SECOND EDITION

KEYBOARD MUSIC
BEFORE 1700

Edited by **ALEXANDER SILBIGER**

Keyboard Music 1700

ROUTLEDGE STUDIES IN MUSICAL GENRES

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Routledge
New York and London

Published in 2004 by
Routledge
29 West 35th Street
New York, NY 10001
www.routledge-ny.com

Published in Great Britain by
Routledge
11 New Fetter Lane
London EC4P 4EE

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group
Originally published in hardcover by Schirmer Books,
an imprint of Simon & Schuster Macmillan

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Keyboard music before 1700/edited by Alexander Silbiger.—2nd ed.
p.cm.–(Routledge studies in musical genres)
Includes biblographical references and index.
ISBN 0-415-96891-7
1. Keyboard instrument music—History and criticism.
I. Silbiger, Alexander, 1935–II. Series.
ML549.K49 2003
786′.09–dc21 2003047162

ISBN 0-203-64212-0 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-67778-1 (Adobe eReader Format)
ISBN 0-415-96891-7 (Print Edition)

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PREFACE

To the Second Edition

The first edition of *Keyboard Music before 1700,* now out of print, was well received and adopted as a textbook or reference at several institutions. It clearly responded to a need for a readable and yet informative survey of the early keyboard literature, and nothing has appeared since to take its place. Thus we are pleased to present a new edition that incorporates the scholarship of the last few years, updates the bibliographies of editions and literature, and adds a newly written chapter on performance practice.

Notwithstanding the predictions of prophets of doom (who always seem to be with us), interest in early keyboard music continues to be vigorous and healthy, and the few years that separate our two editions have brought an impressive number of new publications. The production of critical editions has been especially remarkable, with important new editions of works of Blow, Buxtehude, Cornet, Kerll, La Barre, Merulo, Philips, Scheidemann, and Scheidt; in addition, new collected works of major composers such as Chambonnières, D'Anglebert, Frescobaldi, Kuhnau, and Bernardo Pasquini and first editions of the important Bauyn and Oldham manuscripts are on the way. Each of the *Guides to Literature and Editions* following the individual chapters has been emended to incorporate these new publications, and the bibliographies include a total of approximately 100 new items under Literature and 40 new items under Editions.

The most substantial and, we hope, most welcome addition is an entire new chapter on performance practice. When planning the original edition we decided that since performance practices differed so much from one region to the next, it would make the most sense to treat the topic within the context of each chapter. However, particularly in response to the frequent use of this book in educational settings, we became convinced that there would be merit to including a systematic general introduction to the topic. Although to the experienced harpsichordist and organist much of what is presented in this chapter will be familiar, we hope that in at least a few areas we have presented fresh perspectives. Also, since in recent years the study of performance practice has been subject to a certain amount of criticism, we thought it might be useful to sketch briefly how the interest in this topic came about and what useful purpose it continues to serve.

We have taken the opportunity to correct any errors that had come to our attention, the number of which was gratifyingly small. Several musical examples were reset to correct misprints discovered in their original versions. We owe thanks to John Mayrose for help with the preparation of these examples, to Timothy Dickey for his assistance with updating the text, to Robert Parkins for his comments on the new chapter, and to Bruce Haynes for commenting on the section on pitch. Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to Richard Carlin of Routledge for his enthusiasm and support for reissuing the series of which this book forms part.

Alexander Silbiger
March 28, 2003

PREFACE

To the First Edition

This is the first in a set of four volumes that offer a guide to the rich literature of Western keyboard music. Several differences from the other volumes deserve mention here. Our volume covers a much longer time span—longer, in fact, than the three other volumes combined. That difference amounts to more than just chronological range; although all music before 1700 is often labeled "early," the stylistic and conceptual distance between a late fourteenth-century keyboard dance like those in the Robertsbridge fragment and a late seventeenth-century prelude and fugue like those by Buxtehude is hardly less than the distance between a Buxtehude prelude and fugue and a Stockhausen Klavierstück. The scope of our volume was enlarged further by the decision to include the literatures of both stringed keyboard instruments and organ rather than restrict ourselves, as do the later volumes, to stringed keyboard music That decision was almost unavoidable because for much of the period before 1700 keyboard music does not divide neatly into harpsichord, clavichord, and organ repertories. The parting of the ways between the two literatures became irrevocable only with the acceptance of the piano as the principal stringed keyboard instrument, not so much because of its capacity for dynamic nuance—which had always been within the clavichord's power—as because of the increasing importance of the sustaining pedal as a basic element of its technique.

Other differences resulted from the nature of the early repertory. Among sixteenth- and seventeenth-century composers too few figures stand out sufficiently with respect to the character and distinctness of their work to make a division into individual chapters on each a sensible organizational choice, as it was, for instance, for nineteenth-century composers. One could perhaps imagine an entire chapter on Cabezón, on Byrd, or on Frescobaldi, but whom to pick among the multiple creative talents flourishing in France under Louis XIV, or for that matter among their contemporaries in England and Germany, without doing serious injustice to the many important artists thus ignored? On the other hand, national traditions remained remarkably distinctive throughout the period, more so than during the later eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries. This distinctiveness extended from characteristic styles and genres to notation, instruments, and performance practices. Thus a division into chapters by national tradition seemed the preferable structure for organizing our material. It should go without saying that our chapter titles do not refer to political entities (which in some cases did not even exist yet) but to regions united by a common culture and language. In this context we should also assure our readers that generalizations made about certain national traits and tendencies do not refer to innate characteristics of the people born within each region, but rather to common aspects of their culture. The individual treatment of each region does risk

drawing attention away from those aspects of the early repertory that are shared by the national traditions and also from the sometimes fruitful cross-pollinations among them; we have therefore in chapter 1 included a brief overview of the entire European scene, noting both similarities and differences among respective literatures.[1]

Two further differences from the repertories covered in the other volumes must be addressed here—differences that are not intrinsic, but concern the relationship of today's audiences to the music, specifically, their comparative unfamiliarity with the early repertory and with its context. Keyboard music written after 1700 is regularly performed and widely heard, or to be more precise, a canon of works from this period is regularly performed and widely heard. Restricted as that canon may be, its familiarity also makes it easy to relate to less frequently played music from the period. But for keyboard music before 1700, no such canon currently exists; at best we are in the early stages of the formation of one. Until a few decades ago the main interest in this repertory was historical rather than artistic, largely motivated by the desire to trace the antecedents of J.S.Bach. Specific pieces were valued for having paved the way, provided models, or even anticipated compositions of his rather than for their own merits; Willi Apel refers to Bach's works as "that singular corpus to which everything that precedes seems to point, for which all earlier works seem as mere preparation" (1972, xiv). But studying Froberger, for instance, for the way he foreshadowed Bach has the effect of placing Bach between us and Froberger, thus obscuring the earlier composer from our view; it turns him into a historical artifact. (This does not mean that we should disregard historical connections, but merely that we should be mindful of time's arrow; no problem arises when we study Bach for how he reinterpreted Froberger, or Froberger for how he reinterpreted Frescobaldi.) Many previous studies of the early keyboard repertory, including Apel's monumental survey, have been strongly affected by using Bach and other later masters as points of reference, not only in the treatment of individual composers but, even more important, in the views on various genres and their histories—an issue to which we shall return in chapter 1.[2] In this book we have tried to avoid such a perspective, hoping as much as possible to view the seventeenth century directly from our own time, unmediated by the intervening centuries.

Perhaps even more unfamiliar than the early repertories are the cultures that produced them. When entering any foreign territory, a lack of sensitivity to different customs and conventions may lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Similarly, without some knowledge of what purpose this music served, where and on what it was played, how it was notated, and how the notation related to what was performed, much of it may appear strange, clumsy, and even dull. Thus, before plunging into discussions of the music, we must consider, more so perhaps than in volumes dealing with later periods, its contexts, sources, notation, genres, performance practices, and instruments—in short, its "musicological" aspects. We have tried to keep the intrusion of those topics to a minimum, treating them only to the extent necessary. The culture and habits of the early keyboard players are a worthy topic for another book, and the story of their instruments would hardly receive justice by anything less, but the primary goal of this volume is to provide a guide to their preserved compositions for the benefit of present-day musicians and music lovers.

We also must warn our readers not to expect an encyclopedic survey of the keyboard literature before 1700 along the lines of Apel 1972. Rather than providing a continuous narrative of the development of keyboard music in each region—a narrative that is largely mythical—we have selected the composers and pieces that we believe still have most to offer in terms of artistic interest and value. Historical significance, although of some consideration, generally took second place in the selection process. Inevitably, our judgment on what to include and what to omit, what to emphasize and what to skim past, will not please everyone, but that is in the nature of a book of this sort.

