



1627 IOANNES RUCKERS & 1635 IOANNES RUCKERS



LE CLAVECIN FRANÇAIS

Complete Works for Harpsichord
Nicolas Lebègue • Jacques Harel

Karen Flint, Harpsichord
Ioannes Ruckers (Antwerp, 1627)
Ioannes Ruckers (Antwerp, 1635)



Nicolas Lebègue (c.1631-1702)

Les Pièces de Clavessin (1677) • Second Livre de Clavessin (1687)
Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord, 1627 • Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord, 1635

Karen Flint, harpsichord

Disc 1

Les Pièces de Clavessin (1677)

1. *Pieces in D • I. Ruckers, 1627*

1. Prélude en d la ré sol	1:39
2. Allemande	3:44
3. Courante grave	2:32
4. Courante gaye & Double	2:55
5. Sarabande	2:45
6. Gavotte	1:06
7. Menuet	1:14
8. Canaris	1:36
9. Courante en D #	1:21
10. Sarabande grave	2:52
11. Gigue	2:02
12. Chaconne grave	3:37
13. Ballet	1:11
14. Gavotte	1:12

2. *Pieces in G • I. Ruckers, 1627*

15. Prélude en g ré sol ut ♭	1:23
16. Allemande	3:56
17. Allemande gaye	2:18
18. Courante grave	2:09

19. 2 ^{me} Courante	1:31
20. Sarabande grave	2:08
21. Gavotte	1:01
22. Menuet	2:07
23. Allemande	2:33
24. Courante en G ré sol ut #	1:28
25. Gigue d'Angleterre fort viste	1:24
26. Bourée & Double	1:39
27. Menuet	1:40
28. 2 ^{me} Menuet	2:19

3. *Pieces in A • I. Ruckers, 1627*

29. Prélude en a mi la ré	1:29
30. Allemande	2:27
31. Courante	2:16
32. 2 ^{me} Courante	1:35
33. Sarabande grave	3:06
34. Gigue	2:36
35. Menuet	1:27
36. 2 ^{me} Menuet	1:31

Total Time 73:52

Disc 2

Les Pièces de Clavessin (1677) *continued*

4. *Pieces in C • I. Ruckers, 1627*

1. Prélude en C sol ut fa	1:19
2. Allemande	3:18
3. Courante	2:03
4. 2 ^{me} Courante & Double	2:14
5. Chaconne	4:38
6. Bourée & Double	1:47
7. Gigue	2:05
8. Gavotte, Double & Double [M.R.N. Couperin?]	2:51
9. Menuet	1:36

5. *Pieces in F • I. Ruckers, 1627*

10. Prélude en F ut fa	1:31
11. Allemande	2:45
12. Courante	1:26
13. Courante	1:19
14. Gigue	1:35
15. Sarabande grave	2:38
16. Gavotte	1:05

Second Livre de Clavessin (1687)

1. *Suite en d la ré • I. Ruckers, 1635*

17. Allemande	2:29
18. Courante	1:41
19. Sarabande grave	2:38
20. Gigue	1:14
21. Menuet	0:46

2. *Suite en g ré sol ♭ • I. Ruckers, 1627*

22. Allemande	3:31
23. 2 ^{me} Allemande	2:08
24. Courante	1:27
25. Sarabande	2:15
26. Rondeau	0:38
27. Gigue	1:54
28. Passacaille	3:40
29. Menuet	1:11
30. Gavotte	0:58
31. Gavotte	0:52
32. Menuet	0:54

3. *Suite en a mi la ré • I. Ruckers, 1635*

33. Allemande	3:41
34. Courante	1:23
35. Sarabande	2:41
36. Gavotte	0:46
37. Menuet	1:06

Total Time 72:06

Disc 3

Second Livre de Clavessin (1687) continued

4. Suite en A mi la ré # • I. Ruckers, 1627

- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. Allemande | 2:53 |
| 2. Courante | 1:29 |
| 3. Sarabande fort grave | 2:44 |
| 4. Gigue | 1:47 |
| 5. Bourrée & Double | 1:43 |
| 6. Cannaris | 1:43 |

5. Suite en F ut fa • I. Ruckers, 1635

- | | |
|---------------|------|
| 7. Allemande | 2:42 |
| 8. Courante | 1:38 |
| 9. Gigue | 1:09 |
| 10. Sarabande | 2:23 |
| 11. Menuet | 0:44 |
| 12. Menuet | 1:04 |
| 13. Chaconne | 3:18 |

6. Suite en G ré sol ♯ • I. Ruckers, 1627

- | | |
|----------------------|------|
| 14. Allemande | 3:25 |
| 15. Courante | 1:32 |
| 16. Sarabande grave | 2:37 |
| 17. Chaconne grave | 4:37 |
| 18. Menuet | 1:01 |
| 19. Gigue | 2:13 |
| 20. Bourrée | 0:51 |
| 21. Air de hautbois | 1:26 |
| 22. Gavotte & Double | 1:59 |
| 23. Petite Chaconne | 2:29 |

Jacques Hardel (c.1643-1678)

