

Preface

This edition of the “Sonata per Viola di Gamba e Cembalo” in D major is based on a manuscript with the signature **D-B Am.B. 585** housed in the “Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv“. The manuscript consists of viol and harpsichord parts (no score). There are cue notes added into the middle movement (Poco Adagio) for easier orientation.

The composer of this work has not been authoritatively identified. One does know, however, that the copyist who produced these parts also worked for **Ludwig Christian Hesse** (1716–1772), a well-known viol virtuoso of the time.¹ Therefore one is tempted to attribute this sonata to Hesse as well. The following points support this supposition:

- Hesse created numerous transcriptions of operas.² In other words, recitatives in the style of the middle movement of this sonata would have been very familiar to him. In general however, such instrumental recitatives were rather unusual in the chamber music at the time of the Berlin School.
- The few fingerings extant in the manuscript could be from Hesse. Although it is doubtful that he wrote them in for himself, it is possible that they were meant for a less adept player (perhaps his “pupil” Friedrich Wilhelm II. ?).
- This sonata has been attributed to Ludwig Christian Hesse in the past, for example in RISM A/II.

Amongst modern musicologists, it is Michael O’Loghlin who has most thoroughly delved into the question of the authorship of this sonata.³ Following stylistic comparisons with other viol composers of the Berlin School (J. G. Graun, C. Schaffrath, C. Ph. E. Bach, J. G. Janitsch, F. Benda) he arrived at the conclusion that it is impossible to attribute this sonata with certainty to anyone of these composers. This could also speak for the possibility that another composer, for example, Hesse, wrote this piece, but we cannot be absolutely sure. Certain is only that the sonata can be assigned to the time of the Berlin School (1732–1772).

Our edition remains as true to the cleanly written manuscript as possible. In the score the clefs were left as they were in the original, that is, the viol part is notated in treble clef (to be played an octave lower) as was the custom in the Berlin School. In the viol part we followed modern custom and set the music in alto clef. Any editorial corrections or additions are marked as such (for example by use of parentheses and dotted lines).

Lore Everling kindly took on the task of realizing the figured bass. The realization is added in reduced size in the places where the original manuscript either had figures (for example when the harpsichord was not playing a solo line) or where it is apparent that the harpsichord is playing both the role of soloist and accompanist.

This sonata has never before been published, most likely due to the uncertainty of its authorship. Even so, it represents without a doubt an important contribution to the viol literature of the Berlin School, a contribution which we hope to make better known with the present edition.

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¹ Christoph Henzel, private communication.

² Königliche Hausbibliothek zu Berlin, for example D-B KHM 2253. This is a collection with operas, including works by Rameau, transcribed for one or two viols by Christian Ludwig Hesse.

³ Michael O’Loghlin, *The Viola da Gamba Music of the Berlin School, 1732-1772*, Dissertation. University of Queensland, Australia, 2002.