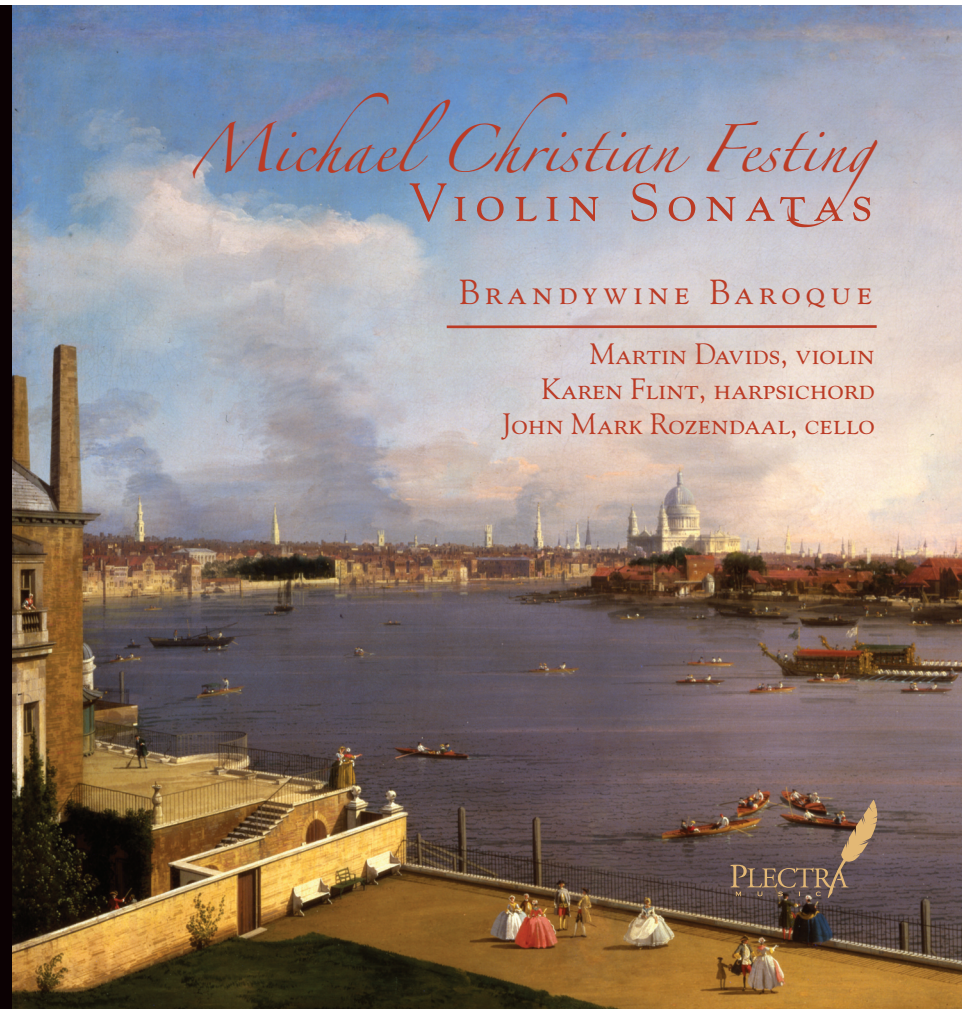




PLECTRA  
MUSIC



MICHAEL CHRISTIAN FESTING (1705-1752)  
VIOLIN SONATAS

BRANDYWINE BAROQUE

MARTIN DAVIDS, VIOLIN

KAREN FLINT, HARPSICHORD

JOHN MARK ROZENDAAL, CELLO

<b>Sonata in D minor, Op. 1, No. 8</b>	<b>11:34</b>
1. Adagio	2:11
2. Allegro	1:57
3. Largo	2:01
4. Giga: Allegro	2:17
5. Gavotta: Allegro	3:08
<b>Sonata in G major, Op. 8, No. 1</b>	<b>9:01</b>
6. Andante	1:27
7. Allegro	2:19
8. Andantino è Dolce	2:45
9. Menuetto Gratosamente	2:30
<b>Sonata in C minor, Op. 1, No. 2</b>	<b>7:35</b>
10. Grave	1:32
11. Allegro - Adagio	2:06
12. Largo	1:12
13. Allegro	1:49
14. Gavotta: Allegro	0:56

