

in total.<sup>38</sup> It is ironic that it was from the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall—the place where the court masques were usually performed and where the royal image was fashioned—that Charles I emerged to mount the scaffold in January 1649.



THE word “conservative” has been used a number of times in the course of this essay. Although some court-related circles were absolutely up to date and received “new style” Italian music hot off the presses, English musical culture was not generally—in traditional historiographical terms—“progressive.” The danger when using such expressions is that there is an allied implication that high quality can only be associated with the “progressive.” This is not the case. The English viol consort repertoire, for example, may be “old-fashioned” in its systematic use of a contrapuntal idiom, but the quality of much of the music is undeniable. Indeed, if early-seventeenth-century English music is judged within its own historical context and in terms of its own indigenous traditions, then the achievement is truly remarkable. English composers may have been slow to respond to the new “Baroque” styles, but, as research has progressed on the music manuscripts associated with the Jacobean and Caroline courts, more and more we have come to realize that the courts’ adventurous and sophisticated artistic tastes were of great significance. The monarch was surrounded by the best musicians of the age and was able to create an active and progressive musical culture at court, and it was to the court that the country looked for the latest musical fashions. There is little doubt that, had it not been for the breakdown of the court system in the lead up to the Civil War, new compositional styles would have been disseminated more widely, and English music would have “developed” apace. In the event, the fulfillment of the Stuart courts’ musical promise had to wait until the Restoration, but this does not negate the achievements of English composers of the period 1603–42.



<sup>38</sup> For details, see Murray Lefkowitz, “The Longleat Papers of Bulstrode Whitelocke: New Light on Shirley’s *Triumph of Peace*,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 18 (1965), 42–60; Andrew J. Sabol, “New Documents on Shirley’s Masque *The Triumph of Peace*,” *Music & Letters*, 47 (1966), 10–26; Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1987), chap. 5: “The Caroline Court Masque,” 179–264.

## INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Victor Coelho  
Keith Polk



INSTRUMENTAL music from the beginning of the sixteenth century to roughly 1640 bristled with a new creative energy. In the previous century, many types of musicians—from lutenists and fiddlers to wind and percussion players—had found an increasingly enthusiastic market for their services, thus laying a secure foundation for the subsequent growth of instrumental styles. Yet, the outbursts shortly after 1500 in all branches of activity, and in all regions of Europe, remain astonishing in their scope. Almost all courtly ceremonies and private social rituals called for the participation of instrumentalists, from solo players in private settings to large mixed ensembles playing for state banquets, wedding ceremonies, theatrical productions, and even church services. The widespread circulation of instrumental music was facilitated by the advent of music printing, which created a new class of amateur players whose appetite for the latest musical tastes resulted in an entire repertoire of instrumental transcriptions, arrangements, and imitations of the popular vocal music of the day. By the mid sixteenth century, instrumental styles were also often highly sophisticated artistic creations, with complex polyphonic repertoires revealing a deep knowledge of both learned written styles and unwritten improvisatory practices.

It is not an overstatement to say that Renaissance European centers everywhere during this period teemed with instrumentalists, many of them highly skilled and thoroughly integrated into the mainstream of the musical culture. In fact, in many cities of even moderate size—Leuven in the Low Countries, Nördlingen in Germany, Lille in France—civic ensembles provided for citizens the primary medium for their hearing of sophisticated, up-to-date polyphony, both improvised and by leading composers. Similarly, widespread knowledge of the sacred vocal repertoire of Josquin des Prez, Jean Mouton, and others, was spread largely through lutenists’ and keyboardists’ arrangements of these pieces, which allowed this music to surmount the walls of the chapel and enter into secular domestic settings and popular print culture. And popular chansons and madrigals by Crecquillon, Sermisy, Arcadelt, and Rore provided instrumentalists with an enormous repertoire

of “standards,” which they arranged, varied, and marketed through a profitable publishing industry. In short, whether it is Siena, Florence, Augsburg, or Lyons, instrumental music was fully embedded in all of the most visible of Renaissance activities, social and political, and formed a vital element in the artistic landscape, fully contributing to all of the major developments and trends in Renaissance music.

An understanding of the contributions of instrumentalists is essential in any accurate assessment of the culture of the Renaissance. The following discussion, then, proposes an ordered discussion of a musical tradition of immense breadth, ranging from improvised to written styles, functional music (like signaling and dance music) to “art” styles (like the fantasia and toccata), and an itinerary that takes us from small German market towns to the major urban centers of royal patronage and the publishing trade.

Let us begin with some over-arching themes. A central concept (valid despite some overgeneralization), according to the late Howard Brown, is the gradual “emancipation of instrumental from vocal music” that took place at the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This can be seen not only with the emergence of new instrumental forms and idioms that had no basis in vocal music, as in the early *ricercar*, *toccata*, and dance variation, but also with the *types* of sources, which were increasingly written or published for exclusive use by instrumentalists. Another theme—this something of a paradox and not so well recognized in the scholarly literature—is the close relationship that existed between instrumental and vocal forces.<sup>2</sup> That is, in our attempts to establish the ways in which “emancipation” may have worked to separate instrumental from vocal, we should not lose sight of the fact that some of the finest “vocal” pieces of this era, like Giovanni Gabrieli’s 14-voice *In ecclesiis* (1615), the final *ballo* of the famous 1589 Florentine *intermedi*, or even the first great “aria” in operatic history, Monteverdi’s “Possente spirito” (*L’Orfeo*, 1607), are those that combined and contrasted vocal and instrumental forces.

In a somewhat different vein, a third development concerns the relationship between the composer and the player. In 1500, professional instrumentalists were known primarily as extempore musicians, their creations consisting usually of improvisations even in elaborately contrapuntal performances; very few players of this time, in fact, were ever known to engage in written instrumental composition. By 1600, on the other hand, the balance had shifted dramatically. The Gabrielis, Monteverdi, Schütz, Scheidt, Tallis, Dowland, Morley, Byrd, and Gibbons—all vocal composers of the first order—were all formally trained instrumentalists. This shift in the status of the player was a gradual process, and the improvisatory

traditions continued as a kind of subsurface current throughout the sixteenth century. We will begin with a survey of the instruments of the era, which provides a crucial underpinning to understanding developments within the various repertoires. This will be followed by a treatment of the musicians themselves, both professional and amateur, with a focus on the relationship between patronage and style, and the influence of printing. The final section will deal with the repertoires of instrumental music, describing first the various genres, followed by a discussion of the contributions of the various regions of Europe.

## RENAISSANCE INSTRUMENTS

### *Treatises and manuals*

One measurement of the new status of instrumental music (and its players) after 1500 is the regular appearance of treatises ranging from eminently practical “how to” information about performance to comprehensive encyclopedic descriptions and illustrations of instrumental families. Between these two poles lies an indispensable corpus of books, prefaces, manuals, and treatises that are still consulted today by early-music practitioners for information about instruments and instrumental performance. Because of the newer techniques that were required for many instruments after the sixteenth century, printed books, especially those for plucked-string instruments, often contained prefaces explaining the rudiments of notation and technique.<sup>3</sup> All of the Petrucci lute books, for example (1507, 1508, 1520), contain rules “for those who do not know how to sing [i.e. read notation],” testifying to the new class of amateur musicians to whom instrumental prints were now marketed. More detailed information and instructions of greater breadth are found in vihuela books, which addressed such issues as tempo and style. Many of these rudimentary prefaces disappear from prints after around 1550, since reading tablature was taken for granted. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was necessary once again to explain recent developments in instrumental performance, which were equal in scope to the changes occurring in vocal music of the same period. The prefaces to publications by Frescobaldi (1611), Piccinini (1623), and Kapsberger (1626, 1640) all describe (but never prescribe) the use of more specific techniques—arpeggiation, ornamentation, slurring—within the context of a new stylistic aesthetic, illustrating the increasing disconnection between notational conventions and performance practice.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For an excellent survey of prefaces to Italian lute books, see Dinko Fabris, “Lute Tablature Instructions in Italy: A Survey of the *Regole* from 1507 to 1759,” in *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela: Historical Practice and Modern Interpretation*, ed. Victor Coelho (Cambridge, 1997), 16–46.

<sup>4</sup> A clear discussion of 17th-century Italian keyboard practice within the context of Frescobaldi’s prefaces is in Frederick Hammond, *Girolamo Frescobaldi* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 222–52; on the performance practice of Italian lute music of the same period, see Victor Coelho, “Authority, Autonomy, and Interpretation in Seventeenth-Century Italian Lute Music,” in *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela*, 108–41.

<sup>1</sup> Howard Mayer Brown, *Music in the Renaissance* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1976), 257.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of fundamental connections between instrumentalists and vocal music, see Howard Mayer Brown, “The Instrumentalist’s Repertory in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Le Concert des voix et des instruments à la Renaissance*, ed. Jean-Michel Vaccaro (Paris, 1995), 21–32. An excellent recent study that extends Brown’s main thesis concerning the centrality of the lute in 16th-century music is John Griffiths, “The Lute and the Polyphonist,” *Studi musicali*, 31 (2002), 89–102.

More encyclopedic knowledge of instruments, tunings, and even playing techniques are contained in several important treatises. Sebastian Virdung's copiously illustrated and influential *Musica getutscht* (1511) is the first printed treatise offering a general discussion of instruments and, significantly, is written in an accessible vernacular. Virdung covers the lute, clavichord, and recorder in particular detail, explaining tunings, stringing, and notation, as well as features of performance practice. Subsequently, Martin Agricola's *Musica instrumentalis deudsch* (1529/45) is one of many treatises that were indebted to Virdung. Michael Praetorius produced the most comprehensive and authoritative of these efforts with *De organographia* (vol. II of his *Syntagma musicum*, Wolfenbüttel, 1618). Praetorius, a fine organist and composer, brought exceptional range to his theoretical writings, and *De organographia* presents a revealing panorama of the instrumental colors available to late-Renaissance performers.<sup>5</sup>

After about 1520 a brisk market developed for more detailed instruction, and musicians, printers, and publishers rushed to satisfy these new demands. Among the more prominent volumes were those on the playing of *passaggi* on recorder (Ganassi, 1535) and on viol (Ganassi, 1542; Diego Ortiz, 1553), while Bermudo (1555), Sancta María (1565), and Cabezón (1578) provided information especially useful to vihuela and keyboard players.<sup>6</sup>

These are just a few among the outpouring of volumes representing Renaissance market forces at work. Note that the focus was on amateurs; no such wide demand (i.e. no wealthy clientele) existed for instruction books on, for example, cornetto, shawm, or trombone, all instruments exclusively for the professional. Praetorius, however, did cover all manner of instruments in his discussion, both those for amateurs and those for professionals; this had also been true of his predecessors.

