The Detroit Recorder Manuscript
(England, c. 1700)

David Lasocki

Introduction

Various items relating to the history of the recorder in Europe now rest in American collections. The best known are the recorder methods and prints of Baroque recorder music in the Library of Congress and the instruments in the Dayton C. Miller collection in the same institution. One item that seems to have gone unreported in the literature so far is a manuscript volume of recorder music in the possession of the Detroit Public Library. The manuscript, a score written in a legible hand, is entitled "Sonates pour une [two words crossed out] fluttes et Basse" on the front cover in a different hand. The title is misleading in two ways. First, the manuscript contains not only sonatas for alto recorder and basso continuo—seventeen of them—but also two sets of divisions on ground basses for the same combination and a duet for alto recorders. Second, the manuscript is of English rather than French provenance. The recorder part is notated in treble clef rather than French violin clef, and the titles of the individual pieces in the copyist's hand are mostly garbled Italian (for example, "Sonatta Flutto Solo") but sometimes English ("Ground/Division" and "Sonatta For 2 Flutes"). All the music in the volume is anonymous with the exception of Sonata II, which is attributed to Corelli in another source (but almost certainly not by him), the pieces were written by four composers: Gottfried Finger (nine), James Paisible (seven), William Williams (two), and Edward Finch (one). Since few recorder players will know very much about these composers, I shall summarize what I have been able to find out about their lives. This exercise also sheds light on the background of the manuscript.

Example 1. Incipits of all the compositions in the Detroit manuscript.

The Composers

Gottfried Finger (or Godfrey, as he was known to the English) was born around 1660, probably in Olomouc, Moravia, where his father was a Stadtpfeifer. We know nothing of his early life, except that the nineteenth-century German musicologist Riemann claimed he was in Munich in 1682. He seems to have gone to England early in 1687, when he became one of several foreign instrumentalists in King James II's Roman Catholic chapel. He received riding charges in 1687 and 1688 for accompanying the king to Windsor and elsewhere during the summers. His first published pieces, a set of twelve sonatas for various combinations of strings and basso continuo (1688), were dedicated to James; they were played in the chapel and perhaps as dinner music.

James fled the country late in 1688 and
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<td>1) Dix Sonates... Opera Terza, No. 10.</td>
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<td>2) Six sonatas or solos for the flute... London: Walsh, Randall &amp; Hare, 1709, No. 3.</td>
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<td>3) Cambridge, Rowe Music Library, Ms. 122, f. 12v, No. 43.</td>
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<td>4) British Library, Add. Ms. 31993, f. 3v (incomplete bass part only).</td>
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X Gottfried Finger Sonata d
1) VI Sonatas, No. 5.
2) Six sonatas, No. 2.
3) Rowe, Ms. 122, f. 14v, No. 44.
4) British Library, Add. Ms. 31993, f. 2v (incomplete bass part only).

XI Gottfried Finger Sonata G
1) VI Sonatas, No. 4.
2) Six sonatas, No. 1.
3) Rowe, Ms. 122, f. 10v, No. 42.
4) Rowe, Ms. 226, No. 6.
5) British Library, Add. Ms. 31993, f. 3 (incomplete bass part only).
6) British Library, Add. Ms. 31466, No. 50 (in E for violin).

XII James Paisible Sonata d
1) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Réés. Vma. Ms. 700, pp. 18–21, No. IV.
3) Rowe, Ms. 122, No. 46.

XIII James Paisible Sonata E♭
1) Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Réés. Vma. Ms. 700, pp. 8–12, No. II.
2) Rowe, Ms. 122, No. 41.

XIV James Paisible Sonata g

XV James Paisible Sonata d

XVI James Paisible Sonata B♭

XVII James Paisible Sonata D

XVIII James Paisible Sonata e

XIX (Arcangelo Corelli, attrib.) Sonata d
1) Sonate à Violino Solo col Basso Continuo Composta da Arcangelo Corelli e Altri Autorii, Amsterdam: Roger, 1697, No. 5 (in a for violin).
2) British Library, Add. Ms. 31466, No. 2 (in a for violin).

