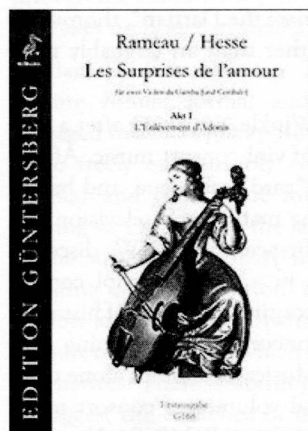


Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Les Surprises de l'amour*, Act I: L'Enlèvement d'Adonis, 2 bass viols and harpsichord, arr. Ludwig Christian Hesse; ed. Jonathan Dunford. Edition Güntersberg, 2010, G168. ISMN 979-9-50174-168-7. 2 scores, harpsichord part, 19.80€.

Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Les Surprises de l'amour*, Act II: La Lyre enchantée, 2 bass viols and harpsichord, arr. Ludwig Christian Hesse; ed. Jonathan Dunford. Edition Güntersberg, 2010, G169. ISMN 979-0-50174-169-4. 2 scores, harpsichord part, 19.80€.



Chrissy Spencer and I recently spent a delightful and whirlwind evening reading Jonathan Dunford's excellent collection of bass viol duets based on Rameau's opera *Les Surprises de l'amour*. We alternately laughed at the cleverness of melodies and rhythms, groaned over some of the key signatures, puzzled over some of the markings, sweated over the "ghost" double stops, remarked about the good quality of the edition, and imagined great ways to use the collection in a concert setting.

The edition provides fascinating background and translations for the two-volume collection. (The other acts will be published soon.) Hesse was a great eighteenth-century viol player and singer. He took Rameau's opera *Surprises*, or actually a series of unrelated acts known as *actes de ballet*, and turned them into duets for two viols—even sometimes three viols, and violin. Rameau himself had constantly changed the opera by adding an overture, a new act and additional music. An editorial note by Dunford states that the ingenious manner in which a large orchestra is reduced to two bass viols is so remarkable as to seem that Rameau might have conceived of the pieces this way originally!

Ludwig Christian Hesse (1716–1772) was the son of Ernst Christian Hesse (1676–1762), also a viol player of considerable talent. The apocryphal story is that the father, Ernst Christian, studied in Paris with both Marais and Forqueray without letting the other know. He used the name *Hesse* to one teacher and the name *Sachs* to the other. Forqueray and Marais eventually began bragging to each other about their "brilliant German student" and arranged to have a competition between Hesse and Sachs. Hesse (alone, naturally) showed up and tried to placate the two masters by playing first a piece in Marais' style and then in Forqueray's. But it was to no avail; the teachers considered this a great impertinence and Hesse was sent off home to Darmstadt and was seen no more in Versailles.

Now to the music: there are wonderfully dramatic moments, moments of great tenderness, and dances of many types. The pieces are generally laid out with a solo viol accompanied by a less difficult bass line, but both players certainly support each other. The music, for advanced viol players, would be suitable as a theatrical piece with dancers and actors.

The first volume has the difficult key signatures of E and A major. The first viol part goes above the frets and is written in both alto and treble clef (played down the octave); the second part is always in bass clef. There is plenty of ornamentation—trills and anticipations. The facsimile manuscript often uses the number 3 followed by a line of dots, which indicates that the solo part is to play thirds (or other designated intervals) either above or below the given notes; the term "figured treble" was given to this notation. Dunford's edition fills in these "ghost notes" with small noteheads, some of which are impossible to play. I found that adding the "ghost notes" greatly filled in the harmony. The edition also provides a harpsichord part, a harmonic help, but it is not in Hesse's original.

There is some ambiguity about repeats, *da capos* and *fins*, but these can usually be figured out. There are occasional empty measures, and some puzzling discrepancies in lengths of notes. Page turns are well thought out, and although there are two awkward ones, they come at good places and can be avoided by a xeroxed page. Deviations from Hesse's original markings are well notated.

The texts deal with nymphs and spirits, satyrs and fauns, Diana, the gods, Cupid, the Titans; and the protagonists are Parthenope and Uranie. Great fodder for a mini-drama, and since Ludwig Christian Hesse was the private teacher to Prince Frederick William II in Berlin, these pieces were likely written for his amusement and entertainment.

Congratulations to Dunford and von Zadow for a great edition! Thanks for literature showing a German/French connection and coming from a period when it is commonly believed that interest in the viol was waning. Our appetites, as Dunford hopes, are definitely whetted for more of this music—what about some trios?

Martha Bishop, Atlanta, GA

[Editor's note: More Güntersberg editions of viol music can be found at their website, www.guentersberg.de, but they can also be found at Edition Walhall's website, www.edition-walhall.com. Edition Walhall, established in 1993 by Franz Biersack, carries over 250 editions of gamba or consort music, which includes editions by Güntersberg, rg-editions, CCBN, and Green Man Press, offering worldwide delivery.]

Fairest Isle. Wildcat Viols: Joanna Blendulf, treble and bass viols; Julie Jeffrey, tenor and bass viols; Elisabeth Reed, bass viol; with Catherine Webster, soprano. 1 compact disc. http://magnatune.com/artists/wildcat_viols

Wildcat Viols has been singled out for praise in a recent VdGSA newsletter, and in other places mentioned as a group to look out for, and with good cause. *Fairest Isle* is a recording that successfully combines works of several composers of mid- to late-seventeenth-century England: Purcell, Hingeston, and Locke. Henry Purcell

