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'For the sake of fulness of music in the choir'—the double bass at the Kroměříž court and the implications on performance practices<sup>1</sup> [draft]

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The use of 16' string bass instruments in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century repertoire has undergone several transformations since the early music revival—in earnest since the 1960s, when the movement began to make important inroads in the recording industry. In the early phase, the double bass was used in ensemble music more or less in the modern way, doubling the cello(s) throughout at 16' pitch. In the 1970s and 1980s the equation of 'violone' with 'double bass' was challenged—rightly, in many instances—and by the early 90s (or earlier) 16' basses had vanished from most HIP recordings of Lully and Purcell, for example.<sup>2</sup> Given the large amount of attention given to notions of nomenclature and tunings early basses in scholarly literature, this study focusses instead on the function of 16' bowed basses and argues for a reconsideration of their performance practice in light of the evidence from court of Carl Liechtenstein-Castelcorno at Kroměříž in Moravia, presented here.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, there is also a tantalising link between Kroměříž and London.

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<sup>1</sup> An early version of this paper was read at the 15th Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music, the University of Southampton, 11–15 July 2012; and an updated and substantially revised version was read at the conference Historical Performance: Theory, Practice, and Interdisciplinarity, Indiana University, 20–22 May 2016.

<sup>2</sup> An early defence of multiple 8' basses rather than 8' + 16' in seventeenth-century music is mounted in Peter Holman and Andrew Parrot, "Underbassed?," *The Musical Times* 114, no. 1568 (1973). In much Restoration music, for example, the bass parts often lay too low to be doubled at 16' by instruments of the time'. For more on bowed basses in English music in the seventeenth century see Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court 1540–1690* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Since I first dealt with this subject in my 2002 PhD dissertation and then again in 2012 and 2016, David Chapman has published a fine article in *Eighteenth-Century Music* which covers some of the material I presented as it relates to Jacob Stainer. Chapman, to some extent, maintains the more traditional narrative which focusses on nomenclature and categorisation (though there is much to admire in many of his conclusions)—my focus here is about function. Chapman echoes Otterstedt in identifying three basic types of large string basses: 8' basses that play the bass or continuo throughout, larger, so-called 12' basses that can reach some of the 'contrabass' register, but still play primarily at 8' pitch and 16' instruments that play an octave lower than written. David F. Chapman, "The sixteen-foot violone in concerted music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: issues of terminology and function," *Eighteenth-Century Music* 12, no. 1 (2015). For all its strengths, Chapman's article does not deal with much material as it relates to function and performance of repertoire at Kroměříž—the ensemble at the heart of the Stainer correspondence. As

When Englishmen James Talbot (1664–1708) compiled information about the 'double bass' in the early-to-mid 1690s his source was the Moravian composer Gottfried Finger (c.1655–1730), who had been active in Olomouc and Kroměříž in the 1670s.

There is not nearly enough space here to adequately summarise the arguments about the names of bowed bass instruments that are (quite fairly) the cause of so much confusion: in particular, the term *violone*. Because the term *violone* had typically been used later in the eighteenth century to indicate a 16' bowed bass instrument, many twentieth-century scholars had assumed that this had always been the case and therefore they used a similar instrument when they encountered *violone* in seventeenth-century repertoire—almost regardless of place and context. A quick summary of recent thinking on the subject is that up until around 1700 *violone* usually indicates some type of bowed bass instrument playing at 8' pitch and from some point around this time *violone* can also indicate a 16' bass.<sup>4</sup> In the last decades of the seventeenth century the *violoncello* emerged, evolving from the larger bass violin into a smaller and more agile instrument capable of playing elaborate solo music; in the process it lost some of the weight and power as the main string bass in ensemble music. As the parts for the new cello became more independent, there was a transition away from reinforcing the basso continuo with only other 8' instruments to adding a 16' bowed bass in larger ensembles. The evidence presented here helps to argue that this transition was already happening at Olomouc and Kroměříž by the early-to-mid 1670s. This was far from a unified process and many places across Europe continued to use only an 8' instrument as the largest bass in ensemble music well into the eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> No satisfactory uniform definitions of the term *violone* have

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will be seen below, such an omission has its ramifications.

<sup>4</sup> On terminology in seventeenth-century music (particularly in Italy) see: Stephen Bonta, "The Use of Instruments in Sacred Music in Italy 1560-1700," *Early Music* 18, no. 4 (1990); Stephen Bonta, "From violone to violoncello : a question of strings?," *The American Musical Instrument Society* 3(1977); Stephen Bonta, "Terminology for the Bass Violin in Seventeenth-Century Italy," *The American Musical Instrument Society* 4(1978).

<sup>5</sup> There are plenty of examples from the seventeenth century where combinations of keyboard, bowed basses and sackbuts created bass lines in octaves using only instruments that are otherwise used only in 8' roles.

emerged because the term cannot, broadly speaking, be found to be used in anything like a consistent way across Europe or across the centuries. Just as the term *sonata* indicates nothing more than a piece of instrumental music, the term *violone*, unqualified, merely indicates some kind of bass string instrument. Having said that, with some context of time, place and performance circumstance, more specific meanings and functions can be identified. In the present study the term ‘double bass’ will be used to indicate a 16’ bass which plays primarily at the lower octave, but without much regard to specific tuning systems, instrument shapes, and so on—that topic is for another time (Helmoltz pitch references are given here as notated for 16’ instruments, but should be transposed down an octave for the sounding pitch).

One of the obstacles of that has dogged the HIP movement regarding 16’ basses is the application of much later principles of orchestration to the uses of bowed basses in general and to the double bass in particular. The scholarly discussions, too, tend to focus almost exclusively on surviving parts for ‘contrabasso’, ‘violone’ and other large basses, with more concern for the allocation of parts, range and difficulty at the expense of the performance practices of the time. Performance practices of the double bass become clearer at the end of the seventeenth century as an extension of basso continuo practice: that is, the greater the number of upper parts, the more the continuo was reinforced.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the presence of the double bass was not necessarily determined by a specific part or mention of it, but rather by the nature of the composition and the circumstances of the performance. That a bowed bass was implied in most basso continuo parts was taken for granted in music at the end of the seventeenth century; for example, in Friederich Niedt’s

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<sup>6</sup> This practice is occasionally extended to include multiple figured bass parts; such as found in the performance parts at Kroměříž—even in moderately small sized scorings. For example a copy of Carissimi’s motet *Benedicite gentes omnes* for three sopranos, two violins and continuo (CZ-KRa A 251) made in Kroměříž around 1670 has two figured bass parts: ‘organo’ and ‘cimbalo.’ The ‘organo’ part plays the entire piece, and the ‘cimbalo’ only joins in when the violins play. In the last section, ‘vos autem jubilantes’, the voices and violins play together with the ‘organo’ and ‘cimbalo’. This is a very rare example at Kroměříž where harpsichord and organ are explicitly combined, and may be evidence of Roman, rather than central-European, practice.

*Musicalische Handleitung* (1700) he understood that 'any *Violon-Bass* part is labelled *Basso Continuo*'.<sup>7</sup>

The present study draws on some overlooked materials connected to the musical establishment at the court of Kroměříž (and, by extension, Olomouc) to help illustrate performance practices regarding the double bass in the late seventeenth century. Several patterns at the Kroměříž court emerge by the early 1670s: the double bass at 16' pitch (at least most of the time) is employed in the basso continuo to reinforce larger ensembles and/or *tutti* passages in concerted works. The use of the double bass was also, in part, determined by the size of the venue. Because the use of the double bass was an extension of basso continuo performance practice, it did not (necessarily) require a separate part, but often shared a part with the organist or harpsichordist. Before examining some surviving music at Kroměříž that pertains to the use the double bass, the correspondence of the Bishop's household will be investigated in order to help clarify the use of surviving musical materials.

### Kroměříž—Olomouc

Up until the Thirty Years War the Moravian city of Olomouc (Ger. Olmütz) had been the capital of the Margravate of Moravia. Following the Peace of Westphalia in 1644 the capital was moved to Brno (Ger. Brünn); despite this move, Olomouc remained the cultural and religious centre of Moravia; and a meeting point of Germanic and Slavonic languages and cultures.<sup>8</sup> In the decades after the Thirty Years War, Bishop Karl Liechtenstein-Castelcorno (reg. 1664–1695) re-shaped Olomouc into a thriving and handsome baroque city. Although the Bishop's main cathedral (St Wenceslas) and residence were in Olomouc, he also had a newly rebuilt (from 1666) summer

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<sup>7</sup> Friederich Erhardt Niedt, *The Musical Guide*, trans. Poulin and Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 27.

