

WILLIAM FLACKTON:

EARLY ENGLISH ADVOCATE FOR THE VIOLA

by Kathryn Steely

The viola has had a checkered past as a solo instrument; a history influenced by changing musical styles and the rise in demand for brilliance and projection in expanding concert venues. There were, of course, masterful players and composers along the way who recognized the unique tonal capabilities of the viola; yet, the relatively small number of works written specifically for viola by well-known composers prior to the twentieth century demonstrates an early history of isolated interest.

However, violists looking for authentic works exhibiting elegant Baroque style characteristics should not overlook the four little sonatas written specifically for viola by William Flackton and published in the 1770s. These works provide ample opportunity to explore simple yet elegant melodic textures in the viola's mid-range and even a chance to develop ornamentation skills so essential to this style.

Before we look at a more detailed outline of these works, first some thoughts about William Flackton, early advocate of the viola, a man who in his day hoped to encourage composers to follow his lead and write for this "fine toned instrument."¹

Early History

Those perusing the February 1798 edition of London's *Gentleman's Magazine*² might have overlooked the following entry in the column reviewing recent "Marriages and Deaths of remarkable Persons." Yet local musicians and those interested in the book trade would surely have noted the passing of the reputable William Flackton:

1798 Jan 5. At Canterbury Mr. Wm. Flackton, upwards of fifty years an eminent bookseller and stationer in that city. If, to the witnesses of an exemplary life, spent in the practice of virtue and religion, it is a happiness to observe a death most truly comfortable, it was the lot of those who best knew him to be fully gratified ... He was the last of an ancient and reputable family, and of a decent, though not learned education. But, he had much cultivated his mind by reading, which, with musick and garden-ing, formed almost to the very last, the solace of his leisure hours. His conversation was instructive, pleasant, and intelligent; and the cheerfulness of his temper never left him until the lamp of life was extinguished. During the course of his long life he was honoured with the patronage of many good and respectable characters ... As a bookseller of the old school, he deserves to be spoken of with great respect; ... In the early part of his life, Mr. F. much studied and practiced musick, and, in his day, was reckoned a fine performer on the organ and violin. His compositions, though not suited, perhaps to the taste of the present age, were looked upon by his contemporaries as possessing a refined and elegant taste. He was passionately attached to sacred musick; and, in the choir books of Canterbury Cathedral, are to be found several of his anthems and services, bearing evident marks of judgement and feeling.... He selected and composed those beautiful hymns and psalms which are now used by them, and generally admired for their simple and affecting melodies. In pecuniary aid, also he was not wanting to that as well as other charities, private and public; and we may conclude his character by affirming, that he lived and died a warm friend, an honest and upright man.³

A native of Canterbury, William Flackton was born and lived his life in the shadow of the great Cathedral.

We have only sketchy details about Flackton's life, many of which are gleaned from church and business records, correspondence between Flackton and his patrons, and brief announcements in the newspapers and periodicals of the day. Baptized on March 27, 1709, in the parish of St. Alphege,⁴ he was the son of John Flackton, bricklayer and cathedral contractor by trade.⁵ Young William was admitted as a chorister at Canterbury Cathedral in 1718,⁶ and speculation based on the reference to Flackton's accomplishment on the organ and the violin in the obituary above and the practice of the day makes it likely that Flackton began his instrumental studies at an early age.

Flackton served a number of years as an apprentice with Edward Burgess, bookseller, stationer, and cathedral lay clerk.⁷ An announcement in the *Kentish Post* in 1727 reveals Flackton embarking on a new venture: setting up his own shop as a bookseller. He was eventually joined by his brother John at some point between 1747 and 1767, and according to the *Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers 1726–1775*, the firm published music and also held book auctions.⁸

Flackton was also an amateur musician and held the post of organist at St. Mary of Charity in Faversham from 1735–1752.⁹ He actively promoted music in the local community, serving as a principle organizer of public concerts in Canterbury through much of his life.¹⁰ Clearly his interests were wide-ranging. His dual roles as an active musician and as an astute businessman allowed him to circulate among some of the educated and cultural elite of his time.

