

**French *Basso Continuo* Performance Technique:  
a study of the arpeggiated gesture in the *prélude non mesuré*  
(c1650-c1720)**

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## Abstract

To compensate for the evanescent nature of the harpsichord, improvised techniques evolved within Italian and French keyboard repertoire so as to avoid 'leaving the instrument empty'.<sup>1</sup> In France, these techniques consisted of arpeggiated gestures, ornaments, and broken texture and they became characteristic features of stylistic performance on the instrument. One of the most important of these was the improvised arpeggiated gesture. Keyboard continuo treatises published in France after 1689 contain few illustrated examples of this. However, a number of composers of *Pièces de Clavecin* (Harpsichord Pieces) attempted to capture its performance in the notation they employed in publications of their music. The most fruitful source of these gestures is the unmeasured prelude of the French harpsichord repertoire. The peculiar notation employed here shows the exact sequence of a variety of arpeggiated gestures. Although the notation derives from lute music and the style is heavily influenced by the Italian keyboard tradition, the French unmeasured prelude is significant in that it illustrates the unique nature of arpeggiated gestures found in the compositions of a wide range of French composers. It thus provides a valuable source for the modern student of idiomatic continuo-playing. This dissertation explores the French method of managing evanescence and examines a history of subtlety and sophistication in harpsichord performance.

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<sup>1</sup> Tagliavini, Luigi Ferdinando, 'The art of "not leaving the instrument empty"', *Early Music* 11 (1983) p.300: '[...] *per non lasciar vuoto l'istromento*'.

## Editorial Method

### Text

Since a universal standard had not been established in France during the period c1650 to c1720, the variety of spellings found in the original sources quoted is retained.<sup>2</sup> When the original French text is supplied in the text or appended in a footnote, obsolete characters, such as the long s (f) are retained.

Editorial additions and emendations to text in quoted sources are in square brackets.

French terms (*prélude*, *prélude non mesuré*, *arpège*, and *traité*) are converted to the English equivalent (prelude, unmeasured prelude, arpeggiated gesture, and treatise) except where the French term has been retained to provide additional clarity to the overall meaning of a sentence.

The terminology for ornaments is given in translation, followed by the original French in brackets except where it has been deemed more appropriate to give precedence to the French term. Unless otherwise stated, the terminology is taken from d'Anglebert's *Marques des Agremens* (1689).

Quotations from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources are given in translation. These have been made not always literally but rather in order to convey clearly their intended meaning. Where available, translations by other scholars are used and acknowledged in the footnotes.

### Music

Musical examples are reproduced from facsimile reprints of original scores and treatises. Original clefs F<sup>3</sup> and C<sup>5</sup> clefs have been retained except in the detailed examples of arpeggiation found in Chapter 3: here, the arpeggiated gestures are transcribed with the original clefs and the first note on each staff shown before the modern standard F<sup>2</sup> bass and G<sup>4</sup> treble clefs. The bass note generally appears first.<sup>3</sup> Two categories of arpeggiation are outlined: simple and ornamented.<sup>4</sup> These categories serve to classify and collect sample arpeggiated gestures from unmeasured preludes. They are further

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<sup>2</sup> For example, François Couperin's spelling of 'Baricades' is retained where the modern spelling is 'Bar[r]icades' (see Ex. 1.04, Chapter 1); similarly, Denis Delair's spelling of 'Acompagnement' is reproduced instead of the modern spelling 'Accompagnement' (see Table 1.09, Chapter 1).

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin* (Paris: Ballard, 1702; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1974), pp.54-56.

sub-divided into seven types. For the purpose of classification, there is a complete integration of harmonic properties, so that each category may illustrate chords containing any number of voices or in any harmonic position.



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## Introduction

This is a study of arpeggiation found in published editions, manuscript collections and treatises on French harpsichord music from c1650 to c1720, particularly those containing the unmeasured prelude (*prélude non mesuré*).

The mechanism of sound production on plucked instruments of this period is characterised by an evanescence. In contrast to sounds produced on the organ, notes played on the lute or harpsichord fade and soon disappear. This prompted the development of techniques of arpeggiation, ornamentation, and broken texture in order to extend the sonority of these instruments. With arpeggiation, instead of playing the notes of a chord simultaneously, the musician sounds the notes of the chord in succession.<sup>1</sup> Idiomatic arpeggiation may take the form of simple upward or downward spreads, and/or metrical and ametrical *brisure*. The earliest evidence of the techniques of arpeggiation, ornamentation, and broken texture in French music can be found in music for the lute. These techniques transferred to French Baroque Harpsichord music during the seventeenth century and became part of French keyboard music over a hundred years.

An accompaniment aesthetic on the lute also arose in early seventeenth-century France and influenced French keyboard music. Important aspects of lute style (*style luthé*) that migrated to harpsichord music are explored here.

The aim of this study is to uncover features of the arpeggiated gesture in French music so that a greater variety in arpeggiation and a better standard of performance might be achieved by the modern player and, in particular, the modern harpsichord continuo player. The art of accompanying from a figured bass is essentially the art of improvising

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<sup>1</sup> This is also known as the breaking or spreading of a chord. The term arpeggio derives from the Italian verb *arpeggiare*, meaning 'to play the harp'. 'Arpeggio', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press [accessed 17 October 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01327>>.

an accompaniment within a given harmonic framework. Improvisation was considered to be a central aspect of both virtuoso solo and accompaniment style during this period. The accompaniment to each piece should be realised as an improvised response to the character of the music. A wide variety of arpeggiation is invaluable to the harpsichordist seeking to provide a rich idiomatic continuo realisation.

The method of notating *basso continuo* accompaniments using the figured-bass method – widely practised in Italy from the late 1500s – was not fully accepted in France until the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> This study considers the pace at which this method migrated to France, and the extent to which French accompaniment practice retained a distinctive French style even when figured bass was introduced.

Particularly French aspects of style are found in the typography of ornamentation, the notation of arpeggiated gestures and in *brisure*, one of the elements of French lute style that persisted in French solo harpsichord music. These quintessentially French practices are examined in order to see how they affect the fundamental technique of the improvised ornamented arpeggiated gesture.

The arpeggiated gesture is found in several sources: French ornament tables, treatises and solo harpsichord pieces. Much can be discovered from the fastidious ornament tables found in published collections of harpsichord music published after 1670. They contain a variety of ornament symbols together with basic illustrations that facilitate their interpretation. These tables appear in the preface to editions of solo harpsichord music, and contain many different symbols that indicate a diverse mix of arpeggiation. In the many treatises on basso-continuo accompaniment that appeared in France around the turn of the eighteenth century, characteristics of the performance of these ornaments are described but not explicitly illustrated. Saint-Lambert, in a colourful

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<sup>2</sup> Nuti, Giulia, *The Performance of Italian Basso Continuo: style in Keyboard Accompaniment in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), p.xi.

prosaic description of arpeggiation, refers to it as a ‘pleasant *charivari*’ in the accompaniment of *récit*.<sup>3</sup> Keyboard continuo treatises published in France after 1689 contain few examples of arpeggiation illustrated in notation. Rare examples are included in Denis Delair’s treatise and in d’Anglebert’s appendix to his 1689 publication.<sup>4</sup> Delair’s example is particularly useful as it employs a notation showing the exact sequence of notes within an arpeggio. It may also serve to establish a link between the arpeggiation used in accompaniment and the arpeggiation manifest in works for solo harpsichord. Part of the present study highlights the features of such unorthodox arpeggiated examples and examines related illustrations found in other seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century works.

Modern studies, such as those by Robert Zappulla and Jesper Christensen, focus particularly on the contribution of accompaniment treatises to continuo performance-practice. Zappulla concentrates on French writings on accompaniment, arguing that those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries describe a style of accompaniment in which rules concerning the construction of chords and the way they may be figured serve as a framework for the ‘freer’ elements of ornamentation and arpeggiation.<sup>5</sup> Christensen focuses on the fundamentals of figured bass playing in France and Germany in the years ‘roughly between 1690 and 1735’.<sup>6</sup> His aim is to provide instruction on the rudiments of continuo playing by following Dandrieu’s principle of ‘proceeding in small learning increments’.<sup>7</sup> Christensen maintains, however, that the French style is simple. When making a distinction between the French and German styles, he recommends the French as more suitable for novices: ‘The French style, being less complicated, is perhaps better suited for beginners’.<sup>8</sup> He also states that no French source describes ‘runs, imitations of the solo voice, or even

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.58-59. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> In his *Principes d’Accompagnement* section of his treatise, and the *Exemple general avec les agréments* in the *Principes de l’Accompagnement* included See Ex. 2.09, Chapter 2, p.53. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> Zappulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment in France* (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2000), p.108 and p.242.

<sup>6</sup> Christensen, Jesper, *18th Century Continuo Playing: A Historical Guide to the Basics* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002), p.7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

the melodic treatment of the right hand', leading him to speculate that 'the French art of figured bass playing was generally as simple as described here'.<sup>9</sup> This stance is examined in the light of an investigation of practical and theoretical aspects concerning arpeggiation not yet raised in modern scholarship.

The most fruitful source of arpeggiated gestures in French harpsichord repertoire is the unmeasured prelude (*prélude non mesuré*).<sup>10</sup> The curious notation employed in this genre shows the exact sequence of a great variety of arpeggiated gestures.

Although the notation derives from lute music – with the style also heavily influenced by the Italian keyboard tradition – the harpsichord unmeasured prelude is uniquely significant in that it illustrates arpeggiated gestures found in the works of numerous French composers. These gestures range from the most basic and unornamented to highly complex gestures containing a wide variety of ornaments and motifs. The French unmeasured prelude thus provides a valuable source for the modern student of idiomatic continuo-playing in which the arpeggiated gesture is an essential component. Furthermore, the aural snapshots captured in the many examples illustrating the notation of harpsichord music by composers ranging from Louis Couperin (c1626-1661) to Nicolas Siret (1663-1754) are as close as the modern reader may come to witnessing the performance of seventeenth-century arpeggiation practice.

Chapter one provides cultural and historical context by surveying the factors surrounding the migration of the figured bass accompaniment method to France. The social status of the lute in early seventeenth-century France and its influence on the late seventeenth-century harpsichord aesthetic is also examined for it is central to the context of an emerging French style of basso continuo accompaniment. French lute accompaniment is characterised by a textural *brisure*, the use of arpeggiation and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.147.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 3, pp.66-71. [\(LINK\)](#)

other ornaments. *Style luthé* may be viewed as an accumulation of techniques which contribute to this ornamented, arpeggiated texture. The extent to which these aspects of style migrated into the new French harpsichord aesthetic is explored.

Chapter two examines the new body of solo harpsichord material that emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century. This material comprises instruction on ornamentation and ornamented arpeggiation presented in tables of ornaments. The manner of playing these ornaments is explained in treatises (*traités*) on methodology. The effectiveness of the treatises in providing instruction to the modern aspiring harpsichord continuo performer is assessed and the context of the performance of ornaments is considered.

The final chapter focuses on how the ornamentation found in the solo music of the unmeasured prelude complements the information contained within theoretical treatises. Examples of the *arpège* found in the preludes of selected harpsichord composers are shown and examined in order to guide the modern continuo player towards an historically-informed improvisation.

## Chapter 1: The Migration of Figured Bass Method from Italy to France in the Seventeenth Century

### Introduction

Despite some successful visits to the French court by Italian musicians and highly placed champions of Italian culture, the migration of figured bass accompaniment from Italy to France proceeded at a relatively slow pace. Except for the inclusion of figured bass lines in compositions by Pierre Guédron (d1619/20) and Antoine Boësset (1586-1643) in the first half of the seventeenth century, it was not until 1652 that the first publication by a professional French composer containing a basso continuo line appeared in Paris.<sup>1</sup> This influx of *basso continuo* into France coincided with the rise in the status of the harpsichord as a solo and accompanying instrument and the decline of the lute in both these roles.

Accompaniment existed in France before the influx of figured-bass continuo. For the first half of the the seventeenth century the lute was favoured by the aristocratic French, both in the accompaniment of song and as an instrumental accompaniment to dance, so any study of French harpsichord performance practice must begin with a study of lute music from which it derives aspects of style. Included in this study is an assessment of the cultural status of French solo music for lute, and the role of lute accompaniment in the emergence of French harpsichord continuo accompaniment.

The influence of this lute style (*style luthé*) on a developing harpsichord aesthetic was significant, and by the time figured bass came to France features of lute style had become assimilated into harpsichord music. It was so important that it profoundly affected the style of French accompaniment and solo music well into the eighteenth century. These features of lute style include textures, techniques and ornament typography. The influence of figured-bass was also significant. Although a foreign

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, Peter, and Ledbetter, David, 'Continuo', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* [accessed 13 November 2009] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06353>>.

invention, it would become a conduit for French idioms. Its appearance has been recorded in French treatises (*traités*) from c1650.

## **1.1 Cultural Factors Influencing the Emergence of Harpsichord Music in France**

### **The Cultural Status of French Solo Music for the Lute**

The primary harmony instrument of the French early-Baroque period was the lute. Perhaps on account of its expressive qualities, and perhaps because Louis XIII took lessons on the instrument, proficiency on the lute was considered a fashionable activity expected of the French nobility of the early-Baroque, which, according to Marin Mersenne (1588-1648), was the competitor of plucked keyboard instruments such as the spinet.<sup>2</sup> The large community of professional lutenists active in Paris during Louis XIII's reign (1610-1643) attests to the popularity of the instrument.<sup>3</sup> Indeed as Mersenne opined:

Although this discourse pertains just as much to the Viol, & the Mandore as to the Lute, nevertheless, I include it here, because the Lute has surpassed the other string instruments so much that honourable men have preferred it, or because it has acquired such a reputation through its excellence, and its perfection, that the others are practically disregarded; or it may be due to the extraordinary

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<sup>2</sup> Mersenne, Marin, *Harmonie universelle: Traitez de la voix et des chants* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1636; facsimile edition: Paris: Centre national de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986), Vol. III, Livre Troisième, 'If we judge the dignity of musical instruments by the same reasons that we would judge the goodness of voices, it [the Spinnet] is probably preferable to the Lute, which is its competitor, but the convenience of the Lute, its good grace, and gentleness gave it the advantage / si l'on iuge de la dignité des Instrumens de Musique par les mesmes raisons que l'on iugeroit de la bonté des voix, sans doute on la prefera au Luth, qui est son Compediteur; mais la commodité du Luth, sa bonne grace, & sa douceur luy ont donné l'auantage.', p. 101.

<sup>3</sup> Hill, John Walter, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), p.124.



excellence of those who play them, enhance their reputation and make them commendable.<sup>4</sup>

Solo lute music had been in its ascendancy in France during the latter part of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth century. Dances form the core of solo lute repertoire from the early 1600s. An example of such was the printed collection of dances published in 1600, *Le trésor d'Orphée*, by Anthoine Francisque (c1575-1605), which contains features of the broken texture in what would be known as *style luthé*.<sup>5</sup>

Extant dances (*airs de mouvement*) in lute tablature include works by composers Antoine Francisque, René Mesangeau (d1638), Ennemond Gaultier (1575-1651), Germain Pinel (d1661) and Denis Gaultier (c1603-1672).<sup>6</sup> Denis Gaultier was one of the first lutenists to group a set of dances into a suite, in preference to grouping all the dances of the same type together in the volume.<sup>7</sup> Thus the great output of that quintessence of French music – the instrumental dance *suite* – began even before the harpsichord became the dominant French harmony instrument.

Dance was one of the most important social activities of the French nobility, both at court and in households. It incorporated the ceremonial, political, social and recreational aspects of court life. This long-standing fashion for courtly dance extended back to a period before the authority of Louis XIV was exercised. This was set to continue during the early reign of Louis XIV, as most French musical activity centred around the court in Paris where the predominant spectacle was to become the *ballet*

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<sup>4</sup> Mersenne, Marin, *Harmonie universelle: Traité des Instrvmens a Chordes* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1636; facsimile edition: Paris: Centre national de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986): 'Encore que ces discours appartiennent auffi bien à la Violle, & à la Mandore, comme au Luth, neantmoins ie les mets icy, à raifon que le Luth a pris vn tel afendant fur les autres instrumens à chorde, foit que les honnestes gens luy ayent donné cet auantage, ou qu'il l'aye acquis par fon excellence, & par fa perfection, que l'on ne fait quafi nul estat des autres, fi ce n'est lors que l'excelléce extraordinaire de ceux qui les touchét, les releue, & les rend recommandables'. p.56.

<sup>5</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.124.

<sup>6</sup> The collection of dances entitled *Le trésor d'Orphée* by Antoine Francisque, published in 1600, contains in lute tablature pieces in the following forms: *Pavane Espagnolle*; *Pavane d'Angleterre*; *Gaillarde*; *Branle*; *Gavotte*; *Courante*; and *Volte* forms; and a number of *Préludes*.

<sup>7</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.126.

*du cour*. The framework of such ballets was conceived as a succession of entries of courtier-dancers, who represented allegorical characters.<sup>8</sup> By design these court ballets placed the king as the leading personage around whom the other characters revolved.<sup>9</sup> Dancing was a key element in the early courtly life of Louis XIV:

The importance of the dance at this time, as vital to young men as fencing, was considered to be so great that even the Jesuits saw it necessary to instruct their pupils in the art. Among the various genres, that of the Court Ballet [...] needed a ceremonial dignity, at which Louis XIV had a natural talent: already by the age of eight he was described as dancing 'perfectly'. As a young man he excelled at the grave so-called Slow Courante and could perform the necessary turn-out of the legs and feet with supreme elegance.<sup>10</sup>

Decorum and dance were interlinked: the 'very acts of walking, bowing, of holding a fan or removing a hat, of entering a room [...] achieved a balletic grace as well as a nobility of manner'.<sup>11</sup> Such honed deportment transferred to dance easily.

Choreography was highly stylised and involved 'intricate upper-body gestures, such as bows and hand signals, that mimicked [...] courtly behaviour'.<sup>12</sup>

The gestures of courtly social grace and deportment melded in dance choreography and bearing, and it is not surprising that a subtle style and concern for gesture was cultivated in the music composed for the principal forms of courtly dance such as the *courante*, the *volta*, the *sarabande*, and the *branle*.<sup>13</sup> Mersenne's *Harmonie universelle* includes detailed analysis of the most common dance forms in use during his time: their names, the parallels between dances, whether they may be danced by a couple

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.109.

<sup>9</sup> This image of the king was captured wonderfully in the dance scenes of the film *Le Roi Danse* (2000) by Gérard Corbaui.

<sup>10</sup> Fraser, Antonia, *Love and Louis XIV - The Women in the Life of the Sun King* (London: Orion, 2007), pp. 39-40.

<sup>11</sup> Tunley, David, *François Couperin and 'the Perfection of Music'* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), pp.9-10.

<sup>12</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.113.

<sup>13</sup> Wachsmann, Klause, et al., 'Lute', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 16 February 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40074pg8>>.

or in groups, and how the poetic step should be based on musical prosody.<sup>14</sup> His entry on the *Courante* explains that it was the most practised of all the dances in France, that it required the participation of only two persons at one time, and that it was danced briskly, in accordance with the iambic foot  $\upsilon -$ , so that ‘the whole dance seems like a skipping series of comings and goings from beginning to end.’<sup>15</sup> It consists of two steps in each bar, and of the following three movements: bending, lifting, and setting down. Mersenne describes other dances, ranging from the Sarabande (‘which was invented by the Saracens’); the Pavanne (‘which comes from Spain’); and, even the Gaillarde (‘some say that it comes from Rome’).<sup>16</sup> Marin Mersenne’s concepts of strong syllabic (or choreographic) gestures deserve consideration by musicians approaching the performance of French dance music of the mid-Baroque. His thoughts on the stresses of dance music evolve from the concept of *vers mesurés à l’antique* associated with Jean-Antoine Baïf (1532-1589), and are useful for the continuo player, who should provide a significant motoric energy to the pulse of any piece.<sup>17</sup> The story of *musique mesurée à l’antique* is related to the characteristics of French *chanson* (and *récit*) accompaniment in France. The poetic style of *vers mesurés à l’antique*, developed by Baïf in 1567, achieves a new level of intimacy between music and poetry. With Joachim Thibault de Courville (d1581), and with the approval of Charles IX of France (1550-1574), Baïf founded the *Académie de Poésie et de Musique*, which met regularly at his home to advance the idea of *vers mesurés à l’antique*.<sup>18</sup> Mersenne characterises the rhythmic patterns of dances in the same way a poet might determine the rhythm of a line of verse.<sup>19</sup> Following the school of Baïf, Mersenne uses the term

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<sup>14</sup> Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle: Traitez de la voix et des chants*, pp.163-180.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.: ‘La Courante est la plus frequente de toutes les dances pratiquées en France, & se dance feurement par deux perfonnes à la fois, qu’elle fait courir fouz vn air mefuré par le pied lambique  $\upsilon -$ , de forte que toute cette dance n’est qu’une courfe fautelante d’allées & de venuës depuis le commencement iufques à la fin. Elle est compofée de deux pas en vne mefure, à fçauoir d’vn pas de chaque pied: or le pas a trois mouuemens, à fçauoir le plier, le leuer, & le pofer.’, p.165.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp.164-167.

<sup>17</sup> Murray, Gordon, Professor of Cembalo at the *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst*, Vienna, Austria. Interviewed by the author on 8 November 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Dobbins, Franck, ‘Baïf, Jean-Antoine de’, *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 12 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01788>>.

<sup>19</sup> Cohen, Albert, ‘Mersenne, Marin’, *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 16 February 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18468>>.

*rythmique* to apply ancient Greek poetic metrics to music, and makes the long and short syllables of scansion correspond to 'abstract concepts of short and long musical *temps* into quarter notes and half notes respectively'.<sup>20</sup> He believes that such schemes of long and short syllables (stresses) were at the heart of dance-music, and that these patterns are manifest in the rhythm of the melody, and in the harmonic progression. Mersenne illustrates twenty-seven metrical patterns and rhythmical arrangements (Ex. 1.01).

**Example 1.01 Marin Mersenne, Twenty-Seven Metrical Steps or Rhythmic Movement<sup>21</sup>**

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## Embellissement

*Table de vingt-sept pieds Métriques ou mouuemens Rythmiques.*

It emerges that the French proclivity for the social grace of dance – and a matching attention to the rhythmic attributes and ornamented detail of dance music – shaped the output and performance style of French musicians from the sixteenth century well

<sup>20</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.113.

<sup>21</sup> Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle: Traitez de la voix et des chants*, p.376.

into the eighteenth century.<sup>22</sup> It is also clear that Baïf's poetic style of *vers mesurés à l'antique* and Mersenne's application of scansion to instrumental music contribute to the development of the distinctive rhythms and harmonies first employed on the lute, and encountered in harpsichord music throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In conjunction with preludial pieces, such as the *tombeau* and the *prélude*, lutenist-composers created a new aesthetic around the broken texture that characterised their compositions in the first half of the seventeenth century. It was this *style luthé* aesthetic that was destined to infiltrate instrumental keyboard music in the second half of the century.

### **The Role of the Lute in the Emergence of French Accompaniment Style**

In the seventeenth century the performance of dance music was not the sole function of the lute. The instrument also served to accompany the *air de cour*: a homophonic strophic song for vocal ensemble, but mostly performed by solo voice with lute accompaniment.<sup>23</sup> The concepts of *musique mesurée à l'antique* applied by Mersenne to dance music were fundamentally related to poetry. *Airs de cour* were often heavily influenced by these principles, with texts set within a homophonic texture according to the scansion of the poetry.<sup>24</sup> This often resulted in phrases of unequal length and different bar-lengths, with the music left unbarred on occasion. In this way, French models of monody, grouped under the term 'recitative' by musicians today, differ from types of *recitativo* and *aria*, born as vehicles for dramatic action and parley in Italian music. The French use the terms *récit* and *récitatif*, but they are not synonymous: *Récit* applies to anything sung by a solo voice so that a *récitatif* may be categorised as a *récit*, but the reverse does not apply.<sup>25</sup> *Récitatif* (simple) was more closely linked to

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<sup>22</sup> Brown, Harry M., and Walls, Peter, 'Performing Practice', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* [accessed 20 February 2011] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40272pg1>>.

<sup>23</sup> Baron, John H., 'Air de cour', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* [accessed 28 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00362>>.

<sup>24</sup> Dobbins, 'Baïf, Jean-Antoine de', *Grove Music Online*. See also Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.111.

<sup>25</sup> Anthony, James, R., *French Baroque Music from Beaujoyeux to Rameau* (London: Batsford, 1973), pp. 28-29.

*recitativo secco* in that it was accompanied by the *basse-continuë* group, and 'set to a fluid succession of metres, where frequent metrical change mirrored the accentuation of poetic verse'.<sup>26</sup> *Récit* also had a particular meaning in the *ballet de cour* and was similar in structure and melodic content to the *air de cour*. French airs can be said to evolve from the spirit of *récit* as they 'faithfully follow the declamation of the words instead of imposing on them the movement and rhythm of an independent melody'.<sup>27</sup> Composers of the *récit* style of early *airs de cour* were influenced by Baïf to achieve a pronounced connection between music and poetry.

Adrian Le Roy (c1520-1598), lutenist, composer, and partner in the printing business with his cousin Robert Ballard (d1588), was known to have mingled with Baïf at the salon of Catherine de Clermont (1543-1603), Countess of Retz, intellectual and patroness of the arts.<sup>28</sup> Le Roy's publications of *chansons* and music for lute in the second half of the sixteenth century display features of the earlier virtuoso lutenist Albert de Rippe (c1500-1551) such as in 'ornamentation by diminution, arpeggiation and an incipient *style brisé*'.<sup>29</sup> This early emerging *brisure* texture came to fruition in a true *style luthé* with the publication of Francisque's *Le trésor d'Orphée* (1600), to which scholars ascribe the first blossoming of this style.<sup>30</sup>

Between 1608 and 1632, the Ballard publishing house issued a string of volumes under the title, *Airs de différents auteurs mis en tablature de luth*. This series by Ballard celebrated *air de cour* in arrangements for voice with a lute accompaniment in tablature. The lute often played a reduction of the lower voices of the vocal ensemble versions of *airs de cour*, with the solo voice singing the melody of the *air*. Lute

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<sup>26</sup> Dill, Charles, 'Eighteenth-Century Models of French Recitative', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 120 (1995), p.234.

<sup>27</sup> Masson, Paul-Marie, *L'Opéra de Rameau* (Paris: np, 1930), pp. 202-203; quoted in Dill, 'Eighteenth-Century Models of French Recitative', p.235.

<sup>28</sup> Baron, 'Air de cour', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th Century France* (London: MacMillan Press, 1987), p.30.

tablature became the principal form of notating accompaniments of this genre.<sup>31</sup> These and other published volumes of intabulated *airs de cour* brought the number of the latter published in the first half of the seventeenth century to over one thousand.<sup>32</sup> The lute *airs* are generally 'simple, essentially syllabic, strophic and mostly ammetrical songs'.<sup>33</sup>

The cultural status of the lute dictated the direction of solo music, the nature of accompaniment, and how accompaniments were notated and played. This examination of the role of lute accompaniment in the emergence of French figured bass accompaniment shows that the history of the lute in France is intertwined with its role in accompanying monody. Thanks to the cultural status of this instrument, it became fashionable for the polyphonic *air de cour*, a form heavily shaped by the doctrines of the *Académie de Poésie et de Musique*, to be performed by one singer with other voices provided in a lute accompaniment.<sup>34</sup> Nascent features of lute *brisure* emerged with the development of the *air de cour*, whose accompaniments were fully notated in lute tablature. As other forms of monody developed and figured bass spread to France, the theorbo and the harpsichord eventually replaced the lute in the role of accompanying instruments.

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<sup>31</sup> Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, p.337.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.337.

<sup>33</sup> Baron, 'Air de cour', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>34</sup> Lesure, François, et al., 'France', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 28 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40051>>.

## 1.2 The Influence of the Lute on the Emerging Harpsichord Style

The lute was the most important plucked instrument of the early seventeenth century. A measure of its significance is the extent to which it permeated the very essence of French music. Consequently, lute music coloured the musical imagination of *clavecinistes* as the harpsichord began to evolve its own distinct oeuvre.<sup>35</sup> How this evolved may be seen by an examination of lute textures, techniques, and the typography of ornament symbols in seventeenth century harpsichord repertoire.

### Textures and Techniques

In polyphonic textures of the previous century, voices were typically maintained in coherent lines throughout the piece. By comparison, in the newer lute style, the lower voices were an abridged version of the full texture, being played successively instead of concurrently, and were subject to delay, repetition, discontinuation and reintroduction:

The style is based on subtle attenuated allusion to common harmonic and contrapuntal formulae, on fluidly built-up melodic lines, and on intentionally vague harmonic direction; it is an aspect of an aesthetic which favoured asymmetry and unpredictability above all else.<sup>36</sup>

French lutenists developed a particular texture that shied away from playing the notes of a chord simultaneously, preferring instead to break the continuity of individual lines of a sustained polyphonic texture. The successive, separate plucking of notes provided an added sense of rhythmic impetus. An intensification of mood was achieved by delaying – and often syncopating – the introduction of notes of the chord.

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<sup>35</sup> Jean Jacquot holds that the harpsichord and lute share in a broader French aesthetic. He maintains that the argument advanced for a direct lute influence on harpsichord music has been overemphasised. His preference is to define the aesthetic using the concept of a general *style brisé*. See Jacquot, Jean, 'Luth et clavecin français vers 1650', *Report of the Tenth Congress of the International Musicological Society, Ljubljana 1967* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1970), pp.134-149. In response to Jacquot's thesis David Ledbetter writes 'It remains to be seen what light is shed on his conclusions, based as they are on late musical sources, by documentary evidence from the earlier part of the century'. Ledbetter, David *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.26. See also p.139.

<sup>36</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.33.



Discontinuous lines, the scattering of individual attacks, and a mesmeric *morendo* are the very characteristics of lute *brisure*.<sup>37</sup>

The broken texture in *style luthé* is not confined to dance music.<sup>38</sup> The *tombeau* and *prélude* forms also exhibit it. The *tombeau*, a plaintive piece intended to be played without any hurry in tempo, portrays the vague, undirected aspect of the broken style by reinforcing the evanescent nature of the lute in the silences present between plucked notes. This delay draws the listener hypnotically into the performance.

Features of *style luthé* were brought into general use by French harpsichordists and idiomatically improved for keyboard so that they became integral to a new evolving style of composition for the harpsichord. The transference of the *brisure* idiom from lute music to keyboard music is further exemplified by transcriptions of lute pieces found in manuscripts attributed to Jean Henry d'Anglebert (1629-1691).<sup>39</sup> Included in these manuscripts are arrangements of lute music by Germain Pinel and Denis Gaultier.<sup>40</sup> D'Anglebert's faithfulness to the lute's compass, and his integration of the musical texture found throughout the lute originals, indicate that his arrangements go beyond a simple adaptation of melodic and harmonic material. He assimilates the lute idiom to the harpsichord to such a convincing degree that the listener imagines the pieces to have been conceived for the instrument. According to David Ledbetter:

In his treatment of keyboard idiom [d'Anglebert] is resourceful in rendering details of the lute *brisure* in a form natural to the keyboard, particularly in the case of complementary syncopations between parts. This *brisure* is never automatic, but is artfully used to enhance particular effects.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.126.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter 1, p.8. [LINK](#)

<sup>39</sup> Ledbetter, David, 'Style brisé', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 15 August 2011] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27042>>.

<sup>40</sup> Saint-Arrowman, Jean (ed.) *Pièces de Clavecin: D'Anglebert, Chambonnières, L. Couperin: Transcriptions de pièces pour luth* (Bressuire: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1999; facsimile of manuscript Rés. 89<sup>er</sup>, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France c1675-1680).

<sup>41</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.86.

Arrangements of lute pieces for harpsichord are found in an autograph manuscript by d'Anglebert: one such transcription is of a lute gigue by lutenist Ennemond Gaultier, which provides a 'unique example of a systemic attempt to render the lute device of *campanella* in keyboard terms'.<sup>42</sup> The translation of idiomatic features from the lute originals of these dances into analogous writing for keyboard, including techniques and devices such as *tirer et rebattre* (notated with a dot over or under a chord to signify an upward stroke with the first finger, or a downward stroke with the outside of the same finger), the three-note *baigné* motif, and the *campanella* technique, is accomplished in a way that holds true to the spirit of the lute pieces whilst exploring a new direction in keyboard writing.<sup>43</sup>

Adoption of this technique in these arrangements shows D'Anglebert's interest in 'transferring the very sensitive style of the lute to the harpsichord'.<sup>44</sup> Bars 25-26 of *Gigue du Vieux-Gautier* (the fourth and fifth bars on the second system of Ex. 1.02) contain the most undiluted form of this effect in the right hand.<sup>45</sup> Parallel examples of the *campanella* device can be found throughout the general harpsichord repertoire.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Campanella* refers to playing consecutive notes (the same or neighbouring tones) on different courses so that they sound on as the following note is plucked. See Ledbetter, David, *Unaccompanied Bach: Performing the Solo Works* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), p.49 and p.321 for discussion of this device. See Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, pp.79-80 and Ex. 3.91, Chapter 3, p. 140 ([LINK](#)) for an example of the *campanella* effect in a *prélude non mesuré* by Siret. See Ex. 3.61, Chapter 3, p.118 ([LINK](#)) for an example of a multi-directional arpeggiated gesture that contains two-part *campanella* writing by d'Anglebert.

<sup>43</sup> For more discussion on lute techniques see Wachsmann, Klaus et al., 'Lute', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 23 February 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40074pg6>>. Mersenne describes lute techniques such as *accent plaintif*, *martelemens*, and *battemens*, that were extremely common. See Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle: Traitez de la voix et des chants, Livre Troisième, des Instrumens: 'Expliquer la maniere de toucher le Luth en perfection'* in *Harmonie universelle.*, pp.80-81. For discussion of the *baigné* motif see Chang, Philip, C., *Analytical and Performative Issues in Selected Unmeasured Preludes by Louis Couperin* (PhD dissertation, University of Rochester, 2011), i, p.45.

<sup>44</sup> Ledbetter, David, 'D'Anglebert, Jean Henry', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 17 February 2011] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07165>>.

