

# Journal of the American Viola Society

Volume 27 Summer 2011 Online Issue





# Journal of the American Viola Society

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Summer 2011

Volume 27 Online Issue

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On the Cover:

**J. S. Bach**

*Chorale: Ich, dein betrübtes Kind*  
from the Cantata  
*Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut*  
BWV 199

Courtesy of The Royal Library  
(Denmark)

Det Kongelige Bibliotek,  
DKKk, mu 6701.0731

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# FROM THE EDITOR

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Bach! When musicians speak the name of Johann Sebastian Bach, the reverence is unmistakable. We are often exposed to Bach at an early point in our studies, and many musicians spend a lifetime trying to fully comprehend his genius. Wherever you are in your musical development, this issue is sure to provide new information to you about Bach and the viola.

Tom Tatton begins with familiar territory: Bach's cello suites. His article reviews sixteen available editions of Bach's cello suites transcribed for viola beginning with Louis Svecenski's 1916 edition. Tatton's chronological view illuminates how changes in performance practice and scholarship have affected the

approach to these works. This article is a must read, whether you need help in selecting the most appropriate edition for yourself or your students or for the useful notes accompanying the article.

Andrew Filmer takes a new approach to the familiar Sixth Brandenburg Concerto. His investigation into the role that timbre plays in this work led to experiments in alternative instrumentation with a new solution: using scordatura violas to replace the violas da gamba. Along with Andrew's detailed and thoughtful article, we are happy to include a video to accompany his research on the AVS's YouTube channel at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/americanviolasociety#p/u>.

As part of an effort to make more of Bach's original music for viola more widely available, this issue also includes a chorale movement from the cantata *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut*, BWV 199: Ich, dein betrübtes Kind for soprano, viola, and piano. The work is presented in its original version with a realization of the continuo part; just perfect for

playing with your favorite soprano and keyboardist. If you have not already seen our first Bach edition, be sure to look at the Sinfonia from the cantata *Gleichwie der Regen und Schnee vom Himmel fällt*, BWV 18, for four violas and continuo at: <http://americanviolasociety.org/resources/scores/multiple-violaensemble-music/>.

In our Alternative Styles Department, Nancy Wilson provides an excellent introduction to the art of ornamenting Baroque music. Nancy gives an overview of the symbols and resources to help you add grace (and good taste) to your Baroque playing. Accompanying the article are two movements from Telemann's Viola Concerto, ornamented by Nancy's husband, David Miller.

Rounding out our issue devoted to Bach, Carlos María Solare reviews several recordings of Bach's suites. We hope that you enjoy our salute to Bach and the viola!

Cordially,

David M. Bynog  
JAVS Editor

# FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Greetings! I am honored to write this first summer letter as incoming president. I gratefully acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the amazing predecessors who have held this position and helped steer the growth of our organization to its present state. Their contributions, insight, and spirit of service continually inspire me and the entire AVS Board.

The American Viola Society (AVS) and its activities have grown in magnitude over the last several years. The *Journal of the American Viola Society (JAVS)* continues to provide a vehicle for scholarship on the highest level. The articles always teach me something unique about our instrument, its repertoire and development, and the way we play and teach.

We continue to support the ever popular and educational congresses: the ultimate reunions for violists, aficionados, and fans. The next North American Congress will be held in

Rochester at the Eastman School of Music May 30–June 4, 2012. As you make next summer's plans, please mark your calendars. Hope to see you there!

The 13th Primrose International Viola Competition (PIVC) started our summer off with a buzz. As the oldest international competition for our instrument, it was at the forefront of technology this past June when people from around the world witnessed an explosion of talent in person and live online in HD. Over 15,000 unique visitors from 63 countries on 6 continents tuned in to watch incredible performances. The live scoring process was innovative, and both its effectiveness and controversy captivated global attention. Look for Dwight Pounds's article in the Fall *JAVS* for a review of the competition in detail. Fundraising continues for this event, so please keep an eye out for our fall auction. Items include a ten-night stay in the Montmartre area of Paris!

In addition to the recent success of the PIVC, the AVS supports local chapters through initiatives put into motion by past-president Juliet White-Smith. State chapters were invited to supply information for forms prepared and submitted to the IRS by the AVS's legal counsel to allow shared usage of our non-profit tax identification number for fundraising purposes. Once approved, this should allow chapters to more easily control and supplement their finances.

Our Viola Bank, chaired by Kathryn Plummer, is in full swing with loans being approved for the 2011–12

academic year. We do not have enough good instruments to fulfill the needs of these many talented youngsters, so if you have ideas on how to expand our bank, please contact us.

The second Gardner Composition Competition is coming up. Entries will be solicited this fall, and the winning work will be premiered at the upcoming Congress. Christine Rutledge chairs this committee, and current information about deadlines can be found on our website. Please pass this information along to the composers you know and admire.

These current projects reflect only a few of the many tasks our hard-working national board tackles year-round. However, without your continued support and belief in our organization we will not be able to offer what we do to violists both here and internationally. Thank you for your membership and donations, and please consider giving more if you can. Also, as you return from summer and settle into fall obligations, please share news of these projects with students, colleagues, and friends. Enthusiastically invite them to become part of our vibrant organization! And, as always, please feel free to share ideas and suggestions with me or any of our national board members.

Sincerely,

Nokuthula Ngwenyama,  
President

# **Bach Violoncello Suites Arranged for Viola: Available Editions Annotated**

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by **Thomas Tatton**

“To present yet another edition of the Bach Violoncello Suites arranged for viola might appear to be a rather questionable exercise in redundancy.”<sup>1</sup> So writes William Primrose in the opening sentence of his 1978 G. Schirmer edition. Since then, other viola editions have come to the fore including those by Leonard Davis (International, 1986), Stéphane Wiener (Gérard Bellaudot, 1990), Jerzy Kosmala (PMW, 1997), Simon Rowland-Jones (Edition Peters, 1998), Paolo Centurioni (Bèrben, 2001), Christine Rutledge (Linnet Press Editions, 2007), and Kenneth Martinson (Gems Music Publications, 2008). In total, there are at least sixteen viola editions of the suites available and in popular use today.<sup>2</sup> It is my purpose here to briefly describe these different editions in order to give the reader a sense of each arranger’s purpose, method, and scope.

The primary explanation for multiple editions is that there is no holograph manuscript of the suites, but two, often conflicting, contemporaneous copies: one copy by Anna Magdalena Bach (AMB) and the other by Johann Peter Kellner (JPK). These, plus later conflicting anonymous copies,<sup>3</sup> all led to the flawed Bach-Gesellschaft (B-G) edition of 1879.<sup>4</sup> This is exacerbated by Bach’s use of scordatura in the fifth suite<sup>5</sup>; the use of an unnamed five-stringed instrument (viola pomposa or violoncello piccolo) in the sixth suite,<sup>6</sup> and the multiple editions, each different, for violoncello!

Editions are prepared for a myriad of reasons. For Svecenski, his edition is most likely the first American edition for viola (1916). Bruno Giuranna’s edition was an effort to rebuild a devastated music education system in Italy after the Second World War.<sup>7</sup> William Primrose felt pressured by students and colleagues alike to provide his musical ideas—phrasings, bowings, fingerings, etc. There are also purely performance editions—Leonard Davis, Watson Forbes, Milton Katims, Samuel Lifschey, and William Primrose come to mind. These editions concentrate on the musical ideas used by the individual artists in his own performance. Recent editions have taken a more scholarly approach. These include Rutledge, Martinson, and Rowland-Jones. In truth, all editions fulfill multiple goals and ideals!

Experienced violists agree that these suites are as remarkable for what we do not know about them as they are for the many familiar and shared understandings, i.e., what we do know about them. Both perspectives loom large in the particulars of the popular editions in use today!

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Some fundamental concerns regarding the suites include:

1. When exactly the suites were written. Scholars are certain they were written in Cöthen between 1717 and 1723. Did Bach continue to work on them after his move to Leipzig? Were they written before or after the violin sonatas and partitas were completed in 1720? The organization of the cello suites seems to argue that they may have been written after the much more loosely organized violin sonatas and partitas—but scholars are not sure!
2. For whom did Bach write these remarkable pieces? Christian Bernhard Linike,<sup>8</sup> cellist, or Christian Ferdinand Abel, gambist and cellist; both appeared at the Cöthen court from Berlin around 1716—a year before Bach arrived. In truth, whomever they were written for must have been a fine musician.
3. We do not know for which instrument the sixth and last suite was written—viola pomposa or violoncello piccolo. Whichever it is, this poses problems and multiple possible solutions to both cellists and violists.
4. Scholars and performers alike continue to re-evaluate Baroque performance practice vis-à-vis these suites regarding choice of tempo, ornamentation, realizations, vibrato, and multiple other stylistic concerns. Discussions will continue far into the future, particularly if one is seeking an “authentic” performance experience.

The many shared understandings include:

1. Bach’s knowledge and understanding of the fundamental workings of the stringed instruments of his day comes close to encyclopedic! His use of resonation,<sup>9</sup> bariolage, sequence, variation, pedals, chords, and other physical possibilities on a stringed instrument are as complete as his treatment of fugue in *Art of the Fugue* or the cycle of major and minor keys in the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.
2. Bach was master of the international styles, forms, common ethos, and practices of his time. These included the French Overture, variation and suite forms, concerto styles, keyboard forms, the vocal styles (sans opera), and harmonic practices—including the Neapolitan chord (used in the fifth suite to produce some jaw-dropping dissonances)—in common use during the Baroque period!
3. Bach’s music was never “unknown” or lost. His music was simply not widely disseminated! He missed the appearance of the popular publishing houses by a generation (see footnote 2).
4. Bach’s music is powerful and compelling, and it explores the contrasts between rich and expressive versus minimal, thin, and stark. For an example of minimal, thin, and stark, examine the Sarabande of Suite No. 5, which is almost anorexic. Yet, the Sarabande in the sixth suite is rich and Rubenesque.

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5. Bach created music with an infinite variety of possible, valid, and artistic performance media and practices. These suites are arranged for guitar, trombone, horn, saxophone, and marimba—to name just a few. The suites also work just as well when arranged for a ten-year-old student violist or for the most diligent of mature, scholarly performers.
  6. Bach created a special moment in musical time and space (*kairos*)—different from ordinary time and space—where he created something special and unique, dramatically changing the course of music history. The violoncello suites are a part of that *kairos*!
  7. Each Bach suite demands a valid, conscious, and genuine effort to perform. Yet, there can never be an absolute, final expression. There can only be many such expressions, each true and beautiful, yet somehow incomplete.

### EDITION ANNOTATIONS

Parameters for comments include the very pedestrian issues of measure numbers, (for comparison and convenience),<sup>10</sup> page layout, and the amount of editing and suggestions (including bowings, fingerings, metronome markings), as well as general directions. Some of the more weighty issues include: the sources used; amount of explanation regarding note, articulation, and rhythm discrepancies between sources; and indications on how the difficulties were resolved. Of course, the previously mentioned problems of scordatura in Suite No. 5 and the difficult problem with the Suite No. 6 five-stringed instrument are included—retain the key of D major and re-write some parts to keep the brightness of D major or transpose to G major to keep the bariolage and double stops as written? Each edition approaches each suite with its own combination of information and solutions.

**Louis Svecenski** (1862–1926). Svecenski was principal viola of the Boston Symphony from 1885 until 1903 and founding violist of the Kneisel Quartet.

Publisher information: **G. Schirmer, Inc.**, Vol. 1278, 1916.

This 1916 edition is most likely the first American viola edition of the suites and is still available. There is no indication of sources and very brief remarks regarding performance directions/notations for the added bowings and fingerings. As in many early editions, the editor has included Italian tempo markings, e.g., Prelude to the Suite No. 1 is marked “Allegro moderato (quasi andante),” and Italian instructions within the body of the movements, e.g., molto cantabile, *diminuendo*, *ritardando*, etc. The optional dances in Suite No. 4 are labeled “Loure I and Loure II” rather than as in most other editions—Bourrées. There is no indication of scordatura in the fifth suite. The sixth suite is in D major (the original key) with unmarked alterations except for the Sarabande. The Sarabande is transposed to G major with this note on



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the bottom of the page: “The original key of this Sarabande is D major, in which it is impracticable for the viola; therefore it has been transposed to G major.”<sup>11</sup>

**Samuel Lifschey** (1889–1961). Lifschey was principal viola with the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1925–1955.

Publisher information: **G. Schirmer Inc.**, Vol. 1564, 1936.

The brief Preface explains that the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript, the Kellner manuscript, and the Bach-Gesellschaft edition were each consulted. Ample bowings and fingerings are included throughout. Again, movements have Italian tempo indications both at the head of and within the movements, e.g.: Prelude to Suite No. 1 is indicated *Allegro ma tranquillo*. Movements have metronome markings, e.g., Prelude to Suite No. 1 is marked quarter note = 66. There are a considerable number of clear indications throughout as to which notes were used when conflicts occurred between manuscripts. There is no indication of the scordatura tuning in Suite No. 5. Suite No. 6 is in D major and includes an excellent explanation of the five-string “viola pomposa.” There are indications of octave displacements where Lifschey has re-scored some parts including the entirety of the Sarabande. A Lifschey recording of the Suite No. 6 Gavottes are available on Vol. 1 of *The Recorded Viola*, recorded 1941; GEMM CDS 9148, Pearl.

**Watson Forbes** (1909–1997). Forbes was principal viola with the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Air Force Orchestra. He served as Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at the Royal Academy of Music and performed often as a chamber musician, principally with the Aeolian String Quartet.

Publisher information: **Chester Music**, J.W.C. 1401, 1951.

The brief Preface explains that Forbes consulted the Bach-Gesellschaft edition as well as the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript. Bowings and fingerings are included throughout. Movements have Italian tempo indications at the head of the movements and within, e.g., Prelude to Suite No. 1 is marked “*Molto moderato*.” Movements also have metronome markings, e.g., Prelude to Suite No. 1 is marked quarter note = 69. Movement timings are interesting and helpful. Included are numerous performance directions, e.g., legato stroke, upper half or lower half of bow, and directions on chord performance, etc. Suite No. 5 indicates the scordatura while using normal tuning with an informational note: “The notes of a few chords have had to be redistributed.”<sup>12</sup> Suite No. 6 has been transposed to G major: “This transcription has been freely adapted to keep the viola part within the compass similar to that employed in the previous suites.

