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‘Memento mori Froberger?’ Locating the self in the passage of time

ON 23 October 1667, the Princess Sibylla of Württemberg composed a letter to Constantijn Huygens—one in a series of communications—reiterating the grief she felt on the death of her teacher, Johann Jacob Froberger, in May of that year. She wrote

From [your] letter, which pleased me very much, I gathered how greatly you lament with me the loss of my beloved, most worthy and honourable master and teacher, for whose hallowed death I, still, daily mourn from the bottom of my heart, when I consider what art and what technical command has died with him, and that I cannot further enjoy his continued teaching, which was my greatest pleasure . . . Would to God that I could be so fortunate as to be with you, Sir, since no one in my circles understands this noble art as you do. I should like to play for you the *Memento mori Froberger* as well as I can. Caspar Grieffgens, the organist at Cologne, also plays this piece, and learned it from [Froberger’s] hand, note by note. [The interpretation] is difficult to discover from the notation. [This remains true] even though the notation is clearly written and I have examined it with exceptional diligence. And I agree with Herr Grieffgen’s opinion that whoever has not learned the pieces from the late Herr Froberger himself, cannot possibly play them with true discretion, as he played them. May God Almighty grant that we music lovers may all delight ourselves mingling in the heavenly choir of the muses with him [Froberger]. Amen.¹

As is well known, the ‘Memento mori Froberger’ that the princess mentions is the allemande of Suite xx (A20; FBWV620); the copy of this piece in the Froberger manuscript held by the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin (SA 4450) bears the inscription, ‘Méditation faite sur ma mort future, la quelle se jouë lentement avec discretion à Paris 1 May Anno 1660’ (Meditation made on my future death, which is played slowly with discretion; in Paris 1 May, in the

year 1660), and another rubric at the end of the page reads simply, ‘Memento mori Froberger?’ (illus.1). These titles are confirmed in two other sources, including an autograph, although the Berlin manuscript is the only known source to record the date and location of composition.²

The musical context of Froberger’s ‘Méditation’ is by now well known; the piece constitutes part of a long tradition of music that expressed grief through the suspension of time. Froberger used the term *discretion* in many harpsichord works of the allemande–prelude type—some with lamenting programmes and some without—apparently to denote a personal, meditative metrical freedom that he seemed to consider a necessary part of musical lamentation.³ He prescribed the use of *discretion*, for example, in several works marking the death of a friend or patron, including the famous ‘Affligée et tombeau [*sic*] sur la mort de Monsieur Blanchrocher [*sic*], faite à Paris, et se jouë bien lentement et à la discretion’ (Affliction and *tombeau* on the death of Monsieur Blanchrocher, made in Paris, and it is played very slowly and at [the player’s] discretion).⁴ And, as has been frequently noted, Froberger’s harpsichord idiom is closely related to the unmeasured preludes fashionable in France in the second half of the 17th century;⁵ although these preludes generally lack definitive programmes and descriptive titles, it is noteworthy that their execution, like the pieces for which Froberger prescribes *discretion*, involves a general suspension of time.⁶

It is perhaps not surprising that the Princess Sibylla’s letter should mention, of all of Froberger’s works, his autobiographical ‘Memento mori’; in remembering her dear teacher, she would derive

inspiration and consolation from Froberger's recognition of his own mortality. Her letter describes Huygens as an ideal audience, someone to whom she could reach out in her grief and who would understand the significance of this piece better than anyone around her, since, as she writes, 'no one in my circles understands this noble art as you do'.

Still, it is striking that the princess's letter mentions *only* the 'Méditation faite sur ma mort future'. After all, many of Froberger's other laments for harpsichord share the same features—the prescribed *discretion* in tempo and execution that allows for personalized interpretation, a poignant *style brisé*, and heart-wrenching chromaticisms. Indeed, the Froberger autograph sold at Sotheby's of London in 2006, unfortunately not currently available for public viewing, includes both a lament on the death of Sibylla's husband, Leopold Friedrich, and a 'Memento mori Sibylla' for the princess herself.⁷ One might wonder whether the princess could derive no comfort from the performance of those other works, and whether Huygens might not have understood her grief through them equally well.

