THE BAROQUE PIANIST

Pekka Vapaavuori - Hannele Hynninen

Könemann Music Budapest


MENUET
GAVOTTE
VERSO
MUSIK
Historia
J.S.Bach
BAROQUE

Pekka Vapaavuori – Hannele Hynninen

The Baroque Pianist

Illustrated by Irmeli Huovinen
Translated by Mikko Korhonen

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Prologue

Baroque music maintains an undisputed position in the teaching of the piano, and over the years has been taught and played in various ways. Evidence of this are the numerous editions of Baroque music, each with its own interpretation reflecting the personal views of the editor.

However, increasingly often these edited publications have been abandoned in favour of the original source, the score as it was written down by the composer. One is then confronted by the problem of how to reveal the colourful performance practice of the Baroque era in the apparently barren Urtext notation. It was in any case absolutely impossible to notate that performance practice accurately.

This book is intended for students of the piano, the harpsichord and the clavichord. It offers a notation faithful to that of the composers, while the keys to its interpretation are provided in the textual section. Original sources have been consulted whenever available to the compilers.

We did not wish to tie the hands of the teacher or the student by any kind of editing. The textual portion is intended to enable each and every one to assimilate the various possibilities offered by the musical language of the Baroque, and then form his own interpretation. The Baroque is such a fascinating area in the wide field of music precisely because of the freedom within its own limits.

Fingerings have been given sparingly, though those by the composer are always printed in italics. Fingerings typical of the Baroque are suggested in places where their use can lead to a better understanding and realization of the idiomatic stressing of individual passages. Otherwise the fingerings have been left to the discretion of th teacher and the pupil.

The pieces have been selected to give a many-side picture of the music of the whole era of the Baroqu in different countries. It has also been our aim t choose pieces which can be naturally rendered on th piano.

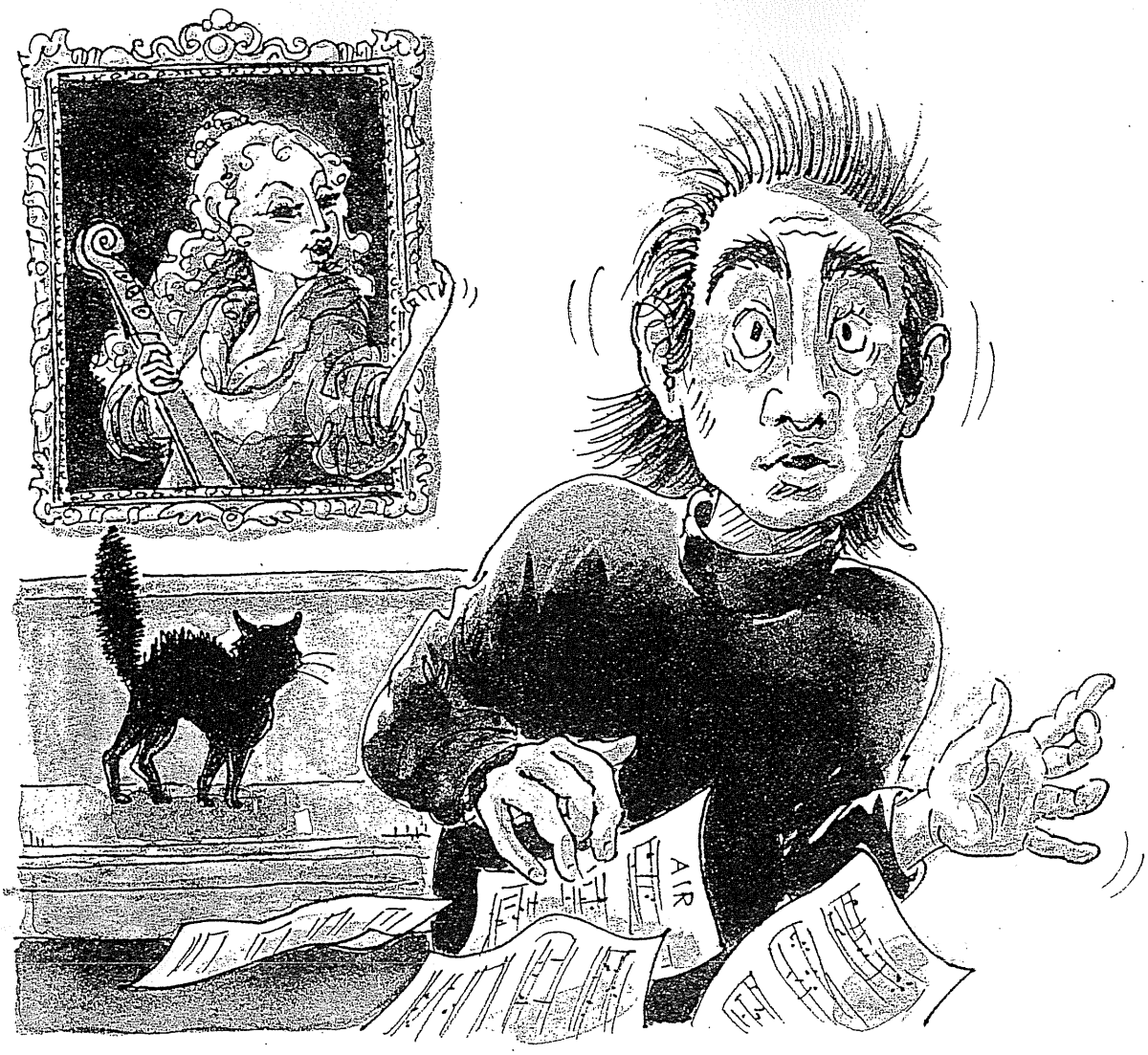
Usually it is the Baroque music of the German are that has most often been played on the piano; thu most of the examples are from there. We have alsc drawn from our own experience of those kinds o pieces which have proved popular among youn students of the piano.

The order of the pieces is based above all on their level of difficulty: the easiest ones are at the beginning and the most difficult ones at the end. However, it is problematic to determine the level of an individual composition, as the smallest piece can become difficult once the practices of expression typical of the Baroque are applied. These include factors such as the articulation, the ornamentation according to the preferences of the player, the adding of extra voices to the texture by means of thoroughbass, etc.

The pieces have been carefully chosen by both authors. The chapter of biographical notes on the composers was written by *Hannele Hynninen,* while the summary on the characteristics of the tonalities was compiled by *Mikko Korhonen.* The rest of the text is by *Pekka Vapaavuori.* The English translation was prepared by *Mikko Korhonen* and revised by *Andrew Stevenson.*

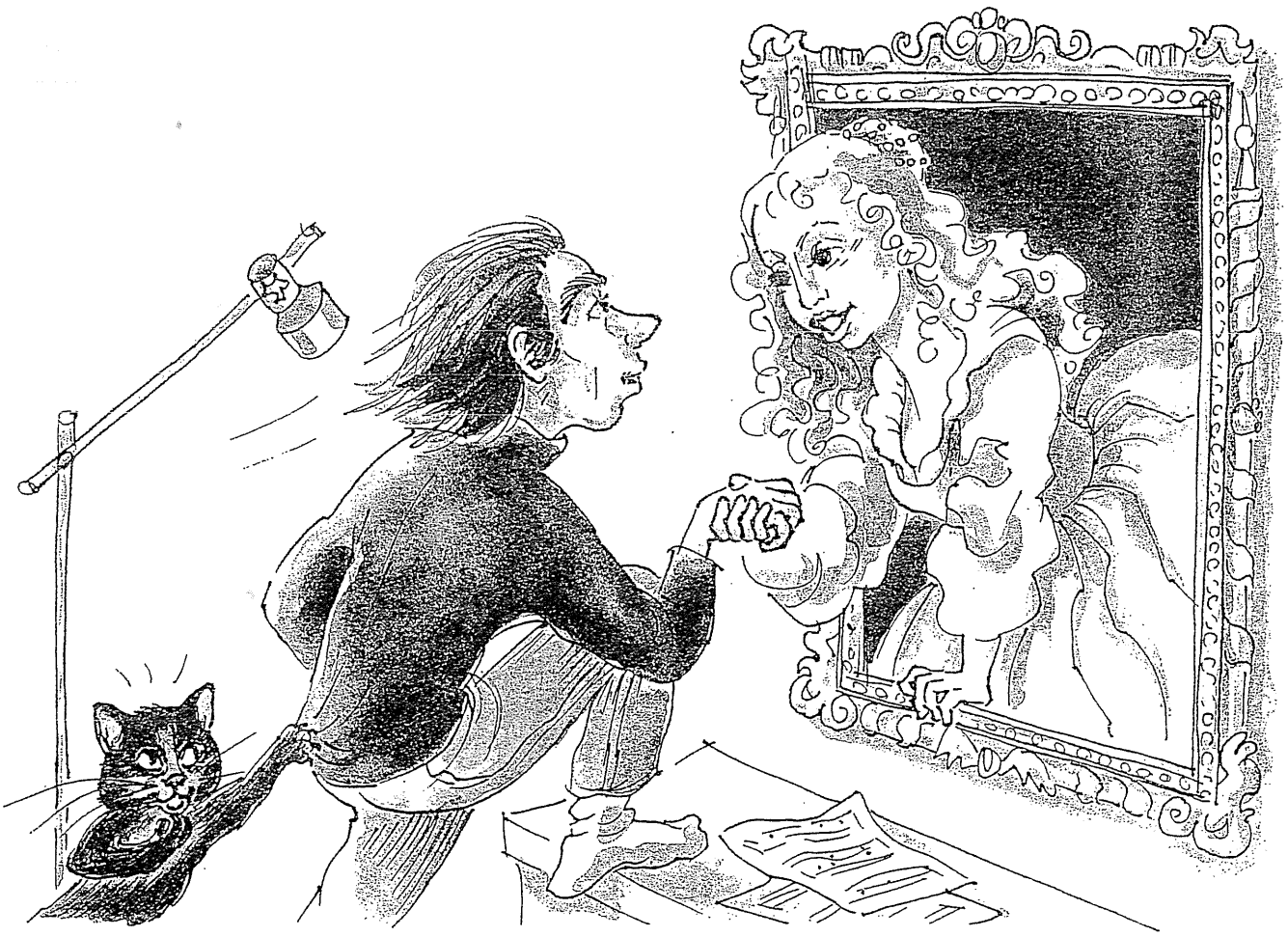
We wish you rewarding expeditions in the field of Baroque music.