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It has been found possible to reproduce, in this key, most of the chords as they appear in the original.”<sup>13</sup>

**Fritz Spindler** (1902–1984). Spindler performed with the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, Germany, from 1949 until 1967. He edited a great deal of music for viola from the 1930s well into the 1950s.

Publisher information: **Hofmeister** (two volumes), 7367 and 7376, 1953.

The Foreword, in German, indicates that both the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript and the Bach-Gesellschaft were consulted. The edition is interestingly done with two staves throughout: the top is the lightly fingered and bowed viola part, and the bottom is a clean modern notation copy of the Anna Magdalena manuscript cello part unedited with only slur indications as found in that manuscript (exs. 1a–1b). Footnotes indicate discrepancies between the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript and the Alfred Dörffel edition in the Bach-Gesellschaft. Suite No. 5 uses normal tuning for the viola part (upper score) and the scordatura tuning for the (lower score) cello part showing instantly which chord tones are left out because they are unplayable in normal tuning! Suite No. 6 transposes the viola part into G major while retaining the five-stringed tuning in D major for the cello part. A 1953 solution to problems struggled with by Martinson, Rutledge, and Rowland-Jones.

*Example 1a. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007, Prelude; mm. 1–2 (Spindler edition).*



*Example 1b. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007, Prelude; mm. 1–2 (Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript).*



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**Franz Schmidtner** (1913–1969). Schmidtner was the violist in the Hamburg String Quartet and the “Radelow Streichquartett,” both working in and around Hamburg.<sup>14</sup> He edited a number of works by Vieuxtemps, Paganini, Liszt, Rode, and Fiorillo; all published by Sikorski. He also wrote a fine viola exercise book—*Tägliche Studien*, in 1957—also published by Sikorski.

Publisher information: **Sikorski**, No. 316, 1955.

The brief Preface is in both German and English, which explains that his edition “is based on the autograph of the Prussian State Library”—the Anna Magdalena Bach copy.<sup>15</sup> The numbered measures are well-spaced with ample bowing and fingering suggestions. Measures 59–62 of the Suite No. 2 Prelude are arpeggiated without indication that in the Anna Magdalena manuscript the measures are dotted half notes (exs. 2–3). Suite No. 5 has no indication that the manuscript uses scordatura. Suite No. 6 is transposed to G major with no indication that the original key is D major.

*Example 2. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008, Prelude; mm. 59–63 (Schmidtner edition).*



*Example 3. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008, Prelude; mm. 59–63 (From the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript).*



**Robert Boulay** (1901–1978). Unfortunately, we know little about Robert Boulay except that he taught at the Paris Conservatoire and performed with the Paris Opera, all in the middle of the twentieth century. He wrote a very nice letter to Lionel Tertis on May 26, 1949, commenting enthusiastically about the positive qualities of the “Tertis Model” viola.<sup>16</sup>

Publisher information: **Alphonse Leduc**, A.L. 21779, 1962.

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There is no preface, and we have no indication of the sources used. This spacious and clean edition is lightly edited with bowings and fingerings. There are no suggestions regarding arpeggiation with the chords at the end of the second suite's Prelude. There is no indication of scordatura in Suite No. 5. Suite No. 6 is in D major; there is no indication of the use of a five-stringed instrument.

**Bruno Giuranna** (b. 1933). International recording artist, founding member of and frequent soloist with *I Musici*, professor at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik from 1983–98, International Chair at the Royal Academy of Music from 1995–96, frequent guest at the Marlboro festival, and Artistic Director of the Padova Chamber Orchestra.

Publisher information: **Ricordi**, E.R. 2667, 1962.

Although not indicated in the edition (there is no preface), Giuranna said he used a photocopy of the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript and an unspecified violoncello edition to create this edition. His efforts were directed at providing material for Italian student violists after World War II.<sup>17</sup> This edition is not highly edited. Bowings and some fingerings are provided with excellent spacing for the performer's own markings. Some dynamics and Italian musical instructions are included as well as a few notations regarding manuscript discrepancies. Suite No. 5 is written with normal tuning, but a brief explanation is provided regarding the original scordatura and indicating that some missing chord notes are not possible with normal tuning. Suite No. 6 is transcribed into G major. William Primrose endorsed this as "most satisfactory."<sup>18</sup>

**Milton Katims** (1909–2006). Milton Katims was a noted violist and arranger. He edited a large number of viola selections published by International Music Company, directed the Seattle Symphony from 1954 until 1976, and was the director of the University of Houston School of Music from 1976 until 1985. While at the University of Houston, he hosted the XI International Viola Congress in 1983.

Publisher information: **International Music Company**, No. 3081, 1971.

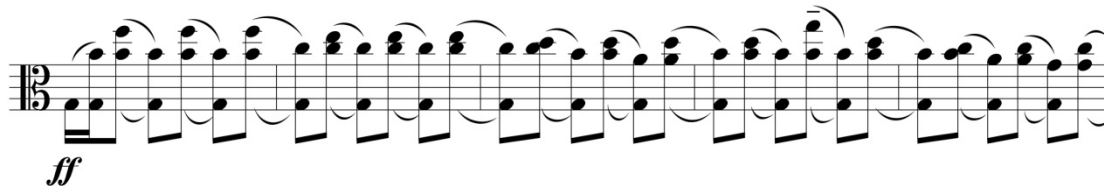
Katims used two main sources: a facsimile of the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript and a copy of the Bach-Gesellschaft edition. The brief "Editor's Note" explains Katims's performance markings. This somewhat busy and cluttered edition includes Italian tempo markings both at the head and within the movements. Measures are numbered, and metronome markings are included, e.g.: Prelude to the first suite is marked (Moderato) (quarter note = 69–76), and approximate timings are offered for each movement. There are no indications of note discrepancies between sources. The Suite No. 3 Prelude reduces the original arpeggiation in measures 45–60 to chords (ex. 4) but includes this note: "In the manuscript the sixteenth notes and patterns in bar 44



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continue through bar 60.”<sup>19</sup> Suite No. 5 gives no indication of the original scordatura. Suite No. 6 is in D major with no indication of the five-stringed instrument and no indication of any editorial changes. He recorded these suites on cassette for Pantheon, No. 2063. The cassette recording is no longer available.

*Example 4. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1009, Prelude; mm. 45–49 (Katims edition).*



**William Primrose** (1904–1982). Primrose was the preeminent violist, teacher, and recording artist of the twentieth century. Primrose was awarded the Order of the British Empire in 1953, was the dedicatee for Congress XI in Houston, Texas, 1983, and has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Publisher information: **G. Schirmer Inc.**, Ed. 3142, 1978.

The personal Foreword does not indicate which manuscripts were used. Primrose does make reference to the Kellner manuscript.<sup>20</sup> The well laid-out movements are lightly edited with fingerings, and Italian performance directions (e.g., Presto or Poco meno mosso) have been added. Metronome markings are included for each movement; the Prelude to the first suite is indicated at a quarter note = 88. Suite No. 5 does not indicate the original use of scordatura. Suite No. 6 is not included in this edition: from the Foreword, “I have chosen not to edit the sixth of the Bach Suites for cello because I find it totally unsuited to the viola.”<sup>21</sup> He does, however, endorse Bruno Giuranna’s edition, which transposes Suite No. 6 into G major. Primrose recorded the first five suites in 1978. Biddulph released them in 1996 (LAB 131–132) in a composite disc with other Primrose transcriptions. David Dalton, Emeritus Professor of Viola at BYU, who was in the recording studio at the time, confirms this. The recording is no longer available.

**Leonard Davis** (1919–2007). Leonard Davis was a member of the New York Philharmonic from 1949 to 1991 (serving as co-principal from 1984 to 1990 and as principal in his final year) and violist in the Metropolitan Quartet and the Corigliano Quartet. Davis taught at the Manhattan School of Music, Brooklyn College, and Indiana University. He wrote a personal piece entitled “The Bach Suites: A Narrative,” published in vol. 5, no. 3 (Fall 1989) of the *JAVS*. He recorded the Bach suites on cassettes, which are no longer available.

Publisher information: **International Music Company**, No. 3064, 1986.

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The Anna Magdalena Bach and the Johann Peter Kellner manuscripts were the major sources for this edition. The busy pages include metronome markings for each movement with the Prelude to Suite No. 1 marked quarter note = 84.<sup>22</sup> Bowings and fingering suggestions with Italian musical directions are included throughout. There are no indications of note or bowing discrepancies between sources nor are there suggestions for arpeggiation at the end of Suite No. 2. There is no indication of either the scordatura in Suite No. 5 or the five-stringed instrument in Suite No. 6. The original key of D major is retained in Suite No. 6.

**Stéphane Wiener** (b. 1922). Wiener taught at the Conservatory of Boulogne near Paris. He wrote a good number of works for viola of which his *Sonate in Re, 6 Etudes de Forme Classique, Mouvements pour 2 Altos*, and other selections are published by Gérard Billaudot and in use today.

Publisher information: **Gérard Billaudot**, Paris, G 4063 B and G 4064 B, two volumes, 1990.

The first thing one notices with this clean, spacious, two-volume edition is that the print setup is oblong. This solves some habitually awkward page turns, but not all. The page turns in the Suite No. 5 and No. 6 Preludes remain difficult. The excellent Foreword, in French and English, explains that Wiener has based his “transcription on three known copies by Anna Magdalena, Johann Christoph Westphal<sup>23</sup> and Johann Peter Kellner” plus the August Wenzinger Bärenreiter urtext cello edition and Wiener’s previous transcription completed in 1980. Wiener mentions that a new manuscript version prompted him to review his 1980 work.<sup>24</sup> This new manuscript is the Johann Christoph Westphal (1727–1799) that was discovered among Westphal’s effects in 1830 (see footnote 23).

Included in the Foreword are brief discussions of the scordatura in Suite No. 5, which indicates the scordatura tuning, but the part is written in standard tuning making some chords unplayable (leaving the choice of notes to the performer—similar to the Martinson edition) and Suite No. 6, which remains in D major. Also in the Foreword are General Rules, explaining the signs and symbols used in the edition. Each movement includes a metronome mark; Prelude to Suite No. 1 is marked quarter note = 76. At the end of each volume is a Special Problems section, which discusses difficulties regarding notes, ornaments, and rhythms among sources. Book I is in French and English, but Book II is in French only. Lastly, included in the purchase price are both the facsimile of the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript and the Johann Christoph Westphal manuscript.

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**Jerzy Kosmala** (b. 1931). Kosmala is a concert and recording artist and teacher. He is a former member of the Kraków String Quartet and the Eastman String Quartet and has adapted and published numerous compositions for viola. Kosmala taught for many years at Louisiana State University and is currently on the faculty of the University of California, Irvine, and visiting Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, London, England.

Publisher information: **Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Sa** PWM 9254, 1997.

The Preface is in Polish and English. Kosmala suggests that “because we have so many different editions we are not satisfied with any of the results as yet.”<sup>25</sup> He uses the Anna Magdalena Bach copy, the Johann Peter Kellner copy, and the two anonymous copies (Westphal and Traeg) as reference—the Anna Magdalena Bach is given priority. This spiral-bound, well-spaced edition includes ample fingering and bowing suggestions. Suite No. 6, as discussed in the Preface, is transposed into G major, but there is no mention of the scordatura in Suite No. 5, no indications of conflict resolution between sources, and no realization in the Prelude to Suite No. 2.

**Simon Rowland-Jones** (b. 1950). Rowland-Jones is a recording artist, composer, and teacher. He was the founding violist in the Chilingirian Quartet and has taught at Malmö Academy of Music in Sweden, Royal College of Music in London, Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, the Royal Welsh College of Music in Cardiff, and the Yehudi Menuhin School in Surrey, England.

Publisher information: **Edition Peters**, No. 7489, 1998.

This is certainly the most “scholarly” edition available today. The extensive Preface (English and German) includes a complete guide to sources, bowing, slurs and editorial slurs ( , ornamentation, dance movements, and useful references. The Critical Commentary cross-references note discrepancies between the Anna Magdalena Bach copy, the Kellner copy, the two anonymous copies (Westphal and Traeg), and Bach’s own autograph transcription of Suite No. 5 for lute. This spacious and clean edition includes measure numbers, crucial slurs, and footnoted references to note discrepancies. Included are two copies of Suite No. 5: one with the original scordatura tuning and one with standard tuning. At the end of Suite No. 5, Rowland-Jones has an alternate version of the Sarabande with his take on appropriate embellishments. Further, there are two versions of Suite No. 6: one with the original key of D major with five-string tuning (C-G-d-a-e’) and one version transposed into G major, with standard viola tuning.

Interestingly, there are only four viola editions of the Bach Suites where the editor has recorded his edition: Simon Rowland-Jones, Leonard Davis, Milton Katims, and William Primrose.

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**Paolo Centurioni** (b.1934). Centurioni is a teacher, chamber musician, performer, and recording artist. He performed with *I Musici* for several years (1956–58 and 1970–79) and served as principal viola of several prominent Italian orchestras including *Pomeriggi Musicali* in Milan. He performed with the *Quartetto de Perugia* and the *Trio d’arche di Roma*. His teaching posts have included the *Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia* in Rome.

Publisher information: **Bèrben Edizioni musicali**, E. 4553 B, 2001.

The brief Preface, in both Italian and English, indicates the sole reference was the Anna Magdalena manuscript. This is a “working edition” and does not propose to be a “critical edition.” The music is of small font, but with spacious staves. The measures are numbered, and the music includes adequate bowing and fingering suggestions. The Prelude to Suite No. 2 includes two suggested realizations. No mention is made of the scordatura in Suite No. 5. The Preface indicates that Suite No. 6 is written for a “5 string ‘violoncello piccolo’ and is therefore transposed to G Major.”<sup>26</sup>

**Christine Rutledge** (b. 1961). Rutledge is a recording artist, teacher, editor, authority on Baroque performance practice, and publisher. She taught at Notre Dame University in Indiana and is currently Professor of Viola at the University of Iowa.

Publisher information: **Linnet Press Editions** (three-volume set), LPE 1, 2, and 3, 2007.

