Charles Babel’s Manuscripts for the Recorder: 
Light on Repertoire and the Art of Preluding (c.1700)

David Lasocki

Charles Babel (c.1636–1716) has gradually emerged as one of the most important copyists of French and English music around 1700. The most recent listing of his surviving manuscripts places their number at thirteen,¹ and he also published two collections of trios ‘by various composers’ – in fact, mostly by Jean-Baptiste Lully – with Estienne Roger in Amsterdam in 1697–9.² In all, more than a thousand pieces are found in his collections of music for various kinds of consort, harpsichord, recorder, and voice, including a good many that have not been traced anywhere else.

The two manuscripts that Babel copied for the recorder contain dozens of unique items, provide another reliable source for known works, and shed light on the recorder’s repertoire in the 1690s. One of these manuscripts, discussed here for the first time, documents the beginnings of the art of preluding for woodwind instruments in France and England.

Charles Babel the Man

Let us first look at what is known of Babel’s life. When he became a naturalized British citizen in April 1699, the naturalization bill stated that he was born in Évreux, Normandy, France.³ Sir John Hawkins reported sixty years after the fact (1776) that Babel ‘played the bassoon at Drury-lane theatre till he was eighty years of age’.⁴ If that is true, then he would have been born around 1636, but we have no corroborative evidence. Andrew Woolley has pointed out a resemblance between Babel’s hand and that of André Danican Philidor (1646/7–1730); as important Lully copyists, the two men may have had a similar background.⁵

Nothing has yet been published about Babel’s career before 1688–90, when he was working for the court orchestra in Hanover as an ‘hautbois’ – which term could encompass players of both oboe and bassoon, not to mention recorder.⁶ A score of twelve four-part suites by Stephan Valois that he copied is dated ‘Hanover 1689’.

A set of part-books of movements from Lully’s early ballets that Babel copied bears the note ‘Remis en Ordre par Charles Babel; A la Haye en 1696’ (put in order by Charles Babel; at The Hague in 1696). Babel is next mentioned as a bassoonist in the troop of William III of England that served in The Hague in 1697–8.

Around that time, Babel moved permanently to England. The Sibley manuscript we will discuss shortly, half of which consists of English recorder music, is dated 1698. The naturalization bill of 1699 concerned numerous ‘private gentlemen belonging to His Majesty’s three troops of Guards and Grenadiers’, so Babel would have been working for a few years as an ‘hautbois’ attached to the military. One of the vocal manuscripts he copied is dated London 1700, confirming his residence in England.

When Prince George of Denmark, the consort of Queen Anne, died in 1708, Babel received a payment as one of his ‘Hautbois’. By 1707 Babel was also a member of the band of the Drury Lane Theatre in London, then switched to the Queen’s Theatre in the Haymarket as first bassoonist until at least 1713. He is listed among the theatre musicians who played in an ‘entertainment’ for Lord Mayor’s Day in 1714, and if Hawkins’ report is correct, he switched...
back to Drury Lane in the last few years of his life.

Babel made his will on 29 October 1716, leaving one shilling to his daughter Elizabeth and the residue of his estate to his ‘dear and well beloved son William’. Guillaume Babel, known in England as William Babell (d. 1723), became a well-known harpsichordist, violinist, and composer, familiar to recorder players today for his six concertos for that instrument. The will was proved by William on 13 November 1716, so Charles had died within the previous sixteen days.

Peter Holman has written of Charles Babel: ‘it is clear that he made a good living copying music of all sorts for wealthy customers, using music supplied by a circle of his London colleagues’. Babel also had notable connections among composers in France, especially harpsichordists, as well as collectors who owned a wide variety of music by Lully.

Bruce Gustafson has questioned the idea that Babel was a professional copyist on the grounds that ‘the manuscripts themselves do not support such a hypothesis: there are no real title pages, no prices, and the two harpsichord books have ownership markings from his son’. Rebecca Herissone, however, has pointed out that the large number of concordances among Babel’s sources suggests he was copying manuscripts to order for different clients from master sources.

The Sibley Manuscript
The Sibley Music Library at the Eastman School of Music, which is part of the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York, holds the first recorder manuscript that we will consider. The cover bears the title *Recueil de pieces choisis à une et deux flûtes* (Collection of selected pieces for one and two recorders). The body of the manuscript begins with a table of contents headed: ‘Table; pour trouver la Suite des pieces a une et a deux flûtes, que jay rassemblez en ce livre avec la lettre qui marque le ton de chacune d’icelles. P. C. Babel 1698’ (Table, to find the series of pieces for one and two recorders, which I have assembled in this book with the letter that indicates the key of each of these. By C. Babel 1698).

Then follows a section headed ‘Flûte seule avec Basse continuë’ (Solo recorder with basso continuo), consisting of:

- two dance movements for treble recorder and basso continuo by Marin Marais;
- twenty-five sonatas for treble recorder and basso continuo by Giacomo Carissimi (attrib.) (1), Gottfried Finger (7), Pietro Antonio Fiocco (1), James Paisible (5), Carl Rosier (8), Agostino Steffani (1), Pietro Torri (1), and William Williams (1);
- a sonata for oboe and basso continuo by Johann Christoph Pepusch, not mentioned in the Table, and an anonymous suite in A major for a melody instrument (range g-sharp’–c-sharp”’) and basso continuo.

The second section, marked ‘A Deux Flutes sans Basse’ (For two recorders without bass), consists of seventeen duets for two treble recorders by Raphael Courteville (6), Finger (6), Thomas Morgan (1), Paisible (3), and Williams (1).