<sup>45</sup> See Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, pp.79-81.

<sup>46</sup> Ledbetter, David, 'Aspects of 17th-century Lute Style reflected in the works of the *Clavecinistes*', *Lute Society Journal* 22 (1982), p.58.

Example 1.02 d'Anglebert, F-Pn Rés 89<sup>ter</sup> MS 5688, *Gigue du Vieux-Gautier*

This type of texture, where voices are plucked in succession, instead of concurrently, is often referred to today as *style brisé* (broken style). This term is of comparatively recent origin: it was coined in the twentieth century to describe the *brisure* of harpsichord music resulting from the incorporation of aspects of lute music into keyboard style.<sup>47</sup> *Luthé*, another, older, more appropriate term exists to describe this phenomenon in relation to French keyboard music. Both Gaspard Le Roux (d c1707) and François Couperin (1668-1733) use the term *luthé*: Le Roux in his *Courante luthé* in D minor (Ex. 1.03), and Couperin in the third piece (*Les Charmes*) of his *Neuvième Ordre* published in his *Second Livre de pièces de Clavecin* 1717 (Ex. 1.04).<sup>48</sup> It is not known whether Le Roux's *Courante luthé* is an arrangement of a specific lute dance. When Le Roux entitles the dance *Courante luthée*, therefore, he is referring to the textural quality of the music that evokes the playing style of the lute.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Buch, David, J., 'Style brisé, style luthé, and the choses luthées', *Musical Quarterly* 71 (1985), pp. 52-67.

<sup>48</sup> Couperin, François, *Second Livre de Pièces de Clavecin* (Paris: l'Auteur & Marchand, 1716-1717; facsimile edition: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1990), p.42.

<sup>49</sup> See Buch, 'Style brisé, style luthé, and the choses luthées': 'The piece resembles the brief courantes of the seventeenth-century French lutenists only in some general stylistic traits such as the D-minor tonality, the short melodic passages in a free-voiced texture, the use of suspensions and held notes, and a few broken chords. The piece modulates more than the usual lute courante, recalling the lute tombeau, pavanne, and allemande. It is substantially longer and has little of the hemiola and rhythmic play that often mark the lute courante. The piece is therefore not imitating a lute courante but is a keyboard courante with some elements of the lute style.' p.59.

Example 1.03 Gaspard Le Roux, *Pieces de Clavessin 1705, Courante luthéé*, p.8

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Example 1.04 François Couperin, *Second Livre de pièces de Clavecin 1717, Les Charmes*, p.42.

42.

*Première partie. Mesuré, sans lenteur. Voyez ma Méthode page 69.*

*Les Charmes.*

*Luthé, scélé.*

*Reprise.*

François Couperin was keenly aware that lute idioms work well on the harpsichord. He includes in his *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* published in 1717 the term 'les choses luthées' ('The things of the lute') in the list of idioms he considers most suitable on the harpsichord.<sup>50</sup> In a paragraph of his publication regarding 'des bateries, ou arpégemens', Couperin cautions the player to 'avoid those slow pieces which are

<sup>50</sup> Couperin, François, *L'Art de toucher le clavecin*: 'Les passages, les bateries, à portée de la main; les choses luthée, et sincopées, doivent être préférées à celles qui sont pleines de tenües; ou de notes trop graves.', p.61.

found there, whose basses are not at all made for combining with lute-like parts and syncopations which are suitable to the harpsichord'.<sup>51</sup>

*Les Baricades Mistérieuses* from the *Sixième Ordre* by François Couperin, also published in his *Pièces de Clavecin* (1717), embodies the procurement of the earlier style *luthé*, and shows subsequent development of lute idiom into a harpsichord *brisure*.<sup>52</sup> As can be seen in Ex. 1.05, all the notes of the chord are not all played concurrently, but in succession, evoking 'a sense of movement, [a] lightness of touch, and a melodic line which [...] is woven into the arpeggiated texture'.<sup>53</sup>

**Example 1.05 François Couperin, *Les Baricades Mistérieuses*<sup>54</sup>**

6.

*Ires Baricades  
Mistérieuses.*

The image shows a musical score for 'Ires Baricades Mistérieuses' by François Couperin. It is a two-staff piece in 2/4 time, written in G minor. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, ties, and ornaments. Key markings include 'Vivement', 'Rondeau', 'Rondeau &c.', '1er Couplet', and 'Fin'. The piece is numbered '6.' at the beginning.

The effect of the ties in *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* is to build up the sonority of the instrument. The player would normally hold the notes even more than notated in the

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.: 'D'éviter les morceaux lents qui si recontrent, dont les basses ne sont point faites pour y joindre les parties luthées, et sincopées qui conviennent au clavecin.', pp.35-36.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>53</sup> Tunley, *François Couperin*, p.114.

<sup>54</sup> Couperin, François, *Second Livre de Pieces de Clavecin*, p.6.

score: 'holding them as much as one has to would be almost impossible to notate'.<sup>55</sup>

Over-holding technique (in conjunction with *brisure*) is 'an essential ally of good touch in giving the harpsichord its full sonority and sustaining power'.<sup>56</sup> On the harpsichord, it enables the player to evoke the grace and gentleness of the lute, as each new attack of a single note is hidden by the existing sounding notes. This is not to suggest that players should hold down all the notes to the detriment of articulation.

The texture of *style luthé* transferred to the harpsichord, as shown in Ex. 1.05, represents a metrical *brisure*, one that creates a motoric impulse within the piece. This *brisure* also serves to expand the sonority of what is, like the lute, an instrument characterised by the attribute of evanescence. In order to give the illusion of a sustained harmony the player must use the resources of each instrument to prolong the sound. On the harpsichord, sonority is increased and sustained by employing more general over-holding or over-legato techniques. These involve the attachment and lengthening of notes in such a way that the player holds them down within chords even as new notes are sounded.

Techniques associated with prolonging the sound include the arpeggio (*arpège*) which was indicated by a variety of symbols in lute and harpsichord music. Often the arpeggiation of a chord is not directly indicated, but implied, relying on the spontaneous invention of the player in the spirit of improvisation. Angelo Michele Bartholomi's *Table pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe* (1669) contains a single-system instruction on the final page which illustrates how the player might arpeggiate a single harmonic gesture in prelude notation (Ex. 1.06).

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<sup>55</sup> Murray, Gordon, Professor of Cembalo at the *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst*, Vienna, Austria. Interviewed by the author on 8 November 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Donington, Robert, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p.574.

Example 1.06 Angelo Bartolomi, *Table pour apprendre facilement* [...], p.61<sup>57</sup>

*Exemple pour preluder.*

F I N.

*Style luthé* offers a response to the evanescent character of the lute, so that sonority may be prolonged on the instrument. Evanescence on the lute is a quality shared with the harpsichord. This explains why the techniques related to lute *brisure* were so easily transferrable to the harpsichord.

### Ornaments

D'Anglebert's interest in the lute style is also evidenced by his espousal of the lute strain of ornament symbols. His ornament table that appeared in 1689 draws not on the ornaments approved by his teacher Jacques Champion, Sieur de Chambonnières (1601/2-1672), but on symbols used by French lutenists and it constitutes the most comprehensive table of ornaments in the French keyboard tradition (Ex. 1.07).<sup>58</sup>

D'Anglebert increased the number of ornament signs employed to include those indicating additional colour and distinction to a note. His ornament table is composed of twenty-nine illustrations of ornaments and their signification. His method of notating ornaments derives from his exploration of lute repertoire, and, in this, he was followed by other composers such as Le Roux, Dieupart, Rameau and Balbastre.

D'Anglebert's ornament signs are 'much closer to those of the lutenists, presumably

<sup>57</sup> Bartholomi, Angelo Michele, *Table pour Apprendre Facilement a Toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë* (Paris: Robert Ballard, 1669; facsimile reprinted in: *Méthodes & Traités: Basse Continuo France 1600-1800*, Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006), p.69.

<sup>58</sup> Chambonnières' disciples in the use of ornament symbols were Nicolas Lebègue and François Couperin. See Chapter 2, pp.40-46. [LINK](#)

because theirs were more exact and convenient.<sup>59</sup> His ornament table circulated around Europe, finding its way into the library of Johann Sebastian Bach, which contained works by French keyboard composers, such as Louis Marchand, Charles Dieupart and François Couperin.<sup>60</sup> It is estimated that Bach copied d'Anglebert's ornament table between 1709 and 1712.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.84.

<sup>60</sup> Wolff, Christophe, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Bach was 'as anxious to keep stylistically up-to-date as he was attracted by exemplary works of widely varying genres, styles and techniques', p.333.

<sup>61</sup> Jones, Richard D. P., 'D'Anglebert, Jean-Henri'; in Boyd, Malcolm (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Bach* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).



Example 1.07 Jean Henry d'Anglebert, *Marques des Agrements et leur signification*

*Marques des Agrements et leur signification*

*Tremblement Simple*  
*Tremblement appuyé*  
*Cadence*  
*Double cadence*  
*sans tremblement*  
*sur une tierce*

*Pincé*  
*autre*  
*Tremblement Cheute ou port en descendant et pincé*  
*Cheute et pincé*  
*Coulé sur une tierce*  
*autre*  
*Sur 2 notes de suite*  
*autre*

*Cheute sur une note*  
*Cheute sur 2 notes*  
*double cheute*  
*Idem a une note seule*  
*Arpeggé*  
*autre*  
*Detaché avant un tremblement*  
*un pincé*

The transfer of the *brisure* idiom from the lute to the keyboard is a defining feature of French music of the mid-seventeenth century. This is heavily evidenced in dance, in the *prélude*, and *tombeau* forms. The common feature of evanescence shared by the harpsichord and the lute makes the use of such a broken texture in both repertoires inevitable and expedient. The successive, disconnected playing of notes produces a sense of rhythmic impetus, whilst a delay introducing notes of a chord may produce a

heightening of mood. This *style luthé* fused into a harpsichord *brisure* to the extent that the very texture became the expression of an aesthetic. D'Anglebert, the author of the most influential table of ornaments in French keyboard music, was himself influenced by the lute strain of ornaments. His typography of ornament symbols spread throughout Europe.

The transfer of lute texture to the harpsichord allowed a convincing variety of expression to be achieved. Over-holding techniques such as *campanella* also found their way into use by *clavicinistes*. By using the *campanella* device that originated in lute music, sound can be softened by over-holding the first note while the next one is played.<sup>62</sup> Ornaments and devices borrowed from lute repertoire such as the addition of ornaments to a particular gesture, and the over-holding of notes (finger-pedalling) are all techniques employed by harpsichordists.<sup>63</sup>

### **1.3 The Emergence of Figured Bass Harpsichord Accompaniment in France**

#### **The Decline in the Status of the Lute**

The exalted position of the lute in the first half of the seventeenth century was not destined to continue: the tablature and techniques involved in playing the lute were not easy to master, and the more accessible form of notating an accompaniment – using the system of figured bass – would eventually outstrip the system of tablature hitherto employed in France.<sup>64</sup> Tablature had remained the primary form of notating accompaniment up to the middle of the seventeenth century, when *basso continuo*

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<sup>62</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, pp.41-42.

<sup>63</sup> Murray, Gordon, Professor of Cembalo at the *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst*, Vienna, Austria. Interviewed by the author on 8 November 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Le Cerf's passage asks 'Why [young students learning to accompany] have abandoned the Lute, that instrument so praised and so harmonious [...] they respond that it is very difficult/On leur demande pourquoi ils ont abandonné le Lut, cet instrument si vanté & si harmonieux [...] ils répondent qu'il est trop difficile.' Le Cerf de la Viéville de Fresneuse, Jean-Laurent, *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique française* (Brussels: François Foppens, 1705-1706; Facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1972); quoted in Zappulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment*, p.49.

began to permeate French musical life.<sup>65</sup> By the 1630s the theorbo (instead of the lute) was being cited as a preferred instrument on which to accompany the voice.<sup>66</sup> However, by the mid-seventeenth century, an increase in the popularity of figured bass as a method of indicating the harmonic progression in an accompaniment, the availability of harpsichords, and the inaccessibility of lute tablature played a part in the lute's decline and ushered in the age of the *clavecin* and *basse continuë*.<sup>67</sup>

Following the publication of Boësset's *Airs de cour avec la tablature de luth* (Book 9) in 1643, figured bass lines generally replaced lute tablature in the notation of accompaniments.<sup>68</sup> This was also a result of the increasing popularity of the theorbo and the harpsichord as accompaniment instruments and was reflected in the increasing number of treatises on accompaniment for these instruments produced in the second half of the seventeenth century. Nicolas Fleury's *Methode pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë* (1660) and Denis Delair's *Traité d'acompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin* (1690) are examples of such treatises and reflect the substitution of lute tablature by figured bass accompaniment.<sup>69</sup>

However, Perrine's (d c1698) *Livre de musique pour le lut* (1680) attests to the fact that the lute continued to be used in the French continuo-group after 1650.<sup>70</sup> Nonetheless, Perrine's treatise shows the use of figured bass in the context of the notation of lute music. There are three systems of music in his treatise: the top system of each example

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<sup>65</sup> Typographical problems experienced by European music-publishers of early keyboard works of the late sixteenth century - which resulted in a blossoming of keyboard tablature or the circulation of music in handwritten manuscripts - had disappeared, and copperplate engraving became an alternative to typesetting as a means of publication. The royal monopoly exercised by the Ballard family did not cover music produced from copper plates, only typeset music. See Atlas, Alan, *Renaissance Music* (London and New York: Norton, 1998): 'In general, music printers had difficulty placing two or more closely spaced notes vertically on the same staff', p.485.

<sup>66</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.11.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>68</sup> Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, p.343.

<sup>69</sup> Delair, Denis, *Traité d'acompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin. Qui comprend toutes les règles necessaires, pour acompagner sur ses deux instruments, avec des observations particulieres touchant les differentes manieres qui leurs conviennent [...]* (Paris: L'Auteur, 1690; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1972), and Fleury, Nicolas, *Methode pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë* (Paris: Ballard, 1660; facsimile reprint: *Méthodes & Traités: Basse Continuo France 1600-1800*, Courlay, Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006). See also: Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.225.

<sup>70</sup> Perrine, *Livre de Musique pour le Lut* (Paris: L'Auteur, 1680; facsimile reprinted in: *Méthodes & Traités: Basse Continuo France 1600-1800*, Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006).

has an unfigured-thoroughbass line, the middle system contains the harmonic spelling of each of these chords, and the lower system presents the lute tablature notation for the realisation (Ex. 1.08). Clearly, Perrine's work appears during a transitional stage in accompaniment, before d'Anglebert's *Pieces de clavecin* (containing the mini-treatise '*Principes de l'Accompagnement*') was published in 1689.

By the early years of the eighteenth century, treatises on accompanying on the harpsichord outstripped the number of treatises for the lute. Denis Delair mentions the lute as a accompanying instrument in his treatise, but his title is directed at theorbo players, and his examples appear in regular notation.<sup>71</sup> The fact that Perrine's work is the only one of its kind for lute, and that his musical examples were published in regular notation and tablature, points to the effective demise of the lute as a popular accompanying instrument near the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>72</sup>

**Example 1.08 Perrine, *Livre de musique pour le Lut*.<sup>73</sup>**

31

*Accords Majeurs des Notes extraordinaires où transposées*

*Accords mineurs des mêmes Notes*

The harpsichord became an instrument preferred by the élite sometime after 1650, and by the 1660s it was 'well established as a leading instrument of fashion, equal to the

<sup>71</sup> Delair, Denis, *Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin. Qui comprend toutes les règles nécessaires, pour accompagner sur ses deux instruments, avec des observations particulieres touchant les différentes manieres qui leurs conviennent [...]* (Paris: l'Auteur, 1690; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1972).

<sup>72</sup> Zappulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment*, p.49.

<sup>73</sup> Perrine, *Livre de Musique pour le Lut*, p.31.

lute'.<sup>74</sup> References to the lute in contemporary correspondence cease around 1680, and, increasingly the harpsichord is the subject of discussion.<sup>75</sup> Very little evidence has been found for the practice of accompanying from a figured-bass at the keyboard in France in the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>76</sup> However, by the end of the seventeenth century, the art of accompanying from a figured bass at the keyboard was considered a key part of a musical education and this is reflected in the proliferation of keyboard treatises at that time.<sup>77</sup>

The publication of the first treatise on figured-bass accompaniment in France appeared considerably later than the first *basso continuo* emerged in Italy. Fleury's *Methode pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë* (1660) appears half a century later than Viadana's tome entitled *Cento Concerti Ecclesiastici [...] con il Basso continuo per sonar nel Organo Nova inventione commoda per ogni sorte de Cantore* (1607).<sup>78</sup> A chronology of the publication of treatises on figured bass accompaniment in France (Table 1.01) shows the early release of treatises for hand-plucked instruments yielding to more continuo publications for the keyboard:

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<sup>74</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.10.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>76</sup> Tunley, *François Couperin*: By way of an example it is an often overlooked fact that Chambonnières could not accompany. Tunley cites this as a possible reason why Chambonnières was replaced by d'Anglebert as the royal harpsichordist. See p.101.

<sup>77</sup> Zappulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment*, p.36.

<sup>78</sup> See Arnold, *The Art of Accompaniment*. See Volume I, Chapter 1, pp.2-5.

**Table 1.01 Treatises on accompaniment (1660-1707)**

Author	Title	Instrument	Date
Nicolas Fleury	<i>Methode pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë</i>	Theorbe	1660
Angelo M. Bartolotti	<i>Table pour Apprendre Facilement a Toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë</i>	Theorbe	1669
Perrine	<i>Livre de Musique pour le Lut</i>	Lute	1680
Jean Henry d'Anglebert	<i>Pieces de clavecin Composées par J. Henry d'Anglebert Ordinaire de la Musique de la Chambre du Roy</i>	Clavecin	1689
Denis Delair	<i>Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin. Qui comprend toutes les règles nécessaires, pour accompagner sur ses deux instruments, avec des observations particulieres touchant les differentes manieres qui leurs conviennent [...]</i>	Theorbe & Clavecin	1690
Saint-Lambert	<i>Nouveau traité de l'accompagnement du clavecin, de l'orgue, et des autres instruments</i>	Clavecin	1707

Because figured bass was an Italian method, linked to Italian forms, political factors and cultural tastes delayed the introduction to France of the figured bass method of notating accompaniments. The wholesale migration of figured bass accompaniment from Italy coincided with the ascension of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) to the post of *surintendant de la musique de la chambre du roi*, a post granted him by Louis XIV in 1661.<sup>79</sup> Although Lully was Italian by birth, he then became French by naturalisation. Much of his musical education took place in Paris following his move there.<sup>80</sup> He absorbed the ideas and tastes of his new homeland and satisfied French tastes for French art forms. Giulio Raimondo Mazzarino, Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661), who became chief minister to the regent and mother of Louis XIV, Anne

<sup>79</sup> de La Gorce, Jérôme, 'Lully', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* [accessed 29 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42477pg1>>.

<sup>80</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.233.

of Austria (1601-1666) in 1642,<sup>81</sup> attempted to introduce Italian influences to the French court in order to gather support for the Ultramontanist party, which advocated concessions to papal authority.<sup>82</sup> During his time as first minister, he imported six Italian opera productions for royal enjoyment, but French audiences would only accept musical drama if it were sung in French.<sup>83</sup> Instead, French opera, *Ballets de cour*, and *Comédies-ballets* took hold as Louis XIV actively encouraged Lully and Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673), known as Molière, in the creation of large-scale court spectacle-performances in which the king himself would take a central role. Lully's works use the figured bass method of indicating the harmony above the bass note within French forms and a quintessentially French style.<sup>84</sup> His use of the figured bass method demonstrates both the utilitarian advantage – and the ubiquity – of this method.

### **French Harpsichords**

Trends in the craft of instrument making may have influenced the development of French harpsichord music. The study of the craft of instrument making in France can rely on the ample supply of extant documentary source materials. This is a happy consequence of the French proclivity for bureaucracy, and a political culture of centralisation which gave rise, during the reign of Henri IV (de Navarre), to the formation of a guild for instrument makers in 1599. On the other hand, in contrast to

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<sup>81</sup> The chief minister to Louis XIII, Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642), pursued an agenda of centralisation, demanding deference to the monarch from French subjects at home, and ensuring the consolidation of French power and prestige in Europe and the New World. The extent of this process of centralisation is vividly captured by Hill: 'Richelieu crushed aristocratic conspiracies with quick executions. He abolished the medieval military dignities and prevented great lords from sitting in the king's council. He created a system of local government whereby each of the thirty-two districts had a royal intendant who had complete responsibility for justice, police, and finances under the king's authority.' Hill, *Baroque Music*, pp.216-217.

<sup>82</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.229.

<sup>83</sup> Anthony, *French Baroque Music*, p.51.

<sup>84</sup> A compilation by Ballard contains a *basse-continuë* line. See *Fragments de monsieur de Lully* (Paris, Christophe Ballard, 1702) [accessed 28 August 2012] <[http://japanese.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/4/47/IMSLP129923-PMLP253159-Campra\\_-\\_Lully.pdf](http://japanese.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/4/47/IMSLP129923-PMLP253159-Campra_-_Lully.pdf)>. The royal music librarian, André Danican Philidor (c1652-1730), collected and copied a large number of works by Lully. His parts contain figured bass markings.

the abundance of early Italian instruments, there are no surviving French harpsichords from before the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>85</sup>

Mersenne describes the *epinette* makers Anthoine Potin, Médéric Lorillart, Jean Jacquet and Jean Denis as examples of quality craftsmen:

It should only be noted that one of the main secrets of the Spinete lies in its position on the table, its goodness depends on the excellent frame, developed to perfection by Anthoine Potin, and Emery Mederic, who are recognised as having been the best French Makers; to whom the best Makers of today, Jean Jacquet le Breton, and Jean Denis have succeeded and who excel in their craft: and perhaps this generation of makers will add new secrets, and new charms to the instruments: for example, one can touch the strings as if imitating the gentle touch and harmony of the Lute: one can imitate the strokes and all the charms of the other instruments on the Spinete.<sup>86</sup>

The term *Épinette* was used in a general sense and includes references to the harpsichord.<sup>87</sup> The design of native French harpsichords from the mid-Baroque gave 'a lighter and more transient quality of tone than that of the [Flemish] Ruckers instrument.'<sup>88</sup> The French craft is divided by scholars into two separate schools: an earlier group of makers responsible for some important developments, and a later group dedicated to enhancing and refining Flemish instruments from the Ruckers workshop to better meet French tastes.<sup>89</sup> Makers such as Jean Jacquet and Vincent

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<sup>85</sup> Hubbard, Franck, *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), p.85.

<sup>86</sup> Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle: Traitez Des Instrumens A Chordes: Il faut seulement remarquer que l'un des principaux secrets de l'Epinette consiste à barrer la table, dont la bonté depend de l'excellente barrure, qui a esté pratiquée en perfection par Anthoine Potin, & Emery ou Mederic, que l'on reconnoist auoir esté les meilleurs Facteurs de France, auxquels les meilleurs Facteurs de maintenant, à sçavoir Jean Jacquet, le Breton, & Jean Denys ont succédé, lesquels font excellents en leur art: & peut estre que ce siecle en produira qui adiouteront de nouveaux secrets, & de nouveaux charmes aux instrumens: par exemple, l'on peut faire toucher les chordes par quelques corps qui imiteront la douceur des doigts, & l'harmonie de Luth: l'on peut imiter les battemens, le flatement & tous les autres charmes des autres instrumens sur l'Epinette, que quelques-vns montent de chordes de Luth, afin de rendre l'harmonie plus douce.*, p.159.

<sup>87</sup> Hubbard, *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making*, p.88.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p.101.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.85.



Tibout were responsible for some of the first double-manual instruments, and began to develop an indigenous French tradition of instrument making distinct from both the Italian and Flemish traditions (but with some similar elements).<sup>90</sup> This gave rise to innovations in composition, with the birth of music requiring two manuals, as in the examples of *pièces croisées* by Louis Couperin (c1626-1661) (Ex. 1.09).<sup>91</sup> Other examples of instruments from this period include a double-manual harpsichord from the Jean Denis workshop (Paris, 1648), and the single manual by Nicolas Dufour (Paris 1683).<sup>92</sup>

**Example 1.09 Louis Couperin, *Bauyn MS, Courante*, fo.20v**



Thus we see that trends in musical taste and style of composition were mirrored in the craft of instrument making. As time passed, the trends in musical taste moved towards the melodic and away from the contrapuntal. This prompted French makers to consider more colour in the shades of tone achievable on an instrument. Workmanship of the

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.100.

<sup>91</sup> Couperin, Louis, *Manuscrit Bauyn – Deuxième partie (Après 1658): Pièces de clavecin de Louis Couperin (F-Pn Rés Vm 7674-5; repr. in Porot, Bertrand (ed.), La Musique Française Classique de 1650 à 1800; Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006), p.40.*

<sup>92</sup> Ripin, Edwin M. et al. 'Harpsichord', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 14 February 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12420pg3>>.

highest order, coupled with a diligent attention to detail in the quilling of instruments, produced the sensitive action commonly associated with the *clavecin à grand ravalement* of the eighteenth century.<sup>93</sup>

#### 1.4 Conclusion

The investigation undertaken in this chapter confirms that the migration of figured bass accompaniment from Italy to France was a relatively slow process. French tastes in the early part of the seventeenth century favoured art forms and practices which were indigenous. The French emphasis on graceful decoration (*agrément*), gesture and subtlety took precedence over Italianate flamboyance and passionate intensity. The French cultivated dance forms, produced the *Ouverture* (French overture), the *ballet de cour*, the *air de cour*, the organ mass, the *Grand motet*, and the obscure *prélude non mesuré*. French music of this period remained 'self-consciously distinct from the music of the rest of Europe in both compositional style and performance practice'.<sup>94</sup> It is clear that the particularly French concern for the protection of their own culture – a fixation that prevails to the modern day – resulted in a slower timeline for the adoption of the Italian invention of figured bass. However, even though figured bass was an Italian method of notating an accompaniment, it slowly became another conduit of French musical style.

Scattered appearances of figured bass lines that are found in French music before 1650 are the exception rather than common practice.<sup>95</sup> The use of a *basso continuo* in 1617 by Pierre Guédron (*d* c1619) is notable, but Guédron soon reverted to the use of intabulated lute accompaniments, widely employed in the *air de cour* at this time.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Nicolas Blanchet (*d*.1731), François-Etienne Blanchet (c. 1700-1761), and Pascal Taskin (1723-1793) are builders associated with the development of the *clavecin à grand ravalement* during the eighteenth century.

<sup>94</sup> Spitzer, John, and Zaslow, Neal, 'Improvised Ornamentation in Eighteenth-Century Orchestras', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 39 (1986), p.555.

<sup>95</sup> Williams and Ledbetter, 'Continuo', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>96</sup> Hill, *Baroque Music*, p.123.

Nascent features of lute *brisure* had emerged early in the development of the *air de cour*, whose accompaniments were fully notated in lute tablature. The French lute style found in solo music and in *air de cour* accompaniments was transferred to the emerging harpsichord aesthetic. *Style luthé* texture, idioms found in lute music, and a strain of lute ornamentation were assimilated into harpsichord *brisure* and ornament typography. *Style luthé* may be viewed as an accumulation of techniques which suggest an ornamented, arpeggiated texture. These techniques offer a response to the evanescent character of the instrument, so that sonority may be prolonged. The common feature of evanescence shared by the harpsichord and the lute makes the use of such a broken texture in both repertoires inevitable and expedient. Given the extent to which *style luthé* influenced the evolution of harpsichord *brisure*, and, given the historical role of the lute in the accompaniment of *airs de cour*, it would be reasonable to expect that idiomatic lute textures and chordal accompaniment figuration would find their way into harpsichord continuo practice. So wholesale was this adoption that François Couperin named '*les choses luthée*' as features most suitable on the harpsichord.<sup>97</sup>

This chapter confirms that the idiomatic use of arpeggiation and ornamentation in harpsichord continuo playing may have had its origin in lute music. It also emerges that the mass practice of intabulating lute accompaniments was not to last into the eighteenth century because the tablature and techniques involved in playing the lute were too difficult to master. The more accessible and convenient form of notating the harmonic aspect of accompaniment – using the system of figured bass – ensured that this new method of notating an accompaniment replaced the system of tablature. The first publication by a professional French composer with a basso continuo line appeared in Paris in 1652. This was Henry Du Mont's (c1610-1684) *Cantica sacra* (1652).<sup>98</sup> The migration of a figured bass method of notating accompaniments

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<sup>97</sup> See Chapter 1, pp.19-20. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>98</sup> Williams and Ledbetter, 'Continuo', *Grove Music Online*.

coincided with the emergence of a new harpsichord aesthetic represented in the music of Chambonnières, whose allemandes and pavaues exhibited a 'polyphonic framework far more pronounced than in the lute versions of these dances'.<sup>99</sup> He was considered to be the father of the French Harpsichord School and his music exhibited an independent harpsichord style which displayed some links to viol consort music.<sup>100</sup> He was soon followed by younger players such as Louis Couperin, Jean Henry d'Anglebert, and Nicolas Lebègue (c1631-1702), who was described in a document dated 1661 from Troyes Cathedral as '*fameux organiste de Paris*'.<sup>101</sup> The increasing popularity of the harpsichord allowed for an easier migration of figured bass accompaniment, and an adaptation of this method for the French by the French.

By the end of the second half of the seventeenth century French treatises on accompanying from a figured bass were in print. These were first directed at theorbo players and lutenists, but increasingly written for *clavecinistes*. Following d'Anglebert's short treatise on accompaniment included as an appendix to his *Pieces de Clavecin* in 1689, the bulk of continuo accompaniment treatises appearing in France are for the keyboard.<sup>102</sup> In the eighteenth century, keyboard instruments were destined to become 'unmatched in popularity for the realisation of *continue* parts'.<sup>103</sup> At last, despite its slow beginnings, by the end of the seventeenth-century Italian *basso continuo* had a French cousin in *basse continuë*, and the 'ambition of young people of quality was to master the art of figured-bass accompaniment on the harpsichord'.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.139.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p.139.

<sup>101</sup> Higginbottom, Edward, 'Lebègue, Nicolas', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 27 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/16188>>.

<sup>102</sup> Zappulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment*, p.33.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

<sup>104</sup> Le Cerf de la Viéville, Jean-Laurent, Seigneur de Fresneuse, *Comparaison de la musique italienne et de la musique françoise* (Brussels: François Foppens, 1704-1706), p.13; quoted in Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.164.

## Chapter 2: *Arpège* and Ornamentation in French *Basse Continuë*

### Sources (c1660-c1720)

#### Introduction

By the end of the second half of the seventeenth century, when the Italian invention of figured bass notation had migrated to France and was adopted by French composers, performers and theorists as the most efficient manner of notating the harmonic progression in an accompaniment, lute tablature was out of fashion and the shorthand system of figured bass was preferred. Although the first treatises to address the task of accompanying from a figured bass part were published for theorbo, as the eighteenth century approached, there was an increase in the number of treatises relating to figured-bass accompaniment on the harpsichord. In the eighteenth century, the harpsichord was destined to become 'unmatched in popularity for the realisation of *continue* parts'.<sup>1</sup> This chapter contains an examination of the extent to which the *arpège* gesture was illustrated and described, how it became central to the French Baroque style of continuo accompaniment, and by whom it was considered in theoretical and performance publications. This chapter examines the evidence for the role and function of the *arpège* gesture in French continuo sources, and will seek to assess the extent to which this information aids the modern student of French baroque continuo in the arpeggiation of chords.

#### 2.1 Evanescence in the French Baroque Harpsichord: Evidence and Sources

One of the problems relating to the *arpège* gesture addressed in French sources was that of evanescence. Despite the fact that François Couperin describes the most favourable characteristics of the harpsichord as 'precision, clarity, brilliance and range', he accompanies this description with another of his observations of fact: 'the

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<sup>1</sup> See footnote 103, Chapter 1, p.35.

sounds of the harpsichord have been determined, each one separately, and consequently cannot be increased or decreased'.<sup>2</sup>

These attributes described by Couperin include a relatively quick decay in the sound, called evanescence. Many other French musicians were aware of the evanescent characteristic of plucked keyboard instruments, and French composer-theorists touched on the subject in prose. Saint-Lambert (*fl* c1700) explored a comparison with the organ that highlights the need for harpsichordists to prolong the 'dry tone' (*fechereffe*) produced on the harpsichord:

On the Organ chords are not re-struck, and *harpégemens* are rarely used. On the contrary the sounds are linked smoothly with skilful hands. Parts are rarely doubled. Given the sustaining power of the instrument, it does not need to adopt the devices resorted to on the Harpsichord to supplement its dry tone.<sup>3</sup>

French harpsichordists applied various devices (*recherches*) to supplement the dry tone (*fechereffe*) alluded to by Saint-Lambert and to refrain from 'leaving the instrument empty'.<sup>4</sup> These devices used to supplement the 'dry tone' of the harpsichord include the spreading or breaking of chords – in a single gesture and with varying degrees of

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<sup>2</sup> Couperin, François, *l'Art de toucher le clavecin* (Paris: Foucault, 1716; facsimile reprint of F-Pn Rés Vm8.s.1: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1996): '*Si le clavecin n'enfle point ses sons; si les batemens redoublés sur une même note ne lui conviennent pas extrêmement; il a d'autre avantages, qui sont, La precision, La nêteté, Le brillant; Et L'etenduë.*', p.35 and '*Les sons du clavecin étant décidés, chacun en particulier; et par consequent ne pouvant être enflés, ny diminués*', p.15.

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin, de l'Orgue, et des autre instruments* (Paris: Ballard, 1707; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1974): '*Sur l'Orgue on ne rebat point les accords, & l'on n'ufe guere d'harpégemens; on lie au contraire beaucoup les fons en coulant les mains adroitement. On y double rarement les Parties; L'Orgue fournissant de lui-même plus que Clavecin, & gardant toujours son harmonie également, il n'a pas besoin de toutes les recherches dont on ufe sur le Clavecin pour suplérer à la fechereffe de l'Instrument*', p.63.

