

PREFACE

by Viacheslav Dinerchtein

“The four collections of fantasias for flute, keyboard, violin, and viola da gamba published by Telemann between 1732 and 1736 include some of the most original and successful music for unaccompanied melody instrument from the eighteenth century. Hence the loss of the viola da gamba fantasias is especially unfortunate,” wrote music historian Steven Zohn in 2008 in his comprehensive study of Telemann’s life and work.¹ Little could anyone imagine at the time that a few years later the entire set, *Fantaisies pour la Basse de Violle*, thought to have perished for almost three centuries, would be fortuitously rediscovered in a private collection in Germany in a perfectly preserved copy.

The extraordinary finding, which appeared promptly before Telemann’s 250-years commemoration, sent waves of awe around the globe, and was celebrated in 2016 in Telemann’s hometown of Magdeburg with a facsimile release, along with a concert and recording presentation by the gambist Thomas Fritzsich, regarded as largely responsible for making the *Fantaisies* available to the musical fraternity. The quality of this music did not fall short of expectations. “[They are] everything we could wish for: endless invention, elegance, charm and wit” remarked Robert Smith, one of the first endorsers of the collection. “The world of viola da gamba players is buzzing with excitement about it!”² Proclaimed an instant “essential chapter in the repertory for the instrument”³ and “a holy grail for viola da gamba players,”⁴ the set was welcomed with countless performances worldwide, eight CD releases within only two years of the discovery, an arrangement for flute, and a documentary, *12 Fantasies, the Magic of Notes*, in which the legendary da gamba virtuoso Paolo Pandolfo, having already recorded the *Fantaisies*, is seen observing, “This is new music for everybody; new music for me too – it is not yet part of my repertoire. We are still in a big work-in-progress phase.”⁵ Clearly, the collection’s rise exceeds our capacity to assimilate its arrival.

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So, who was Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767), the man behind the *Fantaisies*?

In a narrow sense, the most industrious, and, by all accounts, far and away the most revered composer of his lifetime. In a wider sense, a true force of nature with a galvanic personality and a sense of humor that are said to have accounted for much of his success.

Sprouting from a Lutheran clergy family, and becoming an autodidactic musician against all odds, he came to master practically every instrument there was, old and new.⁶ Untypical for his time, he

1 Steven David Zohn, *Music for a Mixed Taste: Style, Genre, and Meaning in Telemann’s Instrumental Works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 426.

2 “Robert Smith – gamba: Telemann’s Fantasieën voor viola da gamba,” Geelvinck Muziek Musea, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://www.geelvinck.nl/concerten/robert-smith-gamba-telemann-fantasien-voor-viola-da-gamba>.

3 Georg Philipp Telemann, *Fantaisies for Viola Da Gamba*, Paolo Pandolfo, Note 1 Music GmbH, 2017, compact disc, liner notes.

4 “Robert Smith – gamba: Telemann’s Fantasieën voor viola da gamba.”

5 “12 Fantasies, the Magic of Notes,” Robin van Erven Dorens Productions, accessed May 25, 2018, <http://robinfilm.nl/in-production-12-fantasies-the-magic-of-notes>.

6 Telemann’s musical training consisted of secretly snatching and copying any score he could find. As he recalls in his 1740 autobiography, “Unfortunately my first and only [keyboard] teacher was an organist who tried to terrorize me with German keyboard tablature notation which I then proceeded to play as stiffly as his grandfather did, from whom he originally inherited it. In my head I heard all sorts of more interesting melodies than were presented to me here. So I decided, after two weeks of torture, to quit these lessons. After this point in time, I never did learn anything more from music teachers.” Young Telemann’s family strongly opposed his passion for music: when he wrote his first opera at age 12, his instruments and scores were confiscated. He was later sent against his will to Leipzig to study law. See “Telemann, Dokumente, Texte, Materialien, Telemanns Garten,” Telemann in Magdeburg, <https://www.telemann.org/ueber-telemann/biographie/autobiographien/id-1740.123.html>.