As mentioned above, the unqualified term *flute* (or *fleute*) in both France and England around 1700 almost always referred to the recorder. The Baroque transverse flute (nowadays generally called traverso) was almost always qualified in French as *flûte d’Allemagne*, *flûte allemande*, or *flûte traversière* and in English as German flute. I say ‘almost always’, because Marc-Antoine Charpentier sometimes wrote for an instrument called *flute* in keys and ranges that imply traverso rather than recorder. Nevertheless, in the Sibley manuscript the consistent range of the parts (the lowest note is f) and the keys used (F major ten times, G minor eight times, C major six times, D minor six times, B-flat major three times, C minor three times, G major three times, A minor twice, D major once) show that the *flute* in question was the treble recorder, the standard size of the late Baroque.

The composers represented are a mixture of ones whom Babel would have been familiar with from his period in Hanover (Fiocco, Rosier,
Steffani, Torri) and others he would have recently come to know in London (Courteville, Finger, Morgan, Paisible, and Williams). Pietro Antonio Fiocco (1653–1714) worked in Brussels, Carl Rosier (1640–1725) in Cologne and Amsterdam, Agostino Steffani (1654–1728) in Hanover from 1688, and Pietro Torri (c.1650–1737) in Brussels and Hanover.

Babel called the composer of the twentieth of the twenty-five recorder sonatas ‘Mr. Carissimi’. Only vocal works by the celebrated Giacomo Carissimi (1605–1674) have survived, and he died twenty-four years before the date of copying, so an attribution to him is improbable (perhaps Babel misread the name of the true composer?). The work’s Italian style and Italian-language movement headings offer few clues, but it is most likely have been produced by one of Babel’s northern European contemporaries. The sonata also survives anonymously, as a Fantasia with two extra movements, in another source that includes trio arrangements (or reductions) of pieces by Lully. The term ‘fantasia’ – which we will examine in detail below – may have been warranted by the unusual sequence of six movements involving three adagios: Adagio, Aria Allegro, Adagio, Aria Largo, Adagio, and Giga.

The significance of the Sibley Manuscript

The Baroque recorder was almost certainly developed in France in the 1660s by the Hotteterre family, who also worked at the French court as woodwind musicians. It was initially used as an obbligato instrument in vocal music: pairs of recorders are found in trio sections of stage works by Lully from 1668 onwards and in sacred music by Marc-Antoine Charpentier from 1670. In 1674, the Baroque recorder was taken over by French musicians to England, where it was soon being employed in theatre music and in vocal music by John Blow and Purcell. The arrival of a new style of recorder in England demanded a new French name, flute douce, soon shortened to plain flute. This practice has proven confusing in recent times, now that flute always refers to the transverse instrument.

The first English tutors for the instrument, from the period 1679–86, include dances, songs, and divisions transposed to fit the range of the treble recorder (the lowest note of which is f'). Nicola Matteis announced that some pieces in his third and fourth books of Ayres for the Violin (and basso continuo) of 1685 ‘may be play’d with [i.e. on] the Flute as well as the Violin’. The first purely instrumental works written for the recorder that we can date are the above-mentioned duets by Courteville (published in 1686) and sonatas by Finger (from 1690). In the 1690s, Paisible wrote virtuoso sonatas, presumably for himself to play, although they remained in manuscript.

Almost all of the late Baroque repertoire for the recorder played today consists of solo sonatas (with basso continuo), chamber music, and concertos composed in the 1710s–30s. The Sibley manuscript, in contrast, gives us a rare snapshot of the recorder repertoire in the 1690s. The sonatas by Carissimi (attrib.), Finger, Paisible, and Williams, as well as the duets, are known from other sources, whereas the sonatas by Fiocco, Rosier, Steffani, and Torri are unique to this manuscript.

Curiously, the last two movements of one of the sonatas by Rosier (no. 16 in the Sibley manuscript) are airs from Purcell’s Fairy Queen (1692): the minuet ‘If Love’s a Sweet Passion’ and the gavotte ‘I Am Come to Lock All Fast’. Another sonata by Rosier (no. 7 in the manuscript) contains a further borrowing from The Fairy Queen: the second movement is an arrangement of the song ‘Thus the Ever Grateful Spring’, shorn of its introductory section for two violins and basso continuo as well as its petite reprise (repeat of the last phrase).

The full score of The Fairy Queen was not published in the seventeenth century, though it is possible that Rosier was in London in 1692, or came across the songs in Holland in the publication Some Select Songs as They Are Sung in the Fairy Queen (London, 1692). On the other hand, the fourth movement of the sonata by Steffani, marked ‘Gavota’, is the B section of another Purcell song, ‘Thus to a Ripe Consenting Maid’ from The Old Bachelor (1693), transposed up a fourth. Taken together, the Steffani and Rosier examples suggest strongly that it was Babel rather
than the composers who inserted the music by Purcell into their recorder sonatas.

The first movement of Steffani’s sonata is an arrangement of the aria ‘Deh prestiami’ from the composer’s opera *Le rivali concordi*, first performed at the Hanover court on 10 February 1693. The arrangement is a simple one, transposing the aria from A minor to D minor and retaining the bass in more-or-less original form.18

Did Babel make the arrangements of vocal music himself? Or did he simply incorporate arrangements that others had made for the recorder, following the common practice of the time? In either case, he presumably found himself a few movements short when he was copying the sonatas.

The sonatas by Fiocco, Rosier, Steffani, and Torri, unique to the Sibley manuscript, constitute a hitherto unknown repertoire in idiomatic styles quite different from the English and French music of the time. Ex. 1 shows the opening of the sonata by Torri, a rhapsodic slow movement with bursts of Italian-style free ornamentation, predating the published examples in Arcangelo Corelli’s violin sonatas by at least a dozen years.19 The opening of the sonata by Fiocco also contains rapid ornamentation, although it is not sustained throughout the movement; see Ex. 2. Both suggest that such ornamentation was a part of Italian-style performance practice for the recorder as well as the violin at the time.