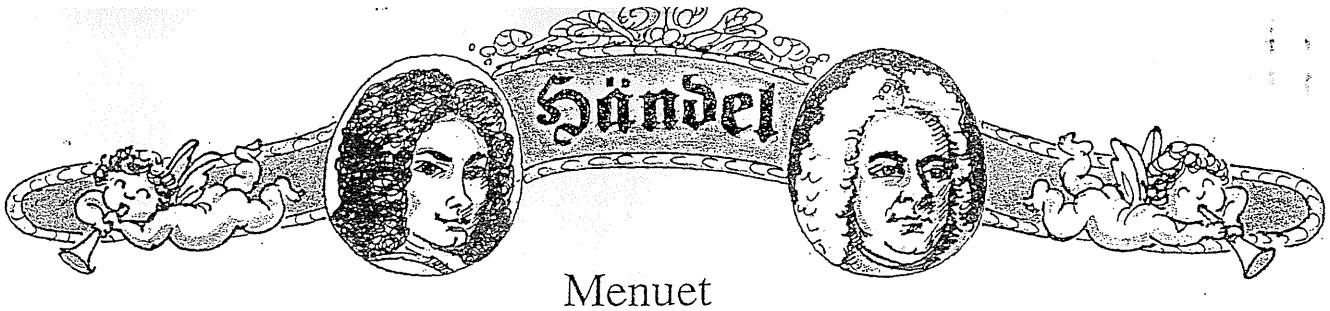
Pekka Vapaavuori *Hannele Hynninen*



INDEX

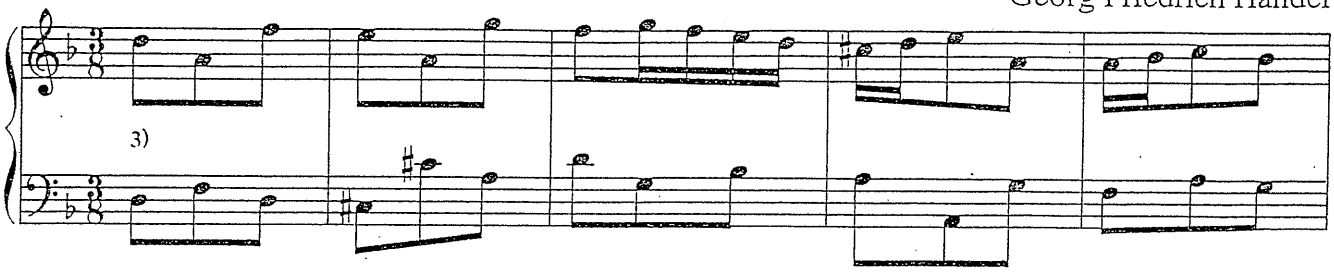
Abbreviations:
AMB = Notenbüchlein für Anna Magdalena Bach
WFB = Klavierbüchlein für Wilhelm Friedemann Bach
FVB = Fitzwilliam Virginal Book

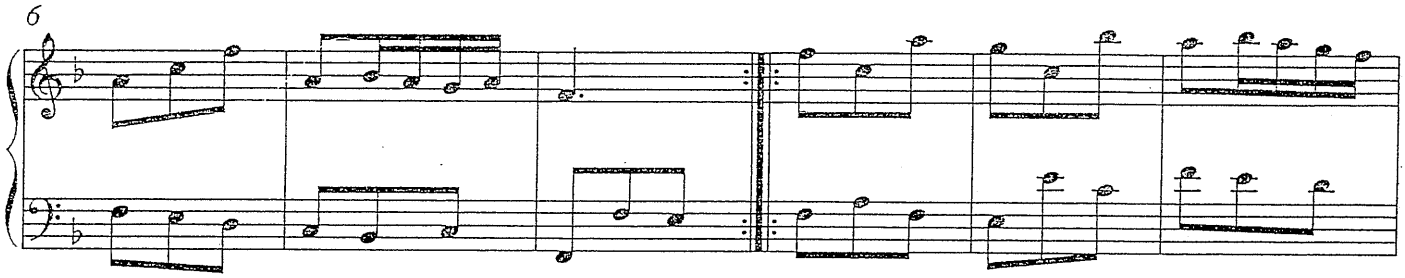


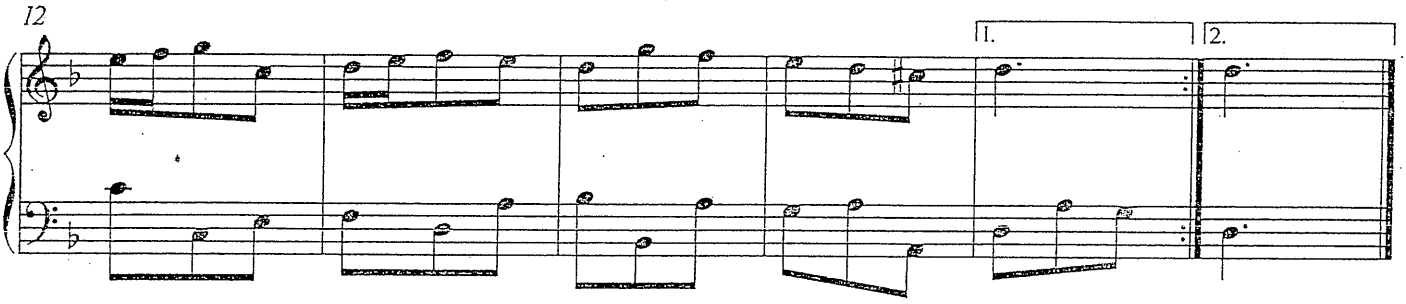


Menuet

Georg Friedrich Händel

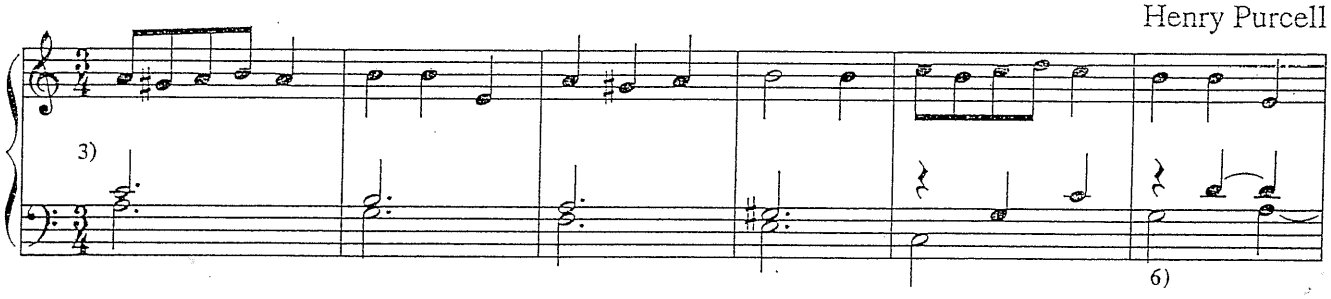


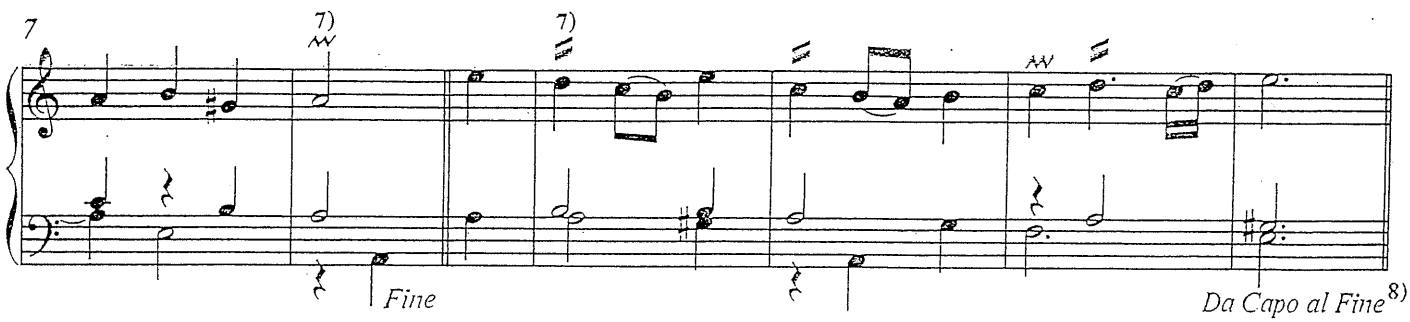


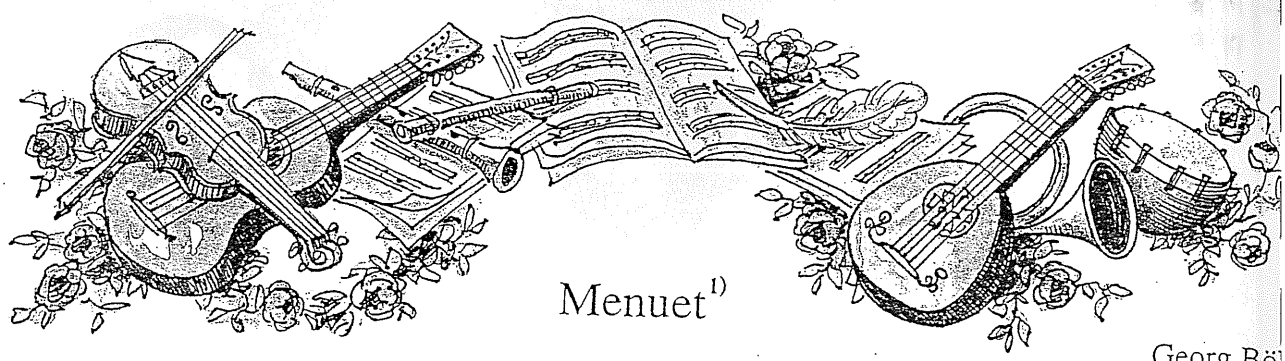


Minuet

Henry Purcell







Menuet[1)]

