

Review regarding G221-G223 by Robert Oliver to be published in Brain Clark's Early Music Review.  
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Stücke für den Unterricht auf der Bassgambe  
Richard Sutcliffe and Leonore von Zadow-Reichling.

Edition Güntersberg

This excellent collection of graded pieces, spread through three volumes, for students of the bass viol, will be welcomed by teachers and students. The volumes are respectively 'Beginner', (28p pages €14.90) 'Intermediate' (28 pages €14.90) and 'Advanced' (32 pages €15.50). The selections are well-informed, carefully graded, chosen from repertoire, ranging from very basic (*Frère Jacques* in four keys and four languages) to moderately advanced. Every teacher will have their own selection compiled over the years, but these modestly priced and well produced volumes bring together so conveniently examples from Ives, Telemann, Marais, Boismortier, etc. So far as I know, this is rare in that it offers such a 'gradus ad parnassum' – a commonplace for most instruments, but not readily available for the viol. Francis Baines' tutors for the treble, tenor and bass viols are similar, and one could almost describe this as an extension, for the bass viol, of that series.

What sets them apart, and makes them so useful, is that they are no more than a guide to what a student should play at various stages of her or his development. They are not yet another tutor, the only suggestions for bowing or fingering are those which appear in the sources. The selection is made from a German perspective, so there is little from the early English repertoire, for example, Simpson's chord exercise doesn't appear, nor does anything by Hume. But this should not be a problem for most teachers, who can readily provide that music where appropriate.

The selection and its ordering take into account the student's need to understand the long-term development of their technique: bowing patterns, different clefs, string crossing, reading from facsimile, there are regular reproductions of the pages from which the transcriptions are made.

Volume 1 has a total of 22 pieces taken from Praetorius, Sermisy, Benjamin Hely, Boismortier, Haydn (Baryton trios) Abel, Simon Ives, Telemann and Schenck. *The Compleat Violist* is described erroneously in the bibliography as 'anonymous'. It is true that the pieces quoted here and taken from the book are anonymous, but it is confusing to so label the publication. Most are duets, so that the pupil and teacher can enjoy playing them together – so important as an introduction to the pleasures of viol playing, and continued through all three volumes. The level is organically developed, so that fluency and enjoyment progress together.

Volume 2 selects more demanding selections from the same composers, and introduces Ortiz, Matthew Locke and Marais. Here are to be found the challenges of shifting to higher positions and playing above the frets, up to a c'. There are explanations of Marais' bowing, fingering and ornamentation signs, with facsimile reproductions.

Volume 3 takes the student a little further, with music by Ruhe (new to me) Leclair, Telemann, Bach (a duet from the Art of fugue), at last some Simpson, Couperin (from *Les Goûts-réunis*) Morel, Christoph Schaffrath, Handel, Guignon and Schenck. Some Abel is presented in a choice of clefs – both the treble clef which one has to play an octave down, and the alto clef.

I find the choices illuminating, not necessarily ones I would make, but valuable as they bring in areas of repertoire which I might not have thought of: Abel, Schaffrath, Haydn. By the end of Volume 3, fluency in string crossing, rapid passages in semiquavers and triplets,

familiarity with the 'keyboard' up to c' on the top string, have all been introduced. When the student has played through this volume, they are ready for their Fuzeau facsimiles, Simpson divisions, Bach sonatas, all the magnificent challenges which await them, if they choose. Of course there are gaps: no Hume, little Simpson, no specific preparation for the demands of Jenkins or Lawes, no suggestion of the bastarda or lyra repertoire, significant omissions all. However they are for a more advanced level than these books, and are so easily remedied that they do not diminish the usefulness of this publication. As Hume would have said, 'if thou dost dislike let me see thine'. I am already using these books, and would like to see their equivalents for tenor (to go with the very good Saraband Music publications) and treble players. Many thanks Edition Güntersberg, you've saved me a lot of trouble.