Ex. 1. Opening of Pietro Torri’s Sonata in C major for Recorder and Basso Continuo from the Sibley Manuscript

Ex. 2. Opening of Pietro Antonio Fiocco’s Sonata in C major for Recorder and Basso Continuo from the Sibley Manuscript
The Ex-Hogwood Manuscript

The library of the late conductor and harpsichordist Christopher Hogwood included a manuscript, bought from an American antiquarian dealer in 1993, to which he gave the identification number M1091. Earlier, it formed part of the collection of the Purcell scholar Franklin B. Zimmerman, who acquired it from an English antiquarian dealer. Along with other items from the Hogwood collection, it has recently been acquired by the British Library.

This manuscript consists of two sections, the first (pp. 1–84) copied by Babel, who placed his initials at the end of his section. It represents a part-book intended for a melody instrument. A number of the pieces were, or seem to have been, composed for more than one part. Therefore, it is conceivable that there would originally have been an accompanying part-book for the basso continuo for those pieces, and probably also a second treble part-book, both now lost. Nevertheless, as we shall see, at least for their own amusement, recorder players performed sonata movements shorn of their bass parts. At least some of the preludes, fantasies (spelt ‘fantaisies’ by the French), and caprices were apparently conceived for melody instrument alone, because they bear little resemblance to conventional dances or other movement types in recognized forms.

Except for a long set of variations on La Folia towards the end of the first section (which, even though it has been transposed from D minor to G minor, goes down to d'), the intended instrument is clearly the treble recorder. The range of the part is consistently f'–d'', with a few extensions to e-flat'', e'', and f''. In seventeenth-century France the violin and treble viol often went no lower than f', but they did do so occasionally, therefore we can count them out here. Also, the second section of the manuscript, in a different, unidentified hand, begins with a duet for treble recorders by Paisible that also appears in the Sibley manuscript, followed by the set of six duets for treble recorders by Courteville. Thus, by both range and association, the first section was intended for the recorder.

The first section of the ex-Hogwood manuscript is a treasure trove for recorder players. Its contents, grouped systematically by key (G minor, G major, A minor, B-flat major, C major, C minor, D minor, D major, E minor, F major, then back to G minor and major), consist of:

- 34 preludes
- 9 fantasies
- 6 caprices
- a collection of dances weighted heavily towards menuets (65 menuets, 2 gigues, 11 passepieds, 10 rigaudons, 8 bourrées, 5 gavottes, 3 sarabandes, 1 allemande, 1 contredanse, and 1 hornpipe)
- 12 marches
- 6 airs anglois
- 4 rondeaux
- 3 echos
- 2 airs graves
- 2 ecossaises
- 2 symphonies
- 2 sarabandes (originally composed for harpsichord by Jacques Champion de Chambonnières)
- a set of 49 variations on La Folia (‘Les Folies d’Espagne’)
- transcriptions of 14 vocal and instrumental movements by Jean-Baptiste Lully
- 3 brunettes
- 2 airs by Henry Purcell
- 13 miscellaneous.

Apart from Lully, Purcell, Paisible (one of the echos), ‘Valoy’ (one of the preludes), and the obscure ‘Maynon’ (Ménon?), the composers are not named. Bruce Gustafson has identified a number of the other pieces in the manuscript as being by Lully. ‘Valoy’ can be identified at Stephan Valoix, named in the records of the Hanover court as a violinist, ballet dancer, and comic actor between 1680 and 1698. The presence of Purcell and the London-based
Paisible in the manuscript suggests that Babel copied it after he settled in England.

The two airs from Purcell’s *Fairy Queen* are the same ones which Babel put into a recorder sonata by Rosier that he copied into the Sibley manuscript. Also, these airs are found in the second section of the ex-Hogwood manuscript, along with the air ‘La Furstemberg’ from *The Virtuous Wife*, Z 611/9, Purcell’s authorship of which has been disputed.

Prelude no. 10 in G minor is found in another manuscript that Babel copied, the Cummings manuscript, ff. 21v–22, in a version marked ‘Basse seule’, notated in bass clef and titled ‘Fantaisie ou Gigue’. This differs from the ex-Hogwood version in having a more extended range and bass-like motion of an octave leap plus ascending fourth at the final cadence. Besides the ‘Fantaisie ou Gigue’, the Cummings manuscript includes seven preludes for ‘Basse seule’ unrelated to the preludes or fantasies in the ex-Hogwood manuscript. The intended instrument may well have been bassoon (which Babel played himself) or bass violin or viola da gamba.

Whatever their origin among Babel’s contacts in Germany, France, and England, the preludes, fantasies, and caprices for treble recorder he collected make fine practice material for the solo instrument, and the better ones could be used as models for writing or improvising our own such pieces.

The Art of Preluding

Babel’s inclusion of so many preludes, fantasies, and caprices in the ex-Hogwood manuscript prompts a brief examination of such pieces in the writings on woodwind instruments and their repertoire of the late Baroque.

Antoine Furetière’s celebrated dictionary of the French language (1690) defines the *prélude* as an ‘Irregular piece of music that the musician plays at first to see that his instrument is in tune and to get going. The great masters often compose preludes on the spot that are worth more than the considered pieces of others’. The *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*, fourth edition, adds ‘Musicians also call preludes certain pieces of music composed in the style of preludes that are made on the spot’.