<sup>4</sup> According to the Italian virtuoso harpsichordist Frescobaldi, graceful artistry should be engaged 'in order not to leave the instrument empty/*per non lasciar vuoto l'Istromento*'. This is why he prefaces his *Toccate e partite d'involatura di cimbalò* with instructions to the reader (*Al lettore*) as follows: '*Let the beginnings of the toccatas be done slowly, and arpeggiated: and in the ties, or dissonances, as also in the middle of the work they will be struck together, in order not to leave the Instrument empty: which striking will be repeated at the pleasure of the player/Li cominciamenti delle toccate sieno fatte adagio, et arpeggiandio: è così nelle ligature, ò uero durezza, come, anche nel mezzo del opera si batteranno insieme, per non lasciar uoto l'Istromento: il qual battimento ripigliarassi à beneplacito di chi suona.*' See Hammond, Frederick, *Girolamo Frescobaldi: A Guide to Research* (New York & London: Garland, 1988), p.188. See also Frescobaldi, G., *Toccate e partite d'involatura di cimbalò* (Rome: 1615; rev., enlarged 2/1616), quoted in Tagliavini, Luigi Ferdinando, 'The art of "not leaving the instrument empty"', *Early Music* 11 (1983) p.300: '*per non lasciar vuoto l'Istromento*'.

ornamentation or none – as in *arpèges simples* or *arpèges figurés*; the ornamentation of notes with *agrèments*, such as *tremblement*, *tremblement appuyé*, *pincé*, and the *chute ou port de voix*; the addition of divisions (an equivalent of *passagi*); the re-striking of notes; and the use of broken-chord writing, a *brisure* texture.<sup>5</sup>

Both lutenist and harpsichordist share a ‘concern for resonance’.<sup>6</sup> As the distinctive style of French harpsichord music emerged in the first half of the seventeenth century, it was heavily influenced by the *style luthé*, a style of writing which enabled the player to achieve expressive variety through the manipulation of accompaniment textures, ranging from a seemingly vague and undirected accompaniment (by reinforcing the evanescent nature of the lute in the silences present between plucked notes) to one which maximised the sonority of the instruments through the use of ornamentation and arpeggiation.<sup>7</sup> During the second half of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century ornamentation and arpeggiation – and ornamented arpeggiation – became central aspects of *le bon goût*, both in solo harpsichord repertoire and continuo playing. These elements of performance practice are reflected in French treatises of the period and in publications of harpsichord music that exemplify these techniques. Theorists explained and described the techniques of the *arpège*, *agrément* and *brisure* adopted to keep the sound alive on the harpsichord. The improvisatory aspect of the arpeggiated gesture was explained and illustrated in French thoroughbass treatises, and the *arpège* gesture was captured in ornament symbols. These French *basse-continuë* treatises provide the first instructions for the modern player wishing to achieve an historically informed idiomatic continuo realisation.

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<sup>5</sup> Le Roux, Gaspard, *Pieces de Clavessin composeés par Gaspard Le Roux avec lamaniere de les joüer se vendent a Paris* (Paris: Foucault, 1705; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1982). Le Roux includes a number of ornaments that can be combined to form species of *arpèges figurés*: the simple *arpegement* or two-note *separez* might be joined with either the *coulé sur une tierce* or the *chute sur une notte*. The spelling of these ornaments is taken directly from Le Roux’s *Marques des agrèemens & leurs significations* table.

<sup>6</sup> Chang, Philip, C., *Analytical and Performative Issues in Selected Unmeasured Preludes by Louis Couperin* (PhD dissertation, University of Rochester, 2011), i, p.42.

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 1, pp.15-16. [LINK](#)

The most consulted source material, and the most obvious sources of French continuo practice at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, are the treatises that were written in France in the sixty-year period between 1660 and 1720. They were written by French theorist-composers, by foreigners who had settled in France, and by theorists of French extraction. These treatises are the most obvious source to which the modern player might turn to learn about stylistic embellishment of the *arpège* gesture in the realisation of a thorough-bass line. A second source of information relating to the performance of arpeggiation are the French ornament tables (*Marques des Agréments*).<sup>8</sup> A further source of information on ornamented arpeggiation is found in the solo harpsichord literature (*Pièces de Clavecin*).

A search for the conventions of stylistic embellishment must be preceded by a quest for sources that illuminate aspects of what the ancient Greeks termed *technē* (τέχνη):<sup>9</sup> that is, the tools required to produce the most basic continuo realisation (aptly termed the ‘perpendicular blocks of harmony’).<sup>10</sup> The ‘musical’ and ‘stylistic’ elements are attended to thereafter and realised through the transformation of the figured bass into a convincing, stylistic, expressive performance. This aspect of musical expression can be understood as akin to the delivery of poetry (*poiēsis*), and poetry as an example of *mimēsis*, as in the use of the term by Plato in Books 2-3 of *The Republic*, meaning the ‘expression’ or ‘representation’ of line in the context of performing arts.<sup>11</sup> The *mimēsis* of a continuo realisation – how the prosody and colour of expression is found through ornamentation and arpeggiation – is the principal concern of this thesis.

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 1, p.22. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> Anna, Julia, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981): ‘The word translated ‘skill’ is *technē* (whence ‘technical’), which is sometimes also translated ‘art’ or ‘craft’ [...] Put very generally, *technē* or skill is an organized body of knowledge of the ways to achieve a certain end. Some skills are practical, like cooking, while others are not, like doing mental arithmetic. Most skills have products – shoemaking, weaving, cookery again – while others are not naturally so described, for example playing a musical instrument.’, pp.24-25.

<sup>10</sup> Arnold, Frank Thomas, *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thorough-bass as Practiced in the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931; reprint edition: New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1965), p.438.

<sup>11</sup> It is not at this point translated by some as ‘imitation’, which carries a negative connotation later in Book 10 of *The Republic*. See Anna, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, p.94.



## 2.2 *Arpège* in Ornament Tables

### Ornament Tables for the Keyboard

Keyboard ornament tables contain frequent illustrations of the *arpège*. They are found in the prefaces of many published editions of *pièces de clavecin* and are an extremely important source for the performance and notation of the arpeggiated gesture. The symbols employed differ from composer to composer and two general traditions evolved from the second half of the seventeenth century. The use of the arpeggiated ornament was not confined to one or two composers, but pervaded French harpsichord style. The works which specify the greatest and most important variety of embellishments at the front of published collections between c1650 and c1720 are by Jacques Champion, Sieur de Chambonnières (c1601-1672), Nicolas Lebègue, d'Anglebert, Gaspard Le Roux (d c1707) and François Couperin (Table 2.01).<sup>12</sup>

**Table 2.01 French composers who included ornament tables in their collections**

Composer	Work	Year
Jacques Champion, Chambonnières (1601/2-1672)	<i>Les pièces de clavessin</i>	1670
Nicolas Lebègue (c1631-1702)	<i>Les pièces de clavessin</i>	1677
Jean Henry d'Anglebert (1629-1691)	<i>Pieces de clavecin</i>	1689
Gaspard Le Roux (d?1707)	<i>Pièces de clavessin</i>	1705
François Couperin (1668-1733)	<i>Pieces de clavecin</i>	1713

While Italian composers generally left substantial proportions of their figuration 'to be supplied, more or less impromptu, by the performer', others – particularly the French – recognised the need to develop notation signs and symbols that could explain when

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<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the signs used in harpsichord music, the ornament signs used in French vocal music (and non-keyboard instrumental music) are less prescriptive. They appear in general in instrumental music of the period as either a plus ('+') or an ex ('x'). This differs from the fastidious approach of French *clavecinistes* in providing detailed instructions as to the type and location of the ornament to be played. Even though French keyboard works were rich in a variety of ornaments, and in how they were specified, other French composers were satisfied to use 'a very limited number of symbols, especially in 17th Century vocal parts' choosing to allow 'the option of more creative embellishment to the performer'. Kreitner, Kenneth et al. 'Ornaments', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 1 June 2010] <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg7](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg7)>.

and how to ornament a chord or a note.<sup>13</sup> Signs indicating the arpeggiation of a chord are included in ornament tables supplied with collections of harpsichord music. The first of these was by Jacques Champion, Sieur de Chambonnières. He is considered to be the ‘grandfather’ of the French harpsichord school and taught both Louis Couperin and d’Anglebert.<sup>14</sup> However, d’Anglebert’s manner of notating and classifying ornaments was closer to the symbols used by lutenists than to the typography of keyboard ornament signs favoured by his teacher.<sup>15</sup> Among the followers of d’Anglebert’s ornament typographical style are Gaspard Le Roux, Charles Dieupart (1667-c1740), Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) and Claude-Bénigne Balbastre (1727-1799).

Symbols indicating the *arpège* ornament first appeared in published collections of harpsichord music by Chambonnières in 1670. He indicates the arpeggiation with a hooked wavy line symbol (Ex. 2.01).<sup>16</sup>

**Example 2.01 Chambonnières, *Pièces de Clavecin* (1670) Preface**



The ornament table used by Nicolas Lebègue in his *Pieces de Clavecin* (1677) follows in the footsteps of Chambonnières, but illustrates fewer species. Lebègue uses the wavy line symbol to indicate arpeggiation (Ex. 2.02).

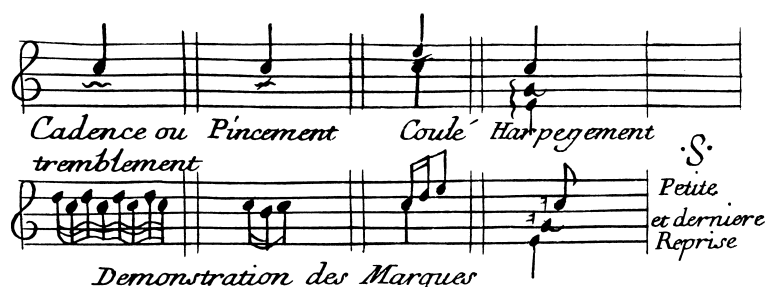
<sup>13</sup> Donington, Robert, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp.152-153.

<sup>14</sup> Chambonnières’ pieces shows a more contrapuntal style than one influenced by lute-styled textures: his music contains idiomatic features found in earlier compositions for keyboard, in addition to some motivic cells found in lute music of this period. See Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th Century France* (London: MacMillan Press, 1987), pp.104-106.

<sup>15</sup> Le Roux, Dieupart, Rameau and Balbastre derived their ornament signs from d’Anglebert.

<sup>16</sup> Chambonnières calls it *Harpegement*. Chambonnières, Jacques Champion, *Pieces de Clavecin* (Paris: l’Auteur, 1670; facsimile reprint: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1989).

Example 2.02 Lebègue, *Les Pièces de Claussin* (1677) *Preface*<sup>17</sup>



The most comprehensive table of ornaments in the French keyboard tradition is that by Jean Henry d'Anglebert (1629-1691).<sup>18</sup> His table contains illustrations covering the unornamented arpeggiated gesture and additional signs affecting the ornamentation of the *arpège*. D'Anglebert's *Marques des Agréments* (*Marques des Agréments*) contains the greatest number of illustrations of unornamented and ornamented *arpèges*. Signs included by d'Anglebert, which may be employed to further ornament an *arpège*, are the *Cheute fur une notte* or the *Cheute fur 2 notes*, the French equivalent of the Italian *acciaccatura* ornament (Ex. 2.03). This ornament is more in line with what Saint-Lambert referred to as *harpegés figurés*: arpeggiated chords that contain one or two borrowed notes (that is, dissonant notes not present in the chord proper).<sup>19</sup> These dissonant notes are not sustained for the full duration of the chord and the chords mostly start from the bottom note (Ex. 2.03).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Lebègue, Nicolas-Antoine, *Les Pièces de Claussin* (Paris: Chez le Sr. Baillon et Chez l'Autheur, 1677; facsimile reprint: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Scheibert, Beverly, *Jean-Henry D'Anglebert and the Seventeenth-Century Clavecin School* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 46. See Ex. 1.07, Chapter 1, p.24. ([LINK](#))

<sup>19</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin* (Paris: Ballard, 1702; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1974), p.55.

<sup>20</sup> Zuppulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment in France* (Turnhout: Brepolis, 2000), p.111.

Exemple 2.03 d'Anglebert, *Pieces de Clavecin, Marques des Agremens, Preface*<sup>21</sup>

Such was d'Anglebert's influence that he is referred to by Saint-Lambert in *Les Principes du Clavecin*. Saint-Lambert includes an example of how 'M<sup>r</sup> d'Anglebert' marks out his *arpège* ornament sign, 'with a little line drawn slantwise through the stem of one of the notes of the chord',<sup>22</sup> and states that this method of marking is preferable, as it does not spoil the layout of the score (Ex. 2.04).<sup>23</sup>

Exemple 2.04 Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, Ch.XXVI, p.55 (2nd example)

**Mr d'Anglebert ne designe pas les Harpegez par les marques qui sont dans les Exemples cy-dessus ; mais par une petite ligne tirée en biais dans la queue d'une des Notes de l'Accord.**

**E X E M P L E .**

**Et cette manière de marquer les Harpegez devrait être préférée à toute autre , parce qu'elle embarrasse moins la Tablature.**

<sup>21</sup> D'Anglebert, Jean-Henry, *Pieces de clavecin* (Paris: l'Auteur, 1689; facsimile edition: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*: 'par une petit ligne tirée en biais dans la queue d'une des Notes de l'Accord', p.55.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.: 'Monfieur d'Anglebert en diftingue cinq, qui font expliquez avec d'autres Agrémens de fon invention, dans le Livre de Pièces qu'il a donné au Public. J'ay recueilli icy tous ces Agrémens, ainfi que ceux des autres Maîtres qui ont fait graver leurs Ouvrages. Voicy les cinq Tremblemens de Mr d'Anglebert/ Mr. d'Anglebert distinguishes five [tremblements], which are explained with other ornaments of his invention, in the book of pieces that he gave to the public. I have gathered all these ornaments here, in addition to those of other masters that had their works engraved. Here are the five tremblements of Mr d'Anglebert.', p.46.

The French equivalent of the Italian *acciaccatura* – a ‘*chute sur une note*’ – is demonstrated by Gaspard Le Roux in his *Marques des agréments & leurs significations*. These appear at the front of his 1705 volume before the *Preface*.<sup>24</sup> Le Roux’s illustration of the *Chute sur une Note* appears on the second system of his table of ornaments (Ex. 2.05).

**Example 2.05 Gaspard le Roux, *Pieces de Clavessin, Marques des agréments, Preface***

*Marques des agréments & leurs Significations*

The image shows a musical score titled "Marques des agréments & leurs Significations" by Gaspard Le Roux. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows a melodic line with various ornaments indicated by small symbols above the notes. Below the notes, there are labels for each ornament: "Tremblement simple", "Pincé", "autre", "Chute ou port de Vois en montant", "En descendant", "Chute et Coule sur", "autre", and "tremblement appuvé". The second system shows a similar melodic line with more ornaments, labeled: "double Cadence", "chute sur", "autre chute", "Arpègement", "autre", "autre", "autre", "Separez", and "Separez". The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one flat, and a common time signature.

In the tradition of Chambonnières, François Couperin uses a hooked wavy-line symbol to notate his *Arpègement, en montant* and *Arpègement, en descendant* in his *Explication des Agréments, et des Signes* found in his *Pièces de Clavecin*.<sup>25</sup> He introduces this ornament in his *Passacaille* of the *Huitième Ordre* found in his second book of harpsichord pieces (Ex. 2.06).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> McVeigh, Simon, and Peres Da Costa, Neal, 'Acciaccatura', *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Oxford Music Online [accessed 18 May 2010] <www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e39>.

<sup>25</sup> Tunley, David, *François Couperin and 'the Perfection of Music'* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), Appendix G, pp.162-163.

<sup>26</sup> Couperin, François, *l'Art de toucher le clavecin*, p.32.

Example 2.06 François Couperin, *Pièces de Clavecin* (1717) *Passacaille*, p.32

32.

*Passacaille*. *Rondeau*.

1<sup>er</sup> Couplet.

Fin.

This examination of ornament typography shows that notation signs indicating arpeggiation make their first appearance in tables of ornaments contained in collections of harpsichord pieces from 1670 onwards, and that symbols signalling that the player should arpeggiate a particular chord were not identical between composers at this time. Two general strands of ornament typography stand out: one derived from lute music and another from the keyboard tradition of Chambonnières. The presence of signs indicating arpeggiation in many ornament tables attests to the ubiquity of arpeggiation in harpsichord music. Moreover, such symbols were retained in use into the second half of the eighteenth century and the modern symbol of a wavy line for an arpeggiated chord originated here. D'Anglebert emerges as the most significant contributor to the development of keyboard ornament typography in the Baroque period. The meticulous notation of ornaments observed in this study, a phenomenon particular to French keyboard composers, attracted attention beyond the boundaries of France in the eighteenth century. The German flautist, Johann Joachim Quantz (1697-1773), distinguished between the French tradition of comprehensively notating

ornaments and the Italian tendency to more improvised addition of embellishment.<sup>27</sup>

He recommends the study of French ornament tables to his reader:

French composers usually write the embellishments with the air, and the performer thus needs only to concern himself with executing them well. In the Italian style in former times no embellishments at all were set down, and everything was left to the caprice of the performer.<sup>28</sup>

This attests to the high regard in which French composers were held throughout Europe for their notation of ornament signs and symbols.

### **2.3 *Arpège* in *Traité*s**

#### **Methodology of *Traité*s and *Mimēsis***

The treatises that will be examined in this chapter adopted a scientific method that encouraged a linear progression in thought from the seventeenth century. This method can be traced back to the writings of René Descartes (1596-1650). Although Descartes' *Regulæ ad directionem ingenii* were not published during his lifetime, they had influenced the format employed by many subsequent authors of seventeenth-century French *traités*. Marin Mersenne's (1588-1648) *Harmonie universelle* (1636) follows a linear, scientific, progression of argument in its three volumes. It is dominated by the development of the cartesian method, and the concept of the universality of

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<sup>27</sup> Quantz's treatise also contains advice on approaching the playing of each note on the harpsichord with 'equal force and emphasis' in order 'to obviate as much as possible the natural weakness of the instrument, which is that the tones cannot be joined to one another as upon other instruments', Quantz, Johann, J., *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen* trans. Reilly, Edward, in *On Playing the Flute* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001) p.259. Quantz played with Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-1788) at the court of Frederick II, King of Prussia (1712-1786), and in the light of this remark it is difficult to see if (or how) Quantz understood the level of complexity inherent in performing Carl Philipp's music, much of which would have been played both on the harpsichord and clavichord by the composer. Carl Philipp's music demands such gradations of articulation and expression that the notes could not possibly be played with 'equal force and emphasis'.

<sup>28</sup> Quantz, Johann, J., *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen* trans. Reilly, Edward, in *On Playing the Flute*, p.163.

knowledge.<sup>29</sup> The third book of Mersenne's first volume is entitled 'THE THIRD BOOK / OF MOVEMENT, OF / tension, of force, of gravity, and of the / other properties of harmonic / chords, and of other bodies' (Figure 2.01). The first volume contains many mathematical illustrations and discussions relating to mechanical physics, and it is only in Vol. II that issues surrounding the voice, singing and composition are introduced. As Mersenne's work intersects the period of popularity enjoyed by the lute, and comes before any meaningful influx of *basso continuo* performance practice in France, this is not a treatise concerned with figured bass accompaniment.

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<sup>29</sup> Cohen, Albert, 'Mersenne, Marin', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 5 March 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18468>>. Perhaps in an attempt to summarise all the elements which relate to his broad project – and in keeping with the *Regulæ ad directionem ingenii* of Descartes – much of Vol. I is concerned with the mechanics of sound. On the title page Mersenne outlines that his study offers both a theory and practice of music. It is a *traité* concerning the nature of sounds, and of movements; concerning consonance and dissonance; pertaining to genres, modes, and of composition; relating to the voice and song; and, regarding all sorts of harmony instruments. Mersenne, Marin, *Harmonie universelle: Traitez de la voix et des chants* (Paris: Cramoisy 1636; facsimile edition: Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1986): 'HARMONIE / VNIVERSELLE, CONTENANT LA THEORIE / ET LA PRATIQUE / DE LA MVSIQUE, / Où il est traité de la Nature des Sons, & des Mouuemens, des Consonances, / des Diffonances, des Genres, des Modes, de la Composition, de la / Voix, des Chants, & de toutes sortes d'Instrumens / Harmoniques.', Vol I, title page. Rule II of Descartes' *Regulæ* is translated by George Heffernan as: 'We should attend only to those objects for whose certain and indubitable cognition our natural intelligence seems to suffice.', and Rule VII as: 'For the completion of knowledge, we should survey, in a continuous and completely uninterrupted movement of thought, all the things that relate to our project, together and individually, and we should also summarise them in a sufficient and orderly enumeration.' See Heffernan, George (ed.), *Réné Descartes – Regulæ ad directionem ingenii – Rules for the Direction of the Natural Intelligence* (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998), pp.20-21.





# LIVRE TROISIÈSME

DU MOUVEMENT, DE LA  
tension, de la force, de la pesanteur, & des  
autres propriétés des cordes Har-  
moniques, & des autres corps.



PREs auoir parlé du mouuement des principaux corps de cet Vniuers, particulièrement de celuy de la terre, il faut examiner plus particulièrement ceux qui appartiennent aux cordes des instrumens, & aux autres corps qui font de l'Harmonie: ce que nous ferons dans les Propositions de ce liure, où nous traiterons aussi de la force nécessaire pour soustenir le poids donné sur vn plan oblique & incliné à l'horizon.

## PROPOSITION I.

*La raison du nombre des retours de toutes sortes de cordes est inverse de leurs longueurs.*

The treatises examined in this discussion often follow the continuous progression of discussion advocated by Descartes. They are shown in the following table that lists the principal treatises published or in manuscript that appeared in France during this period (Table 2.02):

<sup>30</sup> Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle: Traitez de la voix et des chants, Livre Troisième*: 'LIVRE TROISIÈSME / DU MOUVEMENT, DE LA / tension, de la force, de la pesanteur, & des / autres propriétés des cordes Har- / moniques, & des autres corps.', p.157.

**Table 2.02 *Traité*s and MS on keyboard and continuo performance practice before 1720**

French <i>Traité</i> s & Manuscripts	Year	Author
<i>Methode pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë</i>	1660	Nicolas Fleury
<i>Table pour Apprendre Facilement a Toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë</i>	1669	Angelo Michele Bartholomi
<i>Les Principes de la guitarre</i>	1689	Nicolas Derosier
<i>Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin.</i>	1690	Etienne Denis Delair
<i>Petites Reigles pour l'accompagnement</i>	c1700	Jean-Baptiste Buterne
<i>Les principes du clavecin contenant une explication exacte de tout ce qui concerne la tablature &amp; le clavier</i>	1702	Saint-Lambert
<i>Traité abrégé de l'accompagnement pour l'orgue et pour le clavessin</i>	1705	Jacques Boyvin
<i>Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin, de l'Orgue, et des autres instruments</i>	1707	Saint-Lambert
<i>l'Art de toucher le clavecin</i>	1716/17	François Couperin

These treatises often begin with elementary explanations of notation, scales and clefs, before moving on to a discussion of hand position, modes and figuring. Even so, many answers to questions on historical accompaniment can be found in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century thorough-bass treatises. Such publications and manuscripts provide essential technical instruction on what was permitted in terms of harmonic progressions; voice leading; part motion; the constitution of chords; rules concerning the duplication of fifths and thirds; and the meaning of printed figures; textures; hand positions; the treatment of diminished and augmented triads; inversions and their progression; rules on dissonance and suspensions; instruction on how to deal with sequences; how to approach an unfigured bass line; and, advice on dealing with quick notes in the bass.

The first musical example appearing in Fleury's *Methode pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë* outlines the intervals in a scale and between two notes (see Ex. 2.07); Jean Henri d'Anglebert's essay *Les Principes de l'Accompagnement*, accompanying his *Pieces de Clavecin*, opens with a similar illustration; and the first chapter of Saint Lambert's *Les principes du Clavecin* opens with a rudimentary section entitled 'Des Notes et des Clefs'.

Example 2.07 Fleury, *Methode pour facilement apprendre [...]*, 1660, p.6<sup>31</sup>

*Methode pour facilement apprendre*

C H A P I T R E P R E M I E R.  
De la Composition des Accords simples.  
E X E M P L E.

The musical notation consists of two staves. The first staff shows intervals: Seconde (Tons), Tierce (Majeure, Mineure). The second staff shows: Quarte, Triton, Quinte (Fausse-Quinte, Majeure, Mineure), Sixte (Majeure, Mineure), Septiesme, Octave, and Quarte imparfaite. Asterisks indicate specific notes or intervals within these categories.



Voy qu'il y ayt peu de personnes qui sçachent la Musique , qui ne sçachent aussi ce que c'est qu'un accord simple , & combien il y en a de sortes; toutefois voulant rendre mon dessein utile à tout le monde , & en faciliter l'usage aux moins intelligents : l'ay creu deuoir traiter dans ce premier Chapitre des accords simples , & de leur composition.

L'Accord simple n'est autre chose, generallyment parlant, que le rapport qu'il y a d'un Son à un autre Son : Et cet Accord se fait d'un Ton ou de plusieurs ensemble, & quelquefois d'un Semy-ton.

Le Ton, ou Semy-ton, est une union de deux Sons ou Nottes prochaines, jointes l'une à l'autre dans un degré différent sans interualle; Le Ton comme ut ré, ré mi, fa sol, sol la. Et le Semy-ton comme mi fa. Ce n'est pas que quelquefois on ne puisse faire d'un Ton, un Semy-ton, & d'un Semy-ton, un Ton. L'exemple cy-dessus de la seconde vous fera cognoître le contenu de cet article.

The typography and interpretation of signs indicating arpeggiation are discussed in treatises. The arpeggiated gesture, with its varying degrees of ornamentation (or none) was advocated by a range of French music-theorists, and went beyond the status of a technique to become an important aspect of musical aesthetic. It features in the writings of Saint-Lambert and Denis Delair; it also features in an appendix on

<sup>31</sup> Fleury, Nicolas, *methode pour apprendre facilement a toucher le Theorbe sur la Basse-Continuë* (Paris: Ballard, 1660; facsimile edition: *Méthodes & Traités: Basse Continuo France 1600-1800*, Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006), p.17; d'Anglebert, Jean-Henry, *Pieces de clavecin* (Paris: l'Auther, 1689; facsimile edition: *Méthodes & Traités: Basse Continuo France 1600-1800*, Courlay, Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006), p. 131; Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*.

accompaniment by d'Anglebert. The writings listed in this table have been selected on the basis of their discussion of the arpeggiated gesture (Table 2.03):

**Table 2.03 French *Traité*s that discuss the *arpège* gesture**

French <i>Traité</i> s	Year	Author
<i>Principes de l'Accompagnement</i> (Appendix in <i>Pièces de clavecin</i> )	1689	Jean Henry d'Anglebert
<i>Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin.</i>	1690	Etienne Denis Delair
<i>Les principes du clavecin contenant une explication exacte de tout ce qui concerne la tablature &amp; le clavier</i>	1702	Saint-Lambert
<i>Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin, de l'Orgue, et des autres instruments</i>	1707	Saint-Lambert

### Jean Henry d'Anglebert

D'Anglebert's *Pièces de clavecin* 1689 contains an appendix entitled *Principes de l'Accompagnement*. This includes four realisations of a bass pattern seven bars long (Ex. 2.08). Although this is not actually a treatise, it adopts the methodology developed by Descartes, and explains intervals on the opening page. This document contains the first illustrated examples of arpeggiation applied to accompaniment in French keyboard music. Each realisation begins with a different distribution of notes, the hand position moving higher in pitch over the four exercises. In the fourth realisation *Exemple general avec les agréments*, arpeggiation is indicated by the diagonal line crossing the stem of the chord, which would later be illustrated by Saint-Lambert.<sup>32</sup> This fourth example contains up to four voices in the left hand as well as the right hand, and d'Anglebert decorates the right hand chords further by adding indications for the inclusion of *coulé sur une tierce*, *port de voix* and the sign for a *tremblement simple*, all of which transform these arpeggios from unornamented arpeggio gestures

<sup>32</sup> See Ex. 2.04, p.43. [LINK](#)

(arpège simple) to ornamented gestures (arpège figuré).<sup>33</sup> It becomes evident from d'Anglebert's example given below that arpeggiated ornaments are 'stock in trade' for the harpsichordist and are used in continuo playing.

**Example 2.08 d'Anglebert, *Pièces de clavecin, Exemple general avec les agréments***

The image displays a musical score for harpsichord, consisting of multiple staves. The top two staves show a melodic line with various ornaments, including mordents and grace notes. The lower staves show a basso continuo line with figured bass notation. The score includes several annotations in French: "On redouble le Triton et la 2<sup>e</sup> pour remplir et non la 7<sup>e</sup>." and "Exemple general avec les agréments." Below the figured bass, there is a section labeled "Basse chiffrée" with the instruction "Cette 5<sup>e</sup> leçon contient les 4 1<sup>eres</sup>. Il faut la pratiquer sur tous les tons cy après." and "Idem" repeated under several staves. The piece concludes with "Fin du premier Livre".

This example also shows the addition of dissonant notes to the arpeggiation – a practice known as *acciaccaturi* in Italy – which emphasises the awareness of after-sound resonance through the implication of dissonance against consonance.<sup>34</sup> This was a device used with particular sensibility by the French.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> D'Anglebert, Jean-Henry, *Pieces de clavecin*, p.127. All ornaments contained in these examples are fully illustrated in the ornament table in the preface of the publication.

<sup>34</sup> Nuti, Giulia, *The Performance of Italian Basso Continuo: style in Keyboard Accompaniment in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), pp.89-95.

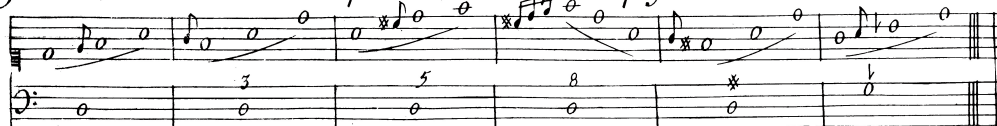
<sup>35</sup> Ledbetter, David, 'Aspects of 17th-century Lute Style reflected in the works of the "Clavecinistes"', *Lute Society Journal* 22 (1982): 'This practice was not of course exclusively French since it is recommended by Gasparini and others, but only the French used it with such sensitivity as an expressive device.', p.56.

## Denis Delair

Denis Delair's *Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin* (1690) was the first treatise to appeal to both harpsichordists and theorbo players. It contains two major sections. The larger (second) section entitled 'Principles of Music necessary for accompanying', considers the fundamental rules and concepts of music 'necessary to know in order to accompany'.<sup>36</sup> Delair explains these rules both by referencing the theorbo and harpsichord and in relation to 'all kinds of instruments'.<sup>37</sup> He integrates into his instruction many small examples of figured progressions, directives in relation to intervallic movement in the bass pattern, and rules for transposition.<sup>38</sup> The smaller section of his work, the *Preface*, contains the subsection entitled the *Principles of Accompaniment*. This includes the illustration of the basic chord in a number of dispositions, ornamented with *coulés* and arpeggiated in the sequential manner that points to the notation system of the *prélude non mesuré* for harpsichord (Ex. 2.09).

### Example 2.09 Delair, *Traité d'accompagnement*, (1690), fig. B-C<sup>39</sup>

*le bemol change la nature de la tierce, que l'on fait dans ledit accord, la rendant majeure, ou mineure. On verra dans l'exemple suivant toutes les manières dont ledit accord se peut diversifier. Les croches qui sont entre les rondes, ne sont pas absolument nécessaires, n'étant que pour l'agrément, ainsi on ne les tient point on ne fait que les passer.*



*Il faut apprendre ledit accord naturel, et de toutes ses manières sur chaque note en particulier, jusqu'à ce qu'on le trouve facilement, avant que de passer aux exemples suivants. La seconde s'accompagne ordinairement de la quarte, et de la sexte. A. elle s'accompagne aussi quelque fois de la quinte. B.*

<sup>36</sup> Delair, Denis, *Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin. Qui comprend toutes les règles nécessaires, pour accompagner sur ses deux instruments, avec des observations particulières touchant les différentes manières qui leurs conviennent* (Paris: l'Auteur, 1690; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1972): 'Principes de Musique nécessaires à sçavoir pour accompagner', p.1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.13.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.1, p.13, pp.32-43, p.52.

<sup>39</sup> Delair, Denis, *Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin. Qui comprend toutes les règles nécessaires, pour accompagner sur ses deux instruments, avec des observations particulières touchant les différentes manières qui leurs conviennent* (Paris: l'Auteur, 1690; facsimile reprint: *Méthodes & Traités: Basse Continuo France 1600-1800*, Courlay, Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006), Part D, p.180.

Each of the six examples contains a root-position chord illustrated with a variety of figured bass indications ranging from no figure to the inclusion of a '3', '5' or '8', sometimes found over the bass to signify the chord played above the bass is in root-position, harmonically the closest related chord to the bass note.<sup>40</sup> The particular value of this illustration lies in the positioning of the notes: they are arranged to indicate the exact sequence of various possible dispositions of a realised arpeggio, and some of the ornaments used to enliven them. In his examples, Delair uses passing notes and the *suspirans* three-note figure.<sup>41</sup> By including comments and the six examples above, Delair points the reader to the notation system employed in the *prélude non mesuré* genre.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, his arpeggiated chords are close to those found in the *préludes* of Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749) and Nicolas Siret (1663-1754).<sup>43</sup>

### **Saint-Lambert**

Saint-Lambert's *Les principes du clavecin* (1702) and *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin* (1707) represent two of the most consequential writings on harpsichord performance practice of the Baroque period. He establishes the *arpège* as a graceful means of articulating a harmonic gesture and recommends the technique to his readers as follows:

It is less than good practice to fill out the accompaniment even when accompanying a solo voice: but in this case all the parts are not struck together at once. They are sounded one after the other with care. This is what is called

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<sup>40</sup> Delair's model of illustrating *l'accord naturel* bears a similar horizontal disposition of voices employed by the Italian composer and theorist Francesco Gasparini (1661-1727) in his later approach to the chordal illustrations of an arpeggio in *L'armonico pratico al cimbalo* (1708).

