



Die ersten beiden Solostücke der Pembroke-Sammlung: Das anonyme Arrangement der Mozart-Arie und (aufgeklebt) „Tempo di Menuet“, WKO 153, in Abels Handschrift. Unter den Titel hat Cheeseman „di C.F. Abel“ geschrieben.

The first two solo pieces of the Pembroke collection: The anonymous arrangement of the aria by Mozart and (glued onto the page underneath) “Tempo di Menuet”, WKO 153, in Abel’s hand. Under the title Cheeseman has written “di C. F. Abel”.

Introduction

In the fourth volume of his *General History of Music*, Charles Burney wrote: “His performance on the viol da gamba was in every particular complete and perfect. He had a hand which no difficulties could embarrass: a taste most refined and delicate; and a judgment so correct and certain as never to let a single note escape him without meaning. His compositions were easy and elegantly simple, for he used to say, ‘I do not chuse to be always struggling with difficulties, and playing with all my might. I make my pieces difficult whenever I please, according to my disposition and that of my audience.’ Yet in nothing was he so superior to himself, and to other musicians, as in writing and playing an adagio; in which the most pleasing and learned modulation; the richest harmony; and the most elegant and polished melody were all expressed with such feeling taste, and science, that no musical production or performance with which I was then acquainted seemed to approach nearer perfection.”

A work by Abel that fits this description is the eighty-four-page manuscript volume in the British Library (**GB-Lbl**) known as the “Musicbook of the Countess of Pembroke” or the “Pembroke Col-

lection” (**Add. Ms. 31697**).⁵ In the 1770s, the music in this volume was in the possession of Elizabeth Herbert, Countess of Pembroke (1737-1831), a viol pupil of Carl Friedrich Abel. After Elizabeth Pembroke’s death, the music was acquired by Thomas Cheeseman, who had the pieces bound together as a book and provided them with annotations. The book came into the possession of the British Library in 1881.

The Pembroke Collection is divided into three parts. In the first part are found a sonata for viol with bass as well as several pieces for solo viol. The two other sections each consist of fifteen sonatas for viol with bass.

The present edition contains all the *solo* pieces of the Pembroke Collection. The order in which they appear corresponds to that of the manuscript. With the exception of the first piece, the manuscript is in Abel’s own hand:

- Arrangement of the aria “In diesen heil’gen Hallen” from Mozart’s *Magic Flute* for bass viol solo; it is the only anonymous piece in the collection
- Tempo di Menuet, G Major, WKO 153⁶
- Tempo minuetto, D Major, WKO 154
- Sonata in G Major for bass viol solo, WKO 155, with the title in Abel’s hand: “SONATA / Viola da Gamba Solo / Senza Basso / di C. F. Abel.” and the annotation by Cheeseman: “Composed for the Lady Pembroke / The Original Manuscript.” Movements: [adagio], allegro, Minuet.
- adagio, G Major, a variant of WKO 155/1

Our edition follows the manuscript to the greatest possible extent. Original beamings and reiterations of accidentals have been retained. The fingerings are by Abel. We have made two small corrections in the Mozart arrangement (see footnotes). Abel frequently employed treble clef for the viol (to be read an octave lower) – as he did here, too. The pieces are therefore reproduced first in the original treble clef, then once again in alto clef, which is usually preferred by today’s viol players.

We owe much of the information about the Pembroke Collection to Peter Holman, who kindly put at our disposal the text of his lecture “Carl Friedrich Abel and the Countess of Pembroke,” which he presented at the Viola da Gamba Society in Great Britain.⁷ For further information, see Holman’s article in the Italian journal *Ad Parnassum*.⁸

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⁵ There exists another volume of viol music by Abel that has a connection to Elisabeth Pembroke, but its contents are not generally known. It was auctioned at Sotheby’s in 1994 and is currently in a private collection in the USA..

⁶ Walter Knape, *Bibliographisch-thematisches Verzeichnis der Kompositionen von Karl Friedrich Abel* (Cuxhaven, 1971).

⁷ Peter Holman, “Carl Friedrich Abel and the Countess of Pembroke,” *The Viol* 1 (2006).

⁸ Peter Holman, “‘A Solo on the Viola da Gamba’: Carl Friedrich Abel as a Performer,” *Ad Parnassum* 2, no. 4 (October 2004): 45-71.