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Moving early music: Improvisation and the work-concept in seventeenth-century French keyboard performance

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Chapter Two: Under the Fingers of Chambonnières

From my perspective as a professional harpsichordist, the music of Jacques Champion de Chambonnières presents a tantalizing mystery: why are these pieces not more popular? Playing his music now, especially from the printed edition of 1670, I sense a nearly perfect combination of freedom and restraint, of eloquence and audacity. Beautiful curves of melody fall effortlessly under the hand, embroidered with *agréments* in exactly the right proportions at the right moments. The texture is neither too sparse nor too rich, varying as the occasion demands. Even if the harmony seems, at times, to wander, this only enriches my appreciation of each musical moment.

Given how I feel about this music now, it seems a shame that it took me so long to discover it. While still a student, I had devoured the works of Louis Couperin, Jean-Henri D'Anglebert, Élisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre, and others; but for some reason, Chambonnières remained stubbornly on the sidelines. I had heard several pieces by Chambonnières played in recital, but they had made no lasting impression on me. It was only the experience of actually *playing* the music—and moreover, playing it from a beautifully presented facsimile of Chambonnières's authorized print—that seemed to change things. Over time, I came to experience this music as something like what Roland Barthes (1977) calls *musica practica*: music to be played and experienced through the body as an active participant, rather than consumed as a passive listener. Although I cannot be certain of this, I suspect my own experience is not an isolated one. Even now, I only seldom hear the music of Chambonnières featured in recitals. Meanwhile, an already impressive and ever-growing discography of seventeenth-century French harpsichord music has, for the most part, neglected Chambonnières,

the so-called “father of the *clavecinistes*,” in favor of his protégé Louis Couperin.¹ Why is this? Why does Chambonnières seem, at least initially, so unapproachable?

In this chapter, I will attempt to shed light on the various interrelated factors that complicate our contemporary reception of Chambonnières’ music: first, its style and associated performance practice; second, its complex and seemingly contradictory source transmission; third, its indistinct boundaries between essential musical structure and contingent ornamental detail; and finally, its participation in a seventeenth-century “oral tradition” of keyboard music.

I will begin by reviewing the primary sources of evidence surrounding Chambonnières’s style of musical composition and performance, focusing on Le Gallois’s detailed letter of 1680. Le Gallois’s vivid description of Chambonnières reveals an elegant, melodically-focused compositional style that varied continuously from performance to performance. I will then concentrate on some of the textual differences apparent in the extant sources for Chambonnières’s music, a task made considerably simpler by the recent publication of an edition of his collected works (Gustafson and Herlin 2017). The variance exhibited by these sources needs somehow to be reconciled with an “authoritative” print of Chambonnières’s works from 1670. Following arguments made by David Fuller, Ronald Broude, and Rebecca Cypess, I will pursue the notion that the *heterotextual* nature of the corpus is grounded in contradictory performance imperatives. In general, the variance between these readings is critically a question of *performance* style, rather than *compositional* style. As such, some sources—like Chambonnières’s print for example—may attempt to fix the style in which a given piece might be performed, while others—particularly a manuscript in the hand of Chambonnières’s younger contemporary D’Anglebert—are effectively translations from one style of performance to another. Next, I will examine what effect the *clavecinistes*’ practice of variance might have had on the

¹ There are some noteworthy exceptions: listen, for example, to Kenneth Gilbert (1979), Skip Sempé (1993), Olivier Baumont (2003) and Karen Flint (2010).

persisting identity of a piece. In line with Nicholas Cook's (1999) analysis of the eighteenth-century practice of ornamenting Corelli's Opus 5 violin sonatas, I will argue that the *clavecinistes* could *see and hear through* notation to arrive at a given piece's structure, which could then be fleshed out in performance. In contrast to Corellian performance culture, however, with its constant reference to Corelli's published score as a single source of musical structure, French harpsichord music instead grapples with *heterotextuality*. Moreover, in a culture such as that of the *clavecinistes*—one that prized ornament and *agrément* to such a high degree—I will argue that it is quite difficult to distinguish rigidly between the ornamental and the structural. Ultimately, I will move that the musical practice of the *clavecinistes* makes more sense when viewed as the product of oral tradition. In particular, I will analyze their practice in terms of *mouvance*, the process of constant variation-through-performance within an oral tradition. I will detail this *mouvance* at work within French harpsichord repertoire, and will also explore the extent to which a piece may be “moved” before it is ultimately “broken.” Finally, in approaching a piece by Chambonnières as an historically-informed performer, I will argue that the performer must necessarily engage with the music's contradictory performance imperatives. In order to understand how Chambonnières's oral tradition works, we must also engage with his (imagined) full range of embodied knowledge, including improvisational knowledge.

Le Gallois

The starting point for an historically-*informed* performance must be to gather all available information and evidence surrounding the *historical* performance in question. In the case of nineteenth-century performance practice, the examination of piano rolls and the earliest recordings of the twentieth century has proven invaluable: they reveal sonic evidence of practices like rubato and portamento that would otherwise be difficult to recreate solely from a textual description. Moreover, these recordings also point to a remarkable diversity of practice within a given performance tradition, as Anna Scott (2014), for example, discovered in piano performances of

Brahms's circle. In the case of pre-nineteenth-century performance practice, though, there are, sadly, no such sonic documents.² Without these, we must instead rely on other kinds of historical evidence: treatises, which usually describe how music *ought* to be played, as well as contemporaneous testimony (such as letters, diaries, memoirs, etc.) describing how music actually *was* played. Coupled with the distinction between ideal and actual performance conditions, we must also consider the place of the composer's (that is, the original performer's) performance style against the backdrop of the general performance style of a particular time and place. In this case, what we want is a document that describes how Chambonnières's own style of performance differed from that of his contemporaries.³

One of the most informative sources surrounding seventeenth-century French harpsichord culture is the *Lettre de Mr Le Gallois à Mademoiselle Regnault de Solier touchant la musique*, written in 1680.⁴ The author, Pierre (or perhaps Jean) Le Gallois,⁵ writes perceptively about a variety of harpsichord performance styles current during the seventeenth century. Although we know nothing for certain about the author's identity, nor about his musical credentials, he nevertheless seems to have been quite familiar with a wide array of harpsichordists: he cites Chambonnières, the Couperins (Louis and Charles), Jacques Hardel, Etienne Richard, and Pierre or Charles-Henri LaBarre as past "luminaries" of the instrument; and he counts Jean-Henri D'Anglebert, Pierre Gautier, an unknown

² The closest we can get is automated musical instruments, musical clocks, and other mechanical cylinder recordings. In the realm of seventeenth-century keyboard music, the best example of this is the various "automatic virginals" or "barrel spinets," as in, for example, the instruments produced by the Biedermann family in Augsburg. David Fuller (1983) discusses musical instruments like these and the limitations of what they can tell us about performance practice. For a more detailed account of the musical decisions that inform the making of these instruments, the earliest source is Engramelle's treatise on barrel pinning, *La tonotechnie, ou, L'art de noter les cylindres* (1775). Engramelle's pinnings are particularly interesting because of his collaboration with the French composer Claude Balbastre. For more on the complexities of Engramelle's mechanical instruments' relation to notation and performance, see Cypess (2017).

³ Of course, these textual descriptions benefit enormously from being read in tandem with other kinds of material evidence like original instruments, acoustical spaces, etc..

⁴ David Fuller includes all of the relevant passages (in French) in his "French Harpsichord Playing in the 17th Century: After Le Gallois" (1976), along with a fine English translation and detailed notes.

⁵ There is some doubt as to *which* Gallois it might have been: Jean or Pierre. Gustafson and Herlin (2017, xli) include a discussion of the author's identity, evaluating the evidence in favor of the various possibilities.

Buret, and Nicolas LeBègue among its current masters (Fuller 1976, 26). His letter is especially useful in contextualizing Chambonnières's unique performance style: Le Gallois famously distinguishes Chambonnières, who “touched the heart,” from Louis Couperin, who “touched the ear” (24).

Beyond such distinctions—which, however poetic, remain elusive without any tangible aural context—Le Gallois describes quite concretely a “brilliant style” (*le jeu brillant*) and a “legato style” (*le jeu coulant*) (Fuller 1976, 24).⁶ The brilliant style consists mainly of great rapidity of passagework and ornamentation. While Le Gallois praises it when practiced well, he also identifies a number of faults with the style: namely rushed and uneven ornamentation and tempo, unclear and messy playing “à cause qu’ils passent trop vite; ou qu’ils n’appuyent pas assez fort pour les faire entendre, ou qu’ils frappent les touches au lieu de les couler,”⁷ and uninspired ornamentation and passagework: “Et ils y font continuellement des passages, particulièrement d’une touche à son octave; ce que Chambonniere appelloit chaudronner” (25).⁸

Le Gallois also heaps scorn on the legato style, at least when overused:

Car ils font de si grandes contortions de mains & de doigts; ils les élevent les uns sur les autres avec tant d’excez, en les serrant extraordinairement, que cela dégoute & fait pitié. Ainsi tout ce qu’on en peut dire est qu’en effet leur jeu est si fort coulé qu’il ressemble plutôt à un jeu de vieile, où à force de couler le jeu n’a point de mouvement, qu’à un veritable jeu de Clavessin.⁹ (Fuller 1976, 25)

To guard against excesses in either of these two styles, Le Gallois recommends a middle path. At least to me, this critique looks very familiar. In fact, in teaching my harpsichord students, I regularly

⁶ Note that the French word “jeu,” as used by Le Gallois, encompasses both an aspect of style (*manière*) and the physical act of playing.

⁷ “Because they go by too quickly, or because [the players] do not press hard enough to make them heard, or because they strike the keys instead of flowing smoothly from one to another” (Fuller 1976, 23).

⁸ “And they continually add passages, particularly from one note to its octave, which Chambonnières used to call ‘tinkering’ ” (Fuller 1976., 23).

⁹ “For they so contort their hands and fingers, they pass them over each other with such excess, knotting them in an extraordinary manner, that it becomes ugly and pitiable. Thus all one can say about it is that their playing is indeed so very legato that it sounds more like the playing of a hurdy-gurdy, in which because of the slurring the playing has no rhythm than like true harpsichord playing” (Fuller 1976, 23).

work to find a middle path between an overly articulate, facile “brilliant style” and a singing, if sometimes clumsy “legato style.” It seems almost difficult to believe this was written in 1680, and if I began with doubts about Le Gallois’s credentials as a musical observer, they have since been dispelled.