<sup>8</sup> Its role in musical culture is covered in several contexts in Robert Rawson, *Bohemian Baroque: Czech Musical Culture and Style, 1600-1750* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013). Charles Brewer, *The Instrumental Music of Schmelzer, Biber, Muffat and their Contemporaries* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011); Jiří Sehnal, *Hudba v olomoucké katedrale v 17. a 18 století* (Brno: Moravské muzeum v Brně, 1988).

residence in the town of Kroměříž (Ger. Kremsier) about 40 kilometres to the south, which had also suffered severe damage during the Thirty Years War. Unlike some of his predecessors (and successors), the Bishop spent most of his time in the area, taking great interest in rebuilding the towns and the religious life of the region. He commissioned a magnificent new palace in Kroměříž designed by the Italian architect Filiberto Luchese (1629–1702).<sup>9</sup> By 1668 he sought to establish a regular ensemble to perform in his chapel in Kroměříž and, it seems, in the cathedral of St Wenceslas in Olomouc.<sup>10</sup> Because the musicians in the employ of the Bishop followed the court to various residences, it is not always clear for which place (if any were intended) certain musical works were intended to be performed. In 1664 the Moravian-born Pavel Josef Vejvanovský was hired in the Bishop's household as *Kapellmeister* and principal trumpeter and played a vital role in the following decades in creating and shaping the musical activities of the most important court in the region.<sup>11</sup>

A collection of letters written between 1668–1670 preserves correspondence between Heinrich Franz Khuen Von Auer (who typically resided in Hall, just a few miles from Absam in Austria) who acted as the agent for Liechtenstein-Castelcorno, the Bishop's *Kammermeister* Thomas Sartorius, and the Austrian luthier Jacob Stainer in Absam about the purchase of a new and complete set of string instruments for the Bishop's chapel music.<sup>12</sup> Though not himself amongst the musicians, Khuen von Auer maintains a keen interest in the process—as does the Bishop and his secretary Sartorius—as they argue for the necessity of such a great expense as part of establishing a

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<sup>9</sup> Ivo Krsek, Zdeněk Kudělka, Miloš Stehlík, and Josef Válka, *Umění Baroka na Moravě a ve Slezsku* (Prague: Academia, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> On music in the cathedral in particular, see Sehnal, *Hudba v olomoucké katedrale*.

<sup>11</sup> See Jiří Sehnal, *Pavel Vejvanovský and the Kroměříž Music Collection: Perspectives on seventeenth-century music in Moravia* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2008). Sehnal gives a number of examples where the Bishop's musicians are required in other towns such as Mikulov, for example.

<sup>12</sup> Some of these letters (or excerpts) were included in Senn and Jiří Sehnal, "Jakob Stainers Beziehung zur Kremsierer Musikkapelle," in *Jakob Stainer und seine Zeit*, ed. Walter Salmen (Innsbruck: Edition Helbling, 1984). The bulk of this correspondence is preserved in CZ-OLa Inv. č. 594, sign. 122, kart 175, from which the present transcriptions were made. This collection also includes correspondence from Paul Seimbl (also in Hall, Austria). References to Stainers responses outside of those letters are derived from transcriptions in Paul Nettel, "Zur geschichte der Musikkapelle des Fürsterzbischofs Karl Lichtenstein-Kastelkorn von Olmütz," *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 4(1921).

regular string ensemble at the heart of the music for the Bishop's chapel.<sup>13</sup> One of the first instruments purchased from Stainer had been a *gross Violin [sic] oder Paß-Geigen*, which was delivered to Kroměříž on 10 December 1669.<sup>14</sup> Stainer's work on the order had been delayed after he was imprisoned on suspicion of heresy for several months in 1669.<sup>15</sup> This *Paß-Geigen* [bass violin] that Stainer had already sent, however, turned out to lack the power they had hoped for; and Stainer later encourages them to order a larger bass, which ensuing correspondence makes clear is a 16' double bass. In the early correspondence, the language used by the Bishop's secretary to describe the basses the court wished to purchase is somewhat lacking in detail (9 September 1669):

... allain weg des großen Violon stehe ich an, weil anstatt des kleinern solicher gemacht soll werden, ob Ihm geigenmacher die begerte 50 taler darum zu bezalen. Zwar verspricht er ain solich Instrumentum zu machen, so den maister lobt und mit den Hall ['mit den Hall' added above in the same hand] ain ganze kirchen anfillen solle, auch in die weite gehört werden, daryber, dan weil diß die lester arbeit, vernere resolution erwart wirt, ob diser große oder ain kleiner Violon ['Violon' added above in same hand], maßen der negste gewest, gemacht werden solle, doch ieder in sein pretio.<sup>16</sup>

... however, as regards the great Violon I am hesitating, since it is to be made instead of the smaller one, whether to pay the violin maker the requested fifty thalers for it. Though he promises to make such an instrument that will be worthy of the Master and that should fill an entire church with its resonance and be heard from a distance. Furthermore, because of the last work, we await a further decision as to whether a large or small Violon is to be made, but each according to its price.

The reference to a large church in the previous comments suggest that the instrument might have been used in the Bishop's cathedral of St Wenceslas in Olomouc—for there were no large churches

<sup>13</sup> Sehnal, *Vejvanovský and the Kroměříž Music Collection*, 101.

<sup>14</sup> Sehnal, *Vejvanovský and the Kroměříž Music Collection*, 102. It is important here to distinguish between a *gross Violin* and a *gross Violon*.

<sup>15</sup> Sehnal, *Vejvanovský and the Kroměříž Music Collection*, 103–04.

<sup>16</sup> CZ-OLa Inv. č. 594, sign. 122, kart 175. Many thanks to Thomas Schmidt for casting a careful eye over my transcriptions and translations from these letters.

in Kroměříž at the time. Shortly after this (24 September 1669), the next mention of the ‘gross Violon’—at the eye-watering price of 50 thalers—gets a helpful clarification in the margins to render it as ‘gross quart Violon’.<sup>17</sup> This is done presumably to clarify the difference between the ordinary 8’ *violon* and the larger 16’ *violon* (the small and larger *violones* mentioned in the previous letter).<sup>18</sup> The use of ‘quart Violon’ would have made the pitch of the instrument immediately clear to the reader as sounding a fourth below the ordinary *violone* (probably an instrument with a low C, tuned like a cello).<sup>19</sup> A letter of 15 December 1669 from Khuen von Auer to Sartorius (in Olomouc) contains further discussion about the progress of the order and with slightly updated terminology referring to ‘ain grosse quart Violon’.<sup>20</sup> The instrument remains a cause for concern in the correspondence because of the high cost, but Khuen von Auer repeatedly makes a case for its necessity and explains something of its use in performance. In his final comments in the letter (before the postscript, which is on a separate sheet) he explains that:

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<sup>17</sup> CZ-OLa Inv. č. 594, sign. 122, kart 175: correspondence of Khuen van Auer, Sartorius, Seimbl, Stainer and Leichtenstein-Castelcorneo.

<sup>18</sup> By 1677 the Austrian musician J. Prinner (*Musicalischer Schlissl*, autograph MS, US-Wc, ML 95) already understood *violone* as a 16’ instrument tuned F,-A-d-f#-b. The bottom four strings are tuned identically to Finger’s in the Talbot MS; see below).

<sup>19</sup> Chapman argues (2015, p. 37) that Stainer’s double bass would have been a six-string instrument tuned in D,-G,-C-E-A-d; but without any direct evidence to support such a claim. The correspondence implies that the Bishop’s agents understood the ordinary *violon* to be a member of the violin family (*bass geige*) and therefore more likely a four-string (or possibly five-string) instrument; and by implication, the ‘octav violon’ or ‘grosse quart violone’ is a similar sort of instrument, but a fourth lower. All of the surviving large double basses (without dealing with tunings or number of strings) are of the violin family, with f-holes, though sloping shoulders. Chapman seems to arrive at his deduction from terminology in Banchieri’s *Conclusioni nel suono dell’organo* (Bologna, 1609); but this fails to acknowledge important changes in string technology and instrument types in the second half of the seventeenth century. Moreover, Khuen von Auer seems to use ‘quart violon’ to describe its size and ‘octav violon’ to clarify its role—otherwise the terms could be contradictory. When Finger supplies the tunings of various string instruments to James Talbot in the 1690s there are only two tunings provided for the bass violin: one in B flat (the common French tuning) and the other in C (the Italian *violoncello*). Moreover, Chapman relies a little too heavily on Eisel’s frequently problematic and error-prone 1738 treatise *Musicus autodidactos* to bolster his argument in favour of a large German *violone* in D. Many of the treatise’s weaknesses and mistakes are highlighted in David M. Guion, *Trombone: Its History and Music, 1697–1811* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008), esp. 40–41. Guion opines that ‘if his entire treatise is as flawed as his section on the trombone, it is easy to see why he was omitted from *The New Grove*’. Like his references to the trombone, Eisel relies heavily on outdated sources (most notably Banchieri, 1609).

<sup>20</sup> CZ-OLA Inv. č. 594, sign. 122, kart 175.

Da die negstmall yberschickte paßgeigen, etwas zu klain, auch die resonanz in volliger musica zu subtil [originally 'klain', which was crossed-out and replaced with 'subtil'], bevorab in ainer großen kirchen, berichtet er geigenmacher, das wan er soliches gewust, wolt er gröbere saiten aufzogen haben, und aber der quart Violon wirt soliches alles ersezen, und sich von ganzer Music hören lassen, wie er dan verspricht, ain solich stukh zu machen, so sich seehen darff lassen aller orthen.<sup>21</sup>

Since the previously sent bass violin was too small, and its resonance in full music too subtle, especially in a large church, the luthier reports that, had he been aware of this, he would have fitted thicker strings. But the large *quart violon* will make up for all of this and can be heard in large-scale music. He has promised to make such an instrument that will be presentable everywhere.