This edition is a three-volume set: Volume I (edited and marked), Volume II (facsimile copy of the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript), and Volume III (an unmarked copy of the Anna Magdalena manuscript in contemporary published notation). Paul Silverthorne remarked, “If my students want a viola edition, I either give them a simple transposed version with no bowing indications plus a copy of Anna Magdalena’s manuscript for them to interpret themselves, or I recommend that they buy the Peters edition edited by Simon Rowland-Jones.”<sup>27</sup> Rutledge’s edition well satisfies Silverthorne’s first alternative.

The Preface to Volume I names the sources as Anna Magdalena Bach’s copy, the Johann Peter Kellner copy, and the two anonymous copies (Westphal and Traeg). The Preface also discusses ornaments, double stops, multiple-voice performance practice, the dance movements, and recommended source material. This well-spaced, lightly edited version includes measure numbers, justified bowings as found in the manuscript(s), suggested bowings (marked with hyphenation), as well as some fingerings. For ease, page turns are carefully accounted for with blank pages. Two different suggested realizations are offered for measures 59–63 in the Prelude of Suite No. 2. (exs. 5–6). Suite No. 5 uses the scordatura tuning with clearly marked fingerings. Suite No. 6 has been transposed into G major. Note discrepancies and performance suggestions are given throughout. Volume II is a facsimile of the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript. Although fraught with difficulties, “the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript is considered to be the



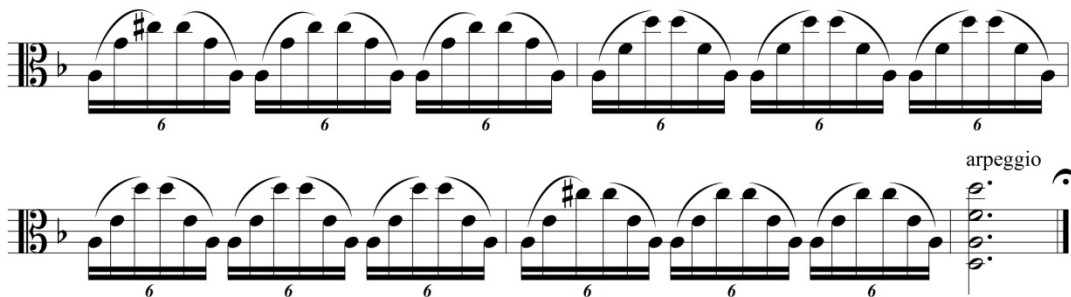
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most authentic and the closest to Bach's own intentions."<sup>28</sup> Volume III is an unmarked copy of the Anna Magdalena Bach version with certain accommodations for score discrepancies—just as Paul Silverthorne suggested.

*Example 5. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008, Prelude; mm. 59–63 (Rutledge edition, suggested realization version 1).*



*Example 6. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1008, Prelude; mm. 59–63 (Christine Rutledge edition, suggested realization version 2).*



**Kenneth Martinson** (b. 1970). Martinson is a chamber musician, recording artist, editor, publisher, and teacher. He has been active in leadership with the American Viola Society and currently serves as President of the International Viola Society.

Publisher information: **Gems Music Publications**, GPL 106, 2008.

This “Urtext” edition<sup>29</sup> was prepared in an attempt “to try to recapture the original intentions of Bach” and is based “almost exclusively ... on the manuscript copy of the six cello suites by Anna Magdalena Bach.”<sup>30</sup>

This clean and spacious edition includes only bowings gleaned from the source. Measure numbers are provided, but no other markings. Suite No. 5 is in standard tuning versus the original scordatura. All the chord notes are included as they appear in the manuscript. Suite No. 6 is in D major, and Martinson “at times re-voices the chords so that they better fit the viola at normal tuning.”<sup>31</sup>

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### Brief Overview of Viola Editions

Editor	Pub. Date	Sources	Recording by Editor	Indications of Note discrepancies	2nd Suite Prelude, mm. 59–63 suggested “realization”	5 <sup>th</sup> Suite Scordatura	6 <sup>th</sup> Suite key D or G Major
Svecenski, Louis	1916	Unnamed	No	None	No	No mention of scordatura	D Major: Sarabande in G Major
Lifschey, Samuel	1936	AMB, B-G	6 <sup>th</sup> Suite – Gavottes only	Substantial referencing	Yes	No mention of scordatura	D Major
Forbes, Watson	1951	AMB, B-G	No	None	No	Scordatura mentioned, not used	G Major
Spindler, Fritz	1953	AMB, B-G	No	Minimal referencing	No	No scordatura in viola part, (scordatura included in separate cello line)	G Major (original 5-string D Major version in cello line)
Schmidtner, Franz	1955	AMB	No	None	Does not include original dotted half notes, only “realization”	No mention of scordatura	G Major
Boulay, Robert	1962	Unnamed	No	None	No	No mention of scordatura	D Major
Giuranna, Bruno	1962	AMB	No	Minimal referencing	No	No mention of scordatura	G Major

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Katims, Milton	1971	AMB, B-G	Yes	None	Yes	No mention of scordatura	D Major
Primrose, William	1978	JPK	Yes—first five suites only	None	No	No mention of scordatura	Omitted
Davis, Leonard	1986	AMB, JPK	Yes	None	No	No mention of scordatura	D Major
Wiener, Stéphane	1990	AMB, JPK, JCW, & Wenzinger	No	Yes	No	Scordatura explained but not used	D Major
Kosmala, Jerzy	1997	AMB, JPK, JCW, & T	No	None	No	No mention of scordatura	G Major
Rowland-Jones, Simon	1998	AMB, JPK, JCW, T, & Lute Suite	Yes	Extensive comments and cross referencing in “Critical Comments”	Yes	One version with scordatura, one without scordatura	One version in G Major, one in D Major
Centurioni, Paolo	2001	AMB	No	None	Two suggested realizations	No mention of scordatura	G Major
Rutledge, Christine	2007	AMB, JPK, JCW & T	No	None	Two suggested realizations	Uses scordatura	G Major
Martinson, Kenneth	2008	AMB	No	None	No	Scordatura explained, not used	D Major

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## SUGGESTED LISTENING

### VIOLA

- Fuchs, Lillian. *Bach: 6 Suites for Cello Solo Played on the Viola*. Legendary Treasures, Doremi 7801–7802, 2005, compact disc.
- McCarty, Patricia. *J. S. Bach: The Six Cello Suites, Performed on Viola*. Ashmont Music 6100, 2000, compact disc.
- Rowland-Jones, Simon. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Suites for Solo Violoncello BWV 1007–1012*. 2 vols. Meridian, 84270 and 84324, 1994–1997, compact disc.
- Westphal, Barbara. *J. S. Bach: The Six Suites for Cello Performed on Viola*. Bridge Records 9094A/B, 1999, compact disc.

### CELLO

- Bailey, Zuill. *Bach Cello Suites*. Telarc TEL-31978-02, 2010, compact disc.
- Casals, Pablo. *Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*. EMI CDH 7 61028 2, 1988, compact disc.
- Fournier, Pierre. *Suites for Solo Cello*. Deutsche Grammophon 419 359-2, 1986, compact disc.
- Ma, Yo-Yo. *J. S. Bach: Six Unaccompanied Cello Suites*. CBS Records M2K 37867, 1983, compact disc.

## SUGGESTED READING MATERIAL

### GENERAL

- Sibling, Eric. *The Cello Suites: J. S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece*. New York: Atlantic Monthly, 2009.

This well-written-and-researched book is a readable narrative for music performers as well as music fans. It is highly recommended for musicians studying these suites as well as listeners—it explains the mystery, the power, and the inevitable draw the suites create in musicians.



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- Williams, Amédée Daryl. *Lillian Fuchs: First Lady of the Viola*. 2nd rev. ed. New York: iUniverse, 2004.

This is a must-read for violists. This quick read is packed with anecdotes, experiences, and working relationships that paint a portrait of this remarkable “Lady,” the “First Lady of the Viola.” Chapter 7 deals with “The Bach Suites.”

## **STUDENTS AND AMATEURS**

- Castleman, Heidi. “Do I Need a License to Play Bach?” *Journal of the American Viola Society* 6, no. 3 (Fall 1990): 3–12.

A must-read for those working on any of the Bach suites; a practical guide for performers.

- Rowland-Jones, Simon. Preface to *Six Suites for Solo Violoncello BWV 1007–1012: Transcribed for Viola Solo*, by J. S. Bach. London: Edition Peters, 1998.

The extensive “Preface” as well as the “Critical Commentary” are invaluable for violists performing any of the Bach suites. They include general background, performance practice suggestions, and references; entirely well-documented.

## **GRADUATE STUDENTS, ACADEMICS, AND PROFESSIONAL VIOLISTS**

- Bylsma, Anner. *Bach, the Fencing Master: Reading Aloud from the First Three Cello Suites*. 2nd ed. Amsterdam: Bylsma Fencing Mail, 2001.

This book contains thorough analyses of suites 1–3 from a unique perspective. It is written as if the reader were listening to Bylsma’s thoughts and ideas about each movement. We are included in the thought process of this well-trained musician! Purchase includes a facsimile of the handwritten copy by Anna Magdalena Bach.

- Bach, J. S. *6 suites a violoncello solo senza basso, BWV 1007–1012*. Edited by Bettina Schwemer and Douglas Woodfull-Harris. 3 vols. Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter, 2000.

Critical volumes of importance for violists include the text volume with substantive historical information and the facsimile volume, which includes the five important

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manuscript documents: A. M. Bach, J. P. Kellner, J. C. Westphal, Johann Traeg, and the first Paris edition of c. 1824. Each manuscript is presented in a large, readable format.

- Winold, Allen. *Bach's Cello Suites: Analyses and Explorations*. 2 vols. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.

This is a well-argued, well-written, interesting perspective on the suites. Incredibly detailed; not for the casual reader/performer of these suites.

### **ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Blume, Friedrich. *Two Centuries of Bach: An Account of Changing Taste*. Translated by Stanley Godman. London: Oxford University Press, 1950.

David, Hans T., and Arthur Mendel, eds. *The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents*. Revised and expanded by Christoph Wolff. New York: W. W. Norton, 1998.

Davis, Leonard. "The Bach Suites: A Narrative." *Journal of the American Viola Society* 5, no.3 (Fall 1989): 19–23.

Martinson, Kenneth. "Rebuttal of Bach Cello Suites Review." *Canadian Viola Society Newsletter* 64 (Autumn 2009): 13–14.

Piltz, Hans-Kar. Review of *J. S. Bach: Six Suites, BWV 1007–1012/Viola Edition/URTEXT*, edited by Kenneth Martinson. *Canadian Viola Society Newsletter* 63 (Spring 2009): 12–14.

White, John. *Lionel Tertis: The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006.

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## VIOLA EDITIONS OF VIOLONCELLO SUITES BY JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH BWV 1007–1012

- Boulay, Robert, ed. *J. S. Bach: Six suites transcrites pour alto*. Paris: Éditions Musicales Alphonse Leduc, 1962. A. L. 21779.
- Centurioni, Paolo, ed. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Sei suites per viola*. Ancona, Italy: Bèrben, Edizioni musicali 2001. E. 4553 B.
- Davis, Leonard, ed. *Bach, J. S.: Six Cello Suites for Viola*. New York: International Music Company, 1986. No. 3064.
- Forbes, Watson, ed. *The Solo Cello Suites by Bach Arranged for Viola*. London: Chester Music, 1951. J.W.C 1401.
- Giuranna, Bruno, ed. *Bach: 6 suites per viola*. Milan: Ricordi, 1962. E.R. 2667.
- Katims, Milton, ed. *Six Cello Suites for Viola Solo*. New York: International Music, 1971. No. 3081.
- Kosmala, Jerzy, ed. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Six Suites for Cello Solo, Transcription for Viola*. Kraków, Poland: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Sa, 1997. PWM 9254.
- Lifschey, Samuel, ed. *Bach: Six Suites for the Viola*. New York: G. Schirmer, 1936. Vol. 1564.
- Martinson, Kenneth, ed. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Six Suites, BWV 1007–1012 Viola Edition*. Gainesville, FL: Gems Music, 2008. GPL 106.
- Primrose, William, ed. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Five Suites for Viola*. New York: G. Schirmer, 1978. ED. 3142.
- Rowland-Jones, Simon, ed. *J. S. Bach: Six Suites for Solo Violoncello, Edition for Solo Viola*. London: Edition Peters, 1998. No. 7489.
- Rutledge, Christine, ed. *J. S. Bach: Six Suites for Violoncello BWV 1007–1012, Edition for Solo Viola*. 3 vols. Iowa City, IA: Linnet Press, 2007. LPE 1–3.
- Schmidtner, Franz, ed. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Six Suites*, Hamburg: Sikorski, 1955. Nr. 316.
- Spindler, Fritz, ed. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Suiten für violoncello allein, für viola übertragen*. 2 vols. Leipzig: Hofmeister, 1953. 7367 and 7376.

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Svecenski, Louis, ed. *Johann Sebastian Bach: Six Suites Originally Written for Violoncello Solo, Adapted, Revised, and Fingered for Viola*. New York: G. Schirmer, 1916. Vol. 1278.

Wiener, Stéphane, ed. *Jean-Sébastien Bach: Six suites pour violoncello transcrites pour alto*. Paris: Gérard Billaudot, 1990. G 4063 B and G 4064 B.

There are other editions—undoubtedly editions unknown to me. Those selected for inclusion here share most or all of these characteristics: they are easily available, in popular use, include all six suites (excepting Primrose’s edition), and include understandable script, instructions, and written notes (primarily but not necessarily in English).

For historical accuracy, the first viola edition of the Bach Suites was most likely by Hermann Ritter (1849–1926). His edition included the first four suites published c. 1885.<sup>32</sup>

For pedagogical purposes, it should be noted that Suite No. 1 is included in Suzuki volumes 5 and 6. Volume 5 includes the Prelude, Courante, and Gigue; Volume 6 includes the Allemande and Minuets (the Sarabande is not included). These are edited by Doris Preucil, published by Summy-Birchard, and distributed by Warner Bros. Publications.