Le Gallois identifies two masters of this middle path: namely Louis Couperin, who excelled in *doctes recherches*, and Chambonnières, who

a excellé par dessus les autres, tant à cause des pieces qu’il a composées; que parce qu’il a esté la source de la belle maniere du toucher, où il faisoit paroître un jeu brillant & un jeu coulant si bien conduit & si bien ménagé l’un avec l’autre qu’il estoit impossible de mieux faire.¹⁰ (Fuller 1976, 24)

Although he praises Couperin’s work “à cause qu’elle est pleine d’accords & enrichie de belles dissonances, de dessein, & d’imitation,”¹¹ it is entirely clear that Le Gallois prefers Chambonnières (Fuller 1976, 25). He identifies not only clear compositional traits, like his “chants naturels, tendres, & bien tournez” but also special qualities of his harpsichord touch and technique, described in detail that goes well beyond *le beau toucher*:

On sçait qu’outre la science & la netteté, il avoit une delicatesses de main que les autres n’avoient pas; de sorte que s’il faisoit un accord, qu’un autre en même temps eût imité en faisant la même chose, on y trouvoit néanmoins une grande difference; & la raison en est, comme j’ay dit, qu’il avoit une adresse & une maniere d’appliquer les doigts sur les touches qui estoit inconnue aux autres. (Fuller 1976, 24)¹²

According to Le Gallois, Chambonnières exhibited both excellence in composition, which is documented and preserved in musical notation, as well as great artistry in performance, the

¹⁰ Chambonnières “excelled others as much because of the pieces he composed as because of his having been the originator of that beautiful style of playing in which he revealed a brilliance and a legato so well contrived and adjusted one to the other that it would have been impossible to do better” (Fuller 1976, 22-3).

¹¹ “Because it was full of chords and enriched with fine dissonances, with structural niceties, and with imitation” (Fuller 1976, 23).

¹² “It is well known that besides skill and precision he had a delicacy of hand that others lacked; so that if he played a chord, and another imitated him by doing the same thing, one would perceive nonetheless a great difference; and the reason is, as I have said, that he had a dexterity and a way of applying his fingers to the keys which was unknown to others” (Fuller 1976., 23).

ephemeral details of which—Le Gallois’s vivid description notwithstanding— are impossible to notate, and hence remain lost to the past.

Still, some details of performance can be notated. Perhaps most interesting of all these qualities discussed by Le Gallois are those that blur the distinction between the seemingly separate domains of performance and composition:

On sçait aussi qu’il employait toujours dans ses pieces des chants naturels, tendres, & bien tournez, qu’on ne remarquoit point dans celles des autres; & que *toutes les fois qu’il joüoit une piece il y méloit de nouvelles beautés* [emphasis added] par des ports de voix, des passages, & des agrémens differens, avec des doubles cadences. Enfin il les diversifioit tellement par toutes ces beautez différentes qu’il y faisoit toujours trouver de nouvelles graces.¹³ (Fuller 1976, 24)

In short, each time Chambonnières played one of his pieces, it was different from the last. We will need to wait until the next section to discuss the extent of these “new charms,” but for now, note how a discussion of a clearly compositional aspect of Chambonnières’s art (his melodies) naturally segues into the ways he varied them in performance. Note also how these *nouvelles graces* effectively blur the boundaries between the notated composition and the un-notated details of performance, since the *agrémens* described by Le Gallois as a product of Chambonnières’s performance could very well have been notated as a compositional detail, even if the particular qualities of his touch and sound could not.

Musicologist and historical keyboardist David Fuller has identified this easy conflation of performance and composition (as well as the language used to describe them) as a general feature of Le Gallois’s letter (1993, 196). The letter is, first and foremost, a description of different manners of *playing* the harpsichord, but since a given manner of playing is usually joined with a characteristic manner of composing, it is impossible to cleanly separate the two. Beyond Le Gallois’s own

¹³ “We know also that he always made use in his pieces of natural, tender, and well-turned melodies which were not found in those of others, and that *every time he played a piece he incorporated new beauties* [emphasis added] with *ports-de-voix*, passages, and different *agrémens*, with *doubles cadences*. In a word, he so varied them with all these different beauties that he continually revealed new charms” (Fuller 1993, 196).

contemporary musical understanding, however, I think this points to blurred boundaries between the domains of performance and composition in seventeenth-century French musical culture more generally. Marin Mersenne (1636), for example, adopted a similar mixture of traits when describing the art of three generations of Champions, singling out Chambonnières for special praise:

Mais apres avoir oüy le Clavecin touché par le sieur de Chanbonniere, [...] je n'en peux exprimer mon sentiment, qu'en disant qu'il ne faut plus rien entendre apres, soit qu'on desire les beaux chants & les belles parties de l'harmonie meslées ensemble, ou la beauté des mouvemens, le beau toucher, & la legereté, & la vitesse de la main jointe à une oreille tres-delicate, de sorte qu'on peut dire que cet Instrument a rencontré son dernier Maistre.¹⁴ (Mersenne 1636, "Première préface générale au lecteur," f. [A v]v.)

Mersenne reminds us here of a truism: that music is ultimately conveyed through performance. Before the regulative force of the work-concept, and its corresponding social and economic structures designed to support the nineteenth-century composer via patronage and publication, composer-performers relied on their performances to preserve and augment their reputations and livelihoods.¹⁵ It is therefore no accident that Mersenne comes to learn of Chambonnières's particular mastery not through the circulation of manuscripts, but rather through his performance at the harpsichord. For Chambonnières, it seems, notation was something only incidental to his music's performance. Le Gallois touches on this point as he relates the curious circumstances by which Hardel, Chambonnières's favorite pupil, came to receive his master's music before passing it on to his own successor, Pierre Gautier:

Je sçais aussi qu'outre ces pieces il luy [Gautier] a generalement laissé comme à son successeur toutes celles que Chambonniere a faites, & dont la plus part, sur tout les dernieres, ont esté copiées sous les doigts de Chambonniere, c'est a dire

¹⁴ "But after hearing the harpsichord played by the sieur of Chambonnières [...], I can only express my opinion by saying that one needn't hear anything afterwards, whether one wants beautiful melodies and the beautiful harmonic parts mixed together, or the beauty of the rhythms, the good touch, and the lightness and speed of the hand joined by a very delicate ear, such that one could say that the instrument [the harpsichord] has met its ultimate master" (Gustafson and Herlin 2017, xxi).

¹⁵ Of course, even with the work-concept in place, such activities were still essential for certain composers' livelihoods, particularly performing virtuosos like Franz Liszt, for example.

lors qu'il les jouoit; de sorte que Hardelles en étoit le seul possesseur.¹⁶ (Fuller 1976, 25)

As Fuller proposes, “taken literally, this can only mean that [the pieces] had previously existed nowhere but in the head of Chambonnières, and not even the composer himself had copies” (1993, 197). The possibility of a perfect “copy” in a situation like this is problematic—it would be more accurate to speak of a transcription than of a copy—and I will return to this issue below. For now, though, these dictated copies point to the ephemeral, changeable aspects of Chambonnières’s performance style, and it should therefore come as no surprise that he would resist notating them himself.

What we have then, thanks to Le Gallois, is a tantalizingly detailed picture of Chambonnières the composer-performer. Against a cultural backdrop of other *clavecinistes*, Chambonnières displayed his mastery of composition in combination with delicacy of touch, and he varied his compositions with great spontaneity and variety in performance. Recalling my discussion from the previous chapter, one of HIP’s goals here should be the *re-creation* of Chambonnières’s musical practice, using this goal as the starting point for new creativity in performance. Given the rather improvisational quality to Chambonnières’s playing, we might imagine that re-creating such a performance with appropriate *agréments* would prove impossible. Luckily, however, the sources for Chambonnières’s music tell another story.

The Sources

There are at least 153 unique pieces by Chambonnières, preserved in nearly 400 texts.¹⁷ Of the various sources for his music, two are considered to be “authoritative” based on their proximity to

¹⁶ “I also know that besides these pieces, he left to [Gautier] as his successor all those that Chambonnières had composed, of which the majority, especially the last ones, had been copied out under the fingers of Chambonnières, that is, as he played them, so that Hardel was the sole possessor” (Fuller 1976, 23).

¹⁷ I am using the term “text” in this chapter in a fairly narrow sense to refer to “musical information which is written or printed” (Boorman 1999, 403).

the composer: first, the 1670 print, supervised by the composer, published in two books (Chamb I and Chamb II), and consisting of sixty pieces; and second, a manuscript in the possession of Guy Oldham since 1957, originally copied in Paris sometime in the 1650s. Oldham's manuscript contains music by Louis Couperin, D'Anglebert, and Chambonnières among others, written out in six different hands, including (as Gustafson thinks likely) the hands of Louis Couperin (the principal hand), Chambonnières, and D'Anglebert. Of the twenty-two pieces by Chambonnières, thirteen have been (presumably) entered by the composer himself, and some of the remaining nine have been entered by Louis Couperin and others by D'Anglebert (Gustafson and Herlin 2017, xxxix). Given the number of first-rate composers involved, the manuscript was evidently prepared for a musical colleague of some stature. These two authoritative sources differ considerably in the level of detail of texture and (especially) ornamentation preserved in notation, with the Oldham readings being predominantly simpler than those of the print. Of the various "non-authoritative" sources, there are a number that are of particular significance here, including: the Bauyn manuscript, created near the end of the seventeenth century¹⁸, which is the source containing the greatest number of works by Chambonnières (at least 127); and the Réserve 89ter (henceforth referred to as Rés-89ter), which is in the hand of D'Anglebert. Faced with such a large number of sources, how should performers go about choosing their texts?

Of these sources, Chambonnières's printed edition of 1670 has understandably attracted the greatest attention from contemporary commentators, as it presents a detailed text personally supervised by the composer and produced at great personal expense. In the preface to the first

¹⁸ The dating for the Bauyn manuscript has been revised numerous times, but recent evidence, particularly examination of the manuscript's paper, points to a date of 1676–c1700. For more detailed information on the manuscript's dating, see Gustafson (2014).

book, he describes his reasons for deciding to publish a collection of pieces which had formerly only circulated in manuscript copies:

Cependant les avis que je reçois de differens lieux quil s'en fait un espece de commerce presque dans toutes les villes du monde, ou l'on a la connoissance du Claveßin, par les copies que l'on en distribue quoy qu'avec beaucoup de deffauts et ainsi fort a mon prejudice; m'ont fait croire, que je devois donner volontairement ce que l'on m'otoit avec violence & que je devois mettre au jour moy même ce que d'autres y avoient desja mis a demy pour moy; puis qu'aussi bien les donnant avec tous leurs agreemens comme je fais en ce recueil; elles seront sans doute, et plus utiles au public, & plus honorables pour moy, que toutes ces copies Infideles, qui paroissent sous mon nom. (Chambonnières 1670, Preface)¹⁹

If we take this statement at face value, Chambonnières would seem to fall into the mold of later composers, who notated their work in painstaking detail so as to control how those works would subsequently be performed. He complains of “faults” that damage his reputation, and Chambonnières is thus moved to exert his control and ownership over the music, producing a fixed text that supersedes the many “unfaithful copies” already in circulation. We would seem then to arrive at an early manifestation of *Werktreue*, in which the composer creates a text designed to encourage “faithful” performances.