traveled widely, gaining exposure to the French and the Italian styles, which he assimilated and incorporated into his music. He is considered directly responsible for having brought these newest trends and idioms over to Germany, to the great delight and inspiration of his contemporaries, among them J.S. Bach and G.F. Handel, both lasting admirers and friends.⁷

Telemann held diverse reputed positions of the day,⁸ culminating in musical directorship in Hamburg, where he remained for almost fifty years and until his death, bringing the city's musical landscape to unprecedented heights.⁹ Parallel to his many commitments,¹⁰ he also established in Hamburg his own music-publishing house, supervising every step of the engraving and printing process, and displaying truly prodigious business skills in distributing his work by subscription to music enthusiasts all across Europe.¹¹ The viola da gamba fantasias belong to that period.

Telemann had a lifelong affinity for letters – poetry of his time, in particular – and authored three autobiographies, published many of his own poems,¹² wrote libretti to some of his operas along with numerous program notes and prefaces to collections of his music, and initiated the first known printed music periodical, *Der Getreue Musikmeister*. Once he reached his sixties, he turned to gardening, which he pursued with the same fervor as he did everything else. He became an avid correspondent with Europe's leading botanists, engaged in a collection and exchange of flower bulbs and seeds, and eventually came to grow a rare botanical garden of exotic plants.¹³

After a long and illustrious career, leaving an output of over three thousand compositions behind – more music than Bach and Handel combined – Telemann died, aged 86, as a musical celebrity and the most prolific composer of all time, at least according to the authority and mouthpiece for such counts, *The Guinness Book of World Records*.¹⁴ His legacy was perhaps best epitomized by Johann Mattheson, one of the foremost music commentators of the day: “People sing the praises of Lully; they speak very highly of Corelli. Only Telemann is above all praise.”¹⁵

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Following his death, with newer musical fashions taking over, Telemann's popularity quickly faded. In a bitter irony, it was his very prolificacy that turned out to be a double-edged sword.

7 Telemann and Handel met during their teenage years and kept in contact throughout Telemann's life. With J.S. Bach the connections are many as well. Telemann stood godfather to Bach's son Carl Philipp Emanuel (thus, the middle name Philipp).

8 Incidentally, J.S. Bach accepted the prestigious appointment as Cantor of Leipzig's St. Thomas Church only after Telemann turned the offer down.

9 After his death, Hamburg's musical scenery suffered a sharp recession. When, in 1772, the historian Ch. Burney visited Hamburg and witnessed a poor performance for an ill-mannered audience, Telemann's successor and godson C.P.E. Bach only commented apologetically, “You are coming here fifty years too late.” See Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and United Provinces; Or, The Journal of a Tour through Those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music* (London: T. Becket, 1775), 2:246.

10 Telemann was in charge of the five principal churches; he opened middle-class music societies, started public concert series, wrote weekly cantata cycles, composed annual passions, dozens of operas and intermezzi for the Hamburg Opera, which he directed as well, and provided the city with music for all imaginable civic, religious and private occasions – all that while also fulfilling steady commissions from home and abroad.

11 The fact that he was often addressing accomplished amateur musicians (both nobility and musically educated middle class) did not prevent J.S. Bach and Handel from placing their orders at different times.

12 Telemann's poems included a eulogy after his first wife's death, and also dedications to his esteemed friends Johann Georg Pisendel, a violinist virtuoso of the day, and J.S. Bach.

13 Many of his musical acquaintances – Handel, C.P.E. Bach, Graun – personally contributed to the collection. Telemann kept detailed observations on his beloved flowers, which was what allowed, in 2012, the recreation of Telemann's original garden in his hometown Magdeburg. See “Telemann, Dokumente, Texte, Materialien, Telemanns Garten” – Telemann in Magdeburg, <https://www.telemann.org/ueber-telemann/Telemann-Garten.html>.

