

Two sonatas for three violas da gamba  
Ed. Günter and Leonore von Zadow  
Edition Güntersberg G 326

There is already a modern edition of these sonatas available (though I haven't got access to it), published by Richard Maunder in 1982. This new edition by Güntersberg apparently differs in many respects as there are many scribal errors to be resolved. These are all asterisked for us in the Güntersberg score. The facsimile of two of the sources is included should you want to check these for yourself, or indeed, play from it. Günter and Leonora have used mainly the Durham Cathedral source (Q1) as it is the most complete.

The bass part does contain a few figures, so performance with a keyboard is suggested. The title however just mentions three gambas and we played them thus, finding them delightful pieces and most satisfying.

The first sonata (in A minor) is in the style of a suite, starting with an Adagio/Allegro in which the first section is a chordal introduction, leading into a fugal Allegro. The second Adagio section is more dotted in character while the second Allegro dances delightfully in 6/8. The final six bar Adagio is again chordal. There follows an Aria, a Courant, Giga, Saraband and variation, and a Ciacona in which each instrument takes a turn to shine.

The second sonata (in D major) follows a similar pattern. The opening Adagio is again followed by a fugal allegro, the second adagio in 3/2 is followed by an allegro, also in 3/2, and ends with a flourish of dotted rhythms. The other movements are a lively Giga, a Courante and a short but charming Sarabanda.

Each viol has equal interest, and all are approachable by competent amateurs, I would say. Viol one takes what high notes there are, but these are only A and a few Bs. There are a few chords. The edition is, as always, beautifully set out.

Thoroughly recommended!

*Jenny Tribe*