

# The German *Jugendbewegung* and *Jugendmusikbewegung*: Introductory Notes

RICHARD CARTER

This very brief introduction to what for many readers will be unfamiliar territory is intended to provide some background and context for the following article. I am grateful to Sandra Zydek for commenting on an early draft, and for providing additional material.

## The *Jugendbewegung*

The Youth Movement, or *Jugendbewegung*, arose in Germany towards the end of the nineteenth century. In the wake of a period of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation younger members of the newly established middle class sought a means of escape from the restrictive atmosphere and often strict discipline of home, school, and church, and formed themselves into loosely organised groups whose principal activity was extended hiking tours—the image of the wandering medieval scholar and an idealised romantic view of the vagabond life shaped much of their thinking. Strange as it may seem from a twenty first century viewpoint, they expressed their dissatisfaction with society by abstaining from alcohol and tobacco, and by embracing a simple, healthy lifestyle—vegetarianism was widespread, for example. Less strange to modern eyes was the adoption of a distinctive dress code. In 1901 they adopted the term *Wandervogel* to describe themselves<sup>1</sup>. Music making, at least in the form of guitar strumming song accompaniment, was an important ingredient of the hiking tours, folk songs and *Landsknechtslieder* (songs associated with mercenary soldiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) were favoured.

The *Wandervögel* were predominantly male. Some groups admitted girls or established separate groups for them, but this was a fiercely contested issue at a time when women did not yet have the vote, and there were serious worries that girls might become too ‘boyish’. Also hotly debated were the admission of Jews and the question of homosexuality.

The *Jugendbewegung* leaders were typically only a little older than the other members, but nevertheless took full responsibility for the group; however, the movement on the whole developed ‘from the bottom up’, and should not be confused with scouting, known in Germany as *Pfadfinder*, which is characterised by a ‘top down’ organisation, in which groups of young people are led by adults in outdoor activities, with uniform and rank in a military or police style. Despite these differences the two movements sought to cooperate with one another in the 1920s, and each adopted some elements of the other’s philosophy.

After the coming to power of the National Socialists in 1933 the *Jugendbewegung* was banned, along with all similar organisations, and in 1939 membership of

---

<sup>1</sup> lit. migratory bird, this plays on the double meaning of *wandern* – to wander or hike.

the Hitler Youth became compulsory. As a rule the *Wandervögel* were not overtly political, and the few exceptions covered a wide spectrum, but the question of the extent of Nazi sympathies within the *Jugendbewegung* is complex and remains controversial. It is however a fact that before the movement was banned its members were subjected to systematic bullying and harassment from the Hitler Youth.

Post War revival in the West was generally even more closely allied to scouting, in the East only the state organised FDJ (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*), formed in 1946 under the leadership of Erich Honecker, was tolerated.

### The *Jugendmusikbewegung*

Some members of the *Jugendbewegung* were dissatisfied with the low standard of musical activity which had developed within the movement, and sought to encourage something rather more sophisticated than strumming a guitar to accompany indiscriminately chosen songs. Songbooks and magazines were published<sup>2</sup>, and greater consideration was given to the choice of instruments. The *Jugendmusikbewegung* began to have a separate existence outside the *Jugendbewegung* per se, and its musical purpose became increasingly pedagogic. The search for new forms of musical expression and, in particular, the rejection of nineteenth-century musical culture, with its perceived emphasis on the soloist and empty virtuosity, led to, amongst other things, an idealisation of Renaissance polyphony. Giselher Schubert sums up the aim of the movement as follows:

The *Jugendmusikbewegung* was also influential in the musical culture of the time [the 1920s]. Its adherents sought to create a new genre that was neither serious art music nor light music, had a particular sympathy for early music and folk music, and emphasized the importance of amateur musical performance. The movement recruited an increasing number of young composers.<sup>3</sup>

Probably the best known of these was Paul Hindemith. The movement was split into two major factions: one centred around Walther Hensel, the magazine *Die Singgemeinde* and publishing firm Bärenreiter, which was founded in 1924 by the then 21 year old Karl Vötterle; the other around Fritz Jöde, his magazine *Die Musikantengilde* (successor to Richard Möller's *Die Laute*, see below), and the publishing house Kallmeyer. Adherents of the factions tended to be antagonistic, although the leaders sought rather to cooperate.

Richard Möller (1891-1918) trained as a marine engineer with Blohm & Voss. He was a *Wandervogel* and prominent lute player from 1907, taking part especially in hikes with musical groups, and coaching musical evenings. In 1912 poor health prevented further active participation and he devoted himself to enriching *Hausmusik* activities by promoting suitable early instruments; in 1917

---

<sup>2</sup> There is a complete listing on the homepage of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* Archive at <[www.archiv-der-jugendmusikbewegung.de/index.htm](http://www.archiv-der-jugendmusikbewegung.de/index.htm)>

<sup>3</sup> J. Kmetz, et al. 'Germany', *GMO* (accessed November 3, 2009).

he became the founding editor of *Die Laute* (The Lute), the first *Jugendmusikbewegung* magazine.<sup>4</sup>

Fritz Jöde (1887-1970), musicologist, editor, author and music educator, was closely involved with the *Jugendmusikbewegung* for most of his life. His policies, methods and ideals of the 1920s have been both criticized as actively, and excused as naively playing into the hands of the National Socialists.<sup>5</sup>

Peter Harlan (1898-1966), inspired by his experiences as a *Wandervogel*, and by contact with Fritz Wildhagen, a collector of early instruments, abandoned conventional schooling to train as an instrument maker, and founded his own workshop in 1918, immediately after his release from military service. At first he built guitars and 'lutes' for the *Jugendbewegung*, but soon began to pursue a double goal: on the one hand, the repair, restoration and copying of early instruments, and on the other, a vision of producing new instruments which adapted the spirit of earlier times for modern needs. He is particularly remembered for three developments: the first was the so-called 'German' fingering system for the recorder, which avoids forked fingerings, but only at the expense of irredeemably poor intonation.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, the quinton, which in this case was a tenor range 'da gamba' instrument tuned in fifths, b'-e'-a-d-G; and thirdly the *Fidel* (or *Fiedel*) family, a consort of instruments based on the viols, but with simplified construction and steel strings. Harlan saw the *Fidel* as his greatest achievement, but no less impressive was his tireless commitment to introducing amateurs to early music instruments and consort playing.

### Notes on the translation

I have translated the German term *Gambe* as 'viol', but left *Viola da gamba* as 'viola da gamba'. There is a persistent confusion of nomenclature for the bass viol (with the top string tuned to d'), for which the German speaking world often uses *Tenor-Bassgambe*—this originates partly in a misunderstanding of *Syntagma musicum*, in which Praetorius lists this tuning for the *Tenor-Alt-Viol de Gamba* in the context of a low consort.<sup>7</sup> Some reserve the term *Tenorgambe* for a small bass viol. Where the size of instrument intended is not absolutely clear I have also given the original German.