*Thomas Tatton is a recently retired string specialist with the Lincoln Unified School District in Stockton, California. Formerly violist and director of orchestras at Whittier College and the University of the Pacific, he holds a D.M.A. from the University of Illinois. He was president of the American Viola Society from 1994 to 1998 and recently served as the vice-president of the International Viola Society.*

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> William Primrose, preface to *Five Suites for Viola*, by J. S. Bach, ed. William Primrose (New York: Schirmer, 1978), 3.

<sup>2</sup> We are in the midst of the third publishing revolution: The first was the invention of the printing press around 1455 (printed music came shortly after Gutenberg’s famous bible). The second was the establishment of music printing companies that accompanied the “age of enlightenment” and the “rise” of the middle class—Breitkopf (1719), Schott (1770), and Simrock (1793). Now we are engaged in the third wave—computerized “downloads” and printing “on demand.” My recommendation regarding the Bach Suites: with the varying quality of edited material available, readers are well advised to seek a publication that meets their specific needs and interest level.

<sup>3</sup> Although scholars cannot identify the creators of the two “anonymous” manuscripts, we can identify with confidence those who held each copy; one was held by “Johann Christoph Westphal” (JCW) and the other by Johann “Traeg” (T)—see footnote 23, the Stéphane Wiener

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entry, and the bibliography entry under Graduate Students, Academics, and Professionals for the Bärenreiter cello edition edited by Bettina Schwemer and Douglas Woodfull-Harris.

<sup>4</sup> The “Bach-Gesellschaft” (Bach-Society, organized in 1850) was an attempt at a complete collection of Bach’s opera. Publication was begun in 1851 and was completed in 1900 with 46 volumes. Volume 47 was added in 1926. The Suites for Violoncello, BWV 1007–1012, Band 27.1, were edited by Alfred Dörffel (1821–1905) in 1879.

<sup>5</sup> Scordatura is an uncommon tuning of a stringed instrument, often used in the Baroque period. Bach used C-G-d-g for the fifth suite (instead of the normal cello tuning of C-G-d-a) to accommodate chords and provide more resonance possibilities. Many editors ignore the scordatura, some acknowledge the tuning but use the normal tuning anyway, and two editors (Rutledge and Rowland-Jones) include the scordatura tuning in their editions.

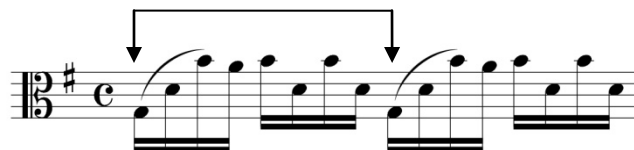
<sup>6</sup> Whether the five-string instrument was a violoncello piccolo or a viola pomposa, the addition of the upper string “e” creates enormous performance difficulties for today’s cellists and violists. The manner in which the editor solves this problem offers different options in editions.

<sup>7</sup> Conversations with Bruno Giuranna, Cincinnati, Ohio, June 16, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Sometimes spelled Lienicke or Linigke.

<sup>9</sup> The term “resonation” refers to the continued and natural vibration of open strings after the music has continued. This is especially true of the open strings employed by Bach to provide, clarify, and underscore harmonic progression. Examples:

*Example a. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 1 in C Major, BWV 1007, Prelude; m. 1 (Rowland-Jones edition).*



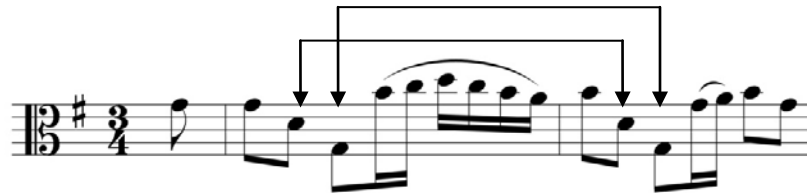
The first g should ring until the second g

*Example b. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 1 in C Major, BWV 1007, Allemande; mm. 1–2 (Rowland-Jones edition).*



The first d' should ring until the second d'. The first g should ring as long as possible.

Example c. J. S. Bach, Suite No. 1 in C Major, BWV 1007, Courante; mm. 1–2 (Rowland-Jones edition).



The first d' and g should ring until the second d' and g.

<sup>10</sup> It is of some interest to take note of the page layout, i.e. measure length (measure 2 from the Prelude to Suite 1 was selected—column 2), and the total number of pages, excluding the Preface or Critical Commentary (column 3). These measurements are at least some indication of the spaciousness of each edition.

Editor	Prelude 1 Measure 2 Length	Total Number of Pages
Svecenski, Louis	3 1/8 inches	50
Lifschey, Samuel	3 1/4 inches	50
Forbes, Watson	2 1/4 inches	46
Spindler, Fritz	2 3/8 inches	62: In two volumes
Schmidtner, Franz	3 3/8 inches	44: Larger than usual book size, i.e., 9.25 X 12 .5 inches
Boulay, Robert	3 3/8 inches	38: Larger than usual book size, i.e., 9.25 X 12 .5 inches
Giuranna, Bruno	3 inches	44
Katims, Milton	3 5/8 inches	38
Primrose, William	3 3/8 inches	39: First 5 suites only
Davis, Leonard	3 1/4 inches	50
Wiener, Stéphane	3 1/4 inches	47: In two volumes/oblong page layout
Kosmala, Jerzy	3 inches	51
Rowland-Jones, Simon	3 1/4 inches	49 plus an extra Suite 5 Sarabande with embellishments, two complete Suite 5's: one with standard tuning, and one with scordatura tuning; and two complete Suite 6's: one with standard tuning, and one with original tuning for a five-stringed instrument.
Centurioni, Paolo	2 1/8 inches	44
Rutledge, Christine	3 inches	59: Transcribed and edited volume
Martinson, Kenneth	3 1/8 inches	54



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<sup>11</sup> J. S. Bach, *Six Suites Adapted, Revised and Fingered for the Viola*, ed. Louis Svecenski (New York: G. Schirmer, 1916), 50.

<sup>12</sup> J. S. Bach, *The Solo Cello Suites by Bach Arranged for Viola*, transcribed by Watson Forbes (London: Chester, 1951), 29.

<sup>13</sup> Watson Forbes, preface to *The Solo Cello Suites by Bach Arranged for Viola*, by J. S. Bach, transcribed by Watson Forbes (London: Chester, 1951).

<sup>14</sup> From the online website “The European Library.” Information provided by Mark Pfannschmidt.

<sup>15</sup> The Anna Magdalena Bach copy of the suites moved around during and after World War II. It first moved from the Prussian State Library to the Benedictine monastery of Beuron, then to its present location, the German State Library in Berlin. See Eric Soblin, *The Cello Suites: J. S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2009), 266–67.

<sup>16</sup> John White, *Lionel Tertis: The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), 168.

<sup>17</sup> Conversation with Bruno Giuranna, Cincinnati, Ohio, June 16, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Primrose, 6.

<sup>19</sup> J. S. Bach, *Six Cello Suites for Viola Solo*, [ed.] Milton Katims (New York: International Music, 1971), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Primrose, 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to compare musical suggestions from those who gave such directions:

Example: tempo and metronome markings for the Prelude to Suite 1

Svecenski	Allegro moderato (quasi andante)
Lifschey	Allegro ma Tranquillo, quarter note = 66
Forbes	Molto moderato, quarter note = 69
Katims	Moderato, quarter note = 69–76
Primrose	Quarter note = 88
Davis	Quarter note = 84
Wiener	Quarter note = 76

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<sup>23</sup> The principal manuscript sources for the Bach Cello Suites—the Anna Magdalena Bach (c. 1727–1731), the Johann Peter Kellner (c. 1726), the Johann Christoph Westphal (second half of the eighteenth century), and the “Traeg” MS, named after Johann Traeg, a Viennese music dealer who owned it (late eighteenth century). The above manuscripts plus the Paris first edition (Janet et Cotellet, c.1824) are available from Bärenreiter. See the bibliography entry under Graduate Students, Academics, and Professionals for the Bärenreiter cello edition edited by Bettina Schwemer and Douglas Woodfull-Harris.

<sup>24</sup> Stéphane Wiener, foreword to *Six suites pour violoncello transcrites pour alto*, by J. S. Bach, ed. Stéphane Wiener (Paris: Gérard Billaudot, 1990), 2–3.

<sup>25</sup> Jerzy Kosmala, opening comments to *Six Suites for Cello Solo, Transcription for Viola*, by J. S. Bach, ed. Jerzy Kosmala (Kraków, Poland: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne Sa, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> Paolo Centurioni, preface to *Sei suites per viola*, by J. S. Bach, ed. Paolo Centurioni, (Ancona, Italy: Bèrben, Edizioni musicali, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Paul Silverthorne—principal viola of the London Symphony Orchestra and London Sinfonietta and Professor of Viola at the Royal Academy of Music. E-mail communication, July 5, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Conversation with Christine Rutledge, June 15, 2010. Rutledge used a copy of the Anna Magdalena Bach manuscript provided by the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, the same library as footnote 15—German State Library in Berlin.

<sup>29</sup> See Hans-Karl Piltz, review of *J. S. Bach; Six Suites, BWV 1007–1012 Viola Edition/URTEXT*, ed. Kenneth Martinson, *Canadian Viola Society Newsletter* 63 (Spring 2009): 12–14 and Kenneth Martinson, “Rebuttal of Bach Cello Suites Review,” *Canadian Viola Society Newsletter* 64 (Autumn 2009): 13–14.

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth Martinson, preface to *Six Suites, BWV 1007–1012 Viola Edition*, by J. S. Bach, ed. Kenneth Martinson (Gainesville, FL: Gems Music, 2008),.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> J. S. Bach, *Sonaten für die altgeige (viola alta) allein : Suite 1–4*, ed. Hermann Ritter (Leipzig: Carl Merseburger, 1885).

# An Acoustical Journey in Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 6:

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## Genre, Instrumentation, and the Quest for Timbre

by Andrew Filmer

### Introduction: An Acoustical Gamble

One takes a gamble when suggesting that specific instrumental timbres play a major role in any of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach. After all, even the unaccompanied violin sonatas and partitas, which Robert Donington believed “requires the violin, and nothing else will do,”<sup>1</sup> were malleable enough for Bach to turn one movement into the sinfonia for *Wir danken dir, Gott, wir danken dir*, BWV 29. For the equally idiomatically regarded cello suites, the fifth also exists in a lute version, BWV 995, and some evidence exists that the original manuscript—now lost—may also have been for that instrument.<sup>2</sup> Even Bach's Brandenburg Concertos owe some debt to Max Reger's piano duet transcriptions in bringing them to initial recognition.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, perhaps the gamble is worthwhile for at least one of the concertos “*avec plusieurs instruments*”: the sixth Brandenburg Concerto. In this concerto (along with the third), Bach has chosen a different approach to building as diverse as possible a mix of instruments, opting instead to highlight the subtle differences between closely linked instruments. The final work of this set is particularly notable for the complications that timbre plays for modern ensembles, with the instrumentation—involving violas da gamba—creating complications in substitutions, arguably even more so than the substitution of flutes for recorders in the fourth concerto. This article looks at the sixth Brandenburg from two perspectives; the first deals with instrumentation and genre in defining the role of timbre, while the second addresses the crucial problem of replacing the violas da gamba—with a new solution in the form of scordatura violas.

### Part I: Genre and Instrumentation

Central to a discussion on timbre are questions on instrumentation, specifically an attempt to pin down what constitutes the continuo group in the sixth Brandenburg—and whether the common understanding of a continuo designation applies.

The relevance of distinguishing the continuo group—or deciding if one is clearly demarcated—is in discerning the timbral importance of the violas da gamba in relation to the rest of the ensemble. In doing so, this highlights complications when substitutions are required due to practicality of available instrumentalists.

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Earlier descriptions of the concerto, such as that of Maurice Riley, positioned the two violas as the *concertino*, essentially treating the work as a double viola concerto with a supporting ensemble of violas da gamba, cello, and continuo.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, Malcolm Boyd makes two particular points: first, that Bach's superscription did not place a division between solo and ensemble elements and second, that Arthur Hutchings's categorization of the third and sixth concertos as "ripieno concertos" is problematic in the case of the latter.<sup>5</sup> Some performances, such as Pinchas Zukerman with Daniel Benyamini and members of the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, convert the sixth concerto into a ripieno concerto with viola sections playing in tutti areas, but this is in the realm of modern extension rather than historical intention. Boyd describes the sixth concerto as "a kind of hybrid, with clearly identified solo and tutti components (but with the solo instruments fulfilling also a tutti role),"<sup>6</sup> and notes that the solo component consists of the two violas and cello. While this is essentially accurate, the nature of this hybrid is far more complicated.

### **Generic Mixing and Timbre**

The diversity of pairings and interchanging relationships among the instruments create complications in determining the nature of the hybrid sixth concerto. Gregory Butler comments on the fourth concerto, which could just as easily apply to the sixth:

At times one is simply at a loss to say exactly what it is generically, for this work, like so many of Bach's, presents an ambiguous, elusive, constantly shifting face, a quicksilver intangibility that defies analysis.<sup>7</sup>

Returning to the sixth concerto, there are various instances that work against a clear classification:

- *The five-part fugue, first movement: mm. 17–19, 56–59*

The five-part fugue involving all the instruments except the continuo is in itself curious because of the order in which the fugue unfolds: cello, first viola, first viola da gamba, second viola, second viola da gamba (ex. 1). This could foreshadow the eventual role the cello will play, in emerging as a solo instrument in its own right. Additionally, the violas da gamba are equals in this mix and not simply part of a continuo canvas. While this is only a brief moment of egalitarian instrumentation, it is interesting to note parallels with Butler's analysis of the fourth concerto, where he suggests that the flutes (recorders) in the scoring of that concerto, "function as concertino parts, no matter how brief their statements."<sup>8</sup> Alternatively, Michael Marissen notes that "the tonic cadence does not mark the entrance of a soloist or subgroup, for the entire ensemble keeps playing,"<sup>9</sup> and that "the absence of strong textural contrasts between orchestral ritornellos and soloistic episodes might suggest ... even that the piece is not really a concerto at all."<sup>10</sup> This, as well as the further examples below, would certainly fit in with Butler's description of generic mixing as "the composer's often complex and always ingenious play on, and play with, certain generic characteristics in the context of another genre."<sup>11</sup>

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*Example 1. J. S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, BWV 1051, movt. I, mm. 16–19.*



- *The solo first viola, first movement: mm. 40–45, 52–56.*

While the previous example highlights the role of the violas da gamba, which will be relevant in proposing a substitution, other sections of the concerto support the overall application of the concept of generic mixing. Marissen notes that Bach also scores for the appearance of a solo viola (ex. 2).<sup>12</sup> In two minor-key sections at mm. 40–45 and mm. 52–56, two things occur: Firstly, the sequence does not move from the first to second viola, but rather stays within the top voice. Secondly, the scoring of the second viola places it as one of a five-part accompanying ensemble. In performance, the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra's decision to build contrast with a distinctly slower tempo in these sections in their video recording of 2000 highlights the uniqueness of the scoring. Additionally, Nicolaus Harnoncourt notes that the use of the interval of a seventh at the start of these solo viola lines (in contrast to the interval of a fourth earlier) indicates a kind of "Romanticism in Baroque music." This possibly further highlights a change of roles within the instrumentation.<sup>13</sup>

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Example 2. J. S. Bach, *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6*, BWV 1051, movt. I, mm. 40–43.