Pièces de Clavecin

Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord, 1627

1. Pieces in D

- | | |
|----------------------------|------|
| 24. Allemande | 3:10 |
| 25. Courante | 1:45 |
| 26. Courante | 1:30 |
| 27. Courante de Mr. Hardel | 1:42 |
| 28. Courante (pour luth) | 2:11 |
| 29. Sarabande | 2:15 |
| 30. Gigue | 0:45 |

2. Pieces in A

- | | |
|--|------|
| 31. Gavotte & double
de la Gavotte [M.R.N. Couperin?] | 1:57 |
|--|------|

3. Pieces in C

- | | |
|---|------|
| 32. Courante d'Ardelle
(pour luth) | 2:10 |
| 33. Courante
(reconstructed by D. Moroney) | 1:53 |

Total Time	66:47½
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Sources:

Lebègue, Nicolas, *Les Pièces de Clavessin* (New York: Broude, PF256)

Lebègue, Nicolas, *Second Livre de Clavessin* (New York: Broude, PF257)

Herlin, Denis, *Jacques Hardel: Pièces de Clavecin* (Monaco: l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1991).

Marc Roger Normand *Couperin de Turin*, c.1695 (Geneve: Minkoff, 1993).

Disc 1, Track 23. *Allemande* by Lebègue, No. 15, f. 42^v.

Disc 2, Track 8. *Double de la Gavotte* possibly by M. R. N. Couperin, No. 42b, f. 75^v.

Disc 3, Track 31. *Double de la Gavotte* possibly by M. R. N. Couperin, No. 27b, f. 57^v.

Bauyn *Manuscript III* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, Rés. Vm⁷ 674)

Disc 3, Track 27. *Courante de Mr. Hardel*, f. 36^v.

Saizenay I (Besançon: Bibliothèque municipale, Ms 279152).

Disc 3, Track 28. Lute version of *Courante de Mr. Hardel* (Track 27), p. 4.

Disc 3, Track 32. *Courante d'Ardelle*, p. 24.

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Cover: Dancers from lid painting, Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord, 1620

Back Cover: Rose of Ioannes Ruckers Harpsichord, 1627

Photos by Scott Hewitt

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Nicolas Lebègue
(Laon, c.1631 – Paris, July 6, 1702)

Lebègue and his Contemporaries

Nicolas Lebègue belongs to a group of French harpsichordists along with Louis Couperin (c.1626-1661), Jean Henry d'Anglebert (1629-1691) and Jacques Hardel (c.1643-1678), who followed in the ground-breaking style of Jacques Champion de Chambonnières (1601/2-1672), the founder of the French classical school of harpsichord playing and composition. Chambonnières was known for his expressive playing. Marin Mersenne in his *Harmonie universelle* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1636) writes:

Having heard le Sieur de Chambonnières play the harpsichord. . . I can only express my sentiments by saying that afterwards, one should listen to nothing else, whether one wants lovely airs and harmonies, or the beautiful touch or lightness and speed of his hands coupled with a very refined ear, one would say that this instrument has met its final master.

Chambonnières was not only a famous player but also a teacher, with most of the significant players in the next generation heavily influenced by him. He was also apparently directly instrumental in bringing Louis Couperin to Paris, where Couperin established a successful career around 1651 and finally received an appointment as organist at the church of Saint-Gervais in April of 1653. He held that position for the rest of his life, dying at an early age in 1661.

It is not known how Jean Henry d'Anglebert came to Paris, but he was one of Chambonnières many protégés. He was married in Paris in 1659, afterwards becoming organist to the Jacobins in the rue Saint-Honoré in 1660. In 1662 he bought the reversion of the post of the *ordinaire de la musique de la chambre du roi*

pour le clavecin from Chambonnières. He published an important book of harpsichord pieces, *Pièces de clavecin* (Paris: Jollain, 1689).

Jacques Hardel was the grandson of Gilles Hardel, an instrument maker in Paris, and the son of Guillaume Hardel and Marguerite Hurel. His father was a master lute maker. He studied with Chambonnières and according to Le Gallois in his *Lettre à Mademoiselle Regnault de Solier touchant la musique* (Paris: Michellet, 1680) “Hardel was the most perfect imitator of Chambonnières style.”

Of these four harpsichordists, Nicolas Lebègue was the next to youngest. While his name has come to be spelled Lebègue, it appears in his published music as le Begue, likewise his signature is often found as N. le Begue. He was the second French composer to have a collection of his harpsichord pieces engraved after Chambonnières, whose two books were published in 1670. Keyboard music was his main output with two volumes of harpsichord works: *Les pièces de clavessin*, (Paris: Baillon, 1677) and *Second livre de clavessin* (Paris: Lesclap, 1687) and three volumes for organ: *Les pièces d'orgue* (Paris: Baillon, 1676), *Second livre d'orgue*, (Paris: Lesclap, c.1678) and *Troisième livre d'orgue*, (Paris: de Baussen, c.1685). The works of L. Couperin, d'Anglebert, and Hardel only circulated in manuscript by 1677, when Lebègue's first book was published.