XX William Williams Sonata C
40 Airs Anglais à un dessus & une basse & trois sonates, les deux premiers à 2 dessus & le troisième à un dessus & une basse, choisis & mis en ordre par George Bingham. Livre second, Amsterdam: Roger, 1702, No. 2.
his successors, William and Mary, disbanded the chapel. Presumably because he was a Roman Catholic, Finger was not re-employed at the court but began a career as an independent performer, composer, and promoter in London. The dedication of a set of violin and recorder sonatas to the Earl of Manchester in 1690 suggests that Finger was also receiving patronage from him. The following year he published more music for violins and recorders, some of it jointly with John Banister II (1662–1736), the violinist and recorder player.4

In November 1693 Finger began to advertise a series of concerts at the York Buildings music room that seems to have continued weekly, except during the summer, until the spring of 1697. Several pieces of evidence suggest that this series had started at least two years earlier under the joint promotion of Finger and Giovanni Battista Draghi, a former colleague in James’ chapel, and with the keen interest of Princess (later Queen) Anne, who had been a music student of Draghi. Finger, a gambist, and Draghi, a keyboard player, presumably provided the all-important continuo accompaniment for the concerts. The advertisements furnish only the barest of details about the music and none at all about the performers. But it is probable that the large quantity of chamber music that Finger wrote during the 1690s, including many solo, trio, and quintet sonatas involving the recorder,5 was intended for his concert series.

In 1695 Finger composed the incidental music for William Congreve’s most successful play, Love for Love, which was performed on the opening day of the Lincoln’s Inn Fields Theatre. Finger continued to provide such music for this theatre regularly until the spring of 1697 and must be considered their “house composer.”

No London activity is recorded for Finger from the spring of 1697 to February 1699, when he promoted a concert of “vocal and instrumental music, after the Italian manner” for his own benefit. Five years later, a collection of music formerly owned by Finger, and which he had made “in his travels in Italy,” was auctioned in London. In view of his absence from the London scene in 1697–99 and the Italian-style music he put on when he returned, his Italian visit may have taken place at that time. In 1699 he composed one set of incidental music for Lincoln’s Inn Fields, then switched to the rival company at Drury Lane Theatre, for whom he composed regularly until May 1701, ending with a full opera, The Virgin Prophetess.

In March and June 1701, his setting of Congreve’s Judgement of Paris was performed in the famous competition at Dorset Garden Theatre. The winner was John Weldon, John Eccles was second, Daniel Purcell third, and Finger only fourth. Then, as Roger North recounted, Finger, “having lost his cause, declared he was mistaken in his music, for he thought he was to be judged by men, not by boys, and thereupon left England, and has not been here since.” Late that year he was in Vienna, and he remained on the Continent for the rest of his life. He moved with the court of Duke Karl Philipp of Neuburg, later Elector Palatine, from Breslau to Innsbruck, Neuburg an die Donau, Heidelberg, and Mannheim, where he was buried on 31 August 1730.6

James Paisible was one of the most important recorder players of the late Baroque era and a significant composer in England of recorder and theatre music. He was born around 1636, almost certainly in France and probably in or near Versailles, where his relatives were among Louis XIV’s musicians. (His original first name, found in his French will, was Jacques; the surviving sources in his adopted England, including his English will, all call him James.) He seems to have gone to England in 1673 with the composer Robert Cambert and three other recorder/oboe players, who brought with them the new Baroque instruments from France.

In the 1670s and early 80s, Paisible performed in the London theatres and occasionally at court. He also acted in and helped with the music for the scenes en musique that the French philosopher Saint-Evremond put on at the fashionable house of the exiled Duchesse de Mazarin at Chelsea, then just outside London. His first official court appointment came in 1683, on the accession of James II, as a bass violinst in the band of twenty-four violins. (The bass violin was a large cello, tuned a tone lower than the modern instrument.) In December of the following year he also became one of the instrumentalists in James’ Roman Catholic chapel. The same month he married Moll Davis, a former actress who had been one of the late Charles II’s mistresses; the marriage therefore caused much ribald comment at court.