This letter also preserves a single sheet postscript showing updates on the pricing of the instruments—with the reductions to the prices and other annotations made in the Bishop's own hand.<sup>22</sup> The complaint in the letter of 15 December 1669 is about the function of the bass violin—that it was simply not powerful enough for large ensemble music in a large church—and this is what is at the heart of the discussion about the instrument in the next few letters. In the process of updating Sartorius, Khuen von Auer also refines the description of the 'grosse quart Violon' which he now further qualifies as a 16' bass by referring to it as 'ain octav violon' as part of his comments added later to the postscript in which he also updates the viola types (Fig. 1). The first mention of the 'octav violon' is in the Bishop's hand in the top half, then again in the revised list at the bottom, in the hand of Khuen von Auer. The term 'octav violon' should be understood to describe the function of the instrument, rather than its relation to the ordinary bass violin (*bass geigen*); the relation of the 'octav violon' to the ordinary bass violin was made clear in the term 'gross quart violon'—an instrument a fourth lower than the bass violin. It is impossible that terms ('gross quart'

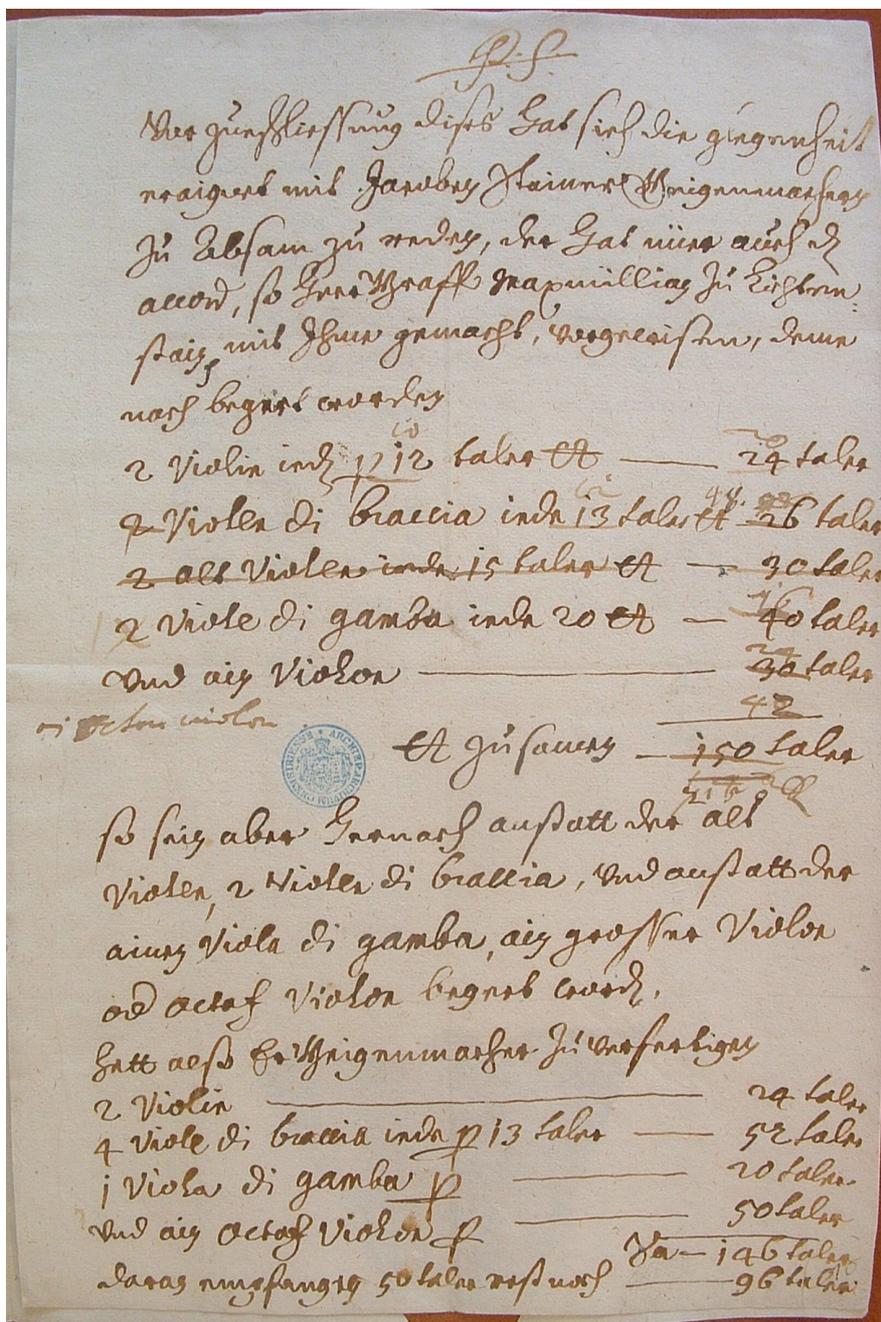
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<sup>21</sup> CZ-Ola, op. cit. Sehnal (2008) cites Nettle (1921) for these details, who seems to have missed several letters in the archive.

<sup>22</sup> Many thanks to Prof. Jiří Sehnal for pointing this out to me.

and 'octav') were both intended to describe its relation to the bass violin because they would be contradictory.

Figure 1: Postscript sheet included in a letter from Khuen von Auer to Sartorius about the purchase of string instruments from Stainer, with updates to the prices (the letter is dated 12 December 1669).<sup>23</sup>



What is of particular interest for the present context is the text which accompanies the updated

<sup>23</sup> Photo by R. Rawson, with permission.

prices at the bottom of the postscript:

So sich aber hernach anstatt der alt Violen, 2 Violen die braccia, und anstatt der ainen viola di gamba, ain grosser Violon oder octaf Violon begert worden. Hatt also er Geigenmacher zu verfertigen.<sup>24</sup>

But then after this, instead of the alto violas [da gamba], two violas da braccia have been requested, and instead of the [bass] viola da gamba a larger *violone* or *octaf violon*. The luthier will thus have to make: [then follows the list of instruments].<sup>25</sup>

This last postscript also shows that the new string ensemble would replace alto viols with violas *da braccia*—itself evidence aligning the chapel music with modern Italian practice.<sup>26</sup> By January 1670 (new calendar) the list is updated to include one viola da gamba, one 'violon' and one 'octav Violon.'<sup>27</sup> On 8 September 1670, Khuen von Auer clarifies to Sartorius that the Bishop's brother, Count Maximillian, has instructed him to confirm with Stainer the recent order which includes the *octav violon*; noting that 'the large violone or octave violon which will already be twice the size of the previously sent bass violin [*bassgeigen*] and which will be audible in all music in pleno' [den grossen Violon oder octaf Violon welcher alberait 2 mall grösser sein wirt, als die vormalls yberschikhte paßgeigen, und sich auf aller Music in pleno hören wirt lassen'.]<sup>28</sup> According to the letter, Stainer

<sup>24</sup> CZ-Ola Inv. č. 594, sign. 122. This language 'ein gröser violon oder octaf violon' does not refer to two instrumentns, but rather two terms for the same instruments. The novelty of such a large bass clearly required frequent clarifications.

<sup>25</sup> The terms 'ein gröser violon oder octaf violon begert worden' represent two terms for the same thing, not two different instrument. The previous and following correspondence make this clear. A topic for another occasion is the purchase of four violas. It may be that such a number was purchased with polychoral works in mind and/or that some of the larger scale works with two violas involved doubling.

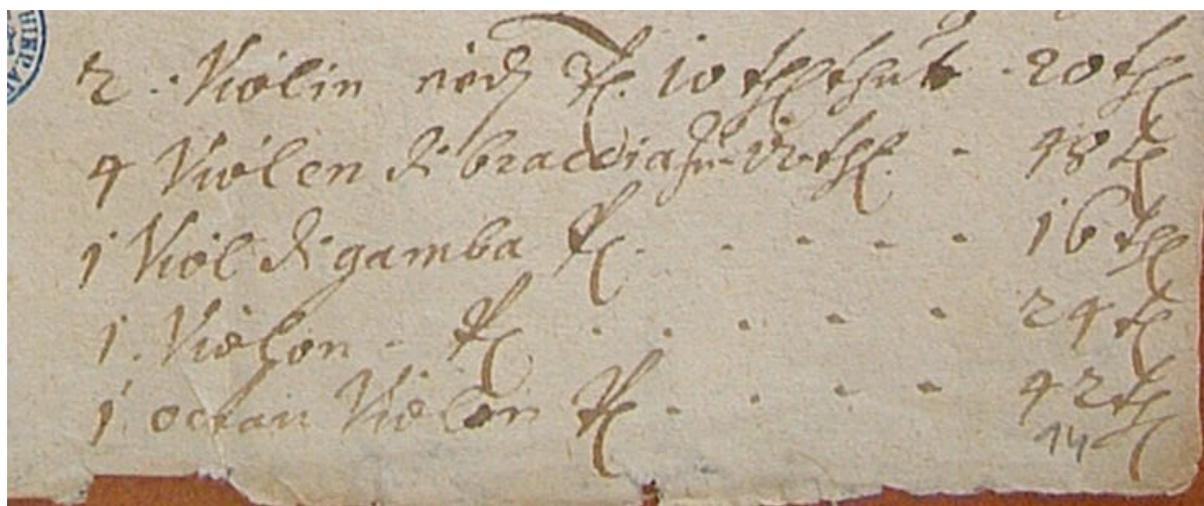
<sup>26</sup> Sehna, *Vejvanovský and the Kroměříž Music Collection*, 102.

<sup>27</sup> The surviving correspondence—cited in practically all modern scholarship from Walther Senn, *Jakob Stainer, der Geigenmacher zu Absam : die Lebensgeschichte nach urkundlichen Quellen* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1951).—has been the source of some confusion. Planyavsky, for example, is puzzled about this, where he considers the comment from Stainer 'Allain wegen des Grossen violons stehe ich an, weil anstatt des kleinen solicher gemacht soll werden', to mean that Stainer was possibly making the larger violon out of a partially or completely built smaller one. Alfred Planyavsky, *The Baroque Double Bass Violone*, trans. James Barket (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1998), 56–57.

