

Introduction

Christian Michael Wolff was born in 1709 in Stettin (now Szczecin, Poland) where he spent most of his life as organist and composer. He received composition lessons from the organist of the Marienkirche Michael Rohde, and from 1729 was substitute organist at the Nikolaikirche. In 1728, after a sojourn of three years in Berlin, he assumed the position of his teacher at the Marienkirche, which had been held before him by his father Christian Friedrich, who had died in 1721, and his grandfather Friedrich. The duties of the highly esteemed musician included playing organ in St. Peter and Pauls, and, from 1745, also in the Schlosskirche. He supervised the construction of two new organs and was active in many ways in Stettin's musical life. He died in 1789.

Wolff composed and published choral music, cantatas, and instrumental music. His compositions were known not only in his home town, but also highly regarded in other places, as can be seen, for example, from the fact that Johann Adam Hiller published two of Wolff's works in Leipzig.³ Unfortunately, only a small part of Wolff's *oeuvre* has survived, since much of his music fell victim to the flames that ravaged the Marienkirche shortly after his death.

Among the surviving works is a collection of six two-movement sonatas for a melody instrument and obbligato harpsichord, from which the present Sonata is taken. The title of the collection reads: *Sei Sonate | per il | Clavicembalo | obligato, | col | VIOLINO, o FLAUTO TRAVERSO, o VIOLETTA, | composte | da | WOLFF | in Stettin. ... 1776*. The well-preserved print is today in the holdings of the library of Brussels' Royal Conservatory (RISM: **B-Bc 7191**). While five of the six sonatas are intended for the rather usual violin or flute,⁴ the instrumentation of the Fourth Sonata is unusual. In this case, the harpsichord part is designated *Clavicembalo o Harpa*, and that of the melody instrument *Violetta o Viola di Gamba*. Thus, in place of harpsichord or fortepiano, a harp is also suggested. "Violetta" probably can be equated with today's viola, while "Viola di Gamba" can be understood as either a bass or tenor instrument. The part is in any case easily played on all three of these instruments. The relatively widely spaced chords at the end of both sections of the Vivace can be played as written on a viola tuned in fifths. On the bass or tenor viol tuned in fourths with a third in the middle, they can only be played with additional notes in order to include the strings between the written tones. This practice is not unusual for viol players.

Our edition follows the carefully written original very exactly. Small corrections are indicated in the score by footnotes. The right hand of the harpsichord part is notated in soprano clef in the original; we have transcribed this into treble clef.

With this edition, we present a work that expands the not very extensive early Classical repertoire for this instrumentarium, and particularly that for the tenor viol. We would like to thank Richard Sutcliffe for calling our attention to this sonata.

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³ Andantino and Chorale prelude in *Sammlung kleiner Clavier- und Singstücke*, ed. by J. A. Hiller (Leipzig, 1774). "Unendlicher Gott, unser Herr," in *Vierstimmige Motetten und Arien*, ed. by J. A. Hiller (Leipzig, 1776).

⁴ *Violino o Flauto traverso*: Sonatas I and VI (both in D Major); *Flauto traverso*: Sonata II (G Major); *Violino*: Sonatas III (A Minor) and V (F Major).