

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach wrote three works for viol that have survived, one for viol and harpsichord from 1759 (Amadeus BP 355), and two for viol with basso continuo, composed in 1745 and 1746 respectively. The source of these two works (Wotquenne 136–137, Helm 558–559) is a copy of each score, preserved together in the Library of the Royal Conservatoire of Music in Brussels (call number: Ms Littera T 5634) and accessible in a facsimile edition\*:

C. dur Sonata à Viola da Gamba Solo e Basso  
del Sig[nore] C. Ph. E. Bach  
Solo a Viola di Gamba e Basso. da C. P. E. Bach

From 1738 on, Bach was employed by the later King Frederick II in Berlin as a harpsichordist; he received the official title of Chamber Musician in 1746. In Berlin he remained until 1767, when he received an appointment in Hamburg. At court his tasks included accompanying the king at the harpsichord, mostly in compositions by Quantz and Frederick himself, but certainly also by Bach. The famous viol virtuoso Ludwig Christian Hesse (1716–1772) assisted Bach in this task. That is surprising in that in Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* the violoncello and not the viol is regarded as ideal for accompaniment: "The most perfect Accompanement of the Solo ... is a keyboard instrument together with the violoncello." But this passage is in the second part of the *Versuch*, published in 1762. Thus it is possible that Bach's preference had changed to the modern violoncello by this time. Bach also specifies the possible keyboard instruments: "The organ, the Flügel, the Fortepiano and the Clavicord are the most common keyboard instruments for Accompanement." The term Flügel ("grand") refers to the Kielflügel (as it were, the "quilled grand"), i.e. the harpsichord.

In the sources the treble clef is used for the viol part. On account of the great range of the Solo in D major, the viol part sometimes extends into the lower staff of the score, in such a way that it seems that the part is written an octave too high (if one considers the portion written in the treble clef as sounding an octave lower). Annette Otterstedt has argued convincingly that the works were composed

for the Dessus de Viole.\*\* Details of both fingering and compositional techniques speak in its favour. If a bass viol plays this part, it sounds an octave lower, so that frequently fifths sound a fourth under the bass; there are otherwise impossible harmonies as well (see the conclusion of the Solo in D from bar 106 on).

Because the works are often played with the bass viol, the present new edition supplies a part in the treble clef for the Dessus de Viole and one in the alto clef for the bass viol. The score brings the musical text in accordance with the original. Dynamics (*p* and *f*, as well as *pp* and fortiss.) are notated in the sources either adjacent to or above the upper part, but not for the bass staff. For practical reasons we have inserted these dynamics into the bass and realised the bass accordingly, taking the dynamics into consideration, in the case of performance on a single manual harpsichord. Only the first movement of the Solo has a figured bass.

There is a remarkable indication of Bach's sensitive style in the fast D major movement (page 25). The source notates the prima and secunda volta together in the same bar; the secunda volta is indicated in the bass by the fermata under the rest at the beginning of the measure:



For this final bar the bass remains silent.

\* Volumes A6 and A3 of the series *Collection C.D. Facsimilés*, Gland (Switzerland) 1992 and Le Vaud (Switzerland) 1991

\*\* "Zwei Sonaten für die Diskantgamba von Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach : zur Geschichte der Viola da gamba in Preussen", in: *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, 1994, 247–277.

COVER

Hermannus Colleenius (attributed): A lady playing the virginals and a gentleman playing a viola da gamba.  
Inscribed on the virginals lid: *Judicium intelligenti*. Amsterdam ca. 1670–1680.