

Introduction

Music has indeed ever been the most elegant amusement

“Music has indeed ever been the delight of accomplished princes, and the most elegant amusement of polite courts.... Add to this, that there is hardly a private family in a civilized nation without its flute, its fiddle, its harpsichord, or guitar: that it alleviates labour and mitigates pain; and is still a greater blessing to humanity, when it keeps us out of mischief, or blunts the edge of care.”¹

Charles Burney’s assessment was also true of the family of the Hanoverian cavalry captain Ernst von Grothaus and his wife Anna Friederike (née Baroness von Oldeshausen), who lived in Ledenburg Manor and Castle in the Principality of Osnabrück. The spirit of their house was informed by the visual arts, music, literature, and the sciences. Their daughter Eleonore von Grothaus, who was born on 10 April 1734, grew up in this atmosphere. “Among the rhetorical arts, music ranked first, and many handwritten pieces for keyboard, viola d’amour [recte: viola da gamba], flute, and voice belonged to the repertoire that was crowned by Handel and Telemann. The most recent arias were heard, and Eleonore wrote many a poem in this form or after the existing melodies.... Music and poetry were united in Eleonore.”²

In 1759 Eleonore married Baron Georg Hermann Heinrich von Münster, bailiff of the Iburg district. Her preserved manuscript poems in the spirit of the storm and stress period attracted interest only in 1928, and in 2000, together with music, drawings, and diverse archival documents of Ledenburg Manor, they were transferred as deposited holdings to the Lower-Saxony State Archive, Osnabrück. I owe a debt of gratitude to the French musicologist François-Pierre Goy, who called my attention to the music and encouraged a closer examination.

The private music library (which I refer to as the Ledenburg Collection), predominantly made up of copies, consists in its current form nearly exclusively of literature for viola da gamba, and apparently it was the poetess herself who was passionately attached to viol playing. Judging by the date of origin, the presumably earliest work in the collection is an exemplar of Georg Philipp Telemann’s *Fantasias for Viola da Gamba*,³

published by the composer himself in 1735, which was considered the lost “Amber Room” of solo viol music by generations of music aficionados. Of no less importance is the discovery in the collection of hitherto unknown viola da gamba works (sonatas and trios) by Carl Friedrich Abel. Sonatas, trios, and concertos – in some cases preserved anonymously, incompletely, or recognizable as transcriptions – characterize the picture of a private music library about whose source of supply we can currently only speculate. Noteworthy is the number of works by Italian composers in the collection.⁴

Thomas Fritzsch
Freyburg (Unstrut), February 2016

Johann Konrad Gretsch was presumably born in 1710 and died in 1778. He was a respected cellist in the chapel of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis in Regensburg and a popular composer. Ernst Ludwig Gerber called Gretsch a “man who reveals in his compositions the most thorough knowledge in harmony, very good taste, and the most consummate skill on his instrument.”⁵ His compositions appear in various sources, as, for example, in the Breitkopf catalogues.⁶ These include two symphonies, two partitas for winds, an oboe concerto, five cello concertos, and eleven cello sonatas. However, these works are apparently only partially preserved. We were not able to find a Trio among the above-mentioned or the preserved works.

The present Trio in G Minor for viola da gamba, violin, and basso continuo is probably an original composition for this formation. The two solo instruments are treated quite differently. Whereas the viol part has a relatively limited compass from d to d² and makes do without double stops, the violin part ranges from g to d³ and contains typical arpeggios and double stops. The bass is corresponding and lively; one senses that the composer was a cellist. The style displays characteristics of the transitional period between the Baroque and the early classical era of sensitivity.

¹ Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London, 1771), Introduction, pp. 5–6.

² Walter Schwarze, *Eleonore von Münster* (Osnabrück, 1929), p. 18f.

³ Georg Philipp Telemann, *Zwölf Fantasien für Viola da Gamba solo, TWV 40:26–37* (Heidelberg, Güntersberg, 2016), G281.

⁴ See also Günter von Zadow, *Die Gambenwerke in der Ledenburg-Sammlung* (Heidelberg, 2016), www.guentersberg.de.

⁵ Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-Biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler*, part 1 (Leipzig, 1790), p. 546f.

⁶ The Breitkopf catalogues from 1766–73 list a total of fourteen works by Gretsch; see *The Breitkopf Thematic Catalogue*, ed. Barry S. Brook (New York: Dover, 1966).

Our edition is based on the following source:

D-OSa⁷ Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 529.4. Manuscript in the Ledenburg Collection with the title *Trio | Viola da Gamba | Violino | Basso Continuo | Del Sigre Gretsche*, three individual parts of four pages each, with the designations, *Viola da Gamba* (alto clef), *Violino* (treble clef), and *Basso* (bass clef). The copyist is not known.

Our edition follows the source as closely as possible. Editorial additions and changes are derived from the musical context, and are indicated by square brackets (appoggiaturas, trills) and dashed lines (slurs/ties). Editorial accidentals that deviate from the source are in parentheses.

All changes that could not be subsumed in this manner are listed in the Critical Report.

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Günter von Zadow
Heidelberg, April 2017
Translation: Howard Weiner

Kritischer Bericht *Critical Report*

Wir vermerken die Schreibweise des Originals, wenn diese von unserer Edition abweicht. T1 = Takt 1, N1 = Note 1

We indicate the original reading, if it differs from our edition. T1 = bar 1, N1 = note 1

Allegro ma non troppo T3 V	
Allegro ma non troppo T7 VdG	
Allegro ma non troppo T48 VdG	
Allegro ma non troppo T83 VdG	

Allegro ma non troppo T88 VdG	
Andantino T37 VdG	
Presto T16 VdG	
Presto T24–25 V	
Presto T25–26 B	
Presto T29 V	
Presto T45 VdG	
Presto T68 VdG	

⁷ Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Standort Osnabrück.