

Reviews

Edited by John Moran

Franz Xaver Chwatal: Introduction and Variations for Viola da Gamba and Pianoforte on the Song "Was soll ich in der Fremde thun," by Peter Lindpaintner. op. 29

ed. Thomas Fritsch. Reconstruction of the pianoforte part by Wolfgang Kostujak. Edition Güntersberg (G399), 2021. ISMN 979-0-50174-399-5. €16.80.

I came across this charming set of variations for viola da gamba, from a later era than I'm used to playing, when I listened to Thomas Fritsch's fascinating album, *The 19th-Century Viol*, which I reviewed in this newsletter last summer. Chwatal's writing and the performances by Thomas Fritsch and Michael Schönheit won me over to these variations as my favorite selection on the CD. I then had an opportunity to program this music on a concert at the University of Richmond this spring, and was very pleased with the timely release of this volume by Edition Güntersberg.

In the marvelous collection of manuscripts from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Prussian courts of the Counts of Maltzan (*The Maltzan Collection* is beautifully reviewed by John Moran in the most recent edition of the VdGSA Journal, vol. LI.), there is a handwritten gamba part for Franz Xaver Chwatal's variations "sur l'air très favori... pour le Viola di Gamba et Pianoforte." The piano part is missing, but a piano four-hand version was later published. For this volume, Güntersberg had the piano part masterfully reconstructed by Wolfgang Kostujak, basing it on the 1841 Hofmeister edition of the piano four-hand version. Peter Josef von Lindpaintner's song, "Was soll ich in der Fremde thun, hier ist es ja so schön!" (Why should I go abroad when it is so beautiful here!) was such a widespread pop tune in the early nineteenth century that it became a folk song, Fritsch tells us in his excellent forward. Chwatal's variations were just one of very many settings of the tune, but since he arranged it specifically for viola da gamba and piano, Fritsch feels that this "shows us that the viol at the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century was suitable for everyday use and was contemporary in the best sense of the word."

Franz Xaver Chwatal (1808–1879), born in Bohemia, was a pianist, composer, and music teacher, finishing his career in Magdeburg. He published two popular piano methods and a ton of piano pieces for two and four hands. When keyboard player Joanne Kong and I decided to add the Chwatal variations to our concert back in April, we thought I would need some amplification, since we'd be using the modern concert grand. The tech department at the

University of Richmond was on standby, but we found that by careful placement of my sound holes, the balance was quite acceptable without amplification. You can watch the Chwatal, the finale of our eclectic program, on YouTube.

Chwatal's variations are extremely well written for viola da gamba, making great use of its upper register, while the piano part is written to provide plenty of air space for the gamba to find itself. Extended piano cadenzas abound, and the minor key introduction is a strong feature for the piano, mock-serious and tongue-in-cheek-profound, because of course everyone was anticipating the delightful major key tune that they knew was about to launch with the set of variations.

The *andantino* theme itself, and all of the six variations, are binary form. In the first three variations Chwatal offers a playful *più allegro* full of triplets, a lively, dotted-rhythm *alla marcia*, and a *con leggerezza* with effervescent, constantly running sixteenth-notes for the gamba. Then the instruments trade places in the *con forza* variation, where the piano left hand takes up the driving with constant sixteenth notes, and the viol and right hand pound out an eighth-note accompaniment. This is followed by a *più lento* with lyrical duets between the instruments, then the *finale*, which is a *vivace* in 6/8 followed by an extended coda that allows the pianist to really cut loose, accelerating to a big chordal finish for all.

I found this piece easy to learn, except for the *con leggerezza* variation, which took a lot of time in order to keep my left hand relaxed for the constant running sixteenths. Joanne and I worked on the relative tempi, feeling no obligation to play *presto* at any time, and that helped me maintain the best tempo in each variation so that I could project well. I can't wait to try this out with a period piano at some point! I will absolutely keep this delightful work in my concert repertoire.

Lisa Terry,
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Christoph Schaffrath: Sonata in G major for Obligato Harpsichord and Viola da Gamba (CSWV:F:21)

ed. Günter and Leonore von Zadow. Continuo realization by Dankwart von Zadow. Introduction by Michael O'Loghlin. Edition Güntersberg (G379), 2020. ISMN 979-0-50174-379-7. €16.80.

Notwithstanding J. S. Bach's superb three sonatas for harpsichord and viola da gamba, or the variations by Chwatal reviewed in this issue, music explicitly scored for keyboard and viol was never particularly common. This could come as a surprise to those more familiar with the vast Classical and Romantic