His claim to fame, however, and his most enduring accomplishment was the publication of his opus 2 viola sonatas, likely the first English sonatas written specifically for that instrument to highlight its unique tonal capabilities.

Musical Environment

By the time Flackton published his Baroque-influenced opus 2 sonatas in 1770, winds of change were issuing in a new musical era. The Stamitz brothers, Carl and Anton, had just moved to Paris and were beginning to present their elegant Mannheim-influ-

enced work within the context of the Concert Spirituels.¹¹ Four years later, Carl Stamitz published several viola concertos in Paris, among them the well-known Concerto No. 1 in D Major. Within ten years of Flackton's first publication of the viola sonatas, Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante* (1779–80) and Zelter's *Concerto for Viola* (1779) provided additional examples demonstrating a growing interest in the viola as a solo instrument. While these composers probably did not know of Flackton's work, Flackton would have been encouraged by this development.

Music publishing thrived in London during this period. Not only did the city offer a range of concert series and performances by many of the European masters, there was also a lively culture of local and household music-making. Amateurs provided a steady market for works published for these more intimate settings. While concerts featuring fashionable new works and virtuoso players were a regular occurrence, London was also the scene of a continued interest in "ancient" music,¹² a conservative movement that promoted earlier works of Purcell, Corelli, and Handel. For the amateur musician, tasteful and artistic music in this older Corelli style, with its simpler textures and less virtuosic treatment, was much in demand. These works provided models for Flackton's composition of the opus 2 sonatas.

The Viola Sonatas

Flackton's opus 2 sonatas were first published in 1770 with the title page bearing the inscription: "Six Solos, Three for a Violoncello and Three for Tenor,¹³ Accompanied Either with a Violoncello or Harpsichord, Composed by William Flackton, Opera II." (Ex. 1.)

This set was apparently well received. In 1776, Flackton published a second edition of the opus 2 collection, along with a supplement containing one additional sonata for cello and one additional sonata for viola (ex. 2). At the time of the second edition, one could purchase the original set of six sonatas; the newly published collection of eight solos, which included the original six plus the two new solos of the supplement; or just the supplement alone.

Example 1. Title page of the original opus 2 edition (image courtesy of the British Library Board, shelfmark number 004338602).

Six
SOLOS
Three for a
VIOLONCELLO
(and Three for a)
TENOR
Accompanied Either with a
Violoncello or Harpsichord
Composed by
William Flackton
Opera II. Price 4^s

LONDON. Printed for the Author and Sold by him in Canterbury, C. and S. Thompson N^o 75 St. Pauls Church Yard, M^r Randall in Catharine Street, M^{rs} Johnson and M^r Longman in Cheapside, M^r Bremner in the Strand, and M^r Welcker in Gerrard Street Soho. Where may be had, by the same Author, Six Trios for two Violins and Bass. Price 5^s — Six Lessons for the Harp^d. Price 4^s

Flackton's Objective

Flackton's aim in publishing these sonatas was to provide music for "utility" for "young practitioners" of the day, with the specific goal of bringing attention to the "tenor violin" (viola), an instrument with little available solo repertoire. His preface to the 1770 publication (ex. 3) reads:

These solos for a violoncello were composed originally for the use of a young gentleman, and are now published on a presumption of their utility to all young practitioners in general.

The solos for a tenor violin are intended to shew that instrument in a more conspicuous manner, than it has hitherto been accustomed; the part generally allotted to it being little more than a dull ripiano, an accessory or auxiliary, to fill up or compleat the harmony in full pieces of music; though it must be allowed, that at some particular times, it has been

permitted to accompany a song, and likewise to lead in a fugue; yet even then, it is assisted by one, or more instruments in unisons or octaves, to prevent, if possible, its being distinguished from any other instrument; or, if it happens to be heard but in so small a space as a bar or two, 'tis quickly overpowered again with a crowd of instruments, and lost in chorus.

Such is the present state of this fine toned instrument, owing, in some measure, to the want of solos, and other pieces of music, properly adapted to it†. The author takes this opportunity of acknowledging his particular obligations to Mr. Abel, for inspecting this work in manuscript before it went to the press; the publication of which, it is hoped, may be productive of other works of this kind from more able hands‡, and establish a higher veneration and taste for this excellent, tho' too much neglected instrument.*

*The greatest masters allow the tenor violin to have

Example 2. Title page of the 1776 Supplement Edition (image courtesy of the British Library Board, shelfmark number 004338604).