A number of terms which have no direct English counterpart are encountered: *Hausmusik*, *Gebrauchsmusik*, *Jugendmusik*, *Gemeinschaftsmusik*, *Spielmusik*, and so on. These terms themselves may be literally translated as domestic music, music for use, youth music, community music, music to play, but as these English expressions do not adequately convey the concepts, I have in general preferred to leave them in German.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Die Deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung in Dokumenten ihrer Zeit von den Anfängen bis 1933* (Archiv der Jugendmusikbewegung e. V.: Hamburg, Wolfenbüttel & Zürich, 1980), 1018.

<sup>5</sup> See B. Joncus, 'Jöde, Fritz', *GMÖ* (accessed November 8, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> Harlan soon admitted that this was a big mistake, but the idea had taken on a life of its own, and cheap recorders using it are still sold today.

<sup>7</sup> M. Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum*, Wolfenbüttel, 1619 (facsimile ed. Bärenreiter-Verlag: Kassel, 2001), II, 25.

# The Rediscovery of the Viol in the *Jugendbewegung*

SANDRA ZYDEK

Translated by RICHARD CARTER<sup>8</sup>

Anyone considering the rediscovery of the viol in the twentieth century is as a rule unlikely to link it with the *Jugendbewegung*, despite the fact that the impetus from the *Jugendbewegung* made a significant contribution to the spread of the viol amongst amateurs. This connection also remains largely—and most unjustly—unrecognized in articles about the viola da gamba in the relevant major musical reference books.

## The First Discovery of the Viol for *Jugendmusik* by Richard Möller

As early as 1918 the viol was presented to musically interested members of the *Jugendbewegung* as the first rediscovered early instrument after the guitar and lute. The *Jugendbewegung* came to the ‘historical’ lute via use of the guitar for song accompaniment, and so began the rediscovery of ‘Early Music’. It was this use of the lute—at this early stage the term was often mistakenly used synonymously with guitar, and the instruments were built in a hybrid form—which inspired Richard Möller, editor of *Die Laute* (The Lute), the first *Jugendmusikbewegung* magazine, to suggest the viol as a complement to music making on the lute.

It seems that Möller and his circle were unaware of the activities of artists, music lovers, and instrument collectors outside the *Jugendbewegung*, such as Arnold Dolmetsch, Paul Grümmer, Christian Döbereiner, and Paul de Wit, who had been revitalizing the viol since around 1890—however, these men mostly came to the bass viol from the violoncello. Also that Robert Kothe, who had become a role model for the ‘lutenist-singers’ in the *Jugendbewegung*, had—apparently without exerting any lasting influence—researched and considered the viol, but rejected its introduction. Kothe wrote in his autobiography, without giving even approximate dates, that the instrument maker Michael Wach had made him a viol ‘after an old model’<sup>9</sup> and that he [a few years before the First World War?], as a result of studying German and Italian paintings depicting early musicians, ventured an experiment with the help of his (first) wife, who played the violoncello [!].<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> This article appeared as ‘Die Wiederentdeckung der Viola da gamba in der Jugendbewegung’ in *Viola da gamba und Viola da braccio, Symposium im Rahmen der 27. Tage Alter Musik in Herne 2002*, ed. C. Ahrens & G. Klinke, pub. Stadt Herne (Musikverlag Katzbichler: Munich – Salzburg, 2006). I wish to thank the editors and publisher, and not least the author, for permission to make and publish this translation. I am especially grateful to the author for providing additional material and illustrations which were not part of the Herne article.

<sup>9</sup> ‘nach altem Modell’, R. Kothe, *Saitenspiel des Lebens. Schicksal und Werke* (Munich, 1944), 100.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

In Venedig ... sammelte ich eine Anzahl Photos solcher Gemälde, die einen Einblick in das Musizieren vergangener Jahrhunderte gewähren. Vor allem sehen wir Lauten, Gamben, Violen vereint. .... So kam uns einmal der Gedanke, einen Versuch zu machen, den Dreiklang Singstimme, Laute und Viola da gamba für unsere Kunst zu verwenden. Eine alte kleine Gambe fand ich in einer der Konzertstädte. Ich ließ sie in München bei Michael Wach sorgfältig reparieren und machte mich mit Freude an die Arbeit, besondere Lieder auszuwählen und auch ein Solostück für Laute und Gambe zu komponieren. .... Es machte mir Freude, die Spuren gemeinsamen Musizierens alter Zeit zu verfolgen; .... Es war erfreulich, diese Neuheiten als kammermusikalische Bereicherung des Programms begrüßt und gewürdigt zu sehen.

In Venice ... I assembled a collection of photographs of paintings which provided a picture of music making in previous centuries. Above all, we see lutes, viols, and violins together. .... We then had the thought of trying the combined sound of voice, lute and viola da gamba for our artistic purposes. I found an old small viol in one of the cities where I had a concert. I had it painstakingly repaired by Michael Wach in Munich and cheerfully set to work choosing suitable songs, and also composing a solo piece for lute and viol. ... It gave me pleasure to follow the tracks of the ensemble music of olden times; ... It was pleasing to see these innovations welcomed and praised as an enrichment of our chamber music programme.

Kothe had originally set his 'Songs for Solo Voice, Lute, and Violin or Violoncello' for lute and viol, but either became uncertain about the suitability of the viol, or substituted it because of its unfamiliarity.<sup>11</sup>

Möller mentioned the viol for the first time in 1916 in an article in the magazine *Der Wanderer* (The Hiker).<sup>12</sup> In 1918 he introduced the viol to the wider readership of the *Jugendbewegung* simultaneously in an article 'Laute – Gambe – Bratsche' ('Lute – Viol – Viola')<sup>13</sup> and in *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio, die alten Instrumente und ihre Bedeutung für unsere heutige Hausmusik* (Lute, viola da gamba, viola da braccio, the old instruments and their significance for today's domestic music making), the first volume of *Der Lautenspiegel* (The Lute's Mirror), a Supplement to the monthly *Die Laute*.<sup>14</sup>

Möller had ascertained from the illustration in Christopher Simpson's viol tutor that the viol resembled the lute in the number of its strings and the division of the fingerboard by frets. As he frequently found the rapid fading of

<sup>11</sup> R. Kothe, *Gesänge für eine Singstimme, Laute und Violine oder Violoncell* (Magdeburg, 1913), 2.