Les Pièces d'Orgue Composées par N. le Begue
Bibliothèque nationale de France, VM7-3107 (1)

Early Years

Lebègue was born in Laon, about 1631, the son of a miller-baker. Laon, founded by the Romans in the first century, is located northeast of Paris in Picardy. Its eleventh-century ramparts are well-preserved and its cathedral, Notre-Dame de Laon, was the model for the famous Chartres Cathedral.

The Lebègues were of humble origin, whose professions included millers, carpenters, masons, and rope-makers. Although most of the Lebègues were merchants, his uncle Nicolas, a violinist, for whom he was named, was a *maître joueur d'instrument* (master player) in Laon. It seems likely that his uncle had some part in his early musical education, although nothing is known about his training.

It is possible that Lebègue left Laon after his mother died in 1655. The first indication that he was in Paris is in the chapter records of Troyes Cathedral in 1661, in which he is recorded as “that famous organist of Paris.” In the same document, there is a record of payment for playing at the cathedral when he was passing through Troyes. He must have had an excellent reputation as an organist by that time.

While it is not known whether Lebègue studied with Chambonnières, it seems quite probable that he came in contact with him when they were both working in Paris. Lebègue’s harpsichord music was influenced by Chambonnières, with both having remarkably beautiful melodic lines, using a lute-derived and mostly three-part writing style with similar harmonic range.

Organist at the church of Saint-Merry, 1664-1702

Norbert Dufourcq in his biography *Nicolas Lebègue* (Paris: Picard, 1954) suggests that Lebègue’s first position in Paris might have been as organist at the

church of the Mathurins in the rue Saint-Jacques. However, his lifetime post was at the church of Saint-Merry from December 18, 1664 until his death in 1702. He became *Organiste du Roi* to Louis XIV at Versailles on June 19, 1678, where he was assigned to the October quarter. He shared the organist duties with three other famous organists after the four of them won the competition that was held to ascertain who would become organists to the king. The others were Jacques-Denis Thomelin (c.1635-1693) who served during the January quarter, Jean-Baptiste Buterne (c.1650-1727) in the April quarter, and Guillaume Gabriel Nivers (c.1632-1714) in the July quarter. Of these four organists, three were in their forties with well-established careers, with Lebègue being the oldest. Buterne, about 20 years their junior, must have been an exceptional player.

Jacques-Denis Thomelin came from a long line of musicians, who were active over several centuries. Jacques-Denis was organist during his life in three Parisian churches — Saint-André-des-Arts, Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie. Titon du Tillet in *Le Parnasse François* [Paris: Coignard, 1732] reported that crowds flocked to hear Thomelin on feast days, as one of the most talented organists of his age. According to Pierre Hardouin (*Revue de musicologie*: July, 1958), he married Héléne du Melin in November 1653. He was the teacher of François Couperin, becoming “a second father” to him after his natural father’s early death. Only two allemandes for harpsichord survive of Thomelin’s compositions, along with a motet, *Domine, salvum fac regem*. Sixteen anonymous organ works in three manuscripts (Paris: Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève F-Psg 2348, 2353 and 2356) may possibly have been composed by Thomelin.

Jean-Baptiste Buterne was born in Toulouse and later served at Pontoise. Only a little treatise survives in a manuscript copy, *Petites règles pour l'accompagnement*

(Paris: Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève F-Psg). He was also organist at Saint-Etienne-du-Mont from 1674 and succeeded his teacher Henry du Mont at Saint-Paul from 1684. He was known to have been active as a court harpsichord teacher.

Guillaume Gabriel Nivers was known for his three volumes of organ works, the first of which, published in 1665, is the first engraved volume of keyboard music in France, as well as for his sacred vocal compositions and his editing of Gregorian chants. He also published a theoretical treatise, *Traité de la composition* (Paris: Ballard, 1667), and a brief treatise on continuo playing – a guide to accompanying motets and plainchant “with wisdom and modesty” (Paris, 1689).

If one considers the number of times Lebègue’s compositions were copied or reprinted – there are five separate printed editions of *Les pièces de clavessin*, and three of the *Second livre de clavessin* – it is clear that he had considerable success as a composer. His most popular piece, the *Gavotte in C* written before 1661, occurs in twelve manuscript sources with six independent doubles written for it, one by Lebègue himself, one by Louis Couperin, one by Marc Roger Normand Couperin and three anonymous ones found in the Parville, Paignon and Schwerin manuscripts.

One day in 1686 at the church of Saint-Merry in the rue Saint-Martin, Nicolas Lebègue received some unusual visitors – the Siamese ambassadors – who came, according to the *Mercure galant* (Paris: November, 1686) “to hear the organ of this church, which enjoys the reputation of being as good as the organist is skillful. It afforded them great pleasure.”

Lebègue was reputed to be one of the best teachers in Paris and his students included Nicolas de Grigny, François d’Agincourt and Jean-Nicolas Geoffroy, as

well as possibly Gabriel Garnier, Gilles Jullien and Pierre Dandrieu (François-Sappey, Paris: Picard, 1982), all of whom became eminent organists.