14 *Guinness World Records 2017* (Great Britain: Guinness World Records, 2017), 125. It is worth noting that, in spite of the cited report, the Austrian theorist Simon Sechter (1788–1867), known as composition teacher of Bruckner, Vieuxtemps, and on some occasion Schubert, and also known for pledging to compose one fugue per day, is thought to have written over 8000 opuses. See *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd. 12, Kassel 1989 S, 450.

15 Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte* (Hamburg, 1740), 369.

Already in 1770, only three years after Telemann's passing, German scholar Christoph Daniel Ebeling makes the first disparaging remark: "[Telemann] would have been greater had it not been so easy for him to write so unspeakably much. Polygraphs seldom produce masterpieces."¹⁶ The comment seems to have set the tone for subsequent ones, as a pejorative image of Telemann as a quick-to-write depthless doodler, "Vielschreiber,"¹⁷ became music critics' leitmotiv.

By the mid 19th century, Telemann's botanical garden, by then "among the most important Hamburg gardens of the century,"¹⁸ clearly took prominence over his music, which continued its sharp plunge into oblivion. The 1911 *Encyclopedia Britannica* dedicates articles to the rediscovered Bach and Handel, but has no entry on Telemann. To make matters worse yet, in an entry on "Aria," the book of knowledge sees "no need to pause to consider the vastly inferior work of lesser composers such as Telemann, Marpurg and Agricola."¹⁹ One is left to debate what is more derogatory, the label of being a "lesser composer" or being aligned with two theorists of marginal contribution to composition.

It must be noted that the unruly idolization of Bach after his revival, along with usually prejudiced comparisons of his music against that of his contemporaries, played an important role in the delay in Telemann's comeback. While discussing the subject of *cantata*, one of Telemann's signature genres, the 19th century Bach biographer and scholar Philipp Spitta affirmed that "in this form Bach could borrow nothing from Telemann, nor, indeed, could Telemann have followed in his steps, even at a remote distance."²⁰ It has since been documented that Bach copied Telemann's entire cantatas by hand.²¹ With ironic precision, Spitta went even further, glorifying, unawares, the cantata "Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt," labeling "a true gem"²² what was attributed to Bach but later identified as having been written by Telemann.

It took over a century and a half for Telemann's music to begin to regain its original status. First signs of interest in Telemann show in the 1920s, thanks to new studies and editions of his work, and an attempted unbiased biographical essay by the popular dramatist and Nobel Prize winner in literature Romain Rolland. He writes in 1919: "This man, whose music was admired in every country in Europe [...] whom the austere Mattheson declares to be the only musician above all praise, is today forgotten, belittled. And no one attempts to make his acquaintance."²³

However, the true meteoric climb for Telemann took place after World War II, when scholars, in a quest to rescue what they could of the bombed German archives, discovered hundreds of abandoned Telemann compositions. Coinciding with the growing interest in Early Music, the revelations gave Telemann's popularity a renewed impetus. As attested by the 2017 massive worldwide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of Telemann's death, with a plethora of performances, festivals, tributes, and exhibitions, which seem to continue to grow exponentially, it is clear that the *Fantasias* for the viola da gamba, came at a culmination point of Telemann's recognition.

16 Cristine Klein, *Dokumente Zur Telemann-Rezeption 1767 Bis 1907* (Oschersleben: Ziethen, 1998), 25.

17 Eduard Maria Oettinger, *Narrenalmanach* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1845), 147.

18 "Telemann, Dokumente, Texte, Materialien, Telemanns Garten," Telemann in Magdeburg, accessed May 14, 2018. <https://www.telemann.org/ueber-telemann/Telemann-Garten.html>.

19 "Online Encyclopedia," Franklin's, United, France, and Poor - JRank Articles, accessed May 14, 2018, http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/SIV_SOU/SONG.html.

20 Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach: His Work and Influence on the Music of Germany, 1685–1750* (London: Novello, 1899), 2:413.

21 Romain Rolland, *Essays on Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), 120. Steven Zohn builds a compelling case of the "Telemann-to-Bach direction of influence." See Zohn, 193.

22 Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, 1:496.