<sup>12</sup> R. Möller, 'Laute und Lautenmusik', in *Der Wanderer*, No. 7 (1916), Sonderheft zum Ausbau unsere musikalischen Kultur (special issue dedicated to the building up of our musical culture), quoted in: *Die deutsche Jugendmusikbewegung in Dokumenten ihrer Zeit von den Anfängen bis 1933* (Archiv der Jugendmusikbewegung e.V.: Hamburg, Wolfenbüttel and Zürich, 1980), 40-43, here 41.

<sup>13</sup> R. Möller, 'Laute – Gambe – Bratsche', in *Musikalische Jugendkultur. Anregungen aus der Jugendbewegung*, ed. Fritz Jöde (Hamburg 1918), 174-177.

<sup>14</sup> Pub. R. Möller, Wolfenbüttel, 1918. Despite its slightly later publication it is likely that Möller's claim that the Supplement predated the article is correct. In places the article follows the Supplement word for word, and functions more as a general introduction.

the sound of the lute unsatisfactory, he reasoned that the viol was well suited to ‘fill out and sustain the sound of the lute’, so as to ‘allow the lute once more to realise its full artistic potential’. In ensemble, ‘frankly, one often misses a steady sustained sound which provides a solid basis for the whole performance’.<sup>15</sup> Up to this time the chosen instrument for this complementary role had been the violin, which, however, only worked in combination with the lute when ‘its own sound colour’ could be ‘contrasted with that of the lute.’<sup>16</sup> The viol was now expected to make good this shortcoming.



Figure 1: ‘Violin maker’s workshop’ from R. Möller *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*, p. 19. At the rear left the body of a viol to Möller’s design (see Figure 2) may be seen, on the right a small bass viol in ‘violin’ form.

From his further reading of viol literature Möller deduced that the lute and viol shared the same tuning, and concluded that lute players could easily learn the viol, as they needed only to master the bow technique: thus a large number of people could quickly learn to play a variety of instruments, and with the help of the viol, modern musical life, especially in amateur circles, would be effortlessly enriched.<sup>17</sup> Möller argued that many people had insufficient time to devote to music or to learn the range of instruments which they themselves felt to be necessary. Such people had had to forego learning a bowed stringed instrument, but were dissatisfied with playing simple folksongs on the guitar,

<sup>15</sup> ‘... den Lautenklang am besten füllen und halten ... um die Laute wieder zu einem vollwertig künstlerischen Instrumente zu ergänzen.’ ‘... vermisse man oft geradezu einen ruhigen, gehaltenen Ton, der dem ganzen Spiel einen festen Boden gibt.’ R. Möller, *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*, 14.

<sup>16</sup> ‘... ihre eigene Klangfarbe im Gegensatz zu der der Laute [wirken könne].’ Ibid., 14.

<sup>17</sup> R. Möller, ‘Laute – Gambe – Bratsche’, 174ff.

and wanted to get to know the ‘great classics [!]: Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Brahms, et al., at first hand’. Such people could be helped by the old bowed stringed instruments.

Möller’s proposals were also based on personal experience with the viol, which he had taught himself to play: he wanted to try the instrument out, and had had one built:<sup>18</sup>

Hervorheben möchte ich jedoch besonders, daß ich mich bei allen folgenden Abgaben über die Spielmöglichkeiten, die Möglichkeit leichten Erlernens usw. bei diesen Instrumenten nicht auf *Theorie* stützte, sondern alles selbst *praktisch* erprobt habe, auf Instrumenten, die ich mir in ihren alten Formen wieder habe bauen lassen.

I must however particularly emphasise that the following views on the capabilities, and ease of learning, etc. of these instruments are based not on *theory* but entirely on personal *practical* experience with instruments which I have had built in their old form.



Figure 2: Lute, viola da gamba and viola da braccio, from R. Möller, *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*, p. 12.

Few violin makers were open to such ideas; he eventually found, in the Hamburg violin maker Julius Hempel, a luthier who showed sufficient understanding of and interest in his plans. Möller and Hempel described

---

<sup>18</sup> R. Möller, *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*, 7.

finding the old types of instrument in museum catalogues and in the magazine of the *Kunst und Gewerbemuseum* (Museum of Arts and Crafts) in Hamburg.<sup>19</sup> Möller's viol was, despite these exemplary intentions, by no means an authentic reconstruction. This was partly a consequence of changes in instrument making practice, but also of misinterpretation. Möller himself used the expression 'instrument designs ... newly developed by me' (neu von mir geschaffene ... Instrumententypen), and he tuned his viol the same as a modern guitar, for the sake of consistency. Möller's viol was a small bass instrument, with the same sounding string length as his lute, it had an endpin, and fixed frets with the fingerboard hollowed out between them, as can be seen in a photograph of Hempel's workshop (Figure 1). Möller paid no attention to the idea of a family of viols, he regarded his so-called viola da braccio as a complement to the viol in a higher register. This was a treble viol played 'da braccio'; it was fitted with a chin rest, mirroring the provision of an endpin on the viol (see Figure 2).

Above all, Möller's musical examples demonstrate a very naïve approach to the material: he proposes, for example, piano or harmonium to accompany the viol in one piece, and he notates the viol part (and the lute/guitar part) in treble clef an octave above sounding pitch (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3: the opening of the Scherzo from the piano trio in G major, Op. 1 no. 2, Beethoven. R. Möller, *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*, p. 63.

The importance for lute players which Möller attached to his rediscovery of the viol may be gauged from the fact that he dedicated the first Supplement to *Die Laute* entirely to the theme of 'Lute, viola da gamba, viola da braccio'. He addresses himself primarily to lutenists, his declared aim was the enrichment of lute music. Beyond this he did not see the viol as an independent instrument in its own right, with its own literature. Nevertheless, Möller's efforts kick started

<sup>19</sup> According to Fritz Jöde, and contradicting this description, Möller's viol may in fact have been built not to a design of his own and Hempel's, but 'from information supplied by the Hamburg lute teacher Meyer-Steinecke' (nach den Angaben des Hamburger Lautenlehrers Meyer-Steinecke): in 'Laute – Gambe – Bratsche, von Möller, eine Besprechung', (a review of Möller's article in *Die Laute*, Vol. 2, no. 3/4 (1918/1919)), 23-24.



interest in the viol for the *Jugendbewegung*. He was himself, however, unable to further the progress of the viol, as he died in August 1918.

01

## Sarabande.

(Aus der 6. Violoncello-Suite.)

Largo. Joh. Seb. Bach.

Viola da gamba.

Klavier oder Harmonium.

Figure 4: the opening of the Sarabande from the sixth suite for solo violoncello, J. S. Bach, arr. Möller.  
from R. Möller, *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*, p. 61.