There may be more specific reasons—reasons beyond a general wish to remember her teacher in the company of a mutual friend—for the princess's special mention of this work, and for her wish to play it for Huygens in particular. Huygens, secretary to the Prince of Orange and a prominent political and cultural figure in 17th-century Europe, was not only an active correspondent with personalities like the princess and Froberger: he was also an avid diarist, and, towards the end of his life, wrote an autobiography intended only for his sons.⁸ For Huygens, the diary and autobiography were mechanisms for self-study, and a collection of lessons on life for his readers. Rudolf Dekker has suggested that for Huygens—as for other notable diarists such as Samuel Pepys—the diary constituted a vehicle through which to mark the passage of time in human terms—to define the vastness of history through reference to the individual and the mundane. As Dekker writes, 'Producing knowledge and producing self-knowledge clearly went hand in hand, and the two cannot easily be separated. In egodocuments like [autobiographies and diaries], the authors not only tried to learn more about themselves but also described and analyzed

their immediate environment'.⁹ Autobiographical writings allowed individuals to reflect upon the events of their days and, cumulatively, of their lives, and through that process, to understand their own position in their worlds and within the course of history.

Froberger's 'Méditation', too, is autobiographical: on a superficial level, it seems noteworthy that this is one of the few pieces by this composer for which both a date and a place of composition survive, a fact that supports the idea that he conceived of it as a sort of diary entry. Beyond this, though, and beyond the musical precedents of lamentation and grief already explored in previous scholarly literature, Froberger's rubrics suggest a connection to a literary precedent that has been overlooked thus far: the piece bears a relationship to the French genre of devotional literature also called *méditations*. Dozens of books of prayers, essays and poems with that title were printed in France, starting around the 1570s and extending through the Enlightenment, and the title of Froberger's piece suggests that he was aware of that popular religious tradition.¹⁰ In this article I propose that, in his highly personalized, intimate style, Froberger composed a musical equivalent of the literary *méditation*, fusing the process of autobiographical introspection with religious contemplation of death.

Both the literary *méditation* and Froberger's musical 'Méditation' embody a paradoxical understanding of time. On one hand, the literary *méditation* often drew on the image of the clock as a reminder of the regularity and fleetingness of time. On the other, these devotional texts also called for a suspension of time during recitation, to allow for proper concentration and to account for the needs of the individual reader. Froberger's piece, too, embraces an aesthetic of suspended time to allow for concentrated meditation and removal from worldly considerations, especially in calling for execution with *discretion*. At the same time, by dating his composition, Froberger showed an interest in time-bound autobiography—in placing himself in the passage of time.

Sibylla's letter to Huygens singles out the 'Memento mori Froberger' as a musical work through which she could derive comfort—that is, as a meditative text. It seems possible that Sibylla considered

*Méditation faite sur
ma mort future, la quelle
se joie lentement avec
Discretion à Paris
le 1 May Anno
1660.*

[12.]

Uemento Mori Profero.

1 'Méditation faite sur ma mort future, la quelle se joie lentement avec discretion à Paris 1 May Anno 1660' (Sing-Akademie zu Berlin SA 4450, reproduced by permission of the Sing-Akademie zu Berlin)

Huygens an ideal audience because of his own activities as a diarist; in that capacity, he, too, marked time through the composition of autobiographical texts. The princess's expression of frustration at her inability to replicate Froberger's own performance style is itself a lament for the passage of time, and for the loss of her teacher's individual musical voice.