When Lebègue was appointed organist at the church of Saint-Merry the organ case had just been rebuilt 17 years earlier in 1647 by Germain Pilon. The organ itself was built by Jean and François de Héman, and probably used parts of a former organ. Later in the 18th century and again in the 19th century it was rebuilt by the Cliquot family. The famous organists of Saint-Merry include Nicolas Lebègue, Jean-François Dandrieu, Camille Saint-Saëns and Norbert Dufourcq. Saint-Merry has a bell tower containing the oldest bell in Paris that was cast in 1331. Lebègue was much in demand to advise on organ building and in that capacity he traveled to Bourges, Blois, Chartres, Soissons and Troyes.

Les pièces de clavessin, 1677

The five sets of pieces in his first harpsichord book, *Les pièces de clavessin*, are systematically notated by key and each begins with a prelude, followed by one or two allemandes and one or two courantes. This volume contains the first published version of a prelude notated without measures by a French composer. Three of the five sets of pieces in his first book, and all of the suites in the second book have a sarabande placed after the courante(s). The exceptions (in the first book) are in the fourth set, *Pieces in C*, where there is no sarabande, and in the fifth set, *Pieces in F*, where the gigue comes before the sarabande. The other works in each group include some, but not all of the following pieces: gigue, gavotte, bourée, canaris, chaconne, passacaille, ballet and menuet. Only twice does Lebègue give any piece a unique title (*Gigue d’Angleterre* and *Air de hautbois*). The largest group, *Pieces in D*, numbers fourteen works.

This first book contains 51 pieces, to which I have added the *Allemande in G* [No. 15 (f.42^v)] by Lebègue, found only in the newly discovered Marc Roger

Normand Couperin de Turin Manuscript, c. 1695 (Genève: Minkoff, 1998). This *Allemande* complements the *Pieces* in G, which lack an *allemande* in G major. In addition I have included a *Double* for the *Gavotte* in C, [No. 42b (f.75^v)] also found in the Marc Roger Normand Couperin manuscript. It is possible that this *Double* was composed by Marc Roger Normand Couperin himself. In the first and second sets of pieces by Lebègue the first eight pieces are in D minor, followed by five or six pieces in D major, while in the third set only the 2nd *Menuet* is in the major. Most of his pieces are binary in form with the second section a little longer than the first. Often his cadences at the end of the first section of pieces in the minor are in the relative major, not the dominant. The pieces in the first book were most likely written over a period of 20 years, making them contemporary with the compositions of Louis Couperin.

In order to explain how to play his preludes Lebègue writes in the Preface to his first book, *Les pièces de clavessin*, 1677:

I have attempted to present the preludes as easily as possible, both for the Conformity and for the touch of the harpsichord, of which the normal manner of playing is to separate and to restrike the chords rather than to hold them down together, as on the organ. If something is found [in these preludes] which is a little difficult and obscure, I ask those who understand [the style] to agree to add in any gaps [in knowledge], in view of the great difficulty of making this sort of Preluding sufficiently understandable to an individual.

[translation by Davitt Moroney]

Davitt Moroney explains: “It is unclear precisely what Lebègue meant by *Conformity* other than conforming to the style of harpsichord preludes.”

It is most fortunate that a copy of the letter still exists written by Lebègue on July 3, 1684 to Mr. William Dundass of England and transcribed onto the front

end paper of *Les pièces de clavessin*, the third issue of the 1677 printed edition belonging to the John Herrick Jackson Music Library (New Haven: Yale University). The letter is in response to Mr. Dundass’ query regarding how to play the preludes, providing the only known instructions on performance practice of French harpsichord preludes from a composer and rare evidence that Lebègue’s music had spread to England seven years after its publication.

A letter sent by Mr Le Begue concerning his preludes:

A Prelude is nothing other than a preparation for playing the pieces in a particular key, just as it is only for trying out the keyboard before playing the pieces, and of wandering around in the key in which one wants to play. That is why I did not bother to divide them into measures, as with pieces, because there is nothing fixed in them.

So to provide some clarification for playing preludes normally, first one must know that one has to play all the notes one after the other, that is to say, those that first appear to the eye, either on the lower staff or the upper staff, playing them first, and the others afterwards.

Second, the little circle [curved line] which starts at the lowest note [of a chord] and continues until the highest note [of the chord], indicates that one must hold all the notes that are included in the said curved line, without releasing the notes you have played, one after the other, and this [is] in order to hold all the harmony.

*Third, when after a big chord you find these *tenués* [signs to hold the note] or circles, and another part has a run or a moving part, that means to always hold the said chord during that passage.*

If there is a difficulty that one does not understand, I would be delighted to be informed so that I can give my opinion [about it].

[translation by Davitt Moroney]

Davitt Moroney notes that:

This letter from 1684 confirms three essential points: (1) the word *tenué* (“held”) was a standard Parisian term for the wavy and curved prolongation lines found in preludes, following notes that should be held; (2) these *tenués* should usually be held for as long as indicated by the length of the curved lines; (3) when a chord is thus arpeggiated, the player should normally finish the chordal figure in whichever hand it occurs, before going on to play a run or moving part in the other hand (and the implication is, “no matter what the vertical alignment looks like”).