<sup>41</sup> For information on the *suspirans* see Tilmouth, Michael, and Ledbetter, David, 'Tombeau (i)', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 8 August 2011] <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/28084](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/28084)> and Williams, Peter, 'Figurenlehre from Monteverdi to Wagner: (3) *The suspirans*', *The Musical Times* (August 1979), pp.648-650.

<sup>42</sup> See Delair, Denis, *Traité d'accompagnement*; English trans. Mattax, Charlotte, Introduction to *Accompaniment on Theorbo & Harpsichord: Denis Delair's Treatise of 1690* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991): 'In the *Traité*, Delair describes a rich accompaniment, embellished by means of freely arpeggiated chords and *coulés* in the tradition of the *prélude non mesuré*.' p.2.

<sup>43</sup> See Ex. 3.71, Chapter 3, p.127 ([LINK](#)) and Ex. 3.91, Chapter 3, p.140. ([LINK](#))



arpeggiating [*Harpéger*] the chords, and it is one of the ornaments [*agrémens*] most suited to harpsichord accompaniment.<sup>44</sup>

Saint-Lambert does not simply classify the arpeggiated gesture as a device ‘resorted to on the Harpsichord to supplement its dry tone’, but suggests that it is, in fact, a ‘most suitable’ ornament.<sup>45</sup> His discussion shows that the arpeggiated gesture went beyond the status of technique to become part of the harpsichord aesthetic.

In his *Les Principes du Clavecin*, Saint-Lambert classifies two kinds of arpeggio: *arpège simple*, in which only notes of the chord are played, and *arpège figuré*, which contain notes borrowed from outside the chord for the purpose of ornamentation.<sup>46</sup> He specifies that the *arpège simple* contains from two to four notes, and the *arpège figuré* is composed of only three or four notes in the right hand (the examples he provides are on one stave only – Ex. 2.10). These notes can be played either ascending or descending.<sup>47</sup> Saint-Lambert’s discussion of individual ornaments is largely an expansion of d’Anglebert’s table of ornaments (1689), and encompasses ‘the ornaments that are in use by the people [players] who perform on the harpsichord’.<sup>48</sup> His example of *l’Harpéger* which appears in his treatise is illustrated in orthodox notation, subdivided into semiquavers (Ex. 2.10).<sup>49</sup> Although the notes of this

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<sup>44</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau traité de l’Accompagnement*: ‘Il n’est pas moins du bon usage de remplir les Accompagnemens lors même qu’on n’accompagne qu’une voix seule: mais alors on ne frappe pas toutes les Parties à la fois, on les applique l’une après l’autre avec menagement. C’est ce qu’on appelle Harpéger les accords, & c’est un des agrémens le plus convenable à l’Accompagnement du Clavecin.’, p.62.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter 2, p.37. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>46</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*: ‘L’Agrément qu’on appelle harpegé ou harpégement, confitte à féparer les Notes d’un Accord, au lieu de les toucher toutes ensemble, felon que l’enfeigne la Chapitre des Parties. Il y en a de deux fortes; l’Harpegé Simple, qui se fait en féparant seulement les Notes de l’Accord; & l’Harpegé figuré, dans lequel on emprunte d’autres notes que celles de l’Accord pour luy donner plus d’agrément.’, p.54.

<sup>47</sup> Saint-Lambert’s illustrations of *arpège* in *Les Principes du Clavecin* are given in the treble clef. He later instructs the reader on the practice of sounding the bass voice first. See Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, p.55.

<sup>48</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*: ‘les Agrémens qui font en usage parmi les Perfonnes qui touchent le mieux le Clavecin.’, p.57. These comments were in the context of a comparative study of ornaments named by Guillaume Gabriel Nivers (c1632-1714), (French organist, theorist and composer), ornaments classified by Nicolas Lebègue (c1631-1702), and to the *tremblement* according to Jacques Champion Chambonnières. Saint-Lambert’s description provides a method by which an aspiring harpsichordist might approach the learning and performance of ornaments such as *coulés*, *ports de voix*, *doubles*, and *tremblements*.

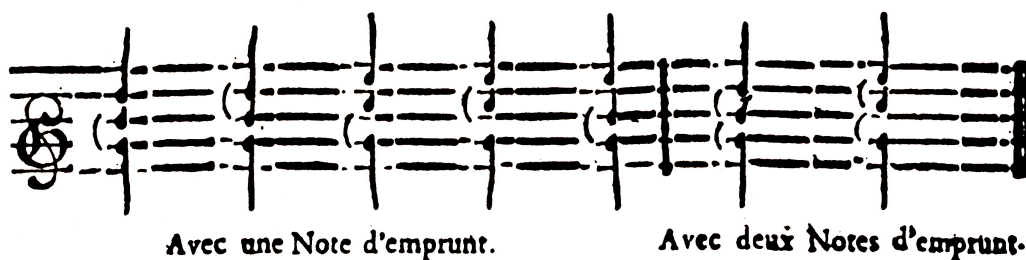
<sup>49</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, p.55.



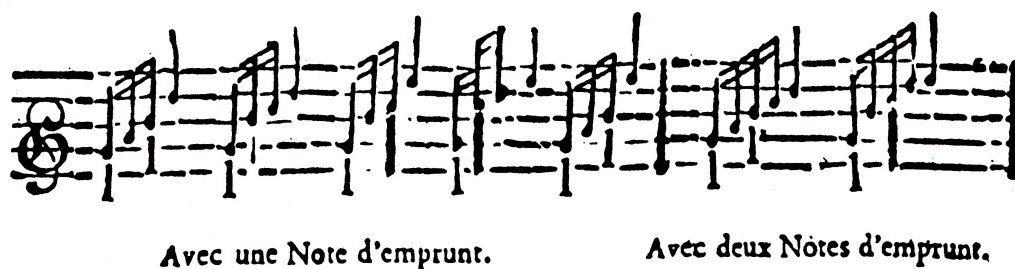
arpeggiated gesture are presented in an equal subdivision of semiquavers, 'an ametrical spread is a more likely interpretation'.<sup>50</sup>

Example 2.10 Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, p.55 (*l'Harpegé figuré*)

*Manière de marquer l'Harpegé figuré.*



*Manière de l'exprimer.*



Saint-Lambert instructs that the notes of the arpeggiated chord should be played with such agility as to avoid any noticeable interval in the playing of the chord that might alter or break the flow of the piece.<sup>51</sup> The *arpège* consisting of two notes is the exception as it is more graceful to noticeably separate them in such a way that the second note is reduced by half its value (*soient réduites à la moitié de leur valeur*) (Ex. 2.11, see the notation printed under the heading 'Expression').<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Kreitner et al. 'Ornaments', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>51</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*: 'Dans l'Harpegé, foit simple, foit figuré, les doigts se doivent appliquer sur les Touches avec une telle agilité, qu'il ne paroisse entre les Notes aucune intervalle sensible, qui altere ou rompe la Mesure de la Pièce.', p.55.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.: 'On en peut néanmoins excepter l'Harpegé qui se fait sur un Accord de deux Notes: car quand il y en a plusieurs de fuite, les Notes ont plus de grace d'être separées sensiblement, en telle forte même que les secondes soient réduites à la moitié de leur valeur.', p.55.

Example 2.11 Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*, p.55 (1st example)



Saint-Lambert's later treatise *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin, de l'Orgue, et des autres instruments* (1707) contains a similar piece of advice regarding this particular kind of metrical arpeggiation. In this he proclaims that in dances (*airs de mouvement*)<sup>53</sup> the chord should be struck together with the bass – except when all the bass notes are black and when the beat is ternary – the notes of each chord are separated in such a way that one note is always played between the beat.<sup>54</sup> The same practice can be observed, he states, in binary time.<sup>55</sup> This kind of realisation forms 'a species of *battement* that suits quite well'.<sup>56</sup> This is the only illustration appearing in the *Nouveau traité* of 1707 that advises the musician how to play *l'Harpège* ornament, that addresses how to arpeggiate within a dance (*Air de mouvement*). Perhaps this explains why it is not a technique in common usage by modern continuo players. In

<sup>53</sup> *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française, Nouvelle Édition, Tome Second, L=Z* (Paris: Beaume, 1786): 'Mouvement, se dit aussi en musique De la manière de battre la mesure. Presser le mouvement, ralentir le mouvement, pour dire, Battre la mesure plus ou moins vite, sans toutefois la changer ni l'altérer. On appelle Air de mouvement, Un air dont la mesure est marquée. Les menuets, les passe-pieds, font des airs de mouvement', p.130.

<sup>54</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement*: 'Les harpègements ne sont convenables que dans le Recitatif, ou il n'y a proprement point de mesure: car dans les Air de mouvement il faut frapper les accords tout à la fois avec leur Basse: Excepté que quand toutes les notes de la Basse sont Noires, & que la mesure est à trois temps, on separe les notes de chaque accord, de telle manière qu'on en reserve toujours une pour la faire parler entre deux temps.', p.62.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*: 'On peut observer la même chose dans la mesure à deux temps', p.62.

<sup>56</sup> 'Cela forme une espèce de battement qui sied tout à fait bien'. Saint-Lambert's use of the term *battement* is slightly unusual. See the section on French ornamentation in Kreitner, Kenneth et al., 'Ornaments', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 11 January 2010] <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg7](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg7)>.

the following example the lower parts are struck together, while the top part is played between the beats (Ex. 2.12).<sup>57</sup>

**Example 2.12 Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau traité*, Ch.IX, p.62**



There seems to be a distinction made by Saint-Lambert between the kind of arpeggiation appropriate during the accompanying of a dance movement (*Air de mouvement*) and the type of arpeggiation used during a *récit*. He suggests that both forms require the continuo to function in different ways. His *Nouveau traité* (1707) contains an entertaining description of how a harpsichordist might apply a florid, rich, *arpège* gesture in the accompaniment of *récit*:<sup>58</sup>

When accompanying a lengthy *Récit*, it is beautiful to linger sometimes a long time on a chord [to sustain a chord], when the bass permits it, and to allow several notes to be sung without accompaniment, then to re-strike a second

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<sup>57</sup> David Kellner (c1670-1748), in his *Treilicher Unterricht im Generalbass*, published in Hamburg in 1732, included a similar example of such *battements*, although he refers to this variety as *das Brechen*. Kellner, David, *Treilicher Unterricht im Generalbass*, (Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1732; repr. 1743): 'Item, *das Brechen* [...] *klings nicht uneben, anstatt, daß sonst alle Partien zugleich anschlagen.*', p.17.

<sup>58</sup> See the discussion on *récit* in Chapter 1, pp.12-13. [\(LINK\)](#) The word *récit* has generally been translated to mean *récitatif*, more closely associated with our understanding of the word 'recitative' today, but, as noted, this style pervades even into *airs* in the *ballet de cour*. This textual description then applies to a greater quantity of French pieces.

chord, and then to stop on it again, supposing, as I have said, that the Bass only sounds long notes, which is quite normal in *Récitatif*.<sup>59</sup>

He continues:

On other occasions, when the parts are doubled, the notes are struck one after the other with continuous repetition, making the harpsichord sparkle a little bit like a musket shot; but having made this pleasant charivari over for three or four bars, one comes to a sudden halt on some big harmonic chord [consonant chord], that is to say without a dissonance, as if to rest after the effort expended in making so much noise.<sup>60</sup>

He suggests that sometimes one should play in such a way that it appears that the instrument sounds of its own accord, 'without the consent of the accompanist'.<sup>61</sup> Writers such as Saint-Lambert might be forgiven for assuming that the enthusiastic student of accompaniment could easily hear how players executed *arpège* gestures and how they could acquire the 'finer points of style' by hearing the changes in texture, the speed, direction and ornamentation of the *l'Harpège* chord, and when to support the voice.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement*: 'Quand on accompagne un long Recit, il est beau de demeurer quelquefois long temps sur un accord, quand la Baffe le peut permettre, & de laisser chanter plusieurs notes à la voix sans accompagnement; ensuite de refrapper un second accord, & puis de s'arrêter encore deffus; & de ne donner ainsi les accompagnemens que par de longs intervalles, supposé comme j'ay dit que la Baffe ne fasse que de longues notes, ce qui est assez ordinaire dans le Recitatif.', p. 62.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.: 'D'autre fois doublant les Parties on rebat toutes les notes l'une après l'autre d'une repetition continuelle, faisant faire au Clavecin un petillement à peu près semblable à de la mousqueterie qui tire; mais après avoir fait cet agréable charivari pendant trois ou quatre mesures, on s'arrête tout court sur quelque grand accord Harmonique, c'est à dire sans dissonance, comme pour s'y reposer de la peine qu'on a eû à faire tant de bruit.', p.63.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.62.

<sup>62</sup> Williams and Ledbetter, 'Continuo', *Grove Music Online*.

You even repeat the same chord several times, arpeggiating it either rising or falling. But this repetition which should be well worked out, cannot be taught to you in a book, you must see it being played by someone.<sup>63</sup>

The fact that Saint-Lambert suggests that one should witness such a performance in person may account for scant inclusion of illustrated examples of ornamented arpeggiation in his writings.<sup>64</sup>

Illustrated examples of idiomatic arpeggiation are confined to a few examples in Saint-Lambert, a small but valuable selection of ornamented *arpège* is found in d'Anglebert's appendix on accompaniment in his 1689 harpsichord collection, and a single staff illustration is found in Delair's treatise of 1690. Although the sum of information found in ornament tables, in passages of treatises and the few illustrated examples included in the same, provided a general impression of the performance practice of the *arpège*, there is a paucity of idiomatic examples of ornamented arpeggiation in these sources.

## 2.4 The *Arpège* in Performance Practice

The performance of arpeggiated chords is subject to comment in the treatises examined. In the section entitled *Avis* (advice), appearing before the *Principes d'Acompagnement* section of his treatise, Delair assumes that the player will arpeggiate many of the chords appearing in the written examples later in the treatise and, presumably, in the general practice of accompaniment. Delair declares that the player may dispense with following a particular order when playing the notes of

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<sup>63</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement*: 'On repete même plusieurs fois un même accord, harpégeant tantôt en montant, & tantôt en descendant. Mais cette répétition qui veut être bien ménagée, ne peut vous être enseignée dans un Livre, il faut que vous la voyez pratiquer à quelqu'un.', p. 62.

<sup>64</sup> In Jean-François Dandrieu's *Principes de l'Acompagnement du Clavecin* (in addition to writings by other authors), there was scant inclusion of illustrated examples of arpeggiation and ornamentation in the realisation of a thorough-bass. It is no surprise, then, to find that Dandrieu's *traité* contains only five pages of written text in the form of a *Preface* followed by pages of figured bass progressions unrealised. This may be a consequence of the difficulties inherent in committing to paper the sequence of notes within an embellished, improvised harmonic gesture. Dandrieu, Jean-François, *Principes de l'accompagnement du clavecin exposez dans des tables dont la simplicité et l'arrangement peuvent* (Paris: l'Auteur, c1719; facsimile edition: Geneva: Minkoff, 1972). See Fuller, David, 'Dandrieu', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* [accessed 5 April 2011] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07160pg2>>.

chords in his examples, provided all the notes are played. The bass should always sound first.<sup>65</sup> He suggests that the player may:

dispense with following a particular order in playing the notes, provided that one plays them all. It does not matter what note is played first or last after the bass, which should always precede the [other notes in the] chord. This order is determined by the convenience of the hand.<sup>66</sup>

Saint Lambert includes the *arpège* among the ornaments which should not spoil the melody or rhythm of the piece: the use of *l'Harpège* is governed by the overall character of the music and the speed of its execution should be modified to suit the overall tempo and movement.

Ornaments must never spoil the melody or the rhythm of the piece. Thus in a gay tempo, the *Coulez* and *Harpegez* must be executed more quickly than when the tempo is slow: one must never hurry [press] the performance of an ornament, however quickly it must pass: one ought take one's time, prepare one's fingers, and execute it with boldness and freedom.<sup>67</sup>

The complicated issue of tempo in the performance of unmeasured preludes is considered in Troeger, while Moroney examines general issues around the performance of these pieces, and the matter of arpeggiation tempo is appraised by

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<sup>65</sup> Delair, *Traité d'accompagnement pour le theorbe, et le clavessin. Qui comprend toutes les règles nécessaires, pour accompagner sur ses deux instruments, avec des observations particulieres touchant les différentes manieres qui leurs conviennent* (Paris: l'Auteur, 1690; facsimile reprint: *Méthodes & Traités: Basse Continuo France 1600-1800*, Courlay, Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006); 'On se peut neantmoins dispenser d'ensuire l'ordre pourvu qu'on les sonne toutes. Il n'importe laquelle se sonne, la premiere, ou la derniere, apres la basse qui doit toujours précéder les accords, on se regle en cela sur la commodité de la main'. Preface, Part C, p.179.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.: 'On se peut neantmoins dispenser d'ensuire l'ordre pourvu qu'on les sonne toutes. Il n'importe laquelle se sonne, la premiere, ou la derniere, apres la basse qui doit toujours précéder les accords, on se regle en cela sur la commodité de la main'. Preface, Part C, p.179.

<sup>67</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Les Principes du Clavecin*: 'Que jamais les Agrémens ne doivent alterer le Chant, ny la Mesure de la Pièce. Qu'ainfi dans les Pièces d'un Mouvement gay, les Coulez & les Harpegez doivent passer plus vite que quand le Mouvement est lent: Qu'il ne faut jamais se preffer pour faire un Agrément, quelque vite qu'il doive passer: Qu'il faut prendre son temps, préparer ses doigts, & l'exécuter avec hardiffé & liberté', p.57.

Zappulla.<sup>68</sup> A different approach is required of the player when performing pieces governed by different characters or styles. A *tombeau*, for instance, requires a more plaintive arpeggiated gesture than would be appropriate in a lively *courante*. The mood of the piece, the need for momentum (particularly in dance music), the call for graceful decoration or a subtle completion of the texture all affect the flavour of an *arpège* chord played by an accompanist. Texture can range from sparse to rich, with the inclusion or omission of the number of voices and auxiliary notes introduced. This stylistic aspect of *basse continuë* realisation is as much to do with the idiomatic performance of a chord as it is to do with its basic structural components.

Playing d'Anglebert's *Exemple general avec les agrémens* (Ex. 2.08) results in a rich, florid realisation.<sup>69</sup> The opening chord is composed of eight voices with one passing note included as an ornament. If played in the form of a single gesture as Saint-Lambert suggested above (with such agility as to avoid any noticeable interval in the playing of the chord) then it would produce a considerable sound – particularly if the piece is in a brisk tempo. As a result one would have a *basse continuë* of exuberance and vigour, with the energy of the piece emanating from the speed and richness of the chord. This type of *arpège* would seem to be the kind recommended by Saint Lambert.<sup>70</sup> It is similar to that later recommended by Rameau: 'as when three or four demisemi-quavers are played one after the other with speed'.<sup>71</sup>

Florid, rich *arpège* gestures are suitable in *récit* (or in *récitatif*) where there is normally no strict dance-like metre. Such *arpèges figurés* may be employed to cover pedal notes

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<sup>68</sup> See Troeger, Richard, 'Metre in unmeasured Preludes', *Early Music* 11 (1983), Moroney, Davitt, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', *Early Music* 4 (1976), and Zappulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment*, pp.93-118.

<sup>69</sup> See Ex. 2.08, p.52. [LINK](#)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.: 'Dans l'Harpegé, foit simple, foit figuré, les doigts se doivent appliquer sur les Touches avec une telle agilité, qu'il ne paroisse entre les Notes aucune intervalle fenfible, qui altere ou rompe la Mesure de la Pièce/In arpeggiation, be it simple or ornamented, the fingers must be applied to the keys with such agility so that no appreciable interval can be detected, which would alter or break the flow of the piece', p.55.

<sup>71</sup> Rameau, Jean-Phillippe, *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Christophe Ballard, 1722; facsimile reprint: *Jean-Phillippe Rameau: Complete Theoretical writings*, 6 Volumes: Rome: AIM, 1967-1973, Vol. 1.): 'Comme quand on fait passer trois ou quatre triples Croches l'une après l'autre avec viteffe.', pp.371-372.

or to flesh out cadences. They contrast with *arpège* gestures intended to provide a motoric impetus to dance music. This motoric impetus is achieved through a swift upward motion of the voices in the chord, akin to the *arpège* gesture discussed by Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) in his *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels*:

The finger that plays the first [note of the *Arpégé*] must always start with the bass, and the others must follow, so that it seems that everything is [played] together; though this should form a kind of *Harpegement*, as when three or four demisemiquavers are played one after the other with speed.<sup>72</sup>

It has been suggested by Robert Zappulla that this method of arpeggiating was the 'predominant gesture used to play chords', and that this more common arpeggiation was a 'simple, rapid, upward arpeggiation described in varying degrees of detail by d'Anglebert, Saint-Lambert, Rameau and others'.<sup>73</sup>

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to determine the extent to which the *arpège* gesture became central to *le bon goût* of French Baroque style, how the *arpège* was illustrated and described, and by whom, and the extent to which this information aids the modern student of continuo in the arpeggiation of chords.

This chapter reveals that the evanescent nature of the harpsichord gave rise to playing techniques and textures designed to supplement the 'dry tone' of the instrument. The importance of the arpeggiated gesture is reflected in its typographical presence in tables of ornaments included in collections of solo music from 1670 to 1713.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.: 'Il faut que le doigt qui frappe le premier, parte toujours avec la Basse, & que les autres se suivent, de façon qu'il semble que le tout soit ensemble; quoique cela doive former une espèce d'Harpegement, comme quand on fait passer trois ou quatre triples Croches l'une après l'autre avec vitesse.' pp.371-372.

<sup>73</sup> Zappulla, Robert, *Figured Bass Accompaniment*, p.116.



Although the symbols used were not uniform, ornament tables presented by Chambonnières, Lebègue, d'Anglebert, Le Roux and François Couperin all contained a symbol – or in many cases a collection of symbols – representing the *arpège*. Some tables contain a number of signs relating to simple and ornamented arpeggiated gestures. This feature became central to a good playing style on the instrument. The relevance of the *arpège* ornament is enhanced by the fact that it was not confined to the period in question, but was described in treatises well into the second half of the eighteenth century: in 1768 Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote under the entry 'arpeggiation' in his *Dictionnaire de Musique* that the arpeggiated gesture is 'practiced as a matter of taste on the harpsichord':

The method of making heard in quick succession the different notes of a chord, instead of hitting them all at once [...] It is practiced as a matter of taste on the harpsichord. As one can only elicit from this instrument sounds that are not sustained, one is obliged to restrike notes of long duration. To make the duration of a chord longer, it is arpeggiated, starting with the bass sounds, ensuring that the fingers that strike the first keys are not released until the arpeggio is complete, so that all the sounds of the chord may be heard together.<sup>74</sup>

The importance of the *arpège* is reinforced by discussion of ornament signs used to indicate arpeggiation and, in some cases, by colourful descriptions in treatises of the performance of arpeggiated gestures. Saint-Lambert referred to d'Anglebert's ornament typography in his *Principes du Clavecin* and described the performance of ornamented arpeggiation in the accompaniment of *récit*. He suggests that this is something that

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<sup>74</sup> Rousseau, Jean Jacques, *Dictionnaire de Musique* (Paris: Duchesne, 1768; facsimile reprint: Hildesheim: George Olms, 1969): 'Manière de faire entendre successivement et rapidement les divers Sons d'un Accord, au lieu de les frapper tous à la fois [...] on le pratique par goût sur le Clavecin. Comme on ne peut tirer de cet Instrument que des Sons qui ne tiennent pas, on est obligé de les refrapper sur des Notes de longue durée. Pour faire durer un Accord plus long-temps, on le frappe en Arpègeant, commençant par les Sons bas, & observant que les doigts qui ont frappé les premiers ne quittant point leur touches que tout l'Arpège ne soit achevé, afin que l'on puisse entendre à la fois tous les Sons de l'Accord.', p.607.

should be 'well worked out, [that] cannot be taught to you in a book, you must see it being played by someone'.<sup>75</sup>

The six examples of arpeggiated notes presented in horizontal succession by Delair provide such an unorthodox system. In Delair's examples are uncovered an analogous connection to the French genre of *prélude non mesuré*. This connection provides a keyhole through which the modern player might glance at other illustrations of the *arpège* gesture. By including this illustration, Delair draws the attention of the reader to *prélude non mesuré* notation, and opens up the use of this notation as a valid source of information for those wishing to gain facility in idiomatically arpeggiating and ornamenting a chord on the harpsichord.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> See p.60. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>76</sup> It is not clear whether Denis Delair inserted the illustration of *l'accord naturel* in the 'Principles of Accompaniment' chapter of his *Traité d'Accompagnement pour le Theorbe et le Clavessin* of 1690 with the direct aim of association with the *prélude non mesuré*, but it was certainly intended to apprise the reader of a method of stylistically arpeggiating a chord.

## Chapter 3: The Notation of Arpeggiated Gestures in Unmeasured Preludes

### Introduction

The importance of the arpeggiated gesture has been seen in its typographical presence in tables of ornaments included in collections of solo music from 1670 to 1713.<sup>1</sup> Although the body of information found in these ornament tables offers a general impression of the performance practice of the *arpège*, it includes few idiomatic illustrations of ornamented arpeggiation.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, one of the most valuable sources for the performance practice of the *arpège* is the French unmeasured prelude. The notation employed in these preludes was particularly innovative, as it allowed the player to see the sequence of notes within each progressing harmonic gesture. It gives a wealth of information which may be incorporated into improvised accompaniment by the continuo player.

### 3.1 *Préludes* and the Art of Improvisation

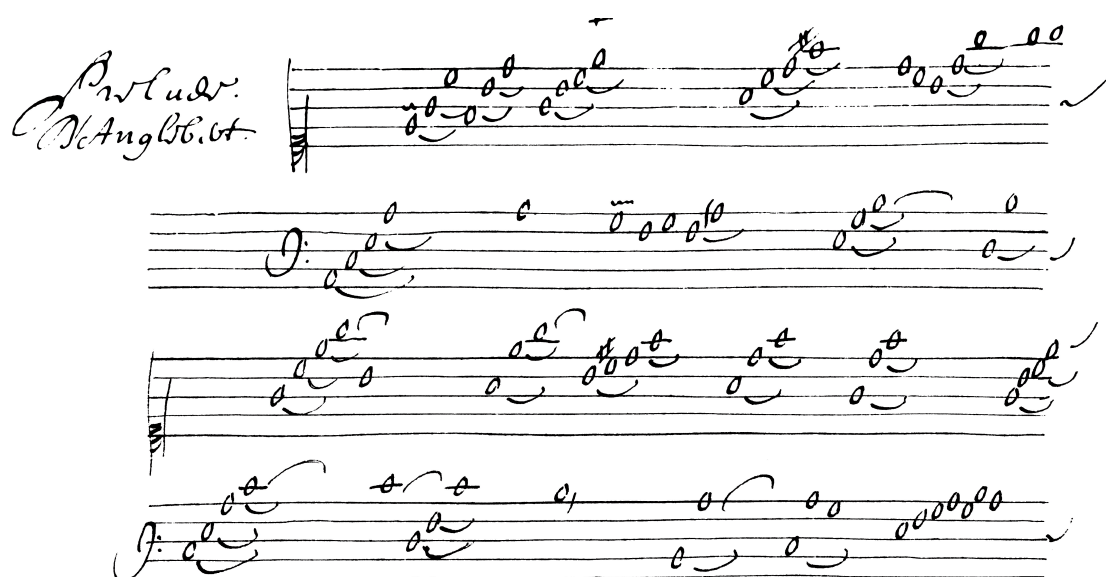
In the unmeasured prelude, arpeggiated gestures are woven together and separated from each other by flamboyant ligatures (*tenuës*). At first glance, these pieces are beautiful to behold, but as can be seen from d'Anglebert's notation below, may seem slightly bewildering to those more used to orthodox notation (Ex. 3.01).

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.40-46. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> One such illustration can be found in Denis Delair's treatise on accompaniment. See Ex. 2.09, Chapter 2, p. 53. [\(LINK\)](#)

Example 3.01 d'Anglebert, *F-Pn Rés 89<sup>ter</sup> MS 5688, Prélude, fo.1*



Unmeasured preludes were written by several French composers including Louis Couperin (c1626-1661), Gaspard Le Roux, Louis Marchand and Claude-Bénigne Balbastre (1727-1799).<sup>3</sup> The French harpsichord school of the 1650s included the composer-virtuoso players Louis Couperin, Jacques Champion, Sieur de Chambonnières, and Jean Henry d'Anglebert.<sup>4</sup> The flowering of the unmeasured prelude for harpsichord occurred before the beginning of the eighteenth century,<sup>5</sup> and the repertoire comprises over fifty pieces.<sup>6</sup>

Unmeasured preludes were composed as prefatory pieces: just as an orator would commence a speech with what Aristotle termed the *proem* in *Rhetoric*, so would the harpsichordist have played a prelude at the opening of a collection of dances.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>3</sup> Curtis, Alan and Cyr, Mary, 'Balbastre, Claude-Bénigne', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 2 June 2010] <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01843](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01843)>.

<sup>4</sup> Ledbetter, David, 'D'Anglebert, Jean Henry', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 5 August 2012] <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/07165](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/07165)>. D'Anglebert's connection to this set is supported by the existence of a manuscript, surviving from this time, which contains autograph entries by these three composers (the Oldham MS, London, private collection).

<sup>5</sup> The majority of works published around the turn of the eighteenth century stylistically date from before this time.

<sup>6</sup> Moroney, Davitt, 'Prélude non mesuré', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 10 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22290>>. 'Unmeasured' music is extant in the viol repertoire. Both Sainte-Colombe and De Machy are known to have composed such pieces.

<sup>7</sup> Atlas, Allan W., *Renaissance Music* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), p.496. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* dates from c336 B.C.

function of the prelude was to explore the harmonic region of these dance movements, to dazzle the listener, and allow the player to warm up the fingers. Characterised by a series of seemingly arbitrary semibreves (or combining semibreves with some smaller note values) and regulated by a system of complex slurs that were written outside conventional intimations of rhythm and metre, unmeasured preludes capture the approach to improvisatory performance style by their composers.

Throughout Europe in the seventeenth century, such a facility for improvisation was considered a skill required by a professional musician. Both historical anecdote and musicological research provide extensive evidence of extemporisation, so that, for example, the improvisatory prowess of the Po valley musician during the time of the Gabrieli is well known to us today.<sup>8</sup> Manuscripts of French lute preludes of the seventeenth century are evidence of an established proclivity for improvisation on that instrument.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, anecdotes abound about the improvisatory prowess of German church composer-musicians such as Johann Sebastian Bach.<sup>10</sup> Harmony instruments (such as the organ, harpsichord, lute and harp) are particularly suited to such improvisation: many Baroque composers turned their attention to the exploration of variation forms – such as the *chaconne* or *passacaglia*, which are born of improvisatory practice.<sup>11</sup> The use of a repeated bass pattern, over which successive upper register voices might engage in embellished extemporisation, is one of the longest established forms of instrumental music in Western Europe.<sup>12</sup> The unmeasured prelude constitutes part of the French

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<sup>8</sup> Hill, John Walter, *Baroque Music: Music in Western Europe, 1580-1750* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005): Italian works of this period contain some examples of written out diminutions, 'the type that instrumentalists were trained to improvise in replacement of slower written notes', p.78.

<sup>9</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music in 17th Century France* (London: MacMillan Press, 1987): 'Some examples are merely brief introductory flourishes that recall the improvised origins of the genre', p.40.

<sup>10</sup> Wolff, Christoph, *Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 'Foundations for his playing [...] [imply] experience with major keyboard genres and styles, improvisatory (prelude, toccata, etc.) or strict (fugue, ricercar, etc.), freely invented or based on a given subject or choral tune.', p.44.

<sup>11</sup> Allesandrini, Rinaldo, 'Chaconne or Passacaglia?', liner note to *Chaconne*. 2010. Compact disc. Naïve. OP 30468.

<sup>12</sup> Vieira Nery, Rui, liner note to *Ostinato*. 2001. Compact disc. AliaVox. AV 9820: 'Most likely its origin lies in an improvisatory tradition developed by instrumentalists involved in the performance of dance music.'

Baroque composer's contribution to the art of improvisation, which has been well worked out and captured in notation.

Just as the practice of embellished improvisation is connected to ground bass forms so it is connected to the preludial genres listed above. This practice is also connected to the art of continuo playing, which is 'essentially an improvised art'.<sup>13</sup>

A good harpsichord continuo player must harness the talents of a composer in realising a figured progression. Preludial pieces and continuo realisation, then, share a common concern with harmonic progression. Unmeasured preludes 'demand a player with the talents of a composer to sort and shape the gestures'.<sup>14</sup> It emerges that preludial music, whether written in orthodox notation or in 'unmeasured' notation, requires something more than a strict reading of the notes. It requires a flair for improvisation.

The clear sequence of notes found in unmeasured preludes is uniquely helpful to the continuo player. Idioms contained in the unmeasured preludes of Louis Couperin or Gaspard Le Roux, that capture the performance of an arpeggiated chord, facilitate the task of the modern continuo player. The lineage and pedigree of such *arpège* gestures are of great value: no other form of notation (aside from that found in the lute preludes) allows the modern player to come as close to witnessing a contemporary of Saint-Lambert extemporising an harmonic gesture. Any method of notation which signifies the sequence and configuration of notes within a chord – where this specific information appears in the context of an overall harmonic progression – has didactic value.

### **Unmeasured Notation**

A form of unmeasured notation used by composers of the French lute school to compose preludes is the genesis of harpsichord unmeasured prelude notation. An early version of

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<sup>13</sup> Williams, Peter, and Ledbetter, David, 'Continuo', *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online* [accessed 9 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06353>>.