- *The continuo, second movement: mm. 40–47.*

With the violas da gamba tacet, there is a particular drama in hearing the cello and the continuo take on a shared solo role in the return of the head motive in the second movement (ex. 3). Sir Neville Marriner's use of an organ in this movement, in the first of the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields's recordings of the Brandenburg Concertos in 1971, was likely intended to emphasize this—and to better match the sustained tones of the motive when first played by the violas. It was the only recording from 1935 to 1982 to attempt this experiment. The second recording in 1979 did not opt for the return of the organ,<sup>14</sup> but a third in 1984 reverted to the original decision.<sup>15</sup>

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Example 3. J. S. Bach, *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, BWV 1051, movt. II, mm. 42–45.*

In addition to these examples, the cello plays an unusual role toward the end of the second movement. In mm. 54–55 (ex. 4a), the cello breaks off into a solo that is not quite a cadenza and not quite an *Eingänge* and includes a closing pattern that returns later with the second viola (measures 59–60) and eventually the first viola (m. 61), with the cello returning to the continuo (ex. 4b).

Example 4a. J. S. Bach, *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, BWV 1051, movt. II, cello line, mm. 54–55.*

Example 4b. J. S. Bach, *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, BWV 1051, movt. II, mm. 59–62.*



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In contrast to the intermingling of roles in the first two movements, there is a clear division of solo and ensemble elements in the final movement fitting Boyd's hybrid classification. Boyd has described this dichotomy as Bach placing "the members of the new violin family in the foreground, with those of the older viol family in the background, almost as if he intended an allegory on the changes taking place at the time in the development of string instruments."<sup>16</sup> Likewise, Philip Pickett conjectures that the metaphor of "The Meeting of the Three Quick and the Three Dead" is present in this concerto, with the violas and cello representing three princes "returning carefree from the chase," while the figures of death in the viols and violone "warn the Princes to repent, for wealth and beauty vanish—all must eventually succumb to death."<sup>17</sup>

As an alternative to seeking one classification that would best describe the sixth concerto, one could hear the work as presenting an overlap of concurrent functions—allegory, generic mixing, and timbre. In certain cases, generic mixing and timbre exploitation can work hand-in-hand; the order of the five-part fugue section discussed earlier is a primary example. The use of the organ in the second movement by Neville Marriner is clearly one with timbre in mind—a decision in line with Laurence Dreyfus's theory of "dual accompaniment."<sup>18</sup>

### Instrument Size and Timbre

There is also the possibility of a calibrated spectrum of timbre from the violas to the violas da gamba to the cello, and finally to the violone and the continuo, highlighting again the importance of the timbre of the viola da gamba to the overall instrumentation. This is particularly relevant when we consider the varied sizes of violas of the day, the ranges of the violas da gamba, and the specific size of the violone. Dreyfus notes that the violone used in this work is of the 8-foot range<sup>19</sup>—the smallest of three sizes used in the Brandenburg Concertos, bringing it closer in range to the cello. He notes that the violas da gamba in the sixth concerto are noted in alto and tenor clefs<sup>20</sup>—presumably referring to the early manuscript copies used by Heinrich Bessler and not the margrave's presentation score<sup>21</sup>—despite the relatively equal pitch range of the scoring. This leads to speculation whether they were intended for the alto and tenor violas da gamba (Marissen argues that this is by no means definitive).<sup>22</sup> As for the two solo violas, we are accustomed to having two identical instruments simply because of the current place of the viola in the history of the instrument. Franz Zeyringer noted that it has become "so customary in music since the Classical period that even in the few cases in which the composer calls for two violas, any two instruments of the multiform and varied viola family are used, without regard to their size."<sup>23</sup>

Precedent would have indicated the occasional division of Viola I and Viola II parts in the seventeenth-century Italian orchestra, performed by alto and tenor violas.<sup>24</sup> It would, however, be overly convenient to picture the two solo violas in the sixth concerto as being alto and tenor violas, the latter being up to twenty inches in body length, making the technical requirements of the second viola part impractical. Instead, when one considers the French court's "high alto" *quinte/cinquesme* and "low alto" *haute-contre* violas, as contrasted to the *taille* tenor viola,<sup>25</sup>

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one might venture the possibility that some further variation of viola size was applied to the two solo (alto) violas.

With these possible variations of instrument size, the ensemble of Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 would have demonstrated gradations of tonal shading all the way from the first voice to the last. This is more so if there were indeed variations within the violas and violas da gamba as discussed above, but evident nonetheless if these did not exist. This is an observation not without controversy, with Boyd arguing that this calibration of timbre was not essential, that “one could argue that the music would be just as well served by an ensemble which included violins, flutes, and oboes.... It seems quite likely that the availability of the players was more decisive in the choice of instruments.”<sup>26</sup> However, it could also be noted that it was atypical for the violas to take on such a major solo role in itself, and the instrumentation is even more unusual given the ready availability of violinists in the *collegium musicum*,<sup>27</sup> as well as the juxtaposition of roles evident in relation to the violas da gamba. Marissen has extensively discussed the significance of this role reversal,<sup>28</sup> which points toward at least a symbolic if not acoustical decision-making process beyond the confines of player availability. Boyd did note that the third concerto would have required forces external to Bach’s *collegium musicum*;<sup>29</sup> likewise, at least one additional viol player (if Prince Leopold indeed took on one of the viol parts)<sup>30</sup> and one additional viola player (if Bach took on one of the viola parts) would be necessary—not to mention someone to replace Bach at the keyboard.

At the end of the day, the question is whether Bach, who “understood to perfection the possibilities of all stringed instruments,”<sup>31</sup> intended the Brandenburg Concertos as an exploration of the specific possibilities of precise combinations and contrasts of timbre, or whether he was as flexible in musical application of these concertos as in his other works. If we accept the importance of timbre, particularly in the sixth concerto, this leads us to consider the most problematic area of the instrumentation in modern-day context: the violas da gamba.

## **Part II: The Quest for Timbre and a Scordatura Substitution Solution**

With timbre as a defining characteristic of the sixth Brandenburg Concerto, any modern solution to the many situations where viola da gamba players are not available would serve best at seeking an approximation of the original intent, not assume a place as a permanent replacement for the original instrumentation. Nonetheless, the unavailability of viola da gamba players in many cases makes the issue of substitution a substantial one.

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## Current Substitutions

Current substitutions include the use of either cellos or violas—and the occasional performance without the viola da gamba parts at all, in favor of Martin Geck’s conjecture of a preceding trio sonata version.<sup>32</sup> Performances with cello or viola replacements are in two general categories: with one player to each viola da gamba part or multiple players with distinctions between tutti and solo sections. In addition, there are massed viola performances, most notably at international viola congresses, which Riley neatly phrased as intending to demonstrate the “sheer joy and love for the music,” rather than to make a statement as to the application or flexibility of the instrumentation.<sup>33</sup>

As discussed earlier, the application of generic mixing demonstrates how Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 moves from concertino to ripieno and back again. A large proportion of the work does exist as a concertino work, and complications arise when instruments identical to the solo instruments are substituted for the violas da gamba, since it interrupts the tonal distinction. One could argue that this takes away from the contrast of timbre inherent in the genre of the concerto,<sup>34</sup> particularly considering the sparse instrumentation in this instance. Substituting cellos for the gambas avoids the problem of pitches below the range of violas but creates the issue of having a viola da gamba part played with uncharacteristic projection, leading to the hazard of interrupting both the solo violas and solo cello.

Between the cello and the viola there is historical evidence to support that the latter would have been a more suitable substitute. Riley notes that in the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-centuries, the first viola solos were adapted from works written for viola da gamba.<sup>35</sup> More specifically to the sixth concerto, in discussing Geck’s observations on revisions for the viola da gamba parts, Marissen suggests that a pattern emerges pointing toward an original scoring for four violas.<sup>36</sup> He further notes that the action of shifting the clef could be to “heighten visually the distinction”<sup>37</sup> between the *da braccio* and *da gamba* instruments—particularly relevant in Marissen’s theory of a reversal of roles between the instruments. If a change in clefs could signify a visual distinction, then a tonal one would be just as likely, if not more so.

The scoring seems to point in this direction as well, at least that of the first movement. The earlier example of the single solo Viola I line (see m. 42 in ex. 2) has a five-part accompaniment split into two: a subgroup of the second viola with the violas da gamba and a subgroup of the cello with the basso continuo. The further exploitation of the theme first introduced in the five-part fugue has the top four lines grouped together with the cello emerging at the end in response to this group of four (ex. 5).

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*Example 5. J. S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, BWV 1051, movt. I, mm. 107–10.*

### **A Scordatura Substitution: Three Pre-Experimental Observations**

Accepting the relative suitability of viola substitutions over cello substitutions still leaves us with two issues. First is the continued tonal interference of a supporting instrument already present largely as a solo instrument. Secondly, there are areas in which the viola da gamba parts move below the range of the viola. A solution for this is the application of violas employing scordatura, not only to maintain the descending lines, but also to achieve a timbre better approximating the sound—and associated function—of the violas da gamba.

The preservation of pitches would be fairly simple on its own: a retuning of the C string down to whatever pitch is required, with a possible adjustment of the G string if the resultant interval became too wide requiring additional inconvenient shifting.

The adjustment of timbre is a far more complicated process. Three focal areas have been of particular note in leading to a new substitution with timbre in mind. First is Bach's fifth suite for solo cello, where the scordatura of the top string is noted to have a particular tonal effect.<sup>38</sup> Even more so is the extended scordatura proposed by Donald Maurice for the suite (c-g-c'-g'), originally intended to advance clarity of voicing.<sup>39</sup> This has provided additional tonal effects in the sympathetic vibrations of having two C strings and two G strings, similar both to Carnatic music and that of North American and Scottish fiddlers.<sup>40</sup>

Second is the tunings of violas da gamba, all of which employ standard tunings involving intervals of fourths. Considering that only the upper range of the instrument is used in Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, it is interesting to note that if the alto viola da gamba was used, the tuning of this particular instrument may have included the use of B-flat and F open strings.<sup>41</sup>

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This would be of some benefit in the key of B-flat major, albeit there is considerable ambiguity on the use of this particular gamba.<sup>42</sup>

The final link is the acoustical properties of the viola. Neville Fletcher and Thomas Rossing note that the differences between dimensions of the violin and viola do not match the tuning of the viola, causing the principal resonances of the viola to lie between, rather than on, open strings.<sup>43</sup> They further note that it was this discrepancy that provided for the unique sound of the viola, and similarly Riley noted that Hermann Ritter's *viola alta*, in "solving" acoustical issues of the viola, created an instrument that sounded more like a cello, losing the sound most characteristic of the viola.<sup>44</sup>

In adjusting the viola to perform a new role, we are not bound by these restrictions of how the resultant sound differs from the viola tone that we have become accustomed to—in other words, a different sound is precisely our goal. Furthermore, instead of moving the resonant frequencies of the instrument, as Ritter seemed to have done, the process here is to emphasize the resonant frequencies already present in the viola. Fletcher and Rossing place these resonances as being between the G and D (for the principal air mode) and between the D and A string (for the principal body or wood mode).<sup>45</sup> Hans Johansson places the frequencies at approximately 230 Hz and 350 Hz, equivalent to B-flat and F.<sup>46</sup> A particular connection of this to the viola da gamba is that the primary resonances of the viola da gamba in Andrew Brown's acoustical study were at 115 Hz—the B-flat an octave lower.<sup>47</sup> As mentioned earlier, at least one viola da gamba has tuning that includes a B-flat: the alto viola da gamba.<sup>48</sup>

### Three Post-Experimental Observations

With scordatura roots in a practical exploration, experiments led to these observations:

- 1. There is a clear increase in volume when retuning finds the precise frequency of its resonant frequencies, particularly in moving the A string to an F below.
- 2. However, volume alone does not indicate the best frequency for an instrument—also relevant is the consistency of pitch in the decay of a note after the bow leaves the string. If a string is tuned slightly sharp to a resonant frequency, one will hear a flattening of pitch in the decay.
- 3. The g' on a D string of a viola is resonant not only because of the sympathetic G string an octave below, but at least as much because of the C string. The effect of the relationship of this compound perfect fifth provides some unusual results—tuning a C string to B will make the F-sharp on a D string particularly resonant, at least in the direct vicinity of the instrument. The same does not seem to apply to the violin, at least not to the same extent—likely because of the reinforcement of a primary resonance lying on the violin's D string.

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## The Scordatura Solution

With these results, we come to this scordatura substitution (ex. 6):

*Example 6. Scordatura tuning for viola da gamba substitution in the Brandenburg Concerto No. 6*



Each staff is dedicated to two strings, adopting Maurice's method for Bach's fifth suite.<sup>49</sup> While these notes denote the actual pitches of the four strings, the parts are written to accommodate reading at sight in what is essentially a form of tablature, turning the viola into a transposing instrument (ex. 7).

*Example 7. J. S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, BWV 1051, movt. I, mm. 19–23, scordatura viola substitution for Viola da gamba II.*



The new scordatura preserves all but one pitch—a low A sixteenth-note in the first viola da gamba in m. 96 of the first movement. Even taking this into account, all the downward running lines are kept intact, solving the issues that appear with regular viola substitution.

