

## THE DANCES OF POSCH'S COLLECTION *MUSICALISCHE EHRENFREUDT* AS FUNCTIONAL MUSIC

METODA KOKOLE

Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU

**Izveček:** Poscheva zbirka za sestav štirih strunskih glasbil, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt* iz leta 1618, vsebuje štiri vrste plesnih stavkov, ki so namenjeni plesu ob plemiških svečanostih in jih lahko razumemo kot funkcionalno glasbo. Italijanski koreografirani plesi Cesara Negrija in Fabritia Carosa so bili v prvem desetletju 17. stoletja plemstvu – Poschevim mecenom –, ki se je zbiralo na graškem dvoru, dobro znani. V odsotnosti nemških virov so možnosti plesne izvedbe Poschevih skladb nakazane na podlagi opisov in razlag takratnih plesnih korakov in figur, kot so jih razložili v svojih plesnih priročnikih Thoinot Arbaeu ter že omenjena Negri in Caroso.

**Ključne besede:** Isaac Posch, instrumentalna ansambelska plesna glasba, Cesare Negri, Fabritio Caroso, glasba v plesni v rabi.

**Abstract:** Posch's collection of ensemble pieces for four string instruments, his *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt* of 1618, contains four types of dances, which were to accompany dancing during noble feasts, so may be considered functional music par excellence. Italian choreographed dances by Cesare Negri and Fabritio Caroso were cultivated in the first decade of the 17th century among the Inner-Austrian nobility in Graz, who were Posch's patrons. Given the complete absence of contemporary German sources concerning actual dance-steps, solutions for the practical reconstruction of Posch's dances may be taken from the descriptions of steps and figures in the dance manuals of Thoinot Arbeau, as well as in those of the already mentioned Caroso and Negri.

**Keywords:** Isaac Posch, ensemble instrumental dance music, Cesare Negri, Fabritio Caroso, music used for dancing.

On New Year's Day, 1618, Isaac Posch<sup>1</sup> sent by a special courier from Ljubljana to Regensburg a manuscript containing 49 four-part instrumental dances.<sup>2</sup> The printer Matthias Mylius

<sup>1</sup> For documentation on Posch, see the monograph by Metoda Kokole, *Isaac Posch "diditus Eois Hesperisque plagis - slavljem v deželah Zore in Zatona": zgodnjebaročni skladatelj na Koroškem in Kranjskem* [Isaac Posch "diditus Eois Hesperisque plagis - Praised in the Lands of Dawn and Sunset": An Early Baroque Composer in Carinthia and Carniola], Ljubljana, Založba ZRC, 1999; and also Metoda Kokole, *The Compositions of Isaac Posch - Mediators between the German and Italian Musical Idioms, Relazioni musicali tra Italia e Germania nell'età barocca*, ed. Alberto Colzani [...], *Contributi musicologici del Centro Ricerche dell'A.M.I.S.* 10, Como, A.M.I.S., 1997, pp. 87-120; Metoda Kokole, *Isaac Posch "Cremsensis". Neue Angaben über die Jugend des Komponisten in Regensburg*, *Die Musikforschung* 52 (1999), pp. 318-321; Metoda Kokole, *Venetian Influence on the Production of Early-Baroque Monodic Motets in the Inner-Austrian Provinces*, *Musica e storia* 8 (2000), pp. 477-507.

<sup>2</sup> The courier from Regensburg and "a couple of items to be sent to print" are mentioned in the letter

or Müller of Regensburg,<sup>3</sup> known to the composer from the time of his schooling at the town's humanistic school, the *Gymnasium Poeticum*, brought out some time during the same year the four partbooks containing the collection entitled *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, "Honourable music delights: that is, various new Balletas, Gagiardas, Courantas and German dances for four parts, as are suitable for playing at banquets and other aristocratic gatherings or nuptials, on all kinds of sting instruments."<sup>4</sup> In his preface addressed to the "reader" (i.e., to performers), the composer repeated that his compositions were suitable for giving pleasure at aristocratic dinners and for recreation afterwards; he was therefore publishing his pieces to please all musicians as well as friends of the art of dancing (see the facsimile reproduced as Figure 2).<sup>5</sup>

But what was the art of dancing to Posch's music like? How could his music be translated into the physical art of dancing? Are the compositions by Posch contained in the collection *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt* merely an accompaniment to dancing, or are they pieces of independent artistic worth in themselves, the dancing, conversely, being a mere accompaniment? Does this constitute art music (so-called "autonomous music"), or is it, rather, "functional music" – or could it perhaps be both simultaneously? These are the main issues that I intend to discuss on the basis of the surviving primary and secondary documentation.

Dance music is in fact regarded as an example *par excellence* of so-called "functional" music, this being a matter on which all theorists of music from the late 19th century onwards, including Eggebrecht and Dahlhaus, readily agree.<sup>6</sup> It is considered one of the clearest examples of applied music; of music intended for practical use – in German theoretical writings termed "Gebrauchsmusik";<sup>7</sup> of background music (*Tafelmusik* in the case of Posch's dance compositions); and even of so-called "light" music according to Adorno's definition. Dance music meets the criterion of the second major sociological category of functional music, being music that serves, and is composed for, special, concrete social purposes: i.e., for practical

---

written by the composer and sent to his employer of the time, the Prince-Bishop of Ljubljana, in October 1617. The document is reproduced in its entirety in M. Kokole, *Isaac Posch "diditius Eois Hesperisque plagis"*, op. cit., 1999, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> On Matthäus Müller (1608–1626), see Josef Benzing, *Die Buchdrucker des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, ed. Walter Bauhius, Beiträge zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesens 12, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1963, pp. 363–364; Jürgen Sydow, *Regensburger Buchdruckerkunst aus sechs Jahrhunderten*, München, Fachverlag für das Graphische Gewerbe, 1956, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Isaac Posch, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, Nürnberg, Matthias Mylius, 1618. A full transcription of the original title-page reads as follows: "Musicalische Ehrenfreudt. Das Ist: Allerley Neuer Balleten Gagliarden Couranten vnd Tänzten Teutcher arth mit 4. Stimmen wie solche auff Adelichen Panqueten auch andern ehelichen Convivijs vnd Hochzeyten Gemusiciert vnd auff allen Instrumentalischen Saytenspielen u. zur Fröligkeit gebraucht werden mögen: Erster Theil. Componiert vnd allen der Edlen MusicLiebhabern zugefallen inn Druck verfertiget: Durch Isaac Poschen Organisten."

<sup>5</sup> The entire text of the "Lectori benevolo" is transcribed in M. Kokole, *Isaac Posch "diditius Eois Hesperisque plagis"*, op. cit., 1999, p. 247.

<sup>6</sup> Albrecht von Massow, Funktionale Musik, *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie. Auslieferung 22*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1994, pp. 1–7.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Hinton, Gebrauchsmusik, *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie. Auslieferung 15*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1987/88, pp. 1–11.

use, contrary to autonomous music, which is a “pure” aesthetic category. Dance music of the 17th century was first defined as “Gebrauchsmusik”, and presented as “functional” music, in musicological writings by Paul Nettl in the early 1920s, this author’s main aim being to point out the distinction between music that was, according to him, composed for actual dancing and the dance-influenced “new” genre of instrumental music, the suite.<sup>8</sup>

Posch’s dances would, in fact, conform in theory to all the above-mentioned requirements of the sociological category of functional music. However, great caution is in order whenever a term introduced only in the early 20th century is used in any discussion of so-called “early music”, including Posch’s music, since recent research rightly lays stress on the incompleteness of the preserved reality, the written or printed pieces, which are in fact only skeletons that provide a framework of an autonomous art that lives in the interpretation, musical and physical, when the dances are physically performed. Only within the context of an actual performance do the dances become living embodiments of a social art, and the music gains its proper sense. Many factors are therefore involved in attempting to recover this past, and mostly “lost”, art.

Generally speaking, 17th-century music as a whole – and most particularly in the cases of early opera, certain women composers and instrumental music generally – has gained much in interest since the late 1980s. However, the social dance of the early decades of the same century, even though very intimately connected with numerous instrumental musical compositions – whether for lute, keyboard or ensemble – remains a rather elusive subject to study or discuss.<sup>9</sup> Sociological and anthropological studies are a little ahead in this respect, since the function of dancing within Renaissance and early Baroque societies is a better documented area than the actual dance-steps and their correlation with music.<sup>10</sup> Especially meagre is the tally of existing primary sources and secondary literature on social dancing in the German-speaking lands, which is of prime interest for the study of Posch’s dances – whether we look for such sources in the foremost world music dictionaries or in the most compendious international dance encyclopaedias.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Paul Nettl, *Die Wiener Tanzkompositionen in der zweite Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 8 (1921), pp. 45–175, and Paul Nettl, *Beitrag zur Geschichte der Tanzmusik im 17. Jahrhundert*, *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 4 (1922), pp. 257–265.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the range of subjects treated in the latest reference book on 17th-century music, *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Tim Carter and John Butt, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, where not even one chapter is devoted to dance music. See also the Preface to the above mentioned book by Tim Carter and John Butt, on pp. xv–xxvii.

