

Für weniger geübte Cembalosspieler haben wir in einem extra Stimmenheft eine gründlich ausgearbeitete Aussetzung des Generalbasses beigefügt, denn die Bezifferung des Basses ist im Original stellenweise lückenhaft und die Zuordnung der Ziffern ist oft unklar. Dabei wurden auch offensichtliche Fehler in der originalen Bezifferung stillschweigend korrigiert. Hinzugefügte Ziffern sind in Klammern gesetzt.

Die liegenden Doppelbögen über zwei gleichen Noten, z. B. in Nummer 66 Takt 60, stehen so im Originaldruck und sind wohl als Bogenvibrato zu verstehen.

Wir danken Johannes Boer für die Einführung, Dankwart von Zadow für die Aussetzung des Generalbasses und Howard Weiner für die Übersetzung des Vorworts.

Leonore von Zadow-Reichling  
Günter von Zadow  
Heidelberg, Juli 2005



Viola da Gamba-Stimme: Beginn der Suite VIII  
*Part of viola da gamba: beginning of Suite VIII*

Bassstimme: Beginn der Suite VIII  
*Part of basso continuo: beginning of Suite VIII*

## Introduction

“The enchanting manner of bowing with which the great Schenk caressed his viola da gamba, which I, listening rapturously, was privileged to experience several years ago, encouraged me to likewise take this soul-moving instrument (when it is touched by such masterful fingers) into my own hand.” In the preface of his Sonatas, op. 1, for viola da gamba and continuo, from 1700, the organist Johan Snep shows himself to be an enthusiastic admirer of the “world-famous” Johan Schenck. His eulogy joins the many paeans of praise that had previously attempted to express in words the genius of this virtuoso.

A musician of Schenck's stature was indeed an infrequent phenomenon in the United Provinces of the Netherlands – and also remained so, since Schenck, like so many before him, eventually emigrated. Already several years before the publication of Snep's sonatas, Schenck had left Amsterdam, the city of his birth, where he started his career with the help of well-to-do citizens, for the Electoral court at Düsseldorf. Elector Palatine Johann Wilhelm II was himself an enthusiastic amateur gambist, and maintained a lively court musical establishment of the highest quality. It is therefore easy to explain why a gambist acquired a leading position here. Yet, Schenck must also have had other qualities, since he was additionally entrusted there with several important official posts that were to continually increase in importance from his appointment in 1696 until 1710, the last year in which we have knowledge of him. In musical history we otherwise find this sort of relationship between a musician and his sovereign only between Lully and the *Roi Soleil*, or much later between Quantz and Friedrich the Great.

An explanation for Schenck's qualities in diplomacy and administration might be found in the fact that he grew up a polyglot, as both his parents came from Germany. His mother married the thirty-two-year-old wine merchant Wynant Schenck of Cologne in 1660, seven months before Johan's birth. It was her second marriage. Johan Schenck, however, undoubtedly considered Dutch to be his mother tongue; evidence of this can be found in his vocal works. In 1686 his op. 1 appeared in print. It contained arias that he had written for the first *singspiel* in Dutch musical history that was actually performed: *Bacchus Ceres en Venus* on texts from the play *Zonder Spys en Wyn kan geen Liefde zyn* by Govert Bidloo. In the preface, Schenck shows himself to be a self-assured artist, who can afford to ridicule the snobbishness of the *nouveau riche*. "We experience today a period in which those who are superior to others on account of their social position or their financial means love the names of several sciences rather than the actual knowledge of them. This is an ambition that does damage to the good arts."

A natural "noblesse" undoubtedly also helped him in the circles of well-to-do citizens. Thus, his first work with gamba sonatas to appear in print, *Tyd en Konst-Oeffeningen* (op. 2) was dedicated to burgomaster Nicholas Witsen, who was a very influential patron in the city of his birth. The challenges facing the gambist in these pieces are so great that this work obviously had nothing to do with the then usual editions intended for amateurs. Rather, it numbers among a series of new publications for professional musicians that fundamentally changed musical composition. Among these, from Schenck's immediate vicinity, are the *Speelstukken* of 1683 by the master violinist David Petersen, which were in various ways a model for him: in Schenck's first published work for gamba we not only find once again the style of the violin sonatas and their free forms that point toward Italian origins, but also an emulation of the engraving and typography of Petersen's edition. His openness for new directions in music as well as his ambition moved him to open up a new dimension in gamba composition comparable to the virtuoso violin music (also literally, since he extended the compass of the parts to c<sup>3</sup>). He probably did not experience first-hand the frequently mentioned influence of the English, who were the leading gamba virtuosos well into the seventeenth century.

