

LA COURANTE FRANÇOISE

Historically Informed Performance of the French Courante for Harpsichord during the second half of the seventeenth century following the criteria obtained from the Baroque Dance



DIEGO RUENES RUBIALES

druenes2@hotmail.com

MA Music Koninklijk Conservatorium Den Haag

The Courante is the dance most frequently found in harpsichord sources from the second half of the seventeenth century, and that's because it was the most fashionable dance in France during that time and the dance preferred by Louis XIV. But little information is found about the Courante as a dance (only 8 known choreographies).

This research is focused on this dance during the first generation of harpsichord composers in France (**Chambonnières, L. Couperin** and **d'Anglebert**), because there are more than 110 Courantes in their corpus of works and because in the traditional sequence of a Suite of dances, we find a set Courantes.



Step Patterns:

1. *Tems de Courante*: is a gesture consisting of a *plié*, an *élevé* and a slide.

2. *Pas de Courante*: is a combination of a *pas coupé* (*plié* + *élevé*) and a *demi-coupé* (*demi-coupé* on to one foot + slide on the other).



Music and dance are two art forms historically related. A lot of music was composed to serve as dance (in social and theatrical context).

Musicians and composers from the baroque period had a practical knowledge of dance, which influenced their compositions and performances.

These step patterns give us the information for the performance of these pieces, stimulating criteria and creativity in the artistic search.

Conclusions:

This research is based on the relation between music and movement through historical dance, its notation and execution make us question automatically about the many aspects (tempo, accents, character, among others) concerning a dance and will improve the comprehension and performance of the Courante.

The large number of Courantes raises often the interrogation if they were intended to be danced or not. Given their popularity, the amount of Courante suggests an offer/demand situation and is reflected in the production of harpsichord music. This had led to new techniques contributing to the evolution of the instrument and its literature.