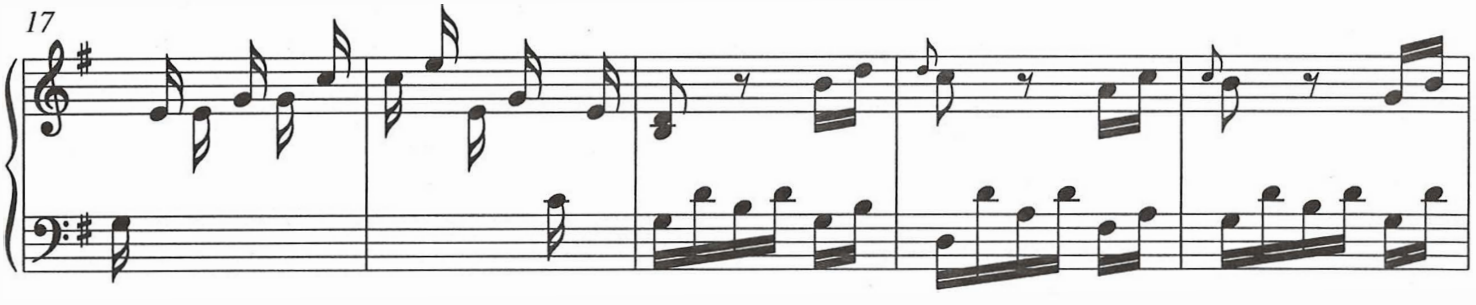

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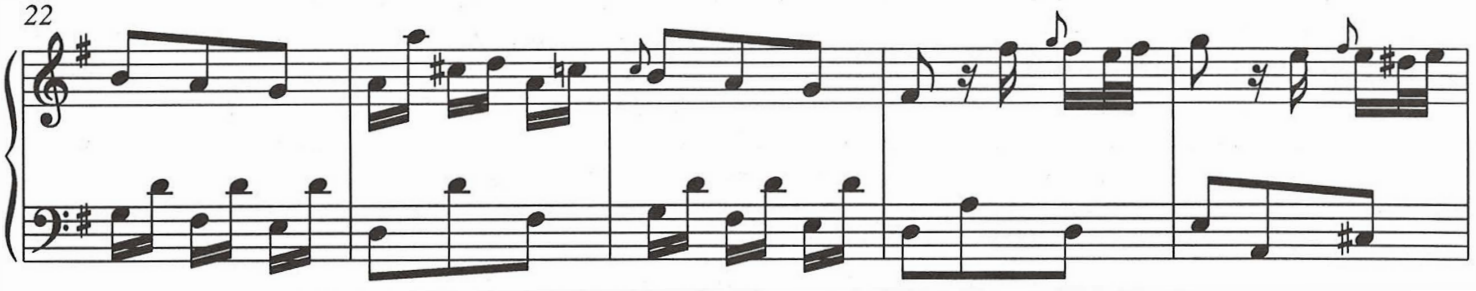

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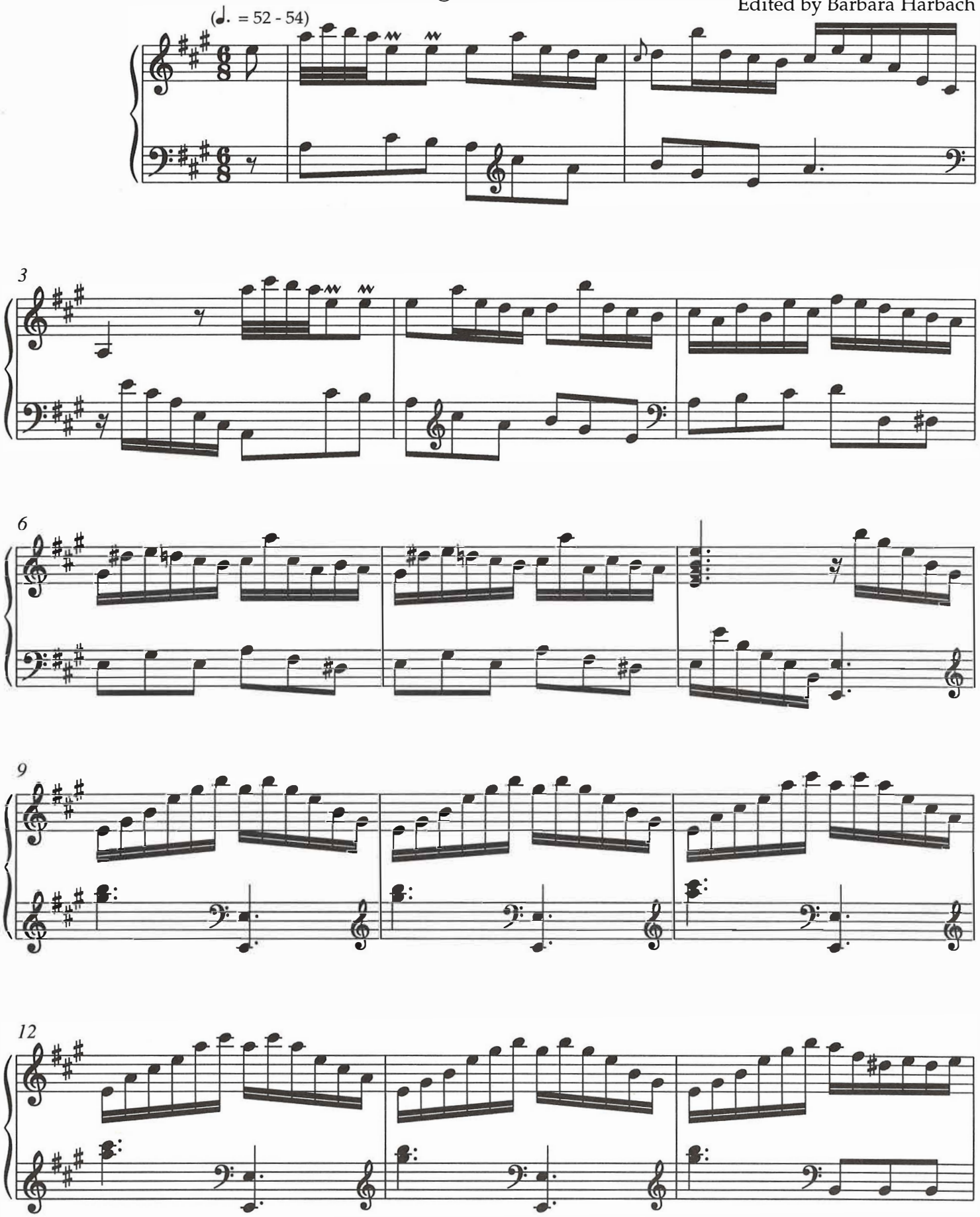
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