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**RE-CONTEXTUALIZING THE EARLY
FRENCH SOLO VIOLIN SONATA (C.1692-1723)**

A thesis submitted with performances in
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The genre of the earliest French violin sonatas (c.1692 – 1723) has been subjected to deficiency analyses, resulting in its neglect both in the written literature and in recordings. This research challenges the received evaluation of the genre as deficient, and argues that the sources of this neglect can be traced back to early 20th century studies of the genre, which inappropriately analyzed the works according to predominantly Italian and German models.

In order to situate and investigate the genre within its cultural context, an alternative analytical approach is developed based on Dryborough's (1997) methodology, which utilizes musical structures to determine the *affect* of a composition. In this case, an analysis of *affect* in the cantatas (Books 1 & 2) of Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749) informs the analysis of the *affect* of his instrumental works.

The resultant information, together with material synthesized in the Literature Review of rhetoric and the theory of *affects*, French dance music, and performance practice in French baroque music, has been utilized in the presentation of two recitals of early French violin sonatas. These performances have clearly demonstrated the intrinsic value of the genre.

The process of preparing and performing this repertoire through Performances A and B has been subjected to analysis. Implications both for further research and performance documentation are explored; in addition, the experiences gained are documented for the benefit of future performers of this genre.

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