<sup>5</sup> For these three treatises, see Sebastian Virdung, *Musica getutscht: A Treatise on Musical Instruments* (1511), trans. and ed. Beth Bullard (Cambridge, 1993); Martin Agricola, *Musica instrumentalis deudsch: A Treatise on Musical Instruments* (1529 and 1545), trans. and ed. William E. Hettrick (Cambridge, 1994); Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum*, II: *De organographia*, parts I, II, trans. and ed. David Z. Crookes (Oxford and New York, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> For these treatises, see Agostino Agazzari, *Del sonare sopra il basso* (Siena, 1607; facs. Milan, 1969), trans. Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History*, 1st edn (New York, 1950), 424 ff.; Juan Bermudo, *Declaración de instrumentos musicales* (Ossuna, 1555; facs., ed. Macario S. Kastner, Kassel, 1957); and for a new translation of Bermudo's chapters on the vihuela, see Dawn Astrid Espinosa (trans.), "Juan Bermudo: 'On Playing the Vihuela,'" *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, 28–29 (1995–96); Antonio de Cabezón, *Obras de musica para tecla arpa y vihuela*, compiled by Hernando de Cabezón (Madrid, 1578), ed. Felipe Pedrell and Higinio Anglés (Barcelona, 1966), ed. Claudio Astronio (Bologna, 2001); Girolamo Diruta, *Il Transilvano* (1593, 1604; facs., ed. Edward Soehnlén and Murray Bradshaw, Buren, 1983), also ed. as *The Transylvanian = Il Transilvano*, trans. and ed. Murray Bradshaw and Edward Soehnlén (Henryville, PA, 1984); Sylvestro di Ganassi, *Opera intitulata Fontegara* (Venice, 1535), ed. Christine Vossart and Jean-Philippe Navarre (Spirmont, Belgium, 2002); idem, *Regola rubertina* (Venice, 1542), parts I, II, ed. Hildemarie Peter (Berlin, 1972); Diego Ortiz, *Trattado de glosas sobre clausulas y otros generos de puntos en la musica de violones* (Rome, 1553; facs. Florence, 1984); new edn in four languages of the original Spanish and Italian edns, ed. Annette Oterstedt, Eng. and Germ. trans. Hans Reiners (Kassel, 2003); Tomás de Sancta María, *Libro llamado Arte de tañer fantasia* (Valladolid, 1565), trans. and ed. Almonte Howell jr and Warren Hultberg (Pittsburgh, 1991).

Moreover, Agazzari in 1607 provided an extensive commentary on how instruments were to be combined in practice, and his views were directed particularly to the performances of professionals.

### Keyboard

The organ remained the central instrument for the professional keyboard player throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The essential features of the "modern" instrument, including multiple manuals, pedals, and separable stops, had developed already by the early sixteenth century, replacing the portative organ (played with one hand while the other pumped the bellows), which had fallen out of regular use. The one-manual positive organ, a portable instrument, continued to be used in church and chamber performances. Various types of stringed keyboard instruments, such as harpsichords, virginals, and clavichords, increased in popularity, particularly in Italy and England, especially as instruments for accomplished amateurs. Around forty harpsichords, almost all Italian, survive from before 1600 (though none from before 1500), revealing brass- or iron-strung instruments with a  $1 \times 8' + 1 \times 4'$  disposition and a range from *C* or *E* to *f'''*, as well as some instruments, after 1570, with  $2 \times 8'$  stops. The specific call for such instruments after 1550, particularly in association with the doubling of bass parts, verifies the growing awareness of the importance of "foundation voices" in instrumental textures.<sup>7</sup> By 1600, the dominance of Venetian keyboard makers had been challenged by the important Ruckers dynasty of harpsichord and virginal makers from Antwerp, whose work featured a four-octave range (usually *C–c'''*) and included two-manual models, often with elaborate case decorations. Their instruments were much in demand all over Europe, and some were even shipped to the New World.

### Plucked strings

For most of the sixteenth century, the lute challenged the primacy of the organ at the professional level, with lutenists occupying prestigious positions at both the papal and princely courts. In addition, the lute was clearly the preferred instrument for amateurs, many of whom, as we can tell from personal manuscript sources, were very skilled players, if stylistically conservative. Virtually all of the extant sources of lute music from this period testify to the abilities and tastes of amateurs. Surviving instruments, treatises, and paintings have been helpful in showing the various sizes of lutes that were built and played before 1500. While an increasing standardization is clearly evident in the sixteenth century, the lute continued to vary in size in accordance with the demands of musical composition. In the fifteenth century, the instrument had five courses and was played with a plectrum, which did not preclude the playing of simple polyphonic textures. Shortly before 1500, a fundamental change in lute technique resulted from abandoning the plectrum in favor

<sup>7</sup> Howard Mayer Brown, *Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation: The Music of the Florentine Intermedii*, MSD 30 (American Institute of Musicology, 1973), 80.

of the fingers, which allowed lutenists to arrange more complex vocal works for their instrument, as well as stimulating a change in how lutes were built.<sup>8</sup>

The most common type of lute for both solo playing and accompaniment during the first half of the sixteenth century was a six-course instrument in which all but the highest string (the *chanterelle*) were doubled at the unison or octave. The most common tuning was *G-c-f-a-d'-g'* (or *A-d-g-b-e'-a'*), though larger bass lutes pitched a fourth lower as well as high-pitched soprano lutes were also used, particularly in works for lute ensemble. By the end of the century seventh and eighth courses were being called for in solo music (tuned to *F* and *D*), and by the beginning of the seventeenth century in France and the Low Countries ten-course instruments were common.<sup>9</sup> Aside from their extensive use as solo instruments, lutes were judged most felicitous for accompanying voices, and this led to the development of larger lutes with many extra bass strings, such as the 14-course archlute, tuned like a six-course lute but with eight diatonically-tuned bass strings attached to a long neck extension, and the theorbo (synonymous with *chitarrone*), a 14- to 18-course instrument with a somewhat different tuning whose extraordinary projection and increased lower range made it the ideal instrument for accompanying monody.<sup>10</sup>

Mention must be made of the vihuela, which for all practical purposes can be described as the lute of Spain. In what appears to be an expression of cultural sovereignty, the lute virtually disappears following the expulsion of the Arabs and Jews from Spain in 1492, to be replaced by the vihuela, a guitar-shaped instrument of six (occasionally seven) courses that was tuned exactly like a lute.<sup>11</sup> The vihuela can be documented in Spain from the last quarter of the fifteenth century into the seventeenth century, with its greatest period of use occurring between 1536 and 1576, when seven vihuela tablatures were published containing solo music and songs of extremely high quality. It was also used in early-sixteenth-century Italy, particularly in Spanish-dominated Naples, and some early lute publications specify lute or *viola* (Francesco da Milano, 1536). And in one of the most memorable passages about music in Castiglione's *Cortegiano* (c.1511), the practice of "singing poetry to the viola [vihuela]" is the response to the question of what is the "best music of all"?

The guitar also has a rich history during this period, especially in France, Italy, and Spain. The "Renaissance" guitar is a small four-course instrument (tuned like the highest four strings of the modern guitar, but pitched usually a fourth higher).

<sup>8</sup> For an accessible general history of the lute through the Renaissance, see Douglas Alton Smith, *A History of the Lute from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Lexington, VA, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> For a clear discussion of lutes in the Renaissance, see Paul O'Dette, "Plucked Instruments," in *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music*, ed. Jeffery Kite-Powell (New York, 1994), 139–53.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the theorbo as a continuo instrument, see Kevin Mason, *The Chitarrone and its Repertoire in Seventeenth-Century Italy* (Aberystwyth, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Two excellent studies of vihuela performance and history are by John Griffiths, "The Vihuela: Performance Practice, Style, and Context," in *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela*, 158–79; idem, "At Court and at Home with the *Vihuela da Mano*," *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, 22 (1989), 1–27.

The earliest printed works are the exquisite pieces included in Mudarra's vihuela tablature from 1546, and by the mid sixteenth century a thriving print culture of guitar music was sustained in France through the efforts of enterprising publishers who marketed this music to a large amateur clientele. As with the lute, the guitar underwent a significant "upgrade" in the late sixteenth century. By 1600, it had grown significantly in size and added another string, a development that went hand in hand with the introduction of new strumming techniques that were soon combined with the plucking techniques inherited from its Renaissance counterpart. Its ease of playing and the development of an immensely practical tablature system (*alfabeto*) that was unique to the guitar, led to a virtual frenzy for the instrument in seventeenth-century Italy, much to the chagrin of conservatively-minded purists who lamented the parallel decline of the lute at the hands of this loud, appealing, and accessible new instrument. Many early Florentine sources of monody are intended for guitar accompaniment, testifying to the instrument's visible presence in the newest styles of the day.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, fascination with novelty and experimentation characterized the age, and other plucked stringed instruments emerged from time to time. Some made only an ephemeral appearance, others left a more lasting mark. The cittern, a melody instrument more flat-backed than the lute and played with a plectrum, was described by prominent theorists and attracted a sizeable repertory. The popularity of the cittern was such that the instrument in turn spawned several larger relatives, similar in basic shape and playing technique, such as the ceterone and the bandora. Retaining the pear-shaped body of the lute, but also played with a plectrum was the mandora. Because they were played with a plectrum, both the mandora and the cittern were well suited to broken consorts and for accompanying dancing when a more penetrating sound would have been appropriate.