Georg Bö

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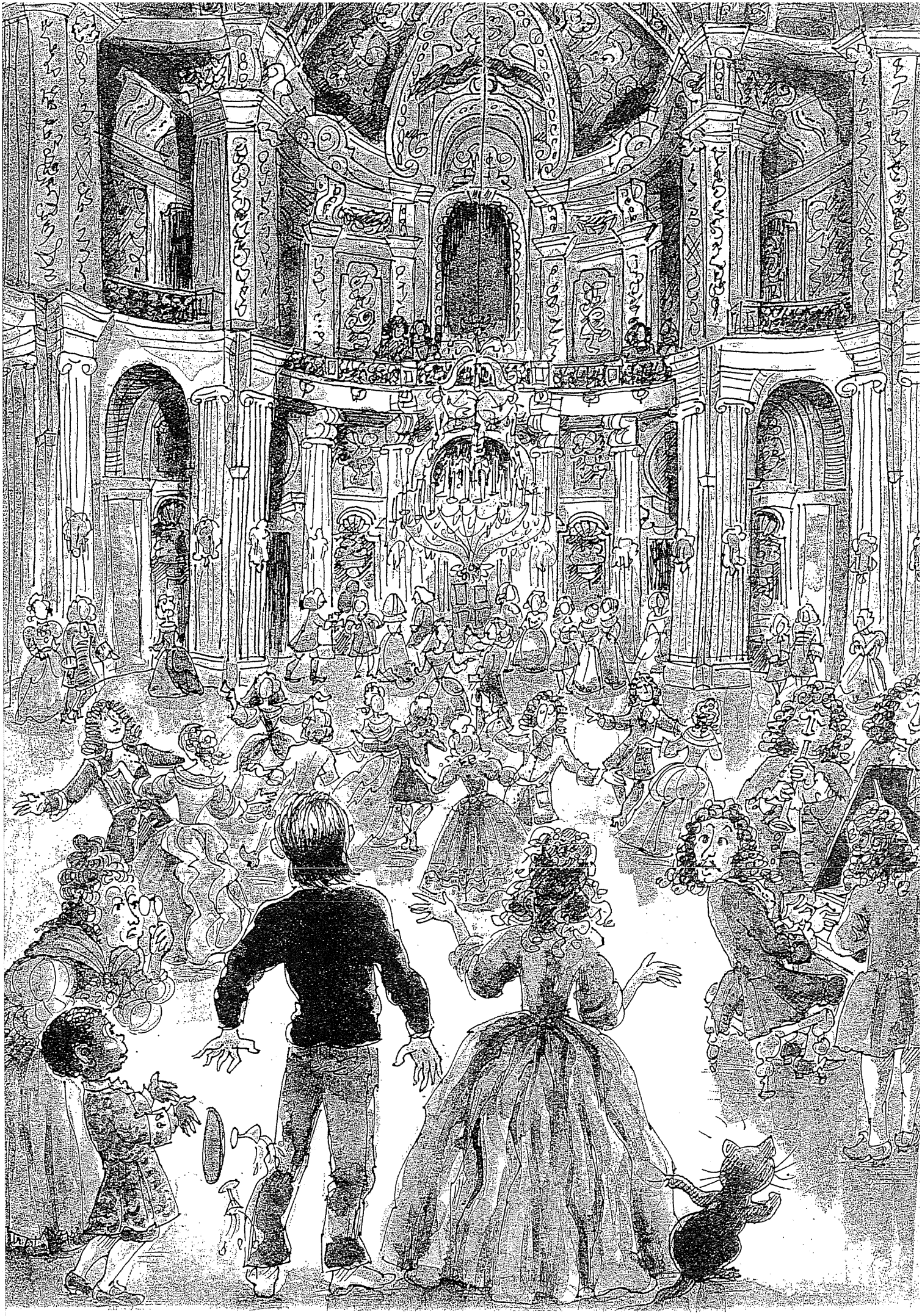
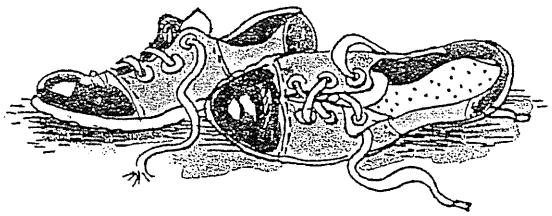