(S) (O) (L) (O) (S)
Two
One for a
Violoncello, and One for a Tenor,
Accompanied either with a
VIOLONCELLO or HARPSICHORD;
being a Supplement to (the second Edition of)
SIX SOLOS three for a VIOLONCELLO,
and three for a Tenor
Composed by
William Flackton
Pr. 7^s

LONDON. Printed and Sold by Mess: Thompson N^o 75. St. Pauls Church-Yard. Mess: Longman & C^o and M^{rs} Johnson in Cheapside, and by M^r Randall in Catharine Street and M^r Bremner in the Strand.

Where may be had by the same Author

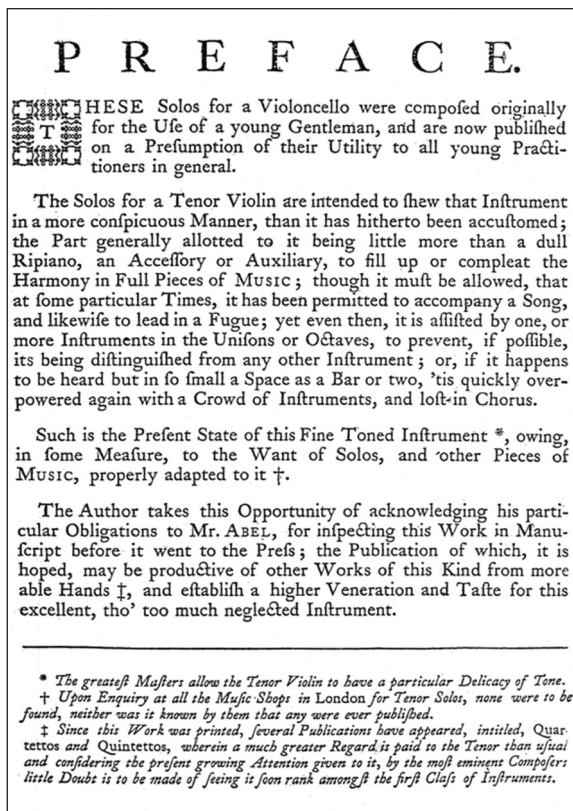
Six Solos three for a Violoncello and three for a Tenor	Price 4 ^s
Eight Solos being the above Six with the Supplement	Op 1. 4 ^s
Six Sonatas for two Violins and Bass	Op 2. 4 ^s
Six Overtures for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte	Op 3. 4 ^s
Six Lessons for the Harpsichord	Op 4. 4 ^s
A Cantata with Songs and Catches	Op 5. 4 ^s

a particular delicacy of tone.

†Upon enquiry at all the music shops in London for tenor solos, none were to be found, neither was it known by them that any were ever published.

‡Since this work was printed, several publications have appeared intituled, Quartettos and Quintettos, wherein a much greater regard is paid to the tenor than usual and considering the present growing attention given to it, by the most eminent composers little doubt is to be made of seeing it soon rank amongst the first class of instruments.¹⁴

Example 3. Preface of the original opus 2 edition (image courtesy of the British Library Board, shelfmark number 004338602).



Flackton's clear objective for the opus 2 collection was to provide music where there was little to be found. The preface commentary demonstrates this primary goal: bringing more attention to the tenor violin (viola) and the encouragement of the production of "other works of this kind from more able hands." His

comments give credence to the growing interest in the viola by the most "eminent composers," and he has the foresight to note that regard for the viola as a solo instrument was on the rise. Flackton is very clear about his advocacy of the viola in his call for prominent composers of the day to take note of this instrument's unique voice and provide new works for this "much neglected instrument."

The inclusion of the three cello sonatas at the beginning of the opus 2 set is curious, however. Flackton only briefly addresses them at the beginning of his preface, commenting that these works for cello were previously composed and included with the purpose of being useful to young practitioners. By contrast, his comments on the viola sonatas are extensive.