23 Romain Rolland, "L'autobiographie d'un illustre oublié," in *Voyage musical au pays du passé*, Paris, 1919.

Telemann's motivation for dedicating a hefty collection to the viola da gamba, an instrument in decline, is unknown. It was still popular in aristocratic circles, and as Thomas Fritzsich observed, "It seems to have taken the entrepreneurial courage and clever sales strategy of a personality who was admired in all Europe [...] to successfully market a dozen fantasias for solo viola da gamba, a product that had become almost unsaleable."²⁴

Sure enough, Telemann understood well the laws of supply and demand, and he knew his customers. But it is also conceivable that, back in 1735, given Telemann's special affinity for both the French and the Italian, he may have attempted to give the gallicized Italian instrument some backing: yes, da gamba was out of fashion, but there was still nothing inevitable in its subsequent extinction. As music historian Richard Taruskin observed, it is only when we regard events in retrospect that their causes look like causes, as we often forget that the past was once the future.²⁵

Let us also not forget that Telemann was a nonconformist to begin with. There was nothing conventional in his release of the *Fantasias* for viola da gamba, as there was nothing conventional in his release of a concerto for viola, an emerging instrument without performing precedents.²⁶ Such were extravagancies Telemann could afford by virtue of his enormous popularity.

The recovery of the *Fantasias for viola da gamba* in 2015 was a spectacular stroke of luck. The only extant copy, which belongs to the archive of the Ledenburg estate, was stumbled upon completely by chance, à la *The Da Vinci Code*, by the French musicologist François-Pierre Goy during a research of an unrelated subject. Having identified a new searching feature in one German online catalogue, and curious to test its presence elsewhere, he went on to conduct a systematic scan of other German regional archives using a random musical keyword, "gamba." It also took the right kind of researcher to recognize the treasure in the resulted listing. The details of the astonishing discovery were then forwarded to Thomas Fritzsich and Günter von Zadow for further proper research, resulting in the performing editions and recordings.

The 12 *Fantasias for viola da gamba* belong to four collections of fantasias for solo instruments that Telemann released in succession, the others being fantasias for flute, violin, and harpsichord. The da gamba are fantasias of remarkable inventiveness and variety of styles, ranging from simple binary movements to complex fugal counterpoint. Thomas Fritzsich also finds in them "elements of the rondo or the concerto, dance forms in both traditional and *galant* guise, echoes of Polish music and of the Moravian *hanacca*."²⁷

As is the case with the flute fantasias, the da gamba collection is structured to progress through tonalities in a more or less stepwise ascending order. Akin to the fantasias for flute and violin solo, the gamba set also gravitates toward the keys that are more practical and resonate better, invariably due to the instrument's tuning. This is one point of interest for modern violists, in that two of the viola's strings are tuned identically to those of the da gamba and two others, with a one octave difference.

A yet more pronounced parallel between the viola and the viola da gamba is their largely matching register, which is to some extent the *raison d'être* of the present arrangement, as, of all modern

24 Georg Philipp Telemann, *Zwölf Fantasien für Viola da Gamba solo*, ed. Thomas Fritzsich and Günter von Zadow (Heidelberg: Edition Güntersberg), 2016, ix.

25 "Dr. Richard Taruskin – The 2017 Kyoto Prize Commemorative Lecture," accessed June 1, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJkfyEKE94M.

26 Telemann's viola concerto is the first documented concerto for this instrument. It is worth adding that Telemann had the nerve to also write a concerto for two violettas, an instrument-predecessor for the modern viola.

27 Telemann, *Zwölf Fantasien für Viola da Gamba solo*.

strings, the viola finds itself in the most privileged position for such an adaptation. The register matters, because it may well be one of the wellsprings from which musical scenery flows. Its mismatch is no doubt one of the few unsurpassable challenges violists face when approaching, for example, Bach's Cello Suites on the viola.