<sup>10</sup> An excellent example of such a recent study is Jennifer Neville, *The Eloquent Body: Dance and Humanist Culture in Fifteenth Century Italy*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> See Julia Sutton [...], *Dance: Late Renaissance and Baroque to 1730: Before 1630*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 6, 2nd edition, London, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001, pp. 888–893, 908–907 (sources and bibliography); Sybille Dahms, *Tanz: III. Ende des 16. bis Anfang des 18. Jahrhunderts*, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Sachteil* 9, Kassel [...], Bärenreiter and Metzler, 1998, coll. 273–279, 393–396 (sources and literature); Ingrid Brainard, *Social Dance: Court and Social Dance before 1800*, *International Encyclopedia of Dance* 5, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 619–623; Julia Sutton, *Music for Dance: Western Music, 1520–1650*, *International Encyclopedia of Dance* 4, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press,

The known documentary evidence relating to early-17th-century dance in the German-speaking lands is – as all specialists unanimously agree – too fragmentarily preserved to permit any positively conclusive answers.<sup>12</sup> There are no known descriptions of dances, let alone specifications of the dance steps, movements, patterns or choreographies that could be directly applied to musical compositions with dance titles. In contrast, the music itself is preserved in abundance: there were hundreds of ensemble compositions bearing dance titles printed in Nuremberg alone in the first decades of the 17th century.<sup>13</sup> These include pieces with musical characteristics directly associated with dancing, and even compositions such as Posch's that were unequivocally intended for physical dancing. Nor can scarce secondary sources, such as iconographical evidence, letters, diaries, travellers' accounts, poems, etc. that inform us of the place and function of dance in society, fill the gap in our knowledge of how music and social dancing were concretely correlated.

However, dancing remained popular during this period, and the rich tradition, so well documented for the Italian court culture of the latter part of the previous century,<sup>14</sup> survived and evolved. Even in the complete absence of new textbooks on the art of dancing from the first decades of the 17th century, it therefore seems safe to assume that the descriptions of steps and movements, as well as the instructions on how to combine them, that were published in the famous dance manuals from the turn of the 16th century onwards (see Appendix), remained valid. Today's reconstructions, as pointed out by the foremost living specialists on historical dance, necessarily have at least one obvious deficiency, which is the lack of con-

---

1998, pp. 504–508. The main difference in the approach to the subject of dance music in these two major referential works is that in the *International Dance Encyclopedia* the music is treated as music for the accompaniment of dance, whereas in the *New Grove Dictionary* dance music is approached as a species of composition in its historical context.

<sup>12</sup> Wolfgang Brunner, *Städtisches Tanzen und das Tanzhaus im 16. Jahrhundert, Alltag im 16. Jahrhundert. Studien zu Lebensformen in mitteleuropäischen Städten*, ed. Alfred Kohler and Heinrich Lutz, Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit 14, Wien, Thomas Fröschl, 1987, pp. 45–64; Volker Saftien, *Ars saltandi. Der europäische Gesellschaftstanz im Zeitalter der Renaissance und des Barock*, Hildesheim [...], Georg Olms AG, 1994, pp. 1–28, 360–427 (with extensive bibliography); Irmgard Jungmann, *Tanz, Tod und Teufel. Tanzkultur in der gesellschaftlichen Auseinandersetzung des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Musiksoziologie 11, Kassel [...], Bärenreiter, 2002 (with bibliography); and G. Yvonne Kendall, [the review of] *The Almain in Britain, c.1549–c.1675* [...], *Music and Letters* 86 (2005), pp. 109–114: 109–110.

<sup>13</sup> See Warwick Edwards, *Sources of Instrumental Ensemble Music: 4. Germany*, *Grove Music Online*, <http://nukweb.nuk.uni-lj.si:2151> (3 January 2007).

<sup>14</sup> From 1581 to 1630 there appeared a number of printed dance manuals that are closely interrelated, both choreographically and musically. Taken together, they clearly reflect the dance practice of the second half of the 16th century up to the year 1630. Especially important sources are: Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchésographie*, Lengres, Jehan des Preys Imprimeur & Libraire, 1588 – ed. and transl. by Julia Sutton (*Orchesography*, New York, Dover Publications, inc., 1967); Fabritio Caroso, *Nobiltà di dame*, Venetia, Muschio, 1600 – ed. and transl. by Julia Sutton (*Courtly Dance of the Renaissance: A New Translation and Edition of the Nobiltà di dame (1600)*), New York, Dover Publications, inc., 1995); Cesare Negri, *Le gratie d'amore*, Milano, Ponti & Piccaglia, 1602, and reprinted under the title *Nuove inventioni di balli*, Milano, Bordone, 1604 – [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri). Materials are now mostly accessible through facsimile reprints, transliterations, translations and commentated editions, many of them freely available through the internet – the pages are listed in the Appendix.

tinuous tradition.<sup>15</sup> Dancing skills that in the 16th as well as the 17th centuries were essential parts of a basic vocabulary of movements and rites of accepted social etiquette, and which were cultivated daily by the nobility and their middle-class emulators, are unfortunately now lost. Thus all reconstructions made in the 21st century cannot but be but historically more or less informed reinventions based on combinations of known steps, movement patterns and rules brought together by personal inventiveness – such as were indeed the choreographies of local court or civic dancing masters in the 16th and early 17th centuries.

Of special importance for the discussion of Posch's 1618 dances are two manuals by the 16th-century Italian dancing masters Fabritio Caroso and Cesare Negri printed in 1600 and 1602, respectively (see Appendix). The former was reprinted as late as 1630, and both are known to have been in circulation via the teaching activities of the authors' students all over Europe – from France, Spain and the Netherlands to Germany, Poland and, last but not least, Austria, as we are informed by Cesare Negri himself in the first part of his manual.<sup>16</sup> Negri lists no fewer than forty-one of his colleagues and students and itemizes their prestigious posts – whereas affluent citizens could afford to engage the services of a dancing master in their own houses, others needed to engage a master from one of the then flourishing dancing schools – and special skills.<sup>17</sup>

Negri's and Caroso's dance steps, patterns and choreographies have many common traits and are compatible with what is known of the international dance language of the time. Their explanations, combined with information from a slightly earlier French dance manual by Thoinot Arbeau<sup>18</sup> intended for less exalted circles – the lesser nobility, the gentry and wealthy commoners, seem equally plausible as the basis for an attempt to reconstruct the dances published by Isaac Posch in 1618 for the pleasurable recreation of the local Inner-Austrian nobility, his patrons. Arbeau's attraction, for present-day purposes, lies especially in his detailed correlation between dance steps and music, as well as in his clear explanations of movements and steps, many of which are illustrated with schematic figures.

So far as this is possible to gauge from the secondary historical evidence, the general style of dancing in Europe – the Habsburg provinces being no exception – was, during the period in question, more or less international. The leading exponents remained, however, Italian dancing masters, whose activities are documented not only at the imperial courts of Prague and Vienna but also at smaller courts such as those of Munich and, notably, Graz, where, at the turn of the 16th century, Ambrosio Bontempo was active.<sup>19</sup> Assisted by members of the court chapel, especially lutenists and violinists,<sup>20</sup> Bontempo taught social

<sup>15</sup> On this aspect of present-day reconstructions of historical dancing, see Julia Sutton, Preface, and 4. Late-Renaissance Dance, in *Courtly Dance of the Renaissance*, op. cit., pp. v–vi, 21–30.

<sup>16</sup> Julia Sutton, Negri, Cesare, *International Encyclopedia of Dance 4*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 597–583.

<sup>17</sup> C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato primo* (fascimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 2–7.

<sup>18</sup> See note 14, above, and Appendix.

<sup>19</sup> Hellmut Federhofer, *Musikpflege und Musiker am Grazer Habsburgerhof der Erzherzöge Karl und Ferdinand von Innerösterreich (1564–1619)*, Mainz, Schott, 1967, pp. 60–62.

<sup>20</sup> Hans Hannater – lutenist; Hans Khuretin and Antonio Vigasi – both violinists. See H. Federhofer, op. cit., 1967, pp. 240, 92–93, 227–228.

dancing to the archducal family and the courtiers – the same aristocrats who were Posch's patrons – and busied himself with devising choreographies for noble feasts.

