

2018

Jacques Champion de Chambonnières. The Collected Works. Edited by Bruce Gustafson and Denis Herlin. 2 vols. The Art of the Keyboard 12. New York: The Broude Trust, 2017. [xlviii, 206 pp.; xiv, 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-8450-7605-7.]

Daivd Chung
Department of Music, Hong Kong Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/hkbu_staff_publication



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

This document is the authors' final version of the published article.

Link to published article: <https://sscm-jscm.org/jscm-issues/volume-24-no-1/chung-review/>

APA Citation

Chung, D. (2018). Jacques Champion de Chambonnières. The Collected Works. Edited by Bruce Gustafson and Denis Herlin. 2 vols. The Art of the Keyboard 12. New York: The Broude Trust, 2017. [xlviii, 206 pp.; xiv, 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-8450-7605-7.]. *The Journal of Seventeenth Century Music*, 24 (1). Retrieved from https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/hkbu_staff_publication/6941

This Journal Article is brought to you for free and open access by HKBU Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in HKBU Staff Publication by an authorized administrator of HKBU Institutional Repository. For more information, please contact repository@hkbu.edu.hk.



<< Table of Contents

Volume 24 (2018) No. 1

Jacques Champion de Chambonnières. *The Collected Works*. Edited by Bruce Gustafson and Denis Herlin. 2 vols. The Art of the Keyboard 12. New York: The Broude Trust, 2017. [xlviii, 206 pp.; xiv, 272 pp. ISBN 978-0-8450-7605-7.]

Reviewed by David Chung*

1. Introduction

2. Multiple Versions

3. Editorial Decisions

4. Scholarly Matters

5. Conclusion

References

1. Introduction

1.1 The current edition of the collected works of Jacques Champion de Chambonnières, by Bruce Gustafson and Denis Herlin, is long overdue. Almost a century has gone by since the last collected edition of the composer's works.^[1] In recent years, harpsichordists have enjoyed up-to-date editions of music by Louis Couperin, Jean Henry D'Anglebert, Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre, Jacques Hardel, and other major harpsichordists.^[2] Intriguingly, although Chambonnières is credited with having laid the foundation for a musical style that culminated in the works of François Couperin and Rameau, it has taken far longer for modern scholars to produce a collected edition of his works.

1.2 This long wait can be attributed to several factors. First, establishing the Chambonnières canon by making sense of the labyrinth of surviving sources is a daunting task. Even the two

1670 Chambonnières prints, the first harpsichord music engraved in France, raise thorny questions. Due to handwritten corrections in different issues of the two volumes, editors need to consult multiple exemplars to properly reconstruct the musical text.^[3] Further exacerbating the situation, more than half of Chambonnières's harpsichord music survives in some forty manuscripts, including numerous recently rediscovered sources such as Brussels 27220 (*B-Bc* MS 27220), Oldham (*GB* private collection), and Regensburg (*D-Rtt* MS Incertus IIIc/4).^[4] The entire process of rebuilding Chambonnières's canon took some thirty years, from 1979, when Gustafson first brought out his classic catalog of seventeenth-century French harpsichord music, to 2007 when he launched his online thematic catalog of Chambonnières's music.^[5] The latter catalog provides a solid blueprint for the edition under scrutiny here.

2. Multiple Versions

2.1 Another probable reason for the delay in producing this edition is the editors' ambitious goal of presenting the majority of extant versions of Chambonnières's music. Where more than one version of a given piece survives, the editors have scrupulously provided a text for each version.^[6] Altogether, more than three hundred musical texts are divided into two parts.^[7] Part 1 contains 160 pieces in three categories: (1) sixty pieces from Chambonnières's 1670 prints; (2) ninety-three pieces (numbered 61 to 153) attributed to the composer in other sources; and (3) seven pieces that lack attribution, in *F-Psg* MSS 2348 and 2353, but are believed by the editors to have been written by Chambonnières on stylistic grounds. Part 2 contains some 150 alternate versions, including *doubles* that accompany some of these versions. Each alternate version of a particular piece in Part 1 is assigned a letter (starting with "a") following the serial number of the piece. This numbering system allows the user to easily compare concordant versions, such as the famous "Courante Iris" (no. 8) and its thirteen (!) alternate versions.

