

## Introduction

### *Music has indeed ever been the most elegant amusement*

“Music has indeed ever been the delight of accomplished princes, and the most elegant amusement of polite courts.... Add to this, that there is hardly a private family in a civilized nation without its flute, its fiddle, its harpsichord, or guitar: that it alleviates labour and mitigates pain; and is still a greater blessing to humanity, when it keeps us out of mischief, or blunts the edge of care.”<sup>1</sup>

Charles Burney’s assessment was also true of the family of the Hanoverian cavalry captain Ernst von Grothaus and his wife Anna Friederike (née Baroness von Oldeshausen), who lived in Ledenburg Manor and Castle in the Principality of Osnabrück. The spirit of their house was informed by the visual arts, music, literature, and the sciences. Their daughter Eleonore von Grothaus, who was born on 10 April 1734, grew up in this atmosphere. “Among the rhetorical arts, music ranked first, and many handwritten pieces for keyboard, viola d’amour [recte: viola da gamba], flute, and voice belonged to the repertoire that was crowned by Handel and Telemann. The most recent arias were heard, and Eleonore wrote many a poem in this form or after the existing melodies.... Music and poetry were united in Eleonore.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1759 Eleonore married Baron Georg Hermann Heinrich von Münster, bailiff of the Iburg district. Her preserved manuscript poems in the spirit of the storm and stress period attracted interest only in 1928, and in 2000, together with music, drawings, and diverse archival documents of Ledenburg Manor, they were transferred as deposited holdings to the Lower-Saxony State Archive, Osnabrück. I owe a debt of gratitude to the French musicologist François-Pierre Goy, who called my attention to the music and encouraged a closer examination.

The private music library (which I refer to as the Ledenburg Collection), predominantly made up of copies, consists in its current form nearly exclusively of literature for viola da gamba, and apparently it was the poetess herself who was passionately attached to viol playing. Judging by the date of origin, the presumably earliest work in the collection is an exemplar of Georg Philipp Telemann’s *Fantasias for Viola da Gamba*,<sup>3</sup>

published by the composer himself in 1735, which was considered the lost “Amber Room” of solo viol music by generations of music aficionados. Of no less importance is the discovery in the collection of hitherto unknown viola da gamba works (sonatas and trios) by Carl Friedrich Abel. Sonatas, trios, and concertos – in some cases preserved anonymously, incompletely, or recognizable as transcriptions – characterize the picture of a private music library about whose source of supply we can currently only speculate. Noteworthy is the number of works by Italian composers in the collection.<sup>4</sup>

With conspicuously beautiful handwriting, an as yet not identified copyist scribed the three sonatas à *Viola da Gamba Solo. e Basso. Del Sigr. C: F: Abel* in score form. The viol part (as in the other manuscripts of the Ledenburg Collection) is notated in alto clef – a conspicuous deviance from Abel’s preferred notation in octave-transposing treble clef. The explanation for this lies in the fact that Eleonore von Münster, who presumably commissioned the pieces, had not mastered playing the viol in treble clef. This is shown also by the set of parts of the C major Trio (A5:3A)<sup>5</sup> of the Ledenburg Collection, to which a viol part transcribed into alto clef was added. The three Ledenburg sonatas were hitherto unknown and are published for the first time in the present edition.<sup>6</sup>

It is difficult to determine the date of origin of the Ledenburg sonatas. In the sonatas, which are permeated by chromaticism, the canonic or semi-canonic openings of the sections of the bipartite movements, the same main key for three movements of each sonata, and the stretto form (slow–fast–fast), which was untypical for England, speak in favor of the assignment to Abel’s early works (i.e., preceding his London period). On the other hand, the unconventional, often surprising harmonies clearly surpass those found already in the comparable Prussian Sonatas (A2:7–8)<sup>7</sup> in terms of audacity, and point – as does the characteristic boldness, in the context of the sensitive style, in the treatment of dissonances – to Abel’s late works.

Thomas Fritzsch  
Freyburg (Unstrut), February 2016

<sup>1</sup> Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (London, 1771), Introduction, pp. 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Schwarze, *Eleonore von Münster* (Osnabrück, 1929), p. 18f.

<sup>3</sup> Georg Philipp Telemann, *Zwölf Fantasien für Viola da Gamba solo, TWV 40:26–37* (Heidelberg, Güntersberg, 2016), G281.