It is remarkable that in the *Scherzi musicali*, which were written much later and published in 1698, we hardly find these Italianate tendencies in spite of the title. Instead, it is the French style that dominates here. The French dominance of the viola da gamba at that time is confirmed by the ornamentation, the variation technique, and above all by the harmonic progressions not only in the dance movements, but also in the sonata-like movements. Because this was the first work that Schenck dedicated to his employer, it undoubtedly gives us information about the prevalent tastes at the court of Düsseldorf. It is quite conceivable that it was in these pieces that Snep heard Schenck's above-cited special manner of bowing and the "carressing."

It is not surprising that the *Scherzi musicali* were Schenck's most successful publication, for the style was known to many gambists even outside France. Already in the gamba duos of *le Nympe di Rheno*, published four years later, the Italian influence is again perceptible; and *l'Echo du Danube* of 1704 – like almost all instrumental music in Europe at the time – shows us a mastery informed by Arcangelo Corelli. That Schenck's last work appears to be lost forever is hard to accept, especially since its title promises quite unusual music: *Fantaisies bizarres de la goutte*. The title remains a riddle, because the surviving figured

bass part of this work, which must have been published before 1712, betrays a very balanced late style. Thus, Johan Schenck's last work lies just as much in darkness as does the fate of its creator.

Johannes Boer  
Doorwerth, Holland, July 2005

## Our Edition

For the publication of the *Scherzi musicali* a copy of the original print by E. Roger, Amsterdam, was kindly placed at our disposal by the Rostock University Library (**D-ROu Mus. Saec. XVIII-56/10a+b**). The print consists of two voluminous part books (Viola da Gamba and Bass), and carries the title:

Scherzi Musicali / per la Viola di Gamba con Basso / Continuo ad libitum / da / Giovanni Schenck / Opera Sesta

There are 101 numbered movements, which are divided into fourteen suites. This division into suites is not explicitly indicated, yet is very apparent from the choice of keys and the order of the movements. Edition Güntersberg is planning to issue the whole work in a practical modern edition in seven individual volumes.

Catalogue number	Suite number	Movement number
G071	I	1 – 6
G072	II	7 – 20
G073	III – V	21 – 37
G074	VI – VII	38 – 59
G075	VIII – IX	60 – 71
G076	X – XI	72 – 83
G077	XII – XIV	84 – 101

Our edition follows the very legible original musical text as far as possible. We employ the original clefs with the following exceptions: Instead of the soprano clef that occasionally appears in the gamba part, we employ alto clef; and bass clef instead of the alto clef that appears very infrequently in the bass part. Altered notes are indicated in footnotes. Accidentals printed in brackets are editorial, as are broken (dashed) ties.

The indication of repeats is not always unambiguous in the original parts, and moreover often different in the two parts. In many dance movements, the repeat signs are lacking at the end although they are present at the beginning of the second section. We have transcribed the repeats into modern notation and, as a rule, indicated the repeat of both sections.

For less-experienced harpsichord players, we have included a separate, completely worked-out realization of the figured bass, since in the original the figuring of the bass part is at times incomplete and the intended placement of the figures often unclear. Obvious mistakes in the original figures have been corrected without comment. Added figures are printed in brackets.

The horizontal double ties over two like notes, for example, in no. 66 at measure 60, appear in this manner in the original and are probably intended to indicate bow vibrato.

We would like to thank Johannes Boer for the introduction, Dankwart von Zadow for the realization of the figured bass, and Howard Weiner for the translation of the preface.

Leonore von Zadow-Reichling  
Günter von Zadow  
Heidelberg, July 2005  
Translation: Howard Weiner