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"Jean-Henry D'Anglebert and the Seventeenth-Century Clavecin School." By Beverly Scheibert.

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Reviews of Books

Beverly Scheibert: *Jean-Henry D'Anglebert and the Seventeenth-Century Clavecin School*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986. 239p. ISBN 0-253-38823-6

One of the first things the reader will ask about D'Anglebert's music is whether the editions we have are reliable. The principal source is the elegantly engraved *Pièces de Clavecin* of 1689. (The second issue — "reveu et corrigé" — is available in facsimile: New York: Broude Brothers, 1965.) In Appendix I Scheibert devotes two pages to a comparison of pieces that exist both in the composer's autograph and the engraved edition (pp. 181-182; see also pp. 59-64 for more comparisons). She finds almost no discrepancies between the two versions; however, she never really evaluates the 1689 engraving. It does have some errors, for example, roughly 25% of the signs for the *tremblement appuyé* were engraved upside-down. It is outside the realm of possibility that the inverted signs have any special meaning, yet the percentage of error would seem to call for *some* remark. It is not impossible that the engraver may also have inverted some of the other signs such as the rising and falling slashes that indicate arpeggios, or the little hooks that indicate the *cheute* or *port-de-voix* and the *pincé*. The engraver may be to blame for some particularly difficult ornament-signs, curious rhythms, and missing accidentals.

Scheibert has also checked Kenneth Gilbert's modern edition of the *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Heugel, 1975; hereafter, LP) against the engraving, and has done it carefully. She includes a two-page report (pp. 187-188) of errors, as well as readings that differ from the engraving. She remarks that LP is "carefully executed" (p. x), and notes that "only occasionally may Gilbert's editorial judgment be open to question" (p. 187), but she nowhere really evaluates LP either. She has, nonetheless, used LP consistently as the basis for her discussion, with reference to the original sources where these are relevant; in addition, most of her musical examples are cited after LP. Thus, for Scheibert's

book, LP has an extraordinary authority. Indeed, LP is carefully executed, and with Scheibert's emendations, the musical text will be almost perfect. Unfortunately, her list is incomplete.¹

D'Anglebert's famous table of ornaments shows 29 signs for the ornaments that appear in the *Pièces de Clavecin*; however, in the music he uses some signs in combinations that are not shown in the table. His is one of the most carefully prepared tables ever published: the written-out realizations are all mathematically correct and metrically unambiguous. In spite of the carefulness and clarity of his table, there are problems in interpreting the signs, and most of these are rhythmic problems. Scheibert remarks (p. 47) that rhythming trills is a delicate matter, for the "various forms of the trill can be only approximately

1. A supplement to Scheibert's *Table 4* (pp. 187-188) is provided here:

Page	Bar	Voice & Beat	Remark
4	4	S 4	1689 eighth and two sixteenths
7	14	T 4	1689 sharp, cf. p.9, bar 13
13	18-19,22		1689 rhythm <i>sic</i> . The 3/2 bars seem odd for cadential bars in a French courante.
13	21	A 5	1689 alto drops out. Add <i>f#</i> as in bar 17.
19	19	T 3	1689 tenor drops out. Add eighth notes <i>a b</i> as in bar 16, beat 4.
21	22	RH 1	1689 /
23	46	A 1	1689 <i>sic</i> . The <i>b</i> is a half note in bars 4,70,94.
26	1		Signature ϵ in the autograph ms.
50	5	S 1	1689 no flat.
53	9		1689 rhythm <i>sic</i> , but cf. p.52, bar 9.
77	18	B 2	1689 <i>sic</i> . Supply editorial naturals for the <i>c</i> 's. Cf. the parallel passage, bar 16.
77	18	S 4	1689 <i>sic</i> . Supply editorial natural.
79	7	T 6	1689 <i>sic</i> . Emend to <i>d</i> ? Cf. beat 6 of bars 5,11, and 17.
80	20	A 1	1689 no sharp, but cf. p.4, bar 7, p.14, bar 8.
86	9	S 1	1689 <i>sic</i> , but the <i>détaché</i> is probably an engraving error. Cf. bar 8.
96	6	S 6	1689 no sharp, cf. p.97, bar 6.
123	1		1689 signature 3.
125	20	B 3	1689 no sharp.
125	25	S 3	1689 <i>f</i> sharp.
133	26	T 6	1689 no sharp.
133	28	A 5	1689 no sharp.

realized via notation. The speed and number of repercussions must have varied with the context." D'Anglebert's five-note turn (used only to introduce a trill) is realized mathematically correctly in his table, but in the manuscript it is sometimes written out as five 32nds (p. 188). Scheibert does not venture an opinion on which version of the five-note turn is better rhythmically or musically.

In the *Pièces*, along with the many signs, some ornaments and parts of ornaments are written out in notes because they "could not be accurately conveyed by a symbol" (p. 63). These include prefixes and suffixes of trills, arpeggios, turns, slides, and *ports-de-voix*. This "thicket of embellishment" (p. 95) requires careful study on the part of the performer who wishes to do justice to D'Anglebert's music.