One such feast – a costumed ball at the Court in Graz in February 1608 – is rather well documented by a letter from Archduchess Maria Magdalena, sister of the future Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II, to her younger brother, then visiting Regensburg.<sup>21</sup> She reported that she herself and her ladies danced many Italian – obviously choreographed – dances, and interspersed among them, some German dances (“teutsche tanz”). One of her partners was the court dancing master Ambrosio Bontempo, whom she identifies simply as “Ambrosio”.<sup>22</sup> He arranged some dances especially for her. These dances included a Gagliarda and a Tourtilion for four dancers, as well as other dances, for which she gave three specific Italian titles.<sup>23</sup> Two of these I was able to identify with choreographed dances published in Negri's and Caroso's manuals, respectively: *Galleria di amor* and *Fiamma di amor*.<sup>24</sup> This proves, at least, that the Graz court dancing master Ambrosio Bontempo was well informed about Italian customs. But the traffic was two-way: as argued by Michael Malkiewicz in a recent article, Fabritio Caroso himself seems to have been aware of dances from the Inner-Austrian provinces, since he published in his 1581 manual *Il ballarino* a choreography for a dance called *Chirintina*, known locally as *Chiaranzana*.<sup>25</sup> Carinthia, Isaac Posch's homeland from 1614 onwards, was therefore not as isolated as one might imagine, and the interchange of social customs was at the turn of the 16th century – at least within the highest social strata – rather lively.

In this connection, it is of further interest that Maria Magdalena of Austria, who was a sister of Margareta – Queen of Spain, ruler of Milan and the dedicatee of certain choreographed dances by Negri and Caroso<sup>26</sup> – married, in October of the same year, the

<sup>21</sup> H. Federhofer, op. cit., 1967, pp. 48–49. The letter is reproduced in its entirety in *Graz als Residenz Innerösterreich 1564–1619. Katalog der Ausstellung*, Graz, Steiermärkische Landesbibliothek am Joanneum, 1964, pp. 371–374.

<sup>22</sup> On Bontempo, see also Hellmut Federhofer, *Graz Court Musicians and their Contribution to the Parnassus musicus Ferdinandeus* (1615), *Musica disciplina* 9 (1955), p. 170, n. 10.

<sup>23</sup> The original passage reads: “Dernach haben ich und der Ambrosy canary tanzt, darnach haben mir den *walota in terz* in 6 person tanzt, da hat aber der h[err] b[aron] Max und der Ambrosiy mit unß tanzt. Darnach haben mir *galleria di amor* auch in 6 persohn tanzt, darnach den *florido lilio* haben der h[err] b[aron] Max und ich und der Ambrosy und die gravin von Portia, darnach zu dem abzug da haben wir den *fiamma di amor* ...”. See *Graz als Residenz Innerösterreich*, op. cit., p. 371.

<sup>24</sup> *Galleria d'Amore* is one of the dances in Negri's manual *Le gratie d'amore*. See the description of its choreography in C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato terzo* (facsimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 189–296, with an engraving of two couples dancing. *La Fiamma d'Amore* is described in F. Caroso, *Il ballarino* (facsimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/caroso](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/caroso)), pp. 98–99, with music in lute tablature.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Malkiewicz, *Chirintina/Chiaranzana. Ein karintischer Tanz?*, *Musicologica Austriaca* 21 (2002), pp. 37–67.

<sup>26</sup> Negri's manual *Le gratie d'amore* was in fact dedicated to Margareta's husband and official ruler of Milan, the Spanish King Philip III, and the concluding dance of the entire collection was in fact dedicated to Margareta herself (“Brando dell'autore a Donna Margarita Regina de Spagna Nostra Signora”; see C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato terzo* (facsimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 291–296. Caroso dedicated to the Queen of Spain, Margareta

future Grand Duke of Florence, Cosimo II. On that occasion, sumptuous wedding festivities were prepared in Florence. These included *intermedii* with choreographed dances performed at the Pitti Palace on 22 October 1608 in the evening hours. One set of three dances (Alemana, followed by Gagliarda and Corrente), *Il primo ballo della Notte d'amore*, was composed by Lorenzo Allegri, a lutenist and musical director at the Florentine court; its music was later included in his collection *Il primo libro delle musiche*, for five to six instruments, which was printed in score with optional continuo in the same year as Posch's *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*.<sup>27</sup>

Allegri's dance set for *Il primo ballo* is, interestingly enough, based on the popular Florentine tune *Aria di Fiorenza*, which was itself modelled on Fabrizio Caroso's balletto *Laura suave*, published in his *Nobiltà di dame* of 1600,<sup>28</sup> which seems to be the source for many dances performed at the 1608 wedding. The printed dances were as a rule intabulated for lute, and at private festivities were performed by lutenists, but as Allegri's print evidences, they could be scored, on grander occasions, for instrumental ensemble. Negri, for example, published the music of his dances not only in lute tablature but also with the addition of a soprano melody in mensural notation, so as to indicate how the tablatures might be expanded in the context of performance by an ensemble. Proof that this practice occurred in Italy not only in the 16th century<sup>29</sup> but also in the early 17th century comes in Gasparo Zanetti's manual *Il scolaro*,<sup>30</sup> printed in Milan in 1645, which contains

---

of Austria, his dance *Alta Regina*: F. Caroso, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 156–157. Therefore, Maria Magdalena, during her years in Graz, was probably directly informed via her sister about the most up-to-date Italian dance repertoire, especially that promoted by Negri. On Cesare Negri's activities at the Milanese court, see also G. Yvonne Kendall, *Theatre, Dance and Music in Late Cinquecento Milan*, *Early Music* 22 (2004), pp. 74–95. Maria Magdalena was, in fact, a keen dancer, and is, for example, reported as having danced with her husband at the Florentine wedding festivities of 1617. See Luis Rosow, *Power and Display: Music in Court Theatre*, *The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Tim Carter and John Butt, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, 197–240: 215.

<sup>27</sup> Lorenzo Allegri, *Il primo libro delle musiche*, Venezia, 1618. See also Lorenzo Allegri, *8 Balli (1618) for five/six instruments with optional continuo*, ed. Bernard Thomas, Early Dance Music Series 18, Brighton and London, London Pro Musica Edition, 1991. Allegri “detto tedesco” was a Florentine of German parentage (1567–1648). From 1604 he was court lutenist. The two collections, by Allegri and by Posch, are both for instrumental ensemble using two treble G-clefs for the upper two voices (indicating the use of violins), and they were both intended for practical use. Allegri's pieces were intended for choreographed dances on specific occasions (danced by “paggi e Dame”), while Posch's compositions were possibly aimed at a slightly more diverse public, since the collection includes standard types of dance that could be performed by any member of the educated social strata, including also the lesser nobility and the bourgeoisie.

<sup>28</sup> *Laura suave* is the fifth fully choreographed dance included in Caroso's *Nobiltà di dame*, comprising a galliard and a *canarie*. See F. Caroso, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 162–172.

<sup>29</sup> Two major printed ensemble dance collections have survived from the mid-16th century: one by Francesco Bendusi (*Opera nova de balli a 4*, 1553) and the other by Giorgio Mainerio (*Il primio libro de balli*, Venezia, 1578), not forgetting pieces that circulated in manuscript form, such as those preserved today in London, British Library, in the Arundel Manuscript. On the latter, see *Sixteenth-Century Italian Dances, from British Museum Royal Appendix MS. 59–62*, ed. Joel Newman, The Penn State Music Series 12, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1966.

<sup>30</sup> Gasparo Zanetti, *Il scolaro [...] per imparar a suonare di violino, et altri stromenti*, Milano, 1645.

several examples of Negri's dance music from *Le gratie* set for string consort. Negri was, in fact, quite explicit about the performance of his dances by a consort, specifying, in his choreographical description, that the musicians made their first entrance to the accompaniment of four "viole da braccio" (instruments of the violin family) in one instance, and "entrano sonatori con quattro alpi [sic]" (harp consort) on the other,<sup>31</sup> the first setting, "Instrumentalischen Sayttenspielen", being recommended by Isaac Posch for his dances. A group of four musicians playing string instruments for the accompaniment of dancing was depicted by Christoph Murer around 1600 in his set of eight engravings dedicated to dancing among the nobility (see Figure 1).<sup>32</sup> Whether Posch himself was influenced directly by Italian masters, or whether he drew his preference for consort performance from the Anglo-German tradition, remains a mystery, however; but the knowledge of Caroso's and Negri's repertoire and style of dances among the nobility of the Austrian cultural domain certainly seems to have been strong enough to justify our considering them of relevance for the choreographical realization of Posch's dances.



**Figure 1**

Four string players accompanying noble dancers by Christoph Murer c. 1600<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> The first example occurs in the description of the dance *Il pastor leggiadro*, and the second in that of the *Ballo fatto da sei cavalieri*. C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 - *Trattato terzo* (facsimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 226, 174; see also G. Y. Kendall, op. cit., 2004, pp. 81-82.

<sup>32</sup> The portrayal of the musicians is the first in a set of eight scenes, the other seven representing dance couples in different positions. See *The Illustrated Bartsch* 19 (2), ed. Walter L. Strauss, New York, Abaris Books, 1988, pp. 90-97. The other eight engravings preserved together with those just mentioned depict first two musicians (playing bagpipe and treble shawm - typical folk instruments for accompanying dances) and then seven peasant dancing couples.