For certain compositions the question arises as to whether or not they should be regarded as keyboard music. Our criterion for inclusion was the working definition: any music that appears to have been scored to be directly playable on a keyboard. In principle this includes open score and tablature arrangements of songs or vocal polyphony if there are signs that, beyond the act of transcription, an effort was made to adapt the works to keyboard. Music published in separate parts for individual voices also is occasionally advertised as suitable for keyboard (e.g., the Venetian publication *Musica nova accommodate per cantar et sonar sopra organi et altri strumenti* [1540]), but, as is evident from compositions that survive in both keyboard and ensemble versions, a keyboard rendition would entail more than simply playing all the voices as written; therefore, works of that type have been left out of consideration. For works notated in open score the situation is more ambiguous; many of those were in fact intended primarily for performance at the keyboard and are discussed here as such. Finally, although we are well aware that the preserved specimens of keyboard music present only a minute fraction of the music that was played and heard (the rest either being lost or, more often, never written down) and that what survives may be neither typical nor necessarily the best of what was heard, we have made the stillexisting compositions our sole concern and not entered into speculations about the nature of the vanished repertory.

Readers will note some differences in approach and organization among the chapters. In part this reflects differences among the national traditions, in part preferences of the individual authors. The Italian and Spanish chapters include extensive coverage of the sixteenth century, treated scantily in the French chapter, but that accords with the comparative size and interest of the surviving repertory. We hope that any inconsistencies resulting from the authors' individual approaches will be found a small price to pay for the special expertise that each brings to his contribution.

Every chapter concludes with a Guide to Literature and Edidons, a Bibliography (subdivided into Editions and Literature), and a list of Manuscript Short Titles (except for chapter 4). Again, no attempt was made at comprehensiveness, and emphasis was placed on recent literature, preferably in English; the reader is referred to the bibliographies in Apel 1972 and NG 1980 for additional earlier items. Similarly, the editions singled out for listing are those each chapter author considered most reliable as well as most accessible.

Alexander Silbiger

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to thank the following individuals for providing assistance, information, or comments: for chapter 1, Robert Parkins, Kathy Silbiger, and Peter Williams; for chapter 2, Candace Bailey, John Caldwell, Mark Greengrass, Curtis Price, Richard Turbet, and Peter Williams; for chapter 3, David Fuller, Robert Gallagher, Elisabeth Gallat-Morin, Arthur Lawrence, David Ledbetter, and Lenora McCroskey; for chapter 4, Jenifer Griesbach; and for general editorial assistance, Isabel Bélance, Gary Boye, John Michael Cooper, Camille Crittenden, Boyd Gibson, and Charles Youmans.

We also want to express our appreciation to Jonathan Wiener, Jane Andrassi, and other members of the staff of Schirmer Books for their expert assistance and their patience and understanding. Finally, we wish to pay special tribute to Maribeth Anderson Payne, former editor in chief, who conceived and initiated this series of volumes on keyboard music.

NOTE ON CITATIONS

Secondary literature is cited according to the author-date system; full citations are given in the literature bibliographies for each chapter. Editions usually are cited by composer and/or (in the case of anthologies) title sometimes with the addition of the name of the editor or date of publication; full citations appear in the edition bibliographies. Manuscripts are cited by short titles; at the end of most bibliographies a list of manuscript short titles is provided that gives their full RISM sigla. Sigla for series publications used only within a chapter are explained in their bibliography entries. The following are used throughout the volume:

Apel 1972	Apel, Willi. *The History of Keyboard Music to 1700.* Bloomington, IN, 1972
NG 1980	*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* General Editor, Stanley Sadie. London, 1980
NG 2001	*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.* Edited by Stanley Sadie; executive editor, John Tyrell. London, 2001
CEKM	*Corpus of Early Keyboard Music.* General Editors, Willi Apel, John Caldwell. American Institute of Musicology, 1963–
SCKM	*17th Century Keyboard Music; Sources Central to the Keyboard Art of the Baroque.* General Editor, Alexander Silbiger. New York, 1987–89

Notes

1. A further danger of our division into national chapters is that it might slight the contributions of smaller nations such as Poland and the Scandinavian countries. The surviving repertory of each of those countries is, however, comparatively small, and they have contributed few keyboard figures of more than regional significance.
2. Apel 1972. Surprisingly, Apel seems to have been aware of this trap (p. xiv), but nevertheless stepped into it again and again. Although his book supposedly deals with keyboard music before 1700, the “Bach” entry in the index gives 219 page references—on the average, one mention of his name every fourth page; furthermore, he is brought into the discussions of 54 different composers and 19 different genres!

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION: THE FIRST CENTURIES OF EUROPEAN KEYBOARD MUSIC

Alexander Silbiger

With the introduction of a keyboard, musicians lost direct contact with the source of their music. A mechanism, sometimes elementary, sometimes formidably complex, was interposed between vibrating strings or air columns and their own bodies. Yet this device proved to be a tool of unprecedented power, allowing a single individual to harness music's full harmony, whether for private solace or for the spiritual uplift of a multitude. Few of the instrument's qualities were as consequential as the ability of each of the player's hands to produce music by itself. The two hands could be like two players, both emerging from one, and easily merged back into one. This effect determined much of keyboard music's special character as well as the forms of notation; the early history of keyboard music can be seen as a history of the exploration and exploitation of this two-handed potential.

Simultaneous negotiation of both hands was, and continues to be, a chief challenge to those seeking to master the keyboard; whereas players of a single line can channel their musicality into realizing the line's expressive content, players of multiple lines must also manage the interplay and balance among several voices. It is no wonder that keyboard playing would become a nearly indispensable auxiliary skill for all musicians attempting to grasp and manipulate the complex textures of music of later centuries, and that so many composers would come from the ranks of masters of that skill. The addition of a pedal board would eventually enhance the instrument's power further, without changing its fundamental nature. Finally, the arrangement of the keys according to ascending pitches almost naturally led to polarized roles for the hands, with a division of labor between treble and bass, or melody and accompaniment, and may very well have facilitated the rise of those conceptions so crucial to music's further development.

Although an instrument functioning in principle like an organ was already known in ancient Greece and Rome (ancient texts credit its invention to an Alexandrian engineer, Ctesibius, in the third century B.C.), we have no evidence of instruments with keyboards sufficiently similar to their modern counterparts to permit real polyphonic playing much before the late fourteenth century (which is not to say that such instruments could not have existed somewhat earlier). From that period survive concrete reports on organs and their use, parts of actual instruments, and clear depictions of organists with both hands on the keyboard. The harpsichord and clavichord also seem to have entered the musical world around this time; a document from 1397 credits the invention of the former to a Viennese physician, Hermann Poll, who called his device a *clavicembalum.*

It probably is no coincidence that the first samples of notated keyboard music date from this period.[1] More surprising is the wide geographic distribution of these early specimens, which come from England, the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany; the urge to record keyboard solos on parchment or paper evidently was not confined to any one part of Europe. On the other hand, the varieties of notational forms, which laid the foundations for long-lived regional traditions, suggest that these forms did not emanate from a central source but represent local solutions to the problem of capturing keyboard music on the page. How to take full advantage of the possibilities offered by these new, or newly improved, instruments, and how to notate the results, would by no means have been obvious, and the surviving evidence provides no more than occasional hints of the story of its accomplishment.

Notation

Musical culture had been solidly based on musicians performing single lines, and polyphony was created by the collaboration of several such performers. Coordination of their parts had become much facilitated by the comparatively recent system of mensural notation. This system primarily served singers, who had been the main practitioners of polyphony; pitch notation relied on solmization practice, and thus was relative. When it was realized that on a keyboard more than one voice could be performed, the obvious thing to try would have been the simultaneous rendition of two independent voices, one by each hand, although there also may have been experimentation with drones and parallel organum.[2] Thus it comes as no surprise that the earliest surviving keyboard pieces have mostly two-voice textures, with each voice notated quite distinctly. Even adaptations of three-part songs tend to retain only two of the voices, usually cantus and tenor (or sometimes cantus and a composite of the two lower voices). At most an occasional sustained sonority is filled in with a third note. Elaborate diminutions in the upper voice suggest a well-developed right-hand technique, but no such demands were yet made of the left hand. Because of the two-part texture and the slow-moving lower voice, some of these pieces may sound a bit thin and static to modern ears, although one cannot help admiring the dazzling diminutions, particularly those of the Faenza Codex.[3] During the second half of the fifteenth century a third voice finally makes its entry in Germany, with partial reliance on the pedal; however, judging by the surviving examples, the playing of full-voiced polyphonic or chordal textures had to wait for the next century.

The surviving specimens of keyboard music from before c. 1500 are few. A rough count nets some 25 manuscripts ranging from fragments preserved in book bindings to the quite substantial Faenza and Buxheim Codices.[4] It is a minor miracle that these manuscripts exist at all, since solo keyboard playing during this period, and indeed, for much of the time covered by this book, largely proceeded without the aid of written music. (Pianists still tend to perform in public without scores.) Some awareness of how the music was notated should be of interest even to players who approach this repertory mostly through modern editions, and might in fact help them interpret what they see.