The terminology *tenué* comes from the fact that notes are “held” and are thus qualified in French by the feminine plural adjective *tenués*; the adjective then came to be used on its own as a noun, referring to the curved lines themselves (or what Lebègue calls the “little circles”). Saint-Lambert in *Les Principes du Clavecin* (1702; in ch. VI, and the *Remarques*, p. 61-62) also calls these signs *tenués*, explaining that they are used almost exclusively in preludes and can be used to compose notes of indeterminate length, “just what one wants” (*on compose cette durée telle qu’on la veut*).

The title page of the second edition of *Les pièces de clavessin*, published in Amsterdam, contains a sentence that demonstrates that the style of the pieces was not familiar to the local populace. Since groups of dance pieces were well known at that time, it must have been the preludes that needed explanation.

Since many people do not know the manner in which these pieces should be played and therefore, cannot understand their beauty, those who are curious should apply to Monsieur Marquis, harpsichord master in Amsterdam.

In the preface to Lebègue’s *Les pièces d’orgue*, 1676, he acknowledges the importance of tempo and hopes that:

All who will do me the honour of playing these pieces may wish to play them according to my intention, that is to say . . . with the proper tempo for each piece (Andrew Parrott, *Early Music*, February, 2013, P. 38).

Guidonian Solmization System and Hexachords

The names used by Lebègue in his “préludes” and “suittes” (original spelling) to indicate what we think of as keys relate to the Guidonian solmization system in which the hexachords presented three different kinds of six-note scales, using the seven diatonic notes, plus Bb.

- the **hard** hexachord: G_A_B // C_D_E = Ut_Re_Mi // Fa_Sol_La
- the **natural** hexachord: C_D_E // F_G_A = Ut_Re_Mi // Fa_Sol_La
- the **soft** hexachord: F_G_A // Bb_C_D = Ut_Re_Mi // Fa_Sol_La

Each hexachord, whether starting on G, C, or F contains two whole steps on each end around a central half step. The solmization syllables used by Lebègue not only indicate the pitch center, but also the type of hexachord that is used. For instance, the title of the first prelude, *Prélude en d la ré sol*, indicates the piece is in D minor and also identifies the hexachords used to identify the D as *soft*, *natural* and *hard*. A triple syllable after the D indicates the position in three hexachords, a double syllable would indicate a position in two hexachords. To increase the range of notes available in the hexachord system, one can use a common note as a stepping-stone to mutate from one hexachord to another.

In the standard hexachord of *musica recta*, or “proper music,” all the diatonic notes, plus Bb, are without raised or lowered pitches, but in later uses of the hexachord, when altered semi-tones were desired, composers invented “fictional” hexachords, that is, transposed ones starting on notes other than G, C, or F, and from this comes the term *musica ficta*.

As a church organist, Lebègue was influenced by an older style of music, using modes and hexachords, but treating them in such a way as to be forward thinking. In his first book he gives an ornament table identifying four signs – *tremblement*, *pincement*, *coulé* and *harpegement*. He often uses pairs of dances, such as allemandes, courantes, menuets, gavottes, contrasting the pairs frequently with a grave followed by a gaye. He adds petite reprises not only to most sarabandes, but also on occasion to his courantes, gavottes and menuets. His music uses chromatic alteration, deceptive cadences and especially suspensions – one of the most expressive ornaments of the French harpsichord school – to great advantage.

Second livre de clavessin, 1687

Beginning with his *Second livre de clavessin, 1687* Lebègue titles the sets of pieces “*suittes*,” the first time that title is used in French harpsichord music. There are no preludes in this volume. All of the “*suittes*” start with an allemande, and contain one or two courantes, a sarabande, a gigue and a menuet except the third *Suite en a mi la ré* that has no gigue, and the fourth *Suite en A mi la ré #* that has no menuet. The last two pieces in the second *Suite en g re sol b* are unusual in that they are in the relative major (B flat)—the only time this key change occurs. In the *Suite en F ut fa* in this volume, Lebègue once again places the gigue before the sarabande. Since the gigue is printed on three pages, there is no way that a different pagination would have avoided a page turn. Thus, it is

likely that he sometimes wished to utilize this early placement of the gigue. The second book contains 44 pieces with more pieces titled chaconne and passacaille than in the first book. One piece, titled *Rondeau*, occurs only once in his harpsichord music.

Like his colleagues, Lebègue adopted the *style brisé* (a broken or arpeggiated texture) for the middle voices in his compositions, which is derived from lutenists’ style of playing, as first written down by Robert Ballard in his lute books of 1611 and 1614. Seventeenth-century harpsichordists used this method of writing to give subtle expression to the harmony and to allow the sound of the instrument to continue for a longer period. Lutenists used arpeggiation to play polyphonic music, because they needed two hands to play a single note. They played the treble and bass lines clearly, and sketched in the inner voices. It was that “baroque” texture that appealed to the French harpsichordists.

Lebègue explored using different dance pieces in the second book, including the *Air de hautbois* – a possible transcription from a theatrical work, and a very simple, but utterly charming *Petite Chaconne* that ends the book. It is clear from the order in which his pieces are printed, that he did not think of a suite in rigid terms. There is fluidity to his selection of pieces within each suite. The eleven suites that he published range in size from the smallest (5 pieces) to the largest (14 pieces).