<sup>28</sup> CZ-Ola Inv. č. 594, sign. 122.

eventually agreed to make the instrument for the lower cost because he now had an apprentice to help him.<sup>29</sup> Several important themes emerge from these letters about the instrument finally called ‘octav violon’: it plays in large-scale works or music in *pleno* [*tutti*], it is needed in large churches where the bass violin is not strong enough on its own, it is twice the size of the bass violin and plays at the lower octave.

Figure 2: By January 1670 [new calendar] Kuhn’s next letter reflects the price changes of December 1669 confirming that *Violon* and *Octav Violon* are two different instruments, also reflected in the price:



The delivery of the instruments was a drawn-out process, though Stainer assured the court that he would finish the them by the end of 1670. According to Stainer’s own annotations of Kheun’s letter of 27 January 1670 he still needed to complete two violins, a bass violin and the ‘octav Violon’; and by 8 September 1670 the two violins and ‘octav violon’ had not yet been delivered.<sup>30</sup> Subsequent archival materials about the instruments from Stainer do not survive and so there is no clear conclusion to the matter; but given the Bishop’s financial acumen and close eye on the entire matter, it seems highly unlikely that he had merely accepted that the instruments would not be shipped. The simplest answer is that Stainer probably finished the remaining instruments and they were

<sup>29</sup> Sehnal, *Vejvanovský and the Kroměříž Music Collection*, 105.

<sup>30</sup> CZ-Ola Inv. č. 594, sign. 122.

delivered to the Bishop's court sometime near the end of 1670 or into 1671. In the *Consignatio Instrumentorum* of the 1695 inventory at Kroměříž there are three *violones* (no sizes are specified) listed alongside two violas da gamba and two violoncellos.<sup>31</sup> More usefully, perhaps, is that mentions of, and parts for, 'violone grande' and 'violone magno' soon appear in the music manuscripts there. The language and descriptions of the 'gross violon' or 'octav violon' at Kroměříž have striking similarities with a near-contemporary one in Prague.

### Prague Parallels—Janovká

Tomáš Balthazar Janovka (1669–1741) published his valuable treatise *Clavis ad thesaurum magnae musicae* in Prague in 1701. Janovká was an experienced musician, holding the post of organist for around 50 years from 1691 at the Church of Our Lady of Týn on Prague's Old Town Square.<sup>32</sup> He has strikingly similar ideas to Khuen von Auer about the function of the double bass. Janovka's first understanding of *violone* was as a 16' instrument, but, as with the correspondence at Kroměříž, Janovka recognises the need to differentiate between two possible understandings of 'violone':

Violone non minus notum instrumentum, quatuor constans communiter chordis, quarum accord ordinarium in choris Musicorum usitatum es sequens. [tuning example: G, A, d, g] Ambitus ejus est à G magno usque ad c vel d. Clavis signata (f) in quarta linea ponitur, ut exemplum hic infra positum demonstrat. Est autem duplex, aliud Violone Grosso seu Magnum, aliud piccolo seu parvum; quod per octavam a priore altius sonat, ut sic per compositum unisonum cum priore procedens Musicae plenitudinis gratia in Choris adhibeatur; quod licite stante regula, octavarum duarum immediatum in duabus vocibus succesium prohibente, fieri potest; nam haec regula in compositionibus locum habet, non vero in instrumentorum ejusdem quidditatis & qualitatis, seu ejusdem & similes naturae, ad eandem vocem adhibitione; licet per octavam (uti hic) sonent.

<sup>31</sup> Facsimile in Jiří Sehnal and Jitřenka Pešková, *Caroli de Liechtenstein-Castelcorno epsicopi olomucensis operum artis musicae collectio cremisirii reservata* (Prague: Supraphon, 1998), 78.

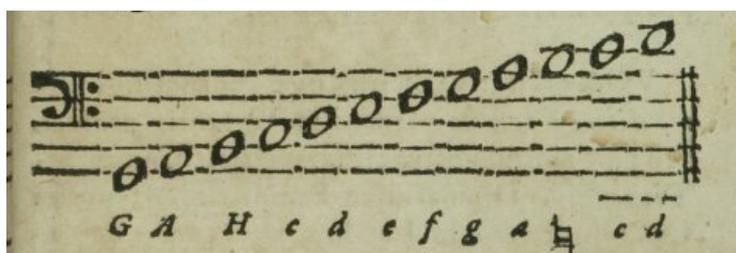
<sup>32</sup> *GMO*.

The violone is not a little known instrument, consisting of four regular strings, whose customary turning in choral music is as follows. [Tuning, below] The range is from lower G all the way to c or d. The clef (f) lies upon the fourth line, as the example given below shows. There are, however, two versions, one the *Violone Grosso*, a big one, the other, the piccolo, a small one, which throughout sounds an octave higher than the first one [*violone grosso*], as it is employed in this way in combination together with the first one<sup>33</sup> [*violone grosso*] preceding it, for the sake of fulness of music in the choir. And this can be done consistently with the standing rule forbidding the immediate succession of two octaves in two voices; because this rule applies to compositions, not to the nature and quality of these instruments or to instruments of a similar nature pertaining to the same voice; it is allowed for them to sound at the octave (as here).<sup>34</sup>

[tuning]



[range]



Janovka confirms several important points: first, this 'violone magno' or 'grosso'—the exact same nomenclature used by Pavel Vejvanoský at Kroměříž from the 1670s and beyond—is twice the size

<sup>33</sup> Note well that Janovka is talking about the function here, not the instruments themselves. In other words, he is not claiming that the smaller *violone* is tuned an octave higher than the larger violone, but rather that it plays its part at the higher octave.

<sup>34</sup> It is surely telling that not only is Janovka's first understanding of *violone* as a 16' instrument, he does not even bother to provide tuning for the 8' *violon* or anything other details spends most of the section dealing with the role of the 16' *violone grosso* and its use; it is not explicit that the tuning he provides should also be considered for the 8' *violone*. Many thanks to Geoff Chew for making suggestions regarding my Latin translation.

of the ordinary *violone* and sounds at the octave (it is fortunate that Janovká makes the point so clear as to reassure his readers that such a practice does not contravene the rules of counterpoint which forbid parallel octaves). Janovka advises the reader that regarding the practice of using the double bass that 'evidence is deduced from the organ' practice, where octave couplings and the combinations of various stops also do not violate the rule in counterpoint prohibiting parallel octaves.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, he does not argue that the instrument plays constantly, but rather joins in 'for the sake of fulness of music in the choir.' Conveniently, Janovká also clarifies that the Latin term *pleno* (see the Kroměříž correspondence above) is functionally identical with the Italian term *tutti*.<sup>36</sup> Janovka is trying to clarify a point which still seems to trouble certain quarters of the modern HIP movement: that (at least in the period under consideration here) the use of the double bass is usually part of performance practice, not composition. This is the same understanding as Khuen von Auer in his letters to the Bishop and his secretary at Kroměříž/Olomouc: the double bass is used for all music in *pleno*.<sup>37</sup>

Janovka's tuning might seem unusual—having a whole step between the two bottom strings— though he further clarifies that you can also tune the bottom string down to F if needed, to fit the range of the vocal bass part in the choir: 'Certain people however tune the fourth or lowest

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<sup>35</sup> 'Argumento à claviaro Organico desumpto; in quo una quaevis palmula, seu clavis, tubis per quintam, octavam, super quintam, & super octavam & c. à se distantibus constat, nec ideirco ullus committitur error contra superiorum hic de octavis regulam, se unam clavim post alteram accipias in una voce, quia haec palmula octavas super octavas & c. in se continens quoad Melothesium pro una habetur.' Prinner (1677) also makes reference to organ practice by associating it with the function of the pedals, and that 'according to the proper bass teachings must be played an octave lower, since this *geigen* represents the pedal or sub-bass pedal of the organ, and therefore everything must function in this lower octave' (adapted from Chapman, p. 44).

<sup>36</sup> 'TUTTI idem quod pleno chorô significat, du nempe simul omnes voces progrediunture'. (p. 319); and: 'Ripieno aliter tutti, vel voce in Capella, significat idem quod pleno sonante choro, seu cum alijs omnibus vocibus hanc, cui haec dictio apposita est, cani aut ludi debere'. Tomáš Balthazar Janovka, *Clavis ad thesaurum magnae musicae* (Prague: Lebaun, 1701), 106. Beyond this, *coro pleno* works, where tutti voices and *colla parte* instruments play the entire time also often include the double bass. The pattern of having only a whole-step between the bottom two strings is also found in his tuning schemes for the mandora and the colascione ('galizone').

<sup>37</sup> This understand should also included works for *pleno coro*, in addition to concerted works with dynamic textures.

string to F, and in this way its range is completely the same as that of the bass voice [of the choir]' [Quidam tamen quartam seu infimam chordam in F concordant, & sic ambitus ejus cum Voce Bassistica prorsus est idem].<sup>38</sup> Because the period around the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was one of transition for the use of 16' basses in basso continuo practice for larger-scale works, it should make perfect sense that Janovka allows that some may still understand the term *violone* to refer to an 8' instrument. The parallels of understanding of performance practice, as well as those of nomenclature, invite a brief look at some repertoire at Kroměříž.

