

Introduction

Johann Friedrich Ruhe was born in 1699 in Halberstadt and received his initial music instruction from his father.¹ He studied in Braunschweig, Wolfenbüttel, and Helmstedt, and, after several unsuccessful job applications, was appointed Kantor (choirmaster-organist) at St. Johanniskirche in Halberstadt in 1725. In 1733 he was named *summissarius* of the Magdeburg cathedral church and school. Besides teaching in the cathedral school, the duties of the *summissarius* included the direction of the entire cathedral musical establishment. For this, he had to “attend the canonical hours, sing the Latin Gospels and Epistles, conduct the music and, together with the Cantor, diligently arrange it, intone the canonical hours on Sunday afternoon and also during the week, and finally sing the Oratio (i.e., collect).”² “Arrange the music” means that the cathedral *summissarius* above all had to compose the music.

Johann Friedrich Ruhe died in Magdeburg in 1776. During his forty-three years of service in Magdeburg, he composed a large quantity of sacred music with which he was apparently quite successful, although none of it has survived. We only know his chamber music works with viola da gamba, of which the present collection of suites offers a sample.

The source for this edition is found under the shelf mark Musiksammlung Greiz Nr. 18 in the Thüringisches Staatsarchiv Greiz.³ The eight-page manuscript score for viola da gamba and (unfigured) bass is in an unknown hand (autograph?). The first page of music bears the heading *Suites pour Viole de Gambe et Violoncello di Ruhe*. A facsimile edition has already been published: *Johann Friedrich Ruhe (1699–1776), Suites pour Viole de Gambe et Violoncello*, ed. by Bernd Musil and the Thüringische Staatsarchiv Greiz (Magdeburg: Walhall EW 260, 2000).

While four other viol sonatas by Ruhe, which are also held in Greiz, are expressly for viol and “fundamento” (figured bass),⁴ the title of the present work specifies “pour Viole de Gambe et Violoncello.” The violoncello part is not figured. “It is indeed a duo for viola da gamba and violoncello in which the harmonic filling between the upper and lower parts has consciously been dispensed with.”⁵ The movements “Air,” “Chiacon mà allegretto,” “Loure,” “Bouree,” “Menuet 1 and 2,” “La Rejouissance,” “Passepiéd,” and “Harlequinade,” written in the French style, show that Ruhe oriented himself on the overture style of the great Magdeburg composer Georg Philipp Telemann. A detailed analysis of the work is found in the article by Hans Rudolf Jung.⁶

Our edition follows the error-free, but not always easily legible manuscript in all details. The original clefs have been retained, although the changes of clef in the viol part have in some passages been shifted slightly for better legibility. Editorial additions are indicated in the usual manner (accidentals and trills in parentheses, slurs as dashed lines). We would like to thank Edition Walhall for permission to publish this edition, and the Thüringisches Staatsarchiv Greiz and the Zentrum für Telemann-Pflege und –Forschung in Magdeburg for their support.

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Heidelberg, November 2015
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¹ The information in this preface is largely from Hans Rudolf Jung, “Dom-Summissarius Johann Friedrich Ruhe (1699–1776) und seine Gamben-Sonaten,” in *Das Magdeburger Musikleben im 18. Jahrhundert* (Magdeburg: Zentrum für Telemann-Pflege und -Forschung, 1986), pp. 57–93.

² *Ibid.*, p. 64.

³ This archive is described in detail in Bettina Hoffmann’s preface to *Baldassare Galuppi, Suonate à Viola da Gamba*, ed. by Günter and Leonore von Zadow (Heidelberg: Güntersberg G275, 2015).

⁴ *Johann Friedrich Ruhe (1699–1776), Quattro Suonate par Viola da Gamba et Fondamento*, facsimile edition, ed. by Bernd Musil and the Thüringische Staatsarchiv Greiz (Magdeburg: Walhall EW 259, 2000).

⁵ Jung, “Dom-Summissarius,” p. 66.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81ff.