

Sektion II

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Pre-Publication Circulation and Scoring of Handel's Op. 2 Trio Sonatas

There have always been questions about the extent of Handel's participation, if any, in the publication of VI SONATES á deux Violons, deux hautbois ou deux Flutes traversieres & Basse Continue Composées Par G. F. Handel SECOND OUVRAGE, and where the publisher John Walsh procured the music. This paper will not attempt to provide answers to either of these questions, but rather, based on the work of Terence Best, Siegfried Flesch and other scholars, together with a fresh examination of the surviving manuscript sources, will discuss the circulation of these sonatas prior to publication and will also tackle again the question of their intended scoring. No autographs survive for any of the Op. 2 sonatas, although two of them (HWV 387 and 391) are clearly early works. The earliest manuscript sources of the other four sonatas (HWV 386a, 388, 389 and 390a) come from Dresden and presumably derive from Handel's visit to that city in 1719, although the sonatas themselves may have been composed during the composer's time at Cannons (1717–1718). These four sonatas, two of them in early versions (i.e., HWV 386a in C Minor rather than the published version, HWV 386b in B Minor, and HWV 389 with fourth and fifth movements that differ in details), circulated on the Continent in the 1720s, either as single works or as a set. This paper will propose that the revisions may have been made in London in the mid-1720s, possibly in connection with Quantz's visit to that city in 1727. A manuscript in the Malmesbury Collection, dated on its title page "1727," marks the addition of HWV 387 to make a set of five sonatas. Walsh most likely acquired a similar manuscript copy to serve as the basis of his publication, and presumably added HWV 391 himself from another manuscript source to bring the number up to six. The same manuscript also marks the earliest appearance of HWV 386b in B Minor, which was most likely created to take advantage of the increasing popularity of the transverse flute among amateur players. The paper will also survey the evidence for and the suggestions advanced as to the intended scoring of the Op. 2 sonatas, concluding that two require two violins for the upper parts (HWV 387 and 391); two were likely intended for two oboes and bassoon (HWV 388 and 390a); and two were probably intended for transverse flute, violin and continuo (HWV 386a and 389), although arguments can and have been made for oboe (HWV 386a) and alto recorder (HWV 389) on the top line.