### Musical evidence from Kroměříž

Despite the fact that the trail of correspondence goes cold about the 'octav violone' at Kroměříž before the instrument is delivered, the same terminology from Janovka soon appears on title pages and in parts in the music at court, both secular and sacred. Moreover, those parts follow the *ripieno* role of the double bass as described in both Janovka and in the court letters about the instrument. The new 'octav violon' of the letters gets special mentions in works by Vejvanovský (and as the court's *Kapellmeister* and main copyist he no doubt took care with such things), among others, where he refers to it variously as 'violone grande' and 'violone magno' (the latter term identical with Janovka's). For example, the title page for his 1688 *Balletti per il Caruale* (CZ-KRa A 874) lists a 'violone', but the part itself is labelled 'cem[alo] ó Violone Grande'. Similarly, the continuo part for his 1692 *Offertur ad duos choros* (A 774) is labelled 'Violone grande ó cemb[alo]'. The 'violone magno' is specified on the title page of his 1680 *Serenada* in C (A 818), but as there is not a separate part, the player would have likely shared with the keyboard player, as in some of the previous examples. Examples such as these leave the strong impression that (at least) Vejvanovský came to understand *violone* as a 16' instrument—without or without defining adjectives. It is also in the final

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<sup>38</sup> Bonta, "From violone to violoncello : a question of strings?"

decade when local copyists begin occasionally to adopt more recent Italian terminology. For example, an anonymous *Magnificat* in G minor (A 462), probably from around 1690, describes on its title page that it is for '4 Voci concertato / con cinque Instrumenti / et Ripieni'. The 'cinque instrumenti' are the two violins, two violas and 'violoncello' in addition to a part for 'organo'; whereas the 'ripieni' include duplicate voice parts for the *tutti* sections as well as two 'contrabasso' parts and one for 'theorba'.<sup>39</sup> As with the other 16' parts (explicit or implied) at Kroměříž, the *contrabasso* parts is merely a copy of the organ part. Also around this time the 8' bass is increasingly referred to by Vejvanovský and other court copyists as 'bassettl', 'basso viola' and eventually 'violonczello', whereas *violone* on its own generally refers to a 16' instrument.<sup>40</sup>

A short aside about the possible implications at Kroměříž of Janovka's tuning: without going as far as suggesting that the *violone* at Kroměříž was tuned exactly as Janovka describes, the *violone* (1) part in Biber's 1673 *Battalia* (preserved at Kroměříž) requires a special effect in the 'Mars' section where the player needs to hold a piece of paper on the string, whilst playing a rhythmic pattern on low A to evoke the sound of a drum.<sup>41</sup> If the player was expected to hold the paper (as the text seems to imply), to do so would have required the low A to be an open string (there is no instruction to weave the paper into the strings as one frequently reads in modern references).<sup>42</sup> It would seem that

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<sup>39</sup> The stronger emergence of the 'concerto principle' here coincides with the change in instruments and instrumentation. There is also a solo cornetto part included in the *Magnificat*, which is a merely patchwork combination of the two viola parts transposed up an octave—perhaps intended as a substituted when no violas were available.

<sup>40</sup> Again, I would urge some caution and careful consideration of the repertoire and its context before arguing that—even only at Kroměříž—there is a clear point at which the change in understanding takes place. Also, it may be that other bowed basses continued to be used at 8' pitch, such as the bass violin or even viola da gamba.

<sup>41</sup> To be more precise, the tunings of Janovka, Finger and Prinner all apply to this particular issue.

<sup>42</sup> CZ-KRa A 840 (Biber autograph set of parts). This is certainly not to argue that Janovka's tuning is the only possibility. The Olomouc native, Gottfried Finger, also provides one or two possible 'double bass' tunings both of which have an open A as the second to the bottom string. Note well that the *Battalia* was composed for Salzburg and Biber's comment could refer to practices at either or both courts. Planeyevsky is also mistaken in arguing that Biber understood the *violone* (as the part is called in the MS) to be tuned G,-C-F-A-d-g which could provide the A in the *Battalia* at the correct octave as an open string. Planavsky, *The Baroque Double Bass*, 35.

the player simply used their left hand to hold the paper against the strings, bowing the open A string:

... der Mars ist schon bekant, aber ich hab ihn nicht bößer wißen zu verwenden, wo die druml geth im baß mues man an die seiten ein papier machen das es einem strepitum gibt, in Mars aber nur allein.<sup>43</sup>

... the [music for] Mars is already known, but I have though it not more wicked to use it, where the drum goes in the bass you have put paper on the strings so that it gives a noise, but in Mars only.

The instruction above from Biber strongly suggests that by 1673 he understood *violone* to indicate a 16' bass—at least in ensemble music. First, its function in the rest of the piece is consistent with its *ripieno* role outlined above. For example, there is no *violone* in the two sections labelled 'aria', where the two violins and viola are supported by the continuo with the second viola playing the continuo part at pitch together with the harpsichord part.<sup>44</sup> More revealing, perhaps, is that if he expected the *violone* (1) player to have an open A string it could not have been a bass violin of any sort that was well known in the region at the time, whereas both Janovka (Prague, 1701) and Prinner (unpublished MS, Vienna, 1677) and Gottfried Finger (early 1690s) provide 16' *violone* tunings with a low A.<sup>45</sup>

As for the rest of the music collection at Kroměříž, it is not necessary to have a surviving part for the *violone* for it to have been expected or required—for even when separate parts do survive, they are nearly always copies of the continuo part. For example, in Vejvanovský's motet *Medicam contra pestem* of 1679 where the *violone* part is identical the *organo* part; without figures but retaining the *solo* and *tutti* indications.<sup>46</sup> In such cases as Venvanovsky's *Medicam* and other

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<sup>43</sup> CZ-KRa A 840.

<sup>44</sup> Whether or not Biber understood both *violone* parts of be at 16' is a topic for another time. What does seem clear is that the most compelling evidence of 8' continuo happens only in the 'aria' sections where a viola doubles the continuo.

<sup>45</sup> J. J. Prinner (1624–94). The other double bass tuning that might be associated with the Kroměříž/Olomouc court is provided by Gottfried Finger—which also has a low A as the second string from the bottom. See below.

<sup>46</sup> CZ-KRa A243. Title page: 'Medicam contra pestem / et / De B: V: Maria // Stella Caeli extirpavit

large-scale works, the double bass *violone* is used just as Khuen von Auer and Janovka describe: to play in the *tuttis* for the sake of the choir and/or large ensemble. Surviving parts suggest that copyists became accustomed simply to making duplicate copies of continuo parts for double bassists. For example, the title page for Vejvanovský’s 1683 motet *Usquequo exaltabuntur inimici nostri* mentions ‘cum violone et organo’, but there is no separate bowed bass part at all, though there are two *organo* parts. A similar pattern is found in his 1684 motet *Congregati sunt inimici nostri*, with two *organo* parts and one unlabelled [‘MDC’] copy of the continuo part, complete with figures and *solo* and *tutti* indications.<sup>47</sup>

In the case of the musical establishment at Olomouc/Kroměříž, the double bass is treated in the same way the *ripieno* basses of all types had generally been used at court up to that point. While these sources make clear the use and octave transposition of the double bass *violone* at Kroměříž from the early 1670s, they should also help clarify that before then *violone* most likely indicates an 8’ instrument—at the very least, that seems to have been the local understanding. Modern performers should also heed the evidence about the need of the double bass not only employed in certain types of compositions of a certain scale, but also as a result of venue size and acoustics. In short, it remains likely that composers and copyists made assumptions about the term *violone* based on a combination of these factors. Finally, the sheer cost of the double bass purchased by the Kroměříž court (itself one of the wealthiest in the region) should indicate that not every town or parish church was likely to be able to afford such an instrument and the level of detail required in the explanations in the sources also suggest that, at least by the late 1660s and 1670s, it was still a

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quae laetavit Dnum / 4 voces in Conc: / 2: violini in Conc: / 2: violae in Conc / 3: Tromboni / 4: Voces capella / Cum violone et Organo // a / Paulo Wejwanowski Tubicine Campestri in 7bri 1679 / Cremsirj Compositum.

<sup>47</sup> There is some evidence—though surviving parts are inconsistent—that before the acquisition of the 16’ double bass the court did not have large basses at all. For example, in Vejvanovský’s *Sonata a 6* (CZ-KRa A 781) from around 1666, the *violon* part is adjusted so that a phrase in the b.c. which descends to C is displaced up an octave at the preceding F in the *violone* part.

relative rarity.<sup>48</sup>

A little further into the eighteenth century explicit evidence of part sharing between organ and *violone* can be found in prints of sacred music in Prague. In the collection of motets *Cultus latriae* by Česlav Vaňura (1694–1736), to take but one indicative example, indications for *violone* (including ‘violone solo’) are included in the organ part with no separate part provided.<sup>49</sup> Such a practice was implied in earlier prints, too, but only by *solo* and *tutti* indications. By the time of Quantz’s *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752) it was understood that double bassists adapted their parts from the existing basso continuo part, not only by simplifying rhythms for the sake of clarity, if needed, but also transposing passages at the octave which might otherwise fall outside of the range of the instrument.<sup>50</sup> Note well that Quantz does not address tunings or number of strings, but rather function: the double bassist should play the continuo part in large scale works at the lower octave so far as the range of the instrument permits—the range of the part does not, itself, determine the instrument to play it. The court at Kroměříž was by no means removed from wider European music culture and it is via its most travelled son, the Olomouc native Gottfried Finger (c.1655–1730), that specific details of a double bass appear in England.

### London’s Moravian connection

Sometime around 1682 the Olomouc native—and musician and copyist at the court of

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<sup>48</sup> Even before the arrival of the 16’ bass at Kroměříž by 1672, other instruments, such as the bass trombone, were used to double the continuo part at the lower octave, where possible, in tutti passages.

<sup>49</sup> Quantz (249–250) suggests that good bassists can play up to [notated] g’.

