

Baldassare Galuppi (1706-1785)
Suonata à Viola da Gamba
Güntersberg G 275

Güntersberg continues to provide useful new editions of hitherto unavailable music for bass viol. Their latest is a surprising addition to the repertoire in the form of a three-movement sonata for bass viol from a composer better known for his operas, oratorios, keyboard music and concertos. The manuscript was found in Greiz, not far from Robert Schumann's birthplace Zwickau and quite close to the Czech border, where (violinist?) Count Reuss, like cellist Count Schönborn in Wiesentheid, assembled an interesting collection of music for use at court. The collection also contains works by Johann Gottfried Donati and Johann Friedrich Ruhe, which we can assume will be published in due course.

The title page describes Galuppi as *Sigre Baldassar Galuppi, detto il Buranello, Maestro die Capella à Londra*, which refers to his birthplace of Burano, the island close to Venice, which many of us will have visited, and the fact that he spent the years 1740-43 in London for performances of his operas at the Haymarket Theatre. Not surprisingly the music itself has much in common with Pergolesi and Vivaldi with extended and attractive use of sequences, idiomatic passage work, and conventional rococo syncopations. Technically the writing is way short of the virtuosity needed to tackle the Berlin school or the later French masters, never going above third position and with just a few easy chords. ⇒

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Like most of the music of this period outside France, it is perfectly effective on two bass viols, or even perhaps with cello continuo, but the edition usefully includes a realisation of the unfigured bass for a performance *a tre*. It also includes a facsimile of the first page of the original, which is unfortunate for the editor Bettina Hoffmann, since it is thus possible to verify that she has almost certainly made the wrong decision in the very first sequence (bar 7 of the first movement). It is true that the note in question in the manuscript is nearer her chosen solution, but the motif is repeated three times and should surely be assimilated. Most players will spot this at the first read-through. Why not print the whole facsimile, which is clear enough to play from, so that players can make their own decisions about such ambiguities?

Nevertheless thanks are due to Güntersberg for this addition to the bass viol pantheon and we look forward to more treasures unearthed in provincial Germany.

Charles Medlam