<sup>33</sup> *The Illustrated Bartsch*, op. cit., p. 90.



In describing dances that could be performed on Posch's music of the collection *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, I shall therefore refer to the elements and techniques of dancing as set forth in the previously mentioned most important and consequential Italian sources of the late 16th and early 17th centuries, while using the somewhat clearer information that can be derived from Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchésographie* of 1588.<sup>34</sup> These all provide detailed descriptions of the basic steps, discuss the many possible combinations of steps and movements – the so-called patterns – and describe the different variants of steps and patterns for the would-be improviser to learn, so that he may gain knowledge of a large repertoire of movements suitable for specified types of dance. In general, the emphasis lay on leg and footwork, with the torso erect and static, the arms relaxed except when engaged with a partner. Most steps are small, and the required footwork is vigorous, complex, deft and speedy. Hands are used for taking, clapping or holding the hilt of a sword, a hat or a flower, but are not usually raised above the head.<sup>35</sup>

The steps and figures listed in dance manuals are prescriptive rather than descriptive, since the provided choreographies fit only the given dances. There were no absolute rules; dancing masters or good dancers were expected to use imaginatively what they had learned from their dancing masters and assembled as their own vocabulary, and to improvise combinations of known patterns and variants so as to make one or more phrases coincide with the music. Improvisation was undoubtedly the most important and regular feature of any early-17th-century social dance. It should, however, be borne in mind that the skills of dancers in the early 17th century exceeded by far our current expectations of amateur dancing abilities, especially as a result of the time allotted to dancing practice in the daily education of the young.

But before discussing Posch's dances in the light of their dance function, let me briefly summarize some basic information on Isaac Posch and his career.<sup>36</sup> He was born around 1591 in Krems an der Donau in Lower Austria. In 1597 he moved to Regensburg in Bavaria, where until the autumn of 1606 or the spring of 1607 he frequented the humanistic school, the *Gymnasium Poeticum*. In Regensburg Posch was given training in music by the school's musical directors Andreas Raselius and Paul Homberger.<sup>37</sup> He completed in a relatively short time all six classes and became, as an *alumnus*, entitled to additional musical training in singing, organ and other instruments, especially the stringed instruments<sup>38</sup> that he suggested for the performance of his earliest known compositions, the four-part dances under discussion in this article. Nothing is known about Posch's whereabouts between 1607 and 1614, when he is recorded for the first time as being a more or less freelance organist under the patronage of the Carinthian Provincial Estates in Klagenfurt. In late 1617 the composer married Maria, born Strussnig (Slov. Stružnik), the daughter of a high-ranking civic official in Klagenfurt. Her surname suggests that she was of Slovenian descent.

---

<sup>34</sup> See note 14, above.

<sup>35</sup> See also Julia Sutton's exhaustive introductions to the editions of Arbeau and Caroso, cited in note 14, above.

<sup>36</sup> For further literature on Posch, see note 1, above.

<sup>37</sup> M. Kokole, *Isaac Posch "diditus Eois Hesperisque plagis"*, op. cit., 1999, pp. 38–41.

<sup>38</sup> Depicted as instruments for the accompaniment of dance in German-speaking areas, as already mentioned, also by Christoph Murer. See Figure 1 and note 32, above.

From 1617 to 1622 he was employed as organ builder by the Franciscan Convent in Ljubljana and by Tomaž Hren, Prince-Bishop of Ljubljana and a high ranking official at the Archducal court in Graz. The latter engaged Posch to repair a number of musical instruments at his residence in Gornji Grad. The 1621 dedication of his second collection of instrumental dances – to the Carniolan Provincial Estates – proves that his audience included members of the local Carniolan lay nobility. Posch died in late 1622 or early 1623.

Three printed collections of Posch's compositions have survived.<sup>39</sup> The first two – the *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt* of 1618 and the *Musicalische Tafelfreudt* of 1621, together with a joint reprint entitled *Musicalische Ehrn- und Tafelfreudt* (1626) – contain instrumental ensemble dances – while the third, the *Harmonia concertans* of 1623, comprises strongly Italianate, small-scale Latin sacred concertos.

Only one complete printed example of Isaac Posch's collection of dances, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, has survived. It belongs to the Proske library collection in Regensburg, along with an incompletely preserved manuscript transcription of the collection, which dates from the mid-17th century.<sup>40</sup> Both sources originate from the archive of the Gymnasium Poeticum. The manuscript item belongs to the oldest stratum of the library, the "Antiquitates Musicae Ratisbonensis". On the cover of each partbook there is a stamp, \* I S M \*, which was probably the mark of ownership of Jacobus Seulin, a minor composer himself and in the mid-17th century *cantor* at the Gymnasium Poeticum. Seulin's signature appears also in the only preserved print of this collection of Posch, printed on the same type of Regensburg paper as the majority of the school documents. The hypothesis that the volume was compiled for use in the school itself is also supported by a handwritten annotation, "pars mea", and, beneath the word "Rector", some accompanying calculations on the flyleaf at the back of the cantus partbook. Posch's four-part instrumental dances were probably used for practical purposes at the Gymnasium Poeticum, as *Tafelmusik* or even for dancing,<sup>41</sup> – as were dances from a number of collections by an older pupil of the same school, Valentin Haussmann, who was in many respects Posch's model.<sup>42</sup> The print is dedicated to

<sup>39</sup> All three are available in modern critical editions: Isaac Posch, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt* (1618), ed. Metoda Kokole, *Monumenta artis musicae Sloveniae XXX*, Ljubljana, ZRC SAZU, 1996; Isaac Posch, *Musicalische Tafelfreudt* (1621), ed. Metoda Kokole, *Monumenta artis musicae Sloveniae XXXI*, Ljubljana, ZRC SAZU, 1996; Isaac Posch, *Harmonia concertans* (1623), ed. Metoda Kokole, *Monumenta artis musicae Sloveniae XXXV*, Ljubljana, ZRC SAZU, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> The original print in the Bischöfliche Zentralbibliothek–Proske, Musikbibliothek, has the shelfmark D-Rp A.R. 424–428; the manuscript copy is shelfmarked D-Rp. A.R. 964–984 (in the latter, the complete altus part-book, as well as Gagliardas 9 to 12, Courantas 1 and 2, Tänze and Proportii 9 to 15 in the tenor part-book, are missing). The manuscript is recorded in Gertraut Haberkamp (ed.), *Sammlung Proske. Manuskripte des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts aus den Signaturen A.R., B, C, AN*, Kataloge Bayerischer Musiksammlungen 14/1 (Bischöfliche Zentralbibliothek Regensburg), München, Günther Henle, 1989, pp. 145–147.

<sup>41</sup> *Alumni* were – by special permission of the rector – allowed to accept commissions from burghers and the civic nobility to play at their private gatherings, weddings, dances etc., and thereby earn some pocket money. See Dominicus Mettenleiter, *Aus der musikalischen Vergangenheit bayerischer Städte: Musikgeschichte der Stadt Regensburg*, Regensburg, Fritz Gleichauf, 1866, p. 209.

<sup>42</sup> Valentin Haussmann (c.1560–before Nov. 1613) attended the Gymnasium Poeticum in Regensburg from about 1585 to 1590; while there, he was, like Posch, taught music by the *Kantor*, Andreas

the Carinthian Provincial Estates, Isaac Posch's noble patrons, many of whom were among the highest-ranking officials at the Archducal Court in Graz.

Figure 2

**LECTORI BENEVOLO S.**

**A** Elhier hastu günstiger lieber Leser/ etliche newe Balles-  
ten/ Gagliarden/ Couranten vnd Tantz/ Teutscher  
Art/ in eine solche Ordnung gerichtet/ das verhoffentlich ein  
nem jeden Music Verständigen dieselbe nicht vnangenehm sein  
wird. Dann erstlich hastu etliche Balleten/welche am tang-  
lichsten über die Tafel gemusicirt werden mögen. Nach disen  
hastu etliche Gagliarden vnd Couranten/ deren jeden inson-  
derheit ein Tantz darauff gehdrig/angehenck/ können beydes  
zur Tafel gebraucht/ oder darnach Getantz werden. Vnd  
weiln bißher ein grosse vnordnung der Proposition daher ent-  
standen/ in dem nemlich die meisten Componisten/ so dergleich-  
en sachen im Druck außgehen lassen/ keine oder doch wenig  
Proportionen ihren Tänzken zugesetzt/ vnd also ein jeder Mus-  
sificant seines gefallens (es sey recht oder nicht) dieselben Pro-  
portionirt: Hastu auch fürs dritte/ auff einen jeden Tantz/  
seine ordentliche Proportion/ wie sie jetziger zeit gebräuchig/  
vnd die fürnehmsten Tantzker darnach zu Tänzken pflegen.  
Vnd ob ich wol nicht willens gewesen/ diese Sachen der zeit in  
Druck zugeben/hab ich doch auff anhalten etlicher guter Hers-  
zen vnd Freund/ solches lenger nicht auffziehen/ sondern allen  
Musicanten/ vnd allen der edlen Kunst der Music Liebhabern  
zugefallen/dasselbige hiemit ins werck setzen wollen. Wollest  
also diese meine geringschätzige Arbeit/ biß der ander Theil/  
(so auff ein andere Manier dann dieser/ vnd geliebts G.Ditt/  
bald folgen soll/) hernach kompt/ im besten  
auff: vnd annehmen/ **V A L E.**

Facsimile of Posch's introduction addressed to the performers<sup>43</sup>

Raselius. Apart from his earliest prints, most of Haussmann's works were published in Nuremberg. His collection *Neue artige und liebliche Tänze* appeared during Posch's schooltime in Regensburg, and he was undoubtedly acquainted with the pieces. See also Martin Ruhnke and Klaus-Peter Koch, Haussmann, Valentin, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 11, 2nd edition, London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001, pp. 148–150.