Two fundamentally different approaches are encountered in the early sources. The first

is called old German organ (or keyboard) tablature because it was used mostly in the Germanic regions, although it may not have originated there, since early examples exist from England (Robertsbridge fragment, c. 1360) and Italy (Bologna fragment, c. 1480; see Ill. 1.1).[5] In principle it consists of a single staff on which the upper line for the right hand is notated more or less as if it were a vocal part; the pitches of the lower lines for the left hand are placed immediately below, and are represented by letters with, in the later sources, the addition of rhythmic symbols (usually in the form of little strokes and flags); see also Illustrations 4.1 and 4.2. The origin of this curious but longlived practice (until c. 1570) can be imagined as follows. In fourteenthcentury polyphonic songs each voice was notated by itself on a different part of the same page (so-called "choirbook" format). Someone trying out a song on a keyboard would need to look simultaneously at two different parts of the page or, more realistically, to memorize part of one voice while reading another. The tablature notation may have started when, as a memory aid, people began indicating with letters a lower part underneath the highest part.

The second method, called Italian keyboard tablature or *intavolatura* (although variants of the same idea were used in France, England, and

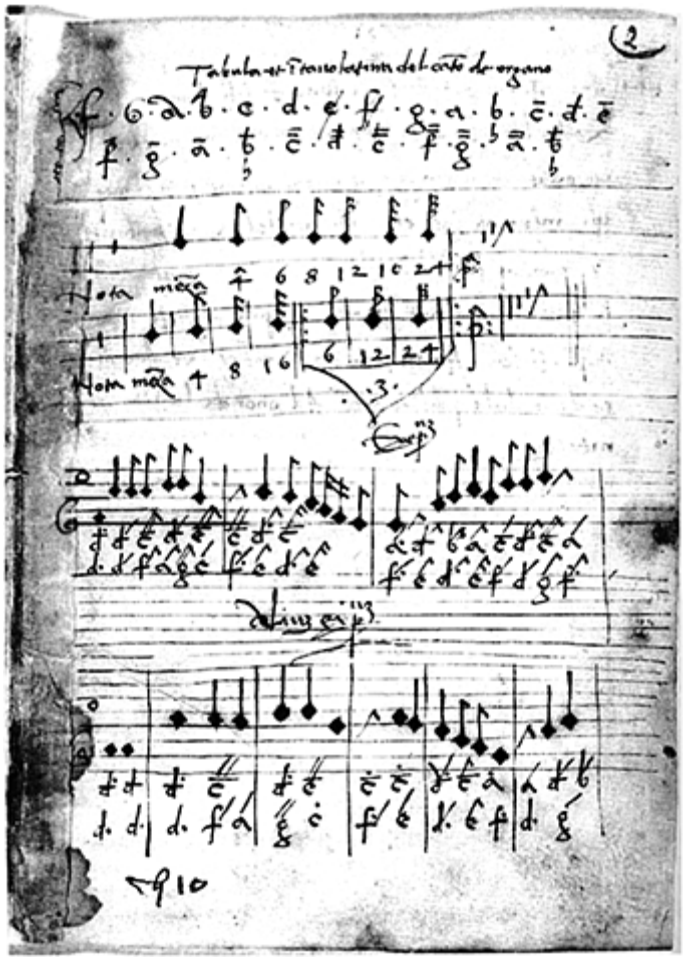


ILLUSTRATION 1.1. “Tabula et intavolature del canto de organo,” Bologna fragment, late fifteenth century (*I-Bu* MS 596.HH. 2^4, f. 2). Reproduced by courtesy of the Biblioteca universitaria di Bologna.

eventually even in Germany), employs two parallel staves that indicate the lines for the right and left hand with (again, more or less) vocal notation. Thus, it closely resembles modern keyboard notation, although we will note a few differences of which one should be aware when preparing editions or performing from a facsimile. The assignment of each of the two staves to a different hand was to remain part of the Italian tablature tradition through the seventeenth century. Illustration 1.2 shows one of the earliest examples, stemming from the northern Netherlands, with the typically active right hand and slowly moving left hand.[6] Each hand is occasionally asked to play two keys

simultaneously (e.g., penultimate measure of the second system). Characteristic of Italian tablature and contributing to its modern appearance are the bar lines, not usually seen in vocal notation of the time. In fact, the staff notations used in both the early German tablatures for the right hand and the early Italian tablatures for both hands differed in several respects from the contemporary mensural notation; we shall come back to these differences, which concern especially the notation of time values and accidentals and usually can be related to the different orientations of singers and keyboard players.

In Germany the asymmetric, right-hand-privileging tablature was abandoned in the late sixteenth century, not, as had happened elsewhere, by giving the left hand its own staff, but by extending the letter notation to the right hand. The resulting so-called new German organ tablature remained in common use throughout the seventeenth century, with occasional competition from the *partitura* system and, increasingly, from staff notation. The tablature's layout tended to be polyphonic, with each voice represented by a row of letters above which were placed the durational signs; seeIllustration 4.4. Although this system does not provide a suggestive graphic representation of musical events comparable to that of staff notation, it does offer several advantages that may account for its long survival. Writing staff notation has always been a laborious process, requiring a special skill and wasteful of precious paper; to print a complex keyboard score in a manner that really does it justice called for the even rarer skill of engraving it on a copper plate (for examples, see Ills. 5.10 and 5.12). Copying a score in new German tablature was quick and used up relatively little paper; it could be printed quite economically by combining a limited number of set type pieces (see Ill. 4.4). This tablature also was probably easier to learn to play from (provided one knew one's alphabet), since there was a direct connection between each letter and each key, and no clefs to worry about. On the other hand, a player had to take in two distinct symbols for the pitch and duration of each note, or eight symbols altogether for a four-part chord, which does seem rather cumbersome.

From the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries Italian tablature developed more or less smoothly to modern notational practice. To avoid

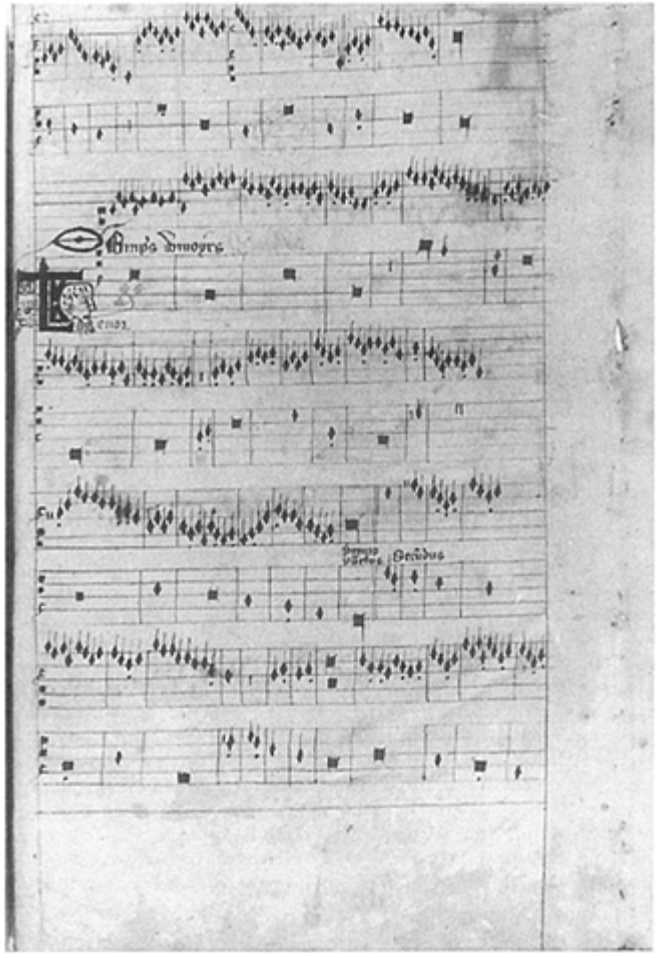


ILLUSTRATION 1.2. “Empris domoyrs,” Groningen fragment, late fourteenth century (*NL-G* Inc. 70v). Reproduced by courtesy of the University Library, Groningen.

ledger lines staves often had more than five lines—commonly six for the treble staff and seven or eight for the bass staff. A more important difference, often still noticeable in modern editions of the tablatures, is that the original notation indicates what should be played, but makes no effort to show the underlying voice leading by rests, direction of stems, double stems, or division between staves.

When contrapuntal voicing was of prime concern in keyboard compositions, Italian composers could avail themselves of *partitura* notation or open score, usually in four voices. It was especially favored for pieces in the polyphonic style like ricercars and

fantasies, but also was sometimes used—at least in Naples—for other types of works, such as toccatas, dances, and variations. A fringe benefit that may account for some instances of its use was that printers had a much easier time printing the individual voice staves than the complex textures represented on the staves of tablature notation, particularly when printing from movable type. Thus, both pedagogical benefits and economy may be responsible for the occasional use of partitura almost everywhere in Europe (see, e.g., Ills. 4.7, 4.9, and 6.4).

Outside Italy and Germany we have no evidence of a continuous tradition of notating keyboard music before the sixteenth century. In England and France a two-stave system similar to Italy's came into use, although the approaches were different in each country. The English seemed to have looked on their keyboard scores as an attempt to accommodate several voices on two staves rather than as a tablature, and they carried over several elements of mensural notation, although until the later seventeenth century they did prefer six-line staves. When there are more than two voices, an attempt is made to preserve each voice's horizontal integrity (sometimes a middle voice is written entirely with black notes to distinguish it from the other voices; see Ill. 2.2), whereas there is little concern with the vertical alignment of simultaneous pitches (Ills. 2.2 to 2.5 provide various other samples of English notation).