Economic reasons may have played a role in the inclusion of the cello sonatas. As a bookseller and tradesman, Flackton was, of course, sensitive to the business issues related to publishing, as well as to the compositional practice of presenting collections of works. Though a standard practice to publish in sets of six, the presentation of a mixed set, three for cello and three for viola, was probably a prudent business move as solos for the more popular instrument might ensure wider sales of this edition. As an amateur composer, the ready availability of this previously composed material may also have quickly filled out the collection and moved the project to earlier publication. Flackton acknowledges that his work had met with the approval of "Mr. Abel," presumably the well-known viola da gambist C. F. Abel who, along with Johann Christian Bach, was an active participant in the London musical scene.¹⁵ While the common assumption is that Abel, as a viola da gambist, may have been most interested in the cello sonatas, it is likely that Abel was also a fine upper string player and possibly even a violist himself.¹⁶

A More Conspicuous Manner

Was Flackton successful in reaching his goal of showing this "instrument in a more conspicuous manner"¹⁷ and in presenting solo material "properly adapted to it"?¹⁸ Clearly the answer is yes.

Not only does Flackton provide elegant solo material

appropriate to the viola's "delicacy of tone," he does so in an idiomatic fashion utilizing keys that are particularly resonant on the instrument. The viola is consistently presented as a solo and independent voice, unusual for the time period, taking advantage of opportunities to lead in the fugal and canonic movements and as the primary solo voice elsewhere.

While parts do not venture out of first position, Flackton does exploit the various ranges of the instrument across the different movements of the sonatas, typically using mid-range in the opening movements, mid- to higher-range in the Allegro movements, and lower strings in the minor-mode second minuets of these paired dance movements. He also provides some chordal treatment as well as double-stopping motion in the fugal movement of the G-Major Sonata, which most likely should be given bariolage treatment, as in the arpeggiated sections of Corelli's opus 5 sonatas.¹⁹ Further, there are many opportunities to develop ornamentation, as Flackton provides examples of both written-out ornaments as well as additional openings to try one's hand with this expected skill.

Style Characteristics

Flackton's writing reflects an earlier style in the use of continuo and figured bass and in the form and structure of these sonatas. At the same time, they demonstrate a sense of "refined elegance and good taste" referred to in the *Gentleman's Magazine* obituary, without the thicker textures and extensive use of contrapuntal elements of the late Baroque.

Flackton's treatment of melody is graceful, exhibiting the same "simple and affecting" style identified by the obituary writer.²⁰ Flackton shares his views on acquiring musical taste in a comment made in a 1760 letter to Lady Young, patroness and wife of Sir William Young, to whom the collection of opus 2 is dedicated: "Good taste [in music] is acquired best by hearing a diversity of compositions of the greatest masters of the most musical and political courts in Europe."²¹ Lady Young's reply serves as confirmation of Flackton's musical taste: "I believe you have often heard me say in those pieces of music you have now published there

are more passages of Elegant taste and delicate expression than are scarcely ever found in our modern compositions."²²

The Corelli Model

As a form, the sonata flourished in musical centers like Venice, Paris, Amsterdam, and London, where the patronage and society were favorable to amateur and independent instrumental music-making.²³ Flackton was well acquainted with the London scene, and his publications were released into this vibrant musical community. His sonatas are in the characteristic Baroque format, similar in scope to sets published by other prominent London composers, including C. F. Abel's "Six Easy Sonattas"²⁴ of 1771 for viola da gamba or violin, Abel's sonatas in three volumes from the Musicbook of the Countess of Pembroke,²⁵ and G. F. Handel's many sonatas published earlier in the century. The format is generally attributed to Corelli, who:

was largely responsible for establishing the slow-fast-slow-fast order of movements...