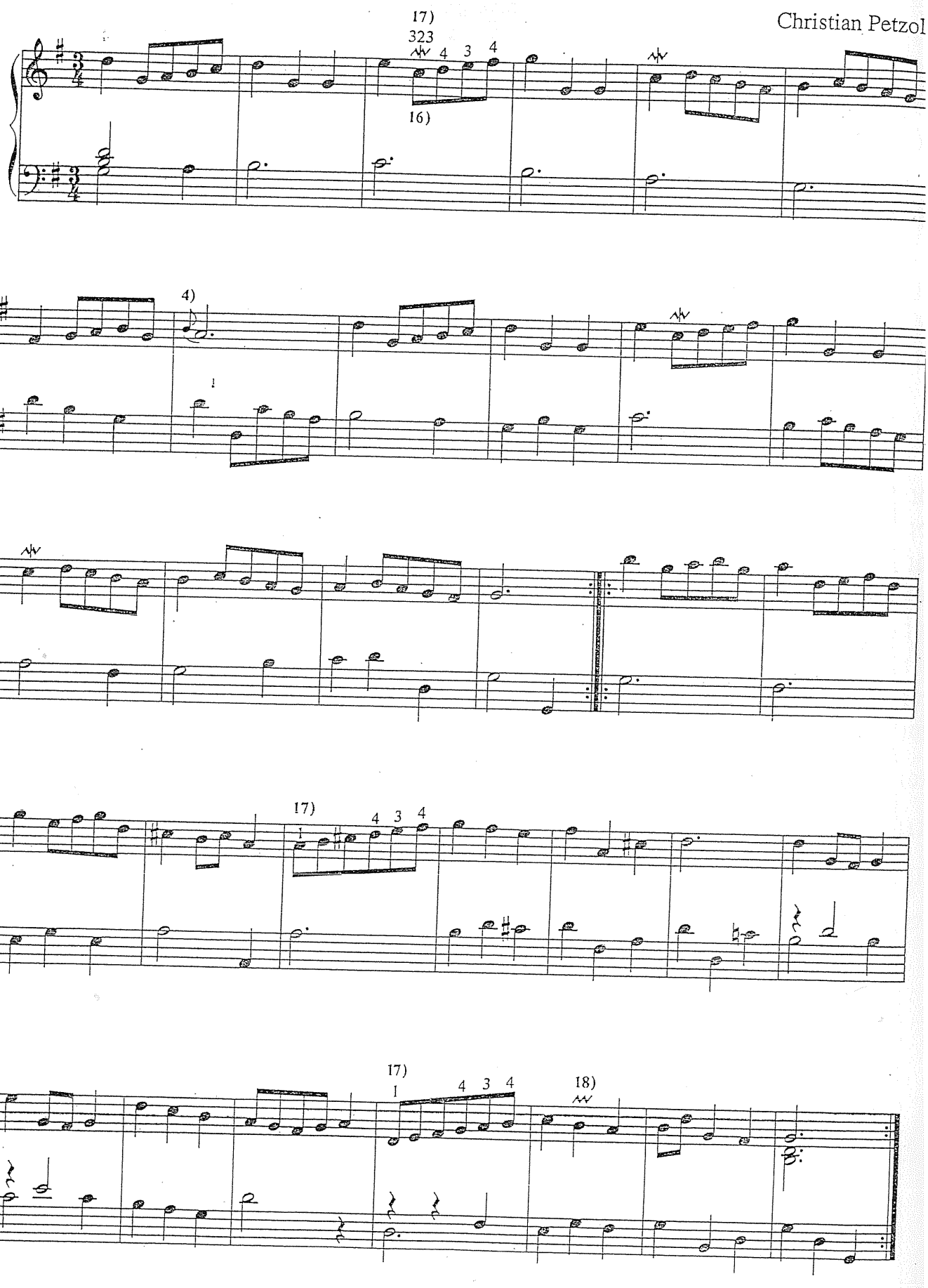
Baroque Music

The Controversial Corner-stone of Piano Playing 93



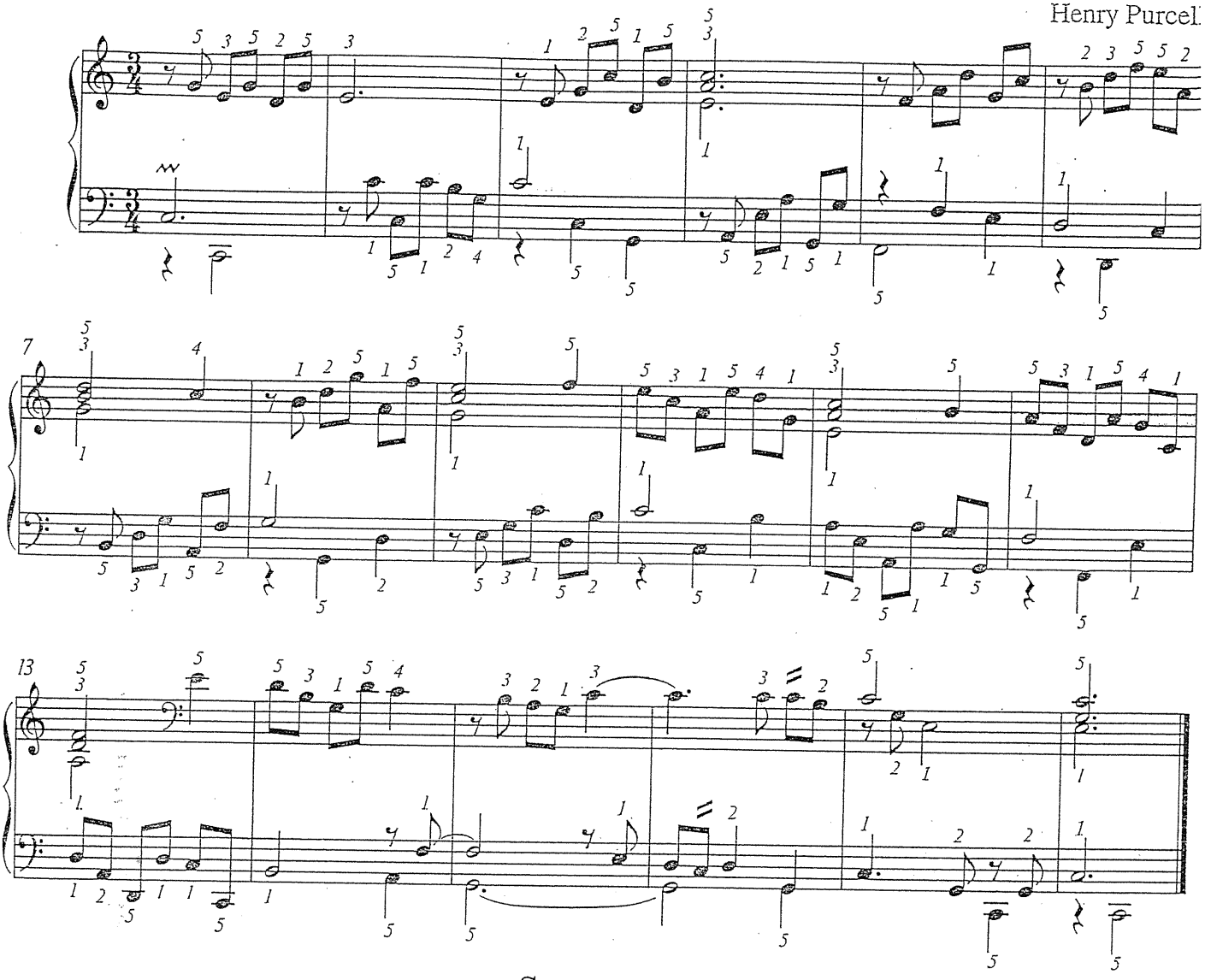
Menuet

Christian Petzol



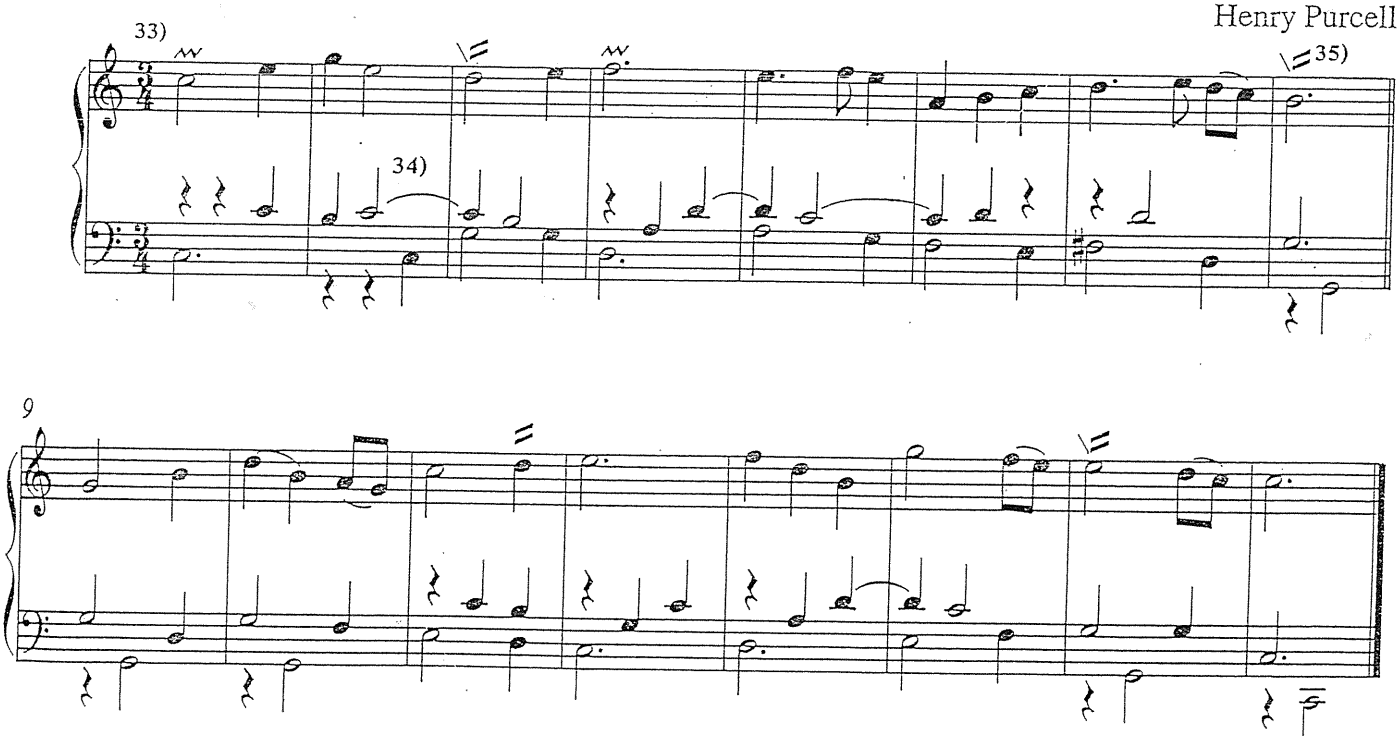
Prelude for the fingering [32)]

Henry Purcell



Song tune

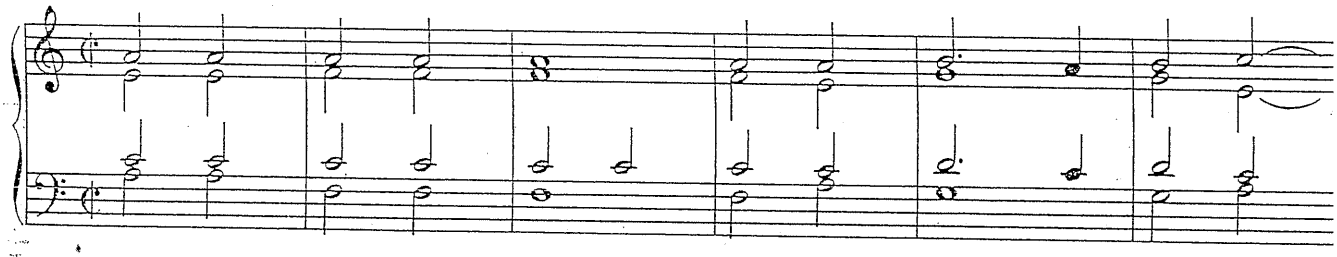
Henry Purcell

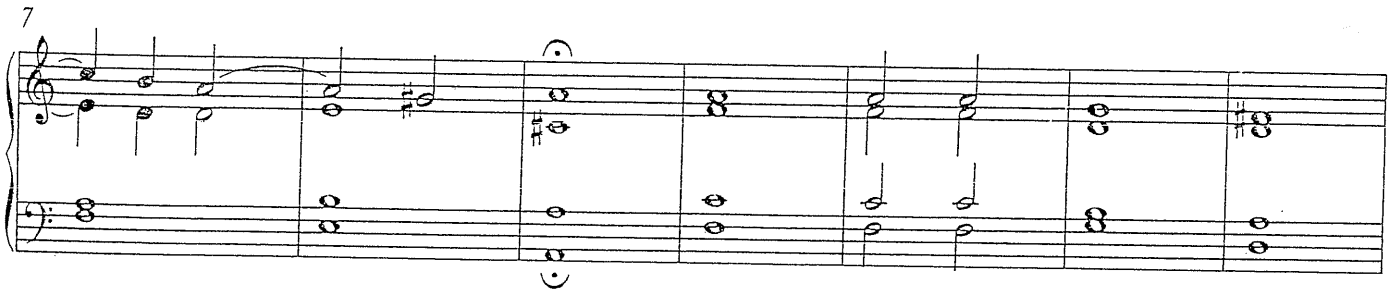


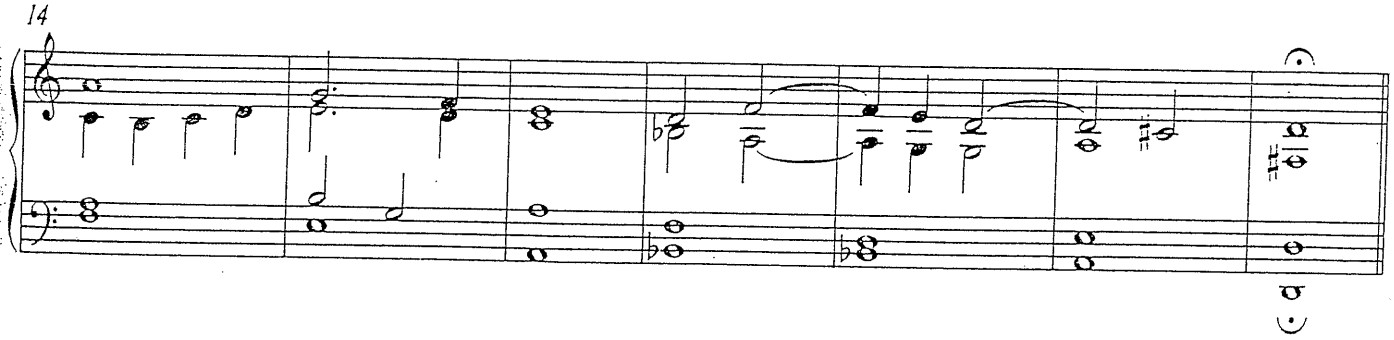
[31)]