<b>Sonata in B<math>\flat</math> major, Op. 1. No. 7</b>	<b>8:00</b>
15. Adagio	1:41
16. Allegro	2:32
17. Largo	0:30
18. Giga: Allegro	1:45
19. Minuet	1:32
<b>Sonata in G minor, Op. 7, No. 6</b>	<b>12:39</b>
20. Affettuoso - Adagio	1:27
21. Allegro ma non troppo	3:24
22. Largetto è Dolce	2:31
23. Aria: Andante è Dolce & Variazione - Dolce	5:17
<b>Sonata in G major, Op. 1, No. 9</b>	<b>8:45</b>
24. Largo - Adagio	2:44
25. Allegro	3:07
26. Allegro	1:17
27. Minuet	1:37
<b>Total Time</b>	<b>57:34</b>

Executive Producer: Karen Flint  
Producer, Engineer: Ken Blair, BMP  
Post-Session Producers: Ken Blair & Karen Flint  
Audio Editors: Ken Blair & Will Anderson  
Production Manager & Design: Robert Munsell  
Harpsichord Tuning: Barbara Wolf, A=415



## MICHAEL CHRISTIAN FESTING (1705-1752)

**Michael Christian Festing**, a “master of the violin”, was born in London on November 29, 1705, the son of John and Elizabeth Festing. His training began with Richard Jones, an eminent violinist who led the Drury Lane Theatre Orchestra. Festing completed his violin studies with Francesco Geminiani, the Italian pupil of Corelli who made his career in England. The influence of Corelli and Geminiani can be seen particularly in Festing’s op. 1 sonatas. His later works show his continued evolution as a violinist and an important and unique voice in the violin sonata repertoire. Festing’s compositions include 32 violin sonatas, 26 concertos, six cantatas, three sets of minuets for the reigning monarch’s birthday, three odes, including an *Ode on St. Cecilia’s Day* and numerous songs.

Festing made his debut performing a concerto of his own composition on March 6, 1723 at Hickford’s Room in London. He later joined the King’s Theatre Orchestra in the Haymarket in 1729. His first compositions published in 1730 are *Twelve Solos for a Violin and Thorough Bass*, op. 1. These sonatas are clearly in the style of Corelli. Like many eighteenth-century violinist-composers, Festing was influenced by Corelli’s landmark op. 5 violin sonatas. His first six sonatas use Corelli’s *sonata da chiesa* form, which includes a polyphonic fugal movement in each sonata, while the latter six are in the *sonata da camera* form. These include giges and minuets along with the typical adagios and allegros.

In 1735, Festing was made Master of the King’s Music and in 1737, he was appointed director of the Italian Opera Orchestra in London and also

became leader of the Philharmonic Society Orchestra. The following year in 1738, along with two colleagues, it is reported that he saw two boys, in a sad state of poverty, driving some donkeys down the street. Recognizing them as the children of the Dutch oboe player, Jean Kytch, who had recently died, Festing contacted his friend Maurice Greene, and along with his companions and other musicians they decided to raise money for the children. Together they founded a charity, The Fund for the Support of Decayed Musicians and their Families, which later became known as the Royal Society of Musicians. Even today, it exists to relieve poverty in families of deceased musicians. Festing took a large role in managing the fund for many years. Other career highlights include accompanying the famous Italian soprano castrato, Farinelli, when he first performed in England. Reportedly, the whole band, which included Stefano Carbonelli, an important violinist and student of Corelli, failed to keep pace with the famous castrato and admitted to being astonished to the point of distraction by both the quality of his voice and its amazing capabilities.

Both Michael and his brother John were musicians, with John playing the oboe and flute. They had one sister, Elizabeth, who became Mrs. Duplaisey and eventually resided in Dublin. We do know that Michael Festing was married and his wife’s name was Anne. They had two sons and two daughters. One son was the Reverend Michael Festing (rector of Wyke Regis in Dorset) who married the only daughter of his friend Maurice Greene.