## First Criticism

The revival of the viol was not without its critics: Fritz Jöde was initially highly sceptical. ‘Technical grounds, in the end, extra-musical considerations’ seemed to him ‘to be insufficient reason alone’.<sup>20</sup> Jöde did acknowledge the rediscovery of the instrument as a musical gain, and emphasised the ‘beautiful and varied sound world of the viol.’<sup>21</sup> He warned of the danger in the rediscovery of the viol—because of the ease of learning—of being satisfied with low quality music, drawing a parallel with the guitar. In addition he criticized Möller’s appendix of musical examples as ‘inadequate’; but he also, at first, ignored the wealth of literature for the viol.

Jöde reiterated Möller’s most important justification for re-introducing the viol into musical life—the ease with which lutenists could learn the instrument—and went on to say that ‘those who are familiar with the violin’<sup>22</sup> should also have no problems. Thus Jöde acknowledged the importance of the rediscovery not only for players of the lute, but also of bowed strings.

In 1922, alongside Jöde, Theodor Herman Reichenbach bemoaned the shortage of straightforward pieces—at the same time justifying his own compositions: Reichenbach’s *Mein Gambenbuch* is a collection of pieces for ‘Viola da gamba, Violoncello or Viola da braccio solo or with accompaniment for the lute.’<sup>23</sup> Alongside solo pieces for viol it includes duets for lute and viol and one for violin and viol, which he either composed himself or arranged. Reichenbach took it for granted that players would come to the viol from the lute, that the bow hold was that of the violoncello, and that the instrument was played with or without frets and tuned as the lute, although he also refers to the tuning in D:<sup>24</sup>

... Ich denke mir ihre Verwendung, nachdem der Schüler, (Beherrschung des Lautenspiels, besonders: korrektes Lagenspiel vorausgesetzt) zuerst einfache Lieder erst auswendig, dann nach Noten, dazwischen Tonleitern (E-Dur ist die leichteste) und Intervallübungen gespielt hat. Alles in dem bei der Laute üblichen chromatischen Fingersatz, .... Von einem Cellisten (der einen andern Fingersatz braucht) lasse man sich die Bogenführung zeigen, die anders ist als bei der Geige, .... Ist eine Gambe einen Ton tiefer als die Laute gestimmt, so müssen die Solostücke entsprechend transponiert werden.

... I think of them [i.e. the pieces] being used after the pupil (presupposing that they have mastered the lute, especially the correct use of left hand positions) has at first played simple songs—initially from memory, then from music—and between times scales (E major is the easiest) and interval exercises.

---

<sup>20</sup> ‘Musiktechnische, also letzten Endes außermusikalische Rücksichten als alleiniger Beweggrund ... als ungenügend.’ F. Jöde, ‘Laute – Gambe – Bratsche, von Möller, eine Besprechung’, 23.

<sup>21</sup> ‘... klangliche Schönheit und Vielfalt der Gambe.’

<sup>22</sup> ‘... der mit dem Geigenspiel vertraut ist ...’

<sup>23</sup> T. H. Reichenbach, *Mein Gambenbuch. Spielmusik für Viola da Gamba, Violoncello oder Viola da braccio allein oder mit Begleitung der Laute*, (*Hausmusik*, ed. F. Jöde, Vol. 17: Wolfenbüttel, 1922)

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Everything in the chromatic fingering which is normal for the lute, .... They should ask a cellist (they use a different fingering system) to show them how to use the bow, this is different from the violin [Note: this does not imply an underhand bow grip!]. If the viol is tuned a whole tone lower than the lute, the solo pieces must be suitably transposed.

Playing the viol in consort seems not yet to have been aspired to in the 1920s, the small bass (*Tenor-Baß-Gambe*) was the most widespread size,<sup>25</sup> and apparently the use of simple old chorale or song settings for beginners was completely unknown. Indeed Peter Harlan encouraged free improvisation on the viol:<sup>26</sup>

Dr. Einstein beginnt in seiner Untersuchung des Gambenspiels der Alten einen Abschnitt: 'Das Spiel auf der Gambe war wesentlich Improvisation'; so baue ich auch heute im allgemeinen die Gambe nicht für Leute, welche auf einen Gambenpart angewiesen sind, sondern für solche, die sich den Tenorpart aus irgendeiner Stimme herauslesen können oder die auch mit dem Instrument irgendeine Melodie oder Baßstimme abspielen oder improvisieren wollen, wie es ihnen in den Weg kommt, also für Lautenisten[,] die nun einmal das Griffbrett kennen und leicht beim Hausmusizieren irgendeine Lücke damit ausfüllen wollen.

In his investigation of historical viol playing Dr Einstein begins one section thus: 'Viol playing was largely a matter of improvisation'; therefore in general the viols I build today are intended not for people who are dependant on a written part, but for those who can extract a tenor line from an existing part, or those who wish to play or improvise any given melody or bass line, as the mood takes them, in other words, for lute players who know the fingerboard, and can in this way easily fill a gap in their domestic music making.

Even though the 'rediscovered' viol did not establish itself with any great success in its first decade, and despite its protagonists still having very little idea of its historical repertoire, the viol was nevertheless, at least in theory, preferred over the violin as an historical instrument. The number of players remained very small during the 1920s. Notwithstanding the efforts of a small circle, it seems that more time was needed to establish the viol in amateur music making—this was certainly in part a financial question, as new viols had to be built.

---

<sup>25</sup> P. Harlan, 'Zur Frage der Hausmusik-Instrumente', *Die Singgemeinde*, Vol. 2 (1925/26), 96-99.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

## ‘Numerically, really quite significant circles’: Viol Courses and the Turn towards Historical Performance Practice in the 1930s

In the 1930s the viol seems to have become more widely established amongst amateurs. In 1932 the following advertisement appeared in the magazine *Collegium musicum*:<sup>27</sup>

### Gambenkurse

Nach Art der Singwochen finden für Erlernung der Grundbegriffe und des Zusammenspiels im Gambenchor und mit anderen Instrumenten schon verschiedene Kurse mit recht gutem Erfolg statt. Wer für seinen Ort glaubt[,] einen Spielerkreis zusammenzubekommen[,] wird gerne von der Schriftleitung nach Kasseler Erfahrung beraten. Dr. Joseph Bacher, Peter Harlan, August Wenzinger und Waldemar Woehl geben ebenfalls gerne Auskunft und stehen als Lehrer zur Verfügung.

### Viol courses

A variety of successful viol courses have been held, modelled on vocal courses, for learning the basics and for playing together in consort, and with other instruments. The editors are happy to advise anyone who feels they can put together a group in their area, on the basis of experiences in Kassel. Dr. Joseph Bacher, Peter Harlan, August Wenzinger and Waldemar Woehl are also happy to advise and are available as tutors.