Devotional prayer in France around 1660

The phrase *memento mori*, though unusual as a rubric in musical works, bears a larger theological and artistic significance. For centuries in art and literature it had been used as a reminder of the imminence of death and the resulting need for morality in the present moment. The most common artefacts associated with the theme of *memento mori* were timepieces. In some cases, it was the hourglass that represented the passage of time and the imminence of death, as in the image appended to Froberger's 'Lamento sopra la dolorosa perdita della Real M.^{sta} di FERDINANDO IV Rè di Romani', in the Froberger autograph of 1656, which shows two weeping figures with an hourglass between them (illus.2).¹¹ With the mechanical advances of the 16th and 17th centuries, clocks and personal watches came to embody the same themes, especially when those timepieces were shaped like skulls or inscribed with moralizing messages.¹² These mechanical timekeepers served as a reminder of the ticking away of life, and as a warning to manage one's time well. In the second half of the 17th century personal watches began to appear

as allegorical symbols in portraits, apparently signifying the fleetingness of time and the industriousness and ethical sensibilities of the portrait's subject. But in addition, as Dekker suggests, mechanical watches indicate a technologically advanced approach to ideas of time, as in the 1668 portrait of Geertruyd Huygens, in which the subject is shown holding a watch.¹³

Just as Constantijn Huygens marked time through regular entries in his diary, and through the retrospective narrative of his life in his autobiography, his son Christiaan dealt with the progress of time through his contributions to the mechanics of horology. It was he who invented the pendulum clock in 1659, and in 1675 he patented a spring mechanism for personal watches, dramatically improving the accuracy of both.¹⁴ Dekker suggests that Christiaan's work in horology may be seen as analogous to the diary-keeping of his father: both activities show the modern individual grappling with time.¹⁵ (The younger Huygens's mechanical innovations contributed to an increased concern with the prescription and accurate execution of musical tempo;¹⁶ it seems possible that these developments prompted composers like Froberger to specify their desire for metrical freedom in certain cases, including the 'Méditation.')

If the Huygens family included leaders in the struggle to define the self through time—Constantijn in his diary-keeping and autobiographical writings, and Christiaan in his work as a horologist—such



2 Drawing from Johann Jacob Froberger, 'Lamento sopra la dolorosa perdita della Real M.^{sta} di FERDINANDO IV Rè di Romani', Libro quarto di toccate, ricercari, capricci, allemande, gigue, courante, sarabande (autograph Ms., 1656). Reproduced in *Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Mus. Hs.18707 (Froberger Autographs)*, ed. R. Hill (New York, 1988), p.112v. (Reproduced by permission of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.)

efforts also manifested themselves in other arenas. The years around Christiaan's introduction into the courtly circles of Louis XIV also witnessed the publication of scores of books of devotional prayers and meditations, some written in prose and some in poetry, some explicitly designated for recitation on specific days and at set times and others intended for more general usage. The reader, whether a cleric or a layman, was meant to use these texts to gain insight into the relationship between the individual and the Divine.¹⁷ Although the prayers are often governed by time, with the authors encouraging recitation at regular intervals and prescribed times, they also highlight a paradox between earthly and meditative time. Through meditation, the reader suspends his consciousness of the regularity of time, losing himself in the contemplation of death and the Divine.

These meditative texts have been analysed in great detail elsewhere, and a thorough study of them is, of course, outside the scope of this article.¹⁸ Some general remarks on the literature are in order, however, since passages from some of those texts help to contextualize Froberger's 'Méditation', and its relationship to the composer's vision of the march of time, and the prospect of his own death. Through an artistic medium that embraces metrical flexibility, Froberger offers a musical analogy for the experience of devotional meditation on death.