<sup>4</sup> See also Günter von Zadow, *Die Gambenwerke in der Ledenburg-Sammlung* (Heidelberg, 2016), www.guentersberg.de, forthcoming.

<sup>5</sup> Carl Friedrich Abel, attributed, *Zwei Trios für Violino, Viola da Gamba und Violoncello/Basso* (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2016), G295.

<sup>6</sup> The world premiere recording of the three Ledenburg Sonatas by Thomas Fritzsch, for which the present edition was used, was released in April 2016 on Coviello Classics (COV 91608).

<sup>7</sup> Carl Friedrich Abel, *Zwei Berliner Sonaten für Viola da Gamba und Basso* (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2006), G090.

## Our Edition

Our edition of the three Ledenburg sonatas is based on the following sources:

### Sonata I in G major A2:52<sup>8</sup>

D-OSa<sup>9</sup> Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 527.11. Manuscript in the Ledenburg Collection with the title *Sonata I. à Viola da Gamba Solo. e Basso. Del Sigr: C: F: Abel*, title page and six pages of music.

### Sonata II in A major A2:53

D-OSa Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 527.12. Manuscript in the Ledenburg Collection with the title *Sonata II. à Viola da Gamba Solo. e Basso. Del Sigr: C: F: Abel*, title page and six pages of music.

### Sonata III in B flat major A2:54

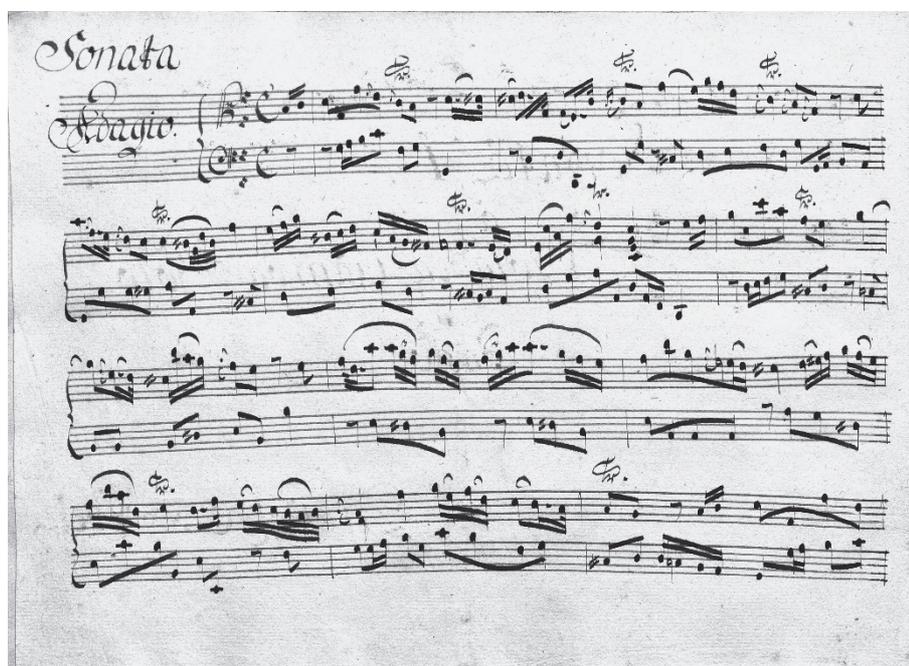
D-OSa Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 527.13. Manuscript in the Ledenburg Collection with the title *Sonata III. à*

*Viola da Gamba Solo. e Basso. Del Sigr C. F. Abel*, title page and six pages of music.

Our edition follows the carefully written sources as closely as possible. Editorial additions are indicated by square brackets (appoggiaturas, trills) and dashed lines (slurs/ties). Editorial accidentals that deviate from the source are in parentheses. All changes that could not be subsumed in this manner are explained in footnotes.

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Günter von Zadow  
Heidelberg, March 2016  
Translation: Howard Weiner



Carl Friedrich Abel, Ledenburg-Sonata I, Beginn des Adagios  
*Carl Friedrich Abel, Ledenburg Sonata I, beginning of the Adagio*

<sup>8</sup> Peter Holman, "Charles Frederick Abel's Viola da Gamba Music: A New Catalogue," *Viola da Gamba Society Journal* 8 (2014), or future versions.

<sup>9</sup> Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Standort Osnabrück.