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A few words about this edition. Although originally written for advanced amateur gambists, this music is a challenge for any professional player, as it demands from the performer both mature thinking and an absolute technical mastery of the instrument. Among the big rocks to surpass, the gambist Robert Smith singles out rapid changes of register and contrapuntal writing while preserving the character of the music,²⁸ to which Paolo Pandolfo adds: "The violist who wants to get to grips with the study of these magnificent works should be equipped with a broad stylistic and instrumental culture in order to be in a position to take up the fascinating challenges offered by the ceaseless interplay of variety, fantasy and rigour."²⁹ It goes without saying that the same set of challenges applies to the modern viola version as well.

Preparing this edition rendered a number of behind-the-scene obstacles. While sharing much of the register with the viola, the fretted seven-stringed viola da gamba is an entirely different instrument, with its own characteristics and origins. In what concerns technical matters, the viola da gamba, held upright like a cello and played with an underhand bow grip, and the viola are truly worlds apart. For this adaptation that meant walking a fine line between adherence to the original text and its playability on the viola.

One technicality to overcome concerned octave transpositions. The da gamba's register extends beyond that of the viola and each compulsory detour needed to blend organically into the larger musical picture. There were also times when a transposition was made by choice. For instance, in the *Vivace* of Fantasia No. 8, notes can be played on the viola verbatim, as written in the facsimile.



However, the built-in interplay with the gamba's open A-string, paired with the fact that, for da gamba, the theme is not yet within the lower range – thus, its brisk character – led to the decision to transpose much of the movement an octave higher.

Another often encountered type of decision had to do with chord layout. The departing point was the belief that Telemann's written-out chords serve as more than merely decorative frills; that they have a special intended place in the musical narrative, be it to bring out a reflective element of an episode, or "to surprise the ear with their unexpected vehemence,"³⁰ to name just two possibilities. And so it is in the spirit of loyalty to the original that numerous chords were preserved intact, albeit being unconventional in the modern viola practice.

28 "Robert Smith – gamba: Telemann's Fantasieën voor viola da gamba."

29 Telemann, *Fantasias for Viola da Gamba*.

30 Johann Joachim Quantz, *Versuch Einer Anweisung Die Flöte Traversiere Zu Spielen* (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Voss, 1752), 196.

In Telemann's time, chords were broken or arpeggiated, usually from bottom to top, "according to the performer's own good taste."³¹ The exact way to execute them depended largely on the context.

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When approaching music such as Telemann's *Fantasias*, today's norm is to strive for what is nominally called "historically informed performance," even though the quest to fully grasp what that is, let alone accurately recreate it, is notoriously complex. With no audio evidence to hold on to, all knowledge there is on the topic comes from musicological research, and contrary to popular belief (also among advanced professionals) cannot be reduced to a dozen shortcuts and formulas for all occasions. Treatises and instruction manuals of the day rarely yield hard-and-fast performance rules agreed on by all. On the contrary, a comparison between conventions of the German, French and Italian schools often lead to scandalous contradictions. And, as a cherry on the cake, Telemann is known precisely for having absorbed and amalgamated all of the above lines of thought. What is clear is that a dogmatic approach to Telemann's *Fantasias* would not illuminate the subject in its full complexity, and there is a reason why Thomas Fritzsich compares playing early music to driving a car in a foreign country with no traffic signs: "Be careful and expect the unforeseen!"³²

It is not our place to join the debate on whether or not today's attempt to understand period performance idioms represents the aesthetics of the past any more than it represents, undercover, the aesthetics of modernity, and we "no longer call novelty by its right name."³³ Neither do we intend to discuss the revival of authenticity in music without addressing a broader question of what we understand by having given it up in the first place. After all, today's listener, bombarded by the 21st century daily cacophony, from the latest techno-remix to the noise of a passing truck (granted, with a few gradations in between), cannot possibly perceive what was meant to be dramatic harmonic tensions of the opening Allegro in the Fantasia No.1 the same way the 18th century listener did.

While acknowledging the multilevel insurmountable gap that separates us from recreating a genuine authentic experience of Telemann's *Fantasias*, and also the enormous speculative element in the best information available on the specifics of the early performance practices, the primary sources still give us some general pointers on aspects that are prevalent or often present in Telemann's *Fantasias*, which are undoubtedly helpful to keep in mind when approaching this music.