The Le Nain Brothers, Lebègue’s Cousins

As far as is known there is no surviving portrait of Nicolas Lebègue, however, he had three cousins, the offspring of his mother’s uncle, who became famous painters –Antoine, Louis and Matthieu Le Nain, who lived and worked in Paris. Their works were frequently unsigned, however, if a signature was present, it was only the family name. As a result their paintings are almost all attributed simply

to the Le Nain brothers. One of these cousins, Matthieu, became the official painter of Paris in 1633, and was later made a *chevalier*. Matthieu painted *Portrait of a Man* now in the Musée Crozatier in Le Pui-en-Velay, which very much resembles one of the three men in the Le Nain painting in the National Gallery in London, titled *Three men and a Boy* (1647-48) which is thought to be a portrait of the three Le Nain brothers. Might the young figure (thought to be a boy by the National Gallery) in that same painting possibly be their cousin, Nicolas Lebègue?



Le Nain Brothers, *Three Men and a Boy*, about 1647-8.
© National Gallery, London / Art Resource, NY

Final Will and Obituary

Nicolas must have been a very kind and generous person, for late in his life (1691), he loaned an enormous sum of money – 4000 livres – to Louis Gouffé and his wife Marie-Anne Garnier (of a Parisian organ family) for a year. It appears never to have been paid back. That amount of money would probably have been the equivalent of about six or seven years of wages – possibly a large part of his life savings.

Financial difficulties overtook Lebègue at the end of his life, and because of his lack of money he took in a lodger in 1693, a certain merchant, named Grabu, who was both untidy and always behind in his rent. A document of May 5, 1694 showed that he owed Lebègue 380 livres. It is not clear that this debt was ever repaid. The combination of these two debts owed him, plus the fact that the city of Paris levied extra taxes on organists and teachers of harpsichord in 1696 in order to balance the budget, might have been the cause of his financial woes. Added to that was a serious bout of illness, that was reported in the *Mercur galant* (Paris: November, 1699):

Suffering from great pains for several months, after an expert consultation, which leaves no doubt that his pains were not brought on by gallstones, he resolved to submit himself to an operation. It was much for a man of over sixty to undergo, but M. Colo, one of the most able and experienced in this type of operation to have appeared up until now, performed it so well that success was all but guaranteed by his ministrations. So it was that at the beginning of last month M. le Begue submitted himself to surgery. During the operation he experienced the greatest pain he had thus far suffered; he remained firm, saying nothing but that which welled up internally from his truly Christian heart. Finally, after eight days, he was found to be out of danger, and he is presently in perfect health and awaiting the happy moment when he may return to his duty at the Chapel Royal. As is well known, His Majesty honors him with a particular esteem, and [Lebègue] has never arrived at court without being welcomed with hearty applause.

[translation by Matthew Hall]

Nicolas was back at work by the end of 1700, but had to borrow a large amount of money that year, possibly to pay for his operation. Finally, in 1702 the king

awarded him a 500 livres pension for *bons offices* (good service). It is unclear whether Lebègue ever received that pension, since he died within a few months.

In anticipation of his coming demise, Lebègue made his final will with provisions for distributing the money owed him, so perhaps he was unwilling to ask to be repaid during his lifetime.

He asked the Churchwardens of Saint-Merry to honor his thirty-seven years as organist of the parish and grant him the right to be buried in the church. He requested that his burial be done with simplicity, with mass said with his body present and that 12 Low Masses be said that day in the church.

To his old friend Lorge, he left 400 livres. He gave his three maiden nieces Barbe Andrieux, Marie Françoise Andrieux, and Marie Claude Andrieux half of what remained in principal and interest from Gouffé and his wife. He gave the children of his deceased sister Marie Lebègue and half-sister Marguerite Naudet, the other half of what was due him from Gouffé and his wife. He gave his godson Nicolas Lezancourt, hosier, the sum of 140 livres.

He left Jeanne, his maid, the sum of 440 livres, on top of any outstanding wages and also a spoon and fork of silver. (She must have been the person who was with him during his final illnesses. It is touching that besides leaving her a substantial sum that would set her up well for life, he also sweetly gave her a silver spoon and fork – perhaps ones that she much admired). Lebègue left his harpsichord and harpsichord manuscripts to his nephew Nicolas Andrieux, to do with them as he pleased, this being his only bequest to him; his spinet to Noël Cognet de Grantins, organist to the Augustinians in Paris; and his organ music to his cousin Henry Mayeux. Mayeux refused his inheritance and all Lebègue's organ manuscripts went to the nephew Nicholas Andrieux. The remainder of his

effects he gave to his nephew Antoine Andrieux, surgeon. Finally in August 1702, Abbé Lyon, his executor, collected the outstanding 3150 livres due Lebègue from the Gouffé loan.

