

**Diesen Vorbericht hat man dem Leser / so  
der Italiänischen Sprache nicht kündig / in Deutsch  
anhero setzen wollen.**

**N**ur hat der geehrte Leser ein Werk / so ich seinem geneigten Urtheil übergebe; ich achte nicht nötig / weitläuffrige Umstände hieher zu setzen / was mich darzu veranlasset / in dem ich es blos auff Begehren guter Freunde und aus guter Meinung zum Kupffer befördert / und mache mir darbey die Hoffnung / daß es die approbation, des Musicalischen Liebhabers erhalten werde / in dem es so eingerichtet / daß diejenigen / so das Instrument noch nicht lange tractiret / etwas haben / so sie zwingen können; die aber albereit was mehr gethan und die / so der Viola da Gamba wohl kündig seyn / auch etwas zu ihren Vergnügen antreffen mögen; wo durch denn vornehmlich mein Absehen dahin gerichtet ist / wenn die ersten von denen leichten Sachen zu den Mittelmässigen und von diesem zu den Schweren gehen / können sie endlichen ihren Zweck erlangen; Zu dem Ende habe auch wegen der application die hier bey gewöhnliche Zeichen / mit anhero setzen wollen / und bedeuten die Ziffern 1. 2. 3. 4. die vier Finger / worbey leichte wird zu sehen seyn / welche Finger auff die erste oder andere Seite müssen gesetzt werden. Dieses Zeichen ( ) bedeutet den trillo, und welche Noten mit einem halben Zirckel oder Strich ( ) zusammen gezogen seyn / müssen in einem Strich so wohl aufwärts als niederwärts gemacht werden. Die übrige Manieren werden des Musicalischen Liebhabers eigenem Belieben an heim gegeben / weil es fast ohnmöglich / sie auff dem Papier alle zu exprimiren. Hierbey habe auch noch erinnern wollen / daß ich die ersten drey Sonaten à 2. und die vier letzten Suiten solo, so gesetzt habe / daß sie auch ohne Basso Continuo können gespielt werden.

Deutsches Vorwort im Originaldruck  
*German preface from the original print*

## Introduction

August Kühnel was born at Delmenhorst in 1645, and lived until around 1700. As the leading viola da gambist of his time, he was active in many places in Germany, including in Zeitz at the court chapel of Duke Moritz of Saxony-Zeitz, in Darmstadt as director of instrumental music to Landgravine Dorothea, then in the same function at the court of Weimar, and finally in Kassel as chapel-master of the court chapel of Landgrave Carl. He also studied in France and, for a longer period, in England, where a concert in London on which he played his own works on the baryton is documented.

Kühnel's collection *Sonate ô Partite* was published in Kassel in 1698.<sup>1</sup> The only preserved exemplar is located today in the Universitätsbibliothek Kassel – Landesbibliothek und Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt Kassel under the call number 2° Mus. 44. It is a set of three partbooks ("Viola da Gamba Prima," "Viola da Gamba Seconda," and "Basso Continuo"), containing fourteen consecutively numbered sonatas or partitas of

<sup>1</sup> August Kühnel, *Sonate ô Partite ad una ô due Viola da Gamba con il basso continuo*, facsimile edition, edited by M.-F. Bloch (Courlay: Fuzeau, 1998).

which the first six are for two viols, and the rest for one viol – all with continuo. The best-known piece is undoubtedly no. 10: a solo sonata, designated “Aria,” with nine variations on the chorale “Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut.” Kühnel dedicated the collection to his employer, Landgrave Carl of Hessen-Kassel. The title page and the “Vorbericht” (preface; lit.: preliminary report) for the reader are reproduced below. To be found in the preface is the information that the first three and the last four pieces are composed in such a way that they can also be played without continuo.

The *Sonate ô Partite* number among the most important German compositions for viola da gamba. Alfred Einstein compared them to the works of Höffler and Schenck, and published four pieces from the collection.<sup>1</sup> Concerning Kühnel’s four Partitas for viola da gamba solo (XI–XIV), he wrote: “Apart from that, Kühnel’s dances cannot be compared to his [Höffler’s]: of the smallest dimensions, yet very well-proportioned, filled with delightful vivacity down to the smallest detail: the Allemande lusty, energetically modulating, now motivic in the interplay of the voices, now moving in snappy runs, now in sprightly arpeggios; the Courante full of verve, finely animated rhythmically; the Gigue lightly exhilarated and mischievous; the Saraband most deeply felt.”

Our edition follows the original musical text as closely as possible. We have retained the original clefs, with the following exception: soprano clef (C1) has been replaced by alto or treble clef. The respective passages are marked by the symbols [s and s]. Altered notes are indicated in footnotes in the score. Editorial accidents appear in brackets, added slurs are dotted. Our edition is to appear in five volumes:

Order Number	
G161	Sonata I-III for two Viols and B.c. ad libitum
G162	Sonatina IV-VI for two Viols and B.c.
G163	Sonata solo VII-VIII for Viol and B.c.
G164	Sonata solo IX and Aria solo X for Viol and B.c.
G165	Partita solo XI-XIV for Viol and B.c. ad libitum

We would like to thank Dankwart von Zadow for the continuo realisation, which is available in a separate score for each volume, and Howard Weiner for the translation of this introduction and the original “Vorbericht.”

Heidelberg, October 2009  
Leonore von Zadow-Reichling  
Günter von Zadow

## Translation of the German “Vorbericht”

**This preface is presented here in German for the reader who is not fluent in the Italian language.**

The honored reader has here a work that I entrust to his well-disposed judgement. I do not consider it necessary to offer here extensive explanations as to what induced me to do this, since I had it engraved merely at the request of good friends and [on the basis of] their favourable opinion, and I hope that it receives the approval of the musical aficionado since it is arranged so that those who have not yet played the instrument very long have something they can manage. And so that those who are already somewhat more advanced, and who are at home on the *viola da gamba*, may also find something for their pleasure. It was especially my intention that if the former go from the easy things to those of moderate difficulty, and from those to the difficult, they [the pieces] could ultimately fulfill their purpose. To this end, and also for expedience, I have included, in addition to the usual markings, the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, which indicate the four fingers, whereby it will be easy to see which finger has to be placed on the first or another string. This mark ( , ) indicates a trill, and those notes that are grouped together by a semicircle or stroke ( ◡ ) have to be played in one bow stroke, either upward or downward. The other ornaments are left to the discretion of the musical aficio-

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Einstein, *Zur deutschen Literatur für Viola da Gamba im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1905).