Like Finger, Paisible was not reappointed to the court on the accession of William and Mary in 1689 but instead developed an independent career as a composer of intermission music for the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and probably a performer in the public concerts at York Buildings promoted by Finger. By 1694 he had also become official composer to Prince George of Denmark, the consort of Princess Anne. Paisible wrote a special dance for Anne’s birthday every year until her death in 1714.

By 1702 Paisible was also a member of the band at Drury Lane as a bass violinist, although in the theatre’s frequent intermission entertainments of sonatas and chamber music he always played the recorder. The Drury Lane musicians also played in public concerts at York Buildings and elsewhere. In 1708 Paisible moved to the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket, the recently built opera house, as a cellist. The only surviving account of his recorder playing dates from 1710, when a German traveller, Uffenbach, who heard him play in a concert, said that his “equal is not to be found.”

By 1715 Paisible had moved back to Drury Lane, where he again played the recorder in concerts and other intermission entertainments. From 1713 to 1719 his participation in various public concerts is documented. He often played on a mysterious instrument called the “echo flute” and recorders large and small. He died in early August 1721 and was buried at St. Martin-in-the-Fields—a church now famous for its Academy—on the 17th of that month.8

William Williams’ origins and training are unknown at present. In 1695 he was appointed to the royal band of twenty-four violins without fee and received a paid place two years later. His career was short-lived, however, for he was buried at St. Mary-le-Strand on 20 January 1701. In April that year a benefit concert was held at York Buildings for his widow and three small children, the program consisting of “all new music, part of it being his own.” His compositions include songs and trio sonatas for recorders and violins.9

The Honourable and Reverend Edward Finch (1664–1738) was the fifth son of Hineage Finch, First Earl of Nottingham and Lord Chancellor to Charles II. Edward took his M.A. at Cambridge in 1679, became Fellow of Christ’s College, and represented the university in parliament in 1689–90. He was ordained deacon at York in 1700 and became rector of Wigan. Four years later he was appointed prebendary of York and moved to the same position at Canterbury in 1710.10 Finch was an enthusiastic musical amateur. The surviving part of his collection, now scattered among several British libraries, includes his transcriptions of works by Corelli, Finger, John Jenkins, Pez, Valentini, and Ziani. His own compositions consist of church music, violin sonatas, and a
The Milieu

During the course of the seventeenth century, the court declined as the focus for the composition and performance of secular music in England. At the beginning of the century the court musicians were still relatively well paid and protected. At the start of the Civil War in 1642, however, they were dismissed and fled abroad or suffered penury at home. Upon the Restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660, the performing groups at court were reconstituted, and music in the French style, which Charles had come to love while in exile, became fashionable. But he ran into serious financial difficulties during his reign. The wages of his court servants, including the musicians, were eventually several years in arrears. The musicians were therefore forced to supplement their income outside the court.

Besides teaching, the two major sources of employment they developed were public concerts and the theatres. Concerts in the modern sense, with a fixed admission charge—apparently the first of their kind anywhere in Europe—were started in 1672 by one of the royal violinists, John Banister I, the father of the recorder player and violinist mentioned above. His concert series seems to have been successful enough to run daily until his death in 1679. There may have been a lull in concert promotion in the 1680s, but a new incentive appeared in 1689. As we have seen, James II attracted a number of foreign Roman Catholic musicians, including Finger and Paisible, to his court chapel. His successors, the staunchly Protestant William III and Mary, did not reappoint these musicians, nor were they inclined to lavish money on music at court. So the foreign musicians, out of work in a strange land, and underworked and underpaid royal musicians such as Banister II and Robert King (another violinist and recorder player), separately and together created the popular and successful concerts of the 1690s. As Roger North put it in his usual colorful fashion: "The masters began to display their powers before the wise judges of the town, and found out the grand secret, that the English would follow music and drop their pence freely, of which some advantage has been since made." The main venues were two music rooms specially built for that purpose: York Buildings, where Finger and Draghi were the promoters for several years, and Charles Street, Covent Garden, where the promoters were at first

trio sonata for two transverse flutes, and he wrote a Grammar for Thorough Bass.\textsuperscript{11}