Fabordón del primer tono [46]

Antonio de Cabezón

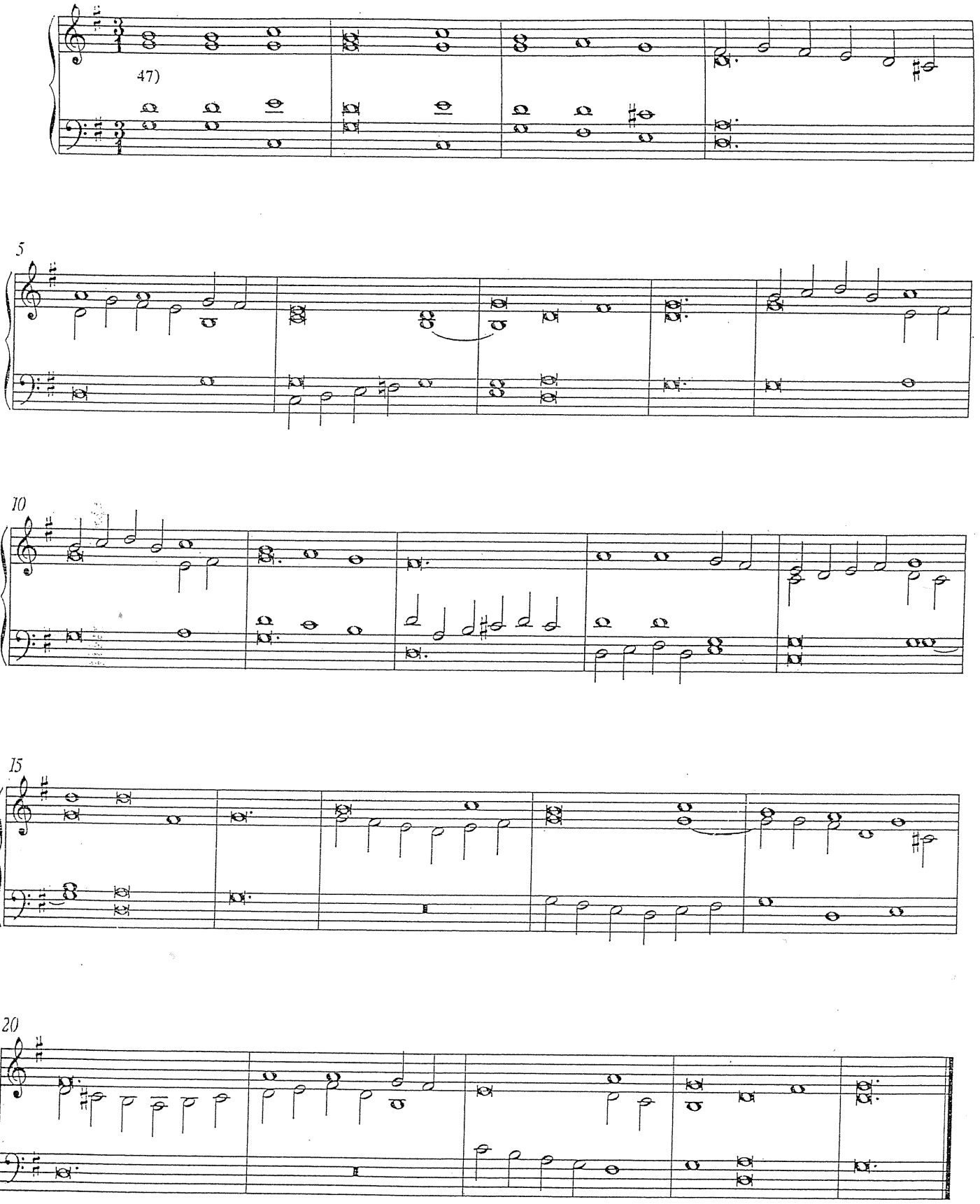






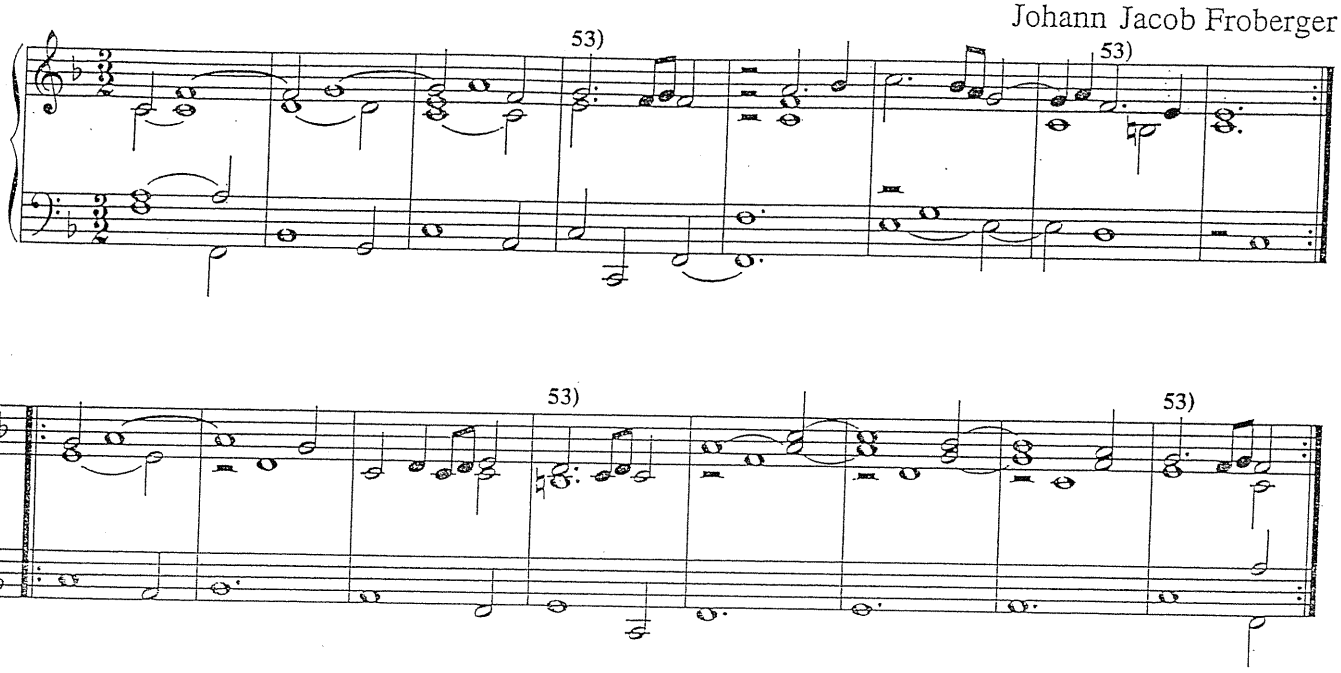
Pavana

Luis de Milán [45]