<sup>14</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.40.

this notation appears in the lute repertoire of the 1630s. The lutenist Germain Pinel (d1661) was one of the best composers of the unmeasured lute prelude: his work has been described as the lute equivalent to the harpsichord preludes of Louis Couperin.<sup>15</sup>

The earliest unmeasured preludes for harpsichord were written down exclusively using semibreve notation. Semibreves were gathered into coherent harmonic groupings by wavelike slur markings. Melodic lines, motifs and part-writing are hidden behind this uniform notation. The manuscript preludes of d'Anglebert and Louis Couperin utilise the semibreve system of notation, as do the engraved preludes of Gaspard Le Roux.<sup>16</sup>

Semibreve prelude notation gradually yielded to a mixture of white and black prelude notation. This marked a later phase in the composition of unmeasured preludes. Jean Henry d'Anglebert used such mixed-value notation in the 1689 engraving of his *Pièces de Clavecin*,<sup>17</sup> as did Nicolas Lebègue (1631-1702) and Louis Marchand.<sup>18</sup>

The ligatures (*tenuës*) found in these sources frequently identify the length of the harmonic gesture, denoting the point up to which the note should be depressed to allow the sound to resonate around the instrument.<sup>19</sup> Even though there is a natural decay in the sound, these pitches persist under the newly-struck notes. The intended effect is 'digital pedalling with the affected note left sounding (i.e. held) throughout the length of the sign or for an indeterminate duration'.<sup>20</sup> This awareness of and concern for resonance is reflected in the performance instructions implied by the ligatures of the preludes.

Additionally, these ligatures often identify when a group of notes is substantially melodic, or they separate one group of notes from another in a cross-stave gesture. The three functions fulfilled by ligatures in these pieces are therefore as follows: to indicate an

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<sup>15</sup> Ledbetter, David, 'Pinel, Germain', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 24 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21774>>.

<sup>16</sup> Moroney, 'Prélude non mesuré', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>17</sup> d'Anglebert, Jean-Henry, *Pieces de clavecin* (Paris: l'Autheur, 1689; facsimile edition: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1999), see pp.1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Lebègue, Nicolas-Antoine, *Les Pieces de Clavecin* (Paris: Chez le Sr. Baillon et Chez l'Autheur, 1677; facsimile reprint: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1995), see pp.49-50.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 1, pp.20-21. ([LINK](#))

<sup>20</sup> Kreitner, Kenneth et al., 'Ornaments', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 11 January 2010] <[www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg7](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49928pg7)>.

harmonic gesture; to indicate a grouping of notes (ornaments or melodic passages); and, to separate notes from the next or previous gesture.<sup>21</sup>

The origins of this notational method cannot be traced with certainty. However, lute preludes constitute the principal influence on the genus of notation found in the harpsichord unmeasured prelude. The transcriptions of lute repertoire undertaken by d'Anglebert perhaps direct us to a possible source, the rhythmically unmeasured notation found in *préludes luthées*.<sup>22</sup> It is estimated that d'Anglebert's transcriptions of lute music occurred during the 1650s and/or 1660s.<sup>23</sup> The degree to which he absorbed the lute style, its already established proclivity for the improvisatory form of the prelude, and his knowledge of lute notation, may have inspired him to compose some of the earliest known keyboard unmeasured preludes, and to undertake their notation for the harpsichord.

### **The Notation of Unmeasured Preludes: Influences**

The unmeasured prelude was influenced by other keyboard pieces whose improvisatory characteristics might also be described as 'preludial'.<sup>24</sup> Examples of such 'preludial' pieces include the *toccatà*, the *ricercare* and the *intonazione*.<sup>25</sup> These forms originated at the fingertips of seventeenth-century Italians, who strove to reproduce on the page the 'spontaneous effect of improvised performance'.<sup>26</sup> Unlike the French unmeasured preludes, these were written in regular notation or tablature. This lineage of pieces – exemplified by the works of Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583-1643) and Johann Jacob

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<sup>21</sup> Moroney, Davitt, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', *Early Music* 4 (1976), p.149. The slanted barlines found in the published *préludes* of Nicolas Lebègue are used to separate one harmonic gesture from the next and also function in this role. See Chapter 3, pp.99-105. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> Moroney, 'Prélude non mesuré', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>23</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p. 61. The extent to which lute repertoire and practice influenced music in France before 1675 has been discussed in Chapter 1, pp.15-25. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>24</sup> Moroney, 'Prélude non mesuré', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>25</sup> Atlas, *Renaissance Music*: 'Intended for use in the liturgy, the *intonazione* (intonation) developed out of a long-standing tradition in which church organists improvised a short prelude in order to establish for the choir singers both the pitch and mode of the chant they were to sing', p.498.

<sup>26</sup> Hill, John Walter, *Baroque Music*, p.55.



Froberger (1616-1667) – is a primary stylistic influence on the harpsichord unmeasured prelude.

Johann Jacob Froberger was known to have been in Paris in 1652, and to have met many of the major players in Parisian music circles.<sup>27</sup> His own performances greatly influenced trends in French keyboard composition. The extent of Froberger's influence on French composers may be seen in the relationship between his toccatas and Louis Couperin's unmeasured preludes. A direct connection between the measured freestyle toccatas of Froberger and French unmeasured prelude notation can be found in the sixth *Parville* prelude entitled *Prelude de M<sup>r</sup> Couperin a l'Imitation de M<sup>r</sup> Froberger*.<sup>28</sup> This unmeasured prelude re-appears as the sixth prelude (in A minor) on fo. 9 of the *Bauyn* manuscript, and bears the abridged title *Prelude de Mon<sup>s</sup>. Couperin* (Ex. 3.02).<sup>29</sup> Sections of this prelude 'almost certainly derived from Froberger's first organ toccata', confirming a 'connection between toccata and prelude'.<sup>30</sup> Couperin's arpeggiation may represent Froberger's performance of the opening of his 'Toccatà Prima' of the same key.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Schott, Howard, 'Froberger, Johann Jacob', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 8 September 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10298>>.

<sup>28</sup> Moroney, Davitt, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', *Early Music* 4 (1976), p.145.

<sup>29</sup> Couperin, Louis, *Manuscrit Bauyn – Deuxième partie (Après 1658): Pièces de clavecin de Louis Couperin, (F-Pn Rés Vm 7674-5, fo. 9; repr. in Porot, Bertrand (ed.), La Musique Française Classique de 1650 à 1800, Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006), p.17.*

<sup>30</sup> Moroney, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes'. See p.146 for a comparison of Froberger's music with the Couperin *prélude non mesuré*. The connection between Froberger's music and Louis Couperin is also addressed in Troeger, Richard, 'Metre in unmeasured Preludes', *Early Music* 11 (1983), p.342.

<sup>31</sup> Froberger, J. J., *Libro Secondo di Toccate, Fantasia, Canzone, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue et altre Partite* (Vienna, 1649) A-Wn, Studierfilm MF 659 of Mus.Hs.18706 Mus A/Froberger/2.

Example 3.02 Louis Couperin, *Bauyn MS, Prelude de Mon<sup>e</sup>. Couperin, fo.9r*



The twists and twirls of Couperin's opening chord illustrates the technique of breaking and re-striking the chord in arpeggiation, as advocated by Froberger's teacher Girolamo Frescobaldi. The originality of this performance manner is 'apparent from [Frescobaldi's] instructive remarks in his prefatory notes'.<sup>32</sup> It is 'in order not to leave the instrument empty' that Frescobaldi prefaces his *Toccate e partite d'involatura di cimbalo* with instructions to the reader (*Al lettore*) as follows:

Let the beginnings of the toccatas be done slowly, and arpeggiated: and in the ties, or dissonances, as also in the middle of the work they will be struck together, in order not to leave the Instrument empty: which striking will be repeated at the pleasure of the player.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Hammond, Frederick, and Silbiger, Alexander, 'Frescobaldi, Girolamo Alessandro', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 20 February 2011] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10219>>.

<sup>33</sup> Hammond, Frederick, *Girolamo Frescobaldi: A Guide to Research* (New York & London: Garland, 1988): 'Li cominciamenti delle toccate sieno fatte adagio, et arpeggiandio: è così nelle ligature, ò uero durezza, come, anche nel mezzo del opera si batteranno insieme, per non lasciar uoto l'Istromento: il qual battimento ripiglierassi à beneplacito di chi suona.', p.188.

He demanded from musicians a fresh approach that required rhythmical latitude, and a flexibility in looking beyond the inexact nature of notation. In this case, however, the inability of the notation to express the need for flexibility was balanced by the novel written instructions of the composer. In *Il Transilvano dialogo sopra il vero modo di sonar organi, et istrumenti da penna*, Girolamo Diruta (c1554-1610) compares quilled instruments to the organ, which is generally played legato (with '*armonia unita*').<sup>34</sup> Diruta recommends that in order to give the illusion of a sustained harmony on an evanescent instrument the accomplished harpsichordist must use the 'instrument's resources to good account by skilful articulation, [...] embellishing the music with *tremoli* and lovely *accenti*'.<sup>35</sup> Frescobaldi and his contemporary composer-performers were clearly aware of the qualities that characterised quilled instruments, and knew how to maximise them to good effect, and how to manage their more demanding aspects.

Frescobaldi's instructions indicate that such opening chords demand a degree of 'arpeggiation' on the harpsichord, and would hardly ever be played simultaneously as in the case of organ performance, where all the notes are depressed together.<sup>36</sup> The playing of *Prelude de Mon<sup>s</sup>. Couperin* (Ex. 3.02) perhaps begins best in the manner suggested by Frescobaldi in his prefatory set of directions: with an arpeggio played slowly, increasing then in speed, struck and re-struck to become increasingly more exciting. The execution of such *arpeggio* gestures (ornamented chords) requires a significant element of stylistic improvisation, a requirement that is made more difficult today by the diminished ability of contemporary Western art musicians to engage in spontaneous invention.<sup>37</sup> The opening chord of Frescobaldi's *Toccata Prima* requires an improvisatory approach to embellishment in order to execute a convincing ornamented harmonic gesture (Ex. 3.03).

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<sup>34</sup> Palisca, Claude V., 'Diruta, Girolamo', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 15 August 2011] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07837>>.

<sup>35</sup> Diruta, Girolamo, 'Modo di sonar musicalmente nell'istrumento da penna', *Il Transilvano dialogo sopra il vero modo di sonar organi, et istrumenti da penna* (Venice: 1593), ff.5v-6r, quoted in Tagliavini, Luigi Ferdinando, 'The art of "not leaving the instrument empty"', *Early Music* 11 (1983) p.300.

<sup>36</sup> See Ponsford, David, *French Organ Music in the Reign of Louis XIV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) for a discussion on the practice of arpeggiating a chord on the organ: pp.87-88.

<sup>37</sup> The French writer Saint-Lambert was of the opinion that for student players such figuration in accompaniment 'should be well worked out' before playing. See Chapter 2, p.60. [\(LINK\)](#)

This arpeggio demands a freedom in tempo and in the manner of playing the constituent notes. Frescobaldi states that this ‘manner of playing must not remain subject to the beat’: it should be taken with spontaneous invention, ‘now slowly, now rapidly, and even suspending it in the air, according to their *affeti*’.<sup>38</sup>

**Example 3.03 Frescobaldi, *Secondo Libro* (1627) *Toccata Prima*, bb.1-12**



The opening bars of Frescobaldi’s *Toccata Prima* contain a catalogue of ‘arpeggiation’ – featuring many of the ornamental devices that were used to fill out the sound:

The Italian means of ornamentation invariably had to do with the singing sound of notes – just as in their language – and the idea of filling in the space between two notes with passages and ornaments is what ‘arpeggiation’ seems to be about for them. Frescobaldi often asks the listener to concentrate on dissonance which, in effect, implies the consonance’.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Hammond, *Girolamo Frescobaldi: A Guide to Research*, p.188.

<sup>39</sup> Murray, Gordon, Professor of Cembalo at the *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst*, Vienna, Austria. Interviewed by the author on 8 November 2011.

The term arpeggio here encompasses the broader definition of ornamentation and passage work.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Frescobaldi is providing the modern harpsichordist with a whole catalogue of ways one might 'arpeggiate (i.e. ornament) a series of long chords, which is what the first page of a toccata usually is'.<sup>41</sup>

Froberger brought Frescobaldi's style to Paris. French keyboard music also had an influence on Froberger's compositional process, which, after his visit to France, seems to meld the Italian and French styles of writing.<sup>42</sup> Froberger wrote a number of plaintive and quasi-improvisatory French *tombeaux*, another notationally 'measured' genre that conveys a character of rhythmic freedom.<sup>43</sup> His *Tombeau de Monsieur Blancrocher* and the *Lamentation faite sur la mort très douloureuse de Sa Majesté Impériale Ferdinand III*, for example, are somewhat fluid in their 'rhythm, part-writing and formal construction', and are required to be performed with a flexible approach.<sup>44</sup>

In order to inform the player of the flexibility required when approaching preludial pieces, Froberger wrote a number of short instructions either at the top of or in the body of the piece to indicate that the player should approach the notation in a flexible manner. He included the instruction '*avec discrétion*' and '*à discrétion*' over certain movements and over a number of passages in *Gigues*, and the text '*sans observer aucune mesure*' over his *Blancherocher tombeau*.<sup>45</sup> These instructions attempted to compensate for the inability of the notation to reveal the technical and stylistic characteristics necessary for a good performance of 'preludial' music:

As with Frescobaldi's prefaces to his toccata collections, Froberger's directions at the beginning of pieces draw attention to a freedom that cannot be adequately captured

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<sup>40</sup> Murray. Interviewed by the author on 8 November 2011: The Italian way of filling out sound 'has a great deal to do with passagi'.

<sup>41</sup> Murray interview, 8 November 2011. Gordon Murray expressed some unease for a blanket use of the term 'arpeggiate' given the danger of hackneyed oversimplification.

<sup>42</sup> Bukofzer, Manfred F., *Music in the Baroque Era* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1947), p.170.

<sup>43</sup> Moroney, 'Prélude non mesuré', *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>44</sup> Troeger, 'Metre in unmeasured Preludes', p.341.

<sup>45</sup> Moroney, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', p.147.

in musical notation and without which a piece would only be 'soiled' in performance.<sup>46</sup>

Davitt Moroney has identified parallel preludial passages in the music of Louis Couperin and Johann Jakob Froberger:

The measured free-style works of Froberger provide important clues to an understanding of the unmeasured notation used by the French for music of the same type. Froberger wrote his 'unmeasured' pieces in precise rhythmic values and then required the player to disregard such metric and rhythmic exactitude and play with 'discretion'.<sup>47</sup>

In view of Frescobaldi's advice on the performance of the opening of toccatas, it is difficult to see how Couperin's opening arpeggio in the *Prelude de Mons. Couperin* (*Bauyn MS fo.9r*) suggests 'a fast and rhythmically regular opening, as in Bach's toccatas where such arpeggios are written in semiquavers'.<sup>48</sup> It is equally likely that Bach approached such passages with the same method as Frescobaldi suggested, and with a freedom alluded to by Froberger in the preface to his *Tombeau de M. Blancherocher*: '*à la discrétion sans observer aucune mesure*'.<sup>49</sup>

Although they are not all captured using the standard, 'vertical', common form of notation, the music contained in the unmeasured prelude, the toccata, and the *tombeau* all represent the fruits of keyboard improvisation. The intersection of the so-called 'unmeasured' world of the harpsichord unmeasured prelude with the seemingly 'measured' performance suggested by the orthodox notation employed in Froberger's *toccate* is a blurring of boundaries addressed by scholars: 'Many notationally unmeasured

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<sup>46</sup> Collins, Paul, *The Stylus Phantasticus and Free Keyboard Music of the North German Baroque* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), p.92.

<sup>47</sup> Troeger, 'Metre in Unmeasured Preludes', p.343.

<sup>48</sup> Moroney, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', p.145.

<sup>49</sup> Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era*, p.110.

preludes can be affiliated to notationally measured genres. The notational dress disguises this musical fact, but the difference is for the player's eye, not the listener's ear.<sup>50</sup>

The aspect of freedom referred to by Frescobaldi and Froberger in prose is present in the unorthodox notation used by French composers to capture the exact constituent notes – and their sequence – in a preludial piece. Unmeasured prelude arpeggiated gestures serve to maintain the sonority of the harpsichord. The particular advantage prelude notation possesses is that it demonstrates the precise disposition of the notes which make up each arpeggiated chord in the manner performed by a seventeenth-century musician.

### **The Short Life-Span of Prelude Notation**

The difficulty in approaching the performance of the unmeasured prelude genre may account for its relatively short life span. Even in the seventeenth century, with the opportunity to hear them performed by their composers, these pieces may have seemed somewhat nebulous to the amateur, and so 'by the mid-1730s the *prélude non mesuré* had become obsolete'.<sup>51</sup> It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the rhythmic scheme of the manuscript preludes, with 'the notes presented as effectively equal', is an undeniable challenge for the modern performer.<sup>52</sup> Scholars have already identified the need for contemporary harpsichordists to be aware of the difference between 'unmeasured notation' and 'unmeasured performance'.<sup>53</sup>

Good prelude playing requires the invigoration of imaginative freedom, but the player must be liberally inclined to impose on the music that measurement and shape which his imagination dictates.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Moroney, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', p.147.

<sup>51</sup> Bates, Carol Henry, 'French Harpsichord Music in the First Decade of the 18th Century', *Early Music* 17 (1989), p.188.

<sup>52</sup> Dervan, Michael, 'Kilkenny Arts Festival. Review: Christophe Rousset', *The Irish Times*, 9 August 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Moroney, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', p.143.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.143.

Some of the difficulty in performing these pieces lies in the fact that the notation conveys the character of an improvised piece. Rhythmic accuracy is lost by sacrificing exact note values in favour of a system of notation which indicates the precise sequence of notes to be played. François Couperin did not compose any preludes using the models provided him by his predecessors. In contrast to the manuscript preludes of Louis Couperin or the printed preludes of Louis-Nicolas Clérambault (1676-1749), all eight preludes contained in *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* are written in 'measured' notation. However, although four are marked *mesuré* others conform to written instructions regarding the manner of a rhythmically free performance. As François Couperin explains:

A prélude is a free composition, where the imagination is open to all that presents itself. But as it is very rare to find talented [performers] capable of playing spontaneously, it is necessary that those who will have recourse to these measured preludes should play them in an easy manner without being over-concerned with rhythmic precision - unless I have marked it expressly with the word 'measured'. Thus, one can dare to say that in many instances, music (in comparison to poetry) has its prose and its lines of verse.<sup>55</sup>

François Couperin's observations are a *claveciniste's* attempt to iron out performance-practice issues relating to his own preludes. In writing his preludes in orthodox notation François Couperin avoided the interpretational difficulties that beset preludes written down in unmeasured notation. His decision effectively signalled the demise of any mainstream use of unmeasured notation.

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<sup>55</sup> Couperin, François, *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* (Paris: Foucault, 1716; facsimile reprint of F-Pn Rés Vm8.s. 1: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 1996): 'Prélude, est une composition libre, où l'imagination se livre à tout ce qui se présente à elle. Mais, comme il est assés rare de trouver des genies capables de produire dans l'instant; Il faut que ceux qui auront recours à ces Préludes=réglés, les jouënt d'une maniere aisée sans trop s'attacher à la précision des mouvemens; à moins que je ne l'aye marqué exprès par le mot de, Mesuré: ainsi, on peut hazarder de dire, que dans beaucoup de choses, la Musique (par comparaison à la Poésie) a sa prose, et ses Vers.', p.60.



### 3.2 Arpeggiated Gestures in the Unmeasured Preludes of Selected Composers

The examination of seven categories of arpeggiated gesture found in the unmeasured preludes of seven selected composers (Table 3.01) reveals the aspects of style that might usefully apply to arpeggiated gestures in continuo performance practice. For the modern player, these gestures allow a glimpse of how any one of the composers of this genre arpeggiated and ornamented a particular chord. The seven species of arpeggio examined are: Type A, Unornamented Arpeggiation, Ascending; Type B, Unornamented Arpeggiation, Descending; Type C, Unornamented Arpeggiation, Multi-directional; Type D, Ornamented Arpeggiation, Ascending; Type E, Ornamented Arpeggiation, Descending; Type F, Ornamented Arpeggiation, Multi-directional; and, Type G, containing Idioms and Motifs.

**Table 3.01 Selected composers of unmeasured preludes**

Composer	Publication	Published	No.
Louis Couperin	MS sources only	n/a	14
Nicolas Lebègue	<i>Les pièces de clavessin</i>	1677	5
Jean Henry d'Anglebert	<i>Pieces de clavecin</i>	1689	4
Louis Marchand	<i>Livre Second Pieces de clavecin</i>	1703	1
Louis-Nicolas Clérambault	I. <sup>er</sup> Livre de Pieces de Claveçin	1704	2
Gaspard Le Roux	Pièces de clavessin	1705	4
Nicolas Siret	Second Livre de Pieces de Clavecin	1719	1

### 3.3 Louis Couperin

Louis Couperin was an important composer of the unmeasured prelude. His *préludes* were never printed in his lifetime, and survive in two manuscripts collections.<sup>56</sup> The Parville MS contains twelve preludes attributed to Louis Couperin, ten of which are extant

<sup>56</sup> The *Bauyn* MS at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (*F-Pn Rés Vm 7674-5*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale), and the 'Parville MS' c1689 found at Berkeley, U.S.A. (*US-BE MS 778*).

in the Paris MS, and a further six preludes, two of which are almost certainly by Louis Couperin.<sup>57</sup> The *Bauyn* MS c1658-1706 comprises two volumes in three sections, the second of which contains fourteen unmeasured preludes by Louis Couperin (Table 3.02).<sup>58</sup> They constitute the largest collection of unmeasured preludes by any one composer.

**Table 3.02 Unmeasured Preludes by Louis Couperin in *Bauyn* MS**

No.	Title	Tonality	Folio	Note
1	<i>Preludes de M<sup>r</sup>. Couperin</i>	D Minor	fo. 1r.	<i>Changement de mouvement</i>
2	<i>Autre prelude de M<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	D Major	fo. 4r.	
3	<i>Prelude de M<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	G minor	fo. 6r.	<i>Changement de mouvement</i>
4	<i>Prelude de Mons<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	G minor	fo. 7v.	
5	<i>Prelude de Mons<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	G Minor	fo. 8v.	
6	<i>Prelude de Mons.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	A Minor	fo. 9r.	<i>Changement de mouvement</i>
7	<i>Prelude de Mons.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	A Minor	fo. 12v.	
8	<i>Prelude de M<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	A Major	fo. 13r.	
9	<i>Prelude de M.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	C Major	fo. 14r.	
10	<i>Prelude de M.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	C Major	fo. 15v.	
11	<i>Prelude de M.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	C Major	fo. 16v.	
12	<i>Prelude de M.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	F Major	fo. 17r.	<i>Changement de mouvement</i>
13	<i>Prelude de M.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	F Major	fo. 18r.	
14	<i>Prelude de M.<sup>r</sup> Couperin</i>	E Minor	fo. 19r.	

Both the *tombeau* and the *toccat*a styles of prelude are represented in these fourteen pieces.<sup>59</sup> The *toccat*a style is present in the ternary form preludes 1, 3, 6 and 12, each of which contains a middle *mesuré* section with the indication '*Changement de mouvement*'. These are fugal dance-like sections; they are all in triple metre and are

<sup>57</sup> Moroney, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', pp.144-145.

<sup>58</sup> Couperin, Louis, *Manuscrit Bauyn – Deuxième partie (Après 1658): Pièces de clavecin de Louis Couperin, (F-Pn Rés Vm 7674-5, fo. 9; repr. in Porot, Bertrand (ed.), La Musique Française Classique de 1650 à 1800; Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau, 2006), pp.v-vi.*

<sup>59</sup> Moroney, 'The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes', p.145.

reminiscent of Johann Jacob Froberger's toccata writing.<sup>60</sup> Louis Couperin's preludes also incorporate features of 'notation, structure and improvisation formulae which are developed from the lute prelude'.<sup>61</sup>

The range of expression achieved by Louis Couperin in his preludes (Ex. 3.04) is considerable: the extent and contrast of the harmonic palette, the richness and vigour of his arpeggiated gestures, the flash of excitement found in the ornaments fused into the anatomy of the notation, and the sensation that accompanies the impression of improvisation elevate his preludes to rank as the finest examples of the genre.

### ***Arpège Gestures Found in the Préludes of Louis Couperin***

Like other preludes in manuscript, Louis Couperin's unmeasured preludes were composed exclusively using semibreve notation. They contain a great variety of arpeggiated gestures, ranging from unornamented ascending gestures to multi-directional ornamented gestures.

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<sup>60</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.90.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90

Example 3.04 Louis Couperin, *Bauyn MS*, *Prélude in G Minor*, fo. 6

*Prélude de M<sup>r</sup> Couperin .1. 6*

The image displays a handwritten musical score for a prelude in G minor. The score is organized into six systems, each consisting of two staves. The notation is highly detailed and expressive, characteristic of Couperin's style. The upper staff of each system contains a complex melodic line with frequent slurs, ties, and ornaments. The lower staff provides a harmonic accompaniment, often featuring a steady bass line with occasional melodic fragments. The manuscript includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and dynamic markings, all rendered in a fluid, cursive hand. The overall impression is one of intricate and delicate musical craftsmanship.

### Type A: Simple Arpeggiation – Ascending

Numerous examples of the unadorned ascending arpeggiated gesture are found in Couperin's unmeasured preludes in the *Bauyn* MS. The typical sequence of notes in these unornamented arpeggios commences with the bass voice and finishes with the top voice. Five examples of the Type A gesture show the range of textural contrast from sparse to full and illustrate its distinctive properties in his music (Table 3.03).

**Table 3.03 Properties of Type A Gestures – Louis Couperin**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Comment	No. Notes
3.05	3vv	$\text{}^3_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>3</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	3
3.06	4vv	$\text{}^6_5$ chord	G $\sharp$ <sub>2</sub> -E <sub>4</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	4
3.07	5vv	$\text{}^5_3$ chord	A <sub>1</sub> -C $\sharp$ <sub>4</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	5
3.08	6vv	$\text{}^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	6

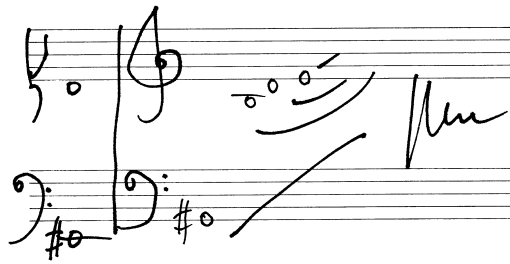
The chord in Ex. 3.05 is realised by the third above the bass. This gesture is placed in the tenor range of the instrument. Each note follows an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.05 Type A1 Couperin: *Bauyn* MS fo.12r (p.23) third system, first gesture**



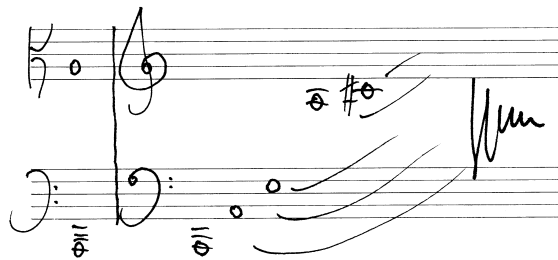
The  $\text{}^6_5$  gesture in Ex. 3.06 contains all notes of the chord ascending, with the upper notes clustered together. It is placed in the tenor range of the instrument.

**Example 3.06 Type A2 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.10r* (p.19) fourth system, fifth gesture**



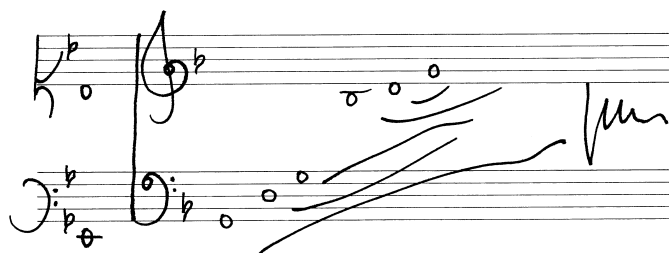
This  $^5_3$  gesture contains all notes of the chord. The highest note crosses beyond middle C. Each note follows an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.07 Type A3 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.12r* (p.23) fifth system, final gesture**



Ex. 3.08 represents a 6-voiced chord. Each note follows an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.08 Type A4 Louis Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.8v* (p.16) first system, first gesture**



The harmony contained in Louis Couperin's Type A arpeggiated gestures is spelled out from the bass voice up through the other voices in the typical slanted configuration associated with *prélude* notation. The gradient of the chord (inclining to the right in each

case) indicates the order in which the notes are to be played. Examples of simple, ascending arpeggios range from between three and six voices.

### **Type B: Simple Arpeggiation – Descending**

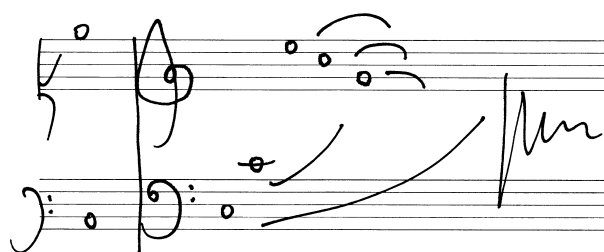
The unmeasured preludes of Louis Couperin also contain examples of unadorned descending arpeggiated gestures (Table 3.04), but they are generally presented with the bass note being struck first, with the descending aspect following on.

**Table 3.04 The Properties of Type B Gestures – Louis Couperin**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Sequence	No. Notes
3.09	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -E <sub>5</sub>	descending gesture	5

In Ex. 3.09 the descending gesture is confined to the right hand, the left hand having already played two notes in ascending sequence.

### **Example 3.09 Type B1 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo. 15v (p.30) first system, first gesture***



Pure Type B gestures are few and far between. The composer seemed to favour ornamented descending gestures and the tagging of a descending gesture to the end of a hybrid gesture (Type C or Type F), or following a melodic passage. The salient feature of unadorned descending gestures is the sounding of the top voice first in the right hand. Other voices are played in the order in which they appear.

### Type C: Simple Arpeggiation – Multidirectional

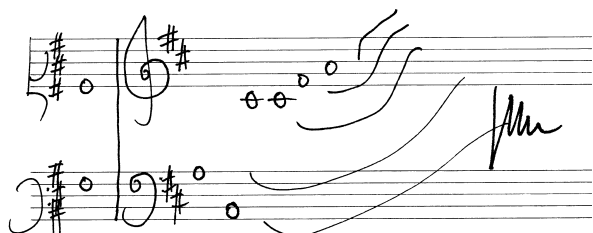
Multidirectional gestures – either Type C or Type F – are frequently found in the unmeasured preludes of Louis Couperin. The examples chosen here are of two kinds: Type C gestures containing only notes of the chord, and Type F gestures containing notes of the chord with small *passagi* (scale passages) within the overall harmonic gesture (Table 3.05).

**Table 3.05 The Properties of Type C Gestures – Louis Couperin**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Sequence	No. Notes
3.10	5vv	${}^6_3$ chord	A <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	repeated C# <sub>4</sub>	6
3.11	5vv	${}^6_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	repeating part of gesture	8
3.12	4vv	${}^6_5$ chord	F# <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>4</sub>	Multidirectional Gesture	8
3.13	4vv	${}^7_3$ chord	B $\flat$ <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>4</sub>	Multidirectional Gesture	8
3.14	5vv	${}^7_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	Multidirectional Gesture	10

In Ex. 3.10 the notes in this  ${}^6_3$  gesture are heavily weighted towards the bass note of the chord, with the outer voices playing this note. The C#<sub>4</sub> is repeated, providing some variation. This gesture is placed in the alto-tenor range of the instrument. Each note follows an ascending sequence (with the exception of the first tenor A<sub>3</sub>).

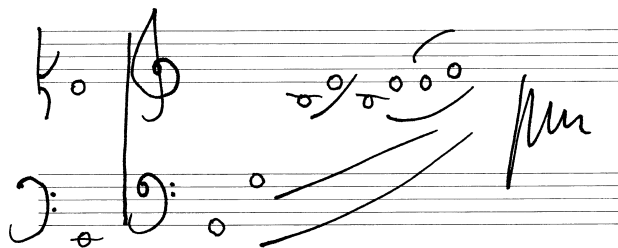
#### Example 3.10 Type C1 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.4v* (p.8) fifth system, third gesture





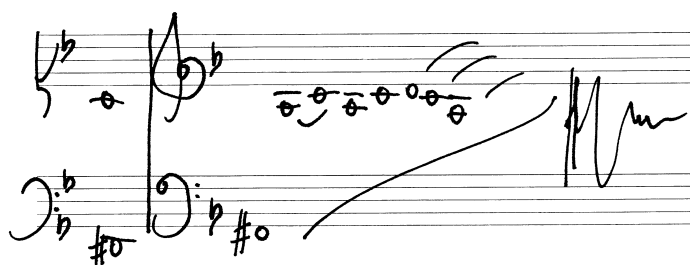
A noticeable feature of Ex. 3.11 is the repetition of the middle notes of the ascending gesture. It is placed in the alto-tenor range of the instrument.

**Example 3.11 Type C2 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.10r* (p.19) fourth system, second gesture**

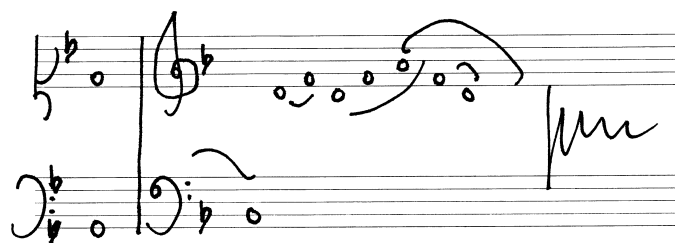


In Examples 3.12 and 3.13 two notes in the multi-directional arpeggio are repeated before continuing on through the gesture.

**Example 3.12 Type C3 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.6r* (p.11) fifth system, final gesture**

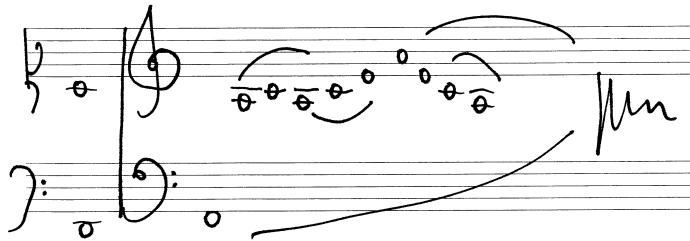


**Example 3.13 Type C4 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.6v* (p.12) second system, fourth gesture**



Ex. 3.14 contains the repeated cell placed within a five-voiced chord.