2.2 The decision to publish most surviving versions of Chambonnières's works was based on the conviction that in a quasi-improvisatory tradition such as the seventeenth-century French harpsichord school, no single version can fully capture the multifaceted characteristics of a given work. The laborious presentation of multiple versions enables the edition's users to access and interpret information in much the same way as a seventeenth-century musician.^[8] An immediate objection to this approach is the escalating printing costs incurred. Financial considerations aside, one could challenge the decision to publish almost everything, since doing so may inevitably lead to the dissemination of some corrupted copies that would be frowned upon by the composer himself.^[9] For the seventeenth-century repertory in which music mostly circulated in manuscripts, the benefits of having multiple versions far outweigh the risks. As Fuller notes in his article on Chambonnières's quasi-improvisatory style, not even the printed text can be considered fixed.^[10] All things considered, the edition's provision of texts from different sources offers distinct perspectives that may all be helpful to the discriminating user. The differences between the Bauyn (*F-Pn* Rés VM7-674–675) and Parville (*US-BEm* MS 778) texts are a case in point. Although the Bauyn text is more

professional, mistakes in notation and rhythm are often left uncorrected, and ornaments are in short supply. Despite some inconsistencies, the Parville text often complements the Bauyn text by correcting errors and furnishing additional ornaments. Combining readings from these two closely related sources is a possible solution, but one that could inadvertently produce “artificial composites.”^[11] For scholars who have long engaged with this repertory, having all versions side by side is most desirable.

3. Editorial Decisions

3.1 The section entitled “Editorial Policies” (Part 1, pp. liii–lvi) explains the sophisticated system of square brackets, dashes, ticks, half-tones, cue-sized symbols, and footnotes used to distinguish between two main kinds of emendation: (1) documentary emendations, which are made with the authority of another source; and (2) conjectural emendations, which are provided purely on editorial initiative. The collation of materials (i.e., documentary emendations) concerns only different texts of a version, not different versions of a piece, as the edition basically presents all known versions of each piece. Recognizing the distinction between “version” and “text” is crucial to understanding the editorial procedure, which seems rather intricate on paper, but is in fact surprisingly straightforward for the user. In each piece, the source and location of each base text as identified by the editors are specified above the opening measure, and both documentary and conjectural variants can be readily identified on the page, with further information provided in footnotes. These editorial procedures largely do away with the burdensome commentaries that often accompany critical editions, as editorial amendments once silently made can now be readily spotted by the user.

3.2 One can hardly find any major fault with an edition so carefully produced as this. However, the editorial decisions on a couple of ornamental symbols are open to scrutiny. The first concerns Chambonnières’s arpeggio symbol (*harpegement*) in the 1670 prints. As explained by the editors, the meaning of this symbol is at times ambiguous, as it is often placed cursorily in the music, in contrast with its precise placement in the table.^[12] In the edition, a fine repositioning of several arpeggio symbols so that they appear closer to the notes they correspond to would eliminate possible confusion for the unwary user.^[13] In addition, the user should insert back into the score a few symbols apparently missing in this edition.^[14]

3.3 The other ornament that is occasionally knotty is the symbol for the trill or mordent in Brussels 27220. As the editors point out, the scribe used the same wavy line above the note to indicate the trill and below the note to indicate the mordent.^[15] The editors have normalized the symbols in accordance with Chambonnières’s table by adding a stroke across the wavy line for the mordent. This solution is perfect except in a few cases in which the wavy line is inserted between the notes of a chord in the original source, allowing the symbol to be read as either a mordent of the note above or a trill of the note below. In m. 2 of the Sarabande in C major (no. 82), this symbol is interpreted by the editors as a trill for *c*’ (i.e., the lowest note of the chord), although both musical context and physical evidence support its possible interpretation as a mordent for *f*’.^[16] In cases such as this, a facsimile of the original, if

available, would allow users to reach their own decisions.

3.4 The above discussion of notational ambiguities reminds us of the variety of usages in the seventeenth century, during which the same symbol could embrace diverse meanings and the same effect could be represented by different symbols.^[17] All told, the sophisticated set of devices (e.g., half-tones, ticks, and dashes) used in this edition provides inquiring performers with the best means of clearing up the mysteries connected with this repertory by encouraging them to engage with original source materials and challenge editorial decisions.