Among writers about woodwind instruments, the first to write on this matter was Jean-Pierre Freillon-Poncin, who observed in his tutor for the oboe, recorder, and flageolet (1700) that a prelude is nothing but an inclination to address the key in which you want to play. Players usually do this by following the force of their imagination, in the very moment they want to play, without having written [anything] beforehand. There is no particular rule for the tempo or length of preludes: they are made differently according to fantasy, as tender, brusque, long, or short, and in broken metre. You can even pass through all sorts of keys, provided they are approached and left appropriately, that is to say, in a way in which the ear does not suffer from it...

Jacques Hotteterre’s treatise *L’Art de préluder* (1719) for flute, recorder, and oboe discussed preluding thoroughly, with many examples. Hotteterre now acknowledged that in fact two different kinds of piece were called *prélude*. The first was the composed, formal piece that usually served as the first movement of a suite or sonata or introduced an air in an opera or cantata. The second was what Hotteterre calls the ‘prelude-of-caprice, which is really the true prélude [and] which must be produced on the spot without any preparation’. Ex. 3 shows two contrasting examples of the prelude-of-caprice written-out by Hotteterre, the first a modified French Overture and the second based on broken chords and passage work. Hotteterre, known as ‘le Romain’, spent a couple of years in Rome (1698–1700), thereafter writing music in mixed French-Italian taste.
Reverting to a single definition, in his flute tutor published in Paris around 1740, Michel Corrette wrote, ‘The prelude is a kind of caprice that is usually composed on the spot before playing a piece’. Corrette observed that when playing alone without accompaniment, you can compose a ‘big prelude’ (grand prélude). For that purpose, he wrote, players ‘can modulate to whatever note they wish and invent fast or slow passages in conjunct or disjunct motion according to whatever occurs to their imagination’. Finally, according to Toussaint Bordet (1755), the prelude-of-caprice was usually played separately, for players’ own enjoyment, or to introduce a piece they are about to play.

The art of preluding was also practiced in England. James Grassineau’s A Musical Dictionary (London, 1740) defines the prelude as ‘a flourish, or an irregular air’. A flourish by several trumpets, cornetti, or other instruments often served as a musical alert in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century theatre in England. Theatrical flourishes were indicated only by verbal instructions in the play or musical score, so they must have been improvised by the performers. For example, in Purcell’s Dioclesian (1690), after the chorus has sung ‘Sound all your instruments’, the score reads: ‘Flourish with all instruments in C-fa-ut key [C major]’. Similarly, only the instructions that ‘Recorders flourish’ appear in the opening scene of Nathaniel Lee’s play Theodosius (1680) (music usually attributed to Purcell). Most such flourishes were apparently quite short, for the dramatist had to specify ‘long’, ‘lively’, ‘full’, or ‘great’ flourishes when desired.

Seventeenth-century English musicians also ‘preluded’ or ‘flourished’ in the process of tuning their instruments and warming up for a purely musical performance. John Dryden, in his play The Kind Keeper; or, Mr. Limberham (1678), said that ‘a good musician always preludes before a tune’. Thomas Hobbes, in his Art of Rhetoric (1681 edition) described ‘the prelude of musicians, who...
first play what they list, and afterwards the tune they intended'.

The practice of performing such improvised preludes and flourishes on woodwind instruments in England must have been popular during the first decades of the eighteenth century, as most recorder tutors advertised for publication in London contained pieces called either ‘preludes’ or ‘flourishes’ or both. Typical title-page descriptions are: ‘a flourish in every key’, ‘preludes or flourishes in all keys’, ‘a prelude, proper to play before any lesson [tune]’, and ‘preludes to introduce the following airs, in their several keys’. Unfortunately, only one such tutor has survived; it contains short preludes consisting mainly of chord tones and basically conjunct-motion passage work in the tonic and without regular metre.

A large and significant collection is Select Preludes & Vollentarys for the Flute [recorder] being made & Contriv’d for ye Improvement of ye Hand with Variety of Compositions by all the Eminent Masters in Europe for that Instrument (London: Walsh & Hare, 1708). This contains 35 pieces, some by composers who were indeed regarded as ‘the greatest masters in Europe’ (Tomaso Albinoni, Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber, Corelli, Purcell, Giuseppe Torelli) as well as others by musicians based in London (John Banister, William Corbett, Henry Eccles, Finger, Nicola Francesco Haym, etc.). Twenty-nine of the pieces turn out to be transpositions of preludes in a similar collection for violin published three years earlier: Select Preludes & Vollentarys for the Violin being Made and Contrived for the Improvement of the Hand with Variety of Compositions by all the Greatest Masters in Europe for that Instrument (London: Walsh & Hare, 1705). In both the recorder and violin collections, about two-thirds of the pieces appear to be sonata movements shorn of their bass parts and some can in fact be traced to violin sonatas and concertos. The remainder, though still in regular metre, are less formal in style and look like written-out examples of improvisatory-style pieces. They are longer and more virtuosic than the simple ‘flourishes’ in the recorder tutors. Many introduce accidentals or even end with a cadence in the dominant, and one has two changes of time signature.

Another early source of recorder preludes is The Second Part of the Division Flute Containing the Newest Divisions upon the Choicest Grounds for the Flute as also Several Excellent Preludes Chacon’s and Cibells by the best Masters (London: Walsh, Hare & Randall, 1708). The four preludes included there, by Finger, Daniel Purcell and Pepusch, again prove to be solo parts of sonata movements. Perhaps recorder players used such movements as warm-up pieces, in private or in public.

