



THE COMPLETE SONATAS FOR TWO FLUTES BY W.F. BACH

PERFORMED ON BAROQUE FLUTES

BY

RACHEL BECKETT AND ELIZABETH WALKER

Sonata no 1 in E minor
Allegro/Larghetto/Vivace

Sonata no 2 in G major
Allegro ma non troppo/Cantabile/Allabreve/Gigue

Sonata no 3 in Eb major
Allegro/Adagio ma non molto/Allegro

Sonata no 4 in F major
Allegro e moderato/Lamentabile/Presto

Sonata no 5 in Eb major
Un poco Allegro/Largo/Vivace

Sonata no 6 in Ab major
Un poco Allegro/Largo/Vivace

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach (1710 – 1784) was the eldest son of J.S. Bach and these outstanding duets are both virtuosic and varied; “steeped in the spirit of the sensitive style (*Empfindsamkeit*) and the literary storm and stress (*Sturm und Drang*), he develops an acutely sensitive idiom, with stylistic extravagances and individual traits of genius that take him to the threshold of early Romanticism.” Oskar Peter 1988.

It is not known exactly when Wilhelm Friedemann Bach wrote these flute duets, but we do know that Quantz would have heard them before 1741, because excerpts from the duets in G major, F major and Eb major appear in Quantz’s book of ‘*Solfeggi*’ which he compiled for Frederick the Great. Added to the confusion, is the existence of four eighteenth-century manuscripts, all with disparities in time signatures, rhythmic and articulation, and additional movements. However, from these manuscripts, it is possible to estimate the different times in which the duets could have been composed.

In our concert, you will hear the progression from the earlier sonatas to the later, as we perform the Sonatas for Two Flutes in the order in which they are most likely to have been written. The first two sonatas, written in ‘easier’ keys of E minor and G major, contain shorter movements, using binary and canonic forms between the two flutes. It is possible that these two duets date from around 1730. The third and fourth duets, in the more challenging flat keys, (more unstable, weaker notes on the baroque flute) use more complex rhythms, canonic forms, and harmonically intense themes. These two could have been written around 1740. The final two duets are most likely to have been composed in the final decade of W.F. Bach’s life when he lived in Berlin and show extreme harmonies and sonorities, all heightened and accentuated by the wooden one-keyed flute.

Rachel Beckett and Elizabeth Walker have performed together since the early nineties, in orchestras such as John Eliot Gardiner’s English Baroque Soloists, The Orchestra of The Age of Enlightenment and The Mozartists. This long collaboration has allowed a deep musical compatibility to flourish, and they have greatly enjoyed preparing for this concert, and their planned CD recording of these Sonatas for the record label Devine Music – due for release in 2022.



RACHEL BECKETT plays regularly with some of the most distinguished orchestras in the period instrument world. As principal flute and recorder with the English Baroque Soloists, conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner, she features prominently in their series of Bach Cantatas recordings which have met with great critical acclaim. She is also principal recorder for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. Recent recordings include Monteverdi's opera, *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse*, Bach B Minor Mass, St Matthew Passion, Magnificat and Cantata 151 *Süsser Trost*.

ELIZABETH WALKER teaches flute at the specialist music school in Wells and runs the summer course, 'Flutes in Tuscany'. Her first solo CD recording of Telemann Fantasias won critical acclaim, ***"if you like her sound as much as I do, you will want to listen to them over and over again"*** BFS. She has also recorded the Flute Sonatas by J.S. Bach with Continuum and recorded a CD of Schubert's works for flute and piano for 'Devine Music' using a Louis Lot flute, no 435 coupled with Chopin's original Ignace Pleyel piano from 1848. She has given solo recitals in London, Holland, Toronto, Chicago and most recently, Orlando (2018). Elizabeth has published two award winning study books, 'Baroque Flute Studies' and 'Baroque Studies for Modern Flute' (Best Flute Method NFA 2015/17). Find out more at www.lizwalker.co.uk