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François Couperin opens his famous book *The Art of Harpsichord Playing* with the words "Just as there is a great distance between grammar and declamation in language, there is also an infinity between musical notation and the manner of performing well."³⁴ The 18th century musicians enjoyed far greater freedom – and, with it, a far greater share of responsibility – than that which we are accustomed to today. Performers were invited and expected to make full use of their personal taste – hopefully, good taste – and their ability as instrumentalists to fill in the many blanks tacitly implied in the score. Usually endowed with the knowledge of conventions that needed no written mention, they were to enrich and enhance the piece at hand with their own bowings, dynamics, embellishments, and/or improvisations. While the genre of Fantasia, with its improvisatory origins that date back to the 16th century, was in all likelihood no exception,³⁵ tastefulness was often found in the moderation. On the topic of **improvising** the reprises, C.P.E. Bach commented that "the concept is excellent but much abused [...] Not everything should be varied, for if it is the reprise

31 Leopold Mozart, *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756), 187.

32 Private correspondence, June 1, 2018.

33 Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 231.

34 François Couperin, *L'art de toucher le clavecin* (Paris, 1717), Preface.

35 Zohn, *Music for a Mixed Taste*, 427.

will become a new piece [...] All variations must always be if not better than at least as good as the original.”³⁶ Leopold Mozart too, on the topic of free-style embellishments, warned that “decorations ought to be used very sparingly, at the right time, and only for variety in often repeated and similar passages [...] for in the application of such ornaments is one’s ignorance soonest betrayed.”³⁷

The expression and **dynamics** were something left to the ability and good taste of the performer, which accounts for the virtual lack of such markings in the *Fantasias*, even if the expectations were high. As J.J. Quantz writes in his authoritative treatise *On Playing the Flute*, “A good execution should [...] be full of variety. You must continually oppose light and shade; for you will certainly fail to be touching, if you play always either loud or soft — if you use, so to speak, always the same colour, and do not know how to increase or abate the tone when required. You must therefore use frequent changes from forte to piano.”³⁸

Slurring belonged to the category of expressive means, in which, once again, one’s ability “to find the desired [emotion] and to apply the corresponding bowings in the right place”³⁹ were decisive. In the *Fantasias*, in addition to what has been requested by Telemann, the slurring outline could at times be arguably further enhanced as to “give [music] a pleasant variety.”⁴⁰ That being a matter of personal taste, our suggestions are indicated by dotted slurs.

Another matter of personal decision is the choice of **fingerings**. The 18th century instruments used different strings and were not built to produce sharp dynamic contrasts of the kind we are used to nowadays, which is the reason lower positions would often render greater resonance. Nevertheless, exploring other areas of the fingerboard in pursuit of a musical idea was perfectly conceivable. As Leopold Mozart explains in his *Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*, higher positions may be used for convenience and practicality, but also “for the sake of elegance when notes which are Cantabile occur closely together and can be played easily on one string. Not only is equality of tone obtained thereby, but also a more consistent and singing style of delivery.”⁴¹ In order to master all positions on all strings, Mozart goes on to recommend to practice pieces of one’s choice in different positions. The Italian virtuoso violinist Francesco Geminiani, too, gives, in 1751, a thorough technical left-hand drilling until the seventh position on all strings in his *Art of Playing on the Violin* – presumably, for its occasional practical application. The use of different positions in the viola version of Telemann’s *Fantasias* is a recurring necessity in order to play the notes, in addition to sporadic departures from the first position that seem musically justified. It must be noted that frequent use of different positions is an attribute of the original gamba version as well.

The **trill**, often written out throughout the *Fantasias*, was considered an essential performing skill, as attested by Quantz. “If an instrumentalist or singer were to possess all the skill required by good taste in performance, and yet could not strike good [trills], his total art would be incomplete.”⁴² It was usually suggested to begin the trill with an appoggiatura, from the upper neighboring note. The nature, the speed of the trill, and the precise way to close it, varied a great deal and were invariably discussed by Telemann’s contemporaries in connection with the character of the music at hand.⁴³ C.P.E. Bach remarks that, in general, a rapid trill is preferable to a slow one.⁴⁴ Quantz, too, speaks

36 Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*. (Berlin: Henning, 1753), 132.