More significantly, the additional resonance and change in timbre turn the viola from an alto-tenor instrument into the tenor role for which the viola da gamba was envisaged. The unusual coincidence of the key of B-flat major with a tonic and dominant that reflect the resonances of the viola makes one wonder whether Bach made that selection with some instinct toward its resonant effect for the solo violas. This is especially so considering the majority of his solo works for violin and cello exploit keys of open strings and particularly fortunate in that it allows us to find a replacement for the viola da gamba.

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As was discussed in interviews with gambist Robert Oliver, it is perhaps less a question of how far quantitatively the application of scordatura on a viola can approximate the sound of a viola da gamba. Rather, it is intended more so that the retuned instrument can better fulfill the role in the overall texture called for in Brandenburg Concerto No. 6.<sup>50</sup>

### Concluding Comments

It is often said that the greatness of classical masterworks is that three centuries after their creation, they are still celebrated in our concert halls. While poignant, this is to some extent historically inaccurate since works like the Brandenburg Concertos were left dormant for over a century, with recording technology contributing much to their eventual popularity.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps what we can say is that the legacy of Bach, as a true master of the string family, is the vast number of aspects, angles, and layers of possibility available to the interpreter. Thus—from the rolling landscapes of New Zealand to the American Viola Society—we deal, once again, with the Lord of the Strings.

*To view a documentary featuring a performance with scordatura violas, please visit the AVS YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/americanviolasociety#p/u>.*

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Robert Donington, “The Choice of Instruments in Baroque Music,” *Early Music* 1, no. 3 (July 1973): 131.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Boyd, *Bach* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1983), 87–88. See also Andrew Filmer, “Performers’ Editions and Additions: A Case Study in Decoding Intent in Early 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Musical Handwriting” (lecture, *New Historians Postgraduate Conference*, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, NZ, August 30–31, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Boyd, *Bach: The Brandenburg Concertos* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 21.

<sup>4</sup> Maurice Riley, *The History of the Viola*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Brumfield, 1993), 112.

<sup>5</sup> Boyd, *Brandenburg Concertos*, 24–25 and 91–92.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.



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<sup>7</sup> Gregory G. Butler, “The Question of Genre in J. S. Bach’s Fourth Brandenburg Concerto,” in *The Music of J. S. Bach: Analysis and Interpretation*, ed. David Schulenberg, Bach Perspectives 4 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Marissen, *The Social and Religious Designs of J. S. Bach’s Brandenburg Concertos* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 36.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>11</sup> Butler, 9.

<sup>12</sup> Marissen, 51.

<sup>13</sup> J. S. Bach, *Brandenburgische Konzerte*, Nicolaus Harnoncourt and Consensus Musicus Wien (Hamburg, Germany: Deutsche Grammophon, 2009), DVD.

<sup>14</sup> Dorottya Fabian, *Bach Performance Practice, 1945–1975: A Comprehensive Review of Sound Recordings and Literature* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2003), 65–67.

<sup>15</sup> J. S. Bach, *Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 5 and 6; Orchestral Suite No. 1*, Neville Marriner and the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, recorded November 1984 and November 1985, EMI 7243 5 85795 2 9, 2004, compact disc.

<sup>16</sup> Boyd, *Brandenburg Concertos*, 92.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Pickett, “J. S. Bach: The Brandenburg Concertos: A New Interpretation,” [www.recorderhomepage.net/brandenburgs.html](http://www.recorderhomepage.net/brandenburgs.html) (accessed August 24, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Laurence Dreyfus, *Bach’s Continuo Group: Players and Practices in His Vocal Works* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 68–71. Dreyfus notes that records indicate Bach led from a harpsichord at a concert where an organ was also used and suggests that having two keyboard instruments simultaneously was possibly a convention.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>21</sup> Marissen, 52.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>23</sup> Franz Zeyringer, “The Problem of Viola Size,” *Journal of the Violin Society of America* 5, no. 4 (1979): 18–36.

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- <sup>24</sup> Riley, 72.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 78–79.
- <sup>26</sup> Boyd, *Brandenburg Concertos*, 35.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4.
- <sup>28</sup> Marissen, 55–62.
- <sup>29</sup> Boyd, *Brandenburg Concertos*, 5.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 14.
- <sup>31</sup> Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach to Johann Forkel, quoted in Riley, 111.
- <sup>32</sup> As cited and discussed in Marissen, 129–33.
- <sup>33</sup> Riley, 113.
- <sup>34</sup> John A. Meyer, “The Idea of Conflict in the Concerto,” *Studies in Music* 8 (1974): 38.
- <sup>35</sup> Riley, 71.
- <sup>36</sup> Marissen, 54.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Hans Vogt, *Johann Sebastian Bach’s Chamber Music: Background, Analyses, Individual Works*, ed. Reinhard G. Pauly, trans. Kenn Johnson (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1988), 182.
- <sup>39</sup> Donald Maurice, “The Art of Vocal Fingering in String Playing,” *American String Teacher* 56, no. 3 (August 2006): 27–31.
- <sup>40</sup> *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Scordatura,” by Richard Partridge, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed May 18, 2010. See also Maurice, “Art of Vocal Fingering.”
- <sup>41</sup> *Le Festes de Thalie* association website, [http://www.festesdethalie.org/BAROC/vdg\\_e.html](http://www.festesdethalie.org/BAROC/vdg_e.html), accessed June 9, 2011.
- <sup>42</sup> *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Viol,” by Ian Woodfield and Lucy Robinson, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>, accessed June 9, 2011.
- <sup>43</sup> Neville H. Fletcher and Thomas D. Rossing, *The Physics of Musical Instruments* (New York: Springer, 1999), 318.

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<sup>44</sup> Riley, 232.

<sup>45</sup> Fletcher and Rossing, 319.

<sup>46</sup> Hans Johansson, *Violin Making*, [www.centrum.is/hansi/modal%20analysis.html](http://www.centrum.is/hansi/modal%20analysis.html), accessed August 24, 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Andrew W. Brown, "An Acoustical Study of Flat- and Round-Backed Double Basses," in *Proceedings of SMAC 03*, ed. Roberto Bresin, vol. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stockholm, Sweden, 2003), 40. [http://www.oberlinacoustics.net/articles/art20\\_andrew%20brown.pdf](http://www.oberlinacoustics.net/articles/art20_andrew%20brown.pdf), accessed June 9, 2011.

<sup>48</sup> *Le Festes de Thalie*.

<sup>49</sup> J. S. Bach, *Suite for Unaccompanied Viola in C Minor Arranged from the Manuscripts of Lute Suite BWV 995 and Cello Suite No. 5*, ed. Donald Maurice and Andrew Filmer (London: COMUS Edition, forthcoming).

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Robert Oliver, <http://vimeo.com/26409862>.

<sup>51</sup> Boyd, *Brandenburg Concertos*, 22.

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# Chorale

## Ich, dein betrübtes Kind

for Soprano, Viola obligata, and Continuo

From the Cantata:

*Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut*

BWV 199

by

J. S. Bach

AVS Publications 013

**Chorale: Ich, dein betrubtes Kind**  
**From the Cantata:**  
*Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut*  
**BWV 199**

This chorale—scored for viola obligata, soprano, and continuo—is the sixth movement of the cantata *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut*, BWV 199. After its first performance in 1714, Bach extensively altered the obligata part, scoring it for cello in a later Weimar performance, for viola da gamba in Cöthen, and for violoncello piccolo in Leipzig. Many contemporary editions and recordings adapt these later versions for use by the viola. This AVS edition, based on the Neue Bach-Ausgabe edition and the autograph manuscript score housed at the Royal Library in Copenhagen, retains the original Weimar viola part. For a recording that uses the original viola part, see Masaaki Suzuki and the Bach Collegium Japan's recording (BIS CD-801, 1996).

## Comments:

Trills are reproduced as they appear in the Neue Bach-Ausgabe edition.

As an aid to the performers, courtesy accidentals, editorial slurs, and a realization of the continuo part have been provided.

In measure 18, the viola line in the manuscript is notated as:



David M. Bynog  
Editor



# Chorale: Ich, dein betrübtes Kind

from the cantata: Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut, BWV 199

**J. S. Bach**

Edited by David M. Bynog

Realization by Phillip Kloeckner

[Andante]

Viola obligata

Soprano

Basso  
Continuo

3

3

3

5

5

5

Ich, dein be -

8

trüb - tes\_\_ Kind, werf al - le mei - ne

11

Sünd, so viel ihr in mir

14

stek - ken und mich\_\_ so hef - tig

17

schrek - ken, in dei - ne tie - fen

20

Wun - - den, da ich stets Heil ge -

23

fun - - den.

# Chorale: Ich, dein betrübtes Kind

from the cantata: Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut, BWV 199

**J. S. Bach**

Edited by David M. Bynog

Realization by Phillip Kloeckner

Viola obligata

[Andante]

3

5

8

11

14

17

20

23

# Chorale: Ich, dein betrübtes Kind

from the cantata: Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut, BWV 199

**J. S. Bach**

Basso Continuo

Edited by David M. Bynog

Realization by Phillip Kloeckner

[Andante]

The musical score is written for Basso Continuo in the bass clef, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The tempo is marked [Andante]. The score consists of eight staves of music, each containing four measures. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature, followed by a bass clef and a common time signature. The second staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The third staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The fourth staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The fifth staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The sixth staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The seventh staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The eighth staff begins with a bass clef and a common time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests. The first staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The second staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The third staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The fourth staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The fifth staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The sixth staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The seventh staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The eighth staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The score is numbered 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, and 22 at the beginning of each staff. The eighth staff has a measure rest in the first measure. The score ends with a double bar line.

# Alternative Styles “Season to Taste”:

## The Art of Ornamentation in Baroque Music

by Nancy Wilson

The year is 1752. In what has been called “the classic of Baroque music instruction,” Johann Joachim Quantz infamously comments about the viola in his book *On Playing the Flute*:

The viola is commonly regarded as of little importance in the musical establishment. The reason may well be that it is often played by persons who are either still beginners in the ensemble or have no particular gifts with which to distinguish themselves on the violin.... I maintain, however, that ... the violist must be just as able as the second violinist.... He needs to know [all that the violinist needs to know].<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, the days of the “weak violist” are long gone; today’s violists can more than hold their own with colleagues in ensembles as well as in solo situations. The increased interest in historically informed performance makes knowledge of ornamentation in Baroque music all the more pertinent. Violists can enjoy ornamentation in transcriptions of violin or cello works, in Telemann’s viola concerto, or, albeit discreetly, in an ensemble. I hope that this simple guide will provide a starting point in your exploration of the art of ornamentation.

In the Baroque period, music was inextricably linked with rhetoric: the goal of the performer was to move the listener. As Quantz put it:

Musical execution may be compared with the delivery of an orator. The orator and the musician have, at bottom, the same aim in regard to both

the preparation and the final execution of their productions, namely to make themselves masters of the hearts of their listeners, to arouse or still their passions, and to transport them now to this sentiment, now to that. Thus it is advantageous to both, if each has some knowledge of the duties of the other.<sup>2</sup>

The role of ornaments—or graces, as they were called—was literally to add grace to the music; that is, to enhance emotional content of music in order to move the listener.

### Adding Grace with the Bow

While most of us think of ornaments as trills, turns, mordents, and perhaps long runs of notes, it’s important to remember that the expressive use of the bow is the first step in adding grace to a note. After all, the bow was considered the soul of the instrument. Francesco Geminiani describes what I call “bow ornaments” in *The Art of Playing on the Violin*:

a.) Swelling of sound (crescendo):



b.) Softening of the sound (diminuendo):



---

c.) *Mezza di voce*: a crescendo followed by a diminuendo:



d.) Plain stroke:



e.) Staccato:





In Example XX, Geminiani shows what he considers to be their proper use, saying: “For it is not sufficient alone to give them their true duration, but also the expression proper to each of these notes. By not considering this, it often happens that many good compositions are spoiled by those who attempt to execute them.” (Exs. 1a and 1b.)

*Example 1a. Francesco Geminiani, The Art of Playing on the Violin, Example XX (text), page [8].*

[http://imslp.org/wiki/The\\_Art\\_of\\_Playing\\_on\\_the\\_Violin,\\_Op.9\\_%28Geminiani,\\_Francesco%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Playing_on_the_Violin,_Op.9_%28Geminiani,_Francesco%29)

### *Example XX.*

This Example shews the Manner of Bowing proper to the Minim, Crochet-quaver and Semiquaver both in slow and quick Time. For it is not sufficient alone to give them their true Duration, but also the Expression proper to each of these Notes. By not considering this, it often happens that many good Compositions are spoiled by those who attempt to execute them.

You must observe that this Sign (  ) denotes the Swelling of the Sound ; the Sign (  ) signifies that the Notes are to be play'd plain and the Bow is not to be taken off the Strings; and this ( | ) a Staccato, where the Bow is taken off the Strings at every Note.

Example 1b. Francesco Geminiani, The Art of Playing on the Violin, Example XX (music), page 27.

[http://imslp.org/wiki/The\\_Art\\_of\\_Playing\\_on\\_the\\_Violin,\\_Op.9\\_%28Geminiani,\\_Francesco%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Playing_on_the_Violin,_Op.9_%28Geminiani,_Francesco%29)

## Essempio XX

*Adagio, o And<sup>te</sup>*

1.<sup>o</sup> 2.<sup>o</sup> 3.<sup>o</sup>  
Buono. Mediocre. Buono.

4.<sup>o</sup> 5.<sup>o</sup> 6.<sup>o</sup>  
Cattivo Cattivo o particolare. Cattivo.

7.<sup>o</sup> 8.<sup>o</sup> 9.<sup>o</sup> 10.<sup>o</sup>  
Buono. Ottimo. Cattivo o particolare. Buono.

11.<sup>o</sup> 12.<sup>o</sup>  
Meglio. Cattivo o partic.<sup>re</sup>

13.<sup>o</sup> 14.<sup>o</sup>  
Cattivo o partic.<sup>re</sup> Particolare.

*All.<sup>o</sup> o Presto*

1.<sup>o</sup> 2.<sup>o</sup> 3.<sup>o</sup> 4.<sup>o</sup> 5.<sup>o</sup>  
Buono. Mediocre. Cattivo. Buono. Ottimo.