<sup>50</sup> Johan Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute, the Classic of Baroque Music Instruction*, trans. E. R. Reilly (New York: Schirmer, 1985). Quantz urges double bassists not to transpose in the middle of a phrase, but rather to keep single musical ideas within the same octave. As further evidence that surviving double bass parts do not necessarily reflect the actual range of the instruments that may have performed them, the low C<sub>s</sub> in the anonymous *Magnificat* (CZ-KRa A 462) could not have been played on any bass instrument of the time at 16’ pitch—they are merely copies of the organ part.

Liechtenstein-Castelcorno at Kroměříž—Gottfried Finger (c.1655–1730) left Moravia and travelled, probably via Munich, to London.<sup>51</sup> Initially a musician (presumably on the viola da gamba) in the Catholic Chapel of James II, Finger soon established himself as a talented and highly-respected composer and multi-instrumentalist.<sup>52</sup> When James Talbot (1664–1708), erstwhile Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, compiled information about musical instruments with the possible (though never realised) plan of publishing a treatise or lexicon, Gottfried Finger was cited as a source of information more than any other single musician.<sup>53</sup> In addition to his academic work, Talbot seems to have been well-connected with London's leading composers and performers; he supplied the text to the (lost) *Ode for the Consort at York Buildings upon the Death of Mr H. P.*, set by Finger.<sup>54</sup> The so-called 'Talbot manuscript' is a large and miscellaneous collection of notes, diagrams, correspondence and other details about musical practices and instruments which seems to have been compiled mostly between 1692–95.<sup>55</sup> Talbot makes a number of references to large string basses of various description and he cites Finger as a source for at least one 'double bass' tuning. That such information should come from Finger is of particular relevance and interest because he was possibly one of the players of the Stainer instruments at Kroměříž; either the violin, viola da gamba or even the *octav violon*. After Biber's departure in 1670, Finger was probably the greatest

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<sup>51</sup> Robert Rawson, "From Olomouc to London: the Early Music of Gottfried Finger (c.1655–1730)," diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2002). And more recently: Robert Rawson, "Harmonia Anglicana, or Why Finger Failed in 'The Prize Musick,'" in *Stages 'Adorn'd with ev'ry Grace': Music, Dance, & Drama in London at the Beginning of the long Eighteenth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

<sup>52</sup> For more on Finger, the violin and the Italian style, see Rawson (2014). Rawson, "Harmonia Anglicana, or Why Finger Failed in 'The Prize Musick'."

<sup>53</sup> For an overview of the so-called 'Talbot Manuscript' see Robert Unwin, "An English Writer on Music: James Talbot 1664–1708," *The Galpin Society Journal* 40(1987).

<sup>54</sup> The text alone was included in the front section of *Orpheus Britannicus* (London: J. Heptinstall, 1698). There are references to instrumentation of each section of the ode described by the London bookseller John Dunton (1659–1733), who may have attended a performance; *The life and errors of John Dunton, citizen of London* (London, 1705/R 1818) vol. 2, 662–663. Reference in the first section to 'flat trumpet' and 'sharp trumpet', as well 'flute and theorbo' to accompany the section 'Mark how the melancholy Flute', among others.

<sup>55</sup> GB-Och Mus. 1147. The manuscript is frequently problematic; some of those problems and inconsistencies were initially recognised in Donnington, 'James Talbot's Manuscript. (Christ Church Library Music MS 1187). II. Bowed Strings', in *The Galpin Society Journal* 3 (1950): 23–45.

bass viol virtuoso at the Kroměříž/Olomouc court—and perhaps one of the best in Europe.<sup>56</sup>

Talbot mentions 8' and 16' string basses in several places in the collection of manuscript sheets. Many of the sheets are scraps for working out details and relationships of instrument families (with frequent corrections and alterations), as well as many parts being incomplete—so some caution should be urged. Nevertheless, they are helpful in understanding something of Talbot's concept of a 'double bass'. Taking his notes in their totality, Talbot understands two kinds of 'double bass'; one is a six-string instrument from the viol family with a low G and the other is a five-string instrument from the violin family with a low F. Initially, however, it is the term 'violone' that nearly trips him up. At the top of a sheet headed 'Violin Bass' the word 'Violone' was later added alongside it. Just beneath the heading, Talbot notes that: 'Tis call'd in French Violon. Ital. Violone'.<sup>57</sup> He then writes 'Span' and 'Germ', but without noting what this instrument was called in those languages. As for the French and Italian understanding of *violone* he makes it clear that he is referring to the 8' bass violin (in the violin, rather than viol, family) by offering two tunings: the French, Bb,-F-c-g; and also the Italian: C-G-d-a.<sup>58</sup> Talbot seems to have then realised that adding the German understanding of 'violone' alongside the French and Italian examples would not suit a page devoted to 8' basses of the violin family. Ergo, on the bottom half of that page Talbot then includes a tuning for 'Germ. Gross Contrbass geig.' (which he mistranslates as 'Double bass viol'): F,-A-d-f#-a. This latter example seems contradictory: Talbot provides the German term that indicates an instrument in the violin family, but writes 'viol' in English. Either Talbot is confused about the terminology at this stage in his notes, or perhaps his 'viol' is an abbreviation for 'violin'. Elsewhere, attempts to clarify that the six-string instrument in G is part of the viol family, on a largely blank sheet (p. 34)

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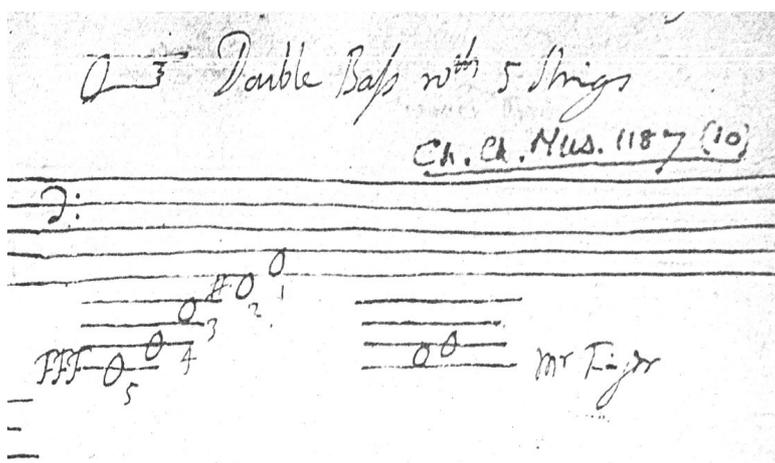
<sup>56</sup> Rawson, "From Olomouc to London"; Peter Holman, *Life After Death: The Viola Da Gamba in Britain from Purcell to Dolmetsch* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010).

<sup>57</sup> GB-Och MS. 1187, p. 31.

<sup>58</sup> Op. cit. This mention of the smaller Italian bass violin (or quite possibly a *violoncello*, given the tuning) is surely amongst the earliest examples of the cello tuning in Britain. Long before the erroneous date of 1707 given in John Spitzer and Neal Zaslaw, *The birth of the orchestra: History of an institution, 1650-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 273.

headed 'Double bass Viol Violone' he notes that 'it has 6 strings 5 notes lower [than] ye Bass', followed by the tuning G,-C-F-d-g. On yet another sheet headed 'Strings' Talbot tries to sort out the differences between the two: the first is a 'Double bass wth 5 Strings' in the F tuning given above, but with an alternative for the bottom string(s) at G-A with the name 'Mr Finger' (Fig. 3).<sup>59</sup> This is the only other known source for the G-A double bass tuning for the bottom two strings also seen in Janovka—and this example is earlier than Janovka.<sup>60</sup> It seems that Talbot understood the G-A tuning as an alternative for the F tuning he gives here and elsewhere; both of which were supplied by Finger.<sup>61</sup>

Figure 3: GB-Och 1187



There is one other telling appearance where, yet again, Talbot clarifies that 'double bass' can refer to two different instruments. On a sheet headed 'String'd Instruments' (one of many similar such schemata) Talbot lists a variety of stringed instruments and how they relate to each other by means of shared strings. In addition to this he also provides his sources (Finger's name appears no

<sup>59</sup> GB-Och MS. 1187 (10).

<sup>60</sup> Finger's tuning (with low F) is similar to Prinner's 1677 tuning, but the latter has a top b string, rather than a. I have not seen this particular tuning anywhere else, but it raises some tricky questions about string length and thickness. For example, the 'double bass' measured by Talbot has a vibrating string length of about 40 inches and it would be very difficult to believe that a string sounding anywhere near the 'b' of the top string of Prinner's tuning would be viable at that length—especially as it also had to accommodate a low F.

<sup>61</sup> Neither Finger, Prinner or Janovka understand *violone* to indicate a six-string double bass in D, sounding an octave lower than the ordinary bass viola da gamba.

fewer than nine times). Talbot works his way through the violin family, relating each instrument to its sibling by common strings: after ‘Violin Treble’ he notes that for the viola: ‘1st string T[eno]r = 2d Treble’. This is then followed by the ‘smallest of Bass Violin = 1st of Treble’ [*i.e.*, the top G on a bass violin in B flat is the same pitch as the bottom G (which here he calls ‘first’ here—inverting the string order) on the violin].<sup>62</sup> Finally, this overlapping common-string relationship breaks down when he gets to the double bass because it does not have any strings in common with the aforementioned B flat bass violin; and so Talbot writes ‘last of Double Bass = A re’ (citing Finger as his source)—a specific pitch designation found in countless treatises, perhaps best known from medieval theoretical practice derived from Guido d’Arezzo.<sup>63</sup> ‘A re’ specifies the bottom line of the bass staff—the top string of Finger’s five-string double bass tuning at sounding pitch.<sup>64</sup> Whether Talbot saw a double bass owned by Finger is not explicit; but it seems sure that Finger owned such a double bass, because when he left London for Vienna in 1701 an ‘excellent Double Bass’ was listed in the sale catalogue of his music and instruments.<sup>65</sup> The evidence is strong that Finger was perhaps the first professional double bass player in England.<sup>66</sup> He presumably played the five-string type with which he was associated in the Talbot manuscript and it was probably used in Finger’s large-scale concert works for his regular concerts at York Buildings.<sup>67</sup> Finger is also the composer of the earliest

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<sup>62</sup> Donnington (1950, 30) was mistaken in claiming that Talbot numbered strings in descending order throughout the MS—Talbot frequently does so, but inconsistently.