37 Mozart, *Versuch*, 251.

38 Quantz, *Versuch*, 110, trans. Dolmetsch. *Interpretation of the Music of the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005), 25.

39 Mozart, *Versuch*, 122.

40 Ibid., 83.

41 Ibid., 147–148.

42 Quantz, *Versuch*, 83.

43 To the often mentioned categorization of the trill speed as slow, medium, or fast, Leopold Mozart adds another variation: an accelerating trill for certain cadenzas (p. 220), likely referring to cases such as the Grave of the Fantasia No.8.

44 Bach, *Versuch*, 72.

against a very slow trill, although he also opposes an excessively fast trill, calling it “chevroté.”⁴⁵ Interestingly enough, the manuals of the day also suggest to adapt the speed of the trill to the acoustic environment and to the thickness of the string.

The *Fantasias* often call for a light separated bow-stroke of diverse shades. It is important to know that **jumping strokes** based on the resiliency of the stick did not appear until the popularization of the Tourte-style pernambuco bow in the 19th century. What did exist, however, in Telemann’s time is a measured and controlled articulated stroke, not far removed from what we know today as *sautille*. Quantz explains that the norm for performing successive separate notes at a moderately fast tempo is “a very short bow-stroke, but the bow must never be detached or removed from the strings. If it were always raised as high as is required when we say that it is detached, there would not be enough time to return it to the string at the proper time, and notes of this kind would sound as if they were chopped or whipped.”⁴⁶ The *staccatissimo* marking appears in various guises throughout the *Fantasias* as well.⁴⁷ Although each case calls for its specific approach in terms of the actual execution, the basic nature of it is always that of a no-slur warning on one hand and an articulation or character pointer on the other.

The use of **vibrato** is an extraordinarily interesting case, worth an extra zoom-in and one’s thorough reflection in connection with the *Fantasias*, already in order to define one’s own position. It must be pointed out that vibrato existed long before Telemann’s time.⁴⁸ In 1545, two hundred years before the *Fantasias*, Martin Agricola writes of string players: “Playing with the free trembling finger makes the melody sweeter than when one does it another way;”⁴⁹ and in 1636 the French polymath and lutenist Marin Mersenne regrets the little use of vibrato in his time, explaining its lack of popularity by means of “a reaction against its overuse in former times.”⁵⁰ And so, the vibrato’s scarce handling in the 18th century seems to have more to do with it being the age of a return toward simplicity, and not with the technique being still underdeveloped.

In Telemann’s age, the vibrato was categorized as an embellishment, along with other ornaments like mordent or trill. As such, it is said to have been restricted to isolated notes or passages in order to intensify their expressiveness, and Leopold Mozart is often cited in this context: “There are some players who tremble at every note, as if they had a chronic fever. One should use the [vibrato] only in those places where Nature herself would produce it.” Mozart proceeds to cite the wave-like undulations of a sharply struck bell as such example and suggests that “a closing note or any other sustained note may be *decorated* with [the vibrato]” (emphasis added).⁵¹

But there have been other views. In 1749, in his *Treatise of Good Taste*, Geminiani writes that: “To perform [the vibrato], you must press the finger strongly upon the string of the instrument, and move the wrist in and out slowly and equally. When it is long continued, swelling the sound by degrees, drawing the bow nearer to the bridge, and ending it very strong, it may express majesty, dignity, etc. But making it shorter, lower, and softer, it may denote affliction, fear, etc., and when it

45 Quantz, *Versuch*, 84. The term is echoed by Leopold Mozart in his *Treatise*: “The trill must above all things not be played too rapidly, then otherwise it becomes unintelligible and bleating, or [the] so-called ‘Goat’s trill.’” See Mozart, *Versuch*, 221.