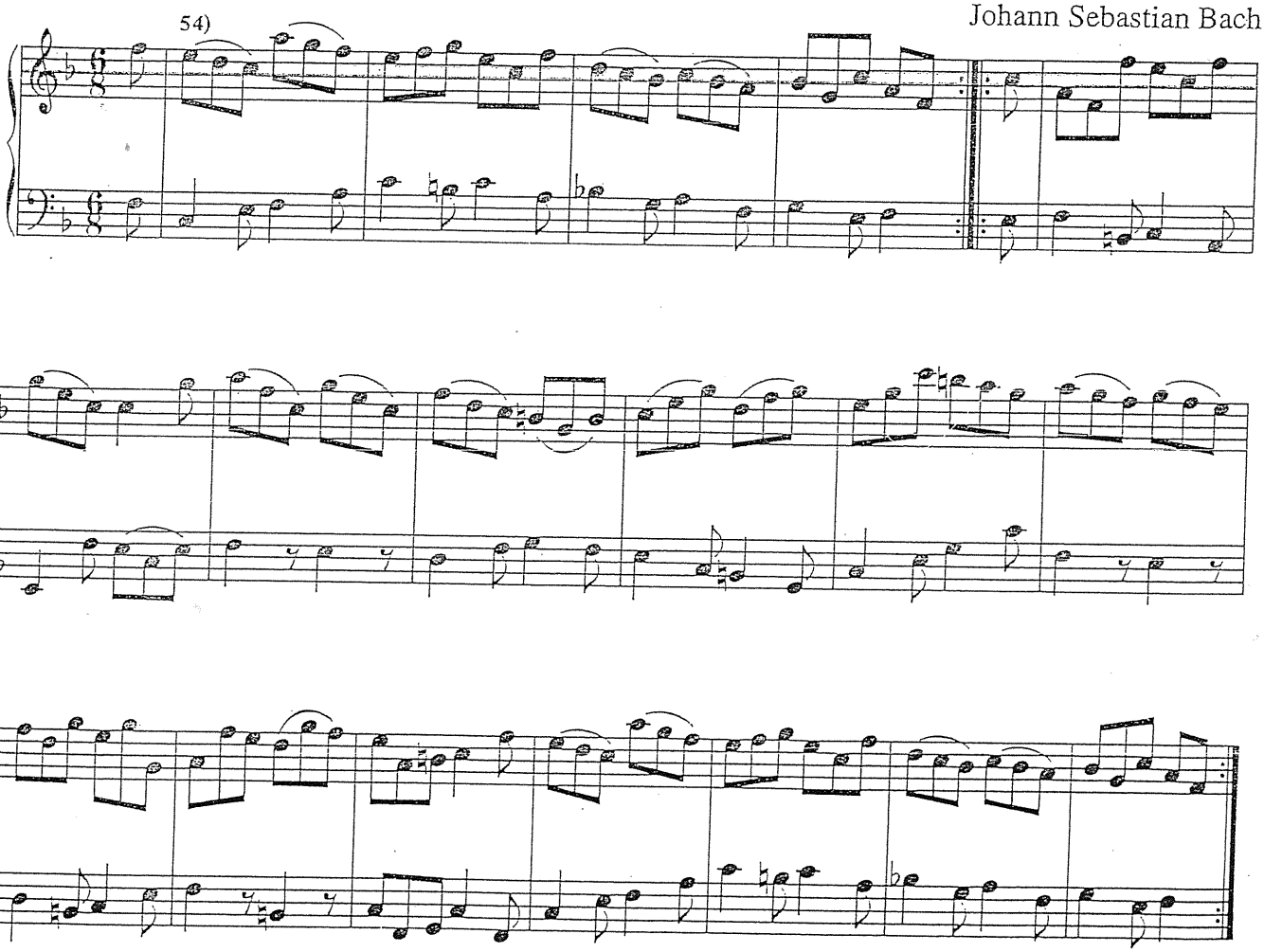
Saraband

Johann Jacob Froberger



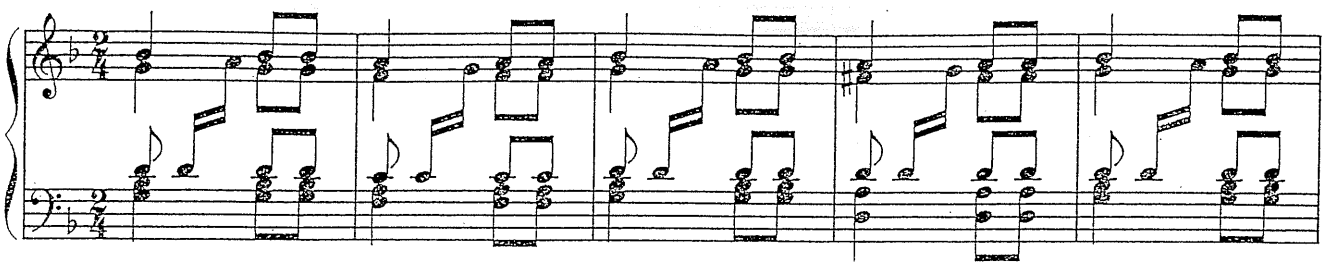
Gigue

Johann Sebastian Bach

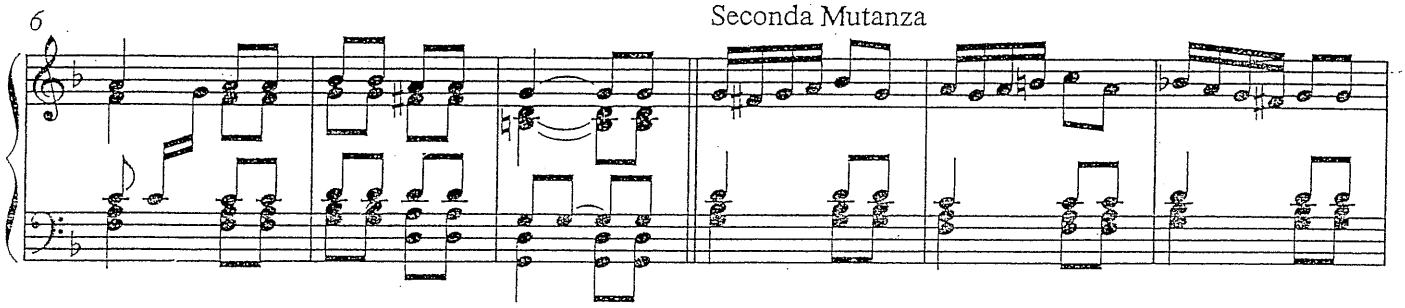


Il Ballo dell' Intorcia

Antonio Valente



6 Seconda Mutanza



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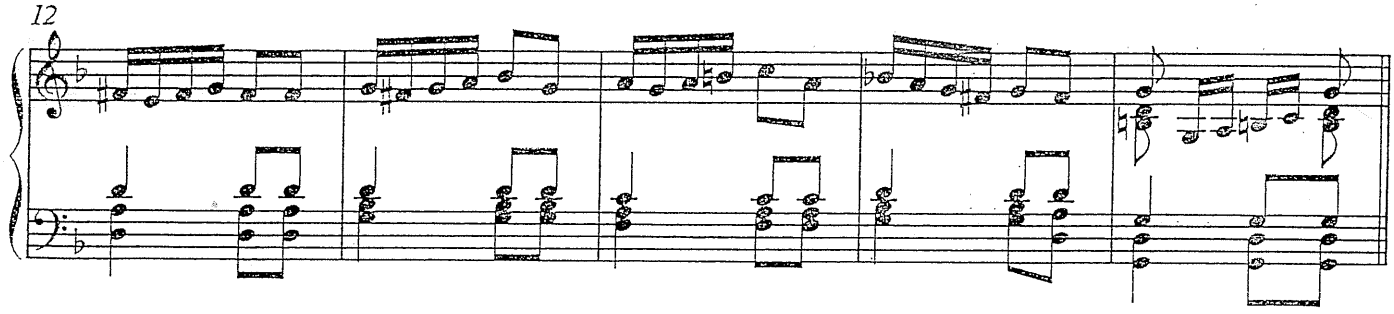
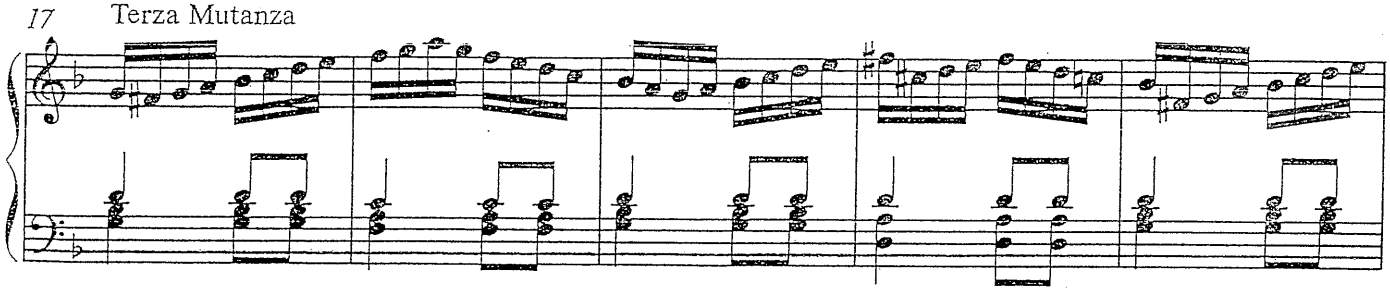
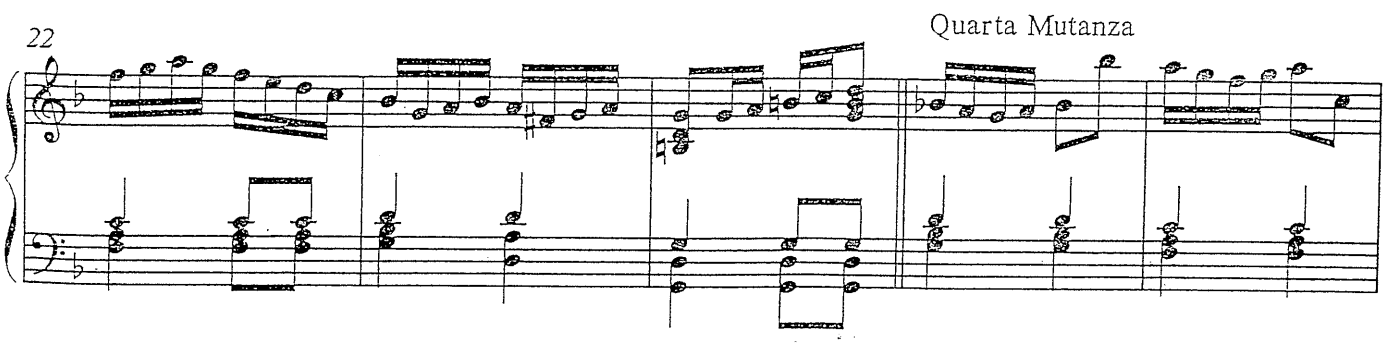
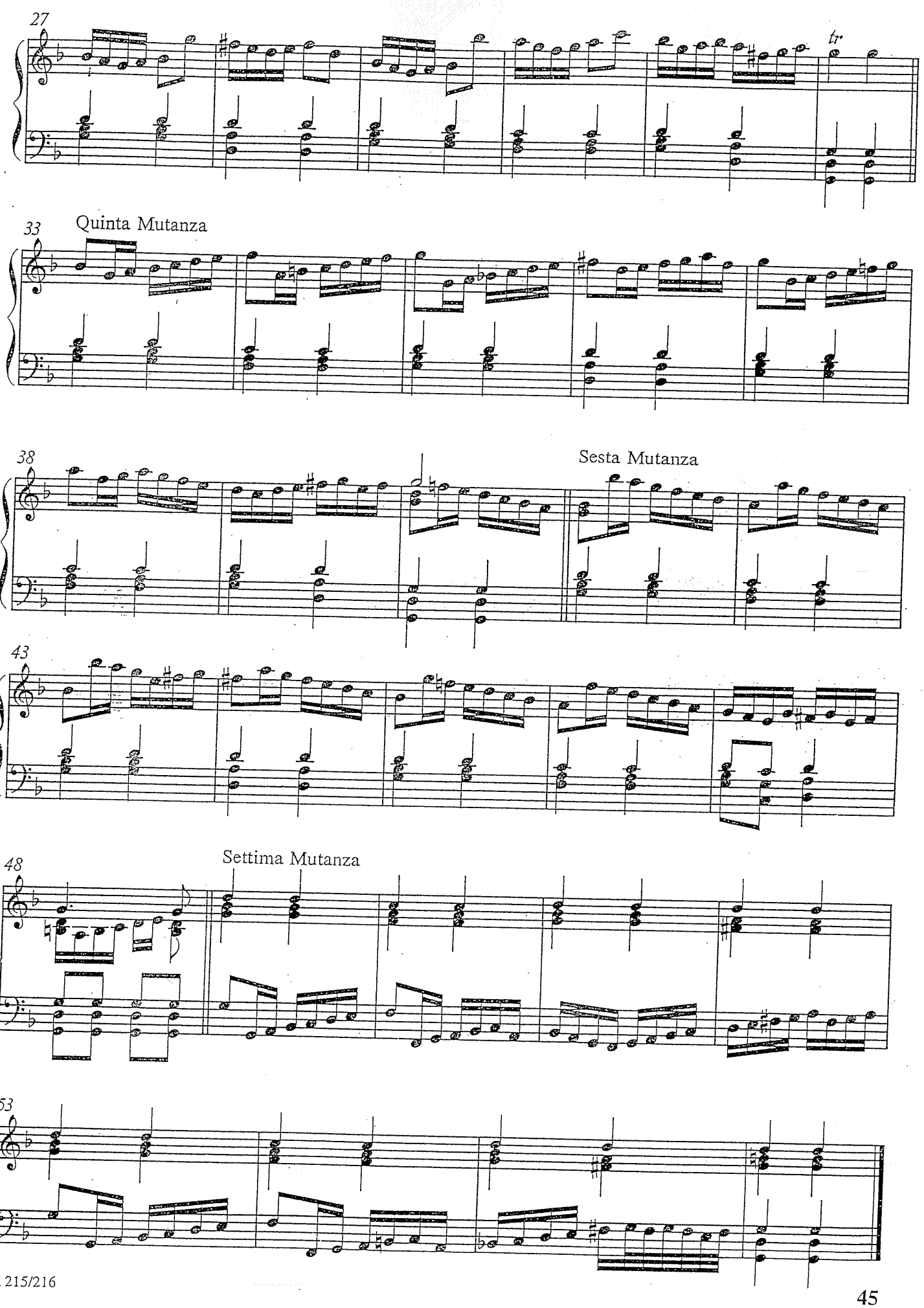


