

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.”¹

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.”²

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*,³

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.⁴

Thomas Fritzsch
Freyburg (Unstrut), February 2016

The Spanish brothers Juan Bautista und José Pla were oboists who in the mid eighteenth century attained fame not only in their home country but throughout Europe for their artistry, ensemble playing, and virtuosity.⁵

Juan Bautista Pla was born ca. 1720 and began performing on various instruments at an early age in the service of King Philip V in Madrid. In 1747, at the recommendation of Domenico Scarlatti, he was engaged at the royal court in Lisbon. His younger brother, José, followed shortly thereafter. In 1751 the two brothers went to Paris, where they participated on a regular basis in the *Concert Spirituel*. In 1753 they traveled to London, appearing there as an oboe duo with great success. In 1755 Juan went on his own to the Württemberg court in Stuttgart, where he enjoyed great respect. José followed him a few years later, but then died unexpectedly in 1762. Juan was deeply affected by his brother’s death, but later recovered, traveled far and wide through Europe, and eventually died, probably in Amsterdam, sometime after 1773.

Since the brothers normally appeared together, it is not surprising that most of their compositions were written for two oboes or flutes. Josep Dolcet’s catalogue of works from 1987 lists a solo sonata, thirteen duos, thirty-one trio sonatas, three solo concertos (of which one is for two solo oboes).⁶

The present volume contains two solo sonatas for viola da gamba from the Ledenburg Collection: the Sonata in B flat major by Juan Bautista Pla, which is also preserved in a source in Bern as an oboe sonata, and the anonymous Sonata in C major. Both manuscripts were

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

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

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

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

⁵ Matthew Haakenson, “Two Spanish brothers revisited: recent research surrounding the life and instrumental music of Juan Bautista Pla and José Pla,” *Early Music* 35, no. 1 (2007), pp. 83–94.

⁶ Josep Dolcet, “L’obra dels germans Pla: Bases per a una catalogació,” *Anuario musical* 42 (1987), pp. 149–81.

written by the same copyist and both bear the annotations “é Flauto” and “Transp” and are thus transcriptions of flute sonatas. It is quite possible that the anonymous sonata is also by Pla.

Our edition is based on the following sources:

J. B. Pla, Sonata in B flat major

Q1

D-OSa⁷ Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 527.8. Manuscript in the Ledenburg Collection with the heading *e. Flauto Trav: Solo: Transp: del: Sigr: Juanna Batta Pla:*, six pages of music, score with the melody part in alto clef and unfigured bass. The scribe is not known.

Q2

CH-BEb⁸ Mss.h.h.IV.182 (11). Manuscript with the title *Oboe Solo | et | Basso | Del. Sig: J: Batta Pla*, title page and four pages of music, score with melody part in treble clef and figured bass. The scribe is not known.

The sonatas in Q1 and Q2 are the same work. The musical texts correspond closely. There are, however, many differences in the articulations. The sonata is not identical with the ‘only’ solo sonata in the catalogue of works.

Anonymous, Sonata in C major

Q3

D-OSa Dep 115b Akz. 2000/002 Nr. 527.1. Anonymous manuscript in the Ledenburg Collection with the heading *e Flauto: Transp:*, five pages of music, score with melody part in alto clef and unfigured bass. Q1 and Q3 are written in the same unknown hand.

The melody parts of the sonatas in the Ledenburg Collection are notated in alto clef so that they sound an octave lower than on a flute. An instrument is not designated, but the context in which these works are found in the collection clearly allows them to be assigned to the viola da gamba. The original compasses d^1-d^3 and d^1-c^3 are suitable for transverse flute and oboe.

For the sonata by Pla, we used Q1 as the primary source for our edition. From Q2 we merely took over the bass figures.

We have followed the sources as closely as possible. Editorial additions and changes are derived from Q2 (for Pla), parallel passages, or the musical context, and are indicated by square brackets (trills, appoggiaturas) and dashed lines (slurs/ties). Editorial accidentals are in parentheses. All changes that could not be subsumed in this manner are listed in the Critical Report.

We would like to thank Christiane and Hans Christoph Homann from Ledenburg Manor and Isabelle Guerreau from the Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv for their support, and François-Pierre Goy, Peter Holman, and Andrew Ashbee for calling our attention to the Ledenburg Collection.

Günter von Zadow
Heidelberg, March 2016
Translation: Howard Weiner



Anonym, Anfang der Sonata C-Dur, Quelle Q3 (Ledenburg)
Anonym, beginning of the Sonata in C major, source Q3 (Ledenburg)

⁷ Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv – Standort Osnabrück.

⁸ Bürgerbibliothek, Bern.