The problem with this theory is that, thanks to Le Gallois’s testimony, we know that Chambonnières varied his compositions each time he played them. Moreover, Le Gallois singles out this variance as something particularly praiseworthy and exemplary of Chambonnières’s style. How, then, can Chambonnières produce a fixed text that notates the music as he would play it (and, by extension, as others ought to play it), when, at the same time, the way Chambonnières would play his own music precludes the notion of any fixed text?

¹⁹ “The information that I have received from various places, that there is a sort of trade in virtually all of the cities of the world in which the harpsichord is known, in the form of circulating copies that are full of faults and therefore prejudicial to me, has made me conclude that I should give of my own free will what has been taken by violence, and that I should publish myself what others have already half done for me; and since moreover it would be good to give them with all their *agrémens* as I do in this collection, they will be without doubt more useful to the public and more honorable to me than all the unfaithful copies that have appeared under my name” (Broude 2017, 291).

David Fuller, Ronald Broude, and Rebecca Cypess discuss this contradiction in a closely related cluster of articles. Fuller opened the discussion with his 1993 article “Sous les doigts [sic] de Chambonniere [sic],” in which he first identified the various strands of this multifaceted paradox. In attempting to find an approach to this music for editors and players, Fuller seeks to reconcile the diverse evidence gleaned from multiple sources, including: the “authoritative” published edition of 1670; Le Gallois’s account of Chambonnières’s playing; Chambonnières’s complaint of “faulty” manuscript copies in circulation; the vast differences between “authoritative” readings of pieces preserved in the published edition and in Oldham’s manuscript; the proliferation of manuscript copies, many of which postdate the print, and which nevertheless differ enormously from the print; Le Gallois’s testimony that, between the deaths of Chambonnières and Hardel, most of Chambonnières’s pieces were *not* in circulation, and that Hardel was the sole possessor of this music, having acquired it through dictation of his master’s playing (*sous les doigts*); and finally, D’Anglebert’s deliberate recomposition (or appropriation) of Chambonnières’s music in Rés-89ter (to be discussed below). Ultimately, Fuller rejects the notion that the identity of the piece²⁰ resides in any one text, and instead proposes a *heterotextual* understanding, one that accepts a piece’s definition by many texts, and in which “intention in this music seems to be buried somewhere underneath the notes we see” (1993, 200). The piece itself is something that can only be uncovered by reading between the lines of its various instantiations, and the composer’s intentions for the piece, if they can be divined, remain similarly obscured.

Ronald Broude explores the relationship between composition, text, and performance in a series of articles broadly focused on French baroque keyboard music, and more particularly on Chambonnières’s heterotextual pieces. Casting aside the usual distinction between descriptive and

²⁰ Tellingly, perhaps, Fuller carefully avoids referring to Chambonnières’s “works.”

prescriptive texts,²¹ Broude instead proposes the concept of the “exemplary text” as a more useful way of understanding self-publications like Chambonnières’s (2017, 292). That is, rather than prescribing how a performer ought to play (prescriptive notation), or describing how a particular performance sounded (descriptive notation), Chambonnières’s 1670 print was instead “intended as a representation of the way the composer of a piece *might* perform it” (292, emphasis added). If Chambonnières’s text has no prescriptive force, and only functions in this exemplary way, then it also stands to reason that Chambonnières *could have* produced any number of such exemplary texts for the same piece, any and all of which Chambonnières would have considered “honorable.”²² Broude thereby posits that Chambonnières’s exemplary text inaugurates a convention whereby a single published text may represent a changeable heterotextual or “multiform” piece (294). Indeed, the performances cited by Le Gallois, each full of *nouvelles graces*, are analogous to such exemplary texts. Or rather—considered more properly from seventeenth-century French musical culture, in which performance is primary—an exemplary text represents through notation a given style of performance, however imperfectly. Broude thus makes the claim that in deciding to publish his works, Chambonnières is attempting to preserve his own style of performance in a more permanent way than had hitherto been possible. When Chambonnières complains of “faults” in circulating manuscript copies of his music, this is not at all the same thing as what we would call “errors,” like missing accidentals or an incorrect number of beats in the bar. Rather, these faults are

²¹ Charles Seeger (1958) originally proposed this distinction, using it to differentiate between the prescriptive function of traditional notation of Western art music, and the descriptive function of ethnographic transcriptions. More critically, musicologist Stanley Boorman points to the inadequacy of these two terms for elucidating the complex relationship between the composition or work, the performance, and the notation. He proposes instead focusing on the “allusive” qualities of notation that “describe the end result in some way which would make sense to the performer” (Boorman 1999, 411).

²² Indeed, although Chambonnières could have done this, such a venture would likely have proved economically foolish. Even Fuller, in 1993, thought it unlikely that publishers would be inclined to publish large numbers of variant readings for a large number of pieces. Luckily, Broude, Gustafson, and Herlin proved him wrong in their edition of *The Collected Works* (2017)!

manifestations of styles different (and in Chambonnières's and Le Gallois's mind, inferior) from the composer's.

In an insightful and creative article ostensibly aimed at uncovering the reasons behind Chambonnières's leaving his post at court, Rebecca Cypess (2007) explores how the technique of engraving enabled Chambonnières to assert his independence, uniqueness, and artistic freedom. Since 1633, the Ballard family had held a monopoly on music printing from moveable type (*imprimée*), but engraved music (*gravée*) carried no such restrictions. Moveable type also brought with it a number of disadvantages for keyboard music, making it difficult to accurately notate such niceties as chords and beamed notes more than a third apart, not to mention the rich repertoire of *agréments* employed by harpsichordists (see Figure 2.1). Working closely with the engraver, composers were able to control (and after the first printing, correct) the precise manner in which their music was presented visually. By means of engraving, composer/performers like Chambonnières could achieve an “interplay of sound and printed text,” wherein the freedom and individuality of the harpsichordist's performance were translated into a visual image:

The physical appearance of each note is never repeated exactly the same way, as it is in the case of moveable type; analogously each note is played differently by different performers, and on different occasions even by the same performer. The individuality of performance styles is mirrored by the artistry of the engraving itself. The music's aural freedom, manifested in improvised *agréments*, the style *brisé* and other techniques of performance, are[sic] reflected by the visual turns and ornaments of the engraving. (Cypess 2007, 549)

The engraving is suggestive, evocative; in its graceful, variable shapes, it points beyond its notation to the ephemeral details of performance that remain fundamentally resistant to that same notation. Before engraving, if composer-performers wanted to convey something of their personal performance style to a wider public and to preserve their reputations, they were forced to rely on their own performances. And if they wanted to preserve their style beyond their own lifetimes (or



Figure 2.1 Lully, *Armide*, Passacaille. Comparison of print (a) vs. engraving (b). In Broude (2017, 283)
 (a) Ballard edition, 1687, p.226, first system, bars 2–4, premier dessus.
 (b) D'Anglebert, *Pièces de clavecin*, 1689, p.64, bottom system, bars 4–6, right hand

indeed beyond their failing careers),²³ the best they could do was train a devoted circle of students and encourage production of detailed manuscripts within that same circle. Chambonnières's engraving, for the first time in French harpsichord music, brought a new permanence and fixity to the substance of a performer's style. In its suggestion of the living, breathing, sounding music of performance, it is in some ways analogous to recording technology, which similarly reflects the actual experience of live music in an imperfect way.

But what of those unfaithful copies Chambonnières so despised? At this point, it seems appropriate to revisit a few of the other sources of Chambonnières's music, some faithful, others less so. Recall the earlier Oldham manuscript, which differs from Chambonnières's 1670 print in many respects, mostly in matters of performerly detail. Rather than reflecting real compositional revision, the variance between these sources is primarily due to their intended audiences: Oldham's manuscript was designed for a consummate professional, capable of realizing the bare text with

²³ Gustafson and Herlin (2017, xxx) hypothesize that part of the reason Chambonnières lost his standing at court was that his powers as a musician may have been declining. He cites a diary entry of Christiaan Huygens dated December 20, 1660 describing Chambonnières's performance as "mediocre."

appropriate *agréments*, fleshing out the texture, and adjusting and livening the rhythmic detail, while the print was designed for a wider public (and perhaps posterity).²⁴ But some of these differences go beyond mere simplification or amplification of detail. Particularly in matters of rhythmic precision and handling of the inner voices, the Oldham readings are not invariably simpler than those of the print; sometimes they're just different. Notice, for example, the handling of m. 4 in the two readings of the Courante in d GusC 12 (see Figure 2.2).²⁵ Where the Oldham reading smoothly leads the tenor stepwise into the middle of the bar against a static melody, the print emphasizes the rhythmic complementarity of melody and disjunct tenor. As Fuller notes, “although the readings are very similar, no bar except the first and last was left by the composer without some change of the notes themselves” (1993, 194). In discussing the kinds of variance exhibited by the sources, Gustafson and Herlin accept a nuanced interpretation of Fuller’s heterotextual analysis:

The differences are not due to the carelessness of the copyists—there are relatively few musical errors—nor are they due simply to the presence or absence of ornaments. Rather, the differences result from such things as the management of texture, the detail in which conventional gestures (e.g., cadences) are notated, and, at times, the shaping of melody and bass. These differences create what we may think of as “versions,” each version being represented sometimes by a single text and sometimes by two or more very similar texts. It seems reasonable to infer that something akin to these constellations of texts must have existed for others of Chambonnières’s compositions for which fewer texts survive. (Gustafson and Herlin 2017, xl)

Recognizing the discrete versions of Chambonnières’s pieces proves invaluable in untangling a thick knot of source material. The Bauyn manuscript, for example, must have been prepared independently of sources close to Chambonnières, and its readings are marked by their simplicity and relative bareness of texture. Since Bauyn’s readings diverge so heavily from the authorized sources, Gustafson and Herlin therefore consider each piece’s reading to constitute a version of a given piece. The Parville manuscript, meanwhile, provides many readings that “appear to have been

²⁴ Posterity extends at least until 1690, when the third issue of Jollain’s engraving was produced.

²⁵ GusC numbers refer to entries in Gustafson’s (2007) online catalogue of Chambonnières’s music.



Figure 2.2. GusC 12: Comparison of Oldham and Chamb I (Fuller 1993, 193)

derived from the same sources as Baun's" (Gustafson and Herlin 2017, xxxix).²⁶ Because of this, even though Parville's readings often provide far more detail in their choice of *agréments* than

²⁶ Regarding the dating of Parville, the manuscript contains transcriptions of works by Lully, including from *Acis et Galathée* (1686). Because of this, the manuscript cannot have been prepared any earlier than 1686.