Written recorder preludes actually go back fifty years earlier: the recorder player and carillonneur Jacob van Eyck placed a Prelude – ‘Preludium of Voorspel’ and ‘Præludium’ – at the beginning of each of the two parts of his celebrated collection for solo recorder, Der Fluyten Lust-Hof (Amsterdam, 1646–9), which otherwise consists almost entirely of sets of variations.

A classification of the Preludes in the ex-Hogwood Manuscript

We have seen that pieces labelled ‘prelude’ were of three types: (1) formal introductions to composed works; (2) pieces that were improvised (prelude-of-caprice) or written down in the same style as if they had been improvised; (3) sonata movements shorn of their bass parts. All three types make an appearance in the ex-Hogwood manuscript.

(1) The prelude in B-flat (see Table 1) can be identified as a prélude by Lully, in the sense of an introductory piece (in this case, to a vocal trio), taken from his tragédie en musique, Psyché (1678), Act IV scene 1. Similarly, no. 8 in D minor is another prélude by Lully, taken from his tragédie en musique, Phaëton (1683), Act III scene 6, where it introduces a recitative.

Four preludes are in French Overture form (nos. 2–4 in G minor), or a modified version of the form in three or more sections with different time signatures (no. 5 in D minor); as such they may have introduced another piece originally. These are long and weighty pieces
averaging 82 bars in length. With only two exceptions (no. 6 in G minor and no. 6 in D minor), the remainder of the preludes are in a single metre and have an average length of only 19 bars. See the Music Supplement to the present issue of EMP.48

Three preludes are similar to the first sections of French Overtures (nos. 15 and 17–18 in G minor).

(2) Eight of the other preludes are of the prelude-of-caprice type, having simple figuration, mostly in quavers, based on scales and broken chords (nos. 5 and 11–12 in G minor, no. 1 in A minor, nos. 1–2 in C major, and nos. 1 and 7 in D minor). No. 2 in C major has no time signature or barlines. Thirteen further preludes are still of this type, even though they have a more elaborate mixture of figuration, and cadence in several keys (nos. 6–7, 9, 13–14, 16, and 19 in G minor, the Prelude in C minor, nos. 1–6 in D minor, and the Prelude in F); see Ex. 4.

(3) Prelude no. 2 in A minor, with its opening Italianate broken-chord figure, suspensions, and sequences, could well be a sonata movement shorn of its bass; see Ex. 5. As the second part of its title in the Cummings manuscript states, no. 10 in G minor is a binary gigue.

<p>| Identification | Page no. (original) | Time Signatures | Cadences (| = double bar) | Comments |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------------------|----------|
| No. 1 in g     | 1                   | C              | III III i i               | Mixture of figuration; suspensions |
| No. 2 in g     | 2–3                 | 2 3 2          | III i | III v i i | i | French Overture |
| No. 3 in g     | 3                   | Π 6/4 Π       | III v | III (v) | i | French Overture |
| No. 4 in g     | 4–5                 | 2 3 2          | v v | v III v | VII i | French Overture |
| No. 5 in g     | 5                   | C              | v i               | Mostly quaver figuration |
| No. 6 in g     | 5                   | 2 C            | III v i i | i | Figuration in crotchets and quavers |
| No. 7 in g     | 6                   | C              | III III i         | Mostly quaver figuration |
| No. 8 in g     | 6                   | 2              | III i i         | Mostly quaver figuration |
| No. 9 in g     | 6–7                 | 2              | v III v i       | Mostly quaver figuration |
| No. 10 in g    | 7                   | 6/4            | v i              | Binary gigue |
| No. 11 in g    | 7                   | 3              | i                | Simple figuration |
| No. 12 in g    | 7                   | Π              | i                | Mostly quaver figuration |
| No. 13 in g    | 7                   | Π              | i                | Mostly semiquaver figuration |
| No. 14 in g    | 7                   | Π              | v i              | Figuration in quavers and semiquavers |</p>
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<td>8</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>Like first section of French Overture</td>
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<td>16 in g</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ⅴ Ⅴⅰ</td>
<td>Mostly quaver figuration</td>
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<td>8–9</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>III ⅰ</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>2 in a</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>VII ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>Like sonata movement; suspensions</td>
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<td>In B-flat</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>V ⅱⅰ</td>
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<td>IV ⅰ</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>In C</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>Mostly quaver figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 in d</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>ⅰ</td>
<td>ⅰ</td>
<td>Quaver figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 in d</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>ⅰ</td>
<td>ⅰ</td>
<td>Mostly quaver figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 in d</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>Mixture of figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 in d</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>Mixture of figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 in d</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>C ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>III ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>(1), (3), (5) like French Overture; (2) like courante; (4) like sonata movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 in d</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>C ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>Mixture of figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 in d</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>ⅰ</td>
<td>Quaver figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 in d</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>ⅰⅰ</td>
<td>Prélude to a recitative by Lully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In F</td>
<td>62–3</td>
<td>ⅰ</td>
<td>ⅰ</td>
<td>Mostly quaver figuration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Preludes in the ex-Hogwood Manuscript
Ex. 4. Prelude no. 9 in G minor from the ex-Hogwood Manuscript

Ex. 5. Prelude no. 2 in A minor from the ex-Hogwood Manuscript
The Fantasies and Caprices

Two other genres in the ex-Hogwood manuscript are closely related to the prelude. In 1636, Marin Mersenne wrote in his Harmonie universelle, ‘And when the musician takes the liberty to employ all that comes to mind without expressing the passion of any words, then this composition is called Fantaisie or Recercato’ (the French equivalent of the Italian ricercare).\(^49\)

Sébastien de Brossard’s music dictionary defined the Italian term ‘fantasia’ as ‘fantaisie, or a type of composition that is the pure effect of talent and natural disposition without the composer being subject to a fixed scheme or a certain kind of metre, using all kinds of keys. It is almost like Capriccio’.\(^50\)