**Example 3.14 Type C5 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.9v* (p.18) first system, third gesture**



The constituent notes of each chord are dispersed in the typical ‘slanted’ presentation, opening with the bass voice. Thereafter, the hands change direction, altering between ascending and descending across the remaining notes of the chord, often changing direction within the gesture. Repeated notes are permitted. These three simple examples show how a 4- or 5-note chord can produce up to 10 percussive events to fill out the sound in a satisfying way.

**The Notation of Ornaments: *Arpège Figuré* (Types D-G)**

Ornamented arpeggiated gestures are commonly found in the unmeasured preludes of Louis Couperin. Four types have been identified and are described below. (Types D-G).

**Type D: Ornamented Arpeggiation – Ascending**

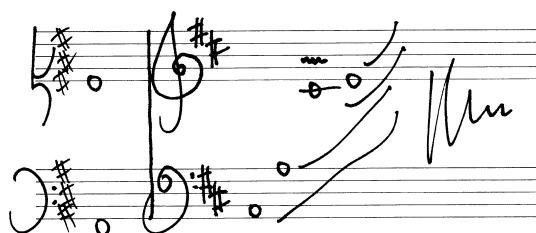
Six examples of Type D gestures ranging in textural contrast from sparse to full are summarised in Table 3.06:

**Table 3.06 The Properties of Type D Gestures – Louis Couperin**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments (d'Anglebert)	No. Notes
3.15	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	A <sub>2</sub> -E <sub>4</sub>	<i>Tremblement</i>	4
3.16	4vv	$^4_2$ chord	F <sub>3</sub> -D <sub>5</sub>	repeated D <sub>5</sub>	5
3.17	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	<i>Tremblement</i>	6
3.18	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>2</sub> -E <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute fur une notte</i>	5
3.19	6vv	$^6_5$ chord	G $\sharp_2$ -B <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute fur une notte</i>	7
3.20	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	A <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	<i>Tremblement &amp; port de voix</i>	7

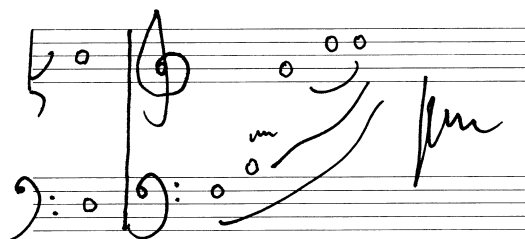
In Ex. 3.15 all the notes of the  $^5_3$  chord are present. Couperin ornaments the C $\sharp_4$  with a trill (*tremblement*). Each note follows in an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.15 Type D1 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.19v* (p.38) fifth system, first gesture**



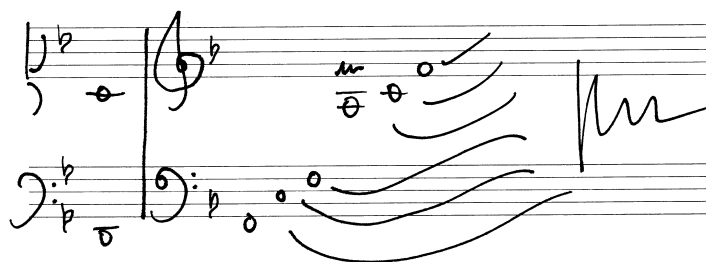
In Ex. 3.16 the notes in the  $^4_2$  chord are evenly spread across the arpeggio. This gesture is placed in the alto-tenor range of the instrument. Couperin ornaments the B<sub>3</sub> with the symbol indicating a trill (*tremblement*). The final note is repeated. Each note follows an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.16 Type D2 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.10v* (p.20) second system, first gesture**



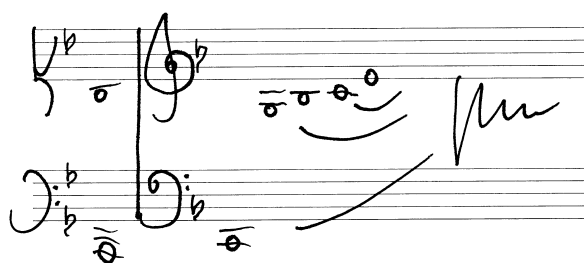
In Ex. 3.17 all the notes of the  $^5_3$  chord are present. Couperin ornaments the  $A_3$  with a trill (*tremblement*). Each note follows in an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.17 Type D3 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.19r* (p.37) sixth system, final gesture**



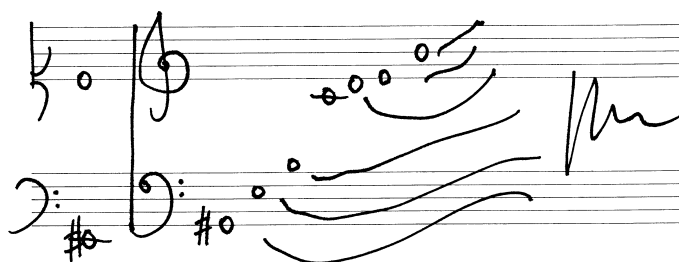
In Ex. 3.18 all the notes of this  $^7_3$  chord are present. Couperin ornaments the chord by the inclusion of an under-auxiliary note. Each note follows in an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.18 Type D4 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.18r* (p.35) second system, second gesture**



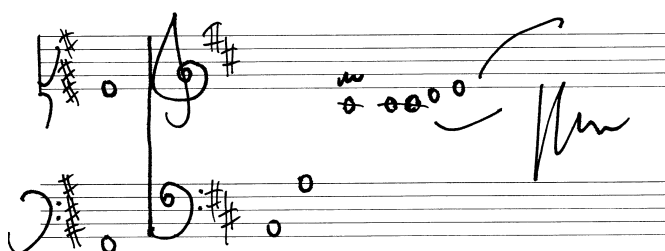
Ex. 3.19 represents a richly textured  $^6_5$  chord. Couperin ornaments the chord by the inclusion of an under-auxiliary note. Each note follows in an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.19 Type D5 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.3r* (p.6) third system, final gesture**



Ex. 3.20 contains three repeated notes on the third above the bass, the first of which is ornamented with a trill (*tremblement*). In addition, there is a passing note inserted between the third and fifth above the bass.

**Example 3.20 Type D6 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.19v* (p.38) fourth system, first gesture**



Type D ornamented, ascending, arpeggiated gestures differ from those in Type A with the inclusion of ornaments and passing notes. Louis Couperin often indicates a trill (*tremblement*) by the use of a symbol (Ex. 3.15). However, he sometimes writes out the constituent notes of the trill in the body of the piece.<sup>62</sup> The passing notes found in this type take the form of auxiliary notes which resolve up or down to a harmony note (indicated by a ligature). They create the ornamental dissonance *chute sur une note* as illustrated in Le Roux's ornament table.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> See Ex. 3.04, p.83, fourth system. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>63</sup> See Ex. 2.05, p.44. [\(LINK\)](#)

### Type E: Ornamented Arpeggiation – Descending

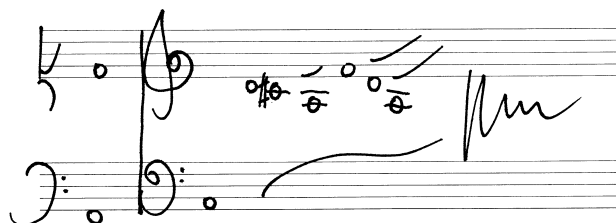
The following are samples of Type E gestures ranging in textural contrast from sparse to full (Table 3.07):

**Table 3.07 The Properties of Type E Gestures – Louis Couperin**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments	No. Notes
3.21	4vv	${}^6_4{}^5_3$ (aux. note)	A <sub>2</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	over auxiliary note	7
3.22	4vv	${}^9_7{}_{5+}$ (aux. note)	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	under auxiliary note	7

Ex. 3.21 shows a  ${}^5_3$ - ${}^6_4$  progression over a bass A<sub>2</sub>. In the right hand a D<sub>4</sub> auxiliary note sounds before the C<sub>#</sub><sub>4</sub>. The second chord is presented with all three components of the chord.

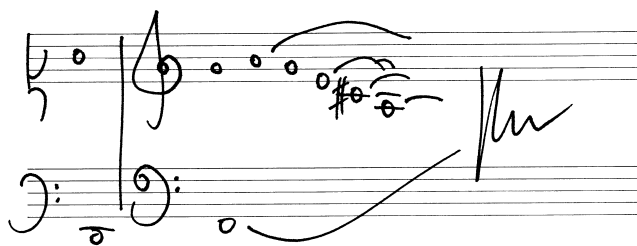
#### Example 3.21 Type E1 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.3v (p.6) second system, second gesture*



The chord realised in Ex. 3.22 contains a G<sub>4</sub> which appears slightly to the left of the bass note in the *Bauyn MS*, but which is presented to the right of the bass note in a modern scholarly edition.<sup>64</sup> Another G<sub>4</sub> is played in the descending pattern but lacks any ligature in the *Bauyn MS*. To achieve a subtle control of tonal colour this note should be released from the chord as the other notes remain depressed.

<sup>64</sup> Couperin, Louis, *Pièces de Clavecin*, Moroney, Davitt (ed.) Modern Edition of works by Louis Couperin, (Monaco: L'Oiseau-Lyre, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 2004), p.47.

**Example 3.22 Type E2 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.4r* (p.7) first system, first gesture**



As with Type B, Type E gestures are rare. The composer seems to favour ornamented descending gestures and the tagging of a descending gesture to the end of a hybrid gesture (Type C or Type F), or following a melodic passage.

**Type F: Ornamented Arpeggiation – Multidirectional**

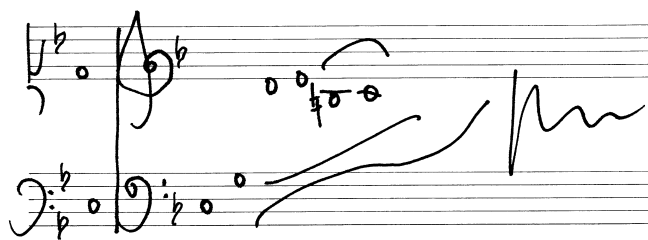
Four properties of Type F gestures are summarised in Table 3.08. The examples selected range in textural contrast from sparse to full:

**Table 3.08 The Properties of Type F Gestures – Louis Couperin**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments	No. Notes
3.23	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -E <sub>4</sub>	under auxiliary note	6
3.24	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -E $\flat$ <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute et Pincé</i>	6
3.25	4vv	$^6_4$ chord	A <sub>2</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	under auxiliary note & <i>Port de voix</i>	7
3.26	4vv	$^6_4$ chord	E <sub>3</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>		5

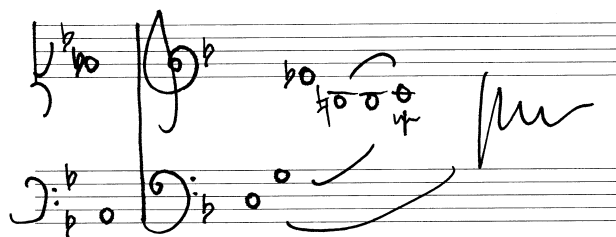
Ex. 3.23 features a C Minor chord spread which includes two under-auxiliary notes (D<sub>4</sub> and B<sub>3</sub>) in a gesture which changes direction from ascending to descending.

**Example 3.23 Type F1 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.17r* (p.33) sixth system, first gesture**



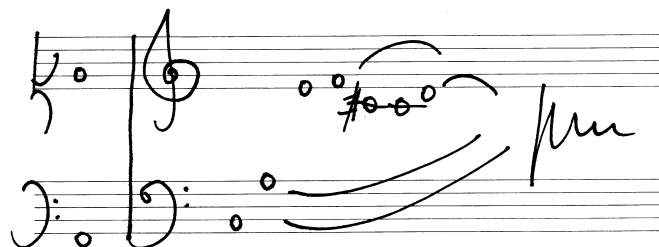
Ex. 3.24 features the repetition of an under-auxiliary note, and the inclusion of a mordent (*pincé*).

**Example 3.24 Type F2 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.18v* (p.36) sixth system, first gesture**



In Ex. 3.25 the composer uses under auxiliary notes in an ornamented  ${}^6_4$  gesture: one (the E<sub>4</sub>) leading to the F<sub>4</sub>, and the other (the C#<sub>4</sub>) leading to the D<sub>4</sub>. An additional anticipatory C#<sub>4</sub> is played before the under auxiliary note.

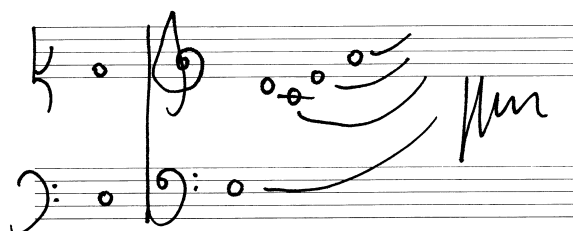
**Example 3.25 Type F3 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.3v* (p.6) fifth system, first gesture**





In Ex. 3.26 all the notes of the  ${}^6_4$  chord are present. Couperin ornaments the chord by the inclusion of an over-auxiliary note approaching the sixth over the bass. Each note follows in an ascending sequence.

**Example 3.26 Type F4 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.3r* (p.6) third system, second gesture**



As with Type C arpeggiation, the constituent notes of each chord in this Type F example are dispersed in the typical ‘slanted’ presentation, opening with the bass voice. Thereafter, the hands change direction, altering between ascending and descending across the remaining notes of the chord, often changing direction within the gesture. Type F ornamented, multi-directional, arpeggiated gestures differ from those in Type C by the inclusion of ornaments and passing notes.

**Type G: Gestures which Include Motifs and Scale Passages**

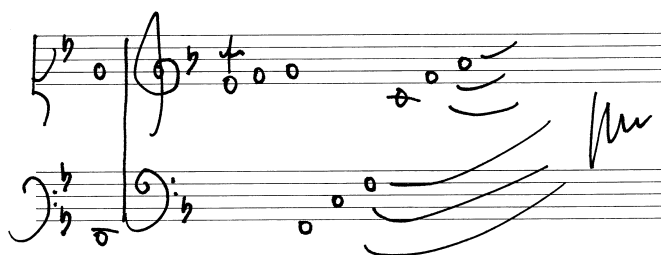
Type G gestures include motifs and scale passages. Five examples are shown in Table 3.09:

**Table 3.09 The Properties of Type G Gestures – Louis Couperin**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments	No. Notes
3.27	6vv	${}^5_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	<i>Suspirans</i>	9
3.28	4vv	${}^6_4$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	<i>Sur 2 notes de Suite</i>	8
3.29	4vv	${}^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	melodic passage	11
3.30	4vv	${}^5_3$ chord	A <sub>3</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	melodic passage	11
3.31	6vv	${}^6_3$ chord	E <sub>2</sub> -C <sub>5</sub>	melodic passage & <i>Port de voix</i>	17

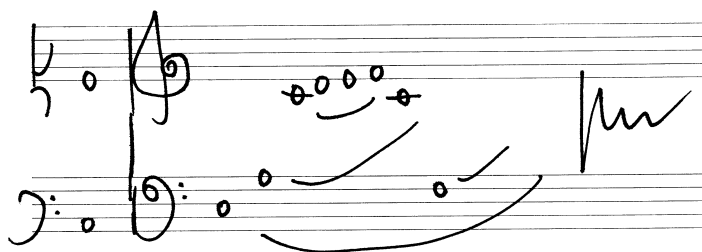
Ex. 3.27 includes a three-note *suspirans* figure before a 6-part arpeggiated chord.<sup>65</sup> The *suspirans* figure is useful as a link motif between chords or, as Louis Couperin intended it here, as an opening motif before the first arpeggiation.<sup>66</sup>

**Example 3.27 Type G1 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.18r* (p.35) fifth system, first gesture**



Ex. 3.28 is included on account of the passing notes connecting C<sub>4</sub> to F<sub>4</sub> in the manner similar to a *tirade*.<sup>67</sup>

**Example 3.28 Type G2 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.15v* (p.30) second system, first gesture**



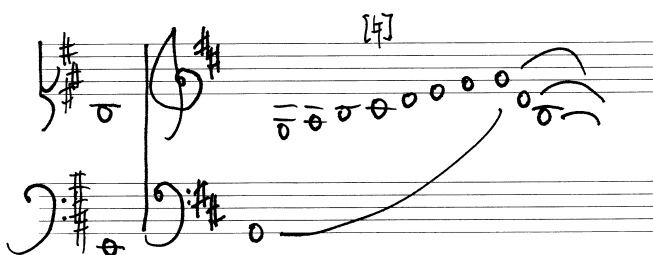
Ex. 3.29 contains another succession of notes approaching the descending gesture (from G<sub>4</sub>). This is an example of a more substantial *tirade*.

<sup>65</sup> The *suspirans* is described in Tilmouth, Michael and Ledbetter, David, 'Tombeau', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 5 June 2013] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/28084>> as an expressive characteristic, 'a three-note upbeat', used in the tombeau genre. For extensive discussion of the *figura suspirans* see Williams, Peter, 'Figurenlehre from Monteverdi to Wagner: (3) *The suspirans*', *The Musical Times* (August 1979), pp.648-650.

<sup>66</sup> It is usual for the second note of the *suspirans* motif to be ornamented. In this case the manuscript shows the ornament on the first note.

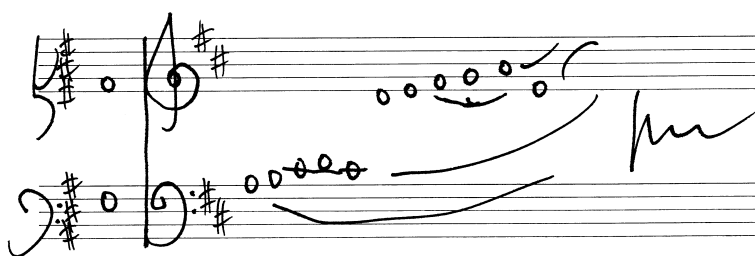
<sup>67</sup> 'Tirade', *The Oxford Companion to Music. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 10 September 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6806>>. For d'Anglebert's use of *tirades* in his harpsichord transcriptions see Pont, Graham, 'Handel's overtures for harpsichord or organ: An unrecognised genre', *Early Music* 11 (1983), p.311.

**Example 3.29 Type G3 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.4v* (p.8) third system, fourth gesture**



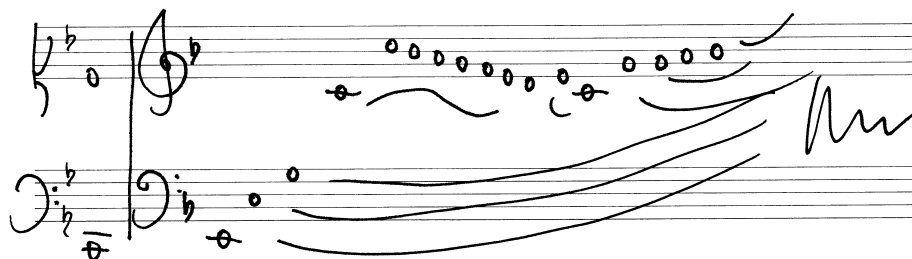
Ex. 3.30 is essentially a long melodic sequence wherein the harmonic notes of the chord are held.

**Example 3.30 Type G4 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.19v* (p.38) fifth system, second gesture**



Ex. 3.31 contains a descending run of notes within a  ${}^6_5$  gesture. Motifs and melodic passages – approaching or intersecting the harmony – provide additional material to fill out the gesture. This material can be used to good effect by the continuo player.

**Example 3.31 Type G5 Couperin: *Bauyn MS fo.17v* (p.34) first system, first gesture**



The twenty-six examples selected from Couperin's fourteen *Bauyn* preludes are testimony to the commendable variety and range of arpeggiation in these works. His simple

ascending arpeggios contain from three to six voices and span a compass from A<sub>1</sub> to G<sub>4</sub>. Couperin regularly makes use of the bass and tenor compass. Independent examples of his simple descending gestures are less common whereas unornamented multi-directional arpeggiated gestures are more common, and tend to be richer and more dense as a result. Couperin frequently repeats two notes in the arpeggio before continuing on through the gesture (Ex. 3.11 and Ex. 3.12). He also often includes ornaments in his arpeggiation: the third of a chord is regularly ornamented with a trill (*tremblement*) (Examples 3.15-3.17) and mordents are commonly introduced (Ex. 3.24). Both under-auxiliary and over-auxiliary notes are regularly employed, and notes may be repeated at will (Examples 3.16 and 3.20). Couperin uses the *suspirans* motif (Ex. 3.27) as well as a *tirade* between notes (Ex. 3.28). Scale passages leading to broken chords are found periodically (Ex. 3.29) and sometimes there is even a continuous melodic connection between notes of a chord (Ex. 3.30).

The *Bauyn* MS unmeasured preludes are seminal because they demonstrate a number of important aspects of the arpeggiated gesture. They abound with examples of arpeggiated gestures, extending from the simple to the highly decorated variety. Couperin's repetition of note clusters within the arpeggiated gesture is notable because it is not readily found in preludes by other composers (Examples 3.11-3.14) as is the recurrence of the same note in a three-note cell (Ex. 3.20).

### **3.4 Nicolas Lebègue**

The first printed unmeasured preludes for harpsichord appear in Nicolas-Antoine Lebègue's *Pieces de Clauessin* 1677. Although stylistically his five *préludes* are similar to those of Louis Couperin, Lebègue opts for a hybrid combination of note values instead of utilising undifferentiated semibreve notation to capture the spirit of improvisation. These note values are intended to illustrate a general expression of tempo rather than exact

relationships between the notes.<sup>68</sup> The inclusion of different note values suggests where a player might linger, or where a player might increase the impulse of the performance.

Nicolas Lebègue utilises the oblique barline in four of his five preludes. The first page of Lebègue's *Prélude En C sol ut fa* shows this (Ex. 3.32). These lines serve to aid the player in separating the harmonic gestures from one another. This is the first use of such oblique barlines found anywhere in keyboard unmeasured preludes in French music.

**Example 3.32** Lebègue, *Pieces de Claussin, Prelude En C sol ut fa*, p.63

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Prélude En C sol ut fa' by Nicolas Lebègue. The score is written on six staves, alternating between treble and bass clefs. The title 'Prélude En C sol ut fa' is written in a cursive font at the top left, with a tempo marking '♩ = 63' at the top right. The music features various note values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Oblique barlines are used to separate harmonic gestures across the staves. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'f' and 'p', and articulation marks like slurs and accents. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the bass clef.

Lebègue's five *préludes* contain examples of both unadorned arpeggiation and ornamented arpeggiation (Table 3.10).

<sup>68</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpichord and Lute Music*, p.100.

**Table 3.10 *Préludes non mesurés* by Nicolas Lebègue**

No.	Title	Tonality	Page	Note
1	<i>Prelude En d la re sol</i>	D Minor	1	(no oblique barlines)
2	<i>Prelude</i>	G Minor	27	oblique barlines
3	<i>Prelude En a mi la re</i>	A Minor	49	oblique barlines
4	<i>Prelude En C sol ut fa</i>	C Major	63	oblique barlines
5	<i>Prelude En f ut fa</i>	F Major	81	oblique barlines

He seemed genuinely concerned that the performer should feel at ease with the notation of his preludes: this is evident from the following paragraph in the preface:

I have tried to facilitate the presentation of the preludes so as to both conform with general practice and playing on the harpsichord, whose manner is to separate and liberally restrike chords rather than to link them together as on the Organ[.] If anything difficult or obscure is encountered, I pray that intelligent gentlemen will make good these defects while considering the great difficulties in making intelligible this method of performing a prelude.<sup>69</sup>

### ***Arpège Gestures Found in the *Préludes* of Nicolas Lebègue***

As with other arpeggiated gestures extracted for the purpose of this study, the typical sequence of notes in Lebègue's preludes commences with the bass voice. His notation is characterised by the preludial slant visible in Couperin's manuscript preludes.<sup>70</sup> The inclusion of note values suggests where a player might linger, or where a player might increase the impulse of the performance. This hybrid blend of notation most likely reveals

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<sup>69</sup> Lebègue, Nicolas-Antoine, *Les Pieces de Claussin: 'Jay taché de mettre les préludes avec toute la facilité possible tant pour la Conformité que pour le toucher du Claucin, dont la maniere est de Separer et de rebattre plus-tost les accords que de les tenir ensemble comme a l'Orgue si quelque chose s'y rencontre un peu difficile et obscure le prie Mess.rs les intelligents de vouloir suppleer aux defaux en considerant la grande difficulté de rendre cette metode de Preluder assé intelligible a un chacun.'*, Preface.

<sup>70</sup> See Ex. 3.04, p.83. [\(LINK\)](#)

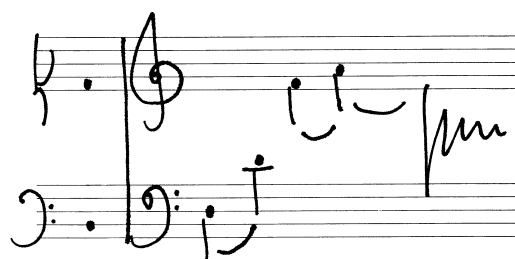
tempo correlations within the piece.<sup>71</sup> The following are samples of arpeggiated gestures found in the preludes of Nicolas Lebègue (Table 3.11):

**Table 3.11 The Properties of Types A, D, F and G Gestures – Nicolas Lebègue**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Sequence	No. Notes
3.33	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	D <sub>3</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	4
3.34	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	4
3.35	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	E <sub>3</sub> -B <sub>4</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	6
3.36	7vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>5</sub>	uninterrupted gesture	7
3.37	6vv	$^6_5$ chord	B <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>5</sub>	<i>tremblement</i>	6
3.38	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	A <sub>1</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	<i>tremblement</i>	9
3.39	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -C <sub>5</sub>	over-auxiliary note	8
3.40	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	A <sub>2</sub> -E <sub>5</sub>	<i>suspirans &amp; campanella</i>	14

Examples 3.33 and 3.34 represent a similar disposition of two chords. Despite the difference in notation, Type A arpeggiated gestures are similar to those found in the works of Louis Couperin.<sup>72</sup>

**Example 3.33 Type A1 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.64) first system, third gesture**



<sup>71</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpichord and Lute Music*, p.40.

<sup>72</sup> See Table 3.03, p.84. [LINK](#)

Example 3.34 Type A2 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.64) first system, fifth gesture



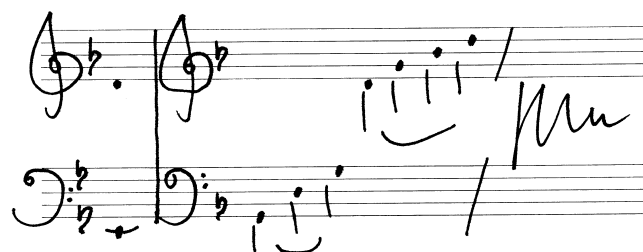
Ex. 3.35 contains all notes of a  $\text{}^5_3$  chord doubled. Each note follows an ascending sequence.

Example 3.35 Type A3 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.69) first system, final gesture



Ex. 3.36 contains a seven-voiced chord that spans a range of two-and-a-half octaves. Each note follows an ascending sequence.

Example 3.36 Type A4 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.27) first system, first gesture



Ex. 3.37 opens with a trill (*tremblement*) on the bass note B2. As with **Type A** gestures each note follows in an ascending sequence.

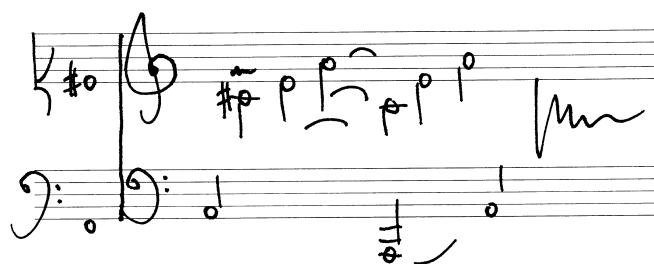


**Example 3.37 Type D1 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.64) first system, fourth gesture**



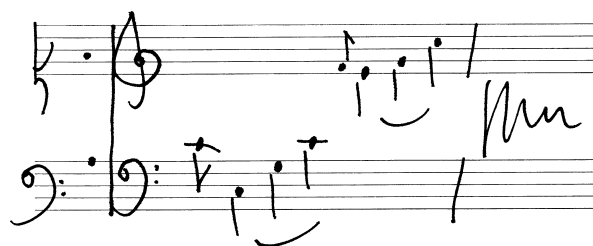
Ex. 3.38 is written using minims, and contains a trill (*tremblement*) ornament on the C#<sub>4</sub>.  
The gesture is played over three octaves.

**Example 3.38 Type D2 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.50) third system, last gesture**



The arpeggiation contained in Ex. 3.39 is given its multidirectional nature by virtue of the first note, the C<sub>4</sub>. The C Major chord that follows contains an over-auxiliary note above the E<sub>4</sub> in the right hand.

**Example 3.39 Type F1 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.63) first system, first gesture**



Ex. 3.40 contains an example of the *suspirans* motif following the multi-directional bass opening. The two-part writing following the *suspirans* is reminiscent of the lute *campanella* effect.<sup>73</sup>

**Example 3.40 Type G1 Lebègue: *Pieces de Claussin* (p.49) first system, first gesture**



Lebègue's hybrid prelude notation contains some gestures similar to those found in the *Bauyn* MS by Louis Couperin, but at an elementary level and to a lesser extent.<sup>74</sup> The bass note opening the gesture in Ex. 3.37 is worth noting for its rare ornamentation with a *tremblement*, as is the lute-like writing in the right-hand *brisure* of Ex. 3.40. The use of oblique barlines and a hybrid blend of note values characterises Nicolas Lebègue's particular contribution to unmeasured prelude typography.

### 3.5 Jean Henry d'Anglebert

Jean Henry d'Anglebert's *Pieces de clavecin* were published in 1689 when the composer was 60 years of age. They represent the compositional achievement of a lifetime, and include pieces that date from earlier in his career as a composer-performer. Four preludes by d'Anglebert are present in exclusively semibreve notation in his autograph manuscript that was probably made between 1677 and 1680.<sup>75</sup> Three of these appeared in a hybrid blend of note values in his 1689 publication (Table 3.12).<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 1, 1.2 The Influence of the Lute on the Emerging Harpsichord Style, p.15, and footnote 42, Chapter 1, p.17. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>74</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.100.

<sup>75</sup> Scholars have dated this autograph manuscript by d'Anglebert between 1677 and 1680. See Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, pp.60-61.

<sup>76</sup> d'Anglebert, *Pieces de clavecin*.

**Table 3.12 *Préludes non mesurés* by d'Anglebert**

No.	Title	Tonality	1689	Rés 89 <sup>ter</sup> MS Facsimile
1	<i>Prelude</i>	G Minor	p. 1	p. 134 Fuzeau Reprint
2	<i>Prelude</i>	G Minor	p. 35	p. 166 Fuzeau Reprint
3	<i>Prelude</i>	D Minor	p. 67	p. 104 Fuzeau Reprint
4	<i>Prelude D'Anglebert</i>	C Major	n/a	p. 1 Fuzeau Reprint

These *préludes* are the only surviving examples of the same material written in whole notation (autograph) and mixed notation (printed).<sup>77</sup> Ex. 3.41A contains the opening staves of the manuscript version of the the D minor *prélude* found in d'Anglebert's hand in the Rés. 89<sup>ter</sup> manuscript.<sup>78</sup> Ex. 3.41B shows the same *prélude* published in the *Pieces de clavecin* (1689).

**Example 3.41A d'Anglebert, Rés. 89<sup>ter</sup> MS, *Prélude* in D Minor**

<sup>77</sup> Scheibert, Beverly, *Jean-Henry D'Anglebert and the Seventeenth-Century Clavecin School* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), p.137.

<sup>78</sup> d'Anglebert, Jean-Henry, *Pièces de clavecin: Transcriptions de pièces pour luth - Manuscrit Rés. 89<sup>ter</sup>, (l'Auteur, c1677-1680; facsimile edition: Courlay: Éditions J. M. Fuzeau,1999), p.104.*

Example 3.41B d'Anglebert, *Pieces de clavecin* (1689), *Prélude* in D Minor

David Ledbetter has examined in detail d'Anglebert's assimilation of lute idioms and features of style to the harpsichord.<sup>79</sup> This assimilation is considered 'the single most important evidence of the connection between lute and keyboard styles'.<sup>80</sup> On account of his extensive transcription of lute music for keyboard – evidenced in the *Rés. 89<sup>ter</sup>* manuscript – it is not surprising to find a substantial influence of lute style in his unmeasured preludes.<sup>81</sup> Since the harpsichord and lute share an evanescent tone it is not difficult to see the use of common compositional techniques, such as broken texture (*style luthé*) in use in both repertoires.<sup>82</sup> Evidence of the influence of the *toccatà* keyboard style of Johann Froberger, significant in the prelude writing of Louis Couperin, is not so apparent in the preludes of d'Anglebert, which 'resemble the lute preludes of the 1650s and later'.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, pp.50-86.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.62.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90.

<sup>82</sup> Scheibert, Jean-Henry *D'Anglebert*, p.110.

<sup>83</sup> Ledbetter, David, *Harpsichord and Lute Music*, p.100.

