



Kayner Taylor (1747 -1825)

Six Sonatas

for Violoncello and Fortepiano

Barbara Bailey-Metz & John Metz

Rayner Taylor

One of the most accomplished musicians in this or any other country. As a composer, he stands upon the highest ground, both as to science and originality, as well as to knowledge of effect, and in every respect is certainly highly entitled to public favour.

I cannot refrain from mentioning, that having heard, on a certain occasion, Mr. Taylor extemporize in one of his happiest moods, Mr. Reinagle declared unequivocally that he conceived it equal to the skill and powers of (C.P.E.) Bach himself.

- *The Musical Intelligencer*, (Philadelphia, 1822)

Rayner Taylor arrived in Philadelphia in 1792, having abandoned the important post of Music Director at the prestigious Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. Why, at the age of 45, this successful musician decided to undertake new adventures in a new land, we don't know—except that Philadelphia was the capital of the new nation and the hub of musical life in Federalist America. Taylor may have been summoned there by any one of the many accomplished English musicians already working in that city.

In the course of a long and productive life, Rayner Taylor composed a grand opera, *The AEthiop*, and he published many hundreds of songs and sacred anthems as well as instrumental music. Not everything was published: there remained “shelves groaning under manuscript files of overtures, operas, anthems, glees &c.” The *Six Sonatas for Cello* are among

these unpublished works and until recently have remained on the “groaning shelves” of the Library of Congress, largely neglected, bound within a volume of published cello sonatas by J. G. C. Schetky (1795).

We don't know when Taylor composed the cello sonatas, though it was perhaps at the same time as his six sonatas for violin and keyboard, published in London in 1781. The Library of Congress score does not seem to be the original manuscript, but a copy, made by the composer, and evidently in haste given the number of obvious scribal errors. We also don't know when or for whom he prepared this copy, except that it must have been after he immigrated to America. Examination of the watermark suggests that the paper on which it was written was made by John Shryock's mill in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, sometime between 1790 and 1810. We may then imagine that they were copied for one of the excellent cellists known to have come to Philadelphia, perhaps for a performance in one of the many private salon recitals held there.

Rayner Taylor was born somewhere in or near London circa 1747. He was trained as a choirboy in the Chapel Royal and in that capacity sang at Handel's funeral. At the ceremony, his hat fell into the grave and was buried with the Master, prompting someone to comment, “Never mind, he left you some of his brains in return!” In England, Taylor had enjoyed an enviable reputation as composer, singer, organist, and Music Director at Sadler's Wells; in Philadelphia, he held several church organ positions, taught, composed, copied music for sale, and he was often a featured performer at the various pleasure gardens in the city. As composer, organist, singer, and teacher, Taylor won the admiration of Philadelphians and, in 1820, he helped found the Musical Fund Society and became its “Director of Music.”

Taylor died on August 17, 1825. His gravestone (now destroyed)

read, "In memory of Rayner Taylor, a distinguished Professor of Music, and many years Organist of St. Peter's church, who died August 17th 1825 in the 78th year of his age. This tribute of respect is erected by the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia."

Taylor's compositional style is early classical, with rondos, short sonata forms, and dance movements with variations. An important aspect making these sonatas unique in the cello repertoire is Taylor's use of the solo instrument. Whereas contemporaries like Graziani and Boccherini were pushing the cello up into the violin range, Taylor preferred to explore the naturally resonant bass and tenor tessitura. In places, the cello writing seems to ask the pianist to become an equal partner even though the keyboard part is only a sketch – just a basso continuo line and figures. Thus the pianist has to provide a fairly ambitious realization, keeping in mind Taylor's reputation as an improviser "equal to the great C.P.E. Bach."

Until now these sonatas have not been recorded, except as part of as a limited circulation archival LP series issued by *The Society for the Preservation of the American Musical Heritage, Inc.* The recording, made in the 1960's, was based on an unpublished arrangement of the sonatas, made for the project by Le Roy Robinson. By contrast, we have used period instruments and the Library of Congress manuscript for the present CD recording. We offer this recording as a companion to the edition we have prepared for publication by *Recent Researches* (A-R Editions) with the intention of bringing these interesting and beautiful pieces to back to life in our own time.

– John Metz and Barbara Bailey-Metz



Six Sonatas *for Violoncello and Fortepiano* *by Kayner Taylor*

John Metz is Professor of Harpsichord at Arizona State University, a founder of the early-music group Ensemble Versailles, and Artistic Director of the Connecticut Early Music Festival. He has published an edition of early 18th Century French vocal music, and has recorded three of the harpsichord suites of Elizabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre (Summit Records, and Bach's Goldberg Variations (Soundset.)

Barbara Bailey-Metz is on the early music faculty at Arizona State University, where she teaches Baroque Cello and Viola da Gamba. She has performed with the Phoenix Symphony, the Phoenix Bach Choir, and Ensemble Versailles, and has given numerous solo performances throughout the United States, and in Korea.

Fortepiano by Robert Smith, after Jakob Konicke (1795,) rebuilt by Robert Loomis. Tuning is Thomas Young, at A=435.

*Cello by Karl Zach, Vienna, 1896, in a Baroque configuration.
Bow by Ralph Ashmead.*

Sonata I in A Major

1	Adagio	3:35
2	Allegro moderato	5:38
3	Menuetto - Andante	5:04

Sonata II in D Major

4	Allegro moderato	4:41
5	Adagio	2:06
6	Jigg	2:36

Sonata III in A Major

7	(Adagio)	2:02
8	Allegro moderato	3:47
9	Rondo Menuetto - Andante	1:49

Sonata IV in D Major

10	Allegro	5:29
11	Andante	1:56
12	Allegro moderato	5:16

Sonata V in G Major

13	Andante	2:06
14	Allegro moderato	6:11
15	Menuetto - Moderato	4:44

Sonata VI in C Major

16	(Allegro)	4:37
17	Adagio	0:47
18	Giga - Allegro moderato	3:44

Total time:

1:06:55

Producers: Todd Hallawell &
Frank Koonce

Production assistance:
Kay Hallawell

*Recording, digital editing &
mastering:* Todd Hallawell

Program Notes: John Metz &
Barbara Bailey-Metz

Program Booklet Design:
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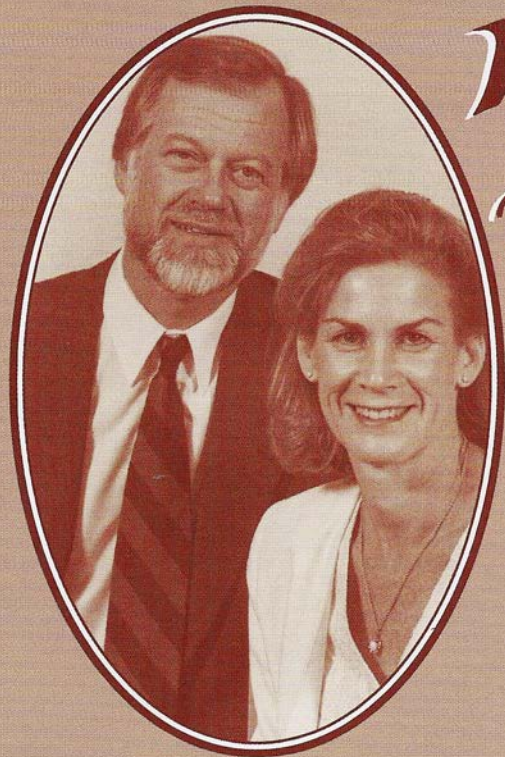
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