

Johannes Schultz

Musicalischer Lüstgarte, Vols 5, 6 & 7

Ed. Günther and Leonore von Zadow

Edition Güntersberg G357, 358 & 359

If you have not come across Johannes Schultz before, here's a little context: born in Lüneburg in 1582, he was a German contemporary of composers such as Gibbons and East, and just three years older than his near namesake Heinrich Schütz. In 1605 he was appointed organist at St John's church in Dannenberg, and worked there for the court of Brunswick-Lüneburg, spending all his career in Lower Saxony. He published a set of four-part dances in 1617, a collection of motets in three to 16 parts in 1621, and a heterogeneous anthology of instrumental and vocal pieces (setting both sacred and secular texts) in 1622. This is his *Musicalischer Lüstgarte*, a complete edition of which was published in 1937 (in *Das Erbe deutscher Musik*, ed. H. Zenck), and which is also available in an online edition by Ulrich Alpers. Now the von Zadows have published their edition, issuing scores and parts in eight volumes, one for each grouping of parts (from two to eight voices) except for the four-part pieces which occupy two volumes.

Volume 5 contains the five-part pieces from Schultz's collection, consisting of a 'madrigal' with a German text *Ich bin des reichen Bauren Sohn*; two instrumental *Tantzen*; a Galliard setting a short love poem *Ach Fraülein schon*; and the most substantial item, a setting of *Vulnerasti cor meum* from the *Song of Songs*. Schultz's word-setting is mostly syllabic, with a large amount of text repetition and not much in the way of musical illustration of the words. However, the music is all well crafted, with some variety of texture and rhythmic subtlety. There is little genuine contrapuntal ingenuity here, and the style is mostly what I would describe as 'animated homophony' with a solid harmonic foundation enlivened by faster passing notes and short snatches of imitation.

The six-part pieces are in Volume 6: an instrumental *Cantzon* and two 'madrigals': *Herzlich tut mich erfreuen*, a long song in three *partes* celebrating the arrival of summer; and *Schwer langweilig is mir mein Zeit*, a song of despair at the poet's absence from his friend. All three are set for two equal-range and frequently crossing trebles, alto, two tenors and bass. While the *Cantzon* is pleasant enough, the two German songs show a deeper side to Schultz's skill. *Herzlich tut* is a set of variations on a melody that weaves its way from one voice to another: while this inevitably limits his harmonic scope, Schultz is quite inventive with the ever-varying counterpoints with which he surrounds his theme. *Schwer langweilig* brings out a more complex harmonic aspect, with its opening chromatic line and a higher level of dissonance than in many of the other pieces.

The third of these volumes (no. 7) consists of a single song, the only piece in Schultz's collection that is in seven parts: it is for two equal trebles, two tenor voices, two baritones and a bass. The text of *Nachtwache* is the cry of a town night watchman, not actually at night, but telling the citizens to listen to the bells striking nine o'clock, time to get their fires going and get up for the day ahead, ending with the instruction to *lobet den Herren* in good Lutheran fashion, this last section in a rollicking triple metre. The music throughout is sonorous, with some occasional witty interplay between individual voices, but is perhaps inevitably restricted in harmonic terms, with a lot of tonic, subdominant and dominant chords, variously articulated. There are quite a lot of repeated notes in individual voices; not a problem for singers with syllabic text underlay, but not so idiomatic or rewarding for viols.

Each volume contains the same general introduction (in German and English) by the editors, and the back cover of each shows a facsimile of the collection's title-page. The only text to receive a translation is the Latin motet in Volume 5, which is given in German and English. It is a pity for non-German readers that the song texts are not given in English too: even if you play these pieces on viols it is good to understand the words, as this can give helpful hints about suitable tempo, mood and articulation. The editors acknowledge that 'the lyrics ... are difficult to understand for us today in their original form' and that they have adopted the spelling and word placement of the 1937 edition by H. Zenck. It is not clear whether they have also re-transcribed the music from the original, or used Zenck's version, but there are a few places where some notes sound dubious (e.g. the two crotchets at the end of bar 57 in Cantus II of Vol. 7 are almost certainly a tone too low).

The scores and parts are carefully laid out and clearly printed, with alto clefs provided as well as octave-down treble for those parts in tenor range. Some of the alto parts, which are here only given in treble clef, will sound better balanced if played high on a tenor viol rather than low down on a treble. There is plenty of material here to get your teeth into, and while it may not all be of the highest calibre, it is good that these clean modern editions make it all available.

John Bryan

our edition was
transcribed from the
original.
G.v.Z. 1.8.2020

no, bar 57 is identical in
the original, in Zenk's
and in our edition.
G.v.Z. 1.8.2020