17 Terza Mutanza



22 Quarta Mutanza

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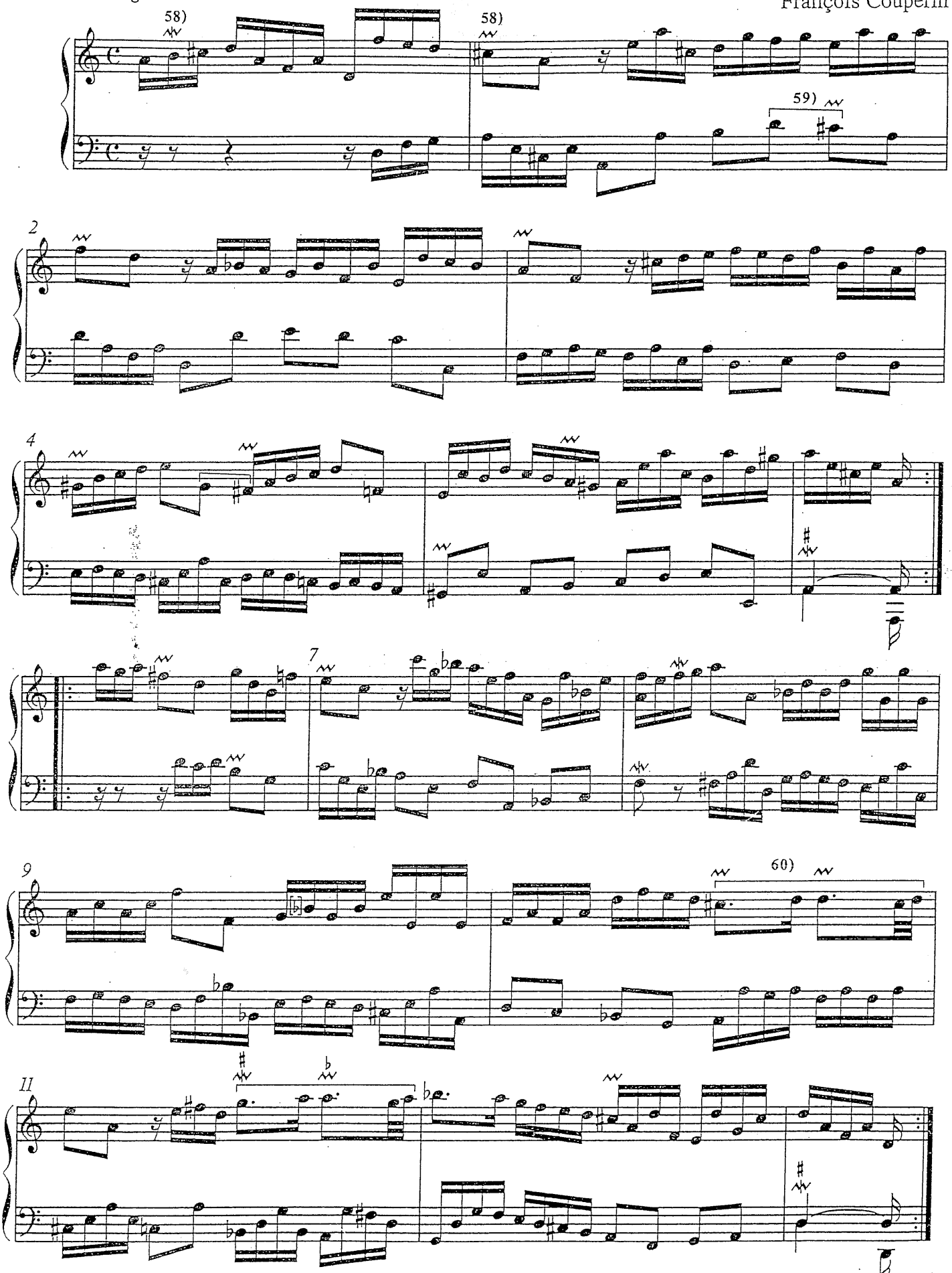
33
Quinta Mutanza
38
Sesta Mutanza
43
48
Settima Mutanza
53

Allemande[57)]

Lègèrement

François Couperin



Hints on the Interpretation of the Pieces

1) J. S. Bach collected two books of music (1722 and 1725) for his second wife Anna Magdalena. Like many other pieces in the present collection, this minuet is from the second book. Most of the pieces contained in it have earlier been attributed to Bach himself, though with the exception of the partitas not a single one of the dance movements is by him. However, most of the rest of the pieces are by Bach.

2) Bach names Mons. Böhm as the composer, which probably refers to Georg Böhm (1661–1733).

3) See *stress hierarchy* on page 96, *articulation of single notes* on page 97 and *inequality* on page 100. Study the phrase structure of the piece and see what D. G. Türk writes about the first notes of each phrase *"On Clarity of Performance"*, on page 98. Consider how to take all this into account in the interpretation of the minuet and apply the same to every piece in this book before starting to practise. In addition, study the chapter on *inequality* and consider its relevance to the interpretation of each piece in the book. Try different alternatives and let your ear decide.

4) The appoggiatura was usually notated with a small quaver and a slur. This does not describe the length of the appoggiatura, which in connection with a note divisible by three would be two thirds of the length of the main note. However, here it would seem most natural to play the appoggiatura as a quaver just before the left hand figure starting the next phrase.

5) Keep a regular beat all the way to the end. Grand and long ritardandos were not applied in Baroque music, especially not in dance movements.

6) Due to the passage of the bass part and the corresponding harmony, the two consecutive bars form here a longer bar in $\frac{3}{2}$ time. This phenemenon, known as the *hemiola,* was a common device in the vicinity of cadences. Take this into account when accentuating the notes.

7) See Purcell's Table of Ornaments on page 102. The preceding ornament (a beat) has also been interpreted as a mordent (see Bach). The second ornament (shake) is a trill (see Bach), the speed of which and the number of notes played is left to the discretion of the performer.

8) This da capo structure (ABA) was commonly used during the Baroque. In the following minuet Rameau calls it a Rondeau. The signs 𝄋 𝄋 denote that you must return from the latter to the former and play until the end.

9) Rameau intended this minuet to be a lesson in basic finger technique of harpsichord playing and placed it together with his table of ornaments at the end of the prologue to his *Pièces de Clavecin* of 1724. The intention is to practise the independence of the fingers. According to Rameau, each finger should be raised from the key exactly simultaneously with the pressing down of the next one. He advises keeping the fingers at all times as close to the keys as possible and relates that he has removed all ornaments because of the exercise nature of this piece. Rameau has divided the quavers into groups of two or four with beams, following the structure of the bass line. Consider how this could affect the interpretation.

10) Giustini's *Sonate da cimbalo di piano e forte* from the year 1732 is the first printed collection in which the title states that it is intended to be played on a "Hammerclavier" or fortepiano (cimbalo di piano e forte = a harpsichord on which it is possible to play both softly and loudly; pianoforte). However, this does not exclude the possibility of playing the pieces on other keyboard instruments as well when necessary. Apparently the thinking was very liberal in those days. This minuet is the final movement of the

Baroque Music

The Controversial Corner-stone of Piano Playing

Baroque music is a concept which continues to stir emotions and cause heated arguments among musicians. After its heyday this music was forgotten as a part of everyday music-making, and when people started to become interested in it again in the 19th century, musical thinking had altogether changed. Musicians attracted to the music of the Baroque did not deem it necessary to find out how it was originally performed or how its austere notation used to be read. It was interpreted according to the ideas of the Romantic era and to ease that interpretation typical 19th century additions were made: slurs, indications of dynamics and tempi, etc.