The Compositional Style

The works in the Detroit recorder manuscript reflect the growing interest in Italian music shown by composers in England at the end of the seventeenth century. The composer most heavily represented in the manuscript, Gottfried Finger, played an important role, as both composer and concert promoter, in popularizing the new style. He arrived in England at a time when the instrumental works of the native composers still relied largely on airs and dances in the French style of Lully and his contemporaries and the repetitive patterns of divisions on ground basses, although the trio sonatas of such Italian composers as Cazzati, Colista, and Vitali were already making their influence felt. In the preface to his set of six violin and recorder sonatas published in 1690 (of which the recorder sonatas form Nos. IX–XI of the Detroit manuscript), Finger remarks that "the humour of them is principally Italian, a sort of music which, though the best in the world, yet is but lately naturalized in England." But he notes "the kind welcome" Italian music had recently received and adds that "it now begins to flourish and grow unto esteem amongst us."

Although the "humour" of Finger’s sonatas is Italian, they represent an amalgam of three distinct interests. As Peter Holman has pointed out:

Elements of his native Austrian style [including] a delight in instrumental virtuosity. . . . are combined neatly with English forms and idioms. The result was something new: a style of instrumental music based on the abstract patterns of Italian da chiesa sonatas, but filled with an Austrian virtuosity and an English tunefulness. It was just what was needed at a time when London society was becoming accustomed to listening to music rather than playing it, and it was widely imitated by a generation of native composers, among them William Croft, Daniel Purcell and William Crockett, who were coming to maturity shortly before 1700. From this point of view, Finger’s abrupt departure from England in 1701 . . . was doubly unfortunate. Not only was the English musical scene deprived of its best composer of chamber music between [Henry], Purcell and Handel, but without his example its new generation lapsed all too easily into insipid imitations of Corelli.\textsuperscript{17}

The fast movements of Finger’s recorder sonatas may not strike us as virtuosic in comparison with the music of Bach, Telemann, and Vivaldi written thirty years
Italian. On the other hand, the figuration of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an early Opus 3 No. 8 (Detroit No. 11), for example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an early Opus 3 No. 8 (Detroit No. 11), for example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an early Opus 3 No. 8 (Detroit No. 11), for example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an early Opus 3 No. 8 (Detroit No. 11), for example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an early Opus 3 No. 8 (Detroit No. 11), for example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an early Opus 3 No. 8 (Detroit No. 11), for example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an early Opus 3 No. 8 (Detroit No. 11), for example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of the flourish in thirty-second notes (an example, is built on eight repetitions of

The movement I have chosen to discuss is based on a misreading of the title of the work. "Cuckoo Sonata" by Finch is a curious example of what an English amateur could write under the influence of the new Italian music. Its style is rather crude, but not without a few imaginative touches and a certain charm. My favorite movement—the fourth, a giga in perpetual eighth notes ending with a short section in 3/2 meter—is unfortunately omitted in the Detroit source.

Conclusions

All the pieces in the Detroit manuscript have survived in other sources. Interestingly, these pieces differ frequently from the concordances in matters of bass figures, slurs, rhythms, ornaments, time signatures, tempo markings, and sometimes in notes and the omission or replacement of a movement. The nature of these differences shows that the manuscript was not copied from any of the other surviving sources, even those printed at that time, but rather from others that have not sur-

Example 2. Third movement from Finger, Op. 3 No. 4 (3).

Example 3. Extracts from fourth movement of Paisible, Sonata in G minor (14).
vived — presumably the autographs or manuscripts of other copyists. The Detroit copyist chose the best of Finger's Opus 3 sonatas (although curiously he missed the grand C minor sonata; perhaps it had not yet been written) and most of the best of Ppaisible's. If he selected the works himself, he had good taste.

The three main composers represented in the manuscript were closely identified with the public concerts and theatres in London in the 1690s. Although the chamber music Finger first wrote in England, perhaps including recorder sonatas IX–XI of the Detroit manuscript, was intended for performance in James II's chapel, his later large output, including the Opus 3 sonatas, was almost certainly intended for his concerts and perhaps also the theatre.