Typically the first movement is a relatively free, short Adagio in one continuous section or in binary design with repeated halves, quadruple meter, dotted rhythmic patterns, free imitation and considerable use of expressive suspensions and resolutions over and against the bass; the second movement is a loosely fugal Allegro, again in one continuous section or binary design, and the third and fourth movements are binary designs that resemble the saraband and gigue, respectively in all but name.²⁶

A review of movements within Flackton's opus 2 sonatas shows clear adherence to this model, opening with a slow movement, followed by an Allegro. Four of the eight sonatas include a slow movement that fills the sarabande position, and all eight close with some variation of either single or paired minuets (ex. 4). It is interesting to note that Flackton did not incorporate the use of the da capo in the minuets of his previously composed cello sonatas, opus 2, nos. 1–3. Use of the da capo minuet in all of the viola sonatas and

Example 4. Overview of movement titles from Flackton's op. 2 sonatas.

Sonata	Inst	Opening mvt	2 nd mvt	3 rd mvt	4 th mvt
No. 1 C Major	VC	Largo	Allegro moderato	Siciliano	Tempo di Minuetto, variation
No. 2 B-flat Major	VC	Siciliana	Allegro	Minuetto, variation	
No. 3 F Major	VC	Largo	Allegro moderato	Larghetto	Minuetto, variation
No. 4 C Major	VLA	Gratioso Largo	Allegro	Siciliana	Minuetto 1,2 (da capo)
No. 5 D Major	VLA	Adagio <i>*With half cadential fermata for cadenza</i>	Allegro	Minuetto primo/Minuetto 2 nd (da capo)	
No. 6 G Major	VLA	Andante <i>*With half cadential fermata for cadenza</i>	Allegro <i>*With half cadential fermata for cadenza</i>	Minuetto primo/Minuetto 2 nd (da capo)	
No. 7 D Minor	VC	Adagio <i>*With half cadential fermata for cadenza</i>	Allegro moderato	Minuet 1, 2 Variation (da capo)	
No. 8 C Minor	VLA	Adagio <i>*With half cadential fermata for cadenza</i>	Allegro moderato	Siciliana	Minuetto, variation (da capo)

in both sonatas of the supplement (opus 2 nos. 7–8) suggests that sonata no. 7 (cello) may have been composed during the time in which Flackton prepared the viola sonatas.

Flackton's writing style in opus 2, nos. 5–8 also took on a bit more flair with the inclusion of a half cadential fermata at the end of the opening movement, and in the case of the G-Major Sonata, at the end of the first movement as well as the fugal second movement. In some cases Flackton includes a short cadenza-like figure following the fermata. In other cases, the performer is left with the decision as to how much improvisation in the cadential figure might be appropriate.

We now turn to a more detailed look at the individual viola sonatas and characteristic detail in Flackton's opus 2.

C-Major Sonata, op. 2, no. 4

The C-Major Sonata, op. 2, no. 4, is the first of the viola sonatas, and its simple features and sunny outlook give a pleasing and satisfied character to the sonata as a whole. The first movement is dominated by two-bar gestures separated by rests that result in almost a regal or prim character as Flackton uses typical stock figures to promote the interplay of melodic fragments. Characterized by falling scalar gestures, the first movement seems almost a study in good manners!

In contrast, the second movement begins in a joyful declamatory style, high-spirited and energized through driving arpeggiated and scalar figures. Flackton uses short bursts of unison melodic motion between solo and accompanying voices to strengthen and give weight to cadences.

A siciliana is offered as a slow third movement, here in the parallel minor key, characterized by voices moving in true canon until the cadence preparation (ex. 5). This motion is much clearer when viewing the original version, to which no additional chordal realization has been added.

The C-Major Sonata closes with paired da capo minuets, with the

Example 5. Flackton, Viola Sonata, op. 2, no. 4, movt. III (Siciliana).

Siciliana

Siciliana

6

6

12

17

23

Example 6. Flackton, *Viola Sonata, op. 2, no. 5, movt. I, mm. 1–9.*

Adagio

1

4

6

8

Example 7. Flackton, *Viola Sonata, op. 2, no. 6, movt. I, mm. 12–18.*

The musical score for Example 7, Flackton, *Viola Sonata, op. 2, no. 6, movement I, measures 12–18*, is presented in three systems. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The notation includes a treble clef and a bass clef. The right hand (treble clef) features a continuous flow of sixteenth notes, often grouped in pairs or fours, with various slurs and trills. The left hand (bass clef) provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes, including some chords and single notes. Fingering numbers (1-5) and articulation marks (trills, slurs) are clearly indicated throughout the passage.

