

# Harpsichord & fortepiano

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# Harpsichord & fortepiano

Volume 12, No. 2



Monteclair was a double bass player in the Paris Opera, and a composer of cantatas, serenades, instrumental concerts, a ballet, *Les Festes d'Été*, and a well-received opera, *Jephthé*. He part-owned a music shop, and was a well known teacher who taught Couperin's children. He wrote four separate treatises on Music that were published in pairs - one book for adults, the other for children: the *Nouvelle Method* of 1709, the *Leçons de musique divisées en quatre classes en faveur des personnes qui commencent à apprendre et particulièrement des enfans...* (1709); the *Principes de Musique* of 1739, and the beautifully named *Petite Method pour apprendre la Musique aux Enfants et même aux Personnes plus avancées en âge* (after 1739).

They are practical works, full of interesting details and music examples, including sections of *Airs de Danse* (dance tunes) which Peacock Press is publishing in a separate volume (Monteclair - *Airs de Danse* PAR-103). In the *Petite Method* he writes that: "nothing improves the understanding of the various mouvements and metres than playing *Airs de Danse*".

The *Principes de Musique* contains the section on the *Agréments* - French ornaments - that is reprinted here. It has some of the clearest and most detailed descriptions available. (For instance, see the *Glissé* on page 22 for a forgotten ornament.)

The language of the period is lovely, if sometimes hard to decipher. I would like to thank Gilles Aufray, the playwright, for his work on the text. For instance, *coulér* is "to flow", but in the particular way that a stream of water flows downhill or through a channel. This must help our understanding of the ornament, and, while it might be obvious to a French speaker, it is rarely mentioned in translations into English. The same applies to the *battement* and to much else as well. I must make it clear that any mistakes and misunderstandings are entirely my responsibility. In particular, there is the problem of translating *notes forte* and *notes faibles* (strong and weak notes) when the meaning seems to have shifted from any function in the metre to include main and subsidiary, and even just long and short, notes.

Andrew Robinson 2008

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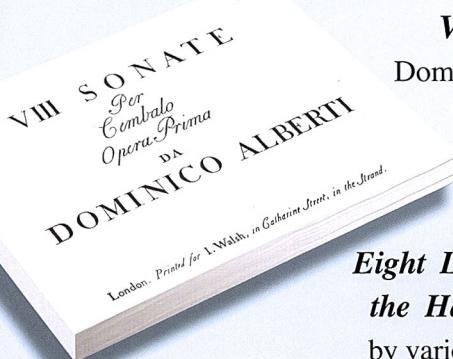
Michel Pignolet Monteclair

Les Agréments -

French baroque ornamentation

Monteclair's descriptions of the ornaments  
taken from his *Principes de Musique* 1739  
with several appendices concerning  
notes inégales, slurring, Hotterre's table of ornaments  
and the temps of the different time-signatures

Edited by Andrew Robinson  
English translation by Gilles Aufray



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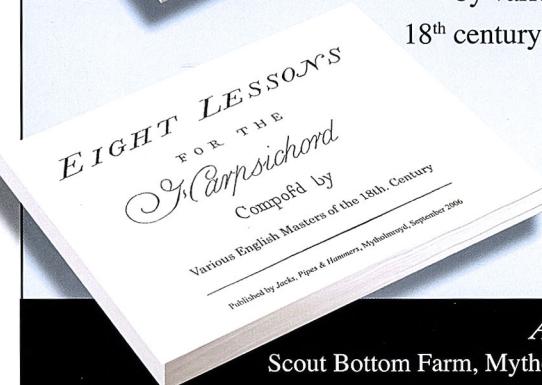


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# Harpsichord & Fortepiano

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**Cover Photo:** Valda Aveling, Gary Cooper, and a Rosenberger Grand by David Winston

# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

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photo by Rachel Clements

Dear Readers,

First an apology; I failed to include Grant Colburn's biography in the "About the Contributors" section last time, so I have included it this time.

We have some pieces on the state of pedagogy – one about the state of affairs in France, and another practical article on how to approach the teaching and playing of a new piece.

In addition this issue features an interview about a new Rosenberger inspired piano, and a very thought provoking article about "modern building" by Paul Irvin. Are two 8's better than 4? Not to sound Orwellian or anything, but I think you'll find this most interesting reading. Also, new to this issue is a pull-out piece you can try for yourself, offered by our Brazilian composer Calimerio Soares. Please let us

know if you'd like more of these scores. Our reviews, similarly, offer some challenges and some new delights.

I guarantee you I will expect some correspondence after this issue; we are being challenged to rethink the way we think, play and make instruments; we are being asked to inject new life into pedagogy. What do our colleagues in other parts of the world feel about the state of teaching early keyboard instruments? Is it going downhill or is it set for a renaissance? How best do we represent early instruments in recorded form.

We continue to welcome ideas and suggestions for articles. For the Autumn 2008 issue, we would like to encourage particularly articles about soundboard and lid decoration. Also, I'd ask you to consider the topic: What are the essential items in a keyboard player's score library? Given \$500/£250/€320 what would you buy first?

Thanks and Best Wishes,

Dr. Micaela Schmitz, Editor