John was known to have more flute students than anyone in London at the time and amassed a considerable fortune from his teaching. Michael also taught violin students. His most notable student was the violinist and

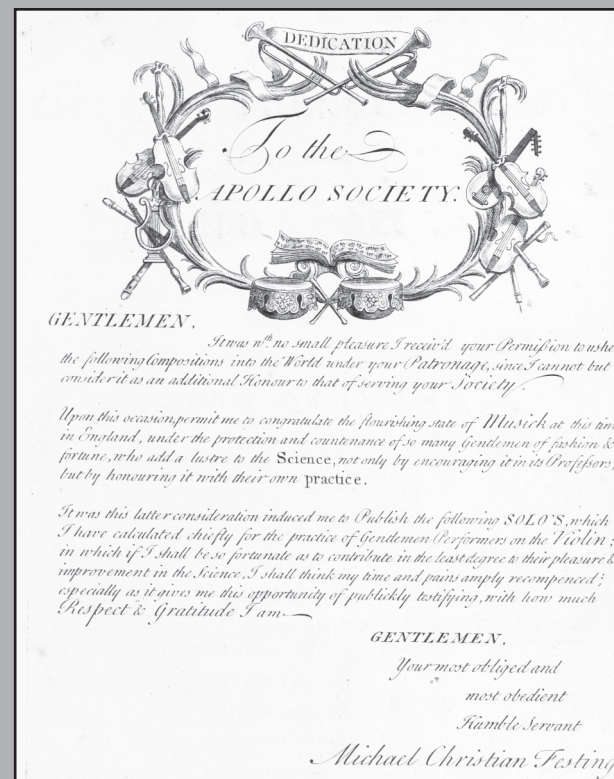
composer, Thomas Arne. Festing, who was only five years older than Arne, was not only a great influence on Arne, but likely was in turn influenced by him. The uniquely English, simple, tuneful airs Arne is known for are echoed in some of Festing's songs and his graceful minuets.

During the 1740's, Festing was surely the most ubiquitous violinist in London. He started a successful concert series at Hickford's room, and co-founded the Apollo Society with Maurice Greene. According to music historian, Charles Burney:

*He (Festing) led during many years at the opera, at Ranelagh, at the concert at Hickford's room, at the Swan and Castle concerts in the city, and often at Handel's oratorios. Nor was there a benefit concert, for any English professor at that time without a solo on the violin by Mr. M. C. Festing; and yet there is not a ripieno player on the violin at the opera now, whose hand and abilities are not superior to those of Festing upon that instrument.*

Although Burney reports that Festing was not the greatest violinist of his time, he admits that he possessed other characteristic that enabled him to become well established and in demand within the musical community. Sir John Hawkins also speaks very lightly of his performing skills, but admits to his genius in composition, particularly for the violin. As Hawkins in his *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* points out:

*The works of Festing were all published by himself, that is to say, he took subscriptions for them, and was not beholden for the circulation of them through the kingdom to the keepers of music shops; the consequence*



Dedication of Eight Solos for a Violin, op. 4



whereof is, that they are less known than the compositions of any other master of his time.

Festing's later works for solo violin include *Eight Solos for a Violin and a Thorough-Bass* dedicated to the Apollo Society, at Temple-Bar, op. 4 (1736), *Six solos for a Violin and Thorough-Bass* dedicated to William Morgan of Tredegar, esquire, op. 7 (1747) and *Six Solos for a Violin with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsichord* op. 8 (c.1750). In his dedication to the op. 4 sonatas, Festing expressed his gratitude for the current state of music in England, a sentiment well deserved during those times of intense patronage and high level amateur music making among the nobility. A glance at the subscriber list printed in op. 7 reveals a number of lords and ladies.

The opening movement of the D minor Sonata op. 1, no. 8, shows that the young Festing is the equal of any Italian master in writing an adagio. Since the final *Gavotta* of this sonata is a mere eight measures long, I have created my own set of variations. As a model, I used Festing's variation pieces (the opening movement of op. 1, no. 9, and the last movement of op. 7, no. 6) and also drew inspiration from his written out embellishments for Corelli's op. 5 Sonatas.