### *Viols and violins*

No changes in instrumental music were more marked than those affecting bowed-string instruments. Instruments popular in the fifteenth century, the rebec and the fiddle, were pushed aside by newcomers such as viols and violins. Viols were well established on the scene by 1520, having been introduced into Italy from Spain in the course of the late fifteenth century. This was a family of instruments from soprano through bass, all generally bowed in downward position (the larger sizes between the legs, *da gamba*), with sloping shoulders and a fretted fingerboard, and usually with six strings. The tuning pattern was similar to that of the lute; the bass, for example, could be tuned as *G-c-f-a-d'-g'* (though the absolute pitch was not fixed). The instruments were of delicate construction and produced a refined

<sup>12</sup> For a general history of the guitar during this period, see James Tyler and Paul Sparks, *The Guitar and its Music: From the Renaissance to the Classical Era* (Oxford, 2002); much information on primary sources of the 17th-century guitar has been compiled in Gary R. Boye, "The Baroque Guitar: Printed Music from 1606–1737" (<http://www.library.appstate.edu/music/guitar/home.html>; accessed 16 Feb 2006).

sound that was ideal for intimate chambers. They were highly favored by amateurs, but were also played by professionals.<sup>13</sup>

The violin was introduced, evidently as a family of instruments, early in the sixteenth century and was incorporated into ensembles sometime between about 1520 and 1550. It was a sturdier instrument, tuned in fifths, and produced a more penetrating timbre well suited to more open spaces, such as dance halls. From the initial stages the violin was an instrument for professionals (it was not considered suitable for those of "gentle birth") and was often taken up as an optional doubling by players in wind bands. During most of the second half of the sixteenth century it operated on more or less equal footing with other soprano instruments, particularly the cornetto and shawm, but gradually achieved prominence. By early in the seventeenth century the violin band was supreme, especially in Italy, and formed the basis for the new concept of a larger, relatively fixed ensemble, the orchestra.<sup>14</sup> This was not a rapid change, however, and wind instruments remained central to professional music making for much longer than has been recognized.

### *Wind instruments*

By 1520 the wind band of shawms and trombone had for many years been the core ensemble for courtly and civic ceremonial occasions. The bands then were often five- or six-part, with two trombones and three or four shawms of varied sizes. During the first half of the sixteenth century the bands expanded both in size, but more particularly in the range of optional instruments that the players could pick up to achieve contrasts of timbre. The double-reed shawm itself had been built in two basic sizes earlier (discant and tenor, with the tenor usually called the bombard). This became a full family of instruments, covering all registers. The bass instrument, however, was too long and bulky for convenient use, and was soon replaced by an instrument with a doubled tube. Known by several names (*curtal* and *fagotto*, for example), instruments in this basic shape were the forerunners of the modern bassoon.<sup>15</sup> The trombone, too, was altered: the bell was made with less flare, which resulted in a more covered sound that matched agreeably with voices. The doubled slide became, finally, universal, and the trombone, too, was made in several sizes.<sup>16</sup>

The shawm-and-trombone framework provided the fundamental wind ensemble

<sup>13</sup> On the viol, see Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol* (Cambridge, 1984). Though popular with amateurs in England, Germany, and Italy, the French seem to have restricted the instrument to professionals; see Daniel Hertz, "Sources and Forms of the French Instrumental Dance in the Sixteenth Century" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1957), 15–17.

<sup>14</sup> For a review of the history of the violin, see Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court, 1540–1690* (Oxford, 1993), 1–31.

<sup>15</sup> Characteristic of a developmental stage, several different approaches in terms of construction evolved in the early and mid 16th century. For a knowledgeable, coherent, and well illustrated discussion, see David Munrow, *Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London, 1976), 39–45.

<sup>16</sup> The smaller sizes were apparently very rare, and even the bass trombone was unusual. One use for the trombones was to double voices, with the soprano range usually covered by the cornetto.

ble throughout the sixteenth century, but a bewildering assortment of optional instruments was developed by the fertile imaginations of makers of that experimental age. Alas, with their reliance on improvisational practices, wind players seldom bothered to write down anything specific about what they were doing. One group of instruments was made with two or more tubes doubling on themselves, being very convenient to carry and play. Those played by taking the reed directly into the lips included the sordun, courtaut, and rackets; of these the bass racket seems to have found some consistent acceptance in practice.<sup>17</sup> In another group a double reed was "capped" inside a small cylinder, and the reed was activated by blowing through a small hole in the top of the instrument. The most common and effective of these were the crumhorns, cylindrical-bore instruments that produced a buzzing but engaging tone quality. These were made in complete families and apparently played most often as a consort. The capped instrument could also be made with an expanding bore, as in the *rauschpfeife* and the *schreierpfeife*, which could produce a much more penetrating sound. These instruments appear occasionally in sixteenth-century sources but seem to have found little general acceptance. Almost all of these optional instruments, even the crumhorns, appear to have gradually dropped out of use after the first decade or so of the seventeenth century.<sup>18</sup>

Of far greater viability was the cornetto, a hybrid instrument played with a small cup-shaped mouthpiece (as in brass instruments), but with finger holes (as with woodwind instruments). Few instruments suited the musical demands of the era from about 1500 to 1650 so aptly. The cornetto could match the dynamic range of the shawms and trombones in outdoor performances but also blend to lovely effect with the vocal choir. It was extremely agile in the hands of a skillful player, although it was difficult to master and was exclusively an instrument of the professional. The success of the instrument was so extraordinary that it replaced the shawm in some wind bands. Both Monteverdi and Schütz, for example, called for cornetts and trombones in their scoring, without any reference to shawms.<sup>19</sup>

Recorders and transverse flutes found a perhaps less spectacular but more long-term place. Both were played by amateurs and professionals. The recorder was well suited to sixteenth-century tastes, with its "deliciously mellow" sound (Munrow) and considerable agility. The recorder was most often played in consorts and was made in a great variety of sizes, which gave overlapping ensemble options. The very smallest instruments could be shrill and the largest cumbersome to play, but contemporary inventories consistently list twenty or more recorders, which suggests that players took advantage of all sizes. The transverse flute had an astonishing vogue, beginning around 1500, especially in France. Seldom mentioned or illustrated in the fifteenth century except as a kind of military-band instrument

<sup>17</sup> See Munrow, *Instruments*, 46; see also Jeffery Kite-Powell, "Crumhorn," in *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music*, 63–68.

<sup>18</sup> For the exceptional lingering of the crumhorn in French practice, see Munrow, *Instruments*, 49.

<sup>19</sup> Most such scorings, it should be added, were those that co-ordinated wind instruments with voices, contexts in which the cornetto would, of course, be more effective than the shawm.

(paired with the field drum), its popularity was such that an inventory of Henry VIII's instruments included 70 flutes, and a Stuttgart court inventory of 1589 listed 220 (compared with 48 recorders).<sup>20</sup> Flutes were made in only three principal sizes (alto, tenor, and bass), had a wider range than recorders, and were in certain respects more successful within ensembles.

Trumpet ensembles in the sixteenth century still maintained their primary role as symbols of stature. In northern Europe particularly the clangor of trumpets was equated with royalty, and everywhere the sound indicated high station.<sup>21</sup> Tradition continued to dictate that trumpeters formed a class of performers distinct from other instrumentalists, following a practice in place for more than a century. This convention was occasionally diluted, in that some courts and a few cities seem to have combined the functions of trumpeter with that of general instrumentalist, probably as a cost-saving measure (the court of Denmark was an example, as were the Dutch cities of Amsterdam and Haarlem). By the sixteenth century, as Peter Downey has shown, the specialized playing techniques of the various registers, most strikingly that of the highest *clarino* range, were well advanced. The repertoires of trumpet bands were still rudimentary, however. The maturation of sophisticated musical structures in pieces for trumpet took place after the period under consideration here.<sup>22</sup>

The listings given here have been intended to highlight those instruments most central to musical practices between about 1520 and 1640. A considerable number of instruments have not been included. The harp, certainly an instrument of great beauty, was widely admired when it appeared in the hands of a gifted player, and it seems to have been more widely used than is easily appreciated. References to the harp are inconsistent in contemporary accounts, however, and it had no regular role, for example, in ensemble practices.<sup>23</sup> The bagpipe and pipe and tabor, too, claimed special audiences, but ones that fall outside the central concern here.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed discussion of the recorder and flute, see Herbert Myers, "Recorder," "Renaissance Flute," in *A Performer's Guide to Renaissance Music*, 41–62. Concerning the inventories, see Munrow, *Instruments*, 54.

<sup>21</sup> Some leading Italian cities such as Bologna, Florence, and Venice had long maintained trumpet ensembles. They were much rarer in the north (Ghent, which as with the Italian cities supported a trumpet ensemble distinct from its civic shawm ensemble, was one exception).

<sup>22</sup> Important steps had been taken by the early 17th century, and Fantini's treatise on trumpet playing was published in 1638. See Don Smithers, *The Music and History of the Baroque Trumpet before 1721* (Syracuse, NY, 1973), 75–86. When trumpeters picked up other instruments such as shawms and cornets, their repertoires were of course not so restricted. See also Peter Downey, "The Trumpet and Its Role in Music of the Renaissance and Early Baroque" (PhD diss., Queen's University of Belfast, 1983).

<sup>23</sup> Anthony Newcomb, "Secular Polyphony in the 16th Century," *Performance Practice: Music before 1600*, ed. Howard Mayer Brown and Stanley Sadie (London and New York, 1989), 231, stresses the importance of the harp when it did appear, pointing out that some of the "most famous singers of the century . . . were harpists." The English court, it should also be noted, maintained a regular place for harpists; see Walter L. Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society from Elizabeth to Charles I* (Princeton, 1953), 296–306.