Paisible is known to have taken an active part in the concerts of the first two decades of the eighteenth century, and I have no doubt, although there are no advertisements to prove it, that he played at least as important a role in the concerts of the 1690s. At the same time he was probably already a member of the band at the Drury Lane Theatre and a participant in their intermission entertainments. His bold and virtuosic recorder sonatas were surely written for himself to play in those concerts and entertainments. Moreover, he was probably the recorder player who inspired all of Finger's sonatas.

Williams' recorder sonata may also have been written for Paisible, although since its technical demands are more modest, it could equally well have been played by Banister or King or any of the other professional performers of the decade. The pseudo-Corelli sonata also falls into this category. The Finch sonata is the odd work out. But as a recorder arrangement, based on the customary transposition a minor third higher, of a violin sonata that was published in 1694 and therefore readily accessible, it too could easily have been played by professionals. In conclusion, therefore, the Detroit manuscript contains some of the repertory that Paisible and other professional recorder players presented in the public concerts and theatre entertainments in London in the 1690s.

NOTES

I am extremely grateful to Michael Lynn for drawing the manuscript to my attention and sending me a photocopy of it. I should also like to express my sincere appreciation of the countless ideas and nuggets of information that Peter Holman has shared with me during my study of the manuscript and its milieu.

2Call number RM788.1191 S698. Mrs. Agatha Pfeiffer Kalkanis, Chief of the Music & Performing Arts Department, Detroit Public Library, has kindly informed me that the manuscript was purchased from an unidentified British firm in 1951 for the modest price of $23.52. She also writes: "Miss Dorothy Tilly would have been the Chief of this Department at the time this came into our possession. As I understand, she was a recorder enthusiast and had a special fondness for purchasing recorder music, as our present holdings testify." (letter to DL, 8 December 1980). A facsimile of the complete Detroit manuscript has recently been published by Musica Musica, Basel, Switzerland.

3My edition of the recorder sonata is published by Zen-On, Tokyo (R-146, 1978). Since the edition was published, I have discovered that the sonata was probably an arrangement of one for violin. The duets have been edited by F.J. Giesbert for Schott, Mainz (OFB 17).


6This biographical material is based on Michael Tilmouth's article in *The New Grove* as well as references in the same author's *A Calendar of References to Music in Newspapers published in London and the Provinces (1660–1719)*, Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle I (1961), and in British Library, Sloane Ms. 1388, f. 78 (on Finger and Draghi).

7Paisible also played the "small echo flute." The name of course calls to mind the "fiauti d'echo" of J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, which, it seems to be generally thought, are probably alto recorders in C. The inventory of Paisible's possessions at his death in 1721 lists only "2 voice flutes, one consort flute & 2 small ones ... & an old cane flute" (London, Public Record Office, PROB 3/21/112).

8This biographical material is based on the study of Paisible in my dissertation (see note 4 above).

9This biographical material is based on references in Henry Cart de Lafontaine, *The King's Musick* (London: Novello, 1909; reprint New York: Da...
Capo Press, 1973), Michael Tilmouth’s article in The New Grove, the same author’s Calendar, and the parish registers of St. Mary-le-Strand (Victoria Branch Library, City of Westminster Public Libraries).

10 This biographical material, taken from The Dictionary of National Biography, VII, 5, is repeated in the cursory article in The New Grove.

11 The information on Finch’s collection and compositions was kindly supplied by Brian Crosby (letter to DL, 9 June 1980). See also his somewhat out-of-date article, “Durham Cathedral’s Music Manuscripts,” Musical Times CXV/5 (No. 1575, May 1974), 418-21.


15 The references to music in the advertisements are conveniently collected in Tilmouth’s Calendar.

16 Information kindly supplied by Don Cook.

17 This passage forms part of the prefaces to four of his editions of Finger’s chamber music published thus far by Nova Music, London: Sonata in Bb for 2 oboes/violins and b.c. (N.M. 109, 1979), Sonata in C for oboe/trumpet in C, violin and b.c. (N.M. 115, 1979), Sonata in C, Opus 5 No. 10, for violin, bassoon and b.c. (N.M. 129, 1980), and Two Sonatas, No. 3 in G and No. 4 in F, for 2 alto recorders, 2 oboes and b.c. (N.M. 144, 1979).


19 This is pointed out in Tilmouth, Chamber Music, 291-92.


21 In his article in The New Grove.