Bauyn's, both the Bauyn and Parville readings are often considered by Gustafson and Herlin to represent a single version of a given piece.

Perhaps the most interesting of all the “unfaithful” sources is D’Anglebert’s manuscript Rés-89ter, which, in addition to several transcriptions of lute and viol music, and early versions of some of the suites D’Anglebert later published, also contains versions of a number of pieces by Chambonnières. Although it still seems doubtful that D’Anglebert actually studied with Chambonnières at any time, he was nevertheless closely connected to his circle.²⁷ The (probable) presence of his hand in the Oldham manuscript—together with the hands of Chambonnières and Louis Couperin—is evidence of this, as are the remarkable circumstances by which D’Anglebert assumed the duties of *ordinaire de la musique de la chambre du roi pour le clavecin* from Chambonnières without the position’s accompanying income (Gustafson and Herlin 2017, xxx). To those who love and appreciate French Baroque music, D’Anglebert’s *Tombeau de Chambonnières* also speaks, beyond words, to the tremendous affection he must have held for the elder composer. Given the relationship between the two composers, we might imagine that D’Anglebert’s copies of these pieces would stay faithful to the composer’s intentions. After all, the manuscript dates from sometime between 1677 and 1680, and if D’Anglebert had wanted to, he could have based his copy on Chambonnières’s engraved edition of 1670. What D’Anglebert actually did, though, was to assimilate these works into his own performerly style.

Musicologist Douglas Maple (1988) has thoroughly described the manuscript and its contents, and has compared the manuscript’s readings with Chambonnières’s published versions. In each piece, D’Anglebert applied a fairly consistent set of stylistic preferences, including: a preponderance of quarter-note motion in the left hand, often created through broken texture (*style brisé*); more

²⁷ As Gustafson and Herlin (2017, xxvi) note, D’Anglebert was “already a mature performer when he arrived in Paris,” and as such, it is unlikely that he studied there with Chambonnières.

consistent part-writing (often in three voices); a right-hand melody unencumbered by inner parts; and a greater density and variety of ornamentation in the right-hand melody (Maple 1988, 397). D'Anglebert also made a wide range of rhythmic modifications of various kinds, sometimes enhancing or suppressing a hemiola, shifting accents, dotting a rhythm, etc. (Fuller 1993, 196). The results of D'Anglebert's interventions are clearly still recognizable as Chambonnières's pieces, albeit clothed in another style. Given their divergence from the composer's own style, it is very possible that Chambonnières might have counted these among the "unfaithful" copies of his music, even if, according to our own contemporary tastes as connoisseurs of French music, we might consider D'Anglebert's efforts to constitute an improvement over the original. Kenneth Gilbert for example, in his edition of D'Anglebert's harpsichord music, professed a clear preference for the younger composer's style to Chambonnières's.²⁸ Certainly, as twenty-first century listeners, we are generally more familiar with the later seventeenth-century style of Lully and D'Anglebert than with the earlier style of Chambonnières, and in this sense, we might also understand D'Anglebert's revisions as a sort of update or modernization of a comparatively old-fashioned style.

D'Anglebert's appropriation of Chambonnières's music thus underscores some of the ethical issues that must have concerned *clavecinistes*. How could D'Anglebert, who clearly respected the elder musician, have brought himself to misrepresent Chambonnières's intentions for his compositions? Even if D'Anglebert felt it unnecessary to exactly reproduce the text of Chambonnières's print, would he not have at least wanted to accurately portray its composer's style of performance? Broude, for one, sees the move towards self-publication as part of a larger trend towards prescribing style for future performances:

²⁸ "In my opinion the variants represent a conscious effort to improve the older master's sometimes gauche keyboard writing, especially in the left hand. As a comparison will show, they seem in every case to be more elegant and idiomatic than the original models ..." (Gilbert 1975, preface).

Previously, performers had usually worked from texts to which they were expected to add embellishment; with the new dispensation, performers were given texts with details that they were expected to read through in order to arrive at the essential musical conception, which they were then expected to realize in the style represented by the detail. Both composers and performers accepted the convention that the texts that transmitted this repertory—whether barebones or detailed—were not to be realized literally, and it was this principle that enabled a repertory that valued spontaneity in performance to represent a multi-form piece by a single text—or, indeed, by any text at all. (Broude 2017, 294)

What Broude is proposing here is something a bit different from *Werktreue*. It shifts our focus, as readers of the musical text, from the compositional substance to the performerly style in which that substance is presented. It is, therefore, more a kind of *Stiltreue*: that is, faithfulness to musical style.²⁹ Through the lens of *Stiltreue*, notation's primary aim is not to convey a musical work (or the instructions for performing said musical work), but rather to convey the stylistic essentials by which the music should be brought to life. *Werktreue* and *Stiltreue* are thus two different manners of reading and engaging with a given musical text, neither mutually exclusive nor mutually necessary. In the next section of this chapter, I will discuss the thorny problems of disentangling *style* from *work* in a given musical text. For now, however, I am content to recognize the utility of *Stiltreue* as a mode of interpretation. Using this concept, it becomes fairly simple to determine what sorts of manuscripts—and by extension, the sorts of performances they represent—Chambonnières would consider “faithful”: namely, those that accurately portray Chambonnières's own style of performance. Being honorable to Chambonnières's music is thus less a matter of *Werktreue* than it is one of *Stiltreue*.

Broude's invocation of a “new dispensation,” with all its religious overtones, is telling. It replaces one source of authority and authenticity, the composer's work, with another, the composer's performerly style. It assumes, moreover, that composers who self-published maintained an ethical

²⁹ Although I am not aware of any sources that discuss *Stiltreue* as a foil for *Werktreue*, it is sometimes employed by German music critics as a complement of a performer's *Werktreue*, as in the desire to play Mozart like Mozart, Bach like Bach etc.

stance towards how their texts would eventually be used. While I think that *Stiltreue* will prove a useful concept in dealing with Chambonnières's texts, I also think that it is not entirely possible to disentangle the various aims and intentions composers had when they decided to self-publish their works. Composers did in some cases suggest something of an ethical imperative behind their texts: Denis Gaultier's 1670 publication, in which he describes how his pieces "should" be presented, is a good example (Broude 2017, 287-8). At other times, however, composers present their texts in the manner in which they themselves play them, as Marais does in the preface to his first book of viol pieces ("comme je les joue").³⁰ Marais's publication also presumes a pedagogical attitude on the part of the composer: he devises a series of symbols to represent the various *agréments*, provides fingerings, and includes an explanatory text describing "la delicatesses du toucher de la viole." Chambonnières's print, on the other hand, while it does make a brief nod towards being "more useful to the public," is primarily concerned with presenting an honorable, faithful presentation of his own performance style. To revisit an analogy I made above, the performer's objective in making a recording is often *not* (at least primarily) to influence and constrain subsequent performances. Rather, it is, at least in part, to produce an artistic object—a text—that accurately reflects the performer's own style and intention, expressed through adherence to a particular interpretive strategy (e.g. *Werktreue*).³¹ Chambonnières's print can be seen to fulfill similar objectives, functioning as a sort of ideal *recording* of his performances.

³⁰ The relevant section from Marais's *Pièces à une et à deux violes, Livre premier* (1686, viol partbook, 4) reads as follows: "Pour m'accommoder a la differente portee des personnes qui jouent de la Viole, J'ay jusques icy donné mes pieces plus ou moins chargées d'accords. Mais ayant reconnu que cette diversité faisoit un mauvais effet, et que l'on ne les jouoit pas telles que je les ay composées; Je me suis enfin déterminé a les donner de la maniere dont je les joue, avec tous les agréments qui les doivent accompagner." (To accommodate myself to the different capacities of those who play the viol, I have until now given my pieces either more or less replete with chords. But having recognized that this diversity created a poor effect, and that they were not being played as I had composed them, I finally decided to give them in the manner in which I play them, with all the ornaments that must accompany them.)

³¹ Ashby (2010) discusses these issues in reference to the interpretive strategies of Artur Schnabel and Glenn Gould, the first oriented towards "the intention of the author" and the second to "the intention of the work" (91). Ashby later demonstrates how their performances and recordings ultimately become *texts* in their own right, and that these texts have a life of their own quite apart from their authors. For more on this expanded notion of the musical text, see

If, however, we accept at least a small element of *Stiltreue* at work in seventeenth-century French keyboard culture, how do we explain D'Anglebert's interventions? There seems to be another set of ethical imperatives at work here, something akin to what Peter Kivy describes as "personal authenticity," namely being "authentically one's own, emanating from one's own person—authentic, in other words, as opposed to derivative or imitative" (1998, 108). It is in this sense, I think, that D'Anglebert's notation "performs" Chambonnières's works in a way that is, first and foremost, personally authentic. Personal authenticity, like *Stiltreue*, shifts attention away from the musical work—the raw material of performance—towards the creative, performative act. To be personally authentic as a performer means appropriating the materials of one's performance, making them one's own. Having his own taste and style distinct from that of Chambonnières, D'Anglebert therefore appropriates the musical material at hand in a way wholly consistent with his own preferences. Since D'Anglebert occupies more or less the same social and cultural milieu, since he speaks more or less the same musical language, we recognize this appropriation as a fairly subtle yet consistent transformation of Chambonnières's text.

As historian Jonathan Dewald (1993) has shown, seventeenth-century France was marked by a profound ambivalence between competing ideals of conformity and individualism. On the one hand, individualism was constrained by the conditions of what literary historian Stephen Greenblatt (1980) calls self-fashioning. The seventeenth-century world in which D'Anglebert constructed his identity was guided by a variety of cultural and social norms, including taste (*bon goût*) and decorum (*bienséance*), forming "a kind of communal judgment and taste shared among connoisseurs – a 'sensus communis' of experts" (Christensen 2010, 89). D'Anglebert therefore created his own artistic persona through a process of self-fashioning, through conformation to these shared norms.

Cobussen (2002).

On the other hand, the seventeenth-century French aristocracy—the part of society perhaps most oppressed by the demands of the state—explored ways of escaping tradition and dynasticism. As Dewald puts it,

as family, state, and ethical ideals increasingly demanded renunciation of individual desires, men and women became increasingly absorbed in understanding themselves as individuals, and indeed in understanding personal desire itself. They explored their inner lives in autobiographies and novels, and they presented their lives in terms of personal achievement. They became increasingly preoccupied with emotion, which attached them to friends and lovers—in other words, to chosen objects of affection. Such deepening concern with the personal offered one response to the oppressiveness of seventeenth-century expectations. (Dewald 1993, 9)

It is tempting to imagine that harpsichordists—and especially Chambonnières, who held aristocratic pretensions—might also have shared these feelings of ambivalence toward individualism and *bienséance*. As discussed above, Cypess (2007) argues convincingly that a concern for individuality informed a host of Chambonnières's professional choices, including his decision to leave court and his method of engraving his harpsichord pieces. At the same time, Chambonnières achieved this individuality through socially- and culturally-available means of self-fashioning. In effect, Chambonnières and D'Anglebert could both only ever express their individualism or “personal authenticity” through negotiation with good taste, as particular inflections of *bienséance*. For listeners in seventeenth-century France like Le Gallois—fully attuned to this negotiation, to the subtleties of performance within their own cultural practice—they might well have found D'Anglebert's transformation of Chambonnières even more pronounced than we do; that is, they would have recognized even more of D'Anglebert the performer within Chambonnières's text. This personal authenticity—D'Anglebert's own originality within a culture of imitation—would necessarily have been of greater importance to him than any competing notion of *Stiltreue* that Broude proposes. As a professional musician, after all, it was only by cultivating a performerly personality of his own that D'Anglebert could develop and cement his stature and reputation.