However, several decades ago a trend towards an authentic interpretation of Baroque music arose as a reaction against Romantic performance practices. The representatives of this line of thought discarded the Romantic editions and started to demand and prepare Urtext-editions, which follow the original text of the composer as closely as possible with no additions whatsoever. This same tendency awakened an interest in original instruments.

As far as keyboard instruments are concerned, this led to a situation in which the supporters of so-called authenticity preferred to play Urtext-music on a harpsichord, whereas the majority of pianists retained the Romantic style of playing together with the corresponding editions. Though the search for objective authenticity started to influence pianists as well, notation was still interpreted according to the patterns in general use. All was based on the understanding that notation has always been interpreted in the same way, which is not true. For a player familiar with the idiom, the austere notation of the Baroque contained a vast amount of information, the codification of which would later require a multitude of various signs and symbols. Since contemporary notation has developed increasingly minute nuances, it was assumed that no nuances or methods of refinement were used during the Baroque era, as they were not notated. The architectural structure of the music was to speak for itself.

Only gradually did a wider interest in sources other than the written notation gain ground. The study of Baroque interpretation and contemporary ways of thinking led to the radical discovery that the notation itself contained amounts of information beyond belief, quite without the semiotic system developed later. In fact, the notation contains everything that is needed for a full interpretation of the music. It is merely a question of being able to read it correctly.

The Diversity of the Baroque and the Common Denominator

To the teacher and student of the piano, Baroque music usually refers to compositions written by or at least attributed to J. S. Bach.

Yet that concept contains a stylistic spectrum of many eras and geographical areas. The usual definition of the Baroque in music (1600–1750) is clearly a solution of convenience and not one based on specific stylistic grounds. When comparing the musical fashions in the various courts of Italy, or in England, France, Germany, and other European countries, the differences between the various periods within the Baroque are significant; the stylistic contrast between Frescobaldi and Scarlatti, Byrd and Händel, Chambonnières and Rameau or Froberger and Bach is considerable.

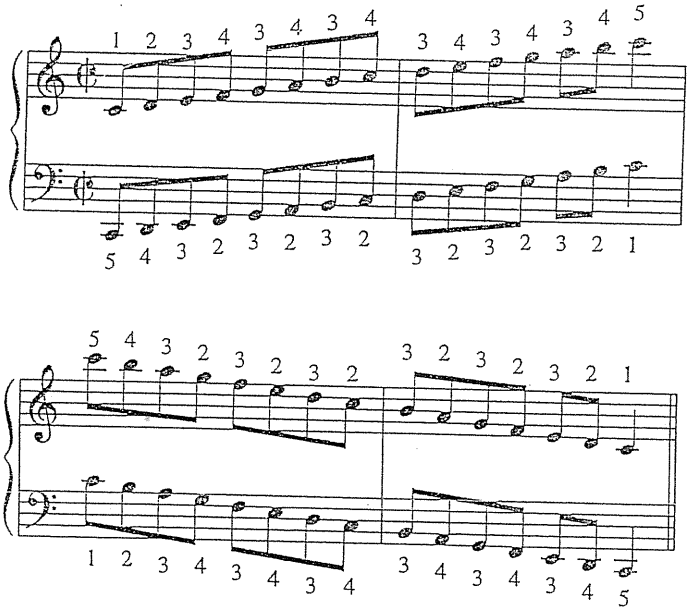
Thus the Baroque in music is a very loose term containing a multitude of styles, though all of them have one thing in common. This is the system of affections and speech as the basis for musical expression.

One area closely connected with the affections is the system of tonal characteristics. Each tonality was understood to have its specific character, which was suitable for the expression of a specific affection.

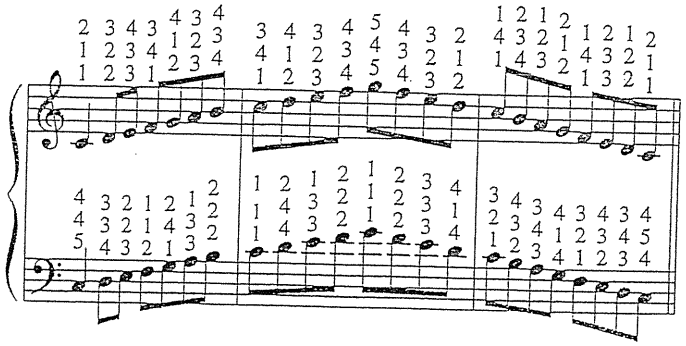
Fingerings

The modern technique of fingering aims at strengthening the weak fingers to make them equal with the stronger ones, which is again quite different from the Baroque way of thinking. Though views on which fingers should be regarded as strong and which weak varied greatly in different countries and different times, certain fingers were always considered weaker than others. Thus they were to be used so that a strong finger would play a strong note and vice versa.

Either the second and the fourth, or the first and the third finger were considered strong. The status of the third finger was emphasized most by Purcell, who suggested the following fingering for the C major scale:



In principle the same fingering was applied by the virginalists of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and by J. S. Bach as well. The main difference is in whether to start the scale with the third or with the first finger. Also, when playing an upward scale with the left hand, the thumb could be used: 5432121 (for example J. S. Bach). As late as in 1789 Türk gives three possibilities for the C major-scale:



In Italy and France the second and the fourth finger were considered strong.

These fingerings were very natural on the contemporary instruments, which had a very light touch and a shallow movement of the key. However, there is nothing to prevent one from trying old fingerings out on the modern piano, where they may lead to revelations about the stressing of different passages and their phrasing.

Pulse – the Basic Element of Baroque Music

Depending on the patron, Baroque music can be roughly divided into two categories: that of the court and that of the church. All surviving music was composed for the use of one or the other of these institutions, though of course the common people did have their own music, which in turn influenced the so-called art music. Dancing was of great importance to the Baroque courts, and especially in the Royal court of France a daily ritual. During the 18th century, composers wrote dances which were increasingly often meant only to be listened to, though the dance-like character and affections were retained.

Modern man might be surprised to find dance rhythms not only for example in the dance suites by J. S. Bach, but also in his church music including the Passions. In contemporary thinking, certain affects were most clearly associated with certain dances; thus it was easiest to lead the listener into affections such as joy, grief, satisfaction or longing by using dance rhythms.

Obviously, other music besides dances was composed as well, and in some genres the pulse has to be very flexible indeed. Compositions like the recitatives, many toccatas, fantasias, preludes, etc. certainly have their own pulse, though quite different from that of the dances.

Yet most Baroque music requires a steady pulse from the beginning to the end, which however does not refer to the rigid mechanics of a sewing machine. Though very stable itself, the basic pulse has to be alive with different stressings and notes of various length (see Türk, for example). Most Baroque music is based on the basso continuo or thoroughbass, in which the bass line keeps up the stable basic pulse, enabling the solo parts to be treated quite freely. This applies equally well to the solo keyboard works and to the compositions for ensembles.

The Names of the Pieces

The name of a composition usually reveals much of its character and offers hints for its performance, be it a dance or something else. Thus it is always advisable to find out exactly what each name actually means before starting practice.

The following short description of the pieces in this book is a start, and further information can be found, for example, in the books mentioned in the list of references.

ARIA (It. aria, Fr. air) has come to mean a solo song with orchestral accompaniment in an opera, oratorio, cantata or as an independent composition. In instrumental music the aria sometimes means a composition in cantabile style.

ALLEMANDE (Fr. = "German") is a dance from the 16th and 17th centuries. After the middle of the 17th century it was seldom danced, though it stabilized its position as the first movement of the dance suite of the Baroque. In this late stylised form it is in $\frac{4}{4}$ -time and starts with an upbeat.

It is fairly slow, dignified and stable, often with figured texture and polyphonic material.

APPLICATIO means fingering. It is the name given by J. S. Bach to the first piece in the Notebook for Wilhelm Friedemann. He wrote down the fingerings exceptionally accurately, persumably wishing to demonstrate in general his views on the matter.

BALL(ETT)O (It. = dance) meant in 17th and 18th century Italy a fairly quick dance in even time, a suite of instrumental dances, or a stage composition containing sections with ballet.

BOURRÈE is a French country dance, which starts with an upbeat in a fairly lively even time. Towards the end of the 16th century it became popular in the courts.

CHORAL (English spelling = chorale) originally meant Gregorian plainchant and later on came to mean a Lutheran church hymn as well. The name was also used in connection with a harmonized hymn tune or one supplied with a thoroughbass line.

CHACONNE (Fr.) The Italian ciacona probably developed from South American Indian dances, which the Spanish brought to Europe. During the Baroque it became a set of instrumental variations built on a repeated bass line and the corresponding harmonies. The tempo is usually calm in a $\frac{3}{4}$ time. The chaconne is closely related to the passacaglia and the English ground.

COURANTE (Fr. = running, It. corrente, coranto, Eng. corant) is usually found in the dance suites in its French form, though sometimes in the Italian, which was a gay dance with jumps. As an instrumental composition in $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{8}$ time it was still very lively and brisk, such as the one in the E major French suite by Bach. The French courante, however, was a complicated and noble dance, and the favourite of Louis IV of France. The instrumental version is usually in $\frac{3}{2}$ time, containing much shifting between $\frac{3}{2}$ and $\frac{6}{4}$, as for example in the B minor French suite by Bach.

The dance is fairly slow and serious, with much contrapuntal texture.

FABORDO'N (It. falso bordone) meant in 16th century Spain and Italy a simple chanting of hymns and psalms in four or five parts. In Spain it was adapted as instrumental music and varied by figuration.

FANTASIA = imagination, fancy. A form of instrumental composition during the 16th century based on imitation. Later it diversified and became increasingly free during the 18th century. As the name implies, an accurate description is impossible.

List of Sources for the Textual Part

Agay, Denes
An Anthology of Piano Music Volume I,
The Baroque Period

Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel
Versuch über die wahre Art das Klavier zu spielen,
Berlin 1753

Couperin, François
L'art de toucher le clavecin, Paris 1717

Mozart, Leopold
Gründliche Violinschule, Augsburg 1787

Rameau, Jean-Philippe
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