THE ART OF THE GROUND ROUND
(S.1.19/Ib.)
For Three Baritones
and Discontinuo

P.D.Q. BACH
(1807-1742)?

Squarely Edited by
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PROGRAM NOTE

P.D.Q. Bach was unusual among eighteenth century composers as eighteenth century composers were among him. Perhaps because of this isolation, this last and least of the towering Johann Sebastian Bach's numerous offspring wrote a great body of music that is characterized by its lack of body and greatness.

THE ART OF THE GROUND ROUND is uniquely typical among P.D.Q.'s works, especially in its use of the discontinue. Most baroque pieces had a so-called continuo part, which consisted of a bass line with chord symbols, to be played by a bass instrument and a keyboard; the left hand on the keyboard played the bass line and the right hand improvised on the basis of the chord symbols. P.D.Q. Bach's problem was that towards the end of his life he got so fat that he couldn't reach the keyboard simultaneously with both hands. So he simply played the bass line and forgot about the improvising (which was the harder part anyway), or probably more often didn't play at all, leaving the bass line to the bass instrument and himself free to drink beer.

A ground round is a round sung over a ground, or repeated bass line. Its use is as old as it is infrequent, and in fact one of the oldest notated pieces of English music is the famous ground round, Sumer is icumen in. Most of the rounds in THE ART OF THE GROUND ROUND are of a type fancied by certain sixteenth and seventeenth century English composers: they reveal, when sung together as a round, levels of meaning that are not apparent when the parts are sung individually. Whether P.D.Q. knew what he was doing, or whether the hidden meanings were accidental, is a moot point, as is almost everything he ever did. In fact, one of the many revolutionary aspects of this much and understandably neglected composer is that, years before the blossoming of romantic "atmosphere" record albums, P.D.Q. Bach was writing moot music.

PERFORMANCE NOTE

THE ART OF THE GROUND ROUND may be sung by three soloists or by a chorus of men. Obviously the larger the chorus, the greater the attention given to enunciation.

It should be decided beforehand how many times each round is to be sung through, or a leader may use a signal to indicate that everyone should stop at the next (Fine). In all cases everyone should end simultaneously (at the same point in the score), not by dropping out one voice at a time.

Rounds 1, 2 and 4 should be sung through in their entirety as solos (or in unison) and then sung as rounds. When singing round 6, the first singer should be heard more prominently than the rest until he has completed singing all three sections. Then all three voices should equalize dynamics.

The discontinue should only be played by one or more orchestral bass instruments (cello, bassoon, etc.) and not improvised on a keyboard instrument. Some variety is desirable when more than one type of instrument is used. For instance: cello only on rounds 1 and 3; bassoon only on round 5; cello and bassoon on rounds 2, 4 and 6.
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1. Loving Is as Easy

Allegro

A

Loving is as easy as falling off a log; A

B

When you're hot you know you're hot, And

C

Cold, cold, loving is

Discontinuo

(Fine)

Cat'll love a cat and a dog'll love a dog, dog,

(Fine)

when you're not you're not hot.

(Fine)

hard, but hot, hot.

(Fine)

To B

To C

To A

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2. Please, Kind Sir

(2 Parts)

Allegro moderato

Please, (Fine) kind sir, that portrait I

Very well, it can be arranged. If you

see, if that’s your daughter, please,
sit you down, make yourself at home

sent her to me. Look! Her

while she’s

*Trill starts on principal note.

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face could launch a thousand ships,
dressing, She'll be down in a jiffy, She's

Look! Her face could launch a thousand ships,
dressing, She'll be down in a

sand ships, thousand ships, thousand ships, thousand ships.
jiffy, jiffy, jiffy, jiffy.

To B
To A
Largo

Jane,

(Fine)

hair is your crown,

(Fine)

day,

that you remove when you retire

Discontinuo

Jane,

breath is like down,

with your wind of a compost heap on fire
you are my eyes black as nuns, and your like nuns, they cross themselves each day

queen.

face like the sun's, You are my set over Pittsburgh, U. S. A.

For your

To B

To C

To A

Oh,
4. Who, Oh Who

Allegro

Who, oh who

why should a boy like I hang a-

I heard some

wants me? Whenever I come round when I could be off to

one say the other day, "Re-
home

moth-er

shoes

me a-way,

war?

War,

War, war is hell.

mem-ber that your

ar-my wants you, your

(Fine)

ar-my wants you, your

ar-my

me a-way, Why? Why? Oh

war is hell. But so is peace.

wants you, your ar-my wants you now?"
5. Golly, Golly, Oh

Andante

**A**

Gol-ly, gol-ly, oh my

**B**

Did you ev-er

**C**

Hol-ly cow! Jeez Lou-

Discontinuo

sostenuto

gosh!

Gol-ly, gol-ly,

hear of such a thing? Oh____

ise!

Man a-live!

(non staccato)
my oh my! Golly, golly, boy, that really takes the cake! Well I declare! Now I've seen every thing!
goodness sake alive! Can never ever saw the likes Well I'll be! Will you

(Fine) (no )
you beat that! (Fine)
of that! (Fine)
look at that! (Fine) (no )

To B
To C
To A

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6. Nellie Is a Nice Girl

Allegro

A

Nellie is a nice girl,
but Hannah is a
Sammy is a singer and a good one too.

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo

horrible prude.

Doo bee doo bee doo.
Show it to him once and he will

Doo, Bum buh-dub-bum buh-dub

simile

Paul is a policeman,
but Peter is a

sing it through.
Doo-bee doo-bee doo-bee doo.

buh-buh-buh-buh-buh (etc.)

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pimp - ly and rude young
Doo-bee doo-bee doo.
He will do his dut-y and his

buh Al-lons, en-fants de

Last time to Coda
To B

man.
Last time to Coda
To C

dut-y is his doo-bee doo-bee doo.
Doo

la pa-tri-

Last time to Coda
To A

Last time to Coda

Coda

O-y veh.

O-y veh.
e! Le jour de gloire est ar-rivé.