In many ways, in fact, D'Anglebert stands as one of the clearest examples of personal authenticity within seventeenth-century French keyboard culture. D'Anglebert's various transcriptions, in particular, are emblematic of an obsessive yet nuanced approach to musical appropriation. In his transcriptions of orchestral music by Lully, for example, D'Anglebert "strips the pieces down to their basic skeletal form of a melody and its supporting harmonies" (Maple 1988, 558). He then uses this reduction as a basis for constructing his own, highly ornamented keyboard texture.³² The various *parties de remplissage* (inner voices) of Lully's orchestral texture are omitted, and in their place, D'Anglebert employs a variety of broken chords, octave doublings, and other idiomatic keyboard features. In essence, he re-makes the piece in his own image, rendering it in his own style of (notated) performance.

As musicologist David Ledbetter has shown, the lute transcriptions from Rés-89ter show a careful conciliation between D'Anglebert's own keyboard style and that of lutenists. In contrast to the literal rendering of Perrine (1680), as well as various German sources that present a regularized three-part keyboard texture (Ledbetter 1987, 58), D'Anglebert instead creates a true synthesis. Through careful management of texture, he combines the loose part-writing of lute texture with the sustained melodic integrity of the outer voices as demanded by keyboard style; at the same time, he translates effects from the lute version (particularly the *tirer et rabattre*, or strumming) by way of more idiomatic effects for the keyboard, like syncopation and arpeggiation (Ledbetter 1987, 86). D'Anglebert seems, therefore, to have attempted to integrate the lutenists' style into his own musical language, extending even to his adoption of the lutenists' characteristic ornament symbols and peculiarities of tablature notation. As Ledbetter notes,

in the case of D'Anglebert, whose keyboard style most thoroughly absorbed that of the lute, this naturalization of lute tablature extended to the notation of

³² D'Anglebert was, of course, the harpsichordist of Lully's orchestra, and so it stands to reason that D'Anglebert's transcriptions of Lully may reflect something of his style of continuo playing as well.

ornaments and even the characteristic *séparé* and *ensemble* signs. The notation was a natural consequence of a similarity of technical means and expressive aims. (Ledbetter 1987, 140)

Through his transcriptions, then, D'Anglebert is assimilating not only the lutenists' pieces, but their style as well. Whether conceived as musical apprenticeship, or perhaps homage, the lessons he learns from the lutenists become a vital part of D'Anglebert's self-fashioning, as he incorporates elements of lute style into his own style of composition and performance.

Only in the case of those who have fully absorbed the taste and style of their masters can we really speak of a perfect combination of stylistic and personal authenticity. I am reminded of the example of Hardel, cited by Le Gallois as the inheritor of Chambonnières's performerly style. Hardel, by virtue of his stature as a composer and performer in French musical culture, is already endowed with "personal authenticity." But we can also recognize the rhetorical strategy by which Le Gallois imbues Hardel with Chambonnières's authority too: he is credited with being "*le plus parfait imitateur de ce grand homme, dont il possédoit tout à fait le génie*" (Fuller 1976, 24).³³ By this invocation of the transmission of authority, Le Gallois thus participates in what Aleida and Jan Assmann call a *logic of authenticity*, in which Hardel's activities "prolong the authority of a living tradition" (2003, 151). This logic of authenticity, according to the Assmanns, serves to distinguish between the *original* and the *fake*. Within modern cultures, the fake "displaces, represses, or substitutes for the original—it is a false usurper—and the original always unmask and dissolves the fake" (Assmann 2003, 149). Using this logic, Hardel's performances should be understood as original and authentic, thereby revealing the inauthenticity of the various "fakes" also in circulation, "*avec beaucoup de défauts*," as Chambonnières complained. Hardel's authority, his personal authenticity, is an extension of Chambonnières's own. D'Anglebert on the other hand, having been omitted from

³³ "The most perfect emulator of the great man, whose genius he entirely possessed" (Fuller 1976, 23).

Le Gallois's account, is resolutely excluded from that same living tradition; his own authenticity is set apart from Chambonnières's. In this way, Hardel could at once be faithful to Chambonnières (*Stiltreue*) and to himself, while D'Anglebert could not possibly do both.

In summary, the sources for Chambonnières's music demonstrate a tremendously flexible approach to the presentation of the composer's text, encompassing a wide range of differences in texture, rhythm, ornamentation, and style. Some of these sources, like Bauyn and Oldham, were intended for professional musicians, and as such, they provide minimally-specified readings that must be amplified by the performer. Other sources, like Chambonnières's published edition, produce something more akin to a model performance, intended to preserve and sustain a given performance style. Many more sources, like D'Anglebert's, include deliberate changes introduced by the copyist, neither amplifying nor reducing the copyist's source, but rather transforming it to accommodate the copyist's own taste (*goût*). This heterotextual variance is symptomatic of a performance-based culture that valorized freedom, variety, and spontaneity, granting the performer a considerable degree of latitude. Whether guided by some kind of *Stiltreue*, or instead by a sense of personal authenticity, or even something between the two, the sounding performance was ultimately more important than any particular series of signs inscribed on paper.

Finding the piece

Lurking behind all of this is a tacit assumption: namely, that each of these readings *is a reading of the same piece*. Faced with the textual, notational differences between sources purporting to represent the same piece, this point is by no means self-evident. How can we assess the kinds of variance introduced by performers within a seventeenth-century culture of appropriation? At what point is the piece's identity first established and subsequently transformed? When does it cease to be the same piece? In Gustafson and Herlin's edition of the complete works, for example, they sort all the readings for a given piece into a variety of discrete "versions." The readings of a given version are

thus more similar to themselves than they are to another version's readings, differing in ways that are considered "ornamental" while the differences between versions are "structural." Could there exist, then, some kind of minimally-specified score, perhaps consisting of a plain treble/bass pair, that encompasses all of the potential performances of, say, the *Courante Iris* (GusC 8)? Such a score would need to be generic enough to accommodate the full range of possible renditions of the piece, including all the versions collected by Gustafson and Herlin as well as any other possible versions one could imagine, while being specific enough to exclude renditions that are clearly of another piece.

Let us consider, for example, seven different versions of the *Courante Iris*, the first five measures of which are reproduced in Figure 2.3. In addition to several sources discussed earlier (Chambonnières's published print of 1670, Rés-89ter, and the Bauyn manuscript), the comparison chart in Figure 2.3 includes readings from the Borel manuscript (copied in France ca. 1660–1680), Brussels 27220 (copied in France after 1678), the Redon manuscript (compiled ca. 1661), and the Babel manuscript (copied in London ca. 1702 by French musician Charles Babel).³⁴ Intuitively, one recognizes *the same piece* within all of these variant readings. Nevertheless, the different styles in which the piece is clothed do have an effect on the listener's appreciation of a host of musical details. Consider, for example, the way in which these readings treat the left-hand accompaniment in measure 3. Chamb I, Bauyn, Rés-89ter, and Babell all choose to tie the bass C in the middle of the bar, creating a lovely 2-3 suspension with the tenor and soprano. The readings in Brussels and Borel, lacking this tie, instead create an impression of crispness and simplicity. The Redon reading, meanwhile, includes the tie but delays the resolution of the bass until the end of the bar, thereby mollifying any accent we might perceive on the third beat. Small "ornamental" details like these

³⁴ For complete bibliographic information and a detailed description of these various sources, as well as all other sources for Chambonnières's music, please consult Gustafson and Herlin (2017).

Chamb I, pp. 15-16

Borel, f. 24v

Brussels 27220, pp. 122-123

Bauyn, I, f. 5v

Rés-89ter

Babell, p.41

Redon, ff. 33v-34r

Figure 2.3. A Comparison of Seven Sources of *Courante Iris*, GusC 8.

accumulate over the course of each reading to such an extent that we must ask: *how much* of any given reading is structural or essential?

Nicholas Cook (1999) has addressed a very similar problem in connection with the explosion of performances, arrangements, transcriptions, and re-compositions of Corelli's Op. 5 that took place during the eighteenth century. The tradition of Italian adagio performance, in which a minimally specified score is filled by the performer with improvised "graces," seems to imply a stratified, hierarchical division of labor between composer and performer. The composer creates the structure—imagined by Cook to be something like a Schenkerian foreground—that gives the piece a lasting identity, while the performer creates the sounding "surface" that varies from performance to performance. In fact, even Corelli "performs" his structure to some extent, since the musical surface he provides (in the form of the un-ornamented solo part) is already an elaboration, albeit an unimaginative one, of what—Cook imagines—Corelli imagined (consciously or not) as the underlying, work-defining structure. Thus, in playing the adagio, the soloist is expected to *see and hear through* the notation to the underlying structure, and respond to it. If indeed each performance of Corelli's piece is an embellishment or realization of this pre-determined structure, then one might expect each of those performances to reduce in analysis to that original structure. This is, however, not the case. Instead, Cook discovers that a given set of graces will sometimes reduce to another structure altogether, thereby complicating the notion that a piece's identity rests in a single, stable structure. At this point, one can retreat to a higher analytical vantage point, but as Cook notes, "used this way, Schenkerian analysis becomes like bubble gum: the further you stretch it, the thinner it gets" (1999, 207-8). In this hierarchical conception of musical identity, a given structural reduction—meant to preserve the work's identity in the face of a variable performance practice—is either over- or under-specified, either overly restrictive of its performance possibilities or so generic as to be nearly meaningless. In this way, Cook argues, the entire "genre" of eighteenth-century

Corelli Op. 5 performances resists being boiled down analytically to a single underlying structure, and if it is to maintain its sense of integrity as a musical work, it must do so through other means. Cook therefore posits the idea that composerly and performerly personas interact within a piece of music in dialogic fashion: “performers have the options of working in line with the compositional structure as represented by structural analysis, such as Schenkerian analysis proper, or of working against it” (219).³⁵ Moreover, the compositional structure to which a given performer responds is relational rather than absolute; that is, as “different musicians make different decisions as to what is essential and what is contingent” (220), they will (probably unconsciously) *see through* Corelli’s scores in different ways:

They are graphic scores; scores, that is, designed not for literal execution, but for seeing, or better, for seeing through. You read the music, and then you don’t play it; you play something quite different, but based on it. (Cook 1999, 222)

The unity and identity of Corelli’s Op. 5, then, are ultimately assured by this continual reference to Corelli’s original notation, “performed” on paper for the benefit of the musical eye.