46 *Ibid.*, 201.

47 See, for instance, the opening of the Fantasia No. 4 vs. the finale of the Fantasia No. 11.

48 See work by Martin Agricola, Marin Marais and Jean Rousseau, among others, who discuss vibrato under diverse titles.

49 Martin Agricola, *Musica Instrumentalis Deudsch* (Colophon: Gedruch Zu Wittemberg, Durch G. Rhaw, 1545), 204.

50 English composer and gambist Christopher Simpson, in 1659, describes in his “Division-Viol” what he denominates “Close-shake,” which is when we, “in imitation of the voice [...], shake the finger as close and near the sounding note as possible may be, touching the string with the shaking finger so softly and nicely as to make no variation of tone,” which is arguably a description of the vibrato proper (unmistakable). Simpson also adds that “the frequent use thereof is not (in my opinion) much commendable,” presumably implying the existence of an otherwise opinion. See Simpson, *The Division-violist*, 9.

51 Mozart, *Versuch*, 238–239.

is made on short notes, it only contributes to make their sound more agreeable; *and for this reason it should be made use of as often as possible*” (emphasis added).⁵² Particularly noteworthy here is Geminiani’s treatment of the vibrato as a means of bringing out the emotional content in its variety, and not as cosmetic embellishment.

Also worth listening to is the opinion of Leopold Mozart’s famous son, Wolfgang Amadeus. In a letter to his father, he writes: “The human voice trembles naturally – but in its own way – and only to such a degree that the effect is beautiful. Such is the nature of the voice; and people imitate it not only on wind instruments, but on stringed instruments too and even on the clavichord. But the moment the proper limit is overstepped, it is no longer beautiful – because it is contrary to nature. It reminds me of when, on the organ, the bellows are jolted.”⁵³ What was universally decried and mocked virtually by all was an exaggerated vibrato or its excessive continuous use, which one respected 18th-century singing treatise tagged as “The prodigious Art of Singing like a Cricket.”⁵⁴

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The last, although not least, topic to briefly touch upon is the often alluded to misconception that, in Telemann’s time, the performer was expected to, inasmuch as possible, “let the music speak for itself.”⁵⁵ The reality is that all reliable period commentators, while sharing their often contradictory approaches to the performing, decidedly agree on advocating musicians to go beyond the ink on the page. “Expression in Music may be compared to that of an Orator. The Orator and the Musician have both the same intention, in the composition as well as the rendering. They want to touch the heart, to excite or appease the movements of the soul, and to carry the auditor from one passion to another. [...] The good effect of Music depends almost as much upon the player as the composer [...] The player must try to feel in himself not only the principal passion but all the others as they come. And as in most pieces there is a perpetual change of passions, the player must be able to judge which feeling is in each thought, and to regulate his execution upon that. It is in this way that he can do justice to the intention of the composer and to the ideas the latter had in composing his pieces.”⁵⁶

These words resonate today as loudly as they must have resonated in the 18th century, and it is in this spirit – that of a bridge from the past to the present – that we share this new viola adaptation of the *Fantasias for Viola da Gamba solo*, as an entity that transcends the passage of the years and the earthly swirls of tastes and conventions, be it on the viola da gamba or the modern viola. No doubt the viola community will find much inspiration and joy in exploring and transmitting this music and its “perpetual change of passions.”

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52 Francesco Geminiani, *A Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick* (London, 1749), 3.

53 W.A. Mozart to Leopold Mozart, Letter of 12 June 1778. W.A. Bauer, O.E. Deutsch, and J.H. Eibl, eds., *Mozart: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen* (Kassel: Barenreiter Verlag, 1962–75), 2:378.

54 Pier Francesco Tosi, *Observations on the Florid Song; Or, Sentiments on the Ancient and Modern Singers*, (London: J. Wilcox, 1743), 166.

55 Dorottya Fabian, (1 December 2001), “The Meaning of Authenticity and The Early Music Movement: A Historical Review,” 156.

56 Quantz, *Versuch*, 109.