## Arpège Gestures Found in the *Préludes* of Jean Henry d'Anglebert

### Type A: Simple Arpeggiation – Ascending

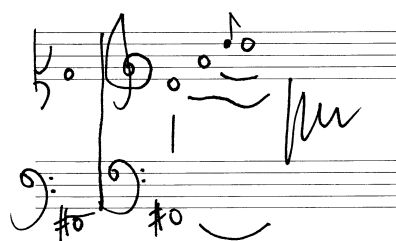
The unmeasured preludes of d'Anglebert contain abundant examples of unadorned ascending arpeggiated gestures. In the same way as those of Louis Couperin and Lebègue, d'Anglebert's arpeggiated gestures commence with the bass voice. The following are a sample of Type A gestures ranging in textural contrast from sparse to full (Table 3.13):

**Table 3.13 The Properties of Type A Gestures – d'Anglebert**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Comment	No. Notes
3.42	4vv	$6_3$ chord	F $\sharp_2$ -D $_5$	Repeated final note	5
3.43	5vv	$6_3$ chord	B $_2$ -D $_5$	3 <sup>rd</sup> doubled	5
3.44	6vv	$5_3$ chord	G $_2$ -B $_4$	uninterrupted gesture	6
3.45	7vv	$6_3$ chord	B $_2$ -D $_5$	3 <sup>rd</sup> doubled	7
3.46	8vv	$6_3$ chord	G $_2$ -G $_4$	3 <sup>rd</sup> tripled	8

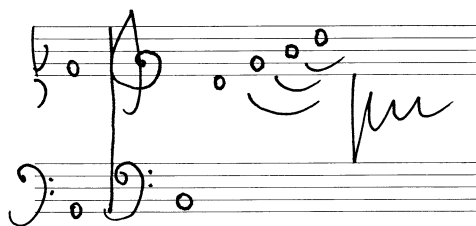
In Ex. 3.42, the first two notes of a  $6_3$  chord are struck together (indicated by the vertical line above the bass note), with the remaining voices following in ascending order to the D $_5$ , which is repeated. This example demonstrates that some notes of the chord may be struck together, while other notes may be arpeggiated.

### Example 3.42 Type A1 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p. 2, first system



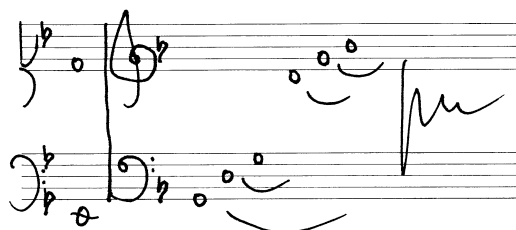
Ex. 3.43 represents a typical example of an ascending *arpège simple*.

**Example 3.43 Type A2 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p. 2, second system**



Ex. 3.44 represents a 6-voiced chord. This species of arpeggiated gesture is similar to that found in Louis Couperin's music.<sup>84</sup> Each note follows in ascending sequence.

**Example 3.44 Type A3 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p. 35, second system**

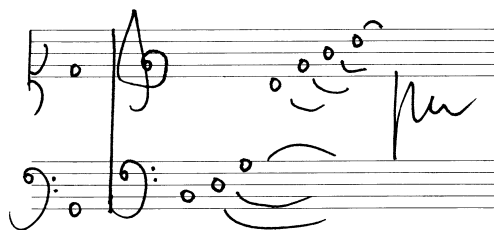


Ex. 3.45 represents an interesting example of an ascending *arpège simple*: the texture is conspicuously thicker, with three voices played in the left hand. This  ${}^6_3$  gesture also contains a  $B_4$  in the right-hand chord. D'Anglebert's *Exemple general avec les agréments* found in his *Principes de l'Accompagnement* contains richly textured chords such as that illustrated in Example 3.45.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> See Ex. 3.08, Chapter 3, p.85. [\(LINK\)](#)

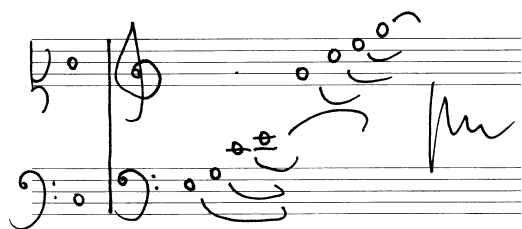
<sup>85</sup> See Ex. 2.08, Chapter 2, p.52. [\(LINK\)](#)

**Example 3.45 Type A4 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p. 1, first system**



Ex. 3.46 is an 8-voiced unadorned  ${}^6_3$  ascending gesture containing four voices in the left hand.

**Example 3.46 Type A5 d'Anglebert: *C Major Prelude*, MS Rés 89<sup>ter</sup> (p.1) second system**



This examination of d'Anglebert's Type A chords has shown that they range from between four to eight voices. He does not shrink from doubling or even tripling the third of the chord, nor is he fearful of rich textures in the left hand. He also includes gestures in which notes of the chord are struck together (indicated by the vertical line above the bass note). Like Louis Couperin he introduces a repeated note.<sup>86</sup>

**Type B: Simple Arpeggiation – Descending**

As in the case of Louis Couperin and Lebègue, examples of pure Type B arpeggiated gestures in the *préludes* of d'Anglebert are scarce (Table 3.14).

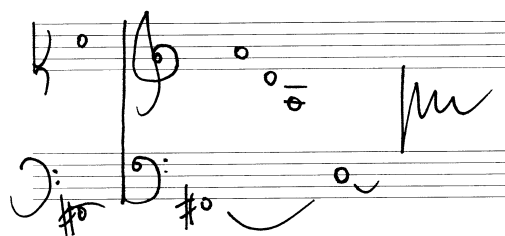
<sup>86</sup> See Ex. 3.16, p.91. ([LINK](#))

**Table 3.14 The Properties of Type B Gestures – d’Anglebert**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Sequence	No. Notes
3.47	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -E <sub>5</sub>	descending gesture	5

The descending arpeggio in Ex. 3.47 carries on from the right hand to end with the D<sub>3</sub> in the left hand.

**Example 3.47 Type B1 d’Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.1, third system**



**Type C: Simple Arpeggiation – Multidirectional**

Multidirectional gestures – either Type C or Type F – are also frequently found in the unmeasured preludes of d’Anglebert (Table 3.15).

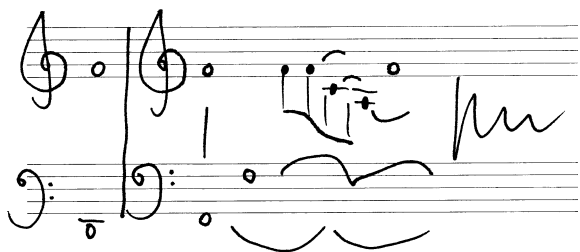
**Table 3.15 The Properties of Type C Gestures – d’Anglebert**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Sequence	No. Notes
3.48	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	multi-directional gesture	8
3.49A	6vv	$^5_3$ (mixed notation)	D <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	contains delayed l.n.	11
3.49B	6vv	$^5_3$ (MS version)	D <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	contains delayed l.n.	11

Ex. 3.48 again contains the simultaneous performance of two notes as indicated by a line connecting the bass to the note above.

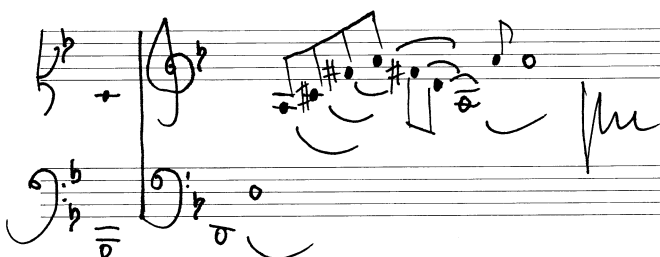


**Example 3.48 Type C1 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.69, first system**

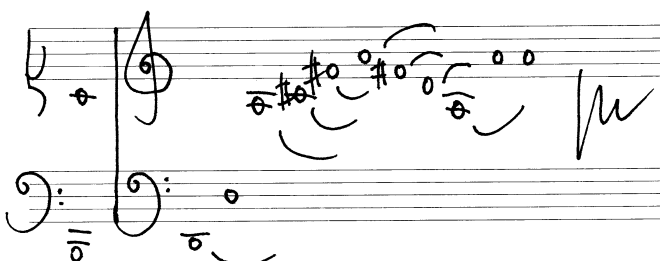


Ex. 3.49 contains a vigorous arpeggio with the leading note (C#<sub>4</sub>) carried through the first gesture, resolving on the tonic (D<sub>4</sub>) during the descending gesture. This example features a repeated note tag at the end of the pattern. Both examples illustrate the same music: 3.49A Type C<sub>21</sub> is from the published collection while 3.49B Type C<sub>22</sub> is from the manuscript version.

**Example 3.49A C<sub>21</sub> d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.35, second system**



**Example 3.49B C<sub>22</sub> d'Anglebert: *D Minor Prelude*, MS Rés 89<sup>ter</sup> (p.109) first system**



## The Notation of Ornaments: *Arpège Figuré*

### Type D: Ornamented Arpeggiation – Ascending

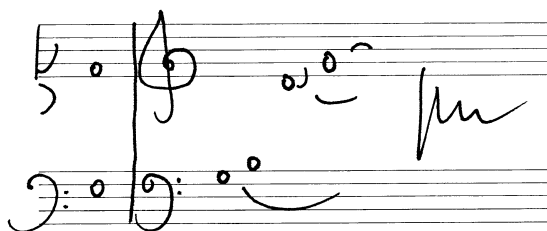
Ornamented arpeggiated gestures are plentiful in the unmeasured preludes of Jean Henry d'Anglebert. The following are samples of Type D gestures ranging in textural contrast from four voices to seven (Table 3.16):

**Table 3.16 The Properties of Type D Gestures – d'Anglebert**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments (d'Anglebert)	No. Notes
3.50	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>3</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	<i>Pincé</i>	4
3.51	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	E <sub>3</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute sur 2 notes</i>	7
3.52	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -B <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute sur 2 notes</i>	7
3.53	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -B <sub>4</sub>	<i>Pincé, Cheute sur 1 notte</i>	5
3.54	6vv	$^6_3$ chord	B <sub>2</sub> -B <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute sur 1 notte</i>	7
3.55	7vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -C <sub>5</sub>	<i>Tremblement</i>	7

The arpeggio in Ex. 3.50 spans the range of one octave. The third note of the gesture is ornamented by a mordent (*pincé*).

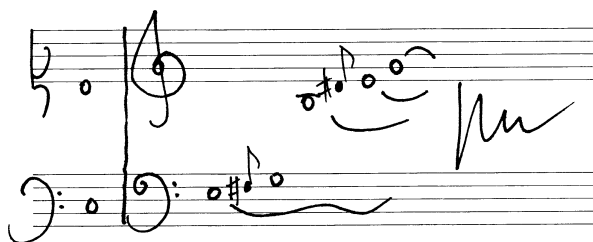
### Example 3.50 Type D1 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin 1689*, p.1, first system



Ex. 3.51 contains two under-auxiliary notes, the first constituting the *coulé sur une tierce* ornament found in d'Anglebert's table, the second forms a *cheute sur 2 notes* in the right hand.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> See Ex. 1.07, Chapter 1, p.24. [LINK](#)

**Example 3.51 Type D2 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.1, second system**



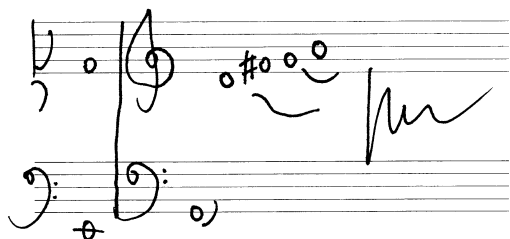
Ex. 3.52 is another disposition of Example 3.51, with both ornaments appearing in the upper voices.

**Example 3.52 Type D3 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.2, first system**



Ex. 3.53 opens with an ornament (*pincé*) in the bass note, akin to Lebègue's.<sup>88</sup> The arpeggiation that follows contains an under-auxiliary note. Unlike in the previous two examples, this F#<sub>4</sub> is assigned the non-value of a semibreve.

**Example 3.53 Type D4 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.2, third system**



<sup>88</sup> See Ex. 3.37, p.104. [\(LINK\)](#)

Ex. 3.54 displays a richer texture in the arpeggio, with three voices present in the left hand. A single under-auxiliary note appears in the right hand to form a *cheute sur une note*.

**Example 3.54 Type D5 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.35, second system**



An ornamented seven-voiced ascending gesture makes up Ex. 3.55. Four voices appear in the left hand: in Ex. 3.46 d'Anglebert has no difficulty with such a rich texture.<sup>89</sup> The ornament appears on the first note appearing on top staff (E<sub>4</sub>).

**Example 3.55 Type D6 d'Anglebert: *C Major Prelude*, MS Rés 89<sup>ter</sup> (p.1) first system**



**Type E: Ornamented Arpeggiation – Descending**

The following are samples of Type E gestures ranging in textural contrast from sparse to full (Table 3.17):

<sup>89</sup> See Ex. 3.46, p.110. [LINK](#)

**Table 3.17 The Properties of Type E Gestures – d’Anglebert**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments (d’Anglebert)	No. Notes
3.56	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	G1-G4	<i>Pincé</i>	9

The ornamented descending arpeggiation shown in Ex. 3.56 occurs in the context of a typical cadence formula of d’Anglebert.

**Example 3.56 Type E1 d’Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin 1689*, p.2, third system**



**Type F: Ornamented Arpeggiation – Multidirectional**

The following are samples of Type F gestures ranging in textural contrast from sparse to full (Table 3.18):

**Table 3.18 The Properties of Type F Gestures – d’Anglebert**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments (d’Anglebert)	No. Notes
3.57	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	<i>tremblement</i>	5
3.58	5vv	$^4_2$ chord	D <sub>3</sub> -B <sub>4</sub>	two over-auxiliary notes	7
3.59	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -E <sub>5</sub>	<i>pincé &amp; cheute sur une notte</i>	6
3.60	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	A <sub>2</sub> -C# <sub>5</sub>	<i>cadence</i>	7
3.61	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>4</sub>	two <i>pincés</i> & <i>campanella</i> writing	8
3.62	6vv	$^6_3$ chord	F# <sub>2</sub> -C <sub>5</sub>	<i>cadence</i>	11
3.63	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	D <sub>2</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	<i>pincé &amp; repeated note</i>	15

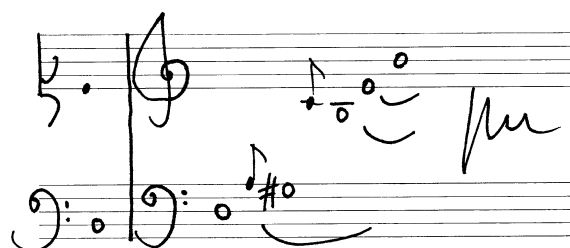
Ex. 3.57 shows a multidirectional arpeggiation with the addition of a trill (*tremblement*) on the top note (G<sub>4</sub>).

**Example 3.57 Type F1 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.35, second system**



Ex. 3.58 shows an ascending <sup>4</sup>/<sub>2</sub> chord ornamented with two over-auxiliary notes which change the direction of the arpeggiation.

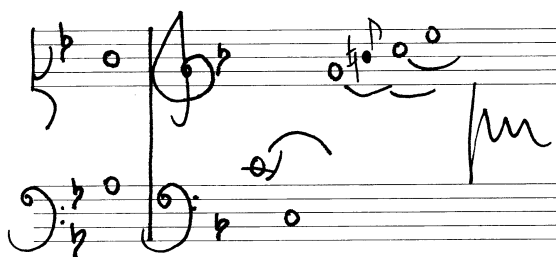
**Example 3.58 Type F2 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.68, first system**



Ex. 3.59 opens with a note ornamented by a mordent (*pincé*). The second note (C<sub>3</sub>) is followed by an arpeggio ornamented with one under-auxiliary note. This *cheute sur une note* is spelled exactly like the example of this ornament given by d'Anglebert in his *Marques des Agrements et leur signification*.<sup>90</sup>

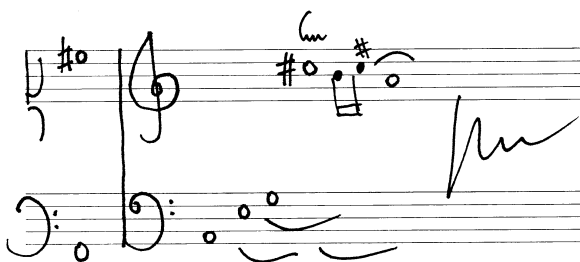
<sup>90</sup> Example 1.07, Chapter 1, p.24. [\(LINK\)](#)

**Example 3.59 Type F3 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.36, first system**



Ex. 3.60 displays an ornamented multi-directional arpeggiation which contains the symbol indicating a *cadence trill* on the C#<sub>5</sub>. This is a compound trill involving upper and lower auxiliary notes.

**Example 3.60 Type F4 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.67, second system**



Ex. 3.61 contains two mordents (*pincés*) in a melodic configuration which resembles the two-part texture of lute *campanella*.

**Example 3.61 Type F5 d'Anglebert: *G Minor Prelude*, MS Rés 89<sup>ter</sup> (p.166) first system**



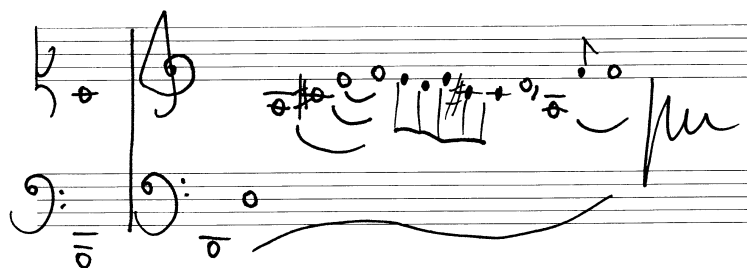
Ex. 3.62 contains the *cadence trill* in the context of a more dense texture that present in Ex. 3.60.

**Example 3.62 Type F6 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.35, third system**



Ex. 3.63 shows an harmonically ornamented D Minor chord.

**Example 3.63 Type F7 d'Anglebert: *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.67, first system**



In a fashion similar to Type C arpeggiation, the constituent notes in Type F examples are separated in the 'unmeasured slant' typical of unmeasured preludes. Following the first note in the bass the hands change direction, altering between ascending and descending across the remaining notes of the chord, often changing direction within the gesture.

D'Anglebert's Type F arpeggiated gestures are rich in ornaments, including the *tremblement* (Ex. 3.57), the *pincé* (Ex. 3.59) and the *cadence* (Ex. 3.60). He incorporates passing notes into his arpeggiation in the form of over-auxiliary notes (Ex. 3.58) and the *cheute* ornament (Ex. 3.59).

**Type G: Gestures which Include Motifs and Scale Passages**

Type G gestures, which include motifs and scale passages, are also found in the unmeasured preludes of d'Anglebert (Table 3.19):

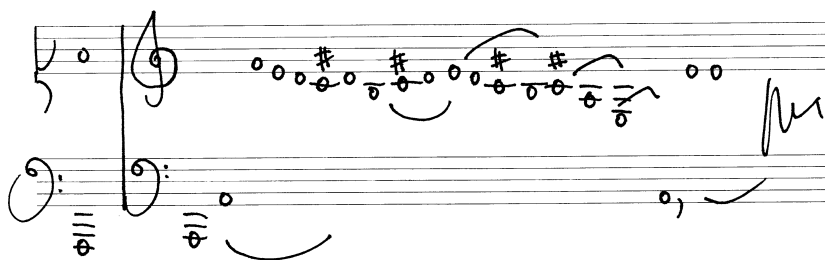


**Table 3.19 The Properties of Type G Gestures – d’Anglebert**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Ornaments (d’Anglebert)	No. Notes
3.64	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	A <sub>1</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	<i>pincé</i>	20
3.65	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	D <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>5</sub>	<i>pincé</i>	23

Ex. 3.64 shows a melodically ornamented chord. The harmony notes of this passage are identified by the ligatures: the B<sub>3</sub> marked with a ligature acts as a dissonance, setting up the relief afforded by the A Major chord that follows. The final bass note of this passage is ornamented by a mordent and a repeated fifth (E<sub>4</sub>) brings the gesture to a close.

**Example 3.64 Type G1 d’Anglebert; *D Minor Prelude*, MS Rés 89<sup>ter</sup> (p.105) first system**



Ex. 3.65 is taken from the opening statement of the published version of d’Anglebert’s D Minor prelude. A *suspirans* figure in the top voice follows an octave bass opening. This is followed by a twisting melodic shift into the sub-dominant tonality, and then back to the final home chord. A lone fifth (A<sub>4</sub>) brings this gesture to a close.

**Example 3.65 Type G2 d’Anglebert; *Pieces de Clavecin* 1689, p.67, first system**



The four unmeasured preludes by d'Anglebert examined in this study contain some of the most idiomatic examples of arpeggiated gestures. They contain many examples of arpeggiation, ranging from simple unadorned ascending arpeggios to multi-directional ornamented arpeggiation. They also contain melodic passages and motifs such as *suspirans* and the *tirade*. In the examples chosen for this research, simple ascending arpeggios range from four to eight voices spanning a compass from G<sub>2</sub> to G<sub>5</sub>. In line with his *Exemple general avec les agrémens* D'Anglebert does not limit the gesture to one single bass voice in the left hand (Examples 3.44 and 3.45) but sometimes even stretches it to four voices on each staff (Ex. 3.46).<sup>91</sup> Independent examples of his simple descending gestures are less common whereas, in the same way as in Louis Couperin's preludes, unornamented multi-directional arpeggiated gestures appear in abundance. D'Anglebert habitually includes ornaments in his arpeggiation: notes above the bass are regularly ornamented with a *tremblement* (Examples 3.55 and 3.57), sometimes with type of *tremblement* he called a *cadence* (Examples 3.60 and 3.62), and mordents are frequently inserted (Examples 3.50, 3.53, 3.56, 3.59, 3.61 and 3.63). Under-auxiliary notes are regularly employed to form the *cheute* ornament (Examples 3.51-3.54 and 3.59). Over-auxiliary notes are also introduced (Ex. 3.58), and notes may be repeated (Examples 3.42, 3.48, 3.49A/B, 3.56, 3.63 and 3.64). D'Anglebert decorates the *suspirans* motif (Ex. 3.61) and sometimes composes a continuous melodic connection between notes of a chord (Examples 3.64 and 3.65).

D'Anglebert's unmeasured preludes are also important because they illustrate several important aspects of the arpeggiated gesture. Three of his preludes are available both in semibreve notation and in hybrid notation of mixed note values, and are the only surviving examples of unmeasured preludes available in both formats.<sup>92</sup> This allows for a comparative study of both types. D'Anglebert's works demonstrate the strongest assimilation of the lute idiom into keyboard music;<sup>93</sup> his unmeasured preludes are

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<sup>91</sup> See Example 2.08 d'Anglebert, *Pieces de clavecin, Exemple general avec les agrémens*, p.52.

<sup>92</sup> See footnote 77 on p.106. ([LINK](#))

<sup>93</sup> See footnote 80 on p.107. ([LINK](#))

excellent examples of this. His four preludes are rich in sample arpeggiation. Finally, his application of ornaments suited to the arpeggiated gesture further elucidates the symbols he assigned to the *arpège* that he set out in his *Marques des Agrements et leur signification*.<sup>94</sup>

### 3.6 Louis Marchand

Louis Marchand (1669-1732) is best remembered for his headlong flight from a keyboard virtuoso contest which was to be held in Dresden in 1717: his opponent was none other than Johann Sebastian Bach. This contest had been arranged by Jean-Baptiste Volumier (c1670-1728), a friend of Bach and the *Konzertmeister* of the Dresden court. Volumier is said to have found Marchand's arrogance too much to bear.<sup>95</sup> The dedication by Saint-Lambert which acts as the preface for Marchand's 1703 *Livre Second - Pièces de Clavecin*, and describes him as a 'public treasure', might go some way to revealing how much Marchand enjoyed flattery.<sup>96</sup> Marchand's *Prélude* in G Minor (Table 3.20) involves semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver and semiquaver note values. He includes ornament symbols for the *pincé* and *tremblement*.<sup>97</sup>

**Table 3.20 *Prélude non mesuré* by Marchand**

No.	Title	Tonality	Page	Date of Publication
1	<i>Prelude</i>	G Minor	1	<i>Livre Second Pièces de clavecin</i> 1703

This *Livre Second* contains only one suite. This consists of eight pieces: *Prélude* (Ex. 3.66), *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Sarabande*, *Gigue*, *Gavotte*, *Menuet*, and *Menuet Rondeau*.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> See Ex. 1.07, Chapter 1, p.24. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>95</sup> Wolff, Christoph, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, pp.179-182.

<sup>96</sup> Marchand, Louis, *Livre Second. Pièces de Clavecin* (Paris: Ballard, 1703; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1982), Preface: 'A Monsieur Marchand.'

<sup>97</sup> Marchand, Louis, *Livre Second. Pièces de Clavecin*.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1-12.

Example 3.66 Louis Marchand, *Pièces de Clavecin, Livre Second, Prélude*<sup>99</sup>

Sample Arpège Gestures Found in the Préludes of Louis Marchand

Sample arpeggiated gestures found in this unmeasured prelude are detailed in Table 3.21.

Table 3.21 The Properties of arpeggiated gestures – Marchand

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Comment	Notes
3.67	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	ascending gesture	4
3.68	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	descending gesture	6
3.69	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>2</sub> -B $\flat_4$	multi-directional gesture	4
3.70	3vv	no bass note	D <sub>4</sub> -B $\flat_4$	<i>suspirans</i>	6

Ex. 3.67 represents an unadorned 4vv chord. The first notes in each hand appear vertically aligned.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p.1.

**Example 3.67 Type A1 Marchand: *Livre Second Pieces de clavecin*, p.1, second system**



Ex. 3.68 shows a simple descending arpeggio, with voices descending from the highest pitches in each hand.

**Example 3.68 Type B1 Marchand: *Livre Second Pieces de clavecin*, p.2, second system**



The bass is not struck first in Ex. 3.69. The gesture begins with the highest pitch ornamented, descends to the lowest, and returns to a G<sub>3</sub> ornamented by a sign for a mordent (*pincé*).

**Example 3.69 Type F1 Marchand: *Livre Second Pieces de clavecin*, p.1, first system**



Ex. 3.70 contains the *suspirans* motif.

**Example 3.70 Type G1 Marchand; *suspirans* motif: *Livre Second*, p.1, first system**



The brilliant opening of Marchand's *Prelude* is another example of a Type G gesture.<sup>100</sup>

The melodic writing descends over a G pedal to arrive at a G minor chord in the second bar.

Louis Marchand's single unmeasured prelude makes a relatively small contribution to the overall collection of arpeggiated gestures studied here. The most interesting illustration is found in Ex. 3.69, where two notes of the four-voiced chord precede the bass note. It is unusual in continuo playing to precede the bass note with notes of the harmonic gesture implied by the figured bass. Such notes could act as an upbeat figure to the chord in a continuo performance, in a similar way to the *suspirans* motif.

### **3.7 Louis-Nicolas Clérambault**

Although Louis-Nicolas Clérambault belongs with Nicolas Bernier (1665-1734) and Jean-Baptiste Morin (1677-1745) in the camp of French composers favouring the Italian style, his *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin* published in 1704 nonetheless follows in the traditions of the French harpsichord school.<sup>101</sup> This is evidenced by the two *préludes non mesurés* illustrated below (Table 3.22).

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<sup>100</sup> See Ex. 3.66, p.123. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>101</sup> Tunley, David, 'Clérambault', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 9 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/05945pg2>>. The Italian style had grown in popularity in Paris, partly on account of the strong presence of Italian music at important households beyond the walls of Versailles. Much of the music heard at James II's household at *St-Germain-en-Laye* and at the *Palais Royal* – the household of Philippe III, Duke of Orléans – was Italian. See Tunley, David, *François Couperin and 'the Perfection of Music'* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), pp.41-43. See also Callow, John, *King in Exile. James II: Warrior, King and Saint, 1689-1701* (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2004), pp.205-240.

**Table 3.22 *Préludes non mesurés* by Clérambault**

No.	Title	Tonality	Page	Date of Publication
1	<i>Prélude</i>	C Major	1	<i>I.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pieces de Claveçin 1704</i>
2	<i>Prelude</i>	C Minor	15	<i>I.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pieces de Claveçin 1704</i>

Clérambault uses mixed value notation, ornament signs, and long ligatures. An individual aspect of his typography is the copious use of dotted lines connecting notes in one staff with a temporal point on the other staff. This renders it is easier to recognise when a note is to be played before, with or following the bass (Ex. 3.71). His notation also comprises two types of ligatures: one is used to group arpeggiated chords and the other – a ligature characterised by undulations – which indicates that a note should continue to sound. Clérambault takes the unusual step of including the more orthodox, vertical disposition of a chord found in regular notation, but marked with a wavy line (in the tradition of Chambonnières) to indicate that the chord is to be arpeggiated. The extent to which these arpeggiations differ from the kind written in sequential *prélude* notation is unclear. In a number of instances he includes the wavy-line ornament symbol before an ensuing chord written with the usual unmeasured slant. This slant already indicates that the chord is to be broken. Clérambault might be suggesting a speed of performance with this marking, perhaps urging here a ‘simple, rapid, upward arpeggiation’ described by Saint-Lambert, Rameau and others.<sup>102</sup> It is unlikely that this ‘double arpeggiation’ is inserted in error as Clérambault repeats this combination of wavy-line *arpège* sign with a sequentially arpeggiated chord four more times on the same page (p.16).

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<sup>102</sup> See footnote 73, Chapter 2, p.63. [\(LINK\)](#)

Example 3.71 Clérambault, *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin, Prelude, p.15*<sup>103</sup>

15 *Augmentation de la Suite en C. sol ut- b. mol.*

*Prelude qui doit se jouer devant l'Allemande.* *Sorti tendrement.*

The image displays a musical score for a prelude. It begins with a treble clef staff containing a melodic line with various ornaments and a 'tendrement' marking. Below it is a bass clef staff with a corresponding bass line. The second system consists of a grand staff with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff, showing more complex arpeggiated textures and rhythmic patterns. The score includes dynamic markings like 'mol.' and 'tendrement', and various musical notations such as slurs, ornaments, and accidentals.

**Sample Arpeggiated Gestures Found in the Préludes of Louis Nicolas Clérambault**

Arpeggiated gestures found in the two unmeasured preludes of Louis Nicolas Clérambault are identified and illustrated in the examples set out below (Table 3.23).

<sup>103</sup> Clérambault, Louis-Nicolas, *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin* (Paris: Roussel/Foucault, 1704; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1982), see pp.1-2, & pp.15-16.

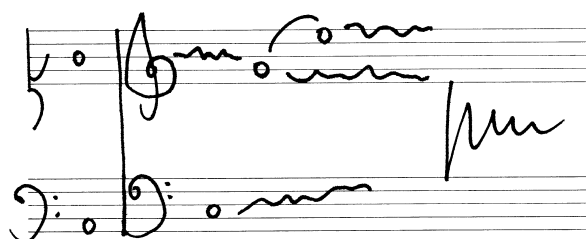


**Table 3.23 The Properties of arpeggiated gestures – Clérambault**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Comment	Notes
3.72	3vv	$^5_3$ chord	C <sub>3</sub> -E <sub>5</sub>	ascending gesture	3
3.73	6vv	$^6_4$ chord	E $\flat_2$ -C <sub>5</sub>	ascending gesture	6
3.74	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	D <sub>2</sub> -F <sub>4</sub>	descending gesture	4
3.75	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	under auxiliary note	6
3.76	5vv	$^7_3$ chord	A $\flat_2$ -G <sub>4</sub>	under auxiliary note	6
3.77	5vv/4vv	$^5_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub> /D <sub>2</sub> -F <sub>5</sub>	under auxiliary notes	6/6
3.78	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	E $\flat_2$ -E $\flat_4$	over auxiliary note	5
3.79	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	D <sub>3</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	anticipatory note & <i>Tremblement</i>	6
3.80	5vv/7vv	$^5_3$ chords	C <sub>2</sub> -C <sub>5</sub>	<i>Tremblement</i>	20

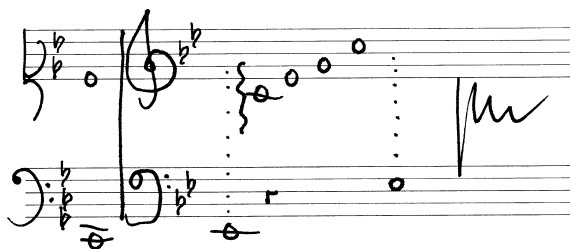
Ex. 3.72 illustrates a typical unadorned, ascending arpeggiated gesture. As in the case of similar Type A arpeggiated gestures found in the music of the other composers examined, the sequence of notes commences with the bass voice and finishes with the top voice.

**Example 3.72 Type A1 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.1, third system**



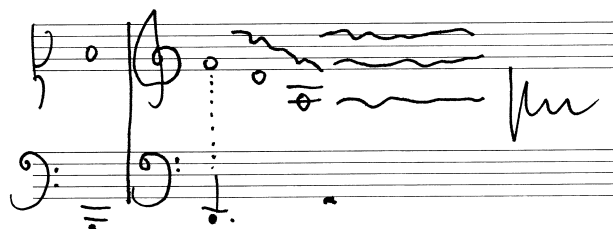
Ex. 3.73 shows two further features of Clérambault's particular style of notation: his use of a dotted vertical line emerging from a note (in this case two bass notes) to a point on the other staff.

**Example 3.73 Type A2 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.16, second system**



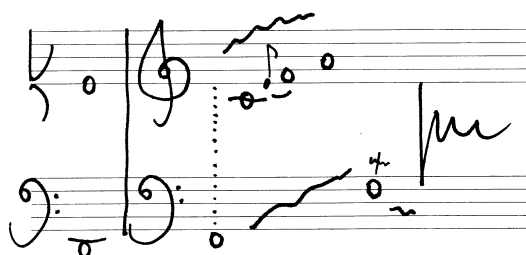
Ex. 3.74 illustrates the unadorned descending gesture (Type B).

**Example 3.74 Type B1 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.2, first system**

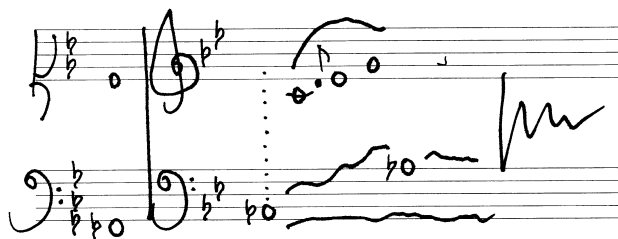


In Ex. 3.75 a single auxiliary note appears in the right hand to form a *cheute fur une notte*. A final bass F<sub>3</sub> is ornamented with a mordent.