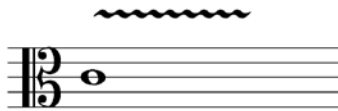
6.<sup>o</sup> 7.<sup>o</sup> 8.<sup>o</sup> 9.<sup>o</sup>  
Buono. Meglia. Pessimo. Buono.

10.<sup>o</sup> 11.<sup>o</sup> 12.<sup>o</sup> 13.<sup>o</sup>  
Cattivo. Buono. Ottimo. Ottimo



---

f.) A tremolo, or bowed vibrato, was also used, by increasing and decreasing the index finger pressure while maintaining a constant bow speed. It is described by Farina as “a pulsing of the hand which has the bow,” bringing to mind the shaking of the human voice. While it is prevalent in seventeenth-century music, it is also described by Quantz and used by J. S. Bach:




or, in a more measured fashion:



## Adding Grace with the Left Hand

### I. Vibrato

In the Baroque period the left-hand vibrato was considered to be an ornament, not an integral part of the sound. It was used to imitate the natural shaking of the human voice when filled with emotion, be it love, anger, or fear. Geminiani indicates this “close shake” with  as does Louis Spohr as late as 1832 in his *Violin School* (ex. 2). Note that this symbol is the same as that used for the tremolo or bowed vibrato in f.

*Example 2. Louis Spohr, Violin School, No. 65, mm. 1–7.*  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/Violin\\_School\\_%28Spohr,\\_Louis%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/Violin_School_%28Spohr,_Louis%29)



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Because the violin or viola was held without a chinrest or shoulder rest, the vibrato was simply a pressing up and down of a finger on the fingerboard. While this produces a vibrato that is narrower than a typical modern vibrato, there can be great variety in its speed. In this way it can portray love, anger, or fear.

Although it is rarely indicated with a sign in music for the violin, a two-finger vibrato was used by viola da gamba players in the seventeenth century and also described by Tartini in 1771: “There is another kind of trill that is best performed on the violin. The two notes that make it up join in such a way that the two fingers never quite leave the string.... This kind of trill is ‘rippled’ and not ‘struck.’”<sup>3</sup> The effect can be one of palpitation, extreme agitation, or horror.

## II. Essential graces

Indicated by signs above the note, these graces are often called French ornaments because, in the words of Quantz, “French composers usually write the embellishments with the [aria], and the performer thus needs only to concern himself with executing them well. In the Italian style in former times, no embellishments at all were set down, and everything was left to the caprice of the performer.”<sup>4</sup> Many composers dictate exactly how each grace is to be executed, and it is worth it to study these instructions in detail, as the variety will add richness to your own execution of these graces. The basic consensus is as follows:

### 1) Trills

g.) Trill:



Like the vibrato, the trill was often called a “shake” or “tremolo,” as it also connotes the shaking of the voice. Employed as expressive devices, there are an infinite variety of trills. But to simplify, the trill can have three basic functions:

h.) Short, quick, and on beat; serves to accent the note:



---

i.) Short and quick in passagework; serves to lighten the passage:



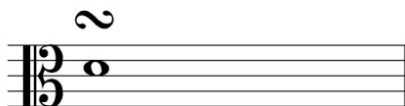
j.) Long, starting slowly and increasing in speed as you proceed; serves to fill out the sound and “swell” the emotional content of the note:



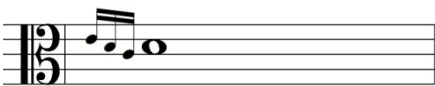
It might be worth mentioning that a fast and prolonged trill that brings to mind an alarm clock has no place in Baroque music, unless you truly intend to sound the alarm. Trills may be started on the main note or on the note above. In general, main note trills are used more often in seventeenth-century music, while upper note trills prevail in music of the eighteenth century.

## 2) Turns

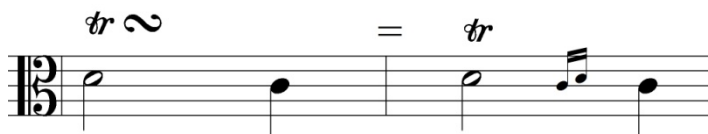
k.) Turn:



l.) Played quickly and on the beat, the turn can serve to accent the note:



m.) Added at the end of a trill, it can serve to soften the landing of the trill:



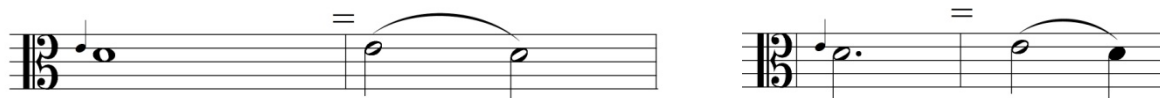
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n.) Played in the middle of a note, it can add a “shiver”:

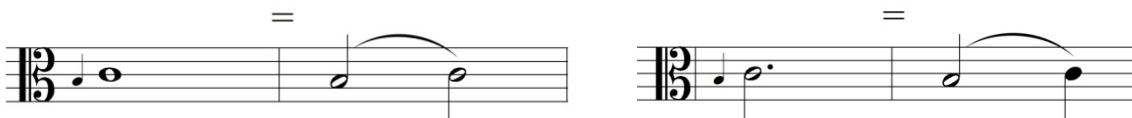


### 3. Appoggiaturas

o.) Appoggiatura from above:



p.) Appoggiatura from below:



Both of these add weight or leaning to the note. By creating dissonance with the harmony, they also add tension. In general, a leaning appoggiatura is played on the beat and takes half of the value of the note. When it is attached to a dotted quarter or dotted half note, it takes two-thirds of the value of the note. But just as a human sigh has an infinite variety of lengths, the variation in length of appoggiaturas is infinite.

When the appoggiatura comes between a falling third or in a quick succession in passage work, it is usually played quickly and without accent, sometimes before the beat. Indeed, this “passing appoggiatura” should be played so lightly that the listener cannot tell whether it is before the beat or on the beat. This is called a short appoggiatura, or a passing appoggiatura, or *tierce coulée*. In this way it serves to lighten the passage:

q.) Appoggiatura or *tierce coulée*:



r.) Appoggiatura in passing:



---

#### 4. Mordents

s.) In French this is called a *pincé*, and indeed it serves to “pinch” the note when played quickly on the beat:



t.) In slow or moderate tempi it can also be used to fill out the sound, as a trill might:



#### 5. Slides

u.) Slide:



This is usually played quickly, either on or before the beat and imitates the voice “swooping” to the note from below, as in a sob, or to connote anticipation (ex. 3).

*Example 3. J. S. Bach, St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244, “Erbarne dich,” m. 1 (violin solo).*



#### 6. Combinations of the above essential graces

Geminiani’s examples XVIII and XIX illustrate these ornaments and their composites beautifully (ex. 4). As his treatise was written in England at the same time as Handel’s famous D-Major Violin Sonata, op. 1, no. 13, using Geminiani’s graces to ornament the slow movements is completely appropriate and extremely gratifying.

Example 4. Francesco Geminiani, The Art of Playing on the Violin, Example XVIII and XIX (music), page 26.

[http://imslp.org/wiki/The\\_Art\\_of\\_Playing\\_on\\_the\\_Violin,\\_Op.9\\_%28Geminiani,\\_Francesco%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Playing_on_the_Violin,_Op.9_%28Geminiani,_Francesco%29)

## Essemp.XVIII

1.<sup>o</sup> Trillo semplice 2.<sup>o</sup> T. composto 3.<sup>o</sup> Ap.<sup>ra</sup> superiore 4.<sup>o</sup> Ap.<sup>ra</sup> Inferiore  
5.<sup>o</sup> Tratten.<sup>to</sup> sopra la Nota. 6.<sup>o</sup> Il Simile 7.<sup>o</sup> Staccato 8.<sup>o</sup> Agum.<sup>to</sup> e din.<sup>to</sup> piano.  
9.<sup>o</sup> di Suono  
10.<sup>o</sup> forte 11.<sup>o</sup> for. pia. 12.<sup>o</sup> Anticipa<sup>ne</sup> 13.<sup>o</sup> Separazione  
14.<sup>o</sup> Mord.<sup>te</sup> Tremolo

## Essemp.XIX.

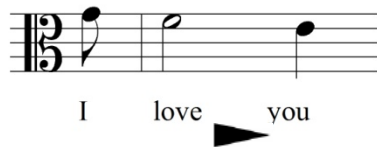
1.<sup>o</sup> 2.<sup>o</sup> 3.<sup>o</sup> 4.<sup>o</sup>  
5.<sup>o</sup> 6.<sup>o</sup> 7.<sup>o</sup> 8.<sup>o</sup>  
9.<sup>o</sup> 10.<sup>o</sup> 11.<sup>o</sup>  
12.<sup>o</sup> 13.<sup>o</sup> 14.<sup>o</sup>

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## Putting It Together

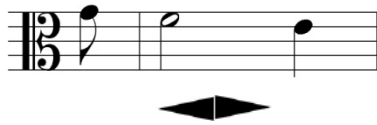
If your eyes are beginning to glaze over, perhaps it's time for a simple exercise to show how you might use these ornaments to heighten the emotional content of your musical narrative. Suppose you have a musical gesture notated: x) and you want to say (with your instrument, not with words) "I love you" (you choose the pitches, just include a harmony).

x.)

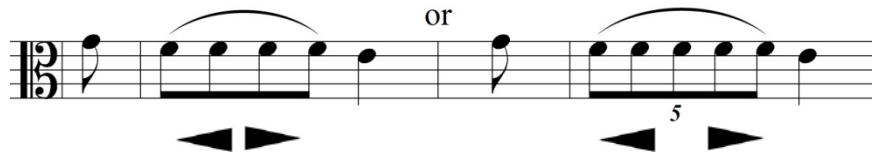


In increasing order of emotional intensity, you might

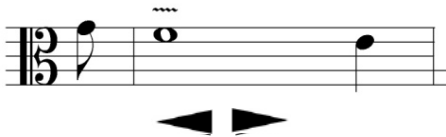
y.) Add a *mezza di voce*:



z.) Add to this a bowed vibrato:



aa.) Instead of the bowed vibrato, add a left-hand vibrato, increasing and diminishing the speed to show the exact nature of your particular love:



bb.) Instead, use a "rippling" two-fingered vibrato to show even more passion:

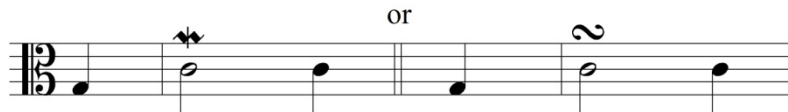


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cc.) Or add an essential grace: an appoggiatura, which creates a dissonance with the bass, will make your heart heave:



dd.) A mordent or fast turn will send a shiver up your spine or show the batting of your eyelashes:



ee.) A slide will add a slight sob to your voice:



Or add a trill to one of these essential graces; your heart will swell. Now try making all sorts of combinations of these essential graces. Geminiani will help you in his Example XIX.

If you're still feeling a desire to add to your emotional arsenal, it's time to do some composing on-the-spot, or improvising, with division ornaments.

## Division Ornaments

In division ornaments, long notes are divided into notes of shorter value in order to fill in the space between two notes. Below is a very simplified approach to creating division ornaments.

ff.) Double pitches:



This can add a *concitato* effect, as in the beginning of Bach's Fifth Brandenburg concerto (ex. 5).

*Example 5. J. S. Bach, Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, BWV 1050, mm. 1–2 (violins).*





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gg.) Turn “around” the pitches:



hh.) Fill in notes with a scale. Filling in with a scale can connote easy running or a flight of fancy:



ii.) Fill in notes with an arpeggio, in accordance with harmony. With separate bows you can evoke trumpets; when slurred, you'll provide more excitement with arpeggios than with scales:



jj.) Leap to another note in the chord and then take a scale back to the second note:



kk.) Leap to another note in the chord and then take arpeggios back to the second note:



ll.) Leap to another note in the chord and take a combination of scales and arpeggios to the second note:



---

mm.) Leap to a non-chord tone and take a scale, arpeggio, or combination back to the second note:



By varying the rhythm and creating divisions on the division, you can create complex ornaments that enhance the emotion as well as the motion that is inherent in the music. Some great examples of division ornaments based on familiar tunes can be found in Howard Mayer Brown's *Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music* (ex. 6).

*Example 6. Arcadelt, "O felici occhi miei," mm. 1–7 (Three versions from Howard Mayer Brown's Embellishing Sixteenth-Century Music, 12–16).*

A. With Tremoli and Groppi

B. Embellished by Ortiz (1553)

C. Embellished from Ganassi's tables

The image shows three musical examples in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. Example A, labeled 'A. With Tremoli and Groppi', shows a leap from a whole note to a half note, followed by a scale with tremoli and groppi. Example B, labeled 'B. Embellished by Ortiz (1553)', shows a leap from a whole note to a half note, followed by a scale with a complex ornament. Example C, labeled 'C. Embellished from Ganassi's tables', shows a leap from a whole note to a half note, followed by a scale with a complex ornament. The notation includes various ornaments, including tremoli, groppi, and complex divisions.

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Indeed, Italian music of the early seventeenth century by composers such as Castello, Marini, and Fontana can be seen as written out division ornaments over a bass line. In the seventeenth century, it was also common practice to improvise variations over a repeated bass line such as a *passacaglia* or a *ciaccona* or a ground such as *romanesca*, *ruggiero*, and *Bergamesca*. The Biber Passacaglia from the Sonatas of the Rosary is one such example. Divisions were also used to create variations, or doubles, as in Bach's Partita in B Minor for Solo Violin, BWV 1002.

Quantz was referring to both essential graces and division ornaments when he wrote: "In the Italian style in former times no embellishments at all were set down, and everything was left to the caprice of the performer."<sup>5</sup> Many treatises provide tables of ornaments, like "cheat sheets," and musicians were expected to study these and become fluent enough to ornament spontaneously. Quantz's table of ornaments is well worth careful study.

By now you should be well equipped to enhance your piece with ornaments; the only thing you might need to acquire is that crucial aspect of Baroque music: good taste.