According to Furetière, caprices ‘are pieces of poetry, music, and painting that succeed more by the force of talent and inclination than by the observation of the rules of the art...’\(^51\)

Finally, Brossard refers back to his definition of fantasia: ‘Capriccio means Caprice. These are certain pieces in which the composer, without being subject to a certain scheme or a certain kind of metre or to any premeditated plan, stokes the fire of his genius; this is otherwise called fantasia, preludio, ricercata, etc.’\(^52\)

In 1649–9, besides two preludes Van Eyck had also included three fantasias for recorder in Der Fluyten Lust-Hof: ‘Fantasia & Echo’, ‘Phantasia’, and ‘Fantasia’.\(^53\) ‘The Fantasia & Echo was apparently inspired by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck’s echo fantasies for organ. Woodwind players will be familiar with the set of twelve fantasies for solo flute by Georg Philipp Telemann, TWV 40:2-13 (Hamburg, c.1727), also published nowadays in transpositions for treble recorder. They are progressively organized by key, each consisting of two movements in a variety of styles and types, which Steven Zohn classifies as binary, capriccio, chaconne/passacaglia, French Overture, fugue, prelude, toccata, and dance.’\(^54\) Commenting on Telemann’s movements classifiable as ‘caprices’, Zohn notes: ‘With their whimsical alterations of tempo, style, and affect, the opening movements of Fantasias 3, 5, and 12 are closely related to the “Capriccio” for flute and continuo in Der getreue Music-Meister (1728).’\(^55\)

A classification of the Fantasies and Caprices in the ex-Hogwood Manuscript

Fantasy no. 2 in F resembles a prelude-of-caprice in being short (only 16 bars long), in a single metre, and having basically quaver figuration with a few bursts of semiquavers; see Ex. 6. No. 2 in C minor, by Stephan Valoix, is a simple binary movement, almost completely in quaver figuration. It is difficult to see anything fantastical about these two pieces. All the rest of the fantasies are in two, three, or even four sections with different time signatures, and are generally much longer than the preludes, with an average length of 64 bars.

As with some of the longer preludes, five of the nine fantasies are in French Overture form or a modified version of the form (no. 1 in B-flat and the fantasies in D minor and E minor). Two others begin in the style of an overture’s first section (no. 2 in B-flat and no. 1 in C minor). The opening sections of no. 1 in C minor, the fantasies in D minor and E minor, and nos. 1 and 3 in F, mostly live up the concept of fantasy in their varied figuration with unexpected twists and turns. None of these have long rests, or have long notes that are obviously intended to be suspensions, which would imply they need an accompaniment. See Ex. 7.

The six caprices are only a little shorter than the fantasies, with an average length of 55 bars. Four – the long Caprice in B-flat, nos. 1 and 2 in D minor, and no. 2 in F – are capricious in their ever-shifting figuration, and two of these pieces have more than one section with different time signatures; see Ex. 8, which moves every few bars from dotted quavers to straight quavers, semiquavers, semiquaver–semiquaver–quaver figures, quavers, semiquavers, and quavers. Two caprices begin in the manner of a French Overture (the Caprice in B-flat and no. 2 in F).
In the two remaining pieces, the designation ‘caprice’ in Babel’s manuscript seems arbitrary. No. 3 in D minor is predictable in its sequences and resorts to oscillating thirds. No. 1 in F is simply a bourrée in the form of a rondeau – there is nothing capricious about it.

In general, there seems little, if anything, in their rhythms, figuration, or sectional nature to distinguish the fantasies from the caprices.

| Identification | Page no. (original) | Time signatures | Cadences (| = double bar) | Comments |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------|
| No. 1 in B-flat | 16                  | 2 6/4 2        | V I | V vi iii I | I | French Overture |
| No. 2 in B-flat | 16–17               | 2 C | I | I V I       |       | (1) like first section of French Overture, (2) like sonata movement |
| No. 1 in c     | 35                  | C 3 C | v III | i I | i | (1) mostly semiquaver figuration; (2) mostly quaver figuration; (3) like third section of French Overture |
| No. 2 in c by Stephan Valoix | 36 | 2 | III | v i |       | Binary; quaver figuration |
| In d           | 40–1                | 2 3/4 2       | III v III | v III III | I | French Overture |
| In e           | 56                  | C C 3 2       | III V iv | i | i | French Overture with extra first section in mixture of figuration |
| No. 1 in F     | 62                  | C 3 C | V I | V vi | I | (1) mixture of figuration; (2) gigue; (3) quaver figuration |
| No. 2 in F     | 63                  | 2             | V I |       |       | Mostly quaver figuration |
| No. 3 in F     | 70                  | C 3/8         | V I | I I     |       | (1) mixture of figuration including suspensions; (2) passepied |

Table 1. Fantasies in the ex-Hogwood Manuscript

Ex. 6. Fantasy no. 2 in F major from the ex-Hogwood Manuscript
Ex. 7. Fantasy no. 1 in C minor from the ex-Hogwood Manuscript
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Page no. (original)</th>
<th>Time Signatures</th>
<th>Cadences</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In B-flat</td>
<td>18–19</td>
<td>2 3 C</td>
<td>V v/V ii V V V</td>
<td>(1) like French Overture; (2) like sarabande; (3) like third section of French Overture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 1 in d</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>v v III III I</td>
<td>Mixture of figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 2 in d</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>Mixture of figuration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 3 in d</td>
<td>42–3</td>
<td>C 3</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 1 in F</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>I V I V I</td>
<td>Bourrée in form of rondeau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 2 in F</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>C, C 6/4 C</td>
<td>V I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Caprices in the ex-Hogwood Manuscript

Ex. 8. Caprice no. 2 in D minor from the ex-Hogwood Manuscript
Conclusions
The two recorder manuscripts that Charles Babel copied around 1700 give us unique glimpses of the instrument’s repertoire at that time. Although the Baroque recorder had been developed in the 1660s, a significant repertoire of purely instrumental music began to be composed for it only in the 1690s. The Sibley manuscript contains some attractive and idiomatic sonatas for treble recorder and basso continuo by composers whom Babel would have come to know when he worked in Hanover (Fiocco, Rosier, Steffani, Torri). It also provides evidence of the circulation of duets and sonatas by composers based in London (Courteville, Finger, Morgan, Paisible, Williams).