We are on familiar ground here. Given the heterotextual presentation of the corpus, one wonders whether Chambonnières’s textual variance might also resist being reduced to a single underlying compositional structure. One senses, as well, that each performerly text has responded in a fairly unique way to the question of *what* the piece is, what is essential, and what is contingent. D’Anglebert’s interventions, for example, which often have profound consequences for our *rhythmic* appreciation of the piece, clearly demonstrate that he considered such details to be non-essential to the piece’s identity. But while Cook’s argument does indeed invite parallels with Chambonnières’s corpus, there are also some significant points of difference. For one, the profusely ornamented solo

³⁵ Although Cook imagines this “compositional structure” as something analogous to a Schenkerian foreground, this kind of analysis is actually not so far removed from a more historically appropriate analytical tool, namely thoroughbass. Indeed, it is no accident that an “imaginary continuo”—a term coined by theorist William Rothstein (1990) to describe a rhythmic reduction consisting of melody and figured bass—functions as an important element in some kinds of Schenkerian analysis.

lines of Corellian adagios go far beyond any degree of amplification found in French keyboard music, while at the same time the variance they exhibit is entirely restricted in other respects: the bass line, together with its rhythm and underlying harmony all remain unchanged, for example. The most important of these differences, however, is that this profusion of “graces” can all be traced back to one Corellian text, namely Corelli’s authorized original of 1700. Indeed, Cook’s dialogic analysis of performerly intervention depends upon a stable textual reference point; performers define their interventions in relation to something unchanging. At first glance, some of the underspecified readings, like Bauyn, might seem to function analogously to Corelli’s unornamented original; when it comes time to play the piece, the performer must *see and hear through* the surface to the underlying structure before adding their own touch. The analogy is imperfect on several levels, though, since, firstly, Bauyn is in no way authoritative; secondly, any reading of Chambonnières, no matter how basic, is already more fully elaborated than an unornamented Corellian adagio; and thirdly, where Corelli produced something foundational and originary, Chambonnières’s authoritative text could only attempt to influence and inflect a textual process already in motion, a heterotextuality.

Without this originary text, how are we to understand the art of performance in seventeenth-century French harpsichord culture? That is, how can we appreciate the notationally-preserved work of performers without the texts on which their performances are based? At the very least, perhaps we can attempt to gain some access to a sort of imaginary *Urtext*, defined in the space (that is, the variance) between readings, allowing us to construct a hypothetical text that defines the essential contours of the piece. Music theorist Stephen Grazzini suggests such a process:

In the case of Chambonnières, it is harder to say what the piece ought to look like, if it could be separated from the written-out performance. Perhaps it would look like the barest of the manuscript scores, or perhaps it would be something even more abstract, like a skeletal melody and a figured bass. (Grazzini 2014, 108)

The idea is that by comparing a variety of readings, we gain some understanding of the subtext informing each performance/reading, even if the exact form and detail of that subtext remain unclear. Moreover, after having determined this subtext, we also gain some understanding of the processes and procedures by which performers vary (i.e., perform) their subtext. Fuller seems to have intuited this kind of seeing-through in his envisioning of a new edition of Chambonnières's works that includes "the richest, most ornamented reading—not on the principle that the most elaborate one represents the author's latest thoughts, but in order to supply the user with as many stylish performing ideas as possible" (1993, 201). For the contemporary performer, then, we seem to have arrived at a recipe for an historically-informed performance of a piece by Chambonnières, roughly outlined by Fuller with additional subtext from me: step one, "read through all 60 of the pieces from the composer's engraved edition in order to soak up the style" and "take the editor's chosen reading simply as a guide and inspiration"; step two, play through a variety of readings of the same piece (provided by Gustafson and Herlin) in order to *see through* to the *Urtext* underneath; and step three, accept "the player's responsibility not to play what he sees," embellishing the *Urtext* in a stylistically-appropriate fashion (Fuller 1993, 201).

There is a problem, though. The lack of an originary text to *see through* calls into question the kinds of distinctions we can make between essential and contingent elements of a piece. Without a point of origin, we lack access to the dialogic layer of performance in which any "seeing-through" takes place. The seeing-through I described above also assumes a hierarchical organization, in which structural elements in the music may be identified as essential, while surface details (or ornaments) are contingent. Gustafson and Herlin, in their approach to distinguishing between "versions" of pieces based on their degree of ornamental or structural difference, imply that this hierarchical division of the piece's identity also applies to Chambonnières. However, I think there is a certain ambiguity in any distinction one might make between purely ornamental differences (Parville vs.

Bauyn) and the more substantive differences discussed by Broude and Fuller. To be sure, *agrémements* continued to be recognized as an incidental detail to be freely altered by performers well into the eighteenth century, while the other forms of performerly variance gradually became less acceptable.

Saint-Lambert, writing in 1702, offers an opinion typical of his time:

Après avoir appris à les [i.e. les agrémens] connoître icy, on pourra les pratiquer en toutes les occasions, où l'on trouvera qu'ils seront à propos: car, comme je l'ay dit tant des fois, on est extrêmement libre sur le choix des Agrémens; & dans les Pièces qu'on étudie, on peut en faire aux endroits même où ils ne sont pas marquez; retrancher ceux qui y font, si l'on trouve qu'ils ne sient pas bien à la Pièce, & y en ajouter d'autres à son gré.³⁶ (Saint-Lambert 1702, 123)

He is, however, quite careful to spell out some of the limits of ornamentation, namely “que jamais les agrémements ne doivent alterer le chant” (124),³⁷ a restriction which seems to preclude the kind of variance practiced in the seventeenth century. By the time of François Couperin’s maturity in 1722, Couperin felt that the correct *agrémements* were as essential a part of a good performance of his *Troisième Livre* as anything else:

Je suis toujours surpris (apres les soins que je me suis donné pour marquer les agrémens qui conviennent à mes Pièces, dont j'ay donné, à part, un explication assés intelligible dans une Méthode particuliere, connue sous le titre de L'art de toucher le Clavecin) d'entendre des personnes qui les ont apprises sans s'y assujétir. C'est une négligence qui n'est pas pardonnable, d'autant qu'il n'est point arbitraire d'y mettre tels agrémens qu'on veut. Je declare donc que mes pièces doivent être exécutées comme je les ay marquées, et qu'elle ne feront jamais une certaine impression sur les personnes qui ont le goût vray, tant qu'on n'observera pas à la lettre, tout ce que j'y ay marqué, sans augmentation ni diminution.³⁸ (Couperin 1722, Préface)

³⁶ “After having learned these ornaments, one may apply them on all occasions when one finds them appropriate; because, as I have said many times, one is quite free in the choice of ornaments, and in the pieces one studies, one may apply them even in places where they are not marked, or remove the ones already there, if ones finds they do not fit well with the piece, and introduce others in their place” (my translation).

³⁷ “That the ornaments must never distort the melody” (my translation).

³⁸ “I am always surprised (after the care I have taken to mark suitable ornaments for my pieces, of which I have given, besides, a very intelligible explanation in my own method, known under the title The Art of Playing the Harpsichord) to hear people who have learned the pieces without respecting the ornaments. It is an unforgivable negligence, inasmuch as it is not an arbitrary matter to place such ornaments wherever one likes. I therefore declare that my pieces must be played as I have written them, and that they will never make an impression on people of good taste unless one observes everything that I have marked to the letter, without adding or removing anything” (my translation).

While many read this assertion as yet another step in the long march towards prescriptive, composerly authority, I prefer to look at it another way. For one, we need to consider Couperin's audience: he likely wrote this preface not for posterity, but rather for an amateur class of performers who might not necessarily be expected to exhibit *bon goût*. Even beyond any innate taste in music that a student may possess, that taste must also be informed by experience playing a musical instrument. Indeed, although Saint-Lambert seemed to be advocating for an ornamental free-for-all, he is quite insistent that such freedom is always conditioned by the performer's good taste and experience as a performer:

Mais il faut cependant prendre garde à ne se pas donner trop de liberté sur ce sujet, sur-tout dans le commencement; de peur qu'en voulant raffiner trop tôt, on ne gâtât ce qu'on voudroit embellir: C'est pourquoy il est bon, & même nécessaire, de s'assujettir d'abord aux Agrémens des autres, & de ne les faire qu'aux endroits où ils sont marquez dans les Pièces, jusqu'à-ce qu'on soit assez fort, pour juger sans se tromper, que d'autres n'y seront point de mal. On doit être persuadé, quelque bon goût qu'on ait pour le Clavecin, que si l'on n'a que six mois d'exercice, on ne peut pas si bien discerner ce qui donne de la grace au Jeu, que ceux qui ont pratiqué le Métier pendant vingt ou trente Ans, & qui ont acquis par cette longue experience, une connoissance plus sûre de ce qui peut embellir leur Art.³⁹ (Saint-Lambert 1702, 124)

Thus, both taste and experience were required for successful performerly intervention, and Couperin evidently wanted to make sure that performers of his music recognized this.

Beyond speaking to amateurs, what might Couperin say to the experienced professional musician wishing to play his music? Are the *specific* ornaments notated in Couperin's score necessarily as important as the style and taste those ornaments exemplify? When we see Couperin in his historical context—as another French composer-performer in a long line extending back to Chambonnières,

³⁹ “One must meanwhile take care not to give oneself too much freedom in this matter, particularly at the beginning [of one's studies]; for fear that, in wanting to refine too early, one might spoil what one wishes to embellish. This is why it is best, and even necessary, to first subject oneself to the ornaments of others and to only apply them in the places where they are marked in pieces, until one is sufficiently experienced to judge without being mistaken that others wouldn't be bad. One must be persuaded, however good one's taste for the harpsichord, that if one has only had six months of practice, one cannot discern as well what gives grace to playing as can those who have practiced their *métier* for twenty or thirty years, and who have acquired by this long experience a much surer knowledge of what can embellish their art” (my translation).

