

instruments. They have looked at a concerto for cello in B flat (WKO 52) and for flute in C major (WKO 51), which are almost identical.

In fact, as the editors say in the excellent introduction, the idea that both these works were arrangements of an original for viol was suggested by Helmut Lomnitzer in 1961. So, they have taken material from both concerti, transposed the whole into G major and produced a second concerto for viola da gamba by Abel. This is a much more substantial work than the previous concerto, and consists of three movements (fast, slow, fast), scored for strings and continuo.

It is a very worthwhile enterprise, given that viol concerti are about as rare as hen's teeth, so I welcome it wholeheartedly. However, I don't feel that it was originally written for the viol.

I have been playing all of the Malzan sonatas – all 21 of them – and they are, for the most part, virtuoso works that we can presume were written for Abel himself to play and to show off his playing and the instrument. There is a wonderful logic to the difficulties that these works present, and, though several are quite challenging, there is nothing that is ungrateful or awkward to play.

And this fits in with Abel's own description of his talents, when he said:

I do not chuse to be always struggling with difficulties, and playing with all my might. I make my pieces difficult whenever I please, according to my disposition and that of my audience.

The present work, while it doesn't present as many difficulties as those in the Malzan sonatas, doesn't also offer many brilliant passages that one might expect of a concerto for Abel's own instrument. And the difficulties are more of the awkward kind, rather than the brilliant. Certainly the transposition of the work to G major makes complete sense and there is nothing that isn't perfectly playable: my question is more about whether this represents the *ur* form of the work.

However, that said, I'm very grateful to Fritsch and von Zadow for producing this work. Any expansion of the repertory for viol and orchestra is a useful addition and this one points to many concerti that have been lost. We must hope that further excavations of libraries in Poland and Germany – and other lands, who knows? – will unearth some of Abel's concerti in their original form.

Richard Boothby

Carl Friedrich Abel
Concerto a Viola da Gamba Concertata G-Dur
Reconstructed by Thomas Fritsch and Günter von Zadow
Edition Güntersberg G331

The rehabilitation of the late 18th century viol, and Abel in particular, continues apace. This latest volume from Edition Güntersberg comes hot on the heels of another concerto for viol they have attributed to Abel; and they suggest that we can find evidence of another in those that are extant for other