The ex-Hogwood manuscript includes a large number of transcriptions of dances and songs, as found in the recorder tutors of the period. More significantly, it also includes no fewer than forty-nine preludes, fantasies, and caprices. The preludes show that two practices known from the first decade of the eighteenth century – composing preludes-of-caprice in improvised style and playing sonata movements shorn of their bass parts – already existed in the 1690s. As for the fantasies and caprices, in their generally sectional form and in their fantastical or capricious character, Babel’s pieces anticipate the _Fantasien_ and the ‘Capriccio’ of Telemann published in c.1727 and 1728, respectively, by three decades.

3 According to Peter Holman, ‘Did Handel Invent the English Keyboard Concerto’, _The Musical Times_, 144 (2003), 13, ‘We now know that when Charles became a naturalised British subject in April 1699 he stated that he was born at Evreux [sic] in Normandy around 1634’. His source is _Letters of Denization and Acts of Naturalisation for Aliens in England and Ireland, 1600–1700_, ed. William A. Shaw, Publications of the Huguenot Society of London, 18 (i) and 27 (ii) (Lymington, 1911), i, 277, which has an entry for ‘Charles Babell, son of Maurice Babell and Lewis, his wife, born at Evreux in Normandy’. This confirms Évreux, but not the date (which also depends on a reckoning of when Babel left Drury Lane). See also _The Manuscripts of the House of Lords, 1697–99_ (London, 1905), iii (new series), 368.
5 Woolley, ‘English Keyboard Sources’, 201.
8 Liner notes to Trio Basiliensis, _Concerning Babell & Son: Music Composed, Arranged and Transcribed by Charles and William Babell_ (Freiburg: Ars Musici, CD AM 1167 – 9, 1996), 12.
11 Vault V1490.B113. Scan available from https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemId=14744&versionNumber=1
13 Conservatoire Royale de Bruxelles, Bibliothèque, 24089; RISM ID 702001573. I owe this reference to Anne Kräft (email messages to the author, 17 July 2014 and 20 March 2016).
14 I have recently re-examined the evidence for the creators and dating of the Baroque recorder in my e-book _Jean-Baptiste Lully and the Flûte: Recorder, Voice Flute, and Traverso_ (Portland, Oregon, forthcoming in 2016), concluding that the Hotteterre family in the 1660s is still the most probable theory.


17 Editions of the sonatas by Carissimi (attrib.), Fiocco, Rosier, Steffani, and Torri, ed. David Lasocki, are published by Instant Harmony, Portland, Oregon; see instantharmony.net/Music/e-editions.php.

18 Identified by Marianne Mezger in ‘Bearbeitungen für Flageolet und Blockflöte aus Werken H. Purcells und Zeitgenossen’, unpublished paper delivered at the fifth Internationales Blockflötensymposion Darmstadt, ERTA-Kongress 1997. Its text was included in a document supplied to members of ERTA at the time (Kongressbericht, Vorträge und Dokumentation, 58); Agostino Steffani, Le rivali concordi, facsimile, with introduction by Howard Mayer Brown, Italian Opera, 1640–1770, 14 (New York, 1977). Besides transposing, the arranger added all the trills (+ signs and an implied one with a written out turn in bar 11), inserted passing thirds in bar 14, changed straight rhythms into dotted in bars 18–20, 64–9, and 72–4, changed straight quavers into quaver–semiquaver–semiquaver figures in bars 31–5, and created divisions in bars 78–80. For transcriptions, see the Music Supplement to the present issue of EMP at http://www.earlymusic.info/Performer.php.

19 Arcangelo Corelli, Sonate a Violino e Violone o Cimbalo .... Opera quinta parte prima. Troisième édition où l’on a joint les agréments des Adagio de cet ouvrage, composé par A. Corelli comme il les jone (Amsterdam: Estienne Roger, 1710).

20 J & J Lubrano Music Antiquarians, catalogue 46, item 137.

21 Email message to the author from John Lubrano (24 November 2015).

22 The manuscript has now been acquired by the British Library but has no shelf number there yet (email message to the author from Richard Chesser, Head of Music Collections, 19 January 2016).

23 See Jürgen Eppelsheim, Das Orchester in den Werken Jean-Baptiste Lullys, Münchner Veröffentlichungen zur Musikgeschichte, Bd. 7 (Tutzing, 1961).


25 Email message to the author (23 November 2015).


28 The piece is reproduced in facsimile in Gustafson, The Legacy in Instrumental Music’, 498. The Cummings manuscript, called after its first known author, the singer and organist William H. Cummings (1831–1915), was next owned by the pianist and conductor Alfred Cortot (1877–1962) and is now in the possession of the musicologist and harpsichordist Bruce Gustafson of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

29 This section is based on the preface to Betty Bang Mather and David Lasocki, The Art of Preluding, 1700–1830, for Flutists, Oboists, Clarinettists and Other Performers (New York, 1984); available as an e-book from instantharmony.net/Music/ebooks.php.

