

# PROGRAM NOTES

Giovanni Buonaventura Viviani, an Italian violinist-composer active in Innsbruck, was the musical director of the Imperial court in the 1670s. In 1678, the year in which his *Capricci armonici*, Op.4 was published, he directed an oratorio in Rome in which Arcangelo Corelli and Bernardo Pasquini participated. Prior to that, he arranged and performed operas in Venice, and subsequently was appointed maestro di cappella for the Prince of Bisignano and the cathedral in Pistoia. Viviani's *Symphonia Cantabile* stylistically resembles a solo cantata with recitatives, ariosos, and arias similar to those by Antonio Cesti, with whom he might have studied during his days in Innsbruck.

Gasparo Visconti was a nobleman who ventured into composing and performing music for his own pleasure. He is presumed to have studied violin with Corelli. Between 1702 and 1705, Visconti was a frequent soloist at theatres, public halls, and at court in London. The Sonata in C $\flat$  exists only in a manuscript from around 1703. It was copied by Johann Georg Pisendel, and it does not stray far from the Corellian model, although it is much more quirky and theatrical. In the final year of his relatively short life, Tartini made a pilgrimage to meet and hear Visconti and remarked that Visconti possessed a unique, God-given style of playing which was born and died with him.

Jean Baptiste Senaillé, French violinist-composer, played a big part in the effort of enlarging the repertoire of French sonatas for solo violin and continuo in the first few decades of the 18th century. His father, Jean Senaillé, a violinist in the 24 Violons du Roi, was presumed to have been his first teacher. He also studied with Italian violinist-composer Giovanni Antonio Piani. His Op.1 was published in Paris in 1710, when he was twenty two years old. The Sonata in G $\flat$  from the collection is a beautiful amalgamation of French and Italian styles. Although conforming to the Corellian model of slow-fast-slow-fast movements and Italianate sophisticated harmonies, the fast movements are in French dance forms. On the whole, his natural, noble and graceful French melodies shine through. Three years after Opus 1 was published, Senaillé followed in his father's footsteps on being assigned a place in the 24 Violons du Roi.

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Johann Sebastian Bach was a multi-instrumentalist and composer whose timeless works mark a high point in western classical music. His father was presumably his first violin teacher. The autograph manuscripts of his Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin were finished in 1720. It is unclear if they were performed during Bach's lifetime, and were not published until 1802. Bach's venture into the field of unaccompanied violin solo music was possibly modeled after Johann Paul von Westhoff's Suites for solo violin (1696). The Sonata in G minor's four-movement layout, with the ornamented melodic lines in the Adagio and a fugal second movement, are elements reminiscent of Corelli's violin sonatas. Bach's ingenious work on realizing a full harmonic and polyphonic richness on a melodic instrument with just four strings remains a challenge for violinists to this day.

Ignace Joseph Pleyel was an Austro-French composer, music publisher, and piano maker. A protégé of Joseph Haydn, he had traveled in Italy, lived through part of the Revolution in London, and then settled in Paris in 1795 to open a music shop and found a publishing house. Pleyel's works were very popular during his lifetime. The duo for violin and viola, B.530 was published a year after he settled in Paris. The first movement is in a full sonata form with a majestic theme. The Menuetto is in an extensive rondo form with a quirky melody set in canon. The violin and viola parts are equal - both alternate roles of carrying and supporting the melody. It has enjoyed a number of reprints, proving it to be among Pleyel's most popular pieces for private entertainment in the home.

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