Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762) was considered to be an eminent composer and one of the finest violinists of his day. Yet modern scholars have generally overlooked him in favor of other masters such as J.S. Bach and George Frederick Handel. The reasons for this neglect are multifaceted. Most present-day music historians have relied upon the accounts of Charles Burney and Sir John Hawkins as the sole source of their information concerning Geminiani's life and musical skills. While these two histories offer interesting insights into eighteenth-century musical practices, they are often biased and the facts frequently misleading since both authors depended heavily upon memory and hearsay evidence for their accounts. The criticisms of Geminiani found in these documents have undoubtedly tinged the attitudes of twentieth-century scholars toward the Italian master. The scarcity of readily available performing editions has greatly hindered the performance of Geminiani's works and has further impeded efforts to obtain a true understanding of Geminiani's contributions to the development of music and musical style. Such an understanding is not easily attained since Geminiani represents an enigma in music history. His compositions and treatises obviously reflect his ties to the Baroque traditions of composition and performance. Many of his tenets, however, were so far in advance of their time that they required rediscovery in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because he represents such an enigma, scholars have been unable to place him neatly in one of the accepted periods of music history. These same scholars have, therefore, considered Geminiani to be a "transitional" figure in music history and have relegated him to the rather nebulous domain of the pre-Classical era. As a "transitional" figure, Geminiani's works have not been judged upon their own merits but rather in comparison with the works of his more well-known contemporaries. Although his compositions and treatises are uneven in quality, they stand as important documents for any student of Baroque performance practices. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze Geminiani's contributions to the literature and development of music. This analysis will be effected by means of a study of Geminiani's Six Sonatas for Violoncello and Basso Continuo, Op. 5 which were originally published in Paris and at the Hague in 1746. These same works were subsequently printed in London in 1747. The second part of this project is a new performing edition of the six sonatas in which, it is hoped, the figures of the basso-continuo have been realized in such a manner as to reveal the composer's ideals of accompaniment and good taste in the performance of his works.

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