There are so few French keyboard sources from before the seventeenth century that it would be dangerous to regard their idiosyncracies as representative of a French tradition. Like the later French sources they possess one characteristic that would be universally adopted in keyboard notation from the eighteenth century onward: the use of two fiveline staves. In fact, except for the frequent use of soprano clef in the upper staff and baritone clef in the lower one (and in some cases the heavy overgrowth of ornament signs), most early French keyboard scores can be read with little difficulty by present-day players (see Ills. 3.2 and 3.3, the latter showing the peculiarly French nonmetric notation of *the préludes non-mensurés,* discussed in chapter 3).

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish sources show notational systems similar in principle to new German tablature, except that numbers were used rather than letters (see Ill. 6.5), and we have already noted instances of the use *of partitura.* Eventually, however, two-staff notation gained the upper hand.

It may seem curious that distinct national forms of keyboard notation (and other instrumental notation such as lute tablature) persisted during a time when vocal notation everywhere had become more or less standardized.[8] The difference may have had to do with the rather limited circulation of keyboard music compared with the much wider dissemination of much of the vocal repertoire. For example, the masses and motets of Josquin and other Franco-Netherlandish composers, the subsequent madrigals of the Italians, and the chansons of the French were regarded as works of music that existed in permanent, notated forms and were copied, studied, and performed throughout Europe. On the other hand, keyboard music in a sense existed only in performance, and a player recorded a piece on paper mostly for himself or for his pupils—a situation that began to change as more keyboard pieces were published, although for a long while even those served primarily as "lessons."

ACCIDENTALS

All types of tablatures differ from mensural notation in their method of indicating chromatic alterations. To a singer an accidental meant a hexachord shift,[9] or a temporary transposition, but for a keyboard player it was merely a mechanical instruction to play the adjacent raised key. In German tablatures accidentals were indicated by the attachments of little hooks (to either note or letter) that always signified a sharp (e.g., E flat would be shown as a raised D), except for B flat, which was written as B (and B natural as H); many sixteenth-century Italian tablatures used dots rather than flat or sharp signs. Of greater consequence to the modern player is the matter of "musica ficta" (used here in the modern sense of editorially added chromatic alterations rather than in the original sense of pitches outside the Guidonian system). In vocal notation accidentals were often omitted, either because they were selfevident or because they were left as options for the singers. In tablatures that practice was less common (although by no means nonexistent), surely because it must have appeared pointless to tell a player to press, say, the F key when the F-sharp key was intended. Nevertheless, particularly in scores with staff notation, the accidentals were treated quite casually. During this period the degree inflection of a particular pitch was not so crucial for the musical meaning of a passage as it would become in later centuries. In Beethoven it makes all the difference whether a given chord is major or minor, but in Byrd no more than momentary color may be at stake.

A further distinction from later notation is that in early keyboard scores an accidental applies only to the note that immediately follows, and not, as is customary today, to the remainder of the measure (a prin-ciple clearly tied to the later notion of key). Thus, at least in theory, accidentals are repeated as needed, and when they are absent the note should not be altered. In practice they were often omitted, leaving it for the modern editor or player to decide whether or not the omission was deliberate or the result of carelessness. A further complication is that in some scores an accidental also applied to repeated pitches but in others it did not, so that in the case, say, of two Cs with a sharp before the first one, the editor (or often the player) must determine if both are to be played as C sharp or if a chromatic descent C sharp-C was intended. The moral is that players should not necessarily follow the accidentals prescribed in either original texts or modern editions, but be ready to alter them in any way that gives a more musically satisfying result. To be sure, what is musically satisfying to our ears might not have been so back in the seventeenth century; we may, for example, be conditioned to prefer a more "tonal" to a more "modal" version. Nonetheless, by increasing our familiarity with the music of the period, we can hope to educate our ears sufficiently to arrive at a reasonable approximation (teaching us, for instance, that the more "tonal" solution is indeed more likely to be the right one!).

METER AND NOTE VALUES

Differences from mensural notation in the indication of meter and note values depend on

the type of tablature. In English and Italian scores the most striking difference is the addition of bar lines, never seen in single-line ensemble parts; their insertion sometimes affected notes meant to continue beyond the measure.[10] The same note shapes and values were used as in contemporary mensural notation (but no ligatures); thus in scores before c. 1600, and often thereafter, the half note rather than the quarter note represents the basic beat in duple time, and bar lines tend to appear every four half notes (although in many scores their placement is somewhat irregular). Because of this, certain mid-twentieth-century editions (e.g., volumes in the *Musica Britannica* series) halved note values, with even further reductions for triple meter, but the policy has become less widely practiced. Reduction of note values, often by a factor of four, remains common in music transcribed from letter and number tablatures; as a result, modern editions from tablature often have a rather black appearance, with what looks like measures in 2/4 meter (although equivalent to 4/2 !). The reason for such drastic reduction of the original note values is undoubtedly the deceptive appearances of the duration signs in these tablatures; a quarter note, for example (after c. 1480), is represented by a flag with two beams, thus resembling a sixteenth note. The resemblance is even more misleading in old German tablature, in which the note shapes on the staff often resemble mensural note values that are four times smaller; this can be seen very clearly in Illustration 1.3, from an example in Sebastian Virdung's *Musica getutscht*

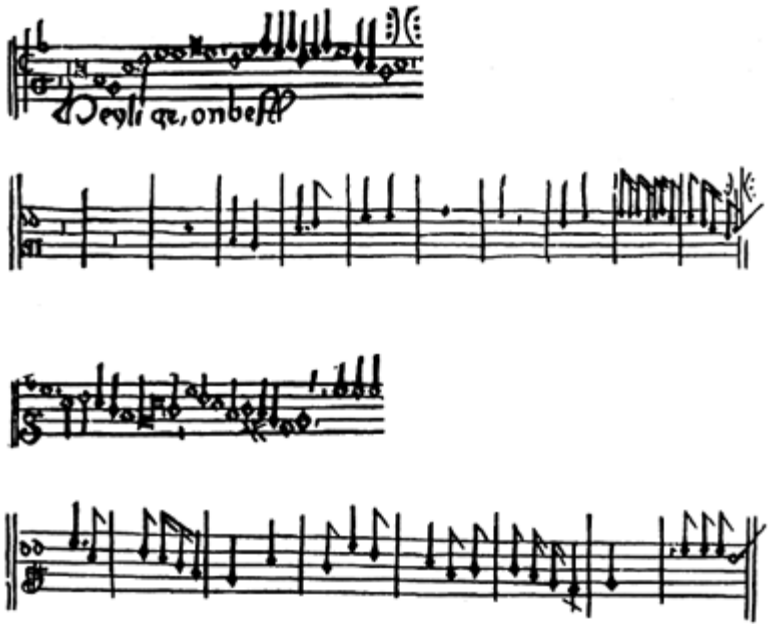


ILLUSTRATION 1.3. Sebastian Virdung, "Heylige, onbefleckte," upper voice, in mensural notation and, underneath, in tablature (*Musica gelutscht* [1511], ff. J l, 2v).

(1511) on how to transcribe a vocal composition into tablature (the example also illustrates several of the other differences between mensural and tablature notation).

One legacy of the mensural system increasingly prevalent in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is a bewildering variety of meter signatures, including Cs with dots, backward Cs, circles with and without slashes, often in combination with various numerical ratios, and sometimes followed by peculiar-looking note shapes like black whole notes or white eighth notes. In theory these symbols convey something about tempo or rhythmic relationships, but all too often they were used with little consistency, and it is no longer possible to recover precisely what the composer had in mind. If in such cases the editor does not provide a plausible interpretation, a bit of experimentation may be called for. At some transition points a precise proportion, for example 3:2, will work perfectly; at other times it is better to keep the pulse constant, or to follow one's instinctive inclinations. A sometimes useful rule of thumb is: the shorter the note values, the faster the tempo; but a second good rule is to disregard that first rule when it doesn't give good results.

The Early Repertory

As long as keyboard players were limited to single lines, they probably were satisfied with a repertory of chant melodies, popular songs, and dance tunes shared with other musicians. One imagines them decorating their melodies with increasingly elaborate divisions as the keyboards became more responsive and flexible. When they began exploring two-handed playing, their only existing model would have been polyphonic ensemble music; adaptations of popular ensemble pieces make up a substantial segment of the earliest surviving repertory. For some time such pieces outweighed in number the first of what might be considered autonomous keyboard works: cantus firmus settings of liturgical chants (with the chant in long note values in the left hand) and, eventually, pieces not based on an existing song but on a church mode or psalm-tone formula, with titles like prelude, preambulum, intonation, or ricercar.