Nicolas Lebègue's obituary occurred in the *Mercure galant* (Paris: July, 1702):

Here, awaiting the resurrection of the dead and the life of the ages to come prefigured by immortality, rests the body of that honorable man Nicolas Lebègue, a native of the city of Laon, who in life was an organist of the King's Chapel and of this church [Saint-Merry] which he served for more than forty years, with as much edification as esteem; his well-known probity of life won him as many admirers as his virtue, which was born of his great merit. He sacrificed all to God whenever he felt himself able to fulfill His holy will with pious works. He always regarded his friends and family with a spirit of goodwill and affection, and his generosity made him the subject of the most tender gratitude. He loved the poor and made them the first inheritors of his savings, for he himself by his own austerity was the very image of evangelical poverty. He contributed to the beautification of several holy places, giving liberally and doting on the spouse of Jesus Christ [the Church] with prayers and foundations [endowed services]. He became the love of all people, the charm and ornament of his art, the delight of his prince who honored him so many times with special distinction; [he was] religious in his conduct, rigorous and vigilant in his duties, and always severe with himself, an enemy of pomp and applause; he strove only to seek the kingdom of God and divine justice, such that he might not be deprived of anything in eternity. Finally, after long and hard trials of his consummate patience, armed with all the sacraments, ceaselessly hoping in His mercy which he proclaimed even unto his last breath, and full of resignation, love, and faith in Jesus Christ, he—universally

beloved, missed, and mourned—gave up his spirit in peace to the Lord on July 6, 1702 at the age of 72.
[Translation by Matthew Hall]

His estate inventory describes the objects in his second-floor music room, which adjoined his bedroom and overlooked the courtyard of his apartment. It included:

- *Two walnut pedestal tables, a walnut cabinet with eight drawers, & a chest*
- *A pendulum clock by Théodore de Blère in a case decorated with copper*
- *Six chairs, two armchairs & two stools in walnut, stuffed & upholstered, fringed in silk*
- *A walnut mirror & walnut bookshelf*
- *Sixteen framed paintings depicting persons and flowers, a wooden cross, decorated with mother-of-pearl, an urn, six gilded pots, two glass sconces, all on the mantelpiece*
- *A chandelier, five carafes & a large enameled goblet*
- *A thermometer in a gold fixture*
- *A two-manual Denis harpsichord on a walnut stand*
- *A bass viol, tenor viol [contrepartye], theorbo, treble viol, and a violin*

I was drawn to Lebègue's music at first through my love of seventeenth-century French keyboard music, and upon first playing his pieces, I was struck by the uniqueness of his music's sound. At first it seemed awkward to me, but I discovered that the only complete modern edition has many errors. Therefore, I have based my performance on the works of Nicolas Lebègue in the Performers' Facsimilies (New York: Broude, PF256, 257), taken from the Irving S. Gilmore

Music Library, Yale University (New Haven: Mc 20 L 49b) and The British Library (London: K. 10a 15).

Lebègue uses many long notes with trills placed above and below them, requiring 5-4 fingering of the trills and big reaches for the hands. He must have had large hands. But, the more time I spent playing his music, the more I became very touched by his tender and exquisite melodies and the vocal quality of his writing. When one reads descriptions of his music, there are often disparaging comments, but I think those remarks were made by persons who have not taken the time to really get to know his music. In my opinion, his harpsichord works are great treasures, which merit exploration by many more harpsichordists.

Jacques Hardel (c.1643-March, 1678)

Jacques Hardel's family was known to have been living in Paris from the beginning of the seventeenth century. He was the son of Guillaume Hardel and Marguerite Hurel, who were married in 1641. A sister, Françoise, was born in 1642. Although Jacques' exact birth date is not known, it is documented that he became a godfather to Jacques Lacman in October 1663. One can assume that Hardel was at least twelve years old then and quite possibly older. Louis Couperin wrote a double for Hardel's famous *Gavotte in A minor* and since Louis died in 1661, it seems logical to surmise that Hardel was probably born sometime around 1643.

Hardel found a place at court in the service of Monsieur, Louis XIV's brother where he taught Mademoiselle, the daughter of Monsieur and Henriette d'Angleterre. Hardel's pieces delighted the court. Henriette's other harpsichord teacher was Jean Henry d'Anglebert. In 1676 Hardel became *Officier de son*

Altesse royale Madame, Elisabeth-Carlotta of Bavaria, Monsieur's second wife. Hardel owned miniature portraits of both Monsieur, Madame and Louis XIV, each encircled with diamonds, which must have been gifts given to him by the royal family.

Le Gallois in his *Lettre à Mademoiselle Regnault de Solier touchant la musique* (Paris: Michellet, 1680) states that Louis XIV "took singular pleasure" in hearing Hardel's pieces "every week played by Hardel himself in concert with the lute of the late Porion." Le Gallois makes it clear that Hardel was one of the best pupils of Chambonnières. He was known as the "most perfect imitator of the great man [Chambonnières], whose genius he entirely possessed." He took care of him during his final illness, writing down his last pieces from dictation. Chambonnières left Hardel all of his music.

Teaching was Hardel's primary profession, with Nicolas Fleury being the only one of his pupils who was reputed to play with Hardel's touch. As a sign of friendship with Gautier, one of his students with whom he lived, Hardel left him all of his own pieces and also all of Chambonnières music that he had inherited.

Like Louis Couperin, Hardel never married and died at the age of 35 at the house of his sister, Françoise, who inherited from him.