Minuetto Primo again referring back to the well-mannered style of the first movement. Flackton gives us a contrasting melodic variation characterized by flowing sixteenth notes with elegance and ease. Both the C-Major and the C-Minor Sonatas make use of this addition of a variation section, here inserted between Minuetto1 and Minuetto 2. In the C-Minor Sonata, the variation is offered in place of a Minuetto 2 while retaining the *da capo* instruction.

D-Major Sonata, op. 2, no. 5

The second viola sonata offered by Flackton, op. 2, no. 5, is the least lyrical of the set. Dominated by jaunty rhythmic and motivic motion, the first movement features a meandering melodic line, defined by dotted rhythms and large ascending leaps (ex. 6). These traits render this movement more instrumental in character, less vocally inspired.

The second movement uses the arpeggio as the main motive, open-

ing with buoyant rising D-major arpeggios, both straightforward and broken. The second half of the movement uses sequencing motives to develop the material. Paired minuets close out the sonata, again exploiting the characteristic large leap as part of the melodic treatment.

G-Major Sonata, op. 2, no. 6

Of the original three viola sonatas in opus 2, the G-Major Sonata, op. 2, no. 6, is offered as a finale to close out the set. In comparison to

Example 8. Flackton, *Viola Sonata, op. 2, no. 8, movt. III, mm. 16–37.*

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. Measure numbers 16, 22, 28, and 33 are indicated at the start of their respective systems. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. A trill is marked in measure 16. The word 'tasto' appears in measures 22 and 33. The score concludes with a double bar line in measure 37.

the previous two viola sonatas and to the opening three cello sonatas, this sonata is more fully developed and may be the most satisfying of all of these short works.

Flackton treats the first movement far more expressively, with a plaintive move to the relative minor key, adorned with written-out,

sweeping ornamental flourishes. The use of written-out ornamentation differs from Flackton's previous sonatas and is reminiscent of C. F. Abel's freely ornamented slow movements.

The movement ends with an implied closing adagio following the half cadential fermata (ex. 7).

While Flackton uses this technique at the end of the first movement of the D-Major Sonata, the overall result at the end of the G-Major Sonata is one of a grand finale following the ornamented setup.

For the second movement, Flackton offers a fugal Allegro, the only movement in the set to

exhibit this treatment. He again uses unison melodic motion between the solo and bass lines in strongly articulated quarter-note motion toward the end of the movement. The weighty treatment of this figure brings strength and finality to close the Allegro. While he uses this technique in short figures in the C-Major Sonata's Allegro movement, here the weight and length of the unison quarter-note line, along with use of heavy accent marks on each note, truly emphasize the point!

Flackton again closes the sonata with paired da capo minuets, this time using the parallel minor for the second minuet. The lightness and elegance of these closing movements, particularly the major-mode minuet, provide a charming close to the sonata.

C-Minor Sonata, op. 2, no. 8

Flackton explored the minor mode more fully in the two additional sonatas offered in the supplement of 1776. As with all of these works, looking at Flackton's work in its most elemental setting as a viola/cello duet reveals interesting detail that might be overlooked in a fully realized adaptation.

Flackton's bass-line motion is interesting in comparison to many of his mentor's works. His experience as an organist gave him a well-informed sense of balance and texture between voices. In general, the running bass lines in these opus 2 sonatas are more interactive

with the solo line and more directional than those one finds in similar works of C. F. Abel, Flackton's compositional authority. The C-Minor Sonata provides examples of these active bass lines, in particular the descending scalar motion including a chromatic line in bar six of the first movement. One expects more harmonic variety in a minor-mode setting, and Flackton does not disappoint.

The second movement is a rambunctious driving Allegro with longer phrase lines and accented unison motion at the cadence points to define the halves of the movement. To further energize this movement, Flackton uses a bit of syncopation over the bass line's repeated quarters in the middle of the second half.