Present-day musicians may feel frustrated by the absence in this early repertory of a substantial body of original keyboard compositions comparable to the sonatas, suites, and character pieces bequeathed by the great masters of later times. That now so-familiar and much-loved concert repertory is, however, by no means typical of what was commonly played and published; workaday keyboard fare has always consisted predominantly of arrangements of popular songs and arias. Many such settings are simple to the point of being skeletal, although occasionally a Byrd or a Liszt would make his virtuoso fantasies on these tunes available to less gifted players. Keyboard adaptations of famous ensemble pieces, from sixteenth-century canzonas to nineteenth-century symphonies, have always been in demand, and, naturally, the need for technical exercises and other educational materials has remained constant through the centuries. Today, if one visits one of the increasingly rare music stores that actually sell "sheet music" (rather than just CDs or synthesizers), one finds a similar selection of pop and jazz standards, old Broadway and current MTV hits in easy, unadorned settings, piano method books, church hymn

collections, an occasional transcription of a Duke Ellington or a Thelonious Monk solo, and just maybe a volume of Bach inventions or Chopin nocturnes. The earliest keyboard repertory was in many ways very similar.

The popular songs were often French; from the Machaut ballades in the Faenza Codex to the ubiquitous Lully arrangements of two and a half centuries later, French imports made their way into the keyboard books of England, Germany, Italy, and Spain along with favorite native songs and dances. A lot of pieces were copied out for teaching purposes, which, since playing and composing were not yet entirely separate activities, could include models for improvisation (e.g., on a liturgical chant or dance bass) as often as finger exercises. Most precious are what look like recorded improvisations of master performers, as found, for example, in the early fifteenth-century Faenza codex or, a century later, in the ricercars of Marc' Antonio Cavazzoni—witnesses to the high levels of artistic and technical attainment of an unwritten tradition.

Not until approximately the middle of the sixteenth century do we see the creation of sets of carefully crafted compositions that were committed to paper, copied, published, admired, and remembered. Among the earliest of such collections are those of Girolamo Cavazzoni published beginning in 1543 (in 1672 Lorenzo Penna still recommended them to students, along with the works of Luzzaschi, Merulo, and Frescobaldi[11]). In 1567 Merulo projected the publication of a dozen volumes, mostly of his own compositions and intabulations, although only a few volumes were realized. Meanwhile, in Spain Antonio de Cabezón was creating an œuvre impressive for its size and variety as well as for the musical weight of its content. Before long these composers were joined by Byrd in England, Sweelinck in the Netherlands, and others elsewhere. Each contributed a memorable body of original works that signaled the transformation of keyboard music from an ephemeral, improvised art form to one with a growing repertory of substantial compositions to be preserved and treasured by successive generations.

There is no doubt that these are the works that will continue to attract the widest interest from musicians and their audiences. Still, whoever takes the trouble to explore the large quantities of unpretentious song settings, dance variations, liturgical service music, and pedagogical material that continued to be produced (mostly by obscure or anonymous figures) will be rewarded by many a gem of unusual charm. The lines between the two repertories are not always so sharply drawn; several major composers have contributed attractive little pieces for nearbeginners as well as arrangements of famous chansons and madrigals or variations on well-known airs and dances. Among those arrangements and variations are some of their most technically demanding and artistically imaginative compositions—works that deserve comparison with the improvisations by the great jazz masters of our own century.

Genres and Their Contexts

As with most music from the more remote past, it is generally difficult to find precise answers to the questions that might help to set a given piece in its historical frame—questions such as why was it composed, where and when was it performed, what purpose

was it meant to serve? Most pieces were probably not written for monetary gain, at least not directly. Composers rarely earned a substantial part of their income from writing keyboard pieces; most made their living by performing, supplemented with some teaching. The circulation and publication of a musician's works might of course enhance his (or, in extremely rare instances, her) reputation and thus contribute indirectly to his position and earnings, but for the most part it was a sideline to his professional activities. The nature of those activities was likely to determine the character of his compositional work for keyboard.

ORGAN MUSIC

The "bread and butter" for most keyboard players was undoubtedly playing the organ at religious services, whether in small parish churches, major cathedrals, monasteries, or princely chapels. Among the notable exceptions were Sweelinck, whose duties at the Amsterdam Oude Kerk included public recitals but no participation in the Calvinist services (restricted to unaccompanied psalmody), and Chambonnières, who probably was unique among the early keyboard composers in playing the harpsichord exclusively during his professional life. For the majority, though, the need to supply varied and attractive music throughout the church year was ever present, and although they undoubtedly met this need for the most part by improvisation, almost all have left us examples—presumably notated for less gifted organists or as models for their pupils—of how they responded. The repertory includes pieces with specific liturgical designations, such as mass and hymn versets and pieces *per l'elevazione,* but also many other types of pieces that could serve at various moments of the service, from prelude to postlude; even plainsong and chorale settings were probably not limited to the songs' liturgical contexts.

HARPSICHORD MUSIC

Solo harpsichord playing more likely took place in connection with the court appointments and engagements that many of these musicians enjoyed in addition to their organ posts (harpsichords were occasionally used in churches, but, one suspects, largely for continuo). The details are rarely recorded (e.g., in 1520 Marc' Antonio Cavazzoni is listed in the personal payroll of Pope Leo X for playing the *gravicembalo;* see Jeppesen 1960, 1:80), but probably ranged from very private performances for one or a few family members to providing entertainment for such formal occasions as a state visit. The visits of musicians themselves to foreign courts, alone or in the entourage of a legation, would have been especially important for mutual exposures to the styles of visitors and hosts (and may of course have involved performances on both organ and harpsichord); notable among such visits are those of Cabezón to England (1554–55), of Bernardo Pasquini to France (1664), and especially of Froberger to several European capitals.

As with the church services, these artists did not need written music for their court performances, although some may have liked to work out more complex compositions on paper; most music that circulated in manuscript or print probably served students and collectors. Many pieces no doubt reflected the improvisations with which the artists

diverted their patrons—improvisations that might have included warmups of arpeggiations and scales, variations on favorite airs, cantus firmus settings, and fugal fantasies on given themes. To associate various genres with more specific venues or occasions is generally not possible; in fact, there is an entire category of pieces like preludes, toccatas, fantasies, ricercars, and tientos that could fit any function, sacred or secular, that were suitable to any time or place, and playable on whatever type of keyboard instrument was appropriate to the occasion, even if originally conceived for a different type.

Scholars have worked hard to try to define the differences among these genres in terms of their structural organization, since form has been such an important factor in their understanding of later genres. However, the distinctions that seemed to have mattered most were those of mood and character. Among the Italian types the ricercar was serious and dignified, whereas the canzona was tuneful and lighthearted and the capriccio playful and witty. The toccata moved back and forth between moods of hesitation and determination, reflecting its preludial roots. Other nationalities were more limited in their choice of titles, with the Spanish at the other extreme calling almost everything a tiento, but that uniform label conceals a diversity of content scarcely less than that of Italy's manifold genres.

IMITATIVE GENRES

It would be a mistake to lump together all the canzonas, capriccios, fantasias, ricercars, and tientos as early, not yet fully developed varieties of fugue, and to evaluate them according to the strictness of their counterpoint and consistency of their subject(s). During the eighteenth century the fugue became an exceptional sort of piece associated with learning and antiquity, but in our period imitation was part of the normal home-and-garden style of serious music and by itself did not define a genre. Thus, in the English fancy the primary agenda was, as the title suggests, display of the artist's fantasy, not the rigorous working out of one or more subjects in imitation; the occasional interjection of homophonic and even dancelike episodes or allusions to popular tunes is a natural consequence of that conception. Furthermore, these largely imitative pieces do not show a progressive evolution toward the monothematic fugue; monothematicism is a feature present in some very early examples and missing in some very late ones. The earlier ricercars, fantasies, and tientos often use neither a single subject nor a set of markedly contrasting subjects, but rather a progression of ideas that appear almost to evolve from each other. The prevailing aesthetic, particularly in the earlier examples, is one of continuous flow and cohesion rather than of overall unity embracing a clearly articulated structure.

DANCES

Dances always have been part of the solo keyboard repertory, even though we do not know how much the keyboard instruments actually were used to accompany dancing. The remarkable estampies in the Robertsbridge fragment somewhat resemble a set of

monophonic instrumental pieces from the same time (in London 29987) and may represent models for adapting such single-line pieces to the keyboard by splitting the line between the two hands, accompanying it in parallel octaves, sixth, or fifths, or adding a slow-moving bass. Most fifteenthcentury players did not, however, consider dance music worth putting on parchment or paper, and most of the largely anonymous keyboard dances from the sixteenth century, whether from England, France, Germany, or Italy, are rather simple settings of popular dance tunes and basses, with one hand (usually the right) either playing the tune or stereotypical divisions, and the other hand providing an accompaniment, often with parallel block chords. In 1593 Girolamo Diruta still wrote with barely concealed contempt about the differences between playing dances and playing "serious music" (Diruta 1984, 54), although by that time composers like Byrd had already begun to create dance music for the keyboard that was as "serious" and artfully made as any other genre.

Several of the earliest serious dance compositions, whether the pavans of Byrd in England or the galliards of Trabaci in Naples, also exist in versions for instrumental ensemble. It could be that when composers wanted to move beyond keyboard dances that were merely harmonizations of popular tunes, they began by adapting ensemble dances, and for some time continued to conceive their keyboard dance compositions initially as four-voice polyphonic settings. This might explain why so many late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century dances, including those of Byrd, Trabaci, Scheidt, and even Andrea Gabrieli's Passamezzo—his sole contribution to this repertory—are so heavily contrapuntal.

