

Reviews

Edited by John Moran

Jacques Morel: I^r. Livre de Piece de Violle Four Suites for Viola da Gamba and Basso Continuo, Paris, 1709

ed. Günter and Leonore von Zadow, with an introduction by Sofia Böttger Diniz and continuo realization by Dankwart von Zadow. Edition Güntersberg G321 and G322, 2018. Suites I-II, ISMN 979-0-50174-321-6; Suites III-IV, ISMN 979-0-50174-322-3. Score and parts for each volume, €21.80.

The music of Parisian composer Jacques Morel is little known and infrequently performed, with the exception of his charming *Chaconne en trio* for flute, viol, and basso continuo. A student of Marais during the golden years of the viol in France, Morel left behind a handful of compositions including a book of pieces for viol.

Güntersberg has published the first modern edition of the collection of four suites for viol by Jacques Morel, based on two first edition prints in the Bibliothèque nationale de France entitled *I^r. LIVRE DE PIÈCES DE VIOLLE / AVEC UNE CHACONNE EN TRIO. / Pour une Flûte traversiere, une Violle, et la Basse Continué. / COMPOSÉES PAR Mr. MOREL... PARIS [1709]*. A facsimile of the first edition was published by Éditions Minkoff (1980), and a high-quality scan is available on gallica.bnf.fr. In the introduction to the first edition, the composer includes a guide to interpretation and technique clearly aimed at the seventeenth-century amateur performer. The source contains extremely detailed indications for bowings, fingerings, ornamentation, and articulation which, Morel asserts, precisely follow the models and teachings of his mentor Marais, to whom the book is dedicated. However, unlike his mentor's works, these pieces are only published in score, which Morel hopes will facilitate performance with less-experienced continuo players.

As in the first edition, Güntersberg publishes the pieces in score and to that adds partbooks, which minimize page turns for performance, as well as a realized score for accompanists with limited continuo experience. An insightful introduction by Sofia Böttger Diniz provides useful context on what little is known of the composer's background and influences. Editors Günter and Leonore von Zadow have followed the source precisely in preparing this edition, with all of Morel's detailed bowing, fingering, and ornament indications notated (more readably than in the source). A critical report enumerates changes the editors have made, which mostly consist of rhythmic corrections and fingering clarifications as well as modernization of a few clefs. The result is a practical

edition, useful for both performer and scholar.

I question the editors' decision not to include a translation of the invaluable introduction and performance directions that the composer supplied in the source, or at least a facsimile of the first few pages. This omission is just as inconvenient for scholars interested in studying Morel's precise directions as it is for amateur performers with a limited background in French.

Morel's pieces for viol represent a worthy contribution to the repertoire. At once expressive and refined, he follows the model of Marais but makes fewer technical demands of the performer. The collection of suites is carefully organized, consisting mostly of stylistically typical French dance movements interspersed with a few character pieces. For the most part, Morel's writing eschews challenging double-stops and technical virtuosity in favor of exploring the lyrical qualities of the viol. In addition, he confines himself to tonalities that are the most resonant on the instrument, and offers generous directions regarding articulation and technical execution. These characteristics make Morel's suites an ideal source for amateurs looking to explore the French Baroque style, and this music's unexpected sophistication makes it equally attractive to the professional player.

This new edition anticipates a recording by Sofia Böttger Diniz of Morel's complete pieces for viol on the Conditura Records label to be released later this year. One hopes the availability of this practical modern edition from Edition Güntersberg will bring Jacques Morel's compelling works to a wider audience.

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