<sup>43</sup> I. Posch, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, ed. M. Kokole, op. cit., p. XXXIII.

As Posch stated in his introduction for the benefit of performers, the four Balletas that open the collection were intended to be played at aristocratic meals, while the remaining compositions were suitable also for dancing afterwards.<sup>44</sup> They comprise fifteen suites – each made up of three dances: Gagliarda (or Couranta) followed by a German dance – Tanz and its “proportion” – Proportio, which in the mid-17th-century manuscript copy bears the name of “Nach Tanntz”. Posch’s preface supplies precious information on the way in which this kind of music was actually used. Regarding the extemporizing of *Nachtänze*, he complains that the practice followed by “most composers” of omitting the after-dance allows each musician to play it as he likes, leading to great disorder. A correct proportion, such as “the most distinguished dancers of today” (those possessing a wide knowledge of steps and patterns as well as the creative imagination to make good use of them) are accustomed to, is therefore provided for each German dance.<sup>45</sup>

It is interesting that in 1602 the aforementioned Valentin Haussmann had confirmed in his preface to *Venusgarten* what common sense already suggests: that after-dances could be improvised where needed, as this same composer demonstrated in an earlier collection known to Isaac Posch, the *Neue artige und liebliche Tänze*, first published in 1598 and later reprinted as many as five times up to 1606.<sup>46</sup> Many facts, indeed, lead us to the conclusion that Posch owes much to Haussmann, not only in that he follows the latter’s example of writing out after-dances, but also, and especially, in the sense of absorbing elements of the English<sup>47</sup> and Italian<sup>48</sup> styles clearly used by Haussmann, whom Posch probably knew through his music or even via personal contact during his years in Regensburg.

With his series of three-dance groups, like those of his contemporaries Johannes

<sup>44</sup> The original passage reads, in transcription: “Dann erstlich hastu etliche Balleten welche am tauglichsten über die Tafel gemusicirt werden mägen. Nach disen hastu etliche Gagliarden vnd Couranten deren jeden insonderheit ein Tanz darauff gehörig angehenckt können beydes zur Tafel gebraucht oder darnach Getantz werden.” See also the facsimile in Figure 2 and note 5, above. The accompanying laudatory poem by Iacobus Preuelius – of whom we still do not know anything – to “his dear friend and teacher”, entitled *De Harmonica operis huius venustate* (On the exquisite beauty of the harmonic work), compares Posch’s “Muse” in superlative terms to the most illustrious classical examples from poetry, mythology and history, each of them connected in some way to banquets or weddings. The entire poem is reproduced in M. Kokole, *Isaac Posch “diditus Eois Hesperisque plagis”*, op. cit., 1999, p. 248.

<sup>45</sup> In the original: “Auff einen jeden Tanz seine ordentliche Proportion wie sie jetziger zeit gebräuchig vnd die fürnembsten Tänzer darnach zu Tanzen plegen.” See also the facsimile in Figure 2 and note 5, above.

<sup>46</sup> See Melchior Franck, Valentin Haussmann, *Ausgewählte Instrumentalwerke*, ed. Franz Bölsche, *Denkmäler deutscher Tonkunst* 16, Leipzig, Breitkopf, 1904, pp. VIII–XV, 115–120 [*Neue artige und liebliche Tänzle (1602)*] and 123–128 [*Venusgarten (1602)*], and Valentin Haussmann, *25 dances for 4 instruments*, ed. Bernard Thomas, *German Instrumental Music* 6, London, London Pro Musica Edition, 1975.

<sup>47</sup> On English style and its influence on Continental composers, see Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court 1540– 1690*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. 144–172.

<sup>48</sup> Haussmann is known for example to have written German *contrafacta* on Italian four-voice canzonette as well as composing Italianate pieces. See *The four-voice canzonettas Orazio Vecchi, with original texts and contrafacta by Valentin Haussmann and others*, ed. Ruth I. DeFord, *Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance* 92–93, Madison, A-R Editions, 1993.

Thesselius, Paul Peuerl and Johann Hermann Schein, whose printed collections came out in 1609, 1611 and 1617, Posch made an important contribution to the development of the formation of the so-called early-Baroque variation suite, basing the three dances on the same or similar motivic material.<sup>49</sup> All movements within each of these suites display a unity of key, and follow an established and consistent succession of dances, based on the alternation of duple and triple metre, which parallels an alternation of slow-paced and fast dances.<sup>50</sup>

The starting point of Posch's series of three dances is the traditional dance – after-dance relationship, in which the Proportio is merely a rhythmic variant, manipulating the metre and note-values, of the original Tanz. The relation of the “theme” to the Gagliarda or to the Couranta lies predominantly in its opening melodic subject, which reappears, with modification, in a more or less recognizable paraphrase. The pieces – as it was necessary for all functional dance music – have a clear metrical organization, with incisive, often repeated, rhythmic motives and a regular phrase-structure, mostly comprising four or eight measures per strain. The pieces are assembled from two or three strains, each of them demarcated by repeat signs. In general, each strain is clearly intended to be repeated as often as needed for the actual dance performance.<sup>51</sup> On average, each strain was stated two or three times; however, there were not infrequently four to five statements. Negri gives the examples of as many as eight statements for the last musical strain of his choreographed dance *Laura gentile* and the same number of statements for the first two strains for his *Alta Somaglia*,<sup>52</sup> while Caroso prescribes eight playings for his *Gagliarda di Spagna*.<sup>53</sup> Variations would have been improvised by the musicians while interminably repeating, for example, an eight-bar strain within a dance.

However, Posch's ordering of the dances is somewhat unusual – especially in view of the fact that they were intended for practical dancing – in that a galliard or a corrente,

<sup>49</sup> For comparative information, see also Johannes Thesselius, *Neue liebliche Paduanen, Intraden und Galliarden*, Nürnberg, 1609 – edited in Lidija Podlesnik, *Transkripcija in analiza instrumentalne zbirke plesov za pet glasov Jonannesa Thesseliusa*, Ljubljana, 1998, pp. 1–77 (University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Letters, BA); Paul Peuerl, *Neue Padovan, Intrada, Däntz unnd Galliarda*, Nürnberg, 1611 – edited by Karl Geiringer in *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich* 70, Wien, Universal-Edition A.G., 1929, pp. 1–25; and Johann Hermann Schein, *Banchetto Musicale. Neuer anmutiger Padouanen, Galliarden, Courenten und Allemanden*, Leipzig, 1617 – edited by Adam Adrio in *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke* 9, Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1967. But however widely the term “variation suite” is used to designate Posch's groups of dances, its use seems to some extent unjustified, since in more than half of his groups, as well as in the majority of Peuerl's and even of Schein's suites, there is no trace of either a rhythmic or a melodic connection linking all the dances of the suite. In some cases, melodic elaborations of the subject are hardly perceptible and only occasionally refer back to a thematic motive.

<sup>50</sup> On Posch's variation suites, see Metoda Kokole, *Prispevek Isaaca Poscha k razvoju ansambelske variacijske suite, Glasbeni barok na Slovenskem in evropska glasba: Zbornik referatov z mednarodnega simpozija 13. in 14. oktobra 1994 v Ljubljani*, ed. Ivan Klemenčič, Ljubljana, Založba ZRC, 1997, pp. 71–94.

<sup>51</sup> For all of his choreographed dances with only a one-strain melody Negri prescribed as many repetitions as necessary to finish the choreography “[La musica] si fa sempre fino al fine del ballo”.

<sup>52</sup> C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato terzo* (fascimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindah/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindah/negri)), pp. 210, 231.