A new approach to writing original and idiomatic dance music for keyboard was introduced by Frescobaldi; his dances, particularly the correntes, capture the lightness and bounce of popular dance music, yet are impeccably crafted, often with hints of polyphonic voicing. His inspiration may have come from both the well-developed stylized dance repertory of the lute and the music of the fiddle-playing dance masters. Dance music is always driven by fashion and exoticism (with, of course, more than a hint of eroticism); Frescobaldi turned his back on the pavans and passamezzos that dominated much of the earlier dance repertory, and in addition to the corrente (probably of French lineage) and the balletto (a form of allemande or German dance), he promoted the passacaglia and the ciaccona (chaconne), of Spanish and New World origins respectively. In his last publications he began to combine his short dance pieces into little cycles, favoring the sequence balletto-correntepassacaglie.

The idea of combining different dance types was hardly new; pairs of musically related pavans and galliards, for example, had been enjoying great popularity in England. The practice was to assume even greater importance for the next generations. Frescobaldi's student Froberger joined the Spanish sarabande and the English gigue to the German allemande and the French courante, and thus is often credited with laying the foundations of the classical dance suite. Because of the scarcity of French harpsichord music from before 1650, we are not certain to what extent he actually provided the lead or—more likely—followed already existing French conventions. It is, however, beyond question that during the later part of the century France provided the models of dance music for the rest of Europe, including new favorites like the minuet that trickled down from the

court of Louis XIV. With the inspiration of those models, the English, Germans, and Italians all created their own traditions of keyboard dances, thus contributing to the rich and diverse Baroque repertory.

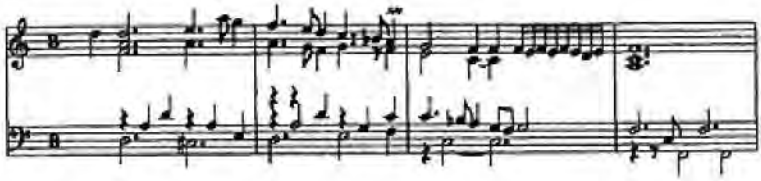
We shall close with an instructive example that illustrates the flow of keyboard music across national boundaries during the middle of the seventeenth century, and the regional accents acquired by the foreign imports. Example 1.1 shows the beginning of a courante attributed to a Monsieur de la Barre—probably Pierre Chabanceau de la Barre (1592–1656), organist and *maître joueur d'épinette* (master player of the spinet) at the French court. The piece, perhaps because of its haunting melody, seems to have enjoyed international popularity; copies survive in seven manuscripts from England, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Since in one manuscript it appears twice, there actually are eight versions, no two of which are identical. Example 1.1 presents the first strain of the versions in manuscripts from (a) England, (b) Germany, (c) Italy, and (d) the Netherlands.[12] Except for converting the examples to five-line staves with treble and bass clefs, we have preserved as much as possible the features of the original notations, including all ornament signs, rests, key and time signatures, and, in (a), the black whole notes (equivalent to half notes).

Beginning with the end of phrase, we observe that the F-major chord in mm. 7–8 in the English and German versions is embellished by nearly continuous arpeggiation, whereas in the other two versions it is left comparatively plain. Does this mean that English and German harpsichordists were more fond of prolonging final chords in this fashion than their Dutch and Italian colleagues? A similar question can be asked about the ornamentation. The English and Dutch versions are richly

EXAMPLE 1.1. La Barre, *Courante*

(a) English version

(b) German version



(c) Italian version

(d) Netherlandish version

supplied with pairs of diagonal strokes—the ubiquitous English ornament signs that presumably prescribe some form of trill or mordent (about the precise meaning we are still guessing; see p. 48.)13 But why are there no ornament signs at all in the Italian version; did Italian harpsichordists not decorate their playing with trills and other flourishes? We know from many contemporary sources that Italians were as fond of trills as anyone else, but that they considered such matters as where to add ornaments or how to arpeggiate a chord mere interpretive details best left to the performer. The opposite extreme to this laxity is shown in m. 6 in the German version, where an entire trill is meticulously spelled out note by note. Written-out trills appear again several times later in the piece; perhaps this characteristic cadential figure was still enough of a novelty in

Germany for the copyist to think it safer to write it out rather than indicate it by a sign. In general, the spelling out of details was as much a tradition in Germany (with Bach as the classical example) as was their omission in Italy.

Other interesting differences among these and the other versions do not become evident until one looks at the entire piece. For example, in all but the Dutch version the courante is followed by a characteristically French *double,* a variation, mostly of the treble voice, in flowing eighth notes. The *double* is more or less the same in all versions and thus forms part of the piece. One question facing the player is whether one should first play the plain versions, with repeats of both strains, and then the *double,* again with repeats (i.e., A:||:B, A':||:B'), or whether one could substitute the double strains for the repeats (AA' BB'), a more economical format more in tune with modern lifestyles. The manuscripts suggest that both methods were practiced, at least outside France. Our Italian version clearly shows the A and B strains with repeats, followed by the two *double* strains with their repeats; the English version has A going directly into A', followed by B and then B', all without repeats. The German version is the only one to include a second variation, with eighthnote divisions in the bass; its strains serve as written-out repeats for the *double,* and thus the resulting scheme is A :||: B :|| A' A" B' B".

No version of this courante exists in the hand of the composer or in any other French manuscript or publication. What the lost original was really like, and which of the surviving versions would have been closest to it, are questions that cannot be answered; even in Paris it may not have existed in any fixed form but perhaps was played differently at different times, whether by the composer or by anyone else (see p. 125). To try to arrive at some kind of synthetic version based on the "best" readings would seem to be a futile exercise. Each of the surviving versions must at one time have been the basis of a performance somewhere in Europe and today could be legitimately played as such.

The moral of our exercise is that, notwithstanding the impression given by erudite scholarly editions, most early keyboard music (and most other kinds of early music for that matter) does not really exist in any kind of definitive version. Except for the comparatively rare cases in which pieces have been preserved in autographs, or in manuscripts or editions prepared under the composer's supervision,[14] the text we know probably differs in many details from the composer's original conception. Our example also suggests that any copy of a piece from a place far from where it was composed very likely picked up flavors and accents from its new home. But rather than lament this unalterable situation, we should rejoice in the large amount of music that somehow has survived the onslaught of time, and remember that each score represents a musician's idea of how a certain piece of music should sound. With knowledge and imagination we can bring these scores back to life and thus enhance our pleasure and, one hopes, that of our listeners.

Guide to Literature and Editions

Williams 1993 offers a comprehensive treatment of the early history of the organ (to c. 1250) and how it became associated with the Christian church, with many provocative new ideas. A recent reference on several aspects of early keyboard instruments, music,

and practices within the larger musical and social context of fifteenth-century Europe is Strohm 1993, in particular pp. 74–75, 90–93, and 367–74. On seventeenth-century music in general, Bianconi 1987 makes fascinating reading despite its (quite deliberate) privileging of Italy and its (equally deliberate) marginalizing of instrumental music.

For keyboard music, Apel 1972 remains indispensable, even though it must be used with caution. For its time the book was an admirable accomplishment, but Apel's perspective on music history has become rather antiquated. In addition to the tendency to evaluate composers and their works as links in an evolutionary chain leading toward J.S. Bach, we should mention his excessive emphases on the value of originality—with the consequent devaluing of intabulations as "arrangements"—and on the formal aspects of compositions, such as his attempts to identify the "toccata forms" of Merulo or Frescobaldi, even though for genre definitions in pre-1700 music, textures and cultural (or affective) associations may be more important than structural schemes.

Handy surveys on the instruments and their history are Williams and Owen 1988 on the organ and Ripin and colleagues 1989 on other keyboard instruments. An annotated list of the sources of keyboard music (to c. 1660) can be found in Caldwell 2001. There is no good general study on early keyboard notation. As an introduction, Apel 1961 is still serviceable, although his transcription policies are outdated; see also Rastall 1982. On the significance of various tablature notations, see Silbiger 1991; interesting interpretations of early printed formats, particularly with reference to Italy and Spain, can be found in Judd 1989. On reading from original notation, see SCKM, 1: vii-ix and Silbiger 1994; on modern editions of early keyboard music in general, see Silbiger 1989 (note in particular 186–88 on accidentals). A valuable source on performance practice and many other aspects of early keyboard music is Williams 1989.

Many of the earliest keyboard pieces and fragments (before c. 1500) are included in CEKM, 1, although the edition is not always satisfactory; Sanders and colleagues 1986, 149–57, gives better versions of some of the Robertsbridge numbers. Editions of most of the other earliest pieces can be found only in various musicological studies, including Cattin 1964–77, Nadás 1985 (203–06), Daalen and Harrison 1984, Wolf 1919/1963 (254–55), and Ziino 1981. Strohm 1993, 368 (n. 317) lists recent reports on additional German sources. For music after c. 1450, see the Guide to Literature and Editions concluding each chapter.

