

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

M I N U T E
P A R T I C U L A R

Mr. Rudall the Flautist

Raymond H. Deck, Jr.

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 11, Issue 2, Fall 1977, p. 123



On the verso of the sheet are studies of a leg and foot (illus. 2) which probably relate to Blake's student exercises at the Royal Academy, where he enrolled in 1779.

MR. RUDALL, THE FLAUTIST: AN AUTHENTIC BLAKE ANECDOTE

by Raymond H. Deck, Jr.

. . . when Mr. Rudall, the flautist, called upon him at his poor lodging near Clare Market, the mystic told his visitor that he had a palace of his own of great beauty and magnificence. On Mr. Rudall's looking round the room for evidence, Blake remarked, "You don't think I'm such a fool as to think this is it."

The residence in question is Blake's apartment at 3 Fountain Court, where he lived from 1821 until his death; Clare Market, which has not survived into the twentieth century, is an extension of the Vere Street which lies at the extreme right center of that portion of Horwood's *Plan of the Cities of London and Westminster* reproduced in Bentley's *Blake Records* (Plate LIX, pp. 564-65). For a description of this apartment as it might have appeared to Mr. Rudall's "corporeal eye," see Bentley's "William Blake, Samuel Palmer, and George Richardson," *Blake Studies*, 2 (Spring 1970), 43-48.

Blake's encounter with Mr. Rudall is reported by James Spilling, an English Swedenborgian, in "Blake the Visionary," *New Church Magazine*, 6 (1887), 209. Spilling explains that his source for the anecdote is J. J. Garth Wilkinson, the Swedenborgian who published the first letterpress edition of Blake's *Songs* in 1839. Spilling's report begins: "He saw and drew his own residence at Felpham differently to what it appeared to anyone else. It was in this spirit that, as we are informed by Dr. Wilkinson, when Mr. Rudall, the flautist. . . ." Wilkinson in turn probably had his information from Charles Augustus Tulk, Blake's Swedenborgian patron during the last decade of the poet's life, who in 1838 introduced Wilkinson to Blake's work and loaned him the copy of the *Songs* used as the copy text for the 1839 edition.

