

***Trio Dialogues, Op. 31, No. 1 (1801)***

**Mathieu-Frederic Blasius**

The *Trio Dialogues Op. 31, No. 1* is only in two movements. The first in an early sonata-rondo form and the second is a precursor of the scherzo-trio form with rondo form influences. Characterized by their sunny nature, both movements are uncomplicated and charming, full of good spirits and fun with virtuoso moments for each player.

Mathieu-Frederic Blasius (1758–1829) was born in Lauterbourg within the Alsace region of France, one of three brothers who became noted musicians. As a youth, Blasius studied violin and clarinet and was later described in encyclopedias of the time as a virtuoso on both. Blasius soon became active in the musical life of Strasbourg. Because of the proximity of Mannheim, there was much contact between musicians of those cities which greatly influenced Blasius and other composers in Strasbourg.

From 1784–1790 Blasius performed in concert tours with his brothers and played in Paris at a *Concert Spirituel* concert introducing a violin concerto he had composed. The Blasius brothers soon became quite active in Parisian music circles and were part of the *alsacienne colonel* (Alsatian Colony) which included a significant number of Alsatian musicians who immigrated to Paris in the last half of the eighteenth century.

Blasius' first successes were in opera, both as a composer and as the music director of the *Comedie-Italienne* which later became the *Opera Comique*. From 1793–1795 he was a member of the music corps of the National Guard Band whose members taught at a school which trained young musicians for military bands; the school later merged with another school to become the *Conservatoire National de Musique*. There Blasius taught violin and clarinet for many years in addition to fulfilling his positions as conductor of the *Opera Comique* and of military bands under Napoleon. With the restoration of Louis XVIII in 1814, Blasius became a member of the king's private orchestra as well as director and composer for the Imperial Guard.

In addition to operas and works for wind band, Blasius wrote many instrumental and chamber works: violin and clarinet concertos; string quartets; and duos, trios, and quartets for various combinations often involving winds. He was a highly regarded, successful, and well-known all-round musician. As a composer, performer and teacher, he earned great respect not only in Parisian music circles but throughout the world.