D'Anglebert, Marais, and others—his *Troisième Livre* appears not as a series of musical works, but rather, as a series of exemplary performances, designed to illustrate Couperin's own inimitable performance style. Why else, after all, would Couperin appeal to the performer's desire to make an impression on "people of good taste," were not the quality of the performance at stake? What Couperin expresses, then, is not a push towards *Werktreue*. Rather, it is a feeling that appropriate ornamentation is as important for a stylish performance as anything else. In this same vein, Margot Martin has drawn comparisons between *agréments* and the affected rhetorical practices of the *précieuses* who presided over salon culture:

Just as the *précieuses* took ordinary words and phrases and by their enrichment and embellishment turned conversation into a refined art, harpsichord composers used the simple melodies, chords and rhythms of common dances and enriched and embellished them. *Agréments* and the *brisé* style were their tools of refinement and means of sophistication. (Martin 1995, 6)

In a very real sense, the ornaments being used to embellish ordinary conversation were just as important as that conversation's subject, since the ornaments were the means by which salon participants demonstrated their art and contributed to their social standing. I am tempted to imagine that, in a culture that fetishized ornament to such a degree, French music's *agréments* were similarly regarded and prioritized by its cultural participants.⁴⁰ And if the right *agréments* (or at least the right kinds of *agréments* used at the right times) are indeed as important as any piece's structural elements, then one begins to question any separation of the two kinds of variance at all.

Of course, different kinds of musical practices may embrace clearer conceptions of the structural and the ornamental. In this connection, we might compare the practice of the *clavecinistes* with that of Lully. If Jean-Laurent Le Cerf de la Viéville (1705) is to be believed, then it would

⁴⁰ Broude may agree on this point. In discussing the famous story of how Marin Marais was forced to hide in the garden at night in order to hear his teacher, Sainte-Colombe, play his pieces—related by Evrard Titon du Tillet (1732, 624)—Broude makes the rather compelling suggestion that "it may well be that Marais was less concerned with Sainte-Colombe's compositions than with the ornaments he devised and used" (2003, 47).

appear that Lully made very clear distinctions between essential and contingent features in his own music. Le Cerf describes how Lully and his secretaries worked in a sort of workshop tradition, in which, for many movements, Lully himself established only the most important elements—the melody and figured bass—and left his secretaries to complete the composition:

Lulli faisoit lui-même toutes les parties de ses principaux chœurs, & de ses duo, trio, quatuor, importants . . . Hormis dans ses grands morceaux, dans ces Pièces importantes, Lulli ne faisoit que le dessus & la basse, & laissoit faire par ses Secretaires la haute-contre, la taille & la quinte.⁴¹ (Le Cerf 1705, Seconde Partie, 126-7)

As Broude and Mary Cyr have argued, Lully focused his efforts on creating something like what would later be called a *partition réduite*, containing the “constitutive elements” of any given musical number (2018, 603). This *partition réduite* could then be filled out and completed with a variable number of *parties de remplissage* according to the demands of a given performance setting. In contrast to the *clavecinistes*—who combined the personae of composer and performer in one person, and often in one text—Lully’s working methods stratify the production of music, with a clear demarcation between the roles of composer (Lully) and his “performers” (the secretaries).⁴² This conventionalized practice naturally leads to conventionalized ways of interacting with scores as well, with clearly marked boundaries between the structural and the ornamental.⁴³

⁴¹ “Lully himself created all the parts of his principal choruses and his important duos, trios, and quartets . . . [But] aside from such big numbers in important works, Lully wrote only the *dessus* and *basse*, and left to be done by his secretaries the *haute-contre*, the *taille*, and the *quinte*” (Broude and Cyr 2018, 601).

⁴² Interestingly, however, Lully also seems to have composed through the medium of performance. According to Le Cerf (1706), rather than writing the *partition réduite* himself, he worked it out at the keyboard and then dictated it to his secretaries. “Lulli la lisoit jusqu’à la sçavoir presque par coeur: il s’établissoit à son Clavessin, chantoit & rechantait les paroles; battoit son Clavessin, & faisoit une basse continuë. Quand il avoit achevé son chant, il se l’imprimoit tellement dans la tête, qu’il ne s’y seroit pas mepris d’une Note. Lalouette ou Colasse [Lully’s secretaries] venoient, ausquels il le dictoit” (Le Cerf 1706, troisième partie, 215; Lully read [the scene] until he knew it nearly by heart. He set himself at the harpsichord, sang the words again and again, hammered away at his harpsichord, and fashioned a basso continuo. Once he had arrived at his melody, he impressed it so firmly upon his memory that he would not mistake a single note. Lalouette or Colasse came, and he dictated it to them).

⁴³ Broude (1992) explicitly links the division of labor between Lully and his secretaries with the artistic workshop tradition, whereby an artwork’s most important features were fixed by the master artist, leaving his apprentices to fill in the details of lesser importance.

Let us consider the Courante Iris once again. I suggested above that by rigorously comparing sources, one could arrive at a sort of composite Urtext that defines the piece's identity. If we bracket temporarily our preconceived notions about surface versus structure, we find something striking: every source, save one (Borel), contains a pincé over the soprano G in the middle of the first bar. Is this single ornament part of the piece's identity? And if not, why does it re-appear so consistently in nearly every source? In a repertoire like that of the *clavecinistes*, in which the roles of performer and composer are so intertwined, such questions are by no means trivial. Unlike the *tragédies* of Lully, this repertoire resists a rigidly hierarchical division between surface and structure, and in this way, it betrays its origins not as a textual practice—that is, literate music—but rather as a product of something like an oral tradition.

Orality and Improvisation

In his discussion of eighteenth-century Corellian ornamentation, Cook eventually finds that such textual practices have much in common with oral traditions. He cites the work of Charles Seeger on the “Barbara Allen” folk tune, who concluded

no such entity as ‘the “Barbara Allen” tune’ can be set up other than for temporary convenience. The fact that with a few intermediate steps we can easily change one version into the other must be regarded in the light of the fact that we can change either version into any other tune of like length with a little, less, or more ease. Melodies are, by their very nature, infinitely changeable or interchangeable. (Seeger 1977, 316)

It is, therefore, impossible to uncover the *Urtext* of a folk song like “Barbara Allen” because such a thing does not exist. Rather than pointing to a hypothetical original or prototype, we can only determine the identity of such a tune by way of its relationship to other tunes, as well as the concrete manifestations of these tunes in performance. Cook eventually concludes that “the result is what Wittgenstein called a ‘family resemblances’ structure: a kind of network structure where everything is linked, whether directly or indirectly, to everything else” (1999, 211). Grazzini rightly points out that while Cook's comparison of folksong with Corelli is not entirely apt—since Corelli's

Op. 5, despite its wide network of interrelationships, is nevertheless “dominated by Corelli’s pristine, widely-distributed, and authoritative original” (2014, 107)—it does work very well with much seventeenth-century French keyboard music.

A number of concepts borrowed from the study of orality and oral poetry are particularly useful here. For example, the concept of the *multiform text* from Albert Lord’s *The Singer of Tales* (1960/2000) recalls Fuller’s idea of heterotextuality. First developed by Milman Parry and his student Lord, and later expanded in *The Singer of Tales*, the famous Parry-Lord hypothesis posits that the Homeric epics were created in and through performance. Oral poets relied upon a number of pre-established poetic/linguistic formulas, remembered, chosen, varied, and realized in the course of performing their songs. The multiform text is what results from this confluence of memory and variation, existing in a perpetual state of flux. By this logic, Lord would argue, a Homeric epic cannot have a single, authentic textual origin, since it exists only in performance, in the variance between (oral) texts:

Our real difficulty arises from the fact that, unlike the oral poet, we are not accustomed to thinking in terms of fluidity. We find it difficult to grasp something that is multiform. It seems to us necessary to construct an ideal text or to seek an original, and we remain dissatisfied with an ever-changing phenomenon. I believe that once we know the facts of oral composition we must cease trying to find an original of any traditional song. From one point of view each performance is an original. (Lord 2000, 100)

Likewise, Fuller’s heterotextual analysis of Chambonnières embraces the futility of searching for authentic origins. The various sources for Chambonnières’s music point instead to the possibilities of multiformity and variation, created in performance.

The concept of *mouvance*, formulated by Paul Zumthor (1972, 73), describes the processes that drive this textual variation over time, not *un achèvement*, but *un texte en train de se faire*. Although originally suggested by Zumthor as a way of understanding medieval manuscript transmission—that is, of understanding how texts evolve within a literate culture—*mouvance* is also explicitly linked with

the workings of orality (Zumthor 1987, 160-61). *Mouvance* creates a certain instability in the oral or written text, then, whose creative potential can only be realized in performance. It is not such a stretch to describe seventeenth-century French keyboard performance in terms of *mouvance* either; the texts that performers *see through* seem to demand their own instability, serving only as temporary textual placeholders in a self-perpetuating performerly tradition, with each new performance contributing to the text's own multiformity.

Classics scholar Gregory Nagy has synthesized a number of studies of textual variation in his *Poetry as Performance* (1996), ultimately strengthening and extending the link between *mouvance* and performance within oral traditions. In particular, Nagy draws upon an edition by Rupert T. Pickens (1978) of the songs of twelfth-century troubadour Jaufré Rudel. In his edition, Pickens uses the concept of *mouvance* to explain the variance exhibited by the songs attributed to Rudel, manifesting in a number of discrete “versions” of the songs, created through performance. Interestingly, Pickens notices that the Provençal word *mover*, in the same sense as the French *mouvoir* or the English *move*, is used in Rudel's songs to express the workings of *mouvance*. In this connection, both Pickens and Nagy cite the ending of Rudel's Song VI, version 1a. In it, the poet speaks to an anonymous, intermediary transmitter of the song (presumably a *jongleur*) who is responsible for bringing it to its final intended audience: “and the one who will learn it from me / beware lest it *move* or change” (Pickens 1978, 232, my emphasis).⁴⁴ In this way, the poet demonstrates a conscious awareness of *mouvance* within his own sociocultural setting, albeit a negative one. More generally—and positively—Rudel's songs point to an understanding of all kinds of composition, re-composition, and performance in terms of “movement.” By way of example, Nagy cites the beginning of Rudel's Song I, version 1, in which the poet “starts his song by picturing a nightingale as it sings, that is, as it

⁴⁴ “e cel q'i de mi l'aprena/ gard si non *mueva* ni camgi” (my emphasis)

moves its song” (Nagy 1996, 15, original emphasis). *Mouvance*, then, should be understood as an essential quality of *any* creative act within an oral tradition such as Rudel’s.