Notes

1. See the Guide to Literature and Editions at the end of this chapter.
2. Such techniques are still reflected in the estampies of the late fourteenthcentury Robertsbridge fragment; see CEKM, 1:1–3. Williams (1993, 43–44) presents further thoughts on early modes of polyphony that might have been enabled by the keyboard.
3. See p. 247. Of course, the possibility that players sometimes added a third voice, for instance by turning a six into a six-three chord or adding a fifth to an octave (in accordance with the polyphonic style of the period), cannot be excluded.

4. In recent years some people have argued that the Faenza Codex was intended for two lutes rather than for keyboard, and a debate on this issue has ensued; see p. 306, n.2. We shall regard it here as keyboard music. It is reasonable to assume that in Italy, as elsewhere, some music for keyboard instruments was written down, and on the basis of later sources from Italy and elsewhere, one would predict that with regard to repertory, style, and notation such music would resemble Faenza. It is not clear that an equally strong case (essentially the "if it quacks like a duck…" argument) could be made for lute duets.
5. On the Robertsbridge fragment, see Strohm 1993, 83–84; on the Bologna fragment 596, see Fallows 1977, 18–28.
6. For later examples of Italian tablature, see Illustrations 5. 10 and 5.12.
7. For more on this point, see Silbiger 1991.
8. As late as the early fifteenth century there were still significant differences among the vocal notations of France, Italy, and Germany.
9. Singers read their parts using the solinization technique, that is, according to the syllables of a movable hexachord ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la, with a semitone between mi and fa. A flat signified the placement of fa, a sharp or natural the placement of mi.
10. Ties, although not unknown, were often omitted, and continuation across a bar line was handled by a variety of means (not always understood by modern editors): a note was repeated, a prolonging dot was placed in the following measure, or the note was simply cut off at the bar line.
11. Quoted in Judd 1989, 201.
12. The manuscripts are cited, along with modern editions, in Gustafson 1979, 2:21–22. The sources for Example 1.1 are (a) *F-Pn* Rès. 1185, No. 44; (b) *GBds* Lynar A 1, No. 65; *(c) I-Rvat* Fondo Chigi, MS Q.IV.24, No. 13; (d) NLUim MS MS q. 1, No.22. Modern editions of several of these and other versions are given in Gustafson 1999, 12–17.
13. The triple stroke in Example 1. 1 a is much rarer; is it a prolonged trill, as in Example 1. lb?
14. Among the few surviving autographs of keyboard music from before 1700 are the beautiful dedication volumes prepared by Froberger for the Austrian emperors (although the flamboyant captions were contributed by a professional artist); among manuscripts prepared under a composer's supervision and including his corrections and annotations is William Byrd's My Ladye Nevells Booke; and among editions prepared by a composer are the series of volumes of Frescobaldi's keyboard works published during his life time. By comparison, hardly any of Sweelinck's keyboard compositions survive in a source that even stems from the Netherlands, and one can only speculate how close the many English and German manuscript copies of his music are to what he actually wrote.

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MANUSCRIPT SHORT TITLES

Bologna fragment	*I-BU* MS 596. HH. 2^4
Buxheim Codex	*D-Mbs* Cim. 352b
Faenza Codex	*I-FZc* MS 117
Groningen fragment	*NL-G* Inc. 70
London 29987	*GB-Lbl* Add. 29987
My Ladye Nevells Booke	*GB* private collection
Robertsbridge (fragment)	*GB-Lbl* Add. 28550

CHAPTER TWO
ENGLAND

Alan Brown

Even the most concise survey of Western musical history will make some reference to the virginalists, that school of English keyboard composers who flourished in the late Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.' The largest source to preserve their music, the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, is one of the best known of all musical manuscripts. It has been available in a modern edition for more than a century and was the basis for Charles van den Borren's pioneering study (1912). Hardly less familiar is the earliest substantial manuscript of virginal music, My Ladye Nevells Booke (hereafter Nevell), dated 1591 and devoted to music by William Byrd. Byrd, who excelled not only in keyboard writing but in virtually every genre cultivated by the Elizabethans, will be the focus of special attention in this chapter. He played a vital role in developing the forms and characteristic textures of the virginalists. Nevertheless, his younger contemporaries, among whom John Bull and Orlando Gibbons are prominent, did not simply imitate him. Each brought a distinctive personality to the art of keyboard composition.

Needless to say, the virginalists do not tell the whole story of English keyboard music before 1700. Thomas Tallis in the sixteenth century and Henry Purcell in the seventeenth (to name but two) may have been active primarily in other fields, but they produced finely crafted keyboard works that can be appreciated for their own merits and not merely as representing particular genres or anticipating later developments.

Inevitably, keyboard music was affected by the political factors that had such profound effects on English life in general. In particular, the turbulent middle years of both the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries took their toll. The English Reformation instigated by Henry VIII (r. 1509–47) signaled the end of an important school of liturgical organ composition, and in the period of the Civil War and Commonwealth (1642–60) organs were again silenced and in many instances destroyed. But these setbacks were reversed at other times and for English music as a whole a much more positive picture emerges in the years of Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) and James I (1603–25), and—after the Restoration of the monarchy—Charles II (1660–85).

To a large extent the history of English keyboard music is the history of keyboard music in London. Most of the composers whose work we shall be considering served as organists of the Chapel Royal, or were otherwise involved with the royal music; some were organists of Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral. All of the seventeenth-century printed sources of English keyboard music were issued in London. Some composers, however, were also associated with provincial cities: Byrd began his career in Lincoln, Bull in Hereford, and Thomas Tomkins ended his in Worcester. In the mid-

seventeenth century Oxford was a center of some importance, as the fine collection of keyboard manuscripts in the Library of Christ Church bears witness.

The Background

Chronological accounts of European keyboard music invariably begin with an English source, the so-called Robertsbridge fragment from the late fourteenth century, already touched on in chapter 1. The six pieces therein (two incomplete) may perhaps have been copied by an English scribe, but the music itself is almost certainly of continental provenance.

From fifteenth-century England it is likely that no keyboard music survives at all, and no instruments are extant. However, there is ample evidence for the use of organs during this century, in records of payments to organ builders and technicians in various parts of the country. Probably most fifteenth-century church organs were modest in scale; if they possessed more than one rank (set of pipes) there was no mechanism for bringing them into play separately, so variations in volume or tone quality would not have possible. It was not uncommon for a church or cathedral to possess two or more organs—one, for example, on the main choir screen and another in the Lady Chapel—so that wherever services took place an organ would be available. The role of the organist was to participate in the liturgy by playing sections of plainsong that would otherwise have been sung. This practice presumably arose partly in order to provide variety and partly to give some relief to the singers. The earliest unambiguous reference to *alternatim* performance, that is, the alternation of choir and organ in the performance of a plainsong, dates from 1396 and concerns a Te Deum sung "alternantibus organis" at the reception of a new abbot at St. Albans (Harrison 1963, 206). It is not known whether on that occasion the organ played only the plainsong notes, or something more elaborate, but during the fifteenth century the addition of counterpoints to the plainsong melody (no doubt improvised at first), and the decoration of the plainsong line itself, must have become regular features. The earliest surviving English liturgical organ music, from the early sixteenth century, shows these procedures at a fairly sophisticated level of development.

Information about organs in the sixteenth century is somewhat more abundant; records of payments include details of a kind lacking in earlier times. For example, at the Church of St. Lawrence, Reading, in 1513 "xjd" (11 pence) was paid for two locks, "one for the stopps and the other for the keyes." This is apparently the earliest reference to stops; as the word implies, these were used to shut off certain ranks of the organ, but the term soon acquired its modern meaning of a register of pipes that can be brought into play.

A famous document of 1519 is the contract between the organ builder Anthony Duddyngton and the churchwardens of All Hallows, Barking (by the Tower), London, for

> a pair of organs…of double C-fa-ut that is to say xxvii plain keys, and the principal to contain the length of v foot, so following with Bassus called Diapason to the same, containing length of x foot or more: and to be double principals throughout the said instrument…with as few stops as may be

convenient. [spelling modernized]

The phrase “pair of organs” does not mean two instruments or even two manuals. The term appears to derive via French from the Latin *par organorum*—a set of matching pipes. “Double C-fa-ut” is the C below the bass stave and in conjunction with “xxvii plain keys” implies a compass of 27 naturals from C to a” (the black notes being understood). The organ was to contain principal and diapason ranks, the former sounding an octave above the latter. Other aspects of the instrument remain ambiguous. The given pipe lengths of five and ten feet may or may not imply that the pitch was a major third or so below our present standard, and the meaning of “double principals” is obscure. It could refer to two ranks of pipes (e.g., one stopped, and one open) or to a small chorus of stops whose lowest component sounded at 4' pitch, extending down to “double C-fa-ut.”

In 1526 John Howe and John Clymmowe undertook to build an organ at Holy Trinity, Coventry, with “vii stops and xxvii pleyn keyes.” Here again, a keyboard running from C to a" is probable. This compass is sufficient for all extant English liturgical organ music.