<sup>24</sup> For a more extensive discussion of instruments see the appropriate chapters in *A Per-*

## Like and mixed ensembles

Finally, notions of ensemble practice responded with great elasticity to changing conditions. In one direction, fairly fixed concepts of like combinations had developed by about 1500, and consorts of flutes, recorders, and viols continued to be favored throughout the century. As a kind of culmination to this approach, the famous "twenty-four violins" of the seventeenth-century French court were an exclusively string band—as was the matching ensemble at the English court. In another direction, mixed consorts, too, including lutes, viols, recorders, harpsichords, and other such instruments, were commonly heard, also throughout the century. Moreover, although the medieval division of instruments into loud and soft categories had disintegrated to a great extent by 1520, players still tended for many decades to fall into the traditional patterns, but new options did evolve. The shawm band, still ubiquitous as the primary loud ensemble, broadened its performance doublings to include the cornetto and (especially for dance music) the violin.<sup>25</sup> Professional players of lute and keyboard instruments, too, seem to have followed career paths similar to the "soft" minstrels of the fifteenth century (they were more often soloists than was the case with wind players, for example).

By about 1570 newer concepts arrived, and as their vitality became increasingly irresistible older approaches began to fade. One of these new concepts, as observed once again by Howard Brown, lay with the stress placed on the division of labor between melodic voices and "foundation" voices. The soprano/bass duality, evidently as an improvisatory framework, was basic to dance music, clearly so by about 1570. In instrumental music, the arrival of the basso continuo practice about 1600 had been prepared by several decades of prior development in song accompaniments. Another was the emphasis on grand sonorities that combined vocal forces with wind, string, and keyboard instruments, as specified by Giovanni Gabrieli, Monteverdi, and Schütz. Yet another was the emergence after about 1610 of a new ensemble, centered on a string band with underpinning of continuo instruments, to which would be added *ad libitum* a variety of wind instruments.

## SOCIETY, PATRONAGE AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSICIANS

POPULATION throughout Europe increased substantially in the course of the sixteenth century, and the effect of this growth on music was clear and lasting; one specialist has estimated the rate as about a 25-percent growth from roughly 69 million to 89 million.<sup>26</sup> In leading cities such as Amsterdam, Antwerp, London,

*former's Guide to Renaissance Music*; Munrow, *Instruments*; Brown, *Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation*.

<sup>25</sup> In the 16th century players able to double on shawm and violin were rather common; by about 1600, however, the violin became increasingly a specialty. Players of shawms and violins were in any case almost invariably professionals. Note that with recorders, flutes, and viols, however, amateur and professional interest overlapped.

<sup>26</sup> Harry A. Miskimin, *The Economy of later Renaissance Europe, 1400-1600* (Cambridge,

and Paris, the effects were particularly dramatic, and increases were considerably higher. Population growth was tied to an increase in economic activity, which in turn was accompanied by striking examples of an increase in personal wealth. In critical regions, especially England, France, and Spain, growth was accompanied by centralization of political power with vastly increased resources available to monarchs. Such growth had an impact on music in two important ways. The first was that greater resources were available for the support of professional musicians. The second was, as we have already noted above, that many more wealthy amateurs actively participated in music-making.

Royal taste exercised a determining influence on the patronage of professional musicians, and the fact that heads of state controlled higher levels of discretionary income was quickly reflected in a larger personnel of resident instrumentalists. The growth pattern was already clear early in the sixteenth century, as the number of musicians supported by Maximilian I of Habsburg about 1515 was almost double that of those of the imperial court of some fifty years earlier. Similarly, Pope Leo X, François I, and Henry VIII engaged significantly larger instrumental forces than had been the case in the late fifteenth century, snaring in the process the services of the most prized virtuosos, including the lutenists Gian Maria Giudeo, Francesco da Milano, and Albert de Rippe and the keyboardist Marc'Antonio Cavazzoni.<sup>27</sup> The internal organizations of these new establishments were quite similar, which reflects the intense competition (and imitation) that characterized court life of the era. The wind bands remained the core units, but expanded to between six and eight. The players' basic assignments centered on shawms and trombones (still a successful medium for dance music), but performances on cornetts, crumhorns, recorders, and even string instruments were also routine. One or two keyboard specialists were available, along with two or three lutenists. A new group comprised the string players. Early in the century these were violists, but gradually violinists were added as well. Again, because the violinists were so often involved in improvised performances, the evolution around 1550 remains murky, but by 1600 the pattern is unmistakable as more musicians are labeled specifically as violinists. The establishment of the "twenty-four violins of the King," early in the reign of Louis XIII (who assumed the crown in 1610) capped this development, and when it had run its course the total number of court players was almost doubled.<sup>27</sup>

1977), 20–28. See also Jan A. van Houtte, *An Economic History of the Low Countries, 800–1800* (London, 1977), 123–35.

<sup>27</sup> Very few documents survive concerning the French court, especially under François I, as has been shown by Christelle Cazaux, *La Musique à la cour de François I<sup>er</sup>* (Paris, 2002), and while the general outlines of support are reasonably clear, details are scanty. For the English court, however, documentation is extensive, and developments can be followed step by step. By 1612 there were twelve players engaged there as regular members of the string band (with at least five others who could also join forces). By 1631 the fixed membership was at least 14, with a clear distribution into five sections (Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, 178–79, 234–35; see also Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society*, 303–4). In spite of poor documentation, it would appear that leadership emanated from the French court, especially given the enthusiastic participation by Louis XIII in dance performances, which were central to the performances of the court violinists. See Robert M. Isherwood, *Music in the Service of the King: France in the*

The smaller courts, while they could not command the resources of the monarchies, still managed to provide significant backing for instrumental music. The courts of Italy, especially Ferrara (Este), Florence (Medici), and Mantua (Gonzaga), were especially important in the development of a brilliant circle of lutenists and string players. Those in Germany (especially Munich and Dresden) made possible the kind of environment that produced the massed sonorities called for by Praetorius and Schütz. By the early seventeenth century the center of courtly patronage in Italy had moved to Rome, in the hands of wealthy families such as the Aldobrandini, Bentivoglio, and, in particular, the papal circle of Pope Urban VIII (r. 1624–44) and his nephews Francesco and Antonio Barberini, who were crucial in the patronage of the most influential keyboard composer of the early seventeenth century, Girolamo Frescobaldi, as well as the lutenists Piccinini and Kapsberger.

Of course, some of the most important patrons of instrumentalists were the city governments themselves, which subsidized stables of professional instrumentalists. Already strong in the fifteenth century, these groups tended to increase in size after 1500. In cities of modest population that had engaged three players around 1480, four became the norm by 1550. Larger cities, such as Antwerp, Augsburg, and Bologna enlarged to between six and eight players. Civic ensembles, like their counterparts at chapel and court, widened the range of instrumental doubling, which was reflected in the very names. The "city pipers" (*stadspijpers*) of Antwerp became the "city players" (*stadsspeellieden*), just as the "shawms and trombones" (*piffari* and *tromboni*) of Bologna assumed the more prestigious nomenclature of "musicians" (*musici*) of the city, in both cases by about 1550.<sup>28</sup>

The relationship between patronage and decisive changes in both vocal music and music for lutenists and organists has been recognized for some time. But the names of outstanding musicians associated with professional wind ensembles remind us that these groups, too, should not be overlooked even though their specific contributions are veiled and difficult to assess. Susato, an editor, composer, and the leading music publisher of his era in the Low Countries, began his career as a trombonist in the civic ensemble of Antwerp. Jean d'Estrée (who published several volumes of instrumental music in Paris at mid-century) was a shawmist in the court band of the French crown. The Hessen brothers (who also published dance music) were city musicians in Breslau, and even Hans Leo Hassler served as the leader of the city music of Augsburg. Members of courtly and civic wind ensembles (some of whom shifted their focus to cornetts and stringed instruments, but many of whom remained loyal to shawms and, especially, trombones) continued to interact in music making at the highest artistic level. Their improvisatory skills have blurred our historical perspective, but the contributions of professional ensemble

*Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 1973), 88–113. Note that while the violin has been considered an Italian fashion, most of the players at both the French and English courts were locals.

<sup>28</sup> For Antwerp, see Godelieve Spiessens, "De Antwerpse stadsspeellieden, Deel I: 15e en 16e eeuw," *Noordgouw: Cultureel tijdschrift van de provincie Antwerpen*, 9 (1969), 25; for Bologna, see Osvaldo Gambassi, *Il Concerto Palatino della Signoria di Bologna* (Florence, 1989), 618–21.

players were key elements in the rapidly changing musical scene of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>29</sup>

Enthusiastic amateurs with means, both at court and in cities, formed another crucial layer in the culture of instrumental music. They played music constantly in the sixteenth century, creating markets for teachers, for instruction books, and for manuscript and published collections of music. Amateurs undoubtedly followed the lead of professionals concerning the technical details of music making, but they played a forceful and often definitive role in matters relating to musical taste and repertory. In many ways it is due to them that a certain canon of "classics" was formed during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The many arrangements of vocal pieces for lute and vihuela (called intabulations) that were published after 1500 are good examples that reveal the public's taste for French chansons, especially those by Crecquillon, Sermisy, and Lassus, madrigals by Arcadelt (the closest phenomenon to "The Beatles" of the Renaissance, with a popularity spanning over a hundred years) and Rore, and masses and motets by Josquin, Morales, Gombert, and Palestrina. The latter represent a particularly interesting recontextualization of genres and purpose, in which sacred music, originally intended for liturgical service, is *secularized* by stripping it of its Latin text and liturgical function, and further both *domesticized*, through performing the work at home and truncating its form (lutenists and vihuelists, for example, intabulated only parts of a Credo or a Gloria), and *vernacularized*, through the addition of scales, ornaments, and other textures borrowed from instrumental idioms.