<sup>53</sup> F. Caroso, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 196–198.

either being a fast dance in triple metre, is placed at the head of the suite, even though actual dancing never started with a fast triple-time dance.<sup>54</sup> In practice, it was, therefore, necessary to introduce each series of three dances with an improvised or borrowed “sedate” introductory duple-time dance, such as an “entrata”, described by Negri as danced in the style of the short, repetitive passages used to process on to the dance floor (a stately pavan, a lighter passamezzo, or an elegant, gliding allemande).<sup>55</sup> This was a common unwritten practice at the beginning of the 17th century, deriving, as just mentioned, from the slightly earlier tradition of Italian court balletti or balli. These were, in fact, in many respects predecessors of variation suites, since dances within each balletto used the same musical material, transforming it in metre and character in accordance with the specified dance-type.<sup>56</sup>

The German dance – Tanz – was originally a simple chordal dance in two sections with a stress on the first beat – a minim – of a two-bar musical phrase, corresponding to the four figures of practical dancing.<sup>57</sup> In comparison with similar pieces by other composers of his time, Posch’s German dances contain musical features typical – with regard to the actual dancing – of more complex, specially choreographed dances, such as Negri’s *Alemana d’amore* for two couples,<sup>58</sup> or, conversely, come close to the complex ensemble style imported to Germany from England<sup>59</sup> at the turn of the 16th century and known to Posch

<sup>54</sup> For a discussion of the “dance-related” dimension of Posch’s instrumental ensemble pieces from the collection *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, see also Metoda Kokole, Plesna glasba zgodnjega 17. stoletja: inštrumentalne suite Isaaca Poscha, *Zbornik ob jubileju Jožeta Sivca / Essays in Honour of Jože Sivec*, ed. Jurij Snoj and Darja Frelih, Ljubljana, Založba ZRC, 2000, pp. 87–104.

<sup>55</sup> C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato terzo* (facsimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 226, 174. See also G. Y. Kendall, op. cit., 2004, 82–83. It is also interesting that, at the time of James I of England, dances at the English court – contrary to the general practice – opened likewise with a galliard. See Curt Sachs, *Eine Weltgeschichte des Tanzes*, Berlin, Dietrich Reimer and Ernst Vohsen, 1933, p. 233.

<sup>56</sup> Other examples of such balletti are Lorenzo Allegri’s compositions published in 1618 (see note 27, above), as well as Negri’s and Caroso’s intabulations of dances – balli.

<sup>57</sup> The origins and the precise nature of the dancing performed to the numerous compositions with the simple title of “German dance” remain a mystery. Most of the information on the actual dancing of this, or of the similar dance called “allemande” (which is only the same word in French), comes from Arbeau: T. Arbeau, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 125–127, and from Rebecca Harris-Warrick, *Allemande*, *International Encyclopedia of Dance* 1, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 45–47. See also Madeleine Inglehearn, *Early Dance Tutors Shed some Light on the German Allemande*, *The Consort* 60 (2004), pp. 21–32.

<sup>58</sup> C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato terzo* (facsimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 185–187.

<sup>59</sup> On the contemporary English almain, originating in an earlier popular German dance with a second or third section in triple time (i.e., a “saltarello tedesco” or “almain-leape”), see a recent thorough study by Ian Payne that treats all aspects of this dance, including its origins and functionality, basing the arguments especially on Thomas Morley’s comments on the pavan: Ian Payne, *The Almain in Britain, c. 1549–c. 1675. A Dance Manual from Manuscript Sources*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003. The Continental origin of the dance, however, remains even in this study an unanswered mystery. For comparative music examples, see also *English Court and Country Dances of the Early Baroque*, ed. Hilda Gervers, *Corpus of Early Keyboard Music* 44, Neuhausen, Stuttgart, Hänssler-Verlag, 1982.

probably through Haussmann's compositions. Some of these are in three sections, while others have odd numbers of bars or feature fast scale-passages and imitative figurations that would undoubtedly render the dancing much more demanding. Also characteristic of Posch's German dances is imitation between the lowest and highest parts. Even imitation or motivic treatment running through all four parts is not infrequent. Particularly remarkable in this respect is the second half of Tanz 13. However, the most elaborate imitation in all four parts occurs in the third section of Tanz 4.

In the complete absence of choreographical materials referring to the German Tanz, the dance as such may be reconstructed only on the basis of the preserved descriptions of the choreographical patterns of allemandes or pavans, which show the influence of earlier bassadanze: step to the left, step to the right, step to the left and turn of the foot to the right side.<sup>60</sup> Brief descriptions of the allemande were first provided by Arbeau and Negri.<sup>61</sup> According to both dancing masters, the allemande was a simple, processional couple dance in a line, consisting almost entirely of a repeated sequence of three walking steps made either forwards or backwards, followed by a *grève*, a movement in which the foot was slightly lifted in the air. The dance included long *riverenze* (swaying steps to the left and to the right), *continenze* (bows), and many arrested steps. Arbeau adds: "You will all dance together in duple time, moving forwards, or if you wish backwards, three steps and one *grève*, or *pied en l'air* (foot in air) without a *saut* (a jump); and in certain parts by one step and one *grève* or *pied en l'air*. When you have reached the end of the hall you can dance while turning around without letting go off your damsel, and the dancers who follow you will do the same. When the musicians finish the first part each dancer stops and engages in light converse with his damsel and then you will begin all over again for the second part [...]"<sup>62</sup>

In this perspective, let us examine Posch's Tanz from Suite no. 11 (Music example 1). The first part has four bars that could be realized in the following manner: a *riverenza* – in four minim beats, followed by two *continenze* of two beats each, and symmetrically repeated. During the repetition two choreographical units of three walking steps followed by the raising of the foot in the air over four minims, could follow. The repetition could, of course, be discreetly ornamented by the musicians. The second section has eight bars in which similar patterns could be repeated – perhaps once moving forwards and then moving backwards – the piece ending with a long *riverenza*, or else the dancers could continue dancing in similar fashion throughout one or more musically varied repetitions. The same approach can be applied to other examples in Posch's *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt* – for example, to Tanz 5<sup>63</sup> – and with more inventiveness, using small variants to adapt the choreography to the variable number of beats in the music, also to other pieces.

<sup>60</sup> Hinrich Langeloh, *Renaissance-Tänze des Orchésographie nach Thoinot Arbeau*, Darmstadt, Verlag der Spielleute, 1993, pp. 19–24, 46–50; V. Saftien, op. cit., pp. 161–164.

<sup>61</sup> T. Arbeau, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 125–127; C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato primo* (fascimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindah/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindah/negri)), pp. 185–186.

<sup>62</sup> T. Arbeau, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>63</sup> I. Posch, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, ed. M. Kokole, op. cit., p. 34.

## Music example 1

**1st playing**

repetition ad libitum    step to the L    step to the R    bow step to the L    raising of foot    continenza L step to the R    continenza R step to the L    raising of foot

**PART 1**

**PART 2**

4    UNIT 1 (forward)    UNIT 2 (backward)

9    UNIT 3 (forward)    UNIT 4 (long riverenza)

Isaac Posch, Tanz 11<sup>64</sup>

To each Tanz Posch added a melodic repetition – Proportio – in triple time (generically labelled as Nachttanz, Proporzion, Tripla etc.), such as was usual at the time.<sup>65</sup> There

<sup>64</sup> I. Posch, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, ed. M. Kokole, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>65</sup> Suzanne G. Cusick, *Nachttanz*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 17, 2nd edition, London, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001, pp. 587–588.



is, unfortunately, no clearly identifiable step pattern that could be applied with confidence to an after-dance of Posch's type. However, after-dances were undoubtedly vigorous leaping dances, a mixture of earlier leaping dances such as the saltarello – in the 15th century paired, as a rule, with a bassadanza – and the still very popular galliard, reportedly a very fast dance with frequent leaps, hops, turns and other quick movements, that achieved the required contrast with the previous walking dance. 17th-century after-dances originated in earlier German folk dances, ostensibly rather unbecoming to a polished society, but apparently sufficiently transformed by the end of the 16th century to enter Carosi's and Negri's court dancing repertoire.<sup>66</sup>



**Figure 3**

The *riverenza* when asking a Lady for a dance by Christoph Murer c. 1600<sup>67</sup>

The following description of a dance and after-dance was recorded by Johann von Münster in 1594: “[...] once the order for the dance has been given to the wind and string players the dancer comes forward in a splendid, graceful, delightful and superb manner and chooses from amongst the ladies and girls present a partner for whom he feels particular affection, and asks her, with a bow, removing his hat, kissing her hands, bending his knee, with kind words and other ceremonies, if she is willing to share a happy and honest dance with him. Once her consent is obtained, they both move forward holding hands [...] when they reach the dance, they begin with certain gravity, without that disturbing agitation which is permitted in the second part of the dance, where more freedom is allowed. [...] But once the dance is over, the dancer escorts his partner to her place and with a bow he either takes his leave of her [...]”<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> M. Inglehearn, op. cit., p. 22. This author equates “Nachtanz” with Arbeau’s “Alman” and Morley’s “Almain-leape”.

<sup>67</sup> *The Illustrated Bartsch*, op. cit., p. 91.

