

### **Giuseppe Tartini**

Two Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Basso  
Edition Güntersberg G283

Yet another excellent edition from Edition Güntersberg. Nobody will expect Tartini sonatas to be easy and I won't try to sell them to readers as such. But do not be put off by the fact that the 'Devil's Trill' sonata exists and that it is nigh impossible to play on the violin! Here we have two sonatas which come from the now famous Ledenburg Collection – the same one that contains the Telemann solo sonatas and the recently-published Abel sonatas. The manuscript provides us with only some movements before the scribe broke off never to return to write out the rest, and there is actually no indication that the music was meant to be a transcription for the viol, being originally for

flute or violin. However, in the context of the library at Ledenburg, a collection put together by an enthusiast for the viola da gamba, it is very likely that at least the movements that were written out were intended to be played on a bass viol. Obviously, it is unusual to have late Italian music for our instrument, and any viol enthusiast at that time (as now) would have been keen to have more music to play, or just to arrange something that looked suitable.

Despite the fact that only the easier movements seem to have been written out in alto clef by the copyist (Güntersberg added their own transcription of the original flute/violin sonata movements), the other (faster) movements are not impossible on the viol, showing that the original choice of pieces to transcribe was a considered one, and although perhaps at times a bit challenging, they are totally worthwhile! The music is never predictable, has quirky turns that are always a pleasant surprise and all in all we have a book of incredibly elegant music. These are not your typical Italian baroque sonatas with lovely first movements, turning the page only to find a disappointing second movement. It is music with substance and of an appealing quality that would make an attractive, fitting and elegant contribution to a programme of pre-classical music by Abel, Schaffrath and CPE Bach.

Perhaps we can now go out and find some more playable late Italian flute or violin sonatas and (finally!) legitimately transcribe them for the bass viol without being hunted down by the authenticity police?

*Susanne Heinrich*