

well as for those with long sections of rest in the middle of the music. So if you are a player who likes the support of cues, these would be useful.

Personally I feel that the style of Michael East's fantasies does not really lend itself to low consort. However I do agree that the poor old tenor instrument, so often left filling in the harmony in the middle of the texture, certainly deserves to be given the opportunity to use the beautiful top part of its range in a more prominent role. This transposition certainly does that!

Janet Reeves

Larry Wallach
Prelude and Fugue for viol quartet
PRB Productions Contemporary Consort Series No. 83.

This piece received its first performance at the 2015 Boston Early Music Festival Gamba Gamut, and there is a performance on YouTube conducted by the composer. It is scored for one treble, one tenor and two bass viols. The second bass should be preferably a seven-string bass, although the composer has provided alternative notes for a six-string bass.

The Prelude opens with an intense passage using sustained notes and strident harmonies. The composer has not provided any dynamics for this section, so it is difficult to know if he intends it to be played quietly to create an air of mystery, or more dramatically. It is followed by a middle section using simpler harmonies built around a lively melody which all four parts are given the opportunity to enjoy. Here, dynamics indicate that the composer intends that the part with the melody is to be heard a little more prominently than the accompanying parts. The treble is kept busy adding to the excitement by embroidering the texture with a descant line. The third section returns to material similar to that of the opening but with a more peaceful atmosphere and with the final bars marked piano.

The fugue unfolds at a leisurely pace using more mellow harmonies than the opening of the prelude. It builds gently to a climax (requiring double-stopping in the top three parts) then relaxes into its conclusion. It is a truly beautiful piece of music.

I arranged for the piece to be played at a Rondo Viol Academy weekend for viol players of intermediate standard. The music contained several challenges for players of our standard, even though we had practised our parts individually beforehand, with some double-stopping, semi-quaver passages that we found difficult to play at the indicated tempos, and a Bass 1 part that switches between bass and alto clef. However, we agreed that we all enjoyed playing it and would like to continue working on it to overcome the difficulties.

Roger Sym

Carl Friedrich Abel
Three Ledenburg Sonatas for bass viol and bc
Güntersberg G282
Two Ledenburg Trios for violin, bass viol and
violoncello/basso
Güntersberg G295

All violists owe a debt of gratitude to the French musicologist François-Pierre Guy for taking a closer look at a collection of music, which was recently moved from its home in Schloß Ledenburg to the State Archives of Lower-Saxony in nearby Osnabrück. His discoveries shed welcome additional light on the later history of the viol in Germany. Poetess and viol player Eleonore von Grothaus has assembled an extraordinary collection of music for and with bass viol, including a precious copy of Telemann's lost *Zwölf Fantasien für Viola da Gamba*, published by the composer in 1735 and now available from Güntersberg as G281.

For the three Ledenburg solos published here for the first time, editor Thomas Fritsch suggests a possible pre-England dating. There are some of the languorous chromatic appoggiaturas and characteristic rococo syncopations of *Empfindsamkeit* Berlin, which we find in the remarkable pieces composed on his 1782 trip to Germany. However, much of the material, including some downright quirky writing, does not feel quite as assured, conversational and fluid as the later pieces. In addition the unknown copyist has written the solo part in the alto clef (as he does in the trios), which points away from Berlin. (Or perhaps this was just Eleonore von Grothaus' preference and she instructed her copyist accordingly?)

Whatever the truth about the chronology, these are finely-crafted, wonderfully idiomatic pieces, worthy of any recitalist's repertoire. The trios are much more suited to a domestic evening's sight-reading with nothing to tax the moderately experienced violist or violinist. The violoncello part is unfigured, suggesting a performance without keyboard, and since the music already has one eye on the classical period, this might indeed be the desired solution. As ever, Güntersberg's scores and parts are beautifully printed and very easy on the eye, with enough copies to suit any combination of players. The editors have wisely decided to print the score of the solos with the bass part unfigured, as in the original. An extra insert provides a version for the amateur accompanist, which has been figured and sympathetically realised by Dankwart von Zadow.

The new publications display a 'Ledenburg Sammlung' (Ledenburg collection) logo. Let us hope this means that further delights are to follow.

Charles Medlam

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