Flackton makes some interesting choices in his treatment of the last two movements of the sonata. The use of G minor for the Siciliana third movement was certainly an unusual choice for a companion key, given the time period and the keys used in the previous sonatas. Might this be an indication of previously written material? Interesting features include a much closer relationship with the bass line than in previous slow movements, motion in parallel thirds and sixths, and an interesting use of syncopation and motion over a pedal tone in the second half of the movement (ex. 8).

The sonata comes to a close with a short da capo minuet and variation in 3/8 time with each section of these binary movements limited to eight bars apiece.

Clearly these works had a great deal to offer developing violists in Flackton's time. However, what options are available to modern players who want to explore these works?

Modern Viola Editions

Modern viola editions of the Flackton sonatas began to appear in the early 1940s as a result of Walter Bergmann's discovery of an original published edition located in the British Museum. A gifted continuo player, Bergmann had an interest in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music and began working for Schott Publishing Company, editing and realizing continuo parts.²⁷ Bergmann's edition of the G-Major Sonata in 1942 was the first modern publication, created in collaboration with Keith Cummings who adapted the viola part. Bergmann eventually followed with publications of the C-Major (1954) and C-Minor (1968) Sonatas.

Bergmann never provided a realization of the D-Major Sonata, perhaps because it is stylistically a bit different than the others with its somewhat more dense motivic motion with less melodic development. For the most part, Bergmann's realizations are light and tastefully done, with some capitalization on the rhythmic motives of the solo part reflected in his treatment of the keyboard part.

Many violists have probably also seen editions prepared by Renzo Sabatini who originally published a

set of realizations and adaptations for all four of the viola sonatas, attributed to “Anonym, 1700.”²⁸ He discovered the printed edition, minus the title page, in a collection of other sonata movements of unknown composers in the library of the Conservatorio S. Cecilia in Rome.²⁹ Sabatini commented that the tenor violin, “as one of the numerous varieties [sizes] of violas, which took the place between viola da gamba and viola da braccia, this instrument was noted in tenor-clef.”³⁰ This comment was either an oversight on Sabatini’s part regarding the tenor sonatas or possibly Sabatini may not have been looking at an original edition. The original prints housed in the British Library show all the tenor (viola) sonatas clearly in alto clef. The cello sonatas use a fair amount of tenor clef interspersed with bass clef; Sabatini may have been referencing the cello sonatas when he made this comment. Upon later comparison with the Flackton prints housed in the British Museum, Sabatini republished these works, adding Flackton’s preface and attributing them correctly to Flackton.

Sabatini’s editions are more pianistic and perhaps Romantic in treatment, with increased density and fuller harmonies in the keyboard part. Sabatini provides a significant addition of articulation markings, dynamics, reassigned octaves in the viola part, and freely developed new variations to Flackton’s original score.

Antony Cullen produced an edition of the C-Minor Sonata and published it through Alfred

Lengnick & Co. in 1955. This edition is fairly close to Flackton’s original, although Cullen has also added some articulation markings and provided some suggestions for treatment of ornamentation.

Finally, a more recent addition to the available modern editions was released in 1995, through Amadeus Verlag, with the continuo part realized by Willy Hess. This seems to be the most conservative of all editions in its closeness to the original print. The realization consists of basic chord progressions as outlined by the figured bass and as such does not reflect the rhythmically-motivated, perhaps ornamental interplay that a harpsichordist might add while realizing the figures. This edition might be useful for the less experienced keyboard player as a stepping-off point toward improvising small embellishments and flourishes while playing.

Filling a Void

As twenty-first-century violists, we are fortunate to have seen the flowering of viola repertoire in the previous century and have unprecedented access through wider dissemination and technological advances to a rich palette of viola works from many style periods. The fact remains, however, that we have limited choices in music written specifically for the viola during the late eighteenth century. William Flackton’s sonatas help to fill that void, providing new material to explore and charming repertoire to perform.

Learning, performing, and teaching a wide variety of styles

strengthens interpretive abilities and informs our playing as we master techniques appropriate to those styles. Exploring these works, as duos with cello or keyboard (harpsichord and organ as available, or piano) or as trios using both cello and keyboard, allows us to experience some of the unique textures and colors that Flackton hoped to exploit as natural characteristics of the viola. There is no better way to revive the memory of William Flackton than to learn and program these historically significant and elegant sonatas; works that highlight the unique voice of the viola.