Around 1935 Alfred Zastrau wrote in a magazine article of ‘numerically, really quite significant circles’ of viol players;<sup>28</sup> in 1937 there came a call in the *Zeitschrift für Hausmusik* for a register of all players, makers, and teachers etc. of the viol, in order to spread the word and promote viol playing, on the grounds that the instrument ‘has once more achieved a level of importance which makes it desirable to move towards a full understanding of everything which has to do with the viol’.<sup>29</sup> In the next few years there are reports of fully booked courses<sup>30</sup> and of courses with up to 36 participants.<sup>31</sup>

Such courses were especially important for the many self-taught viol players, as the basics could be established. Above all, points of technique were clarified—from 1938 there is a report on the Recorder and Viol week in Schloß Halburg (18 to 25 April), led by Konrad Lechner, which reveals that the viol players were ‘largely beginners, some of whom had learnt to play without a teacher,

---

<sup>27</sup> ‘Gambenkurse’, *Collegium musicum*, Vol. 1 (1932) no. 4, 80.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Zahlenmäßig schon recht bedeutenden Kreisen’, A. Zastrau, ‘Alte Instrumente für neue Hausmusik’, [1935] pp. 103-111 in an inadequately annotated cutting in the library of the *Musikinstrumentensammlung Hans und Hede Grumbt*, Bochum, p.107.

<sup>29</sup> ‘... wieder eine Bedeutung erlangt habe, die es wünschenswert erscheinen ließe, zu einer umfassenden Verständigung über alles zu gelangen, was mit der Gambe zu tun habe.’ In ‘An alle Gambenspieler, Gambenbauer, Herausgeber und Verleger von Gambenliteratur’, *Zeitschrift für Hausmusik*, Vol. 6 (1937) no. 1, 38.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Gambengruppe im Arbeitskreis für Hausmusik’, *Zeitschrift für Hausmusik*, Vol. 8 (1939) no. 3, 113.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Bacher reported on two meetings in ‘Lehrgang für Haus- und Kammermusik in Loshausen bei Treysa 17. bis 31. Juli 1937. Leitung August Wenzinger’, *Zeitschrift für Hausmusik*, Vol. 6 (1937) no. 5, 191-194.

and whose technique was thoroughly “overhauled”<sup>32</sup>—the significance of the viol in musical society was discussed, and a selection of suitable literature for playing in consort and in domestic situations was presented and coached.

Right through to the early 1940s Peter Harlan was holding courses on which he made his own instruments available for the students.<sup>33</sup> Here the participants were sorted into groups according to their ability. Also at this time, annually during the ‘summer holiday weeks’, the instrument maker Johannes Adler offered the opportunity of trying out and learning to play on his range of instruments.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1930s playing practice on early instruments was increasingly influenced by musicological findings, and higher demands on music making began to be made: alongside the question of bow hold, notice was being taken of tuning in the old *Kammerton* [a'=415Hz]. Viols built after a variety of original models were on offer, both ‘consort’ and ‘solo’ instruments in different styles.<sup>35</sup>

The underhand bow grip appears to have come into fashion in the mid 1920s, Harlan advocated the use of a viol bow and its special hold from 1926 onwards. In 1928 August Wenzinger heard a viol player from Harlan’s circle using frets and an underarm bow technique. Although he found ‘the result ... unimpressive’, he nevertheless commented that ‘the demand for historical performance practice on faithful copies of old instruments’ had arrived.<sup>36</sup> A year later, in 1929, Wenzinger was invited by Karl Vötterle of Bärenreiter-Verlag to present a viol course using original playing techniques. Thus Wenzinger became involved in a study of original sources.

Like Wenzinger, Joseph Bacher also unravelled the old way of playing the viol with the aid of historical sources and made the results of his research available—not only to the *Jugendmusikbewegung*—in a publication of 1932 entitled ‘The Viola da Gamba. An introduction to the nature of the viol consort and to the playing manner of the old masters. With illustrations, a repertoire list, countless examples in tablature and staff notation, and music for viols.’<sup>37</sup> Bacher considered his book to be ‘an introduction to the old techniques of viol playing’.<sup>38</sup> In Bacher’s work the interested circles from within the *Jugendmusikbewegung* and amongst amateur musicians were presented

---

<sup>32</sup> ‘... vorwiegend Anfänger, die z. T. ohne Lehrer Spielen gelernt hatten und technisch gründlich „überholt“ wurden.’ Reported in ‘Die Singwochenarbeit des Jahres 1938’, *Zeitschrift für Hausmusik*, Vol. 7 (1938) no. 6, 228–230.

<sup>33</sup> *Mitteilungen aus der Peter Harlan-Werkstätte*, after 1938, poss. 1939?

<sup>34</sup> Catalogue, *Johannes Adler-Werkstätten, Markneukirchen*, p.17.

<sup>35</sup> *Mitteilungen aus der Peter Harlan-Werkstätte*, c1935, p.4. Harlan offered early and late baroque models. ‘Historical bowed strings from the Johannes Adler Workshop’, Catalogue, *Johannes Adler-Werkstätten, Markneukirchen*, after 1938, 4–6, lists a ‘soloist’s’ viol ‘after Joachim Tielke (c1700)’ and a plainer value-for-money ‘consort’ viol.

<sup>36</sup> ‘... das Resultat ... nicht erhebend.’ ‘... die Forderung nach der originalen Spielweise auf originalgetreuen Instrumenten ...’ A. Wenzinger, ‘Die Viola da gamba einst und jetzt’, pp. 5–10 in Adolf König, *Die Viola da gamba*, Fachbuchreihe das Musikinstrument, Vol. 43, (Frankfurt am Main, 1985), here 8ff.

<sup>37</sup> J. Bacher, *Die Viola da gamba. Eine Einführung in das Wesen des Violenchores und in die Spielweise der alten Gambenmeister. Mit Bildern, einem Verzeichnis von Spielmusik, zahlreichen Tabulaturbeispielen, Notenbeispielen und Spielstücken für Gamben* (Bärenreiter: Kassel, 1932).

<sup>38</sup> ‘Einführung in die alte Technik des Gambenspiels’, *ibid.*, 42.

with a new fundamental work on the viol. His explanations are based on the writings of Jean Rousseau, Thomas Mace, Marin Marais, Christopher Simpson, Silvestro Ganassi and others.<sup>39</sup>

Bacher describes the viol as belonging to two stylistic periods: the Renaissance and the Baroque, and differentiates the uses of the viol—in the baroque period solo music held sway, in the Renaissance the consort music, which he primarily aimed to discuss, was more important: ‘This introductory publication will mainly discuss the viol consort’ (In dieser Einführungsschrift wird in erster Linie vom Gambenchor die Rede sein). Thus the viol was made useful for the *Jugendmusikbewegung* in a further way: as *Gemeinschaftsmusik* (community music).<sup>40</sup>

Bacher distinguishes ‘three types’:

*Diskant-Gambe* d, g, c', e', a', d" (hereafter *Diskant-Gambe*)

*Alt-Tenor-Gambe* G, c, f, a, d', g' (hereafter *Tenor-Gambe*)

*Tenor-Baß-Gambe* D, G, c, e, a, d' (hereafter *Baß-Gambe*)

As a low bass instrument (largely for reinforcing the bass line) there is also the *tiefer Baß* (after Praetorius) tuned AA, D, G, B, e, a and the *Kontrabaß* tuned DD, GG, C, E, A, d.