<sup>68</sup> The source is quoted from the booklet text for the CD by René Clemencic, *Danses de la Renaissance*, Clemencic Consort, Harmonia Mundi 90610, 1973, pp. 7–8.

Posch's musically speaking relatively stylized Gagliardas (in comparison with his Tänze and Proportii) approach the more complex Anglo-German instrumental style of the turn of the century in their rather dense and elaborate polyphonic texture, known from Haussmann's compositions. Their musical interest therefore rises far above the simple needs of functional dance music. Posch's Gagliardas can, in fact, function as "artworks" in their own right in addition to serving the art of dancing. With the exception of only two pieces, the Gagliardas are in three sections, which are in most cases rhythmically, and in some cases also melodically, contrasted, the number of bars in individual sections varying from six to thirteen. One further salient characteristic of the majority of Posch's Gagliardas is an imaginative spinning-out of initial motives, with a liberal use of shorter note-values such as crotchets and quavers.

### Music example 2

Isaac Posch, Gagliarda 9, b. 1-7<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> I. Posch, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, ed. M. Kokole, op. cit., p. 48.

The pictorial and choreographical evidence on the manner of dancing galliards is abundant.<sup>70</sup> Arbeau alone devoted nearly 50 pages merely to the explanation of galliard steps, movements, positions, variants, etc.,<sup>71</sup> while both Caroso and Negri are copious with their explanations and examples. The galliard was undoubtedly the most popular triple-time and moderately paced dance, employing hundreds of known figures with all their combinations. The more or less clear descriptions include steps, hops, leaps, kicks, stamps and turns. Many of these were – in the manuals by Arbeau and Negri – illustrated with pictures. Some of the most commonly used figures depicted in Arbeau's manual to be used for dancing galliards feature, apart from a variety of steps, also a high leap called a *capriole*, used only by the most skilled dancers, and the figures described as *grève* or *piéd en l'air*, *ruade*, *rue de vache*, *marque de talon* and *marque de piéd*, *piéd croisé* etc.<sup>72</sup> Caroso and Negri (“diversi sorti di passi” and “salti del fiocco”)<sup>73</sup> similarly give lists of figures, some of which are depicted in inserted engravings. Caroso's, as well as Negri's, choreographed galliards most often involve the alternation of the gentleman and lady, each performing a variation to show off before the other, who looks on quietly or performs a walking passage. The dancers either travel across the floor or remain in one place.

CAPRIOLE      RUADE DROITE



Figure 4

*Capriole* and *ruade droite*, as depicted in Thoinot Arbeau's *Orchésographie* in 1588, and *ruade*, as depicted in a dance scene by Murer<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> For the historical development of galliards, see Karl Heinz Taubert, *Höfische Tänze*, Mainz, Schott, 1968, pp. 71–85 (with choreographies); Alan Brown, Galliard, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 9, 2nd edition, London, Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2001, pp. 449–451; Julia Sutton, Galliard, *International Encyclopedia of Dance* 3, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 106–111; Michael Lutz, Galliarde, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Sachteil* 3, Kassel [...], Bärenreiter and Metzler, 1995, col. 989–998. For examples of choreographies, see also H. Langeloh, op. cit., pp. 37–45.

<sup>71</sup> T. Arbeau, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 78–119.

<sup>72</sup> T. Arbeau, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 91, 87, 88, 89, 85.

<sup>73</sup> C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 (fascimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 55–92.

<sup>74</sup> T. Arbeau, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 91, 88; and *The Illustrated Bartsch*, op. cit., p. 92.

The generic step pattern of a galliard was termed “the five steps” (It. *cinque passi*). These five steps, or five changes of weight, occupy the time of one “tempo di gagliarda” or six minim beats.<sup>75</sup> The cadence – “cadenza delli cinque passi” – occurs on the fifth and the sixth notes – a virgorous leap often ornamented with beats in mid-air and landing in a position where the dancer rests with one foot in front of the other. The basic unit in Posch’s case – as it was the norm then – comprises two bars of music – that is, six minims. The most popular rhythmic patterns for galliards are ♩♩♩♩♩♩ or ♩♩♩♩♩♩, as clearly seen, for example, in Posch’s Gagliarda 7.<sup>76</sup> However, generally speaking, even in his Gagliardas with an uneven number of bars, practical performance was, and is still, possible, since dancers are free to add at will supplementary steps or figures, so long as the pattern remains symmetrical and the geometrical order of the floor pattern is preserved.

Posch’s Courantas are constructed on similar lines to his Gagliardas.<sup>77</sup> They are, like Schein’s examples, close in style to the fast Italian type called “corrente”, a rapid dance performed with tiny hops between most of the steps.<sup>78</sup> One example of a corrente was published by Negri in his 1604 manual.<sup>79</sup> His dance is intended for couples that dance alternately. Negri prescribes fast steps with hops (*seguiti ordinarii con quattro graui in fuga*), small leaps (*saltini*) and *fioretti*. In general terms, the evidence relating to how the corrente was danced is too scant to enable us to make any fruitful attempt to realize Posch’s three Courantas choreographically. It is above all vital to bear in mind that Posch’s conception of this dance had nothing to do either with the earlier duple-metre Coranto described by Arbeau or with the later 17th-century French courantes, which was the slowest and most noble triple-metre couple dance. Posch’s Courantas have a rhythmically clear-cut homophonic texture, using the older, straightforward patterns: ♩♩♩♩♩♩; ♩♩♩♩♩♩ or ♩♩♩♩♩♩, and their combinations, which were used by Negri in his example.

Dancing in the early 17th century, however, entailed much more than just the mastery of hundreds of different steps and step-patterns and the adoption of appropriate graces and postures, as taught as part of the general humanistic education of the time.<sup>80</sup> Dance interacted, at the highest level, with intellectual concerns that permeated the whole of the contemporary humanistic society. The ingeniously conceived floor patterns, the products of intricate choreographies, with their precise geometrical forms and strict attention to perfect symmetry, often conveyed intellectual and even philosophical meanings.<sup>81</sup> Even the simplest

<sup>75</sup> F. Caroso, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>76</sup> I. Posch, *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, ed. M. Kokole, op. cit., pp. 40–41. See also the example in M. Kokole, op. cit., 2000, pp. 102–103.

<sup>77</sup> Wendy Hilton, Courante, *International Encyclopedia of Dance* 2, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 259–261: 259.

<sup>78</sup> Louis Horst, *Pre-Classical Dance Forms*, New York, The Dance Observer, 1940, pp. 43–53.

<sup>79</sup> C. Negri, op. cit., 1604 – *Trattato terzo* (facsimile on the web site [www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri)), pp. 265–264.

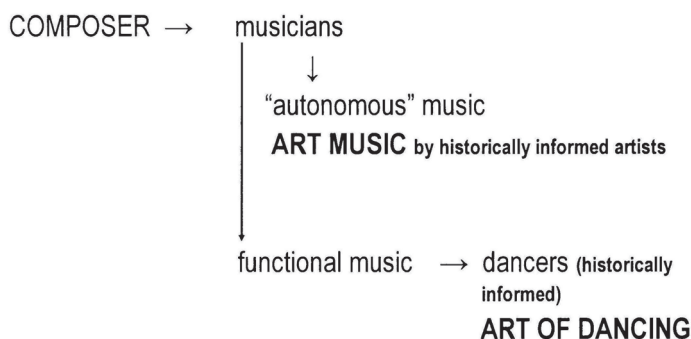
<sup>80</sup> See J. Sutton, Late-Renaissance Dance, in F. Caroso, ed. J. Sutton, op. cit., pp. 21–30.

<sup>81</sup> The noble art of educated dancers even aimed to convey the graces of the soul and no less that the celestial order of the music of the spheres. Dance interacted with contemporary intellectual patterns of behaviour and deportment essential for membership of the social elite of the day. The argument is thoroughly treated, with regard to the place of dance in the humanistic culture of 15th-century Italy, by Jennifer Neville in her recent book *The Eloquent Body*. For a citation, see note 10, above.

choreography, inventible on the spot if the dancers' skill was great enough, displayed such elements of symmetry as dance patterns made first on the left and repeated on the right, or a bow to the right answered immediately by a bow to the left. Each dance pattern had always to begin with the left foot, and was repeated with the right foot. The patterns ran from simple to complex, and dancing techniques from easy to difficult: there were, indeed, dances to suit every taste and capability. However, there was no absolute rule. Dancing masters or good dancers were expected to use their own vocabulary imaginatively and to improvise combinations of known patterns and variants, so that these coincided with the music.

The basic beat or musical pulse of all Posch's dances is a minim, as recommended by the dance specialists. The specific dance-pulse of course depends on the physical capability of the dancers to perform the movements and steps entailed. Each step requires a definite time, which may not be prolonged or shortened at will. It is, in fact, the most common mistake to play the dances (especially the galliards) too fast.

21st-century performances of early dance music – including Posch's dances – must therefore remain, as I have already pointed out earlier, more or less historically informed recoveries of a longlost dancing tradition.<sup>82</sup> And in this recovery there is more than one level to take into consideration.