<sup>63</sup> On this type of pitch referencing see Francesco Galeazzi, Deborah Burton, and Gregory W. Harwood, *Theoretical-practical elements of music, parts III and IV* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 98.

<sup>64</sup> This section of the Talbot MS has been misread before now; usually rendered to suggest that Finger had lent an instrument to Talbot (which, of course, he may have; but that is not what is on this particular sheet). There is no mention of such a loan anywhere in the MS, including Talbot’s measurements of a ‘double bass viol’. Finger is only associated explicitly with tunings. I am especially grateful to Oliver Webber who exchanged ideas with me about this particular page.

<sup>65</sup> Peter Holman, “The Sale Catalogue of Gottfried Finger’s Music Library: New Light on London Concert Life in the 1690s,” (2010).

<sup>66</sup> Even if Finger only acquired his double bass in the 1690s, this still makes the arrival of a professional double bassist in London well before 1702, with G. Fedeli (‘Saggione’), as claimed in Spitzer and Zaslaw, *The birth of the orchestra*, 273.

<sup>67</sup> There are surviving large-scale works by Finger from either the late 1690s or around 1700/1701 that would benefit from a double bass (see Rawson, “From Olomouc to London.”). Still others are listed in Finger’s sale catalogue; see Holman, “The Sale Catalogue of Gottfried Finger’s Music Library.” Holman’s

known Italian concerto in England (c.1694) and perhaps around this time he was also a pioneer in bringing the modern Italian and central-European approach of basso continuo with cello and octave-transposing double basses to London.<sup>68</sup>

Another Continental arrival from Central Europe, whose appearance in London seems to have overlapped with Finger's, is the Berlin native Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667–1752) who seems to have arrived in London just before or around 1700.<sup>69</sup> Pepusch had considerable experience at the Italian Opera, the English theatre at Dury Lane, in London's busy concert life and later composing sacred and domestic music, alongside Handel, for James Brydges, the First Duke of Chandos.<sup>70</sup> By 1724 Pepusch defined *Violone* as:

a very large Bass Violin, or Double Bass, it being as large again in every Way as a common Bass Violin, and the Strings twice as thick and twice as long, renders the Sound just an Octave lower than the common Bass Violin. This Instrument is used only in Great Consorts, as Operas, and other publick Musick.<sup>71</sup>

The use of reinforcing the continuo with the double bass in England may have begun with Finger and the earliest concertos by Pepusch (c.1704) give evidence of the practice in London—at least in concertos and other large-scale concert works.<sup>72</sup>

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discovery of the sale catalogue also helps confirm that Finger regularly performed large-scale works there and that these might have been where his double bass was used (either by himself or another performer).

<sup>68</sup> Rawson, "From Olomouc to London," 160. Only the violin 1 part (not *concertato*) survives; GB-Lbl Add. 35,043, ff. 49v 50r, 'Concerto Comp. del Sigr Godefrido Finger.' It is not known whether he brought his double bass with him from Moravia to London, or if he acquired in England, or on his travels to Italy and France in the late 1690s.

<sup>69</sup> Donald Frederick Cook, "The Life and Works of Johann Christoph Pepusch (1667–1752), with Special Reference to his Dramatic Works and Cantatas," diss., University of London, 1982).

<sup>70</sup> Graydon Beeks, "A Club of Composers: Handel, Pepusch and Arbuthnot at Cannons," in *Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Tercentenary Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

<sup>71</sup> J. C. Pepusch (attrib.), *A Short Explanation of such Foreign Words as are made use of in Musick Books* (London: Brotherton, 1724). This anonymous dictionary is attributed to Pepusch in Graham Strahle, *An early music dictionary: musical terms from British sources, 1500–740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 411. Lower Lindgren, however, has since argued that the Italian cellist Nicola Haym (1678–1729) may be the author *A Short Explication*. Lowell Lindgren, *Nicola Francesco Haym: Complete Sonatas I* (Middleton: A-R Editions, 2002), xxv.

<sup>72</sup> The earliest of these is probably the *Concerto Grosso* in B flat (a violin concerto in all but name). Most of the concerto is based on a violin sonata probably composed just after 1700. The ripieno bass part

### A coda about concertos

It is hoped that the argument presented here, in favour of understanding the double bass as an extension of basso continuo practice in courtly and large-scale sacred music at Kroměříž, will encourage a reconsideration of its use in other contexts. In order to help facilitate that scholarly conversation, a few examples from concertos are discussed below; but even before those examples are addressed, it seems necessary to consolidate a few conclusions from the Kroměříž case study that should impact further studies on this subject. The fact that the double bass parts there were generally copies of the basso continuo (or *organo*) parts, it can be understood that the performer did not play everything copied into the part (the same would apply if they were sharing a part with the organist or another continuo player). It has already been argued through the evidence presented here that the double bass only played in *tutti* sections or choral works in *pleno* and that any surviving part usually preserves the *solo* and *tutti* markings from the continuo to indicate where the double bass should play. A number of later eighteenth-century treatises, such as Quantz, for example, understood that double bassists created their part from the cello or continuo part not only by sometimes simplifying the notated rhythms, but also by transposing phrases at the octave which would otherwise be either too high or too low for the instrument. In short, the double bass part made compromises for the sake of the 8' part, not the other way around. The basso continuo part is the result of composition, the addition of a double bass part is usually the result of performance practice. Taken altogether, this evidence suggests that when considering the 16' bass in concerted music, is it a mistake to look to surviving parts to provide the answer to the question 'what instrument played this?' As has been shown above, early double bass parts are usually duplicates of

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has no *solo* or *tutti* markings, but rather has rests in the passages for solo violin—though plays in the cello solo passage. Pepusch tended to label these parts in concertos as *basso ripieno* if they had a label at all. This concerto survives only in score (GB-Lbl Add. 64, 965).

the basso continuo part, rather than necessarily being bespoke parts for particular double basses.<sup>73</sup>

The principle in concerted music of copying parts not all of which were intended to be played as written—or played at all— was not unique to double basses. For example, there are countless concertos for transverse flute where, in *tutti* sections they are given notes out of their range, where the players either dropped out or displaced at the octave those passages.<sup>74</sup> Sometimes one will encounter *col basso* passages, or even entire movements, for the viola where the copyist has merely duplicated the continuo part (sometimes providing an exact copy of the basso continuo part—even in bass clef—directly into the viola part); the player must have adapted the part to fit their instrument.<sup>75</sup> To suggest that in such cases one should examine the entire range of the part in order to determine the instrument required to play them would be to miss the point entirely; and yet that is precisely what happens frequently in discussions about 16' bass parts—to look to the range for answers of instrumentation.<sup>76</sup> In short, a wide variety of surviving parts for concerted music confirm that what you see is not necessarily what you get.

As the Kroměříž sources suggest—or even make explicit—the double bassist often shared a part with the organ or harpsichord; with another single part provided for the 8' bass, such as the cello. If double bassists were accustomed to being silent in passages marked *solo* then any exceptions to this pattern would need to be explicit—and this is what happens in many early examples of music with obbligato cello. This was a common occurrence around 1700 because most ensembles were

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<sup>73</sup> There are some early eighteenth-century double bass parts which omit the *solo* sections and preserve the *tutti*—rather than copy out the entire part with *solo* and *tutti* markings. A more detailed study of those would be welcomed.

<sup>74</sup> One example, taken almost at random, is Adam's *Concerto a Flaut[o] Travers[o]* (D-DIb Mus. 3701-o-1) which has a low g in the solo flute part. It would be a strange proposal indeed to argue that the flute in question should be able to play a low g—but that is a common approach in scholarly discourse about the double bass. The broader implications of this practice in later eighteenth-century concertos is considered in Carey Cambell, "Soloist participation during the tuttis of eighteenth-century woodwind concertos," *Eighteenth Century Music* 7, no. 1 (2010).

<sup>75</sup> For example, the 'March' movement from Pepusch's *Concerto Grosso á 6* (for solo trumpet, five-part strings and b.c.) is an exact copy, in bass clef, of the basso continuo part; D-ROu, Mus. Saec. XVII-37 (No. 12). This piece was probably composed for the trumpeter A. G. Lemon to perform at Cannons.

