

Dietrich Becker

Sonata in A major for violin, bass viol and BC

Ed. Günter and Leonore von Zadow

Edition Güntersberg G 320

Many of us viol players have long known Dietrich Becker's fine D major sonata for violin, bass viol and bc, with its wonderful chaconne, skilfully crafted fugues and soulful slow movements. Originally from his 'Two-part Sonatas and Suites' published in Hamburg in 1674, it appeared early on in a learned article, which was in wide circulation in the 1970s and was therefore much performed at that

time. It has a special place in my heart since it featured in the first radio recording I ever did, for Bremen Radio in about 1976! The indefatigable editors at Güntersberg have now brought out a companion piece in A major, which is similar in style but also contains extended solo passages for violin and bass viol. They, as ever, provide all the material you could possibly need for a play-through or concert performance, and this time – *mirabili dictu* - the page turns are perfect! There is a nice concise score without realisation of the figured bass for the more experienced keyboard player, and others can use the version with a realisation by Dankwart von Zadow. This attractive piece could serve well in a domestic setting as well as on the concert platform. There is nothing to trouble a professional player, and an amateur could have fun chewing on some of the trickier fugal and solo writing as well as the many chains of thirds. English does not have a good translation for *Kleinmeister* (minor master?), but Germans would not hesitate to describe him thus, sitting, as he does, somewhere near the top of the second league. Composers in the German-speaking lands were particularly fond of substituting a viol for the second violin in the trio sonata setting and this is a welcome addition to the many fine examples by Bertali, Schmelzer, Krieger, Erlebach, Buxtehude, Pepusch and Telemann.