The solo viols, which are also today being built again (for the solo literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) are tuned as the *Tenor-Bass* consort viol D, G, c, e, a, d'. The latter is thus the common tuning for all bass viols.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless the practice of tuning the viol as the guitar—as proposed by Möller in 1918—continued for a long time. In 1926 Peter Harlan had still recommended the same tuning for viol and lute,<sup>42</sup> later he continued to mention it as a simplification for lutenists: around 1939 both Harlan and Johannes Adler suggest, in the context of the treble viol, that lutenists could retune in order to have the third in the familiar place.<sup>43</sup> We may take it from this that lutenists and guitarists continued the practice of such retuning with all sizes of viol.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.: In Appendix I Bacher gives an overview of ‘music for viol consort’ (43-46), and in Appendix II ‘some pieces for viols’ (49-64) which are in one to three parts, and also mentions a forthcoming collection of easy pieces for viol from Bärenreiter (42, Note 42).

<sup>41</sup> ‘Die heute ebenfalls wieder gebauten Solo-Gamben (für die Sololiteratur des siebzehnten und achtzehnten Jahrhunderts) haben wie die chorische Tenor-Baßgambe die Stimmung D, G, c, e, a, d'. Diese letztere ist also die einheitliche Stimmung für alle Baßgamben.’ Ibid., 19.

<sup>42</sup> P. Harlan, ‘Zur Frage der Hausmusik-Instrumente’, 98: ‘I am of the same opinion as Möller (his book *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*), that we should use today’s lute tuning for today’s viol’ (Ich bin mit Möller (sein Buch *Laute, Viola da gamba, Viola da braccio*) einer Meinung, daß wir für die heutige Gambe auch die heutige Lautenstimme nehmen).

<sup>43</sup> *Mitteilungen aus der Peter Harlan-Werkstätte*, undated (c1939?), 7. ‘Historical bowed strings from the Johannes Adler Workshop’, Catalogue, *Johannes Adler-Werkstätten, Markneukirchen*, after 1938, 5 (Library of the *Sammlung Grumbt*).

## Viol Tutors

The growing importance of viol consort playing is reflected not only in Joseph Bacher's publication but also in the viol tutors by August Wenzinger. These were created to complement both Bacher's work and Paul Grümmer's cellist-oriented tutor<sup>44</sup>, Wenzinger described them as 'a practical guide for amateurs who primarily intend to make music in consort with a viol ensemble'.<sup>45</sup> 'Viol Study. A Method for Viol Playing in Consort' appeared in two volumes: 'Part One – The Basics' and 'Part Two – Developing Further Technique'; a few years later came a tutor for beginners, especially aimed at children, by Wenzinger and Marianne Majer.<sup>46</sup> These tutors were the first of their kind and became something of a blueprint for a large number of viol and *Fiedel* tutors into the 1950s and 1960s. The comparable contemporary work is Helmut Mönkemeyer's series *Der Gambenchor* (The Viol Consort) which in contrast to Wenzinger's appeared in three parallel volumes, for treble, tenor and bass viol respectively.<sup>47</sup>

The children's tutor by Wenzinger and Majer aimed 'to assist the viol in regaining [*sic*] its rightful place in the early learning of music, and to encourage pleasure in music making for children and beginners'.<sup>48</sup> The authors considered the viol—especially the treble, because of its size—to be particularly suitable for children and beginners: 'Due to its relative simplicity, viol playing proves to be the best place to start when learning a bowed stringed instrument'.<sup>49</sup> Now players were no longer coming to the viol only from the lute.

## Viol Shortage during the Second World War and the Development of the *Kniefiedel*

During the Second World War the demand for viols could no longer be met. Harlan's response to this shortage was to lend<sup>50</sup> viols to interested participants on his courses, even in cases where these had no chance of continuing to play once back at home.<sup>51</sup> Initially with the aim of giving interested people the opportunity of acquiring a viol-like instrument—which they could, if necessary,

---

<sup>44</sup> P. Grümmer, *Viola da Gamba-Schule für Violoncellisten und Freunde der Viola da Gamba*, (London & Hamburg, 1928).

<sup>45</sup> '... praktische Spielanleitung für den Liebhaber, der sich hauptsächlich dem chorischen Musizieren mit einem Gambenensemble zuwenden will.'

<sup>46</sup> A. Wenzinger, *Gambenübung. Ein Lehrgang für Chorisches Gambenspiel. Erster Teil: Die Anfangsgründe* (Kassel & Basle, undated [1935?]); *Gambenübung. Ein Lehrgang für Chorisches Gambenspiel. Zweiter Teil: Technische Weiterbildung* (Kassel & Basle, undated [1938?]); M. Majer, A. Wenzinger (editor), *Gambenfibel für den Anfangsunterricht insbesondere mit Kindern* (Kassel & Basle, undated [1943?]).

<sup>47</sup> This according to Mönkemeyer in his combined viol and *Fiedel* tutors from the 1950s: cf. H. Mönkemeyer, *Schule für Soprangambe oder 6-saitige Sopranfiedel in Quart-Terzstimmung mit 110 Übungen und Spielstücken zu 1-3 Stimmen* (Celle, 1952), 3.

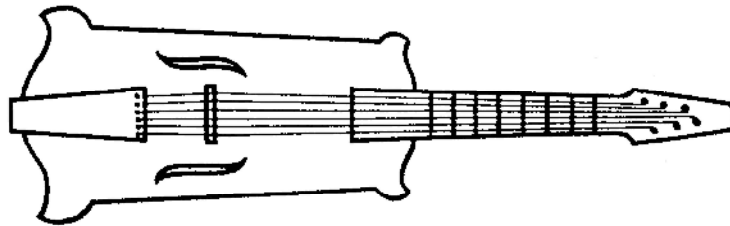
<sup>48</sup> '... dazu beitragen, der Gambe den ihr in der Musikerziehung und Musikpflege zukommenden Platz wiederzugewinnen und Kinder und Anfänger zur Freude am Musizieren anzuregen.' M. Majer, A. Wenzinger (editor), *Gambenfibel*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> 'Das Gambenspiel erweist sich durch seine relative Einfachheit als die beste Einführung in das Spiel auf Streichinstrumenten.' Ibid., 5.

<sup>50</sup> It is in fact not absolutely clear whether Harlan lent or hired out the viols.