Within seventeenth-century French harpsichord culture, we can observe varying degrees of *mouvance* at work. At the more conservative end, perhaps, would be the many notated “performances” of Chambonnières’s Courante Iris discussed above, each of which ultimately represents the same piece, namely Chambonnières’s. The *clavecinistes*’ practice of composing and performing *doubles* (or variations), however, takes *mouvance* to new heights. Although the composer of a piece might also write a corresponding *double*, more frequently they were furnished by another composer or, even more likely, improvised in performance (Reimann 1952, 322). The *double* stereotypically tends to lavish attention on the upper voice of a piece, featuring diminutions of the melody in fairly regular rhythmic values, often twice as fast as the main note value of the *simple* (the original piece). In a courante that tends to feature quarter-note motion, for instance, the *double* would likely move in eighth notes. Any additional interventions—like altering the bassline, or managing the texture differently—tend to be made in order to support a more active melodic line. In spite of these conventions, however, composer/performers could still be quite free and inventive in treating the *simple*. D’Anglebert, for example, in his *double* for Chambonnières’s Courante in G (GusC 56), goes well beyond the ordinary (see Figure 2.4). Although he does show a preference for ornamenting the melodic line in eighth-notes, as is usual in *doubles* for courantes, he also partakes in decorating the lower lines, and as Maple (1988, 409) notes, even allows himself some imitation between voices. Given the extent of these interventions, it should come as no surprise that the *double* often receives an attribution distinct from that of its corresponding *simple*. In a real sense, then, the *double* represents a meeting point for composer and performer at the center of *mouvance*, with both parties sharing jointly in the piece’s authorship.

Courant!
Chambonnières.

34/

4

7

Double.

4

7

Figure 2.4. Chambonnières's Courante in G major (GusC 56) and D'Anglebert's *Double*

If we are correct in our assumption that the music of the seventeenth-century *clavecinistes* works like an oral tradition, and is therefore subject to *mouvance*, what happens when the music “moves” too far? In the case of Rudel, the poet clearly invokes the idea of “moving” a song, but beyond that, “the anonymous transmitter is enjoined to learn the song from the poet exactly as it was composed,” lest the transmitter “break,” “fracture,” or “move or change” it (Nagy 1996, 22). Nagy hypothesizes that movement (*mouvance*) is valorized when it takes place within an authoritative performance setting, that is, when the performer has been authorized by the poet and the poet’s performance is, in turn, validated by the audience. Such positive valuation of *mouvance* affirms the stability and lasting identity of a song within a given performance tradition, even as it undergoes variation and change over time. It is in this sense that Nagy can redefine *mouvance* as “the process of recomposition-in-performance as actually recognized by a living oral tradition, where the recognition implies the paradox of immediate change without ultimate change” (25). “Movement,” however, is understood negatively as “breaking” when these conditions have not been met:

If, however, a jongleur “moves” the song of a troubadour in an unauthorized situation, it is a matter of negative change because tradition breaks down. For a performer of a song to “move” it in a negative sense is to “change” it, even to “break” it. (Nagy 1996, 23)

We can understand the kinds of “movement” undergone by Chambonnières’s pieces in a similar light. When the performance is “authorized”—either played by Chambonnières himself or by one of his best students—then the various changes introduced are considered faithful and honorable, and they participate in a *logic of authenticity* whereby the performance is perfectly aligned with the “original.” The valuation of an “unauthorized” performance like D’Anglebert’s, on the other hand, might be up for debate, depending on how one understood the tradition. Le Gallois, for example, would presumably not have cared for D’Anglebert’s “breaking” of Chambonnières’s performance tradition, but it is not difficult to imagine other listeners—like Kenneth Gilbert, for example, who, as we may recall, very much preferred D’Anglebert’s style—who would have approved heartily.

D'Anglebert did indeed explore the outer limits of performerly *monvance*, and in at least one case, he broke them. Douglas Maple (1988, 381), operating under the probably incorrect (yet impossible to prove otherwise) assumption that D'Anglebert studied with Chambonnières, considered the possibility that the readings in Rés-89ter constitute exercises in composition, perhaps even done with Chambonnières's encouragement. As I have argued extensively above, I prefer to view the contents of Rés-89ter as exercises in performance. Such distinctions become even more nuanced, though, in the confluence of performerly and composerly activities that led to D'Anglebert's Gaillarde in C. Gustafson (1979, 102) had already noted the remarkable similarities between this piece and another by Chambonnières, one that appears both as a Sarabande in C (GusC 34a) in the Bauyn manuscript (vol. I, f. 11r) and a Gaillarde in C (GusC 34) in the 1670 print.⁴⁵ The first strains of Chambonnières's and D'Anglebert's gaillardes are reproduced below in Figures 2.5 and 2.6.

As Maple notes, “there is not a direct measure-by-measure correspondence between the two pieces, but the similarities are so strong that there can be little doubt that D'Anglebert's piece was modeled on, or at least inspired by, Chambonnières's piece” (1987, 390). Maple proceeds to detail some of the compositional processes by which D'Anglebert arrives at his piece through the transformation of his model. Retaining Chambonnières's opening melodic idea, he re-harmonizes it to allow for a long descending sequence of 7-6 suspensions, thus slowing the harmonic rhythm. Throughout the piece, he again shows his preference for smooth, clear voice leading, coupled with a more active left-hand part achieved through broken texture. In effect, D'Anglebert applies many of the “performerly” conventions evident in his readings of Chambonnières, but at the same time, he

⁴⁵ Interestingly, Maple makes his comparison using only the sarabande from Bauyn, making no mention of its appearance as a gaillarde in the 1670 print. The sarabande and gaillarde by Chambonnières are very similar, with most of the apparent differences stemming from a change in meter from the gaillarde's 3/2 to the sarabande's 3/4. Since replacing Chambonnières's sarabande for the gaillarde would make no substantive difference to Maple's argument, I have therefore made this substitution here. A comparison of two gaillardes, with their similar rhythmic values and meters, is in any case easier to follow than Maple's original comparison.



Figure 2.5. Chambonnières Gaillarde in C major (GusC 34).



Figure 2.6. D'Anglebert's Gaillarde in C major.

seems to assert his “composerly” attitude as well. The result of these transformations is clearly recognizable as a new piece, as Maple agrees: “Because D’Anglebert reworked the first strain so extensively and essentially wrote an entirely new reprise, he was clearly justified in claiming this piece as his own. Its relation to the Chambonnières piece is nonetheless unmistakable” (395). In effect, D’Anglebert has “moved” Chambonnières’s gaillarde to such an extent that he feels it necessary and appropriate to call it his own. Had D’Anglebert not appropriated his musical model so deliberately, completely, and successfully, we might well imagine contemporary listeners—particularly those familiar with Chambonnières’s piece—to have found D’Anglebert’s performance irreparably “broken.”

D’Anglebert’s re-molding of Chambonnières’s music reminds us, again, of the difficulties inherent in distinguishing categorically between the ornamental and the structural, between the composerly and the performerly. At what point exactly in crafting his Gaillarde in C does D’Anglebert-the-composer take over D’Anglebert-the-performer’s work? Oral traditions naturally resist these distinctions, as their *mouvance* gradually transforms text by means of performance. In retrospect, it should come as no surprise that the transmission of Chambonnières’s music recalls the workings of an oral tradition. Le Gallois, citing Hardel’s dictation *sous les doigts de Chambonnières* reminds us that the vast majority of Chambonnières’s music had, in fact, never been notated! Existing solely in Chambonnières’s head and hands, it operated according to a different set of rules than, for example, Corelli’s Op. 5. In the case of this music, especially, we are forced to speak of orality, since the music only existed in any real way in performance, at least before Hardel’s transcription. These pieces were *oral compositions*, arising through performance practices that did not depend upon notation.⁴⁶ Even though Le Gallois works assiduously to inscribe Hardel’s “copies”

⁴⁶ *Oral* composition should be contrasted then with *literate* or written composition, which does rely upon notation. For more on these two kinds of composition and their workings in medieval music, see Busse Berger (2005).

within a *logic of authenticity*, the dictation—a translation from aural experience to textual presentation—is not transparent. Hardel’s dictation therefore also participates in what the Assmanns (2003, 149) call a *logic of textuality*, in which original and *copy* (rather than the logic of authenticity’s *fake*) define each other reciprocally. Even before considering the effects of textual processes of variance by which scribes influence their texts, it is difficult to speak of a textual “original” of which Hardel makes his “copy,” and thus the copy points to “a cyclical movement of enrichment from the copy back to the original; the latter triggers the copy; the former, in return, valorizes the original” (150). One might even go so far as to say that the copy *precedes* the original, pointing towards its mythical pre-literate origins in orality. The lack of a real textual “original” again problematizes our efforts to *see through* a text, and it gestures towards other ways of understanding music: ways that move beyond text, and look instead towards embodied experience and the musical imagination.

Another way of conceptualizing music that only exists in performance is via improvisation. If we really take Le Gallois at his word, then most of Chambonnières’s music must have been created not at the writing desk, but at the keyboard. Seated at the harpsichord, Chambonnières would, of course, still have had recourse to his musical imagination as he constructed his pieces; intimately connected with this imagination, though, he would have also relied on various kinds of (embodied) knowledge: how to harmonize a bass, how to ornament a melody, how play imitative counterpoint. These kinds of skills enable *composition-in-performance*, as improvisation is sometimes defined. The notation of Chambonnières extant pieces is best understood in line with musicologist Roger Moseley as an instance of *entextualization*, a process whereby discourse is transformed into “text,” removed from its original context, and re-used. Moseley imagines two different modes of interaction with such entextualized utterances, one being literary, and the other archaeological. A literary mode of engagement with these pieces of Chambonnières’s would tend to focus on each piece as a kind of ‘frozen utterance,’ having achieved a stable identity through notational rigidity (Moseley 2013, 4).

The archaeological mode, on the other hand, would view these preludes as *material*, created by physical hands at a physical keyboard, encapsulating the skill and activity that brought them about. As Moseley describes the archaeological mode, “it is procedural rather than descriptive” (2013, 11). The literary mode is concerned with the canonization of musical works, while the archaeological mode focuses on the “discursive flow” of improvisational practice.

If we can imagine Chambonnières’s pieces not as a series of textual traces, but rather as a particular configuration of embodied skills and sounds, then the question of how to distinguish between the ornamental and the structural—and by extension, how to move the piece without breaking it—becomes considerably more complex. In the next chapter, therefore, I will examine the emerging field of historical improvisation studies, as well as its applicability to the performance of seventeenth-century French keyboard music. “Improvisation” is itself a fairly loaded term, having had a wide variety of meanings to different people, within different fields, and at different times. My task will consist in discerning a notion of improvisation correlated with specific musical practices, attuned to the techniques and methods by which Chambonnières’s oral practice might conceivably have functioned. Such an approach attempts to bring particular historical practices into conversation with broader contemporary discourse surrounding improvisation, leading to a clearer understanding of those historical practices and, at once, an expanded conception of what improvisation can or might be. For the *clavecinistes*, improvisation and oral composition go hand in hand: oral composition depends upon improvisational technique as its central mechanism, while improvisational practice only achieves durability through the workings of orality. If we, as performers, are to take the principles of HIP-as-method seriously, then we must also seek to understand Chambonnières’s works *for ourselves* as products of orality and the embodied knowledge of improvisation. We must ourselves enter creatively into Chambonnières’s oral tradition. Only then will we be able to find “new charms” for old music.