**Example 3.75 Type D1 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.2, second system**

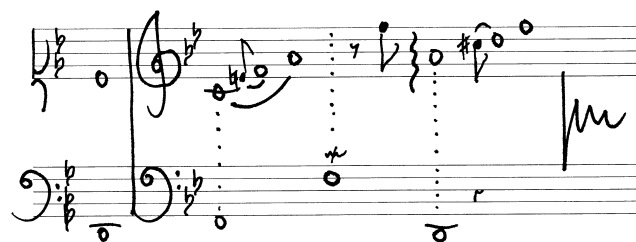


**Example 3.76 Type D2 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.15, third system**



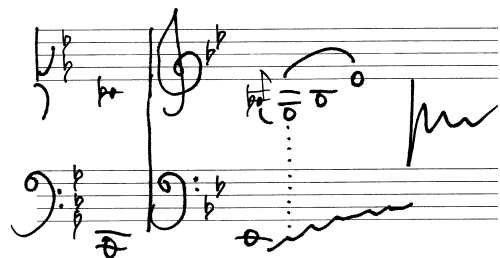
Ex. 3.77 contains another illustration of Clérambault's 'double arpeggiation' in the second of two gestures forming the *cheute fur une notte* ornament.

**Example 3.77 Type D3 Clérambault; *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.16, second system**



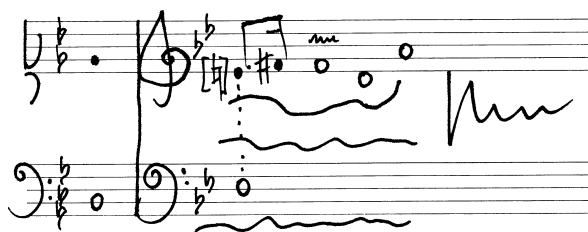
Ex. 3.78 contains an over-auxiliary  $A \flat_3$  which changes the direction of the arpeggiation.

**Example 3.78 Type F1 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.15, fourth system**



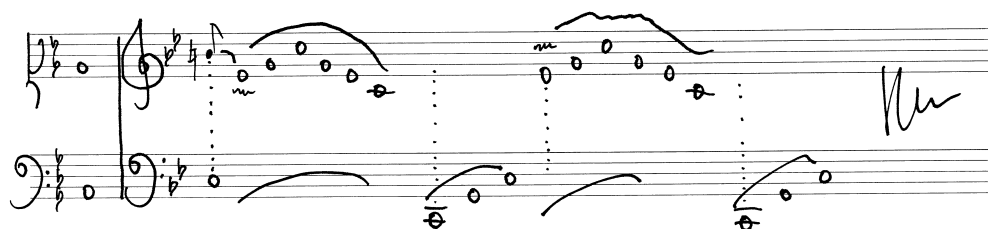
Ex. 3.79 is characterised by an opening dissonance resolving up to form a major third against the bass, which is repeated with a trill ornament. The other notes of the chord are added thereafter.

**Example 3.79 Type F2 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.16, first system**



Ex. 3.80 is a series of seven-voiced rolling gestures in C Minor.

**Example 3.80 Type F3 Clérambault: *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.16, first system**



Clérambault's use of ornamentation corresponds to many categories encountered in d'Anglebert's table. Like d'Anglebert, he uses mixed value notation, ornament signs, and long ligatures. Three-note upbeat figures (*tirades*) appear in Clérambault's preludes (Ex. 3.71). His extensive use of dotted lines linking notes on one staff with a temporal point on the other staff is a facet of notation he consistently utilises. Furthermore, his typography incorporates two types of ligatures: the strain of tie that groups arpeggiated chords together and an unusual species of ligature characterised by a series of undulations.<sup>104</sup> In several instances he inserts a wavy-line ornament symbol before an ensuing chord which is characterised by the unmeasured slant. As this slant already indicates that the chord is to be broken, Clérambault might be suggesting a speed of performance with his marking. It is unlikely that this 'double arpeggiation' is inserted in error as Clérambault replicates its use before a sequentially arpeggiated chord a further four times on the same page.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See Ex. 3.71, Chapter 3, p.127. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>105</sup> Clérambault, Louis-Nicolas, *1.<sup>er</sup> Livre de Pièces de Claveçin*, p.16.

### 3.8 Gaspard Le Roux

Gaspard Le Roux's *Pieces de Clavessin* (1705) contains eighty-six pieces gathered into seven suites, with an appendix containing '*Pièces pour deux clavecins*'.<sup>106</sup> The four *préludes* included are all engraved using semibreve notation, more usually associated with manuscript copies (Table 3.24).

**Table 3.24 *Préludes non mesurés* by Le Roux**

No.	Title	Tonality	Page	Note
1	<i>Prelude</i>	D minor	1	Exhibits figured bass markings.
2	<i>Prelude</i>	A Minor	15	No figured bass markings included.
3	<i>Prelude</i>	F Major	32	Exhibits figured bass markings.
4	<i>Prelude</i>	G Minor	57	No figured bass markings included.

His first and third *préludes non mesurés* differ from unmeasured preludes by other composers 'in that they are furnished with thoroughbass figures'.<sup>107</sup> The opening page of the first *Prélude* (Ex. 3.81) shows these figured bass markings printed under the bass notes.

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<sup>106</sup> Le Roux, Gaspard, *Pieces de Clavessin composées par Gaspard Le Roux avec la maniere de les jouer se vendent a Paris* (Paris: Foucault, 1705; facsimile edition: Geneva: Minkoff, 1982).

<sup>107</sup> Bates, 'French Harpsichord Music in the First Decade of the 18th Century', p.187.

Example 3.81 Le Roux, *Pièces de Clavessin, Prélude*, p. 1

These *Préludes*, and a small number of other pieces, are excluded from the curious adaptation by Le Roux of his dance material into arrangements for instrumental trio which are included underneath the harpsichord versions in the original print. In the elegant *Preface* of his volume, Le Roux provides the modern reader with an insight into his fastidious character:

I never had intended to expose them to the public view. But encouraged by knowledgeable people, and moved by the gross errors that I noticed in the copies of my harpsichord pieces that were circulating against my will, I finally resolved to have them printed, and to favour the taste of the public, who alone can decide about the merits of my works.<sup>108</sup>

Such polite comments suggest either the existence of poor arrangements of the composer's work or poor performances of his material. Le Roux's fastidious response extends to the inclusion of a detailed ornament table following in the tradition of d'Anglebert, and is evidenced by a painstakingly specific approach to figured-bass

<sup>108</sup> Le Roux, Gaspard, *Pièces de Clavessin*: 'Je n'ay jamais eu en veuë de les exposer aux yeux du Public. Mais encouragé par des Gens qui ont beaucoup de connoissance, et touché des fautes grossieres que j'ay remarquées dans les copies qui ont couru malgré moy de mes pieces de Clavessin. J'ay enfin pris la resolution de les faire graver, et de pressentir le Public, qui seul peut decider du merite des ouvrages.', Preface.

markings throughout the publication. All of his trio *basse-continue* parts in the volume contain a generous supply of figures (see the trio parts of the *Allemande Grave* in Ex. 3.82), with the exception of the *Gigue [pour deux clavecins]* which contains only one figured bass indication.<sup>109</sup>

**Example 3.82 Le Roux, *Pièces de Clavessin, Allemande Grave*, p. 34**

The image shows a page of a musical score titled "Allemande Grave" on page 34. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system includes a treble staff with a melodic line and a bass staff with a figured bass line. The second system is a repeat of the first, marked "Reprise". The bass staff of the second system includes the instruction "doucement" and a series of figured bass markings: 6, 7, 6, 4, 3, b, 6, 7, b6, 5, 6, b6, 7, 7, 4, 3. The score is written in a historical style with various ornaments and slurs.

Le Roux’s meticulous inclusion of figured-bass markings in all of the other trio arrangements is evidence of diligence and care. This may also be the reason for the addition of figures into the first and third *préludes*.<sup>110</sup> One view is that Le Roux’s figures found underneath the bass-notes of his *préludes* help to denote harmonic groupings, in order to ‘indicate how the other notes were to be formed into harmonies’.<sup>111</sup> From this

<sup>109</sup> Le Roux, Gaspard, *Pièces de Clavessin*, p.80, second bar. This singular omission of figures may be read as intentional in this case as it is directly linked to the composer’s instructions on how to generate a second harpsichord part for all dance movements (from their trio parts) by developing *contraparties* from the trio staves in the manner of the six pieces at the end of the book.

<sup>110</sup> The graphological features of the digits contained in the figured bass markings of Le Roux’s F Major *Prelude*, particularly those of the ‘9’, the ‘7’, the ‘6’, the ‘4’ and the figure representing the crossed ‘5’ appear to be from the same hand throughout the entire F Major suite. However, the digit ‘6’ appearing in the D Minor *Prelude* differs from many other indications of a first inversion chord that follow in the D Minor suite.

<sup>111</sup> Moroney, ‘The Performance of Unmeasured Harpsichord Preludes’, p.145.

point of view, the figured bass is not a *basse continuë*, as 'no notes are to be added; the figures define the harmonies which the printed notes must form'.<sup>112</sup> This is certainly one possible way to explain the presence of these figures. They clearly assist in the delineation of the constituent notes of indicated chords, and they help to distinguish ornamental or melodic notes in that context. An alternative explanation could lie in more subconscious connection between accompaniment and the improvisatory genre of the unmeasured prelude. The presence of the figured bass markings might be evidence of a mental connection in the mind of Le Roux between continuo realisation and the *prélude non mesuré* genre. The inclusion of these figures by Le Roux might also point to his method of teaching or understanding figured bass. The presence of figures serves the pursuit of harmonic analysis, but might also suggest something about the link between the composition/improvisation process and continuo realisation.

### **Sample Arpège Gestures Found in the Préludes of Gaspard Le Roux**

Sample arpeggiated gestures found in the unmeasured preludes of Gaspard Le Roux are detailed in Table 3.25.

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p.145.

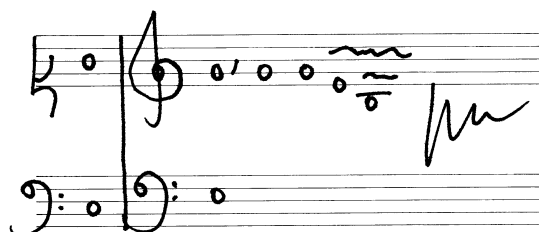


**Table 3.25 The Properties of arpeggiated gestures – Le Roux**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Comment	Notes
3.83	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	E <sub>3</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	<i>baigné</i>	6
3.84	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	F <sub>3</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute fur une notte &amp; pincé</i>	6
3.85	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute fur une notte</i>	5
3.86	5vv	$^5_3$ chord	G <sub>1</sub> -G <sub>4</sub>	<i>tremblement</i>	5
3.87	6vv	$^5_3$ chord	D <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>5</sub>	<i>tremblement</i>	6
3.88	3vv	$^4_2^6_3$ progression	D <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>5</sub>	<i>tremblement</i>	15
3.89	4vv	$^5_3$ chord	D <sub>2</sub> -D <sub>5</sub>	<i>suspirans &amp; Cheute fur une notte</i>	8
3.90	3vv	$^5_3$ chord	A <sub>3</sub> -E <sub>5</sub>	<i>tirade</i>	13

In Ex. 3.83 the descending gesture is preceded by the lute-like three-note *baigné* figure.<sup>113</sup>

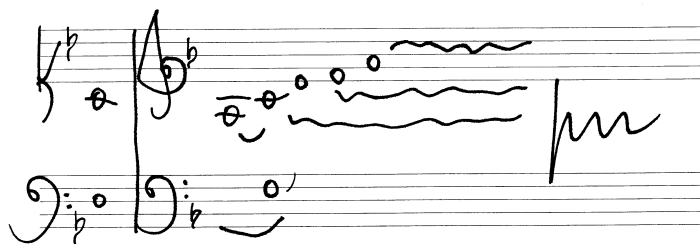
**Example 3.83 Type B1 Le Roux; use of *baigné*: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude p.15, first system***



In Ex. 3.84 the tenor A<sub>3</sub> appears to the left of the bass note and is clearly connected to the C<sub>4</sub> by a tie. The bass F<sub>3</sub> is ornamented by a mordent (*pincé*) and an under-auxiliary note appears in the arpeggio before the F<sub>4</sub> forming a *chute sur une Notte* as per his table of ornaments.

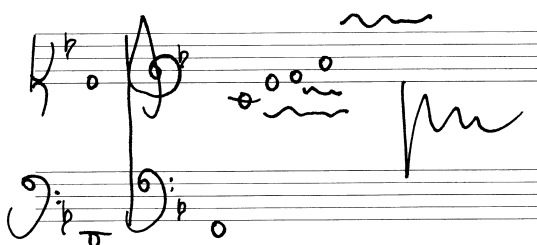
<sup>113</sup> See Chang, Philip, C., *Analytical and Performative Issues in Selected Unmeasured Preludes by Louis Couperin* (PhD dissertation, University of Rochester, 2011), i, p.45.

**Example 3.84 Type D1 Le Roux: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude p.32, first system***



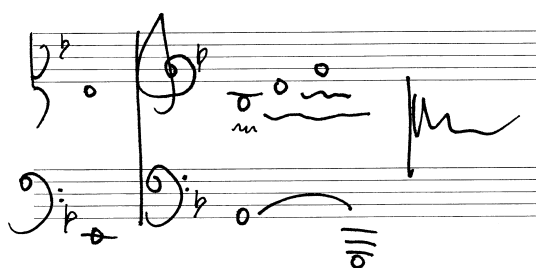
Ex. 3.85 provides a clearer example of the *chute sur une Note* ornament.

**Example 3.85 Type D2 Le Roux: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude p.32, second system***



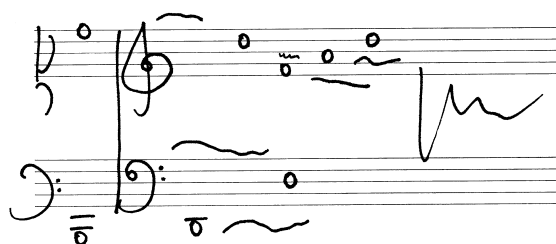
The first two notes in Ex. 3.86 appear vertically aligned and so should be struck together. The first note in the right hand is decorated with a trill (*tremblement simple*). The final G<sub>1</sub> reinforces the tonality.

**Example 3.86 Type D3 Le Roux: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude p.57, third system***



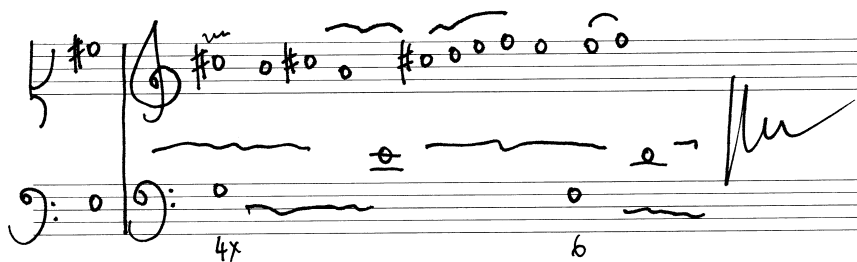
The end of Ex. 3.87 is similar to Ex. 3.85. The opening notes provide additional material within the tonality.

**Example 3.87 Type F1 Le Roux: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude p.1, third system***



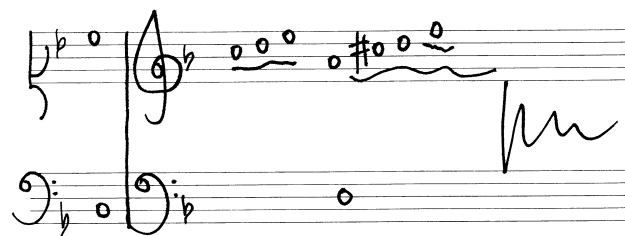
Ex. 3.88 illustrates a possible realisation of a  $4_2-6_3$  progression. The first five notes (from C#<sub>5</sub> to E<sub>4</sub>) form the harmonic spelling of the chord, while the melodic motif from the C#<sub>5</sub> to F<sub>5</sub> leads towards the resolution to D Minor.

**Example 3.88 Type F2 Le Roux: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude p.1, second system***



Ex. 3.89 illustrates Le Roux's use of the *suspirans* motif.

**Example 3.89 Type G1 Le Roux; use of *suspirans*: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude p.32, third system***



Ex. 3.90 contains a melodic *tirade* motif in the first gesture.

**Example 3.90 Type G2 Le Roux; tirade: *Pièces de Clavessin, Prelude* p.15, first system**



This examination of Le Roux's four unmeasured preludes shows that Le Roux engraves his unmeasured preludes using semibreve notation more usually associated with manuscript versions of preludes. Both in typography and in style he uses similar ornaments to d'Anglebert. Perhaps the single most interesting feature of Le Roux's typography is the unexpected inclusion of figured-bass markings into the first and third *préludes*. These figures undoubtedly act as an harmonic delineator and isolate ornamental or melodic notes from harmonic notes. Such markings are not found elsewhere in surviving unmeasured preludes. The presence of the figured bass markings might attest to a mental connection – on the part of Le Roux – between continuo realisation and the unmeasured prelude genre. It is certainly indicative of Le Roux's creative approach to composition. The inclusion of these figures might reveal part of his compositional method and perhaps even the improvisation of harmony through the application of figured bass method.

### **Nicolas Siret**

The Siret family produced four generations of church organists for the town of Troyes, and Nicolas Siret (1663-1754) took up the post of organist at Troyes Cathedral in 1689. Although he was a friend and admirer of François Couperin (to whom he dedicated his first book of pieces), Siret's *Second Livre de Pièces de Clavecin* (1719) utilises an older style of suite groupings than that found in Couperin's 1713 book.<sup>114</sup> The Troyes composer

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<sup>114</sup> Gustafson, Bruce, 'Siret, Nicolas', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* [accessed 9 August 2012] <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25889>>.

opens his second book of harpsichord pieces with what had by then become a rare genre: a *prélude non mesuré* (Ex. 3.91).

**Example 3.91 Siret, *Second Livre, Prelude*, p. 1<sup>115</sup>**

1.

*Prelude.*

Siret follows the tradition of d'Anglebert, Lebègue and Marchand in utilising mixed notation to differentiate harmonic gestures from melodic passages. Table 3.26 outlines the details of Siret's only surviving unmeasured prelude.

**Table 3.26 *Prélude non mesuré* by Siret**

No.	Title	Tonality	Page	Date of Publication
1	<i>Prelude</i>	G Minor	1	<i>Second Livre de Pieces de Clavecin</i> 1719

<sup>115</sup> Siret, Nicolas, *Second Livre de Pieces de Clavecin* (Paris: Foucault, 1719; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1982), see pp.1-2.

## Sample Arpège Gestures Found in the Préludes of Nicolas Siret

Sample arpeggiated gestures found in the unmeasured prelude of Nicolas Siret are detailed in Table 3.27.

**Table 3.27 The Properties of arpeggiated gestures – Siret**

Ex.	Texture	Disposition	Range	Comment	Notes
3.91	5vv	$^5_3$ $^6_4$ progression	D <sub>2</sub> -B $\flat$ <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute fur 2 notti</i>	12
3.92	7vv	$^5_3$ chord	F <sub>2</sub> -A <sub>4</sub>	<i>Cheute fur une notte</i>	11

Ex. 3.92 opens with a D Major melodic motif over the bass. This is followed by the ornament d'Anglebert classified as a *Cheute fur 2 notti*. Siret uses quaver auxiliary notes to ornament the G Minor  $^6_4$  chord here, reminiscent of the method employed by Denis Delair in his treatise on accompaniment.<sup>116</sup>

### Example 3.92 Type D1 Siret: *Second Livre, Prelude p.1, second system*



Ex. 3.93 contains an inverted *suspirans* motif within an upward arpeggiation.

<sup>116</sup> See Ex. 2.09, Chapter 2, p.53. [\(LINK\)](#)

**Example 3.93 Type G1 Siret: inverted *suspirans*: *Second Livre, Prelude p.1, first system***



As with the single prelude of Louis Marchand, Nicolas Siret's unmeasured prelude contributes very little to the overall collection of arpeggiated gestures gathered in this study. The one unusual feature is the inverted *suspirans* figure (Ex. 3.93).

### **Conclusion**

The great variety of arpeggiation employed in early French keyboard music emerges from this study of thirty-one unmeasured preludes by seven composers ranging from Louis Couperin to Nicolas Siret. These composers were selected on the basis of their contribution to the unmeasured genre and to the presence of arpeggiated gestures in their work. Although the number of preludes differs from composer to composer, with one prelude surviving by Nicolas Siret and Louis Marchand compared to the fourteen preludes by Louis Couperin collected in the *Bauyn MS*, some composers' collections of preludes contain more species of arpeggiation transferrable to continuo performance than others. This is particularly evident in the case of d'Anglebert and Le Roux: only four preludes survive by each composer. However, d'Anglebert's preludes contain twenty-three examples of arpeggiated gestures as against five examples found in the preludes of Gaspard Le Roux.

The fact that the notation employed by the seven composers selected for this study was not entirely standardised provides different perspectives on each composer's compositional method, and validates the inclusion of works by less prolific composers. All preludes studied share the innovative unmeasured slant which indicates

the sequence of the notes within a gesture. This style of notation follows the model employed in earlier lute preludes (Ex. 1.06 Bartolomi).<sup>117</sup> All composers also employ some sort of ligature and they use them to indicate harmonic gestures, to indicate groupings of notes into melodic passages, or to separate notes for the next or previous gesture. The oblique barline is only found in the preludes of Lebègue and serves as the third function of ligatures.<sup>118</sup> Some composers use undifferentiated semibreve notation exclusively, while others developed a hybrid variety of notation first found in the preludes of Lebègue. D'Anglebert is the only composer whose unmeasured preludes survive both in MS and printed sources and in these, we find that that arpeggiated gestures are notated differently.

The manner in which arpeggiated gestures are ornamented is often common to all seven composers. They all notate both unornamented and ornamented ascending arpeggiated gestures in their preludes (Types A and D). The music of each composer contains at least one example of the third of a chord ornamented by a *tremblement* (Louis Couperin Ex. 3.16, Lebègue Ex. 3.38, d'Anglebert Ex. 3.55, Marchand Ex. 3.69, Clérambault Ex. 3.80, Le Roux Ex. 3.85, and Siret Ex. 3.93). Many of the composers employ the *cheute* or *acciaccatura* ornament in their arpeggiated gestures (Couperin Ex.3.18, d'Anglebert Ex. 3.53, Clérambault Ex. 3.75, Le Roux Ex. 3.84, and Siret 3.92). Many composers also include the *suspirans* motif (Louis Couperin Ex. 3.27, Lebègue Ex. 3.40, d'Anglebert Ex. 3.53, Marchand Ex. 3.70, Le Roux Ex. 3.89, and Siret Ex. 3.93) and a combination of passing notes and *tirades* (Louis Couperin Ex. 3.28, d'Anglebert Ex. 3.64, Clérambault Ex. 3.71, Le Roux Ex. 3.88, and Siret Ex. 3.91). Some composers use an over-auxiliary note (Couperin Ex. 3.26, d'Anglebert Ex. 3.58 and Clérambault Ex. 3.78). Louis Couperin, d'Anglebert and Clérambault employed repeated notes in a three-note motif called a *baigné* that originates in lute music (Louis Couperin Ex. 3.20, d'Anglebert Ex. 3.56,

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<sup>117</sup> See Ex. 1.06, Chapter 1, p.22. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>118</sup> See Ex. 3.32, Chapter 3, p.100 for an example of the oblique barline used by Lebègue. [\(LINK\)](#) Clérambault, Siret and Le Roux did not mark barlines in their preludes. D'Anglebert includes them in his printed works. See Example 3.41B, Chapter 3, p.107. [\(LINK\)](#) Marchand also uses barlines in his prelude. See Ex. 3.66, Chapter 3, p.123. [\(LINK\)](#)



Clérambault Ex. 3.71 and Le Roux Ex. 3.83), while d'Anglebert alone employed a two-note motif at the conclusion of a cadential gesture (Ex. 3.63). The signs used to indicate these ornaments differs between composers, and some ornaments are even written out in the manuscript sources of their compositions. D'Anglebert, for example, sometimes uses a *cadence* ornament in his published preludes to replace a generic *tremblement* sign which appears over the same note in the manuscript version.

The above-illustrated arpeggiated gestures taken from manuscript and printed unmeasured preludes by seven leading composers of French harpsichord music before François Couperin constitute a valuable source for the modern performer aiming to achieve an historically-informed and stylistic continuo realisation of French harpsichord music. This study has revealed a variety of ways a player would have arpeggiated and ornamented a chord and it has been possible to capture from these preludes a glimpse of style and idiomatic inclination as it was at the turn of the eighteenth century.

## Conclusion

Manuscript and published sources of unmeasured preludes that contain arpeggiated gestures provide an exact performance instruction on the sequence of notes forming an arpeggiated chord. They therefore offer a valuable resource for those seeking to attain a fluent harpsichord technique in the French style of the period 1650 to 1720. This style integrates idiomatic lute textures and, since both lute and harpsichord share a common quality of sound production – evanescence – the use of arpeggiation and ornamentation was exploited in the repertoire of both these plucked instruments in order to allow the player maximise their sonority. This French response to evanescence became much more than a collection of techniques – it became an important part of French musical aesthetic – the *mimēsis* of a solo and accompaniment style.<sup>1</sup> Already, in the early seventeenth century when French tastes favoured indigenous practices and art forms, a distinctive French accompaniment style had developed in the tabulated lute accompaniments to *airs de cour*. The *arpège* was central to this French expressive aesthetic.

As the distinctive style of French harpsichord music developed, cross-fertilisation occurred between solo music and accompaniment practice with respect to the arpeggiated gesture. This cross-fertilisation was already present in lute music of the early seventeenth century. Solo lute music dating from this period is characterised by features such as broken texture, ornamentation and arpeggiation – features that would become known as *style luthé*.<sup>2</sup> This aesthetic also characterised lute accompaniments. A correlation of this style emerged in harpsichord music in the middle of the seventeenth century when references suggesting a relationship between accompaniment practice and solo music, and pointing in the direction of the unmeasured prelude, began to appear in the treatises of harpsichord composer-theorists. Jean Henry d'Anglebert appends an accompaniment treatise to his 1689 published collection of solo harpsichord music. This shows a highly embellished accompaniment style and includes many ornaments from his

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2, p.39. [LINK](#)

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 1, p.8. [LINK](#)

*Marques des Agrements et leur signification* (1689) that were intended as a key to the ornament typography found in his solo harpsichord music.<sup>3</sup> The arpeggiated gestures in his unmeasured preludes contain written-out versions of similar ornaments.<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of examples by Denis Delair of the basic and ornamented chord in his accompaniment treatise of 1690 is reminiscent of unmeasured prelude notation.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, two of Gaspard Le Roux's unmeasured preludes published in 1705 are supplied with figured-bass markings associated with continuo practice.<sup>6</sup> The link between solo music and accompaniment style is also evident in Saint-Lambert's treatise on accompaniment, *Nouveau traité de l'accompagnement du clavecin, de l'orgue, et des autres instruments* (1707). His description of the accompaniment of *récit* could serve equally to describe the performance characteristics of an unmeasured prelude.<sup>7</sup> The evidence pointing to cross-fertilisation between ornamentation practice in solo harpsichord music and ornamentation in figured-bass accompaniment, offers a clear justification for this examination of the unmeasured prelude in the context of French basso continuo performance technique.

The unmeasured prelude may be described as a carefully-written-out account of solo improvisation unfolding through harmonic progression. Continuo accompaniment is improvisation similarly evolving over a set harmonic progression. Just as the preludes are the result of an improvisatory process centred around harmonic progression, so too is the art of continuo accompaniment anchored in improvisation over a set harmonic progression. Improvisation is therefore an essential component both of continuo accompaniment and the unmeasured prelude. Because improvisation is an essential component of both, an understanding of the arpeggiated gesture in the unmeasured

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<sup>3</sup> See Ex. 1.07, Chapter 1, p.24. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> See Ex. 2.08, Chapter 2, p.52. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> See Ex. 2.09, Chapter 2, p.53. [\(LINK\)](#) See also Ex. 3.92, Chapter 3, p.141. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 3, pp.132-135. [\(LINK\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 2, pp.58-60. [\(LINK\)](#) This cross-fertilisation has already been observed by modern performers for example, Skip Sempé who wrote 'Louis Couperin was perhaps first noticed in the twentieth century for his *Préludes*, which are written in the genre that has become known as "Unmeasured *Préludes*". This style certainly has its [*sic.*] some of its origins in the Italianate Toccatas of Frescobaldi and Froberger, but perhaps more importantly, in the tradition of seventeenth century recitative with basso continuo', Sempé, Skip, 'Louis Couperin and the French Harpsichord', liner note to *Louis Couperin*. 2002. Compact disc. Alpha 066. p.22.

prelude furthers the acquisition of an understanding of its correct deployment in the context of continuo accompaniment.

Ancillary sources such as ornament tables and treatises have also been consulted in order to establish the nature of the arpeggio gesture in continuo accompaniment. Publications of solo harpsichord works contain tables showing arpeggiation (and the ornamented arpeggiation of a chord) and explaining the significance of ornament symbols.<sup>8</sup> Jean Henry d'Anglebert compiled the most important of these ornament tables. French treatises dealing specifically with figured-bass accompaniment were also published during this period. Their authors generally adopted a Cartesian scientific method that encouraged a linear progression of thought. They were primarily concerned with the tools required to produce the most basic continuo realisation (*technē*). They often begin with elementary explanations of scales and clefs, notation, hand position, modes, figuring, and lead on to essential technical instruction on harmonic progression, part motion, voice leading and textures.<sup>9</sup> Few of these writers, however, directly exemplify the performance of the arpeggiated gesture. Nonetheless, taken as a whole, both the primary and the ancillary sources referred to above have allowed a more thorough picture to emerge of the nature of the *arpège* in historical performance practice. The study of *arpèges* in the unmeasured prelude for solo harpsichord has uncovered a wealth of material not found elsewhere and it has allowed a glimpse of style and idiomatic inclination as it was at the turn of the eighteenth century. It also has offered an historically-informed understanding of the practice of arpeggiation in French continuo performance practice, a practice that persisted beyond the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

The unmeasured prelude is critical to our understanding of continuo accompaniment because it illustrates invaluable elements of stylistic arpeggiation. The eighty-two illustrations of the arpeggiated gesture taken from thirty-one of these testify to the great

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 2, p.40. ([LINK](#))

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 2, p.49. ([LINK](#))

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 2, p.64. ([LINK](#))

variety in approach adopted by their seven composers. They will serve to assist the modern harpsichordist in the acquisition of fluent ornamentation in French keyboard music of the Baroque.

To date, studies of the unmeasured prelude have primarily been concerned with questions relating to its performance. This examination shows that it also prepares a continuo-player to accompany idiomatically and stylishly. More possibilities for idiomatic arpeggiation are found in these pieces than in any illustration found in French treatises on accompaniment. A clearer association has been established here between elements of performance in the preludes (ornamentation, arpeggiation, *tirades*, motifs, *suspirans*) and an idiomatic accompaniment style. The unmeasured prelude has been shown here to be central to our understanding of idiomatic continuo accompaniment because, albeit in the context of solo music, it illustrates indispensable elements of continuo performance practice.

Until now, the relevance of the *arpège* in the unmeasured prelude has not been fully explored by modern scholarship on continuo accompaniment. It has been argued that historical treatises offer excellent guidelines, for they present continuo playing as a combination of two factors: 'the ability to read bass figures, and a knowledge of "standard harmonisations" for typical bass progressions'.<sup>11</sup> This knowledge is indeed 'very useful for today's players who wish to play from a modern "*Urtext*" or facsimile edition'.<sup>12</sup> Jesper Christensen also maintains, however, that the French style is simple.<sup>13</sup> The evidence presented in this study of arpeggiation in the unmeasured prelude confirms, on the contrary, that French Baroque music is very far from 'being [...] better suited for beginners'.<sup>14</sup> The complexity of French solo harpsichord music, its baffling but equally

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<sup>11</sup> Christensen, Jesper, *18th Century Continuo Playing: A Historical Guide to the Basics* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002), p.7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>13</sup> Christensen, Jesper, *18th Century Continuo Playing: A Historical Guide to the Basics* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2002): 'The French style, being less complicated, is perhaps better suited for beginners', p.8, and that 'the French art of figured bass playing was generally as simple as described here', p.147.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8.

charming characteristics, the detail accorded to the indication of ornament signs, the exciting textures, and *brisure*, all require a high level of intellectual and emotional involvement. This music is sometimes perplexing, ornate yet often subtle, accompanied by signs that indicate the need for further embellishment, and always far from being unchallenging, effortless or easy.

French composers of harpsichord music were extremely specific about indicative ornament signs and symbols, and took great care to include the most extensive ornament tables in editions of their music so as to reflect their compositional intention. The arpeggiated gestures found in the unmeasured prelude constitute an idiomatic collection of arpeggiation for the modern harpsichordist interested in an historically-informed performance. The examination of this collection represents a new approach in scholarship for, until now, modern scholars have drawn on historical treatises as their principal source of information. While this study is valid in its own right, the unmeasured prelude has been shown to be a valuable and unique source for the continuo player, greatly supplementing the instruction on the *arpège* found in historical treatises and ornament tables. This thesis is focused primarily on the arpeggiated gesture because its notation found both in manuscript and published editions of unmeasured preludes allows the performer to comprehend the composer's intentions most clearly. The wealth of musical examples extracted from these preludes to show how arpeggiation was performed will enable today's continuo-interpreters to come closest to Saint Lambert's advice to 'see it being played by someone'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Saint-Lambert, *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement du Clavecin, de l'Orgue, et des autres instruments* (Paris: Ballard, 1707; facsimile reprint: Geneva: Minkoff, 1974): 'On repete même plusieurs fois un même accord, harpégeant tantôt en montant, & tantôt en descendant. Mais cette répétition qui veut être bien ménagée, ne peut vous être enseignée dans un Livre, il faut que vous la voyez pratiquer à quelqu'un.', p.62.

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