

Music reviews

Sainte Colombe *le fils*
Viola da Gamba solo: *Tombeau pour*
Mr de Sainte-Colombe le père und die fünf Suiten
Ed. Günter and Leonore von Zadow,
Edition Güntersberg G380

Durham Cathedral Library manuscript Mus. Ms. A27 (hereafter referred to as A27) is one of the most important British sources of 17th- and early 18th-century European bass viol music. Fifty pieces, such as an E minor Prelude by Godfrey Finger and an unpublished F major Sarabande by Marin Marais are solely found in this manuscript, which also includes the 36 pieces for bass viol of Sainte Colombe *le fils*. The discovery of Sainte Colombe *le fils*' music raises several questions. Among the questions, Sainte Colombe *le fils*' identity and his relationship to the renowned 17th-century viol virtuoso Monsieur de Sainte Colombe may be the most intriguing one. Although we do not have any archive to support the 'father and son' theory, their music has a certain degree of similarity, which is not found in other music. For example, both *Tombeau po[u]r M[onsieu]r S[ain]te Colombe le pere* by Sainte Colombe *le fils* and the *Tombeau, les Regrets* by Monsieur de Sainte Colombe are constructed in five sections as a sequence of events drawn from the Orpheus myth. This structure is not found in any other viol *tombeaux*.

Furthermore, both *tombeaux* are concluded by a dance-like binary movement in duple time. Given that the similarities between the *tombeaux* of the two Sainte Colombes can surely not be coincidental, we can confidently assume that *le fils* had studied the *tombeau* by his father and mimicked the form to pay homage to him.

Sainte Colombe *le fils*' music was first brought into the public eye by Jonathan Dunford's edition in 1998. However, that edition does not include all Sainte Colombe *le fils*' music in A27. For unknown reasons, the F-duru[m] suite was left out of the publication. The latest edition by Günter and Leonore von Zadow for Edition Güntersberg includes the F-duru[m] suite, which fills the gap and gives players the complete *pièces de viole* of Sainte Colombe *le fils*' in a clear modern edition. Günter and Leonore von Zadow provide the reader with a background to 'the mystery of the Sainte Colombes', and their critical report also gives us the idea of the original notation of A27; but it would have been helpful if the unplayable E minor chord in bar 12 of the E minor Prelude had been corrected for a performance edition. Since the editors worked off a black and white photocopy, it seems that they were unaware that the copyist, Canon Philip Falle, used an orange-red ink for the French ornamentation,

bowing and fingering – perhaps for clarity. Speaking as a viol player, I find the two page turns in the *Tombeau* are not performer friendly. It is spread over four pages in the edition, so only one page turn is necessary. This could have been achieved by leaving page 19 after the B minor suite blank: there is a blank page at the back of the F minor pieces, so the whole suite could have been shifted one page on to achieve this. Having studied the complete A27, I question the choice of grouping the *Fantaisie en Rondeau* and *Gavotte* with the suite in g-moll on pages 104 to 106. In A27 there are five short pieces by Christopher Simpson followed by a four-movement suite by Du Faut in between the two groups of pieces by Ste Colombe *le fils* in G minor.

Had Falle intended the *Fantaisie en Rondeau* and *Gavotte* within the G minor suite on pages 104 to 106, the *Fantaisie en Rondeau* would have fitted neatly across pages 106 and 107 in a similar manner to how it is laid out on pages 110 and 111. And the *Gavotte* could have come afterwards on page 108 prior to the first four Simpson pieces.

These quibbles apart, I recommend this edition of the 36 solo *pièces de viole* by Sainte Colombe *le fils*. The music is as wonderful as other well-known viol repertoire but much less frequently played. I believe this publication will encourage players to learn and perform the music of Sainte Colombe *le fils*.

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