The inventory of Hardel's possessions at the time of his death includes:

- A large harpsichord with two keyboards in the style of Philippe Denis on a walnut stand – value 300 livres
- An *espinette* by Jerome in an inner/outer case – 55 livres
- Treble and bass viols (Medard style) – 60 livres
- 6 treble viols & 1 bass viol – 55 livres
- Lute (Bologna) – 40 livres

- 4 Mendolles & 4 lutes – 12 livres
- 12 *poches* (pocket violins), 10 bows, 3 cases, 2 *theorbos* – 18 livres
- Various pieces of spruce for spinets
- In a small cabinet, a little harpsichord hammer, all in silver plate, gilded (a tuning hammer)

Hardel's pieces for harpsichord were never published, but occur in at least 13 keyboard manuscripts and a couple of lute manuscripts. Both Lebègue and Hardel had gavottes that became their most popular pieces. His *Gavotte in A minor* occurs in at least 11 keyboard manuscripts, plus lute, flute, vocal and violin manuscripts. I have included a *Double* for his *Gavotte in A* from the Marc Roger Normand Couperin manuscript that was possibly composed by Couperin himself. The most complete set of pieces by Hardel is found in the Bauyn manuscript, Part III — six *Pieces in D*, *Allemande*, three *Courantes*, *Sarabande*, *Gigue* and the *Gavotte in A minor*. There are two pieces written in lute tablature that I have included in this recording, although one is a copy of a harpsichord piece, bringing the total number of original pieces to eight. In this CD the third courante is repeated in a lute version, and the final piece, *Courante pour luth in C* is given twice, once in the lute version and finally in a reconstruction by Davitt Moroney.

Hardel was greatly influenced by his teacher, Chambonnières, with his pieces having strong melodic lines. His base lines, however, were more active. The low tessitura of some of his pieces reminds one of French lute music. I find his music stunningly beautiful, especially the *Allemande in D*.

Karen Flint
Wilmington, Delaware
February, 2014

Karen Flint, harpsichord

Karen Flint, harpsichordist and artistic director of Brandywine Baroque since its founding, teaches harpsichord at the University of Delaware. With Brandywine Baroque, she performs on an annual series of concerts held in Wilmington and Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Ms. Flint established the Dumont Concerts in 2003, a weekend festival of harpsichord recitals. Now called Harpsichord Heaven, the programs are given on her collection of antique instruments in Delaware. Ms. Flint studied harpsichord with Edward Parmentier and Egbert Ennulat and organ with Fenner Douglass and Paul Terry. She has degrees from Oberlin Conservatory of Music and The University of Michigan.

Her recordings include: *Complete Harpsichord works of Nicolas Lebègue and Jacques Handel*; *Complete Harpsichord Works of Elizabeth Jacquet de La Guerre*; *Les Pièces de Clavessin* by Jacques Champion de Chambonnières; *The Complete Harpsichord Concertos on Antique Instruments* by J. S. Bach with Davitt Moroney & Arthur Haas; *Violin Sonatas Op. 5, 1-6* by Arcangelo Corelli; *Cantates Françoise*, works by Clérambault and Jacquet de La Guerre; *Love in Arcadia: Duets and Trios* by Handel; *Cello Sonatas* by Boismortier; *Oh! The Sweet Delights of Love: Music by Purcell*; *The Lass with the Delicate Air: Songs from the London Pleasure Gardens*; and *C. P. E. Bach Trio Sonatas* on the Plectra label; plus *The Jane Austen Songbook* with Julianne Baird on the Albany label. For more information visit www.brandywinebaroque.org.

Ioannes Ruckers Harpsichord, Antwerp, 1627

Ioannes Ruckers (1578-1642), the most famous member of the illustrious Flemish family of harpsichord makers, built this two-manual instrument in Antwerp in 1627. Ioannes was the son of Hans Ruckers (c.1550-1598), founder

of the Ruckers dynasty. The 1627 Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord was in the Château de Villebon for many years. This château in the Loire Valley was once the seat of the Duc de Sully (1560-1641), the great minister of Henri IV.

Originally the instrument had two registers with non-aligned keyboards sharing one 8-foot and one 4-foot choir, pitched a fourth apart. The instrument was almost certainly restored by Nicolas Blanchet in Paris in 1701, who installed new dated keyboards, modified the jacks and range and added a new stand, lid and black exterior decoration. The range is GG/BB-c³, with a bass short octave and a split Eb key. This exceptionally beautiful Villebon Ruckers was restored to its early eighteenth-century state by John Phillips of Berkeley, California in 2009.

Ioannes Ruckers Harpsichord, Antwerp, 1635

The 1635 Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord was originally a single manual instrument with the usual Ruckers 45-note (C/E-c³) range, but with the unique disposition of two unison registers and an octave. It was rebuilt twice in the eighteenth century. In about 1700 it was converted to a double with the expanded range of 48 notes (C, D-c³) and later (possibly 1753), it was extended by four notes (BB, C# in the bass and c#³, d³ in the treble). Although the case was lengthened for the second keyboard, it was never widened. The instrument preserves its original exquisite soundboard decoration and printed papers on the interior. Other than a restorer's signature from 1907, nothing is known of its history before it was auctioned in 1997. John Phillips of Berkeley, California restored it to its mid-eighteenth-century state in 2005.