Growth and development have been emphasized, but darker forces were afoot as well. Plagues and famine had lurked throughout late medieval and early modern times, but their devastations tended to be relatively short-term. The religious wars of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were quite a different matter. The ravages of the Thirty Years' War, which began in Germany in 1618, so decimated the staff of court musicians that Schütz could no longer count on an ample number of players—in his *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* he drastically reduced his scoring as a result, as Stravinsky would do three centuries later in the face of a drastic shortage of musicians during the First World War. The longer conflict waged by the Spanish crown in Flanders was even more cataclysmic. Some cities reduced their expenditures for music, and cities such as Leuven, Mechlin, and Dendermonde eliminated musical subsidies entirely. "It is inappropriate at the present time to support the civic ensemble," reads the 1578 account book from Mons, "given that the money is needed for the fortifications of the city."<sup>30</sup> Such defenses proved crucial as this war ground on for decades. The loss of life was appalling, and musicians, too, were recorded among those cut down. For a generation, musical life was blotted out, with even more long-term effect in vocal music than in instrumental. The conclusions may be obvious, but deserve restatement none the less. Musical culture is elastic, and it can survive disasters of short duration. Long-term conflict, with incessant

diversion of resources for defense and for the pursuit of war, is another matter. The economies of both Flanders and Spain were dismembered, many of their institutions shattered, and their brilliant musical cultures destroyed. Other regions, it must be added, fared much better during this era. The patronage frameworks of England and Italy, for example remained quite secure. The same was true for Germany to the extent that, though damage ran deep in some regions, most recovered, and German instrumental music remained a vigorous force.

## THE REPERTORIES

### *Instrumental performance of vocal music*

Through the greater part of the sixteenth century singers and players shared much in terms of styles and repertories. Excluding collections for solo instruments, title pages of the published repertory routinely stated that the contents of volumes could be performed by "voices or instruments."<sup>31</sup> Instrumentalists, though, especially professionals, would have adapted the musical texts to suit their own needs, often dividing long notes, embellishing cadences, filling in rests, specifying precise chromatic alterations, rendering other passages more idiomatic, transposing, and sometimes altering the form.

Ornamentation of pre-existing texts, that is, the extensive elaboration of given melodic lines, was the primary means of adaptation through much of the sixteenth century. This is one aspect of instrumental practice that is reasonably clear. Even though this was a spontaneous technique to be applied in the course of a performance, the procedures of decoration are well described in several manuals.<sup>32</sup> These instruction books, many written by practicing professionals such as Silvestro di Ganassi, Diego Ortiz, and Girolamo dalla Casa, reveal that divisions (as such decorations could be called) were applicable to all instruments, including flutes, viols, keyboard instruments, lutes, and vihuelas.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore these sources also show that while details varied from one writer (and one instrument) to another, the essential principles that underlay decorative techniques were shared through various mediums. The examples in musical sources show that, at their best, elaborations could lend graceful elegance. At their most perfunctory, they can appear, at least to our tastes, mechanical and tedious, as in Italian lute music of the first decades of the sixteenth century and much of the German organ repertory between about 1530 and 1590.

<sup>31</sup> Susato characteristically described his chanson prints as "convenable tant à la voix comme aussi propices à jouer de divers instruments;" and note that while he did issue one volume of dance music, he published not a single volume of imitative fantasias or ricercars for ensemble instruments.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the manuals, see Howard M. Brown, *Embellishing 16th-Century Music* (Oxford, 1976), pp. vii–xiv.

<sup>33</sup> For a listing of the treatises, see the "Bibliography of Sources to 1600; Sixteenth-Century Treatises that Include Information about Performance Practice," in *Performance Practice: Music before 1600*, 269–71.

<sup>29</sup> With the ascendance of the violin in the early 17th century, the wind bands finally went into decline as they lost their vital link to main-stream musical activity.

<sup>30</sup> Léopold Devillers, *Essai sur l'histoire de la musique à Mons* (Mons, 1868), 16.

genre in which the same music served both instrumental and vocal purposes was the intabulation. At its simplest, an intabulation was an arrangement of a vocal model notated in tablature for lute, vihuela, or guitar, or occasionally keyboard, though the term has been applied to any instrumental arrangement for plucked string or keyboard whether or not it is in tablature. The making of intabulations was a central concern (perhaps *the* central concern) of lutenists, and in fact the majority of the surviving lute repertory consists not of fantasies or dances but intabulations, which both testifies to instrumentalists' close knowledge of the latest trends in vocal music and provides a barometer for gauging the popularity of these pieces. Often, intabulations were faithful renderings of the vocal model in all respects, resembling little more than transcription, albeit occasionally transposed and modified for the size of instrument at hand. At the other extreme are highly embellished examples in which the original vocal contours are barely visible (or indeed, audible) beneath a swirl of ornamentation and cadential embellishment. The fact that intabulations are not entirely "original" works but arrangements of vocal models should underscore their importance, not only in the context of the popularity they clearly enjoyed in the sixteenth century but also about what they can tell us about Renaissance musical composition. First of all, intabulations were made for a variety of reasons: as a pedagogical process through which a player can understand the contrapuntal workings of a vocal model; as a practical means of reducing vocal parts for the sake of accompanying; as self-standing solo pieces; and as an aid in composition, in which the intabulation may have acted as a kind of "pseudo-score" that composers used to mediate the eventual scoring of vocal parts. Contemporary descriptions of intabulation methods contained in treatises by Le Roy, Bermudo, and especially Vincenzo Galilei show further how intabulations can teach players how to compose works in this vein, such as fantasias.

The lute song was another genre with a massive debt to the vocal repertory. Many settings for lute and voice were published in the early sixteenth century, including works originally written in parts derived from the frottola and early madrigal repertories. These pieces were in almost all cases adaptations of pieces originally written in parts. In the lute settings one line (usually the discant) would be left for voice, and the others, often just the tenor and bass, played by the lute (other plucked instruments would also have been acceptable), maintaining as close as was feasible the original voice-leading. This approach of reducing polyphonic repertories for lute and voice dominated for decades and forms the background for the emergence of accompanied monody at the end of the century.<sup>34</sup> The appearance of the French *air de cour* and the English ayre of around 1600 signaled yet another development that was evidently conceived specifically to take advantage of the special capabilities of the lute. The lute songs of Dowland and the other Elizabethan songwriters—Pilkington, Campion, Rosseter, Ferrabosco, and Danyel—contained newly composed accompaniments (that is, they were not derived

from previously existing vocal parts) and represent magnificent examples of the type.<sup>35</sup>

The transformation of the canzona furnishes a striking example of successful adaptation of vocal music to instrumental ends. During the earliest phases, Italian musicians simply took over French chansons, as in Gardano's 1539 print *Canzoni francese a due voci . . . buone da cantare et sonare*. Instrumentalists were certainly drawn to these pieces by their straightforward rhythmic and attractive melodic qualities, by the popularity these works enjoyed among the general public, and by their clearly audible formal structures (ABA, ABCA, and ABB, for example). The next steps are unclear, as there seem to be mid-century prints of *canzoni francese* for which no vocal models have been found, but certainly by about 1570 the canzona had become an instrumental piece (a Vincenzino publication of 1572 included one *canzon da sonar*).<sup>36</sup> The late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century canzonas maintained an appealing melodic style and sprightly rhythms but exploited unmistakably instrumental effects, both in the ensemble versions (those, for example, by Claudio Merulo, Giovanni Gabrieli, and later Samuel Scheidt) and in those for keyboard (Andrea Gabrieli, Merulo, and the seventeenth-century master of the form, Frescobaldi). In this late stage the canzona became so close in basic vocabulary to the mid-century *ricercar* and *fantasia* that it can be more appropriately discussed together with them (see below).

One final instrumental category may be included under the rubric of "vocal music." Toward the end of the sixteenth century composers increasingly exploited the potential of contrasting specific instrumental colors with voices. Indeed, the largest body of pieces in which composers precisely demanded such instruments as violins, cornetts, and trombones were vocal works. The Italians provided leadership in this area in two distinct directions. Giovanni Gabrieli explored contrasts of large masses of sound, with twelve and more individual parts split into two, three, or more choirs, differentiated by various vocal, wind, and string timbres. His lead was followed by several distinguished Germans, including Hassler, Praetorius, and Schütz. Monteverdi, moving in another direction (also followed by Schütz), preferred to exploit the tone quality of a few voices (often just one or two, supported by continuo) contrasted with blocks of sound provided by an instrumental ensemble. The instrumental group often provided formal cohesion by restating initial material, as with the *ritornello*, creating a rondo-like affect.

### *Dance music*

Massive quantities of dance music poured from presses all over Europe throughout the era, including music for lutes (both solo and duos), various keyboard instruments, and ensembles. Despite the abundance of source material, however,

<sup>34</sup> The evolution of the lute song repertory towards accompanied monody is treated in Kevin Mason, "Per cantare e sonare: Accompanying Italian Lute Song of the Late Sixteenth Century," in *Performance on Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela*, 72–107.

<sup>35</sup> On this repertory, see Brown, *Music in the Renaissance*, 270–71; see also David Tunley, "Tunings and Transpositions in the Early 17th-Century French Lute Air," *Early Music*, 21 (1993), 203–9.

<sup>36</sup> Ernst Meyer, "Concerted Instrumental Music," in *The Age of Humanism 1540–1630*, ed. Gerald Abraham, *The New Oxford History of Music*, IV (London, 1968), 565.

designed to be played, but by whom? Also, this was dance music, but was it ever used as raw material for use on the actual dance-floors of the time, or was published dance music an idealized repertory intended for solo instrumental performance, like a Bach gigue or a Chopin waltz?

It now seems clear, after the work of such scholars as Daniel Heartz and Howard Brown, that the publications, at least those for ensemble, were apparently designed for amateurs.<sup>37</sup> Much of this repertory is uncomplicated, comprising either simple harmonized tunes or strings of various kinds of variations. Furthermore, when instruments are indicated, such as flutes and recorders, they are those most likely to be played by amateurs. It follows, then, that the music would not have been heard on the dance floor, for sixteenth-century amateurs were usually either members of the aristocracy or from wealthy urban circles. These men and women would never have played for dancing, which was a task for hired professionals and one that was beneath those of higher station. Lute publications, too, almost always contained dance music (though it is interesting to note that the published output of papal lutenists like Francesco da Milano and Perino Fiorentino and royal lutenists like Albert de Rippe almost completely exclude dance or variation settings).