## Good Taste

Composers and theoreticians alike were very clear on the absolute importance of good taste and rallied against what they considered to be poor taste. Many composers, Bach included, simply wrote out the ornaments in the hopes that performers would feel no need to add their own. Indeed, in making a harpsichord transcription of Alessandro Marcello's Oboe Concerto in D Minor, Bach added his own ornaments in the second movement; they provide an excellent example of Bach's idea of good taste in ornamentation (exs. 7a–7b).

*Example 7a. Alessandro Marcello, Oboe Concerto in D Minor, movt. II, mm. 4–14 (oboe solo).*



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Example 7b. J. S. Bach, *Harpsichord Concerto in D Minor, BWV 974, movt. II, mm. 4–14* (Harpsichord melody).



Others, such as Couperin, explicitly stated that the performer was to play only the ornaments indicated in the score and in exactly the style dictated in his preface. In 1710, Estienne Roger published a version of Corelli's Opus 5 Sonatas for violin and bass, along with what the publisher claimed to be Corelli's own ornaments. No doubt some found these ornaments tasteful while others felt they were over the top. In any case I have found them invaluable for study as well as performance.

For me, Judy Tarling, in *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners*, beautifully sums up good taste: "Baroque ornamentation should be rhythmically free, should sound improvised, unregulated, and above all express the various 'passions' contained in the music being enhanced."<sup>6</sup>

While your own brand of "good taste" is best developed by deepening your knowledge of national styles within the Baroque period as well as specific intentions of each composer, below are some pointers for getting started.

**Know your place:** When you are playing an inner voice, there won't be much room for added ornaments. Indeed, in listing the duties of those who accompany a *concertante* part, Quantz says that "a good violist must shun all extempore additions or embellishments in his part."<sup>7</sup> However, you can add much "grace" to your part with the bow alone. If the music is contrapuntal, you could have some fun passing around division ornaments with your friends on other voices.

**Stay in character:** If you go out of character, do it for a reason.

**Bend the rhythm, but don't break it:** Ornaments should occur within the basic pulse of the music.

**Keep the basic melody and harmony in mind:** Ornaments should not obscure basic melody and should honor the underlying harmony. Quantz says:

Some persons believe that they will appear learned if they crowd an Adagio with many graces, and twist

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them around in such fashion that all too often hardly one note among ten harmonizes with the bass, and little of the principal air can be perceived. Yet in this they err greatly, and show their lack of true feeling for good taste....

The rarest and most tasteful delicacies produce nausea if over-indulged. The same is true of musical embellishments if we use them too profusely.<sup>8</sup>

There are numerous contemporaneous examples of ornamentation that indeed obscure the melody, so clearly this is something that was done, much to the consternation of Quantz and other proponents of good taste. If you choose to do so, understand that you will be taking on the role of “wild and crazy guy.”

**It’s all about the bass:** As many violists know, much of the emotional content of Baroque music comes from the harmonic structure. Dissonances create tension, be it to express sorrow, grief, angst, or love. Consonances relieve that tension and bring a peaceful resolution. Ornaments in the melody should enhance, intensify, and clarify the narrative implied in the harmony. In particular, know that if you add an appoggiatura to a written note already functioning as an appoggiatura, you will actually lessen the tension created by the composer.

**Learn to recognize when the composer has written out the ornaments, and treat them as such.** If you do so, you may well find there is no need to add more ornaments.

**Some practical hints for getting started:** Start simple, then build, increasing complexity. By pushing the envelope, you

will discover how far you can go before crossing over into “bad taste.”

Write out your ornaments at first. Make several versions, varying your style from balanced and rational to dramatic and perhaps a bit crazy!

Practice your cheat sheets (Quantz and others: see Further Reading below).

Spend some time with friends just improvising on a ground bass. You’ll have fun, and it will boost your confidence!

Use recordings to inspire, but not to imitate.

Now that you’re gaining fluency in creating your own ornaments, use this as a tool for studying Bach. Try reducing his music to a chord progression or melody plus bass line. Create your own ornaments on the simplified version. Compare yours to his; your interpretation of his music will then become richer.

Most important, always keep in mind the reason you have embarked on your mission to ornament in the first place: to enhance the rhetoric and emotion inherent in the music. Simply following the rules to create something superficially pretty and correct will not move your audience. Break the rules if that serves your higher purpose. You’ll know you have achieved your goal when your ornaments sound as if they have been improvised on the spot and yet are so compelling that they may as well have been written by the composer himself.

*For an example of ornamented viola music, please see the sample score: Movement I and Movement III of Telemann’s Viola Concerto with ornamentation by David Miller.*

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## Further Reading

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*A great cheat sheet for early seventeenth-century music.*

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Geminiani, Francesco. *The Art of Playing on the Violin*. London, 1751.  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/The\\_Art\\_of\\_Playing\\_on\\_the\\_Violin,\\_Op.9\\_%28Geminiani,\\_Francesco%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/The_Art_of_Playing_on_the_Violin,_Op.9_%28Geminiani,_Francesco%29).

Neumann, Frederick. *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.  
*An exhaustive and detailed treatment of the subject.*

Quantz, Johann Joachim. *On Playing the Flute* (1752). 2nd ed., translated by Edward R. Reilly. London: Faber and Faber, 1985.  
*A must read; great cheat sheets for mid-eighteenth century music.*

Tartini, Giuseppe. *Treatise on Ornaments* (1771). Translated by Erwin R. Jacobi. Celle, Germany: H. Moeck, 1961.  
*More cheat sheets.*

Tarling, Judy. *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners*. St. Albans, UK: Corda Music, 2000.

*An absolute must read and must have for a school library; Judy pulls together information from all of the treatises, adds to this her own experience as a baroque violinist, and presents it clearly and practically. See her chapter 1.5 on Ornamentation, 34–62. She has an exhaustive bibliography, including a list of primary sources available in facsimile or modern edition with ornament information (p.57).*

Zaslaw, Neal. "Ornaments for Corelli's Sonatas, Op. 5." *Early Music* 24 (1996):95–115.

For ornamentation of the first movement of the Telemann Viola concert in G Major, see "User Friendly Baroque Ornamentation: Five Leading Baroque Performers Clarify Viola Literature" compiled by Patricia McCarty, in *American String Teacher* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 43–52.

## Music Examples

Bach, J. S. Harpsichord Concerto in D Minor, BWV 974.  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/16\\_Konzerte\\_nach\\_verschiedenen\\_Meistem,\\_BWV\\_972%E2%80%9C93987\\_%28Bach,\\_Johann\\_Sebastian%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/16_Konzerte_nach_verschiedenen_Meistem,_BWV_972%E2%80%9C93987_%28Bach,_Johann_Sebastian%29)

———. Partita No. 2 in B Minor, BWV 1002.  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/6\\_Violin\\_Sonatas\\_and\\_Partitas,\\_BWV\\_1001-1006\\_\(Bach,\\_Johann\\_Sebastian\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/6_Violin_Sonatas_and_Partitas,_BWV_1001-1006_(Bach,_Johann_Sebastian))

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Biber, Franz. Passacaglia from Rosary Sonata XVI.  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/Mystery\\_%28Rosary%29\\_Sonatas\\_%28Biber, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/Mystery_%28Rosary%29_Sonatas_%28Biber,_Heinrich_Ignaz_Franz_von%29)

Corelli, Arcangelo. Sonatas for Violin and Bass, Opus 5 (Chrysander Edition).  
[http://imslp.org/wiki/12\\_Violin\\_Sonatas, Op.5\\_%28Corelli, Arcangelo%29](http://imslp.org/wiki/12_Violin_Sonatas,_Op.5_%28Corelli,_Arcangelo%29)

Marcello, Alessandro. Oboe Concerto in D Minor.  
<http://icking-music-archive.org/ByComposer/Marcello.php>

*Nancy Wilson is known as one of the leading baroque violinists in the United States and was a founding member of many of America's pioneering period instrument ensembles, including Concert Royal, the Bach Ensemble, Classical Quartet, and Aston Magna. A native of Detroit, Ms. Wilson holds degrees from Oberlin College and The Juilliard School; studied with Dorothy Delay, David Cerone, and Mischa Mischakoff; and began her studies of historical performance practice with Albert Fuller, Jaap Schroeder, and Stanley Ritchie at Aston Magna. She has been invited as guest lecturer and clinician at workshops and music schools throughout the United States, Europe, and China and currently teaches historical performance practice at the Mannes College of Music in Manhattan and violin at Princeton University.*

<sup>1</sup> Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, 2nd ed., trans. Edward R. Reilly (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 237–41.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>3</sup> Giuseppe Tartini, *Treatise on Orchestration*, trans. and ed. Sol Babitz (Los Angeles, CA: Early Music Laboratory, 1970), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Quantz, 163.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Judy Tarling, *Baroque String Playing for Ingenious Learners* (St. Albans, UK: Corda Music, 2000), 34.

<sup>7</sup> Quantz, 238.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 99,120.

# Concerto In G Major

Solo Viola

Movement I

G. P. Telemann

Ornamentation by David Miller

**Largo**

8

12

16

22

26

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37

41

44

47

9

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# Concerto in G Major

## Movement III

Solo Viola

G. P. Telemann

Ornamentation by David Miller

Andante

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(p)

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# Recording Reviews

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## Bachian Musings

by Carlos María Solare

Not that I am complaining about it, but in the past few months I seem to have spent quite a bit of time with Johann Sebastian Bach's cello suites. Shortly before Christmas I picked up—on a whim—Eric Siblin's book, *The Cello Suites: J. S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece* (Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 2009). Mr. Siblin, of all things a pop music critic, had on a similar whim attended a concert of Bach's cello suites back in the "Bach Year" of 2000 and just happened to fall in love with the music. He decided to find out as much about it as he could, and this endearing book is the result of his quest. Its thirty-six chapters (one for each movement of the suites) alternatively deal with, firstly, the music's genesis and its place in Bach's biography, then with Casals's discovery of it in late nineteenth-century Barcelona and his subsequent life-long championship, and lastly with the author's own journey of discovery. Even if I can't claim to have learned from it much that was really new, Siblin's enthusiasm for Bach's music proved contagious, and I found myself looking afresh at the scores—in Bärenreiter's collected edition of all the authentic sources—and revisiting for myself this world of inexhaustible beauty.

I also returned to Casals's monumental recording of the suites, the first ever made and dating from the 1930s (originally made by EMI, it is now available in several CD reissues). Since then, of course, every famous cellist—as well as a few infamous ones—has set down his view of this music. And I do mean "his view": I may be wrong, but I can't think of any complete cycle by a female cellist! Conversely, most of the recordings of these pieces made on the viola seem to be by women! First in line was the redoubtable Lillian Fuchs in the early 1950s. Long out of print, this legendary recording was reissued by the historical label Doremi in 2005, and quite impressive it is! Even if it can't be called "historically informed," Ms. Fuchs's playing transcends any such thoughts. The occasional un-Baroque forays into high positions, slides, and missing cadential trills are more than compensated for by the consistently imaginative phrasing, rhythmic life, and variegated coloring that imbue these readings (Doremi DHR-7801/02). Among other complete sets that have come my way, those by Patricia McCarty (Ashmont 6100), Barbara Westphal (Bridge 9094A/B), and Rivka Golani (CBC MVCD 1141-3) have all, in their very different ways, left fond memories.

A recent addition to the viola discography of Bach suites is by Tanya Solomon (Eroica Classical Recordings JDT3433), whose recording hides behind the title *Baroque Preludes, Dances and Fugues II* (in case you were wondering, vol. I consisted of Bach's violin Sonatas and Partitas, as

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well as the Flute Suite, played on the viola by Solomon's husband, Scott Slapin). Solomon's playing is thoroughly modern, albeit with a nod toward historical awareness. Vibrato is discretely applied, and she avoids Romantic indulgence, mostly letting the music speak for itself. A certain parsimoniousness regarding repeats is as irritating as it is incomprehensible, since there would have been plenty of room on the CDs for the missing music (mostly the repeat of the second half of each dance movement). Solomon is rhythmically alive and always sensitive to the music's implied polyphony. For the record, she eschews the scordatura tuning in the Fifth Suite and plays the Sixth in G major.

Two recent single CDs will hopefully develop into complete cycles. Tabea Zimmermann counterpoints Bach's first two suites with Reger's three unaccompanied suites, Op. 131d (myrios classics MYR003), and this juxtaposition allows one to see both composers in a new light. Of course, Reger saw himself as a Bach follower. Hearing Reger's suites, one realizes both the similarities between the two composers, down to Reger even copying Bach's model, but also how Reger distanced himself from Bach. Thanks to Zimmermann's crystal-clear intonation, Reger's exuberantly chromatic passages are always easy to follow, and the many passages in thirds sing out soulfully. The juicy tone that Zimmermann deploys in Reger's music greatly contrasts with her Bach playing. This is an ideal demonstration of how to approach the style of Bach's time with an instrument in modern set-up. Dancing rhythms come appropriately to the fore while at the same time making up an entity together with the "abstract" music of the Preludes. I do hope that the other suites—coupled with other Bach-inspired music by the likes of Adolf Busch, Heinrich Kaminski, Oskar Geier, or Bernd Alois Zimmermann—won't be long in following.

Chivalrously last, as befits the only gent in this Bachian round, Maxim Rysanov has clearly plotted his recording as a unity (BIS SACD 1783). He starts with the sonorous E-flat arpeggiations of Suite No. 4, and they can seldom have been more sonorous than in Rysanov's hands. He seems to be operating some sort of sustaining pedal, so prominently do the overtones ring, and so well caught are they in the amazingly life-like recording. Rysanov plays almost exclusively in the first position throughout the whole CD, using open strings wherever possible, thus making for uncommon clarity in the music's implied polyphony. He follows the E-flat Suite with No. 5 in the original scordatura tuning, which—apart from allowing some otherwise unplayable chords—effectively underlines the piece's dark C-minor coloring. After this, the bright G major of No. 1 is like going back into the sun. Rysanov is always conscious of the music's choreographic potential, and he varies nicely the repeats. I especially liked his touching in of the bass notes in the E-flat Sarabande, sometimes going back to the top note, sometimes not, while always keeping an amiably "walking" pace. Contrastingly, the C-minor Sarabande is spun on a thread of tone. Again, I hope we won't have to wait too long for the other three suites from Rysanov. Long may they keep coming!