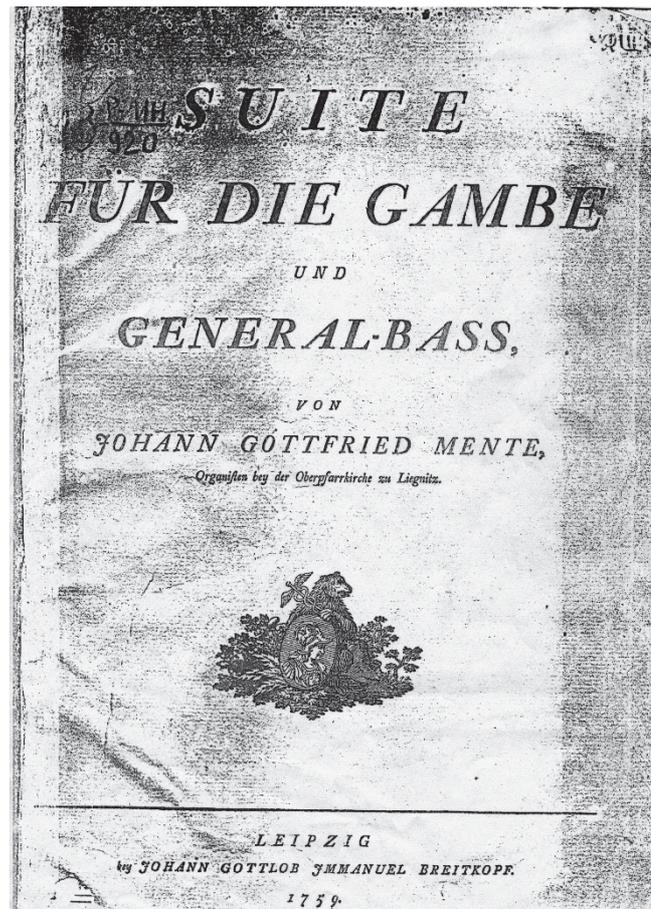


Moll gewählt hat, weil sich dadurch die Möglichkeit bietet, die tiefen Töne der siebenten Saite voll auszukosten. Mente war offensichtlich ein hervorragender Könnner auf diesem Instrument und diese Suite verdient ihren Platz im Repertoire der späten Gambenmusik aus Deutschland.

Wir danken Brigitte Kulieva für ihre Hilfe bei der Beschaffung der Kopie der Quelle aus Moskau und Thomas Fritsch für das Korrekturlesen unseres Entwurfes und seine Ratschläge zu dieser Edition.

Günter und Leonore von Zadow
Heidelberg, Januar 2015



Druck Leipzig 1759, Titelseite
print Leipzig 1759, title page

Introduction

We are relatively well informed about Johann Gottfried Mente's life – at least up to the age of forty-one – since he wrote a detailed resume for Mattheson's *Ehrenpforte*, which we highly recommend.⁵ Mente was born in 1698 in Rotenburg an der Oder, where his father was a Royal Prussian customs inspector, city judge, and organist. He learned to compose and play keyboard instruments, viola da gamba, and lute from his father, developing a predilection for instrumental music that lasted throughout his life. He subse-

⁵ Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte, woran der Tüchtigsten Capellmeister, Componisten, Musikgelehrten, Tonkünstler &c. Leben, Wercke, Verdienste &c. erscheinen sollen* (Hamburg, 1740), p. 414f.

quently received instruction in Frankfurt an der Oder from the “skilled city and university musician” Martin Simon.⁶ Sojourns in Dresden, Leipzig, Beuthen an der Oder, and Bautzen followed, after which, in 1727, he received the prestigious position as organist of the Liebfrauenkirche in Liegnitz, Silesia, which he held for thirty-three years.⁷ He was a very busy music and viol teacher, who enjoyed great respect from the aristocrats in his immediate area.

Johann Gottfried Mente composed numerous sacred and secular works, for example, an “Ode sepulchralis, seu triste melos de Domino nostro J. C. ... à C. A. T. B. 1 oboe, 2 violins, viola and basso continuo,” “Twelve Sonatas for various instruments, lute, viol, transverse flute, violin, oboe, viola d’amore, along with a thorough-bass,” “Six Sonatas for the viol along with a thorough-bass,” and “The Prince’s Music consisting of six strong concertos, the first of which is set for trumpets, timpani, violins, etc.; the second, however, with alternating instruments, such as viols, lutes, traversos, etc.,” and many more. Except for the Suite published here, all these works are no longer extant.

The present Suite was published in 1759 in Leipzig by Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf. The only surviving copy is today in the holdings of the Russian State Library in Moscow (RUS-Mrg) under the call number M3 P-IIH/920. The title reads: SUITE | FÜR DIE GAMBE | UND | GENERALBASS, | VON | JOHANN GOTTFRIED MENTE, | Organisten bey der Oberpfarrkirche zu Liegnitz. The print consists of two separate partbooks for VIOLA DA GAMBA and BASSO. The Suite is made up of four movements: “Lamento” with the suffix “Adagio à la Francese,” “Scherzando,” “Menuet,” and “Polonoise.”

In our edition, we reproduce the original print as exactly as possible. The viol part contains numerous fingerings that, with one exception, have been reproduced unchanged. Today’s player will notice, however, that Mente does not always conform strictly to the French fingering rules, and will possibly want to do



some things differently. Mente employs the French markings seen in the illustration on the left; they apparently could not be reproduced in the 1759 Leipzig publication exactly as we

know them, for example, from Marais.⁸ In the “Lamento,” the viol part additionally contains a richly embellished alternative for measures 15 to 27. The ornamented measures are given separately, following the “Lamento.” In our edition, we have done this in the same way in the viol part. In the score, however, we give the passage in question twice: once without ornamentation (pages 2 and 3) and once with ornamentation (pages 2A and 3A), in order to allow all conceivable performance variants.

In this Suite, the influences of French viol music (Marais) mix with those of German sensitivity (J. G. Graun, C. P. E. Bach, Schaffrath). Rapid scale passages and multi-voiced chords characterize this catchy and captivating music. It is certainly not a coincidence that Mente chose the key of A Minor, since it offers the possibility of exploiting to the full the low notes of the seventh string. Mente was obviously an outstanding artist on this instrument, and the Suite deserves a place in the repertoire of late viol music from Germany.

We would like to thank Brigitte Kulieva for her help in obtaining copies of the source from Moscow, and Thomas Fritsch for proofreading our draft and for his suggestions concerning this edition.

Günter and Leonore von Zadow
Heidelberg, January 2015
Translation by Howard Weiner

⁶ All quotations are from *ibid.*

⁷ Robert Eitner, *Quellen-Lexikon der Musiker und Musikgelehrten christlicher Zeitrechnung bis Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1900–04), s.v. “Menthe, Johann Friedrich.”

⁸ See, for example, Marin Marais, *Pieces de Violes [Premiere livre]* (Paris 1689).