

Music Reviews (continued)

Dieterich Buxtehude: Sonata in D major Opus 2 Number 2 BuxWV 260, from VII Suonate à due, Hamburg 1696. Edition Güntersberg G112.

The early form of the often mistakenly-named 'trio' sonata, where the continuo keeps to its appropriate place as a chordal accompaniment, was called 'a due' and the most popular manifestations of this form were for two violins and continuo and violin, bass instrument (cello, bass violin or bass viol) and continuo. Buxtehude composed two sets of seven sonate 'a due', opus 1 and opus 2 for the combination of 'Violino & Violadagamba con Cembalo' a choice already explored by composers such as Becker and Erlebach (also published by Edition Güntersberg). Buxtehude balances the bass viol and violin parts equally, and both contribute to the musical argument fully with the bass viol getting the same share of musical interest as the violin.

Opus 2 number 2 is one of the more delightful and less technically difficult of the sets. It opens with a short slow exploratory section which leads to a jolly triple contrapuntal exchange. An 'Arietta' follows with some playful syncopations and lots of rhythmic interplay between the players in the divisions. After a dramatic chromatic largo, the sonata ends with a vivace. The violin part only occasionally reaches and never exceeds D in 3rd position and is technically quite straightforward. The viol part in this sonata has the occasional B above the last fret, but generally lies conveniently under the hand. Highly recommended for an introduction to this genre.

This wonderfully clear edition is beautifully produced on high quality paper and contains everything you could possibly need in the form of part books for violin and bass viol, cembalo and score, with a separate realised continuo part. Alto clefs have been substituted for tenor in the viol part, and the continuo, unlike the original, now has only bass clef to read. The cover of the score has a splendid wood carving of Buxtehude's workplace the Marienkirche, Lübeck, where the Abendmusik concerts were held, demonstrating its status as civic church with a physical connection to the Rathaus next door.

The complete opus one and two of seven sonatas each is also available for 99 Euros per opus.