¹ William Flackton, *Six Solos: Three for a Violoncello and Three for a Tenor Accompanied Either with a Violoncello or Harpsichord* (London: printed for the author and sold by him in Canterbury, C. and S. Thompson, Mr. Randall, Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Longman, Mr. Bremner, and Mr. Welcker, 1770), 1.

² *Gentleman’s Magazine* was a widely read English periodical published first in 1731. It covered news and matters ranging from the philosophical to the political and personal for the educated in society.

³ Obituary of remarkable Persons; with Biographical Anecdotes, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, February 1798, 170–71.

⁴ Luke Agati, *William Flackton 1709–1798: The Life and Times of a Canterbury Musician Organist at Faversham Parish Church* (Kent: Faversham

- Society, 2002), 1.
- ⁵ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Flackton, William,” by Watkins Shaw and Robert Ford, accessed June 22, 2010, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.
- ⁶ Agati, 1.
- ⁷ Shaw and Ford.
- ⁸ H. R. Plomer, C. H. Bushnell, and E. R. McC. Dix, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were at Work in England Scotland and Ireland from 1726 to 1775* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1968), 94.
- ⁹ Shaw and Ford.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Stamitz, Carl (Philipp),” by Eugene K. Wolf, accessed June 22, 2010, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.
- ¹² William Weber, “London: A City of Unrivalled Riches,” in *The Classical Era*, ed. Neal Zaslaw (London: MacMillan, 1989), 318.
- ¹³ The “tenor” is an early name (that was commonly in use in England and the United States during the eighteenth century) for the large-pattern viola.
- ¹⁴ Flackton, *Six Solos*, 1.
- ¹⁵ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Abel, Carl Friedrich,” by Walter Knappe, accessed June 22, 2010, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.
- ¹⁶ A review of the catalogue for auction after C. F. Abel’s death reveals that he had four fine violins, including an Amati, in his possession as well as a tenor and several violas da gamba. There is no mention of cellos in the collection of goods presented for sale. Of note also in Abel’s auction catalogue is a range of printed music, including the six sonatas by William Flackton. Apparently these works were sufficiently well regarded to specifically list them by name rather than to list them in a collection of works by “different authors” which appears later in the catalogue. A facsimile of Abel’s catalogue can be found in Stephen Roe’s “The Sale Catalogue of Carl Friedrich Abel (1787)” in *Music and the Book Trade from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote, 105–43 (London: British Library, 2008).
- ¹⁷ Flackton, *Six Solos*, 1.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ For an example of this treatment, see Corelli’s Sonata op. 5, no. 1, p. 2 in the Allegro movement. Here Corelli indicates “arpeggio” under the series of half-note triple stops. While Flackton does not include this indication, this treatment is not unusual. See Arcangelo Corelli, *Sonate a Violino e Violone o Cimbalo Opera Quinta* (London: Preston and Sons, 1789), 2.
- ²⁰ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 171.
- ²¹ Sarah Gray, “William Flackton, 1709–1798, Canterbury Bookseller and Musician,” in *The Mighty Engine: The Printing Press and Its Impact*, ed. Peter Isaac and Barry McKay (New Castle: St. Paul’s Bibliographies, 2000), 126.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ William S. Newman, “Sonata,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan Publishers Ltd. 1980), 17:481.
- ²⁴ Carl Friedrich Abel, *Six Easy Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Basso Continuo or Other Instruments* (Heidelberg: Edition Güntersberg, 2005).
- ²⁵ Carl Friedrich Abel, *Sonatas for the Viola da Gamba from the Musicbook of the Countess of Pembroke*, ed. George Houle, 3 vols. (Albany, CA: PRB Productions, 2006).
- ²⁶ Newman, 17:483–84.
- ²⁷ Anne Martin, *Musician for a While: A Biography of Walter Bergmann* (West Yorkshire, UK: Peacock Press, 2002), 29.
- ²⁸ [Flackton, William] *Drei Sonaten für Viola und Generalbass*, 3 vols.

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²⁹ Ibid., 1.

³⁰ Ibid.

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