

# THE VIOL No 35, Summer 2014

**Carolus Hacquart *Chelys Op. III : 12 Suiten für Viola da Gamba und Basso continuo. Heft 1: Suiten I - III; Heft 2: Suiten IV - VI; Heft 3: Suiten VII - IX; Heft 4: Suiten X - XII.* Edited by Günter and Leonore von Zadow 2013 Edition Güntersberg ISMN 979-0-50174-233 - 236**

Carolus Hacquart was born ca. 1640 in Bruges and studied composition, lute, viol and organ. The 12 suites for viol were published in 1686 when he was working as a musician in Amsterdam. They are dedicated to two lawyers who had been his pupils and who had financially enabled the publication.

Hacquart's dedication to the lawyers indicates that he expected them to play the pieces together, presumably one on the solo and one on the bass. The parts given here would allow for a number of possibilities. There are four separate parts: a score with the solo viol part and the bass line which has a continuo realisation; the solo viol part along with the continuo bass part (figured); plus separate solo and bass parts. Personally, I would have preferred two sets of the solo viol plus bass where each player can see what the other is up to. As there are only two page turns in the entire twelve suites this would have been quite feasible and the separate parts could have been dispensed with.

The bass part needs some explanation. It is missing from the main (and only complete) source for the solo part. Other sources include figured bass parts for some of the movements only. The missing bass parts for this edition have been reconstructed using the existing parts as examples and also the fact that the bass of the harmony is frequently in, or implied in the solo part.

Although the suites follow the typical French pattern – the majority are in the form of prelude, allemande, courante, sarabande and gigue – the accent is not very French. It has, as one might expect, a Dutch or North German feel to it, something more like Schenck, Kühnel or Buxtehude. Four are in D minor, one each in G minor and A minor, two each in G major and D major, and one each in C and F major. The music is quite athletic with frequent hopping from upper to lower strings and back again. Much use is also made of chords and arpeggio patterns which bring out the resonance of the viol. I particularly enjoyed those occasions when the repeats of sarabandes consisted of variations – over half are treated in this way. In one suite the courante is replaced by an aÿr and in another the prelude is replaced by an exciting, varied and fairly lengthy fantasia.

I find these suites a welcome addition to viol players' repertoire.

*Elizabeth Dodd*