Michael Festing was clearly aware of the current state of violin technique. His sonatas make significant demands on the performer, but never for the sake of pure display. In his later works he omitted the fugal movements, and embraced the lighter *galant* style. Festing's works include sudden and unusual modulations, double stops, polyphony, arpeggios, leaps across multiple strings, key changes up or down a tone, occasional trips to the upper ends of the instrument and even ricochet bowings. (see *Allegro ma non troppo*, op. 7, no. 6)



*Allegro ma non troppo*, op. 7, no. 6

Festing's music was quite popular in his time. His concerts at Ranelagh Gardens where he was appointed as leader of the band and director of music, from 1742 until his death in 1752, featured not only his instrumental music, but also many songs and cantatas.

Festing died on July 24, 1752. He left a long will dated April 22, 1750 and proved on February 12, 1753. To his wife Anne he left £20 and funds to purchase and furnish two rooms for her own use. To his mother he left £40; to his sister he left £10; to his brother John he left a mourning ring worth two guineas; and to the Musician's Charity Fund he left £5.

To his son Michael he left such valuables as a watch, a cane, and a ring. To his son Christian he left similar valuables, to be given the boy when he completed his apprenticeship – musical, apparently. To his wife Anne and sons, Festing left his books as well as silver plate, some rings, pictures of his father, mother and sons – for as long as Anne remained unmarried. His manuscript music was left to Sir Joseph Hanky and to Sir Joseph's eldest son his best violin bow. His friend Thomas Pratt was given the choice of any two of his manuscript compositions and the option to buy Festing's Stainer violin. He left mourning rings to a number of friends, including the musicians Maurice Greene and Charles Weidman. The rest of his estate was for the benefit of his widow.

The music critic John Potter in his *Observations upon the Present State of Music* in 1762 wrote that Festing: *deserves praise and esteem as a composer of great merit*. John Hawkins said: *As a composer, particularly of solos for that instrument, the nature and genius whereof he perfectly understood, he had but few equals*. Festing's violin sonatas are noted for their excellent craftsmanship and showcase his exceptional knowledge of string playing technique. While relatively unknown today, they are both melodic and virtuosic and deserve to be heard and played more often.

Martin Davids, 2014

Violinist **Martin Davids** founded and directs the Callipygian Players, Chicago's premier Baroque chamber music ensemble. "A devoted Baroque artist and performer of considerable note" (Jack Neal, KUNR-FM), Mr. Davids is concertmaster of Brandywine Baroque (DE), Chicago Galant Consort, Bach Collegium of Ft. Wayne, Janus Ensemble, Reno Baroque Ensemble (NV), and the Bach Institute Players at Valparaiso University. He is principal second violin with the Haymarket Opera Company and Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado. He also plays with Ars Antigua and Music of the Baroque in Chicago. In the summer, he performs at the Staunton Music Festival (VA) and Green Lake Festival of Music (WI). Other ensembles he has played with include Indianapolis Baroque Orchestra, Ensemble Galilei, Chicago Opera Theater, Central City Opera, Aradia, Toronto Consort, and numerous others across Canada and the U.S. Mr. Davids earned the distinguished Performer Diploma in Baroque violin from Indiana University where he studied with Stanley Ritchie. He also received a Masters degree from The University of Michigan.

His recordings on the Musica Omnia, Albany, Plectra, Cedille, and Sonabilis labels have been described as "simply gorgeous" (American Record Guide, Jan/Feb, 2011). His latest CD, *12 Sonatas for Violin and Continuo* by Henry Eccles - "both performance and recording are uniformly excellent" (Early Music America Spring, 2014) is now available. He is a founding member of the award winning electric Baroque ensemble Discontinuo and is in demand as an electric violinist. He has played on many world premieres of new works including David Borden's K 216.01 for electric violin and synthesizer ensemble. A recognized expert in historical performance,

Mr. Davids often gives masterclasses in performance practice and improvisation at many schools and universities including Northwestern, Cornell and The University of Michigan. He performs on a Baroque violin by Ferdinando Alberti from 1750.