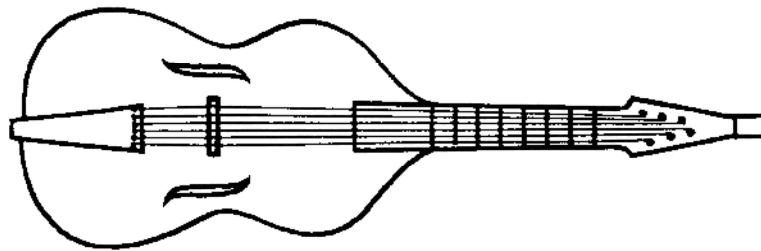
<sup>51</sup> P. Harlan, 'Lob der Gambe', *Zeitschrift für Hausmusik*, Vol. 12 (1943) no. 1, 12.

build for themselves—Harlan developed the simply constructed *Kniefidel* tuned as a viol in fourths and a third (see Figure 5). Here there are contradictory accounts, for although the *Fidel* was originally designed as a viol substitute, it soon began to represent a completely different musical ideal and developed a life of its own. The *Fidel* went a different way from the viol and became more and more a tool of music pedagogy, sometimes also tuned in fifths (this last was given particular impetus by Helmut Mönkemeyer, who in 1952, as director of the Music School in Krefeld, developed the so-called *Quintfidel* in cooperation with the Hermann Moeck Workshops in Celle).



**Eckige Fidel**

nach dem Werkbogen herausgegeben von Peter Harlan im Bärenreiter Verlag



**Werkstatt-Fidel**

aus der Peter-Harlan-Werkstatt, Burg Sternberg

Figure 5: ‘Rectangular Fidel’, from plans published by Peter Harlan (Bärenreiter-Verlag); and ‘Workshop Fidel’ from the Peter Harlan Workshops, Burg Sternberg. From [Peter] Harlan, [Erich] Valentin: *Die Fidel-Fibel* (Lehrbrief, Wilhelmshaven [1955]).

The popularity of the *Kniefidel*, sustained above all by its use in music education, remained something of a nine days’ wonder, but in the meantime the viol was increasingly establishing itself as an historic instrument for connoisseurs and amateur enthusiasts.

### The Advantages of the Viol for Youth and Amateur Music Making

To sum up: the viol, especially because of its sound and playing method, met the requirements and tastes and fulfilled the aims of the *Jugendmusikbewegung* and the spirit of the time:

- as an instrument on which a beginner (above all, because of the frets) could make rapid progress (in addition, the frets allow playing from tablature), especially for beginners who were already experienced guitar or lute players;



- because of the perceived ‘naturalness’ of the da gamba playing posture, which also permits simultaneous singing and playing, and because its veiled sound does not cover the singing;
- and most of all, because of its suitability for community music making (*Gemeinschaftsmusik*).

The ‘inner demeanour’ (innere Haltung) when playing the viol was also loftily compared with singing: ‘Playing the viol is almost like singing: whoever wants to do it, whoever is mentally prepared, will soon find they can.’<sup>52</sup>

The number of viol players in the *Jugendbewegung* was not high compared with the total membership, but it should nevertheless not be underestimated. Some of the instruments used were mass produced, and the impact of their use may be felt in ‘modern’ *Spielmusik* and *Gebrauchsmusik*. The viol increasingly freed itself from its early link with lute playing, and—despite the initial talk of ‘improvement’—the story of its rediscovery is the story of a genuine, steadily progressing rediscovery of the historical instrument and of its playing techniques, on a sound theoretical basis; in parallel with which, little by little, a group of experts in historical performance practice came into being.

A fascinating document survives from 1940, and is reproduced in full below. In an effusive letter headed ‘Delight of a novice viol player’,<sup>53</sup> Ortwin Wendland emphasizes a variety of advantages of the viol for amateur music making (easy to learn, natural playing position, possibility of singing along, continuo playing, suitability for ensemble playing), and in so doing expresses almost model views and opinions. Wendland also endeavours to justify the acquisition of such an instrument and such music making in wartime (emphasis original):

Lieber Werner,  
 nun wirst Du Dich wundern: ich habe mir eine Tenor-Gambe angeschafft. Mitten im Kriege, als ein 33jähriger, als einer, der ebenso wie all andern kein Zeit hat, eine Gambe! Es war wohl reichlich kühn, der Entschluß. Wenn der freundliche Instrumentenmeister mir nicht den Weg geebnet hätte, wäre er ja auch gar nicht möglich gewesen. Aber ich habe ihn nicht bereut. Wie habe ich mich, während sie gebaut wurde, im voraus auf die Gambe gefreut! Ich habe in Gedanken schon immer Gambe gespielt, mir vorgestellt, wo die Töne liegen, welche Finger sie greifen müssen usw. *Diese Freude allein war die Sache wert.*  
 Und dann kam die Überraschung. Mit Bangen war die Vorfreude gemischt gewesen. Du kennst ja mein Geigenunglück. Ich hätte gern Geige gespielt, bin aber zu ungeschickt dazu. Ich habe mich redlich gequält, kam aber nie zu einer reinen Freude. Dann hatte ich das Quinton. Aber so gern ich darauf spielte, ungetrückt war die Freude doch nicht. Wird es nicht bei der Gambe das Gleiche werden? Es wurde ganz anders. Nie hätte ich gedacht, daß es so leicht ist, Gambe zu spielen. Man muß wohl auch einen guten

<sup>52</sup> ‘Gambe spielen ist fast wie Singen: wer nur will, wer die innere Bereitschaft hat, der wird es auch bald können.’ *Mitteilungen aus der Peter Harlan-Werkstätte*, after 1938, poss. 1939?

<sup>53</sup> O. Wendland, ‘Anfängerfreuden eines Gambenspielers’, *Zeitschrift für Hausmusik*, Vol. 9 (1940) no. 5, 99-100.