Still, this music probably does at least mirror contemporary developments in dancing, which, is itself a gauge of social customs and class function. The Attaingnant repertory of about 1530, for example, shows that the fifteenth-century *basse dance*, a refined, ceremonial, and almost ritualistic dance, had been replaced by the modern, and more simple, *basse dance commune*, as well as by the pavan, gagliarda, saltarello, and branle, dances whose origins run the gamut of domestic, international, urban, and rural.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the medieval technique of basing a structure on a dance tune stretched out in the tenor with improvised counterpoint above and below, had been replaced by a very different approach. The new *basse dance*, for example, was for four parts, with the melody usually in the superius and with a bass part that is noticeably more harmonic in its voice leading. In addition, this new dance was made up of short, clearly articulated phrases that were repeated, resulting in a much more transparent formal structure. Finally, the *basse dance commune* was frequently paired with a concluding faster dance, often in a contrasting meter, similar to the pavan/gagliard, passamezzo/saltarello, and the German *Hof-tanz/Nachtanz* pairs that are ubiquitous in lute books. While certainly normative, such pairings were not fixed, however, as other combinations were possible, and many dances could be done singly (these included the branle, tordion, and piva).<sup>39</sup> In the later sixteenth century new dances were arriving yet again, especially the allemande and courante.

<sup>37</sup> Heartz, "Sources and Forms," 13-14; Brown, *Music in the Renaissance*, 269. See also Dietrich Kämper, "Studien zur instrumentalen Ensemblesmusik des 16. Jahrhunderts in Italien," *Analecta musicologica*, 10 (1970), 156-59.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Heartz, "The Basse Dance; Its Evolution circa 1450 to 1550," *Annales musicologiques*, 6 (1958-63), 321-7.

<sup>39</sup> On the various dance types, see Daniel Heartz, *Preludes, Chansons and Dances for Lute* (Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1964), pp. xxxi-liv.

It appears certain that when professionals performed for dancing they followed the main developments outlined by the published repertory as they improvised. They would have certainly played the same kinds of dances, though clearly without the fast diminutions as found, for example, in the lute branles by Le Roy or the long (and sometimes rambling) divisions one encounters in the dance settings by the prolific blind lutenist from Trieste, Giacomo Gorzanis. A more plausible example of the musical style that was used for dancing is given by three Italian dance treatises, *Il ballerino* (1581) and *Nobiltà di dame* (1600),<sup>40</sup> both by Fabritio Caroso, and *Le gratie d'amore* (1602) by Cesare Negri. All three treatises provide musical examples in lute tablature following the description of the steps of the dance. The settings are simple and set in regular phrases, and generally homophonic with only slight extensions of scales. Furthermore, a handful of French and English manuscript versions of sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century dance pieces have survived, evidently reflecting the practices of professionals. In these pieces only two parts are given (soprano and bass); therefore the older tenor-based cantus-firmus tradition had been abandoned, and the task of the performers in this era was centered on the spontaneous creation of inner parts to fill out the texture. In terms of internal forms, evidently the clearly articulated phrases and the repeated sections were also retained. Finally, the manuscript versions, and published pieces by expert instrumentalists such as Susato, show that in the dance pairs the faster concluding dance was frequently treated as a variation of the first.

The published dance repertory also reveals that composers utilized dance pieces in various ways to build larger musical structures. One way to accomplish this was to add further dances to the dance pairs. By the later sixteenth century sets of three dances were fairly common, and by shortly after 1600 four and more could be strung together. The content was not yet fixed, but the allemande and courante were usually the common building blocks around which other dances could be grouped (cf. the "Royall Consorts" of William Lawes).

Yet another approach to extending dance structure was variation. One way to do this was to vary a bass pattern. Spanish composers were among the first to work with this idea, but it was the Italians who developed such standard patterns as the *passamezzo moderno* (I-IV-I-V...) and *passamezzo antico* (I-VII-I-V...), the Romanesca, or *Guardame las vacas* as it was known in Spain (III-VII-i-V...), and the Folia (I-V-I-VII...). Another approach, one favored especially around 1600, was to state an entire dance melody, then to follow this with a set of variations in which the framework of the original melody provided the basis for elaboration. Byrd and Gibbons provided splendid examples.

English musicians enriched the dance literature in other ways. In their hands the pavan became a highly expressive and serious work. The efforts of Dowland, Phillips, and Brade were of such stature that they became the "main vehicle for the dissemination of the English consort style in northern Europe" (Holman). Indeed, the great impact of English composers abroad deserves much more emphasis than

<sup>40</sup> Fabritio Caroso, *Nobiltà di Dame: A Treatise on Courtly Dance, Together with the Choreography and Music of 49 Dances*, ed. and trans. Julia Sutton (Oxford, 1986).

it has received, and this impact was largely through dance settings, many of which, like Dowland's *Lachrimae* pavan, were disseminated widely throughout England and the Low Countries in both solo and ensemble versions.<sup>41</sup> The English (and some German composers who followed their lead) set pairs of dances, particularly pavans and galliards, but they also assembled collections in which several dances of one type would be given in series, which again underlines the point that little uniformity can be expected from instrumental practices during this period. Another English contribution has been termed the "fantasia-suite," a form favored by Coprario, which would begin with a fantasia followed by an almain and a galliard.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that though dance settings in this era were often modest pieces, it was in this repertory that composers and performers explored elements that were key to later developments. These included a focus on the bass (especially in dance variations), concern with relationships between movements (as in Susato's dance pairs), and textures with polarized soprano and bass.

### *Improvisatory types, intonations, preludes, and toccatas*

In the early sixteenth century there was not yet an established set of rules for audience behavior as exists now (such as it is) for modern concerts. We can assume that one of the conditions commonly facing the musician was the distracting chatter of conversation. We know from a contemporary description of a performance by Francesco da Milano that the way he quieted his listeners was to strum a few chords and play a few running lines—in short, to play a kind of prelude.<sup>43</sup>

Such pieces were useful to musicians in both secular and sacred contexts. They went by a variety of names, the most common being toccata, prelude, preamble, and intonation. Some of the earliest were called "tastar de corde" (literally, "a touching of the strings") or more commonly "ricercar" (between about 1508 and 1536), but by mid-century "tastar" was replaced by its cognate "toccata," while "ricercar" was now applied to pieces consistently imitative in texture, making the term synonymous with the fantasia. Preludial-type pieces were always idiomatic, reflecting the capabilities of the instrument for which they were conceived. They also seem very close to improvisations, with great flexibility in terms of form, and could combine chordal passages, running scale patterns, and even imitative segments.<sup>44</sup> Many are of slight musical value, but Italian composers in the late sixteenth century, Andrea

<sup>41</sup> Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, 163.

<sup>42</sup> John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, 1: *From the Beginnings to c.1715* (Oxford, 1991), 479. See also Christopher D. S. Field, "Consort Music 1: Up to 1660," in *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain*, III: *The Seventeenth Century*, ed. Ian Spink (Oxford, 1992), 235.

<sup>43</sup> The passage, written by the jurist Jacques de Vintimille and cited by Pontus de Tyard in 1555, contains the following: "The tables being cleared, he chose [a fantasia] and, as if tuning his strings, sat on the end of a table seeking out a fantasia." Quoted in H. Colin Slim, "Some Possible Likenesses of Francesco Canova da Milano (1497–1543)," in idem, *Painting Music in the Sixteenth Century: Essays in Iconography* (Aldershot, 2002), 5.

<sup>44</sup> On the background of the toccata, see Murray Bradshaw, *The Origin of the Toccata*, MSD 28 (American Institute of Musicology, 1972).

and Giovanni Gabrieli and Claudio Merulo, for example, succeeded in producing pieces of lasting interest.

### *Variations and cantus-firmus settings*

The earliest and most consistent uses of variation techniques were those found in dance music, as discussed above. Two later types may be mentioned briefly. In the first, the concept of repeated bass patterns, as in the Spanish and Italian dance types, or the repertory of sixteenth-century "grounds," led by the early seventeenth century to more ambitious structures built on bass ostinatos. Monteverdi made particularly effective use of this approach. In the second, which appears to have begun in mid-sixteenth-century Spain, composers took over the devices of those dance variations in which a melodic structure was stated, then followed by a set of varied alterations in which each successive statement was clearly set apart (as in the English sets found in such sources as the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book). These variation sets were based on either popular songs or sacred melodies (examples of both are also found in the English repertory). This approach spread to the Low Countries (especially in the works of Sweelinck) and appears to have reached from there into Germany. Scheidt and Schein emphasized sacred settings within their output of variation types and developed an array of variation techniques, especially in music for organ.

No change in performance practice was more fundamental than that concerning the use of a cantus firmus. Improvisation around a borrowed melody (with the tune in longer notes, most often in the tenor, surrounded by more sprightly counterpoint) was central to music-making until the late fifteenth century. This practice, in its most strict manner, rapidly lost its principal role after 1500. In dance music, as seen above, the tenor-based structure yielded to one based on a soprano melody with supporting lower parts (in sacred music and in such pieces as the ricercar it yielded to a structure based on imitation). Still, the cantus-firmus principle was by no means abandoned, and borrowed melodies certainly continued to be a staple item in the practices of church organists everywhere. The approaches of Germans, from Hofhaimer through Scheidt, were varied and imaginative. The French, to judge from the publications of Attaingnant and the later ones by Titelouze, were less adventurous in this regard. The early generation of Italian and Spanish organists led by Girolamo Cavazzoni and Antonio Cabezón, on the other hand, produced brilliantly original works. This artistic level was maintained by later Italians, particularly Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli and Frescobaldi.

### *Imitative types: ricercar, fantasia, canzona per sonare*

As instrumental music continued to develop in the sixteenth century, composers increasingly dispensed with such traditions as relying on borrowed melodies, fixed dance patterns, or repeated basses. The most ambitious efforts were in imitative pieces such as the ricercar and fantasia. What remains striking is how sophisticated were some of what were apparently the earliest examples.