**Karen Flint**, harpsichordist and artistic director of Brandywine Baroque since its founding, teaches harpsichord at the University of Delaware. With Brandywine Baroque, she performs on an annual series of concerts held in Wilmington and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Ms. Flint established the Dumont Concerts in 2003, a weekend festival of harpsichord recitals. Now called Harpsichord Heaven, the programs are given on her collection of antique instruments in Delaware. Ms. Flint studied harpsichord with Edward Parmentier and Egbert Ennulat and organ with Fenner Douglass and Paul Terry. She has degrees from Oberlin Conservatory of Music and The University of Michigan.

Her recordings include: *Complete Harpsichord works of Nicolas Lebègue and Jacques Harel*; *Complete Harpsichord Works of Elizabeth Jacquet de La Guerre*; *Les Pièces de Clavessin* by Jacques Champion de Chambonnières; *The Complete Harpsichord Concertos on Antique Instruments* by J. S. Bach with Davitt Moroney & Arthur Haas; *Violin Sonatas Op. 5, 1-6* by Arcangelo Corelli; *Cantates Française*, works by Clérambault and Jacquet de La Guerre; *Love in Arcadia: Duets and Trios* by Handel; *Cello Sonatas* by Boismortier; *Oh! The Sweet Delights of Love: Music by Purcell*; *The Lass with the Delicate Air: Songs from the London Pleasure Gardens*; and C. P. E. Bach *Trio Sonatas* on the Plectra label; plus *The Jane Austen Songbook* with Julianne Baird on the Albany label.

**John Mark Rozendaal**, cello, specializes in teaching and performing stringed instrument music from the Baroque and Renaissance eras. As founding Artistic Director of Chicago Baroque Ensemble, John Mark performed and led seven seasons of subscription concerts, educational programs, radio broadcasts, and recordings for the Cedille and Centaur labels. Rozendaal, a member of Brandywine Baroque, has served as principal ‘cellist of The City Musick and Basically Bach, and has performed both solo and continuo roles with many period instrument ensembles, including the Newberry Consort, Orpheus Band, and the King’s Noyse, Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra, the Catacoustic Consort, Philomel, Parthenia, The New York Consort of Viols, Empire Viols and the Kansas City Chorale under maestro Charles Bruffy. He performs as a member of Trio Settecento with violinist Rachel Barton Pine and harpsichordist David Schrader. Rozendaal’s viola da gamba playing has been praised as “splendid” (Chicago Tribune), and “breathtaking” (Sun-Times). Recordings are available on the Cedille, Centaur and Plectra labels.

A dedicated teacher, Rozendaal often joins the faculties of the Viola da Gamba Society of America Conclave, Viols West’s annual workshop, Amherst Early Music, Madison Early Music Festival, and the Music Institute of Chicago’s annual Baroque Festival. As Artist-in-Residence at The Harvey School, Rozendaal led the Harvey Early Music Ensemble’s tours to England in 2006 and to Italy in 2007. He performs on a cello made by Barak Norman in London, 1708.

JACOBUS ET ABRAHAM KIRCKMAN HARPSICHORD, LONDON 1779

This single manual English harpsichord, used in this recording, is part of the Flint Collection of Instruments. It has a case of mahogany with holly stringing, the bentside and cheeks are veneered with burr walnut, with kingwood crossbanding and holly stringing. The nameboard is veneered with burr walnut and is inscribed on a boxwood plaque *Jacobus et Abraham Kirckman Londini fecerunt 1779*. The lid has original brass strap hinges. The soundboard has an inset rose pierced and carved with King David playing the harp flanked by the maker's initials I. K. The five-octave keyboard with a compass of FF to f<sup>3</sup>, omitting FF sharp, has ivory naturals and ebony accidentals. Two brass-knobbed hand-levers control the two 8' stops. A new trestle stand with turned legs and a lockboard (that was missing) have been made for the instrument by the Unionville, Pennsylvania cabinetmaker, Douglas Mooberry.

Previously sold by Sotheby's on April 7, 1983, it was then acquired in about 1986 by Dr. Roberts, a noted neurosurgeon who practiced in London. Other owners include Queen's College, Cambridge and Mrs. S. Stevens of Maxey, Peterborough. It was restored in 2007 by Thomas and Barbara Wolf of The Plains, Virginia.

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