

Etienne Moulinié, *Drei Fantasien für vierstimmiges Consort* (Three fantasias for four-part consort), Paris 1639, ed. Leonore and Günter von Zadow. Edition Güntersberg, 2006; G103. ISMN M-50174-103-8. Score and four parts (Dessus, Haute-contre, Taille, Basse-contre), € 14.80.

In 1951, a grand concert celebrating the 2,000th birthday of Paris was organized at St-Denis, the ancient basilica and resting place of the great French kings. With the world looking on from broadcasts across Europe and the United States, the chosen

piece to be performed was a recently discovered coronation mass by the 17th-century composer Etienne Moulinié. The performance was a huge success, with French critics praising the piece, hoping that now the world would see the glory of French music and that France would assume its rightful place in history.

Alas, it turned out to be a hoax; the composition was written by the then choir director of St-Eustache, Father Emile Martin, who picked out the name Etienne Moulinié because their names shared the same initials. Poor Moulinié was sufficiently obscure, and therefore a good candidate for such a fraud (*Time*, March 24, 1952).

Moulinié (b. ca 1600; d. after 1669) was *maître de la musique* to Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII and a constant troublemaker. Gaston needed his rival court and Moulinié was an important composer of his time. Along with Guédrón and Boesset, Moulinié was one of the main composers of *airs de cour*, the four- and five-part polyphonic strophic songs set to genteel pastoral texts that belie the violence of the time. It was also the time of the *ballet de cour*, which usually ended with aristocrats parading in the most grotesque costumes. In one spectacle from 1610, two counts were dressed as colossal flower pots, two were howling tomcats, and two were huge *basse de violes*.

This era predates that of the great French viol virtuosos, but there were several viol consort composers at this time: Du Caurroy, Du Mont, Le Jeune, and Métru. Moulinié's *Three Fantasies* are found in his *Cinquieme livre d'airs de cour* from 1639. It features airs from the last large ballet that he wrote for Gaston, *Pierre de Provence avec la Belle Maguelonne*, originally produced in Paris in the presence of the King and Cardinal Richelieu. The tantalizing lone appearance of these instrumental works in a collection otherwise devoted entirely to voice and lute music indicates that the viols were there and constantly in use.

There is a facsimile edition of the fantasies available from Fuzeau, which also includes the *Le Jeune Fantasies* of 1612, but the present edition by Leonore and Günter von Zadow is a useful and nicely edited work. The clef of the *Dessus* has been changed to treble, and that of the *Basse-contre* to bass. The third part, the *Taille*, offers alto clef on one side of the part and treble-8 on the other. The metric notation is in larger measures of 4/2, 3/2, etc. The first two fantasies run from one meter to another, a jumble of dances which is fun to figure out, and there are some wonderful moments of expressive ascending and descending chromaticism in the slower sections. Concerning the matter of accidentals, the editors claim that editorial accidentals are in parentheses, but curiously there are no brackets to be found. One would have to compare the facsimile to be sure what is editorial.

The third fantasia is quite different in that it never changes time, but scurries along to the end. There is a surprise when the bass part suddenly moves into alto clef, immediately before some tricky passage work. In all the fantasies, the texture thins out from time to time, leaving only the top and bottom parts, suggesting to me that perhaps a lute might be added for performance of these lovely pieces.

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