In many of the lute ricercars (or fantasias) by Francesco da Milano, most written in the late 1520s and early 1530s while the lutenist worked at the papal court, two or three interrelated ideas, each one usually developed in imitation, serve to unify the piece, with astonishingly subtle alterations.<sup>45</sup> The variety of influences demonstrated in these works show how thoroughly Francesco, like other instrumentalists, adopted the sectional contrast used in the motet or the French chanson—duets vs tutti, homophony vs imitation—which was combined with a thoroughly idiomatic style. Other ricercars of Francesco are monothematic, and a few embed quotes from vocal music, which demonstrate aspects of the same parody and paraphrase technique used in sacred vocal polyphony. Much the same can be said of the counterparts for organ by Francesco's contemporary Girolamo Cavazzoni. In Spain, Antonio de Cabezón, too, produced masterful contrapuntal pieces, which he termed *tientos*. Modern scholars have often pointed out the similarities in the ricercars of around 1540 with imitative structures in contemporary motets. Drawing attention to the common element, however, should only serve to heighten our awareness of the fact that the best of the instrumental versions are not at all interchangeable in technique with their vocal counterparts. Evidently this approach was uniquely instrumental from very early in its development.

While the ricercar (or fantasia) of the first half of the century showed a plurality of approaches—clearly commensurate with the vihuelist Luis Milán's definition in 1536 that a fantasia derives “from the fantasy and skill of the author who created it”—the works in this genre after 1550 conform more to a norm; a fantasia was a piece built up of successive contrapuntal sections, or points of imitation. By the end of the century the internal sections tended to be longer, fewer in number, and more clearly articulated. Some were monothematic, although this was by no means a standard feature. An example of the multisectional ricercar, with clearly contrasting sections, and a return to initial material, is the well-known *Ricercar del duodecimo tono* of Andrea Gabrieli.<sup>46</sup> Ricercars all but disappear from the Italian and French lute repertory after 1600, but they continue in Italian keyboard music, whose master in this period was Frescobaldi. The formal procedures also attracted the finest composers in the north. Byrd, Dowland, Gibbons, Sweelinck, Scheidt, and Schein, for example, all produced fine pieces in this genre.

After about 1590 many pieces called canzonas should be included within the general type. More refined distinctions may be made with some composers. For some, ricercars tended to be keyboard works, while canzonas were ensemble pieces. For those who observed this distinction, historical hindsight permits the suggestion that the later ensemble sonata evolved from the canzona and fugue from

the ricercar. Still, the titles applied by composers about 1600 were by no means fixed. Frescobaldi, for example, composed pieces he called variously canzonas, fantasias, and ricercars. His fantasias and ricercars were the most similar in that both involved extensive imitative reworking of the ideas stated at the outset. His canzonas tended to be more varied melodically and rhythmically and to have more clearly defined sectional structure, but they fall nonetheless into a style that other composers might have called ricercars. The flexibility of terminology is vividly illustrated in the ricercar by Andrea Gabrieli mentioned above, a piece that fits many of the stylistic criteria of the canzonas by his nephew Giovanni.

### *New arrivals around 1600: concerto, ritornello, sinfonia, sonata*

By late in the sixteenth century, roughly 1590, new terms began appearing on title pages and scores. Their meanings varied from place to place and from time to time, but they were unified in one sense: they indicated the presence or the participation of instruments. This presence was almost always allied to the newer trends of the era. Among these certainly one of the most important was that the participation of professional musicians finally emerges clearly. Attaignant had published his dances almost certainly for use by amateurs, but when Giovanni Gabrieli called for cornettists, trombonists, and violinists in his scores, he was specifically requiring the presence of professionals.

The term *concerto* appeared in several title pages around the turn of the century, but it was not itself attached to individual pieces contained within the prints. What the term was evidently intending to communicate was that, among the works in the volume, one could anticipate the general co-operation of instruments with voices. The term that would more often be found in the scores themselves (as opposed to the title pages) was *concertato*, which indicated contrasting elements within the piece in question. It could be inserted, for example, to identify a grouping that included vocal and instrumental forces, when these forces were inserted in contrast to more purely vocal units.

The designation *ritornello* was most often used in the early seventeenth century to identify an instrumental segment within a larger vocal work. This instrumental segment could reappear, and would often then result in a kind of rondo form. Monteverdi used this device with telling affect, as in *Chiome d'oro* from his Seventh Book of Madrigals (1619). In the ritornello of this piece, the upper two instrumental voices imitate and interact with each other above an ostinato bass. The bass then continues in the vocal sections, providing a tautly unified overall structure.

The term *sinfonia*, too, is most often found in music about 1600 (as with Gabrieli, and later with Schütz) as a label for instrumental segments within larger works that incorporate voices. In this context, however, the sinfonia was not usually repeated, as was the case with the ritornello. Rather less often, the term could indicate independent works; such pieces were written by Banchieri, Rossi, and Viadana. These independent works were multisectional in structure and similar in style to canzonas. Otherwise, sinfonias during this era were not standardized in terms of textures, forms, or instrumentation.

<sup>45</sup> On the ricercars of Francesco da Milano, see Arthur J. Ness, *The Lute Music of Francesco Canova da Milano (1497–1543)* (Cambridge, MA, 1970), 4–7; see also Hertz, *Preludes, Chansons and Dances*, pp. xv–xvii; Victor Coelho, “Papal Tastes and Musical Genres: Francesco da Milano ‘il divino’ (1497–1543) and the Clementine Aesthetic,” in *The Pontificate of Clement VII: History, Politics, Culture*, ed. Kenneth Gouwens and Sheryl E. Reiss (Aldershot, 2005), 277–92.

<sup>46</sup> Available in Archibald T. Davison and Willi Apel, *Historical Anthology of Music* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1946), 1: 147–48.

The term *sonata*, from about 1550 through the early seventeenth century, designated not a particular form or even procedure, but simply that the pieces were played rather than sung. Beyond this very general definition it is probably fruitless to try to establish any more specific definition. Individual composers, of course, did have some reasonably definite ideas about what kind of composition might be designated a sonata, but these tended to be quite idiosyncratic. Cima published a set of sonatas in 1610 that included textures calling for two violins above a bass, while others, such as Merula, produced pieces that are very much like canzonas. Giovanni Gabrieli evidently included several related but different kinds of pieces within the general rubric. With his well-known *Sonata pian'e forte*, he apparently intended to indicate a piece for antiphonal choirs that fell somewhere between the more grave style of his *ricercars* and the more spirited character of his *canzonas*. His *Sonatta per tre violini* (published in 1615), however, calls for only three parts, often in imitation, above a figured bass. For the period considered here, the prudent attitude would be to consider each piece called a "sonata" very much on its own merits. Only after about 1640 did more specific understandings about the sonata as a genre develop.

### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

ITALY clearly produced the most instrumental music, of the greatest variety, over the longest span. Italian organists reached the front rank of their profession early in the sixteenth century, with a roster of talent that ran in an unbroken line from Cavazzoni to Frescobaldi. Italians produced all types of music for organ, but they were especially important in the evolution of the *canzona francese* from simple transcriptions of vocal models to a significant kind of instrumental music, and similarly in the evolution of the *ricercar* from a piece which followed principles of vocal music to an independent instrumental form of the highest artistic merit. It was Italians, too, who first employed the organ as a *concertato* instrument supporting the basso continuo. Significant in these developments were Andrea Gabrieli and Banchieri in the second half of the sixteenth century, Merulo and Giovanni Gabrieli about 1600, and Frescobaldi.

Italy was graced with masterful lutenist composers from the beginning of the era, with Marco dall' Aquila, Francesco da Milano, Giovanni da Crema, and the Mantuan Alberto da Ripa (Albert de Rippe), while later figures included Vincenzo Galilei and Simon Molinaro, the last two being skilled composers of vocal music as well—a trait that shines through in their fastidious concern with voice-leading in their lute compositions. Among the early lute pieces, especially important were the *ricercars*, but Italians skillfully produced music for all genres: intabulations of vocal music, pieces for voice and solo lute, and dance movements.

In ensemble music Italians also seized leading roles in all fields. In wind music, the prestige of Italians is demonstrated by Ganassi and Dalla Casa (both members of the civic wind ensemble of Venice), who produced authoritative treatises on

the art of ornamentation. By about mid-century, the reputation of Italian cornettists was exceptionally high. Orologio, for example, not only traveled throughout Europe as a virtuoso on his instrument but was a composer of considerable merit. Ensemble string music through most of the sixteenth century was considered an Italian creation, and players imported in this era into the courts of France and England were largely Italian. Both the viol and the violin reached their definitive forms in Italy. Many early viols were produced by German makers, but by the turn of the seventeenth century the dynasties of brilliant Italian makers were well established. Moreover, it was Italy that began to pour out violin virtuosi who soon captivated most of Europe. By about 1610 came the production of idiomatic pieces by such composers as Marini and Cima, which exploited the particular virtues of the instrument. Forms were by no means standard, but early examples of solo and trio sonatas and of sonatas in essence on the *da chiesa* and *da camera* model were being produced by Italian composers around 1630 and were soon to be emulated through much of Europe.

Germany came the closest of the European regions to matching the outpouring that characterized Italy. Early in the sixteenth century, such German organists as Hofhaimer and Schlick had established Germans as the leading players and composers of the era. In the middle years of the century the organ was no less extensively cultivated, but the emphasis of organ composers on elaborate ornamentation resulted in a music that has not worn well for later generations. By the end of the century, though, younger organists of brilliant talent arrived on the scene. These included Praetorius, Scheidt, and Schein in the north and Hans Leo Hassler in southern Germany. The emphasis in the earlier period was on intabulations and dance music, but by about 1600 the German masters were particularly successful with imitative *ricercars* and *canzonas* and with various kinds of variations.