An unusually informative source is the inventory of musical instruments belonging to Henry VIII, made in 1547. The list includes more than 60 instruments held in the King’s different houses, the majority being at Westminster under the care of Philip van Wilder, Henry’s “Keeper of the Instruments.” There are double and single regals, double and single virginals, and just two clavichords relegated to the list of “Instruments of Soundrie Kindes” (clavichords seem to have been more common in the previous century). The “double” instruments had a more extended bass range (probably to C, as opposed to c or G). The regal was a small chamber organ, no doubt similar to the smaller instruments used in churches. The inventory gives details of the pipework for several of the regals (though not precise specifications); typically they had three or four ranks, including pipes of wood, tin, or brass, the regal (reed) stop itself, and often a “Cimball” (perhaps a small two-rank mixture). Sometimes a rank of pipes was divided, although exactly where is not stated. One of the largest instruments was “A paire of double Regalles with viii halfe stoppes and one hole stoppe of pipes.” This division would enable the player to use different tone colors in the upper and lower registers of the single manual instrument.

Following the Reformation and during the reign of Elizabeth the organ suffered a period of neglect; many churches allowed their instruments to fall into disrepair, and there is little evidence even of the building or use of house organs. In the early years of the seventeenth century there was a revival, in which an important part was played by Thomas Dallam. Complete specifications survive for a number of his instruments, some of which have two manuals. The organ he built at Worcester Cathedral in 1613–14 has often been quoted as a typical example:

> Great: 2 open diapasons (8'); 2 principals (4'); one twelfth (2 2/3'); 2 fifteenths (2'); one recorder (stopped) (8'?)
>
> “Chaire Organ” (Choir): one [stopped] diapason (8'); one principal (4'); one flute (4'?); one fifteenth (2'); one twenty-second (1')

For the Great diapasons the explanation is added “CC fa ut a pipe of 10 foot long,” which confirms a compass descending to C and suggests a pitch (once again) about a major third

below that of today.

Organs built after the disruptions of the midcentury were similar in essential respects to those of Dallam, although the manual compass would often be extended down to G1. There were still no pedals. A twomanual organ commissioned from Robert Taunton for Wells Cathedral in 1662 had a very similar layout to the previous example:

> Great: 2 open diapasons (8'); one stopped diapason (8'); 2 principals (4'); one twelfth (2 2/3'); one twenty-second (1'); one recorder (8'?)
>
> Chaire Organ: One stopped diapason (8'); one flute (4'?); one principal (4'); 2 fifteenths (2'); one twenty-second (1')

English organ building in the late seventeenth century was dominated by “Father” Bernard Smith and Renatus Harris. Both of them added a third manual (“echo organ”) to their largest instruments from the 1680s onward.

The 1547 inventory describes a large number of “Virginals.” In modern usage the term usually refers to the small rectangular instrument with strings running parallel to the keyboard, but in the sixteenth century it was applied to any type of harpsichord. No doubt some of Henry’s instruments were of the rectangular type, but his collection also included “longe Virginalles made harpe fasshion,” which suggests the characteristic harpsichord shape with the strings lying at right angles to the keyboard. Henry’s stringed keyboard instruments were almost certainly imported from Northern Italy or the Low Countries. Van Wilder himself was a Netherlander, and Dionysius Memo, a keyboard virtuoso from Venice, played at court in 1517.

We know tantalizingly little about the instruments that the virginalists had at their disposal. Almost certainly, the majority were still imported. A sixteenth-century Italian virginal, said to have belonged to Queen Elizabeth, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Its compass, originally C/E (short octave) to f''' is standard for Italian virginals of this century—but not in agreement with that which suffices for the music of Byrd and most of his immediate successors (C, D, E to a''). Harpsichords and virginals by members of the Ruckers family of Antwerp certainly found their way to England in Byrd’s time. The most common Ruckers instrument was the single-manual harpsichord with 8¢ and 4¢ stops, and a compass of C/E (short octave) to c''' The Ruckers virginals normally had the same compass and one 8 'rank. Russell mentions nearly 20 instrument makers resident in England in the sixteenth century whose names appear in various records, but of their work only one example survives. It is a combined organ and harpsichord, dated 1579, by L. Theeuwes, a Netherlander who had settled in London by 1568. Its keyboard ran from C to c''' with a chromatic bottom octave, and the harpsichord had three registers, 8', 8', 4'.

The importation of foreign instruments continued at least until 1637, when Charles I ordered a large double-manual harpsichord from the Ruckers workshop. However, about 20 rectangular virginals by English makers survive from the years 1641 to 1679 (see, e.g., Ill. 2. 1). They are all of the type with the keyboard left of center, which meant that the string was plucked near the left-hand bridge, giving a bright tone. English harpsichords from before 1700 are extremely rare. One example, made by Charles Haward in London in 1683, has two 8 'stops and may originally have had a lute stop. Haward also made “bentside” spinets. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century the spinet replaced the

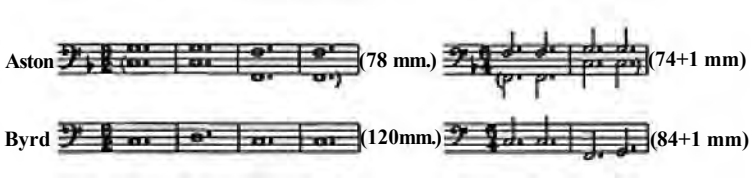
virginal as the standard small domestic keyboard instrument. It had a single set of strings, running at about 35° to the keyboard; the normal compass was G_1/B_1 (short octave) to c''' or d''', which is suitable for most of the keyboard music by Restoration composers.

ILLUSTRATION 2. 1. Virginal by James White, made in London and dated 1656. The compass is G_1/B_1 (short octave) to c'''. The instrument is seen here in a contemporary setting at the Museum of London. Reproduced by kind permission of the Museum of London.

The Two Sixteenth-Century Traditions

No keyboard music was printed in England before the seventeenth century. Manuscripts are our only sources; however, English keyboard manuscripts earlier than Nevell are scarce. Many must have been lost in the religious upheavals of the midcentury. Those that do survive represent two traditions, sacred and secular; Byrd drew on both in forming his own keyboard style. The most important source for liturgical organ music is London 29996. The three relevant layers of this composite manuscript (ff. 6–48; ff. 49–67; ff. 158–178') were probably all compiled before 1559, the date when the Catholic rite finally ceased to be the official one in England. The hymn settings on ff. 158–178' are arranged liturgically, beginning with Advent and continuing as far as the first Sunday in Lent. The largest of the purely secular sources is the so-called Dublin Virginal Manuscript of c. 1570. This book did not originate in Ireland; rather, the one composer named, “mastyre taylere,” can probably be identified as John Taylor, who was organist of Westminster Abbey in 1562–70. A third source, the Mulliner Book, copied by Thomas Mulliner in London,

EXAMPLE 2.1 Grounds in Hornpipes by Aston and Byrd

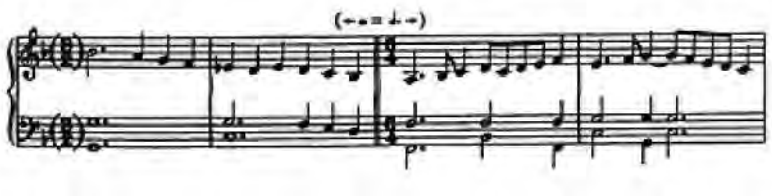


c. 1560–75, contains a miscellany of music probably compiled for the use of choirboys (see Flynn 1993). About half the pieces are plainsong settings, although not in any particular liturgical order; among the rest are keyboard transcriptions of anthems and of secular and sacred songs, and a few examples of what appear to be idiomatic harpsichord works.

At least one earlier manuscript survives to give us some idea of the kind of music played by the professional harpsichordists at Henry VIII's court. It is Royal App. 58, dating from c. 1520–40, with its three famous pieces in idiomatic keyboard style: "A hornepype" by Hugh Aston and the anonymous "My lady careys dompe" and "The short mesuré off my lady wynkfylds rownde." All three use a melody-and-accompaniment texture with broken chord figurations in the left hand. The most extended piece is Aston's Hornpipe, which could well have been the direct model for Byrd's piece of the same name (MB 27/39).[2] Both works have a first section with a 4-measure ground (if barred in 3/2 meter) and a second section with a 2-measure ground (if barred in compound duple time). Example 2.1 shows, in their simplest form, the grounds used in the two pieces. Aston's ground is essentially in the tenor, often supported by the bass notes shown in brackets in the example. It begins on the supertonic, but from m. 23 onward new right-hand figurations tend to begin on the tonic measures, anticipating the pattern of the second section. Example 2.2 shows a few measures on either side of the change of meter. The seamless join here is typical of Aston's sustained melodic line, which often bridges the statements of the ground.

The other two pieces have more obvious connections with the court: Sir Nicholas Carew (d. 1539) was Henry's "Master of the Horse" and Sir Richard Wingfield (d. 1525) his ambassador to France. The "dump" is again based on a ground—a simple alternation of G (tonic)

EXAMPLE 2.2 Aston, Hornpipe, mm. 77–80



and D (dominant). The opening right-hand melody has a resemblance to the "Western