

Briefly noted...

Bach wrote three spectacular sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord, and honored the instrument with amazing obbligato parts in his two surviving Passions, not to mention a handful of wonderful appearances in cantatas. However, unlike his fellow Saxon Telemann, he left nothing for us to play alone, a deficit deeply felt by many players, some of whom have taken matters into their own hands. One need look no further than the review of the CD by Ibrahim Aziz in the current issue or the review by Martha McGaughey of Paolo Pandolfo's arrangement of the all six cello suites (*VdGSA News*, Winter 2017) for evidence. Two new editions have come to light this year: **Suites Nos. 4 & 5 arranged by Peter Lamprecht (Güntersberg G422)** and the **Six French Suites arranged by Miyoko Ito (Walhall EW1255)**.

Lamprecht has focused his efforts on these two suites because he is of the opinion that, in contradistinction to Bach's other four cello suites, they are not dependent on an instrument tuned in fifths. This is not easy music, but, by selecting gamba-friendly keys and revoicing chords, he has come up with no-nonsense versions that are not more difficult on the viol than the originals are on the cello.

Ito's arrangements of all six of the "French" suites, originally for harpsichord, are a different matter altogether. Bach was an avid arranger of his own and others' works. However, reducing keyboard music to something playable on a single bowed instrument is more the exception than the rule. Ito

keeps five of the six suites in their original keys. She manages to convey a surprising proportion of the original notes, in technically challenging arrangements, which still manage to be idiomatic for the viol. Edited largely in treble clef down an octave, this arrangement seems to retain as many notes of the original as possible. Ito's arrangements make these musically rewarding pieces accessible to viol players who have the technical wherewithal or the dogged determination to learn them.