30 PRELUDE. s. m. Piece de Musique irréguliere, que le Musicien jouë d’abord pour voir que son instrument est d’accord, & pour se mettre en train. Les grands Maîtres composent souvent sur le champ des prélude qui valent mieux que les pièces étudiées des autres’. Antoine Furetière, Dictionnaire universel, contenant généralement tous les mots françois, tant vieux que modernes, & les termes de toutes les sciences et des arts (Amsterdam: Estienne Roger, 1690).

31 ‘Les Musiciens appellent aussi Prélude, Certaines pièces de Musique, composées dans le goût des prélude qui se font sur le champ’. Dictionnaire de l’Académie française, fourth edition (Paris, 1762), included in Dictionnaires d’autrefois, available online from the University of Chicago; see https://artil-project.uchicago.edu/content/dictionnaires-dautrefois.

32 J’ay cru devoir expliquer ce que c’est que Préludes. Ce n’est autre chose qu’un disposition pour prendre le ton du Mode par où l’on veut jouer. Cela se fait ordinairement suivant la force de l’imagination des Joueurs, dans le moment même qu’ils veulent jouer sans les avoir écrit auparavant. Il n’y a point de règle particulière pour le mouvement ny pour la longeur des Préludes; on les fait différemment selon la fantaisie, comme tendre, brusque, long, ou court, & à mesure interrompuë; on peut même passer sur toute sorte de Modes, pourvu que l’on y ent & que l’on en sorte à propos, c’est à dire d’une manière que l’oreille n’en souffre point...’ Jean Pierre Freillon-Poncein, La véritable manière d’apprendre à jouer en perfection du haut-bois, de la flûte et du flageolet (Paris, 1700; facsimile, Geneva, 1974), 28.


34 ‘Je dirai seulement qu’en fait de Musique l’on peut considérer deux différentes espèces de Préludes, l’une est le Prélude composé qui est ordinairement la première Pièce de ce que l’on appelle Suite, ou Sonate, et qui, véritablement, est un Pièce dans le formes; de cette espèce sont aussi les Préludes que l’on place dans les Opéras et dans les Cantates, lesquels précèdent et annoncent quelquefois ce qui doit être chanté’. Hotteterre, L’Art de préleruer, Sanvovisin edition, 2.
L’autre espèce est le Prélude de caprice qui est proprement le véritable Prélude,... le Prélude doit être produit sur le champ sans aucune préparation'. Hotteterre, L’Art de préluder, Sanvoisin edition, 2.


‘Le Prélude est un espece de Caprice qui se compose ordinairement sur le champ avantque de joüer une piece’. Michel Corrette, Méthode pour apprendre aisément à jouer de la flûte traversière (Paris, c.1740), 45.

‘Quand on joüe seul sans accompagnement, on peut composer un grand Prélude. Pour lors on peut moduler sur tel ton que l’on voudra, faire des passages vites ou lents, par degrez conjoints ou disjoints, selon que cela se présente à l’imagination’. Corrette, Méthode, 45.

‘Mais le vrai prelude est un chant de caprice que l’on compose sur le champ, c’est de cette espèce de prélude dont un habile homme se sert pour faire briller son genie sur l’instrument qu’il possede.... Ces sortes des Préludes se font pour l’ordinaire pour s’amuser, ou lors qu’on va exécuter quelque moreau de Musique’. Toussaint Bordet, Méthode raisonnée, pour apprendre la Musique d’une façon plus claire et plus précise à laquelle on joint l’étendue de la Flûte traversière, du Violon, du Pardessus de Violon, et la Vielle et de la Musette (Paris, 1755), 15.


This collection does not seem to have been published in facsimile. For a collective modern edition, see Preludes and Voluntaries for Treble Recorder, ed. Rene Colwell (London, 1950) and More Preludes and Voluntaries, ed. Lasocki.

Facsimile, New York: Performers’ Facsimiles, [1996].

Facsimile, New York: Performers’ Editions, [1986].


Lully, Psyché, tragédie mise en musique (Paris, 1672), 118–19. This and the following identification kindly supplied by Bruce Gustafson, email message to the editor, 22 November 2015.


http://www.earlymusic.info/Performer.php.

‘Et lors que le musicien prend la liberté d’y employer tout ce qui lui vient dans l’esprit sans y exprimer la passion d’aucune parole, cette composition est appelée Fantaisie, ou Recherche’. Marin Mersenne, Harmonie universelle (Paris, 1636), ii, 164.

‘Fantasia, veut dire Fantaisie, ou espece de Composition, qui est le pur effet du genie sans le Compositeur s’assujettisse à un nombre fixe, ou à une certaine qualité de mesure, se servant de toutes sortes de Modes, &c. C’est à peu près comme Capriccio’. Sébastien de Brossard, Dictionaire de musique (Paris, 1703).

‘Caprice, se dit aussi des pieces de Poësie, de Musique, et de Peinture, qui reussissent plûtost par la force du genie, que par l’observation des regles de l’art, et qui n’ont aucun nom certain’. Furetière, Dictionnaire universel.

‘Capriccio, veut dire Caprice. Ce sont de certaines pieces, où le Compositeur, sans s’assujetir à un certain nombre; ou une certaine espece de mesure, ou à aucun dessein prémédité, donne l’effort au feu de son genie, ce qu’on nomme autrement Phantasia, Preludio, Ricercata, &c’. Brossard, Dictionaire.

See Wind, Jacob van Eyck and the Others, 355–77.


Zohn, Music for a Mixed Taste, 428.