To begin with, we have Posch's preserved compositions – works of art – that remain without the aid of modern musicians, a lifeless art. They can be brought to life, as Posch himself was well aware, in two distinct ways. They can simply be played, so that the music impinges directly on the ear. Posch himself tells us that the first four “dances” of his collection, the *Ballette*, convey his art more successfully by just being heard. In this instance, Posch's dances function as autonomous artworks. The remaining compositions of the collection *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt*, however, were at least in the composer's period, suitable vehicles for another art: one that impinges first on the eye, the ear acting only as a secondary recipient. In this second instance, Posch's dances become “functional”,

---

On intricate dance patterns and their meaning in the early 17th-century source from Sweden, see Jennifer Neville, *Dance Patterns of the Early Seventeenth Century: The Stockholm Manuscript and “Le ballet de Monseigneur de Vendosme”*, *Dance Research* 18 (2000), pp. 186–203.

<sup>82</sup> See also note 15, above.

and the artistic content is expressed at a higher level in the physical movements of the dancers – who constitute, in fact, the third group of artists involved in the transitory recreation of Posch's compositions. The music in this case serves an external purpose and is performed accordingly. Its subservience means that it has to maintain a clear rhythmic and metric structure, as well as a regular phrase-structure. It must tolerate incessant musical repetitions of the same short strain that would become intolerable in the context of autonomous musical performance. It is indeed true that much of the actual accompanying dance music is rather commonplace, and that the dances with the most beautiful and elaborate choreographies are actually the least compelling musical pieces, since the basic function of the music in this case is to support the choreography. Sadly, perhaps, what is the most pleasing to watch is not always the best to hear!

## APPENDIX

### ITALIAN DANCE MANUALS (1581–1630)

#### 1581\* - **Fabritio Caroso (c. 1530–c. 1605)**

*Il ballerino* di M[esser] Fabritio Caroso da Sermoneta, Diuiso in due Trattati; Nel primo de'quali si dimostra la diuersità de i nomi, che si danno à gli atti, & mouimenti, che interuengono ne i Balli: & con molte Regole si dichiara con quali creanze, & in che modo debbano farsi. Nel secondo s'insegnano diuerse sorti di Balli, & Balletti si all'uso d'Italia, come à quellodi Francia, & Spagna. Ornato di molte Figure. Et con l'Intauolatura di Liuto, & il Soprano della Musica nella sonata di ciascun Ballo. **Venezia**, 1581.

[www.pbm.com/~lindahl/caroso](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/caroso) (Facsimile scans from US Library of Congress and transcription by Greg Lindahl.)

#### 1587 (R 1689) - **Prospero Luti di Sulmona**

*Opera bellissima* nella quale si contengono molte partite, et passaggi di **gagliarda**. Con la quale ciascuno in breve tempo potrà facilmente imparare di Ballare, Composta nuouamente per Prospero Lutij di Sulmona. **Perugia**, 1587.

#### 1588\* (R 1596) - **Thoinot Arbeau (= Jehan Tabourot, Dijon 1519–Lyon 1595)**

*Orchésographie* et traicte en forme de dialogue, par lequel toutes personnes peuvent facilement apprendre & practiquer l'honneste exercice des dances. Par Thoinot arbeau demeurant a Lengres. Eccle[siasies] 3. Tempus plangendi, & tempus saltandi. **Lengres**, 1588.

[www.graner.net/nicolas/arbeau](http://www.graner.net/nicolas/arbeau) (Transcription of the full text and music from Arbeau's *Orchésographie* by Nicolas Graner.)

**1600 [R of 1581 with different title]\* (R 1605\* + 1630\*, Roma = *Raccolta di varii balli*) - Fabritio Caroso *Nobiltà di dame* del S[ignor] Fabritio Caroso da Sermoneta, Libro, alta volta, chiamato Il ballerino. Nuouamente dal proprio Auttore corretto, ampliato di nuoui Balli, di belle Regole, & alla perfetta Theorica ridotto: Con le Creanze necessarie à Cauallieri, e Dame. Aggiuntosù il Basso, & il Soprano della Musica: & con l'Intauolatura del Liuto à ciascun Ballo. Ornato di vaghe & bellissime Figure in Rame. **Venezia**, 1600. (Revised reprint of *Il ballerino* of 1581).**

#### 1600 (R 1607, Palermo) - **Livio Lupi da Caravaggio**

*Mutanze di Gagliarda*, Tordiglione, Passo è Mezzo, Canario e Passeggi. **Palermo**, 1600.

#### 1602\* (R 1604\*, Milano = *Nuove inventioni di balli*; R 1611\*, Venezia) - **Cesare Negri (c. 1535–c. 1604)**

*Le gratie d'amore*, de Cesare Negri Milanese, detto il Trombone, Professore di ballare, Opera nova, et vaghissima, divisa in tre trattati. **Milano**, 1602.

[www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri](http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/negri) (Facsimile scans from US Library of Congress and transcription by Greg Lindahl.)

#### c. 1615 (MS in Foligno) - **Ludovico Jacobilli**

*Modo di ballare*

#### 1630 (MS in Madrid) - **Cesare Negri (c. 1535–c. 1604)**

Translation of *Le Nuove inventioni di balli* in Spanish: *Arte para aprender a danzar*.

---

\* Contains music for the choreographed dances.

PLESI POSCHEVE ZBIRKE *MUSICALISCHE EHRENFREUDT*  
KOT UPORABNA GLASBA

Povzetek

1. januarja 1618 je Isaac Posch iz Ljubljane tiskarju v Regensburg poslal zbirko 49 štiri-glasnih inštrumentalnih plesov. V spremnem nagovoru »bralcem« je poudaril, da objavlja svoje skladbe zato, da bi ustregel vsem glasbenikom in prijateljem plesne umetnosti. Prve štiri *ballette* so po avtorjevih besedah primerne za igranje med slavnostnimi obedi, ostale skladbe, urejene v nize treh ritmično kontrastnih parnih plesov, pa so namenjene tudi fizičnemu gibanju – plesu po gostijah; hitri poplesi (v izvirniku *Proportii*) t. i. nemških plesov (v izvirniku *Tänze*) naj bi bili primerni le za najbolj izvedene plesalce in skladatelji jih je podobno kot leta 1598 njegov vzornik Valentin Haussmann – čeprav so jih v praksi glasbeniki velikokrat kar improvizirali –, da ne bi bilo nereda, izpisal. Poscheve skladbe iz leta 1618 so zgodovinsko še posebno pomembne in zanimive prav zato, ker predstavljajo enega zadnjih primerov tiskanih ansambelskih inštrumentalnih plesov, za katere je bila jasno izražena tudi njihova raba oz. je bila eksplicitno omenjena njihova funkcija. Splošno velja, da je prav ples v nemško govorečih deželah, vključno z geografskim prostorom današnje Slovenije, v zgodnjem 17. stoletju – zaradi pomanjkljivo ohranjenih virov o dejanski plesni rabi številnih skladb s plesnimi naslovi – še posebno neoprijemljiv predmet obravnav. Poskus aplikacije italijanskih koreografskih elementov na ohranjene plesne skladbe Isaaca Poscha je utemeljen na dokumentirani prisotnosti italijanskega plesnega repertoarja med notranjeavstrijskim plemstvom – Poschevi meceni in naslovniki posvetil njegovih glasbenih del. Ta repertoar danes poznamo iz ohranjenih tiskanih priročnikov plesnih mojstrov in učiteljev Fabritia Carosa (1581, ponatis 1600; 1605 in ponatis 1630) in Cesara Negrija (1600, ponatisa 1604, 1611). V okviru dvornega plesa leta 1608 v Gradcu je namreč sestra tamkajšnjega vladarja Marija Magdalena skupaj z dvornim plesnim mojstrom Ambrosiem Bontempom in nekaterimi plemiči plesala tudi dva plesa, *Fiama di amor* in *Galleria di amor*, ki jih poznamo tudi kot koreografirane primere iz tiskov Carosa in Negrija. Dinastični stiki notranjeavstrijskega dvora s španskim in nekaterimi italijanskimi dvori so sicer splošno znani, neposredna prisotnost italijanskega plesa pa malo manj. Razprava vsebuje tudi poskus funkcionalne razlage Poschevih plesov, ki so razloženi z vidika opisov plesov *allemande* (tudi *alemana*) in *gagliarda*, kot jih opisujejo Thoinot Arbeau, Fabritio Caroso in Cesare Negri. Prispevek zaključuje razmislek o tem, ali je Poscheva glasba zbirke *Musicalische Ehrenfreudt* umetniško avtonomna ali je zgolj posredniško sredstvo za drugačen umetniški izraz – ples. Dejansko je lahko tako umetniško avtonomna kot tudi »uporabna«, funkcionalna, odvisno od družbenega konteksta in namena vsakokratne poustvaritve.