Germany could claim very competent lutenists, including Hans Judenkünig, Hans Gerle, and Hans Newsidler, during the first half of the sixteenth century. The emphasis in their written works, as with their keyboard colleagues, was on intabulations and dance pieces, of which many settings were cognates with Italian works. The next generation, including Melchior Newsidler and Sebastian Ochsenkun, were as gifted as players, and much of the music of the younger Newsidler is both distinguished and challenging. The works of the Transylvanian lutenist Valentin Bakfark must be included here; his long and complex fantasias were of the highest caliber.

German courts and cities supported first-class professional ensembles through most of the era (until financial setbacks resulting from the wars beginning in 1618), and it is also clear that enthusiastic circles of amateur performers had sprung up, especially in the larger cities. Little music was composed for ensembles, however, as most German publications through the sixteenth century continued the pattern of offering vocal music for *ad libitum* instrumental use. By about 1590, and especially after the turn of the century, came an outpouring of compositions for ensembles. These were dominated by dances, written by such composers as Hassler, Melchior Franck, Scheidt, and Schein (as well as an influential group of English composers

resident in Germany).<sup>47</sup> Of greater artistic interest were the works of Praetorius, Schütz, Scheidt, and Schein, that combined ensemble instruments with voices.

French instrumental music, as reflected by published collections, was curiously erratic. Attaignant published several volumes of keyboard music early in his career; this was followed by nothing of lasting interest until the publication of Jean Titelouze in 1623. The Low Countries were similar in that one figure, Sweelinck, towers above all others. A good deal of lute music was published in France (by Attaignant, Moderne, Gorlier and others), containing exceptional compositions by two transplanted Italians, da Ripa (de Rippe) and Paladino (Paladin), and in the Low Countries (by Phalèse in Leuven), but most of the music was more competent than distinguished.

The same presses in Paris, Lyons, Antwerp, and Leuven churned out quantities of ensemble music, mostly devoted to dance sets. Much of this music is charming and effective for casual amateur performance and is beautifully adapted to its purpose. It should also be noted that, as reflected in the publication of instrumental music, activity slowed in France during the worst of the religious conflicts in the last two decades of the sixteenth century, and it stopped almost completely in the southern Netherlands—Susato himself fled Antwerp, evidently owing to the threat of religious persecution.<sup>48</sup> By early in the seventeenth century, however, conditions in France stabilized, and the establishment of the “twenty-four violins of the King” was a key development in the history of French instrumental music.

The musical taste of professional ensemble instrumentalists was dominated by that of the French court, and this appears to have centered almost exclusively on dance music, although an important volume of *fantasies* by Eustache Du Caurroy was posthumously published in 1610. French professionals, at any rate, showed little inclination to indulge in the newer Italian genres such as sonatas and sinfonias. Very little has survived in contemporary manuscripts of court dances, but the collection assembled slightly later by Philidor apparently gives a good idea of the nature of the repertory. French court dances were written down in two parts only, soprano and bass. The dance ensemble performed in five parts, and the inner three parts were apparently improvised.<sup>49</sup> A further verification of this practice is provided by a series of contemporary English manuscripts reflecting the same approach.<sup>50</sup> Taken with iconographic evidence of numerous illustrations of instruments playing for dancing, in none of which are the players shown playing from written music, these manuscript collections underline the point that improvisational practice continued to be a central feature of performance throughout the period under consideration here.

<sup>47</sup> On English composers in Germany, see Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, 156–72.

<sup>48</sup> Kristine Forney, “New Documents on the Life of Tielman Susato, Sixteenth-Century Music Printer and Musician,” *Belgisch tijdschrift voor muziekwetenschap*, 36–38 (1982–84), 18–52.

<sup>49</sup> On the repertory, see Isherwood, *Music in the Service of the King*, 94–102; see also 367 n. 75.

<sup>50</sup> See Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers*, 189–94, 238–41; on the influence of French musicians in England, see *ibid.*, 108, 230–33.

Spanish instrumental music appears to have been characterized by very uneven production. Relatively little keyboard music was published there, but the surviving works of Antonio de Cabezón reveal him to have been a master whose works can stand next to any of his contemporaries. Liturgical music for organ formed a significant portion of his output, but his intabulations and pieces based on variation technique offer splendid examples of the genres. Of special interest are pieces he titled *tientos*, similar in style to the Italian *ricercars*, but with a fascinating subtlety of counterpoint. None of the Spanish keyboard composers of the later sixteenth century were of the same caliber.

Several fine vihuela composers appeared in quick succession in the two or three decades after Luis Milán's *Libro de vihuela de mano intitulado El maestro* (1535/36), the most significant of whom were Luis de Narváez, Alonso Mudarra, and Miguel de Fuenllana. These composers produced idiomatic pieces, fantasias, intabulations, and variations sets of consistently high distinction, and the collections of Mudarra and Fuenllana also contain some of the earliest works for the Spanish guitar.

Ensemble music in Spain has attracted little scholarly interest until quite recently. One significant development was that the more important churches in Spain began remarkably early to engage staffs of wind players on permanent contracts.<sup>51</sup> By about 1530 this appears to have been a general trend. Some Spanish wind players were evidently quite capable, but a decline in ensemble music appears to have set in by late in the century, at least in the respect that players in Spain appear to have been slow to adapt to newer trends around 1600. Certainly little original written music of artistic merit seems to have been produced.<sup>52</sup>

Music in England, in contrast to that of Spain and the southern Low Countries, reached a peak in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A few sources of keyboard music survive from the earlier sixteenth century, but scores of fine composers seem to have burst on the scene around 1590. The breathtaking quality of so many pieces by such a variety of composers testifies yet again to the richness of instrumental music of the era. Byrd, Bull, and Gibbons may be selected as those most consistently of top rank, but such composers as Giles Farnaby, Morley, Peter Philips, and Thomas Weelkes also produced works of great beauty. The range of music spans all types, but outstanding are the fantasias (again the equivalent of the Italian *ricercars*) and variation forms. A particular English trait was the preference for the virginal, although the organ was not neglected. Our knowledge of English keyboard music is established not only by fine prints but also by extensive manuscript anthologies such as the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book.

Relatively little lute music was published in England until fairly late in the sixteenth century, although fine lutenists were performing there throughout the era. The great master was John Dowland, whose music is simply exquisite (his output includes fantasias, dances, and variations, and of course lute songs). Outstanding

<sup>51</sup> Kenneth Kreitner, “Minstrels in Spanish Churches, 1400–1600,” *Early Music*, 20 (1992), 533–46.

<sup>52</sup> On the situation in Spain, see Douglas K. Kirk, “Churching the Shawms in Renaissance Spain: Lerma, Archivo de San Pedro Ms. Mus. 1” (PhD diss., McGill University, 1993).

among his colleagues were John Johnson, Daniel Bachelar, and Francis Cutting, whose works are mostly contained in manuscript.<sup>53</sup> One odd feature is that some of the finest English composers so little exploited the instrument. We have only a single lute work by Morley, only a handful of lute pieces can be attributed to William Byrd (and some of them are simply transcriptions of his keyboard works), and Gibbons and Weelkes wrote none at all.

Ensemble music found a ready audience in England. The viol had an extraordinary vogue among English amateur musicians, which seems to have engendered a matching repertory of dances, imitative pieces, and variations. The tradition of cantus-firmus settings (which continued to appear for decades) based on the *In nomine* theme was a peculiarly English phenomenon. The contrapuntal pieces of Byrd and Dowland represent an artistic high point (including Byrd's settings for solo voice and viols). Music for broken consorts was not neglected, with Morley's *First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599) being a landmark set. Excellent wind ensembles were available both at court and in the larger cities, and fine professional string players were available as well (many of them at first Italian players of both viol and violin; later on French influence was more prominent). Peter Holman has recently described the development of the string ensembles at the English court, showing that the tradition there was quite vigorous and similar to that of the French court. Indeed, the demand for instrumental music at court in the first two or three decades stimulated a first-rate repertory by such composers as Orlando Gibbons and Coprario. The distinguished tradition was continued in the next generation with the works of William Lawes.

#### AN UNDERGROUND STYLE?

AMPLE evidence suggests that a significant body of musicians functioned beyond the range of written music throughout the sixteenth century. We have seen, for example, the startling maturity of some of the earliest examples of written pieces in such genres as the imitative *ricercar*, which hints that such pieces may have existed earlier in unwritten form. The evidence of French and English dance music is more explicit, as we have preserved examples of pieces written for two parts, soprano and bass, which were evidently intended as a shell inside which further parts would be improvised. We also know from the comments of outstanding players such as Ganassi that it was simply assumed that instrumentalists would not only perform written music, but also that they could on the spot create polyphonic music to match the needs of any particular occasion. The question remains, however, as to what, if anything, may be established concerning this "underground" music.

We can be reasonably sure that the repertories followed along the lines of written sources. Dance music, of course, and variation forms would have been

standard fare. The application of divisions, as mentioned above, was by its very nature a spontaneous practice. One useful approach might be to determine areas in which improvisation might have been improbable. Textures that involved six or more voices, especially when one choir might be contrasted with another, would be highly unlikely contexts for improvisation (and it should be noted that it was in precisely this kind of piece where specific instruments were indicated). The extensive exploration of chromatic progressions, too, would have been very difficult if not written down. Imitation, however, though difficult, would of itself not have posed insuperable difficulties for skilled players. Contemporary treatises, at any rate, indicate that improvised imitative counterpoint was expected from competent musicians. It may not be possible to reconstruct the practices of the sixteenth century (or even desirable, given our lack of any verification as to the accuracy of our efforts). We should at least be aware, however, that in considering what remains of instrumental music of the era, it is just that, a remnant. Much is gone, almost without a trace. There may have been brilliant ensemble music heard in France in the late sixteenth century, for example, or fine imitative keyboard pieces in Germany, or worthy lute ayres heard in England around 1540. We have only the faintest of traces that signaled their presence, and as improvisations they vanished completely with the passing of their age.



<sup>53</sup> For an exemplary study of English lute music of the period, see Matthew Spring, *The Lute in Britain* (Oxford, 2001).