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Music Reviews

G199

**Carl Friedrich Abel *Quartett G-Dur für Flauto traverso, Violino, Viola da Gamba und Violoncello*
Edition Güntersberg 2011 ISMN M-50174-199-1 Score and 4 parts, ~~€189~~, 16.00 €**

As Peter Holman writes in his introduction, Abel was the greatest viola da gamba player of the second half of the 18th century and was one of the most prolific composers for his instrument. This quartet is thought to be from a set of works published in London in 1794 for flute, violin, gamba and cello and is the only one to have survived.

It has two movements; the first a cheerful allegro moderato in two repeated sections; the second, marked allegretto, is in rondo form and is very dance-like in character.

None of the parts present any difficulty to competent players. The upper two parts and the gamba part work together interacting with each other in a series of alternating duets with accompanying figures from the 3rd player and sometimes coming together as a trio. In the first movement the cello part is, in the main, a very simple, fairly static bass line. The second movement gives the player a little more to do and has a couple of sudden flourishes in the second episode. There is no keyboard continuo part and the piece works well without, but also works with a harpsichordist filling in chords – which are easy enough for a competent continuo player.

The piece is, as expected for that period, pleasant, easy on the ear - typically gallante. The comments from the group I presented it to ranged from “delightful”, “agreeable”, “typically of the period”; a work we could recommend.

Elizabeth Dodd