In Chapter IV, "Ornamentation," Scheibert reproduces facsimiles of ten 17th- and 18th-century ornament tables in chronological order, and she makes comments about each table. Scheibert, in her "tour" of the ornament tables, is surprised to find that the same ornament has different names in the different tables, and she adds to the confusion caused by the conflicting terminology used by the various composers with such statements as "Raison's table shows the *port-de-voix*, indicated by a slur, beginning before the beat" (p. 51). The example in this table has two quarter-notes falling from *a* to *c* sharp, and the realization has a 16th-note *d* (whose value comes from the *a*) slurred to the *c* sharp. Raison's direction for over-legato "il ne faut lever le *re* qu'après avoir posé l'*ut*" is ignored. Scheibert later (p. 99) uses the name of this disjunct ornament in her discussion of D'Anglebert's conjunct *port-de-voix*, but of course Raison's *port-de-voix* is a different ornament from D'Anglebert's. Readers will be glad to have so many facsimiles of ornament tables in one place: there is a lot of raw material for further study.

Chapter V, "Ornament Performance," is devoted to explaining D'Anglebert's ornamentation in light of the writings of Jean Rousseau and Saint-Lambert. The peculiar order of discussion is based on Saint-Lambert's statement that the most important ornaments are the trill, mordent, arpeggio, and slide, and although his own discussion does not follow this order, Scheibert has opted for it. Much of this chapter is concerned with "proving" that the 17th-century French clavecinistes really wanted to have anticipated trills and *ports-de-voix* as well as main-note trills, but that they all "forgot" to mention them in their tables. Scheibert manipulates quotations, sometimes coming up with non-sequiturs: "Rameau gives a trill that he says begins on the main note because the preceding note, to which it is slurred, serves as its beginning" (p. 72);

moreover, she omits examples that would spoil her argument. For example, she cites Saint-Lambert as her authority for trills that anticipate the beat:

An example in St.-Lambert's treatise shows the upper auxiliary of the trill beginning on the beat, but his text raises doubt: "One must strike these other notes [other voice or voices occurring on the same beat as the trill] precisely when beginning the trill; i.e., as soon as one plays for the first time the auxiliary note that is used to make the trill." Some writers today say that the first auxiliary note of the trill strikes on the beat, along with the other voice or voices. But St.-Lambert may mean that the trill proper (after the preparation note) begins on the beat: "as soon as one plays for the first time the auxiliary note...." The use of "as soon as" instead of "when" seems to imply "after." This interpretation would correspond to Rousseau's trill with a preparation before the beat.

By omitting Saint-Lambert's clear example, in which the trill does indeed start on the beat with the upper auxiliary, she tries to force Saint-Lambert to say what she wants to hear.

Her basic premise for the performance of trills (see pp. 66-77) is that main-note and anticipated trills will make the music of D'Anglebert more fluent, graceful, interesting, and easy, and "while it is technically possible to start all trills on the upper note, it seems alien to the French character of the period" (p. 74). She finds a special difficulty in the passages where D'Anglebert calls for two different ornaments to be performed simultaneously (for example, a trill in one hand and a mordent in the other, or a *port-de-voix* and *pincé* in one hand and a mordent in the other), and proposes a simplified version where the difficulty is avoided by moving the *port-de-voix* or the auxiliary of the trill ahead of the beat so as to be able to coordinate the repercussion of the two ornaments precisely.

The documents she so carefully assembled in Chapter IV are cast aside to make room for her personal opinion, and she justifies herself, albeit somewhat apologetically, with such statements as:

Because Chambonnières had not included the trill starting on the main note (for whatever reason), for many years no one else thought to add it either, perhaps because of its very simplicity and common use (p. 77). Why did D'Anglebert omit from his ornament table any

mention of the one-note grace that falls before the main note?
(p. 99).

In reading this chapter I was very much reminded of the preface to Saint-Saëns's edition of Rameau's *Pièces de Clavecin* (Paris: Durand, 1895), with its lengthy harangue on why Rameau's ornamentation needs to be rethought. The argument by the "editors" concludes with these words, which no doubt were a comfort to late 19th-century performers:

The question of whether to retain or suppress the ornaments can only be resolved by a master like M. Saint-Saëns, who knows early music better than anyone else, both as regards its composition and its performance. He has grasped its inner essence, and there is no guide more sure or more experienced than he. Rameau would surely have prepared such a version himself if he had had at his disposal the perfect instruments of our time. Not only is the thought of the ancient harpsichordist respected, but his music becomes accessible to all, at the same time receiving a new vigor.

In Saint-Saëns's editions, of course, almost all the mordents are suppressed, the *coulés*, *ports-de-voix*, and arpeggios are written out in notes, and Saint-Saëns has chosen which of Rameau's *cadences* are to be short main-note trills ("inverted mordents"), and which are to be longer trills anticipating the beat. Performers today find such an edition unacceptable not only because of its arrogant attitude towards early music, but also because it misrepresents Rameau.

While Scheibert's study of D'Anglebert has material of interest to scholars and performers, the presentation is very uneven. Parts of the book are solid, but many parts are weak and unconvincing. The organization is rather loose, and information on a single topic is scattered throughout the book. A strong editorial hand could have made this a much better book; however, if the book convinces even one person to look more closely at D'Anglebert's music, it will have served a good purpose, for the music is extraordinarily good.

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