4. Scholarly Matters

4.1 The introductory essay provides a penetrating study of Chambonnières's life, the transmission of his music, and a range of performance issues. Many aspects of Chambonnières's life and career are still shrouded in mystery. Can we attribute the composer's decline largely to Lully's rise from the 1650s? Is it true that, as Jean Rousseau seemed to suggest, Chambonnières was an incompetent continuo player? What were the composer's relationships with his peers, such as D'Anglebert, who in 1662 acquired the *survivance* of Chambonnières's post as *ordinaire de la musique de la Chambre du Roy pour le clavecin*?^[18] Of course, these and other questions have not been entirely overlooked, but the Chambonnières literature has so far been tainted by misinformation—notably, although not exclusively, supplied by François-Joseph Fétis (1830) and his followers. In focusing on facts, the editors have dispelled major myths and constructed a strong new edifice of biographical research on the composer, shedding new light on a range of issues, such as the continued popularity of Chambonnières's music during the eighteenth century. Notably, the laudatory poems from the composer's *Livre premier* and excerpts from Le Gallois's famous *Lettre* of 1680 are generously reproduced in full in the two appendices.^[19] The comprehensive bibliography, list of original sources, and footnotes, which are abundant with excerpts from historical documents and archival materials, will be of tremendous value to students and researchers alike.

5. Conclusion

5.1 This edition, integrating musical integrity with scholarly rigor, marks a milestone in the publication history of seventeenth-century French harpsichord music. Offering more than three hundred musical texts of 160 pieces, including many versions from recently rediscovered sources, the edition will appeal to harpsichordists, scholars, and all those who share a vested interest in this repertory. Notably, the edition is firmly based on the principle of presenting all extant versions, itself rooted in the conviction that this is the ideal way of presenting musical works that evolved in a quasi-improvisatory tradition. Interestingly, the publisher's preface (Part 1, p. xv) mentions the prospect of interactive digital editions that will allow knowledgeable users to put together their own versions. Until this comes to pass, however, the current edition will suffice for even the most stringent user.

The publisher, Broude Brothers Limited, which includes The Broude Trust, has ceased operations (see <http://www.broude.us/>). Many Broude publications, including the edition under review here, remain in print through an arrangement with the C. F. Peters Corporation in New York (see <https://www.edition-peters.com>).—Ed.

References

***David Chung** (dchung@hkbu.edu.hk) has contributed articles and reviews to *Early Music*, *Early Keyboard Journal*, *Eighteenth-Century Music*, *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music*, *Music and Letters*, *Notes*, and *Revue de musicologie*. His edition of nearly 250 keyboard arrangements of Jean-Baptiste Lully's music is available on the *Web Library of Seventeenth-Century Music* (www.sscm-wlscm.org). Chung is currently Professor of Music at Hong Kong Baptist University.

[1] Jacques Champion de Chambonnières, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Paul Brunold and André Tessier (Paris: Senart, 1925; reprint, New York: Broude Brothers, 1967).

[2] On the most recently published editions, see Bruce Gustafson, "Four Decades after *French Harpsichord Music of the Seventeenth Century*: Newly Discovered Sources," in *Perspectives on Early Keyboard Music and Revival in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Rachelle Taylor and Hank Knox (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 39–41.

[3] For discussions of the publication history of Chambonnières's two books, see Bruce Gustafson, *Chambonnières: A Thematic Catalogue*, JSCM Instrumenta 1 (published 2007, last revised February 2017), passim, <https://sscm-jscm.org/instrumenta/instrumenta-volume-1/>; and the "Critical Apparatus" of the work under review, Part 2, 221–27.

[4] See Gustafson, "Four Decades," 7–39, for a discussion of the newly rediscovered sources.

[5] Bruce Gustafson, *French Harpsichord Music of the 17th Century*, 3 vols. (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1979); and Gustafson, *Chambonnières: A Thematic Catalogue*.

[6] The editors and publisher postulate that these versions, similar to "socialized texts," provide users with access to the various ways in which a piece may have been interpreted in its own time. See Ronald Broude, "Performance and the Socialized Text," *Textual Cultures* 6, no. 2 (2011): 23–47.