<sup>76</sup> Here I am specifically addressing concerted music. English consort music, for example, presents a different tradition.

typically one to a part in concertos and in other concerted music—and when the cello was playing a solo in its higher register, a solo harpsichord could not provide an adequate bass in a room of any great size. In many cases, composers and/or copyists made it clear that during cello obbligato parts in arias or concertos, the double bass played with the continuo—this was an exception to the standard pattern where the double bass played only in *tuttis* to reinforce the continuo. A few examples here are not intended to establish a paradigm, but rather serve as indicative examples of how the use of the double bass in concertos and arias with obbligato cello can prove something of an exception to how it was used in large-scale works. In concerto repertoire, for example, continuo parts that also mention a double bass are especially common in concertos for the solo cello.<sup>77</sup> The cello obbligato in the aria ‘Innocente è chi ben’ ama’ from Antonio Maria Bononcini’s *Arminio* (Vienna, 1706) is specifically designated with ‘Cembalo e Contrabasso’ in the continuo (Fig. 4).<sup>78</sup> Giovanni Bononcini’s ‘Si già guerra apprestano’ from his serenade *Il fiore delle eroine* (Vienna, 1704) provides a rare example of a score which illustrates separate obbligato parts for members of the continuo band.<sup>79</sup> Two violins and solo soprano are accompanied by obbligato theorbo, cello, ‘contrabasso’ and, in the more turbulent section, with harpsichord.<sup>80</sup> The designation of solo *contrabasso* or *violone* ‘senza cembalo’ in continuo parts can be found in many other quieter or pastoral arias in early-eighteenth works in Austria and the Czech lands in particular.<sup>81</sup> Another

<sup>77</sup> Although this pattern appears around 1700, it can be found right through the middle of the eighteenth century. For example, a concerto by Giorgio Antoniotto from around the 1730s makes mention in the score for ‘E Fondamento Cimbalo E ContraBasso’ (GB-DRc MS E27).

<sup>78</sup> D-DI Mus. 2209-F-1.

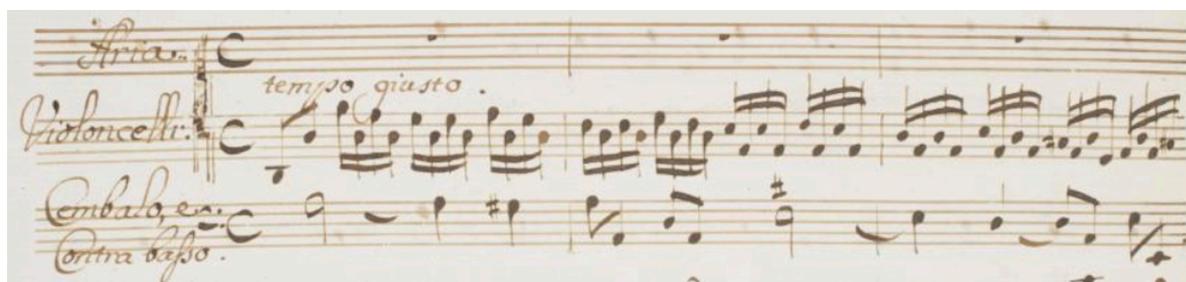
<sup>79</sup> A-Wn Mus. Hs. 16039.

<sup>80</sup> The pattern of using a double bass (solo or with other continuo instruments) to accompany obbligato cello parts is pervasive in early eighteenth-century Vienna. It is not only found with solo cello, but with cello obbligato and other instruments too; such as in the aria ‘Tanto e con sì gran piena’ from Caldara’s *Gianguir* (Vienna, 1724) for soprano, two violins (also with *solo* and *tutti* markings), viola, obbligato cello and ‘Contrabasso solo, e Cemb’ for the continuo (D-MEIr, Ed 118d). This may not have been done only because of small numbers in the continuo band. Another copy of the same aria (A-Wn, Mus. Hs.18298 and Mus.Hs.18299 [parts]) adds the note ‘tutti violoncelli’ on the cello stave the *tutti* sections.

<sup>81</sup> Other examples include the aria with obbligato cello ‘taci onor più non t’ascolto’ in A. Scarlatti’s *Tigrane* (Naples, 1715) with the indication ‘contrabasso solo senza cembalo’ in the continuo part; reprinted in Michael Collins, *The Operas of Alessandro Scarlatti, Volume VIII: Tigrane* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983), 211–14. *Tigrane* has other examples where the presence and absence of both

regional example can be found in the cello concertos (1730s) by the Moravian composer Josef Guretzky (1709–69), where his continuo parts are frequently labelled 'violone' or 'contrabasso'.<sup>82</sup> In his case, the *forte* and *piano* markings do not indicate *solo* and *tutti* (as was commonly done), but only to indicate dynamic changes. There are no *solo* or *tutti* markings as one would expect in the continuo part because the *contrabasso* played throughout together with the harpsichord—only the solo cello part contains *solo* and *tutti* markings.<sup>83</sup>

Figure 4: 'Innocente è chi ben' ama' from Antonio Maria Bononci's *Arminio* (Vienna, 1706)



It would seem that not all requirements for the double bass were as subtle and practical as seen in the concertos and arias above. In fact, it may be that some of the main reasons cited in the Kroměříž case for the necessity of the double bass—namely volume and power to fill a large

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'contrabasso' and 'cembalo' are indicated in the continuo part. Another example of 'contrabasso senza cembalo' is in the luxurious scoring for the aria "Dei colli nostri" in Francesco Conti's 'dramma pastorale' *Il trionfo dell'amicizia e dell'amore* (Vienna, 1711), for soprano, two barytons, two mandolins and continuo. Double bass without harpsichord is also a common continuo texture in pastoral arias with obligato chalumeau; for example, in stage works by Fux (Harry White, ed. *Johann Joseph Fux and the Music of the Austro-Italian Baroque* 1992), 88.); or several arias with obligato chalumeau in Johann Reinhardt's *La piu bella* (Vienna, 1715) (D-MEIr, Ed 147o). The same idea is surely implied the 'senza cembalo' indication in the aria 'Sento, né so perché' from Miča's *L'origine di Jaromeriz* in Moravia (Jaroměřice, 1730). A more exhaustive list would be useful in future.

<sup>82</sup> Guretzky was born in Přeov and educated in Kroměříž, where he played in the orchestra of Cardinal Schrattenbach and in that of his successor Jakob Ernst von Liechtenstein (1738–45). Guretzky also travelled in the 1730s where we was at the court of Count Rudolph Franz Erwein Schönborn in Wiesentheid, where all of his nine surviving cello concertos are preserved (GMO). There is a discussion of some of these concertos in Robert Rawson, *Bohemian Baroque: Czech Musical Culture and Style, 1600-1750* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013).

<sup>83</sup> Chapman rightly draws attention to Handel's aria 'Ah! crudel' in *Rinaldo* (HWV 7a), Act 2 Scene 8 (GB-Cfm, Mus. MS 254) where the solo bassoon is accompanied by 'violone grosso solo'. Chapman, "The sixteen-foot violone in concerted music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: issues of terminology and function," 51–51. This example seems to follow the earlier cello specimens given here. On the use of *solo* and *tutti* to act as warnings to *concertato* players that 'here you are a soloist', see Maunder.

acoustic—may also provide reasons why it appears in the theatre accompanying recitative.<sup>84</sup> It was Pepusch, again, who has left the earliest surviving ‘Double Bass’ part of any stage work in England—for his ambitious masque *Venus and Adonis* (1715) composed for the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. Not only is this perhaps the most important theatrical piece of music in the English language between Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, but it is also the earliest operatic work in England to survive with a complete set of performing parts.<sup>85</sup> The set of parts that survives is not from the original run at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane in 1715–16, but rather from the 1717 revival at Lincoln's Inn Fields.<sup>86</sup> What is important to point out at this point is that Pepusch had recruited players from the opera house and his approach to the Drury Lane masques (1715–1717) was derived from the Italian practice at the opera house. As with the earlier practices of the double bass in large-scale music, the double bass part is an exact copy of the basso continuo part in overtures and arias—and usually with *tutti* and *solo* markings, or *forte* and *piano* markings. In both latter cases the effect is the same, the double bass plays when the whole band plays together. The double bass part for *Venus and Adonis* also preserves all the recitatives in score and often with text incipits. On the face of it, one might argue that if double bass parts are generally copies of the continuo part—and this particular part is no exception—then perhaps the recitatives were copied into the part without the intention of the double bassists playing them? In the case of *Venus and Adonis*, the surviving bass parts are not all identical; the recitatives are not copied into the bassoon part, for example. Much more convincing is that there are text incipits preserved in the recitatives in the double bass part, some of them clearly added later in a different hand from the original copyist—surely to aid performance. Finally, there is also evidence of corrections to the work of the

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<sup>84</sup> In the case of Handel's recitative, see Richard G. King, “Who does what? On the roles of the violoncello and double bass in the performance of Handel's recitatives,” *Early Music* 44, no. 1 (2016).

<sup>85</sup> GB-Lcm 975, score and parts.

<sup>86</sup> See Cook, “The Life and Works of Johann Christoph Pepusch.”; and R. Rawson, ‘An attempt to give the town a little good musick in a language they understand’, liner notes for the CD recording, Pepusch *Venus and Adonis*, The Harmonious Society of Tickle-Fiddle Gentlemen (Ramée 1502, 2016).

original copyist of the recitatives in the double bass book—hardly necessary if the double bassist was not going to play.

The Kroměříž case study presented here, alongside the ancillary ones, should force a reconsideration of current HIP practices regarding the use of 16' basses in certain circumstances. Of late, the movement has too often fallen back into the traps from which it once struggled to escape in the 1960s and 70s, namely: the problems projecting later performance practices incorrectly onto earlier repertoire. Early music pioneers like Peter Holman and Sigiswald Kuijken, for example, went considerable distances to urge a reappraisal of the *de facto* use of 16' basses in pre-1700 music of composers such as Purcell and Lully; an effort so successful that one now seldom ever hears a 16' in that repertoire. Since that time, however, the same scholarship has been applied to music which either did have, or may have had a 16' bass, and in the process ironing out the otherwise varied and colourful landscape of performance practices across Europe in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Like James Talbot in the 1690s, we should hesitate with our pen before making assumptions of uniformity across repertoires, nations and performance traditions and instead admire the sheer variety and possibilities available to the performer.

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