Lehrmeister wie Wenzinger dabei haben (der natürlich nur in Gestalt seiner „Gambenübung“ anwesend war). Von Anfang an hatte ich Freude am Spiel. Und dann: die Hände haben es so viel leichter als bei der Geige. Sie brauchen nicht verdreht oder verrenkt zu werden. Sie fassen Gambe und Bogen so natürlich wie nur möglich. Wer von der Geige herkommt, muß denken, die Gambe spielt sich allein. Bei der Geige muß man ja alles selber machen; wer das kann, ist dann fein heraus. Ganz anders bei der Gambe; es ist, als brauchtest Du Dich um nichts zu kümmern, ganz ungezwungen tun die Hände mit, und die Gambe fängt an zu singen. Je mehr Du ihr den Willen läßt, auf sie eingehst, in sie hineinhorchst, desto schöner singt sie. Du spielst ja auch die Blockflöte und weißt, daß sie wohl nur einen Fehler hat: den aller Blasinstrumente, wer sie spielt, kann nicht mit ihr mitsingen. Beim Gambenspiel kannst Du es. Die Gambe wünscht es sich sogar, sie erweckt Dich dazu. Das macht auch ihr Klang, zu dem es sich so besonders gut singt. (Nun habe ich vielleicht eine besonders schöne Gambe erwischt. K ... meint, seine sei eine Zigarrenkiste dagegen. Jedenfalls hätte ich nie geahnt, daß man für so wenig Geld ein so gutes Instrument bekommen kann). Und dann hat die Tenorgambe noch den Vorteil, daß man auf ihr richtige Baßstimmen streichen kann. Das Quinton ist doch mehr ein Mittelstimmen-Instrument. Nun kann ich in die Tiefe steigen, nach der ich eine geheime Sehnsucht hatte. Du weißt, wie lange wir uns schon ein Cembalo wünschen, und daß wir es aus naheliegenden Gründen noch immer nicht haben können. Und meine Frau, die nun schon seit Jahren nicht mehr flöten und Klavier spielen kann, sondern nur noch singen kann, hatte nie die rechte Möglichkeit, mit mir zusammen zu musizieren. Jetzt ist uns auf einmal geschenkt. Ein Vierteljahr habe ich die Gambe erst, zwei Stunden in der Woche konnte ich durchschnittlich auf ihr spielen, und doch genügt das, um schon jetzt Generalbaßstimmen wie die aus Bachs Schemelli-Gesangbuch zu bewältigen. Nun singt meine Frau zur Gambe und wir können wieder zusammen (mit Bach zu reden) Gott die Ehre geben und das Gemüt rekreieren. Daß das Cembalo fehlt, stört uns nicht; wir hören es uns gleichsam dazu. – So viel Freude haben wir also von der Gambe; und es ist doch erst der Anfang, von all den anderen Freuden, wenn K ... mit seiner Gambe kommt oder ich ihn (und sein Cembalo) besuche ganz zu schweigen.

Mitten im Kriege eine Gambe? Jeder von uns Daheimgebliebenen weiß sich in tiefer Schuld derer draußen. Unsere Arbeit kann dem Einsatz des Soldaten nur selten gleichgestellt werden. Aber es ist auch nötig, Stätten der Stille und des Friedens mitten im Kriege zu schaffen und zu pflegen, wo das Herz einkehren kann. Gerade zum Schutz dieser Stätten wird draußen das Blut eingesetzt. Und: man kann auch stellvertretend für die draußen musizieren. Musik ist ja ein Engelwerk, eine himmlische Kunst, vor der der Teufel flieht—wenn sie recht getrieben wird. So stehen wir denn doch mit im Kampf und stärken die Front von innen.

Warum ich Dir das alles schreibe? Um Dir Mut zu machen, es auch mit einer Gambe zu versuchen. Du wirst Ähnliches erleben wie ich. Ich bereue nur eins: daß ich nicht schon längst den Mut faßte, eine Gambe zu kaufen. Und dann aus Dankbarkeit. Auch

gegen den Instrumentenmeister für seine Freundlichkeit und für seine saubere, gute Arbeit. Vor allem aber gegen den, der uns die wunderbare Gabe der Musik gegeben hat.

Es grüßt Dich herzlich mit Heil Hitler

Dein Ortwin Wendland

Dear Werner,

now you will be wondering: I have acquired a bass viol (*Tenor-Gambe*). In the middle of the War, as a 33 year old, as one who, just like everyone else, has no time, a viol! It was a pretty bold decision. Indeed, if the friendly instrument maker had not smoothed the way, it would have been utterly impossible. But I don't regret it. How I looked forward to the viol, while it was being built! In my mind, I was constantly playing the viol, imagining where the notes are, which finger I should use etc. *For this pleasure alone it was worth it.*

And then came the surprise. The joyful anticipation was mixed with dread. You know my misery with the violin. I would love to have played the violin, but I was no good. I really tormented myself, but got no real pleasure out of it. Then I had the quinton. But however much I enjoyed playing it, the pleasure was never unclouded. Might it be now be the same with the viol? It was completely different. I would never have thought it was so easy to play the viol. You must of course have a good teacher such as Wenzinger to hand (present only in the form of his 'Gambenübung', of course). From the first moment the playing gave me so much joy. And then: it is so much easier on the hands than the violin. They don't need to be twisted or contorted. They hold the viol and bow just as naturally as can be. Anyone coming from the violin will think that the viol plays itself. On the violin, you have to make everything happen yourself; good luck to him who can. On the viol it is completely different; it is as though you don't have to take care of anything, the hands do what's needed quite naturally, and the viol begins to sing. The more you let it have its way, the more you let yourself go along with it, and tune your ears to it, the more beautifully it sings. You play recorder too, and you know that there is only one problem: that of all wind instruments, the player cannot sing along. When you play the viol, you can. Indeed, the viol asks for it, inspires you to it. The sound of the viol does that, it is so good to sing to. (Now, perhaps I have managed to get hold of a particularly good viol. K ... says his is a cigar box by comparison. In any case, I had never imagined that it was possible to get such a good instrument for so little money). And then the bass viol has the further advantage that you can play real bass parts. The quinton is after all more of an instrument for middle parts. Now I can descend to the depths, which I have always had a secret longing to do. You know how long we have wanted a harpsichord, and that for obvious reasons we still cannot have one. And my wife, who for years now has not been able to play the flute or the piano any more, but can only sing, has never had the real chance of making music with me. Now suddenly everything is possible. I've had the viol just three months, on

average I manage to play two hours a week, and yet it has been enough to master continuo parts such as those in Bach's Schemelli Song Book. Now my wife sings to the viol and together we can (as Bach would say) praise God and revive our spirits. It doesn't bother us that there is no harpsichord; we can both hear it playing along. – We have so much pleasure from the viol; and that is only the start, I will not mention all the other joys, when K ... comes with his viol, or I visit him (and his harpsichord).

In the middle of the War, a viol? All of us stay-at-homes are deeply indebted to those out there. Our work can rarely be compared to a soldier's service. And yet it is necessary to create and maintain havens of peace and freedom in the midst of War, where the heart can retreat. It is precisely in order to protect these havens that blood is being spilled out there. And: we can make music for those out there who cannot. Music is after all angels' work, a heavenly art, from which the devil flees – when it is properly done. So we are fighting too, and strengthening the front from behind.

Why do I write all this to you? To give you courage to try a viol as well. You'll have the same experience as I have had. I have only one regret: that I didn't pluck up courage to buy a viol long ago. And out of thankfulness, too. Also to the master instrument maker for his friendliness and good, neat work. Above all to him, who gave us the wonderful gift of music.

Kindest regards and Heil Hitler

Ortwin Wendland