[7] About one hundred pieces from the manuscript *F-Pn Rés VM7-674–675* were published, in identical versions to those in the present edition, in *Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Rés. Vm⁷ 674–675: The Bauyn Manuscript*, ed. Bruce Gustafson, 4 vols., *The Art of the Keyboard* 10 (New York: The Broude Trust, 2014). See my review in *Notes* 72, no. 1 (2015): 216–21.

[8] See Gustafson's discussion of how the presentation of multiple versions could allow the modern performer to "approach the same piece in the same manner as the seventeenth-century player did," in *Harpsichord Music Associated with the Name of La Barre*, ed. Bruce Gustafson and R. Peter Wolf, *The Art of the Keyboard* 4 (New York: The Broude Trust, 1999), xiv–xv.

[9] See Ronald Broude, "Chambonnières's *Pieces de clavebin* of 1670 and the Preservation of a Performing Style," in *Perspectives on Early Keyboard Music*, ed. Taylor and Knox, 173–87, for a

discussion of Chambonnières's complaints of the faults he found in unfaithful copies ("copies *Infideles*"). In this edition, the "Courante de Chanboniere" from the manuscript *US-BEm* MS 1372, p. 81 (Part 1, no. 147), could qualify as a corrupt copy. The editors' solution is to present two versions, first a literal transcription and then a hypothetical reconstruction of the composer's intention.

[10] See David Fuller, "'Sous les doigts de Chambonniere,'" *Early Music* 21, no. 2 (1993): 191–202.

[11] See the Preface to Louis Couperin, *Pièces de clavecin*, ed. Alan Curtis, Le Pupitre 18 (Paris: Heugel, 1970).

[12] In the table ("Demonstration des Marques") of *Livre premier* (1670), the same symbol is used for both ascending and descending realizations according to its position. Placing it below a chord denotes the ascending realization, and vice versa.

[13] The amendments for pieces in Part 1 of the edition are based on exemplars of Chambonnières's two prints of 1670—*F-Pn* Rés 251, *F-Pn* VM7-17455 (1), *F-Pn* VM7-1851, and *F-Pn* Rés VMB-95 (2)—all available online at <http://gallica.bnf.fr>: (1) no. 1, m. 17, last quarter note, arpeggio symbol to move up slightly (below *d*"); (2) no. 6, m. 32, arpeggio symbol to move up above *a*'; (3) no. 7, m. 4, first two eighth notes, arpeggio symbols to move up above *c*" and *d*"; (4) no. 14, m. 13, last four quarter notes, arpeggio symbols to move up slightly; (5) no. 15, mm. 3–4, beat 1, arpeggio symbols to move up slightly (below *a*' and *e*'); and (6) no. 25, m. 15, fourth quarter note, arpeggio symbol to move down slightly (above *f*-sharp).

[14] The missing symbols are (1) no. 3, m. 6, beat 1, *harpegement* below *g*'; (2) no. 3, m. 10, chord 2 of the upper staff, *harpegement* below *f*'; (3) no. 25, m. 6, beat 1, *coulé* (oblique line) between notes *d*" and *f*"; and (4) no. 34, m. 29, beat 1, *harpegement* below note *a*.

[15] The scribe of *F-Pn* Rés 476, the same as that of *US-NHub* MA 21 H 59, and the primary scribe of Brussels 27220 shared the practice of using a wavy line above a note to indicate the trill and the same wavy line below a note to indicate the mordent.

[16] The wavy line was drawn immediately beneath *f*" in Brussels 27220. In two parallel situations (nos. 23a, m. 7, and 107a, m. 7), the editors have interpreted the symbol as a mordent.

[17] See David Chung, "Revisiting 'Le bon goût': Observations on the Irregularities and Inconsistencies in French Harpsichord Music 1650–1730," *Music and Letters* 92, no. 2 (2011): 183–201.

[18] See the historical essay in Jean Henry D'Anglebert, *The Collected Works*, ed. C. David Harris, *The Art of the Keyboard* 7 (New York: The Broude Trust, 2009), 2:63–67.

[19] See the discussion of the identity of Le Gallois, attributed sometimes to Jean and sometimes to Pierre, in the introductory essay in Part 1, xli, n. 79.