Devotional prayers in the mid- to late 17th century took the form of sermons, prose chapters and poems; in some cases they adapted biblical literature, and in others they were newly composed. This literature was published by both Catholic and Protestant theologians and clerics (it should be remembered that the Edict of Nantes was not revoked until 1685); intended to inspire ethical thoughts, beliefs and behaviour, these writings encouraged readers to shut themselves off from the world, temporarily suspending their mundane activities. Authors of books of meditations directed their writings not only to those in religious orders, but also—or perhaps primarily—to laymen. As Christian Belin writes, 'To pray and to meditate become nearly synonymous . . . and the combined practice of these two activities could be reconciled with any condition and any station of life'.¹⁹ By the mid-17th century, writers in these devotional genres harnessed their readers' attach-

ments to the clock to incorporate meditative prayer into their daily routines.²⁰

The same time-consciousness also served as a *memento mori*, inspiring repentance.²¹ Meditative prayer both relied on a consciousness of the passage of time, which ensured that readers would pray regularly, and held itself apart from time, offering readers a chance to ponder the Divine outside of the pressures of daily life. Authors of devotional literature often used the clock as a metaphor to emphasize the fleetingness of time, the imminence of death, and the need for Christian behaviour in the present moment as a preparation for the end of their lives.²²

A few passages from the devotional literature serve to illustrate these points. In his 1655 collection of *Méditations pour les retraites ou exercices de dix jours* (Meditations for retreats or exercises lasting ten days), for example, the Carmelite cleric Jean de Saint-Samson advised

Let us think about death one or two times each day, envisioning it as the point of our entry to eternal life, or to pain, whether it be temporal or eternal. We do not know when it will arrive: it could be tomorrow.²³

The moment of death's arrival is never certain; and as a result, time must be set aside each day to consider it and to reform our behaviour as a result, 'so that we are not surprised without the riches and precious garments of good works'.²⁴

The noted French Protestant cleric Charles Drelincourt, in his 1656 *Les consolations de l'âme fidèle contre les frayeurs de la mort* (Consolations of the faithful spirit against the terrors of death), recognizes the differing perspectives of pre-modern and modern conceptions of the passage of time, symbolized by biblical metaphors of inconstancy on one side, and by the clock on the other:

The Ancients associated time with wings: that which was a rich symbol of its incredible swiftness. And the Holy Spirit compares our life to the shuttle of a weaver, a hired worker, a courier, a postal ship, and a flying eagle. He speaks of it as a ravine of water, a cloud, a vapour, a wind and a breath . . . In sum, all the things in the world that have the most surprise and inconstancy and of which the movement is the most sudden and the most swift, are used in Scripture to represent to us the vanity of our life, and the brevity of our days.

Our life, in addition to being of short duration, passes insensibly. There is something in it like a clock, in which the gears turn without pause, although the controllers appear to us immobile: Similarly, whether we be awake or asleep,

whether we be walking or reclining, whether we be eating or fasting, whether we be working or holding our hands crossed [in prayer?], we advance insensibly towards death.²⁵

Scripture, Drelincourt notes, describes time using metaphors of unpredictability, volatility and surprise. Time is swift, inconstant and sudden. Although he does not contradict this conception of time, he provides a more complete picture through reference to the modern invention of the clock. Time may seem to us to move suddenly, and the passage of time may take us by surprise when we notice it, but like the gears of a clock time is in fact regular and consistent, moving always, even if it appears static.

It is perhaps noteworthy that in Drelincourt's formulation the clock does not dictate the passage of time, but is merely a metaphor for it. The metaphor works in the opposite direction in a treatise on horology by Pierre de Sainte Marie Magdeleine of 1657. Although this treatise serves a different function from devotional literature, the author connects his work to the devotional tradition, situating it—or perhaps justifying it—through reference to spirituality. In his dedication to Salomon Phelippeaux, *Consiller du Roy & Maistre en sa Chambre des Comptes*, the horologist acknowledges what might seem to be the irrelevancy of his scientific writings for a non-scientist. However, he encourages his dedicatee not to concern himself with the details of the mechanics of clock-making, but rather, to view his work as a metaphor:

But my design is not, Sir, to occupy your spirit with these physical things; your more elevated thoughts occupy themselves with the consideration of a mystical horology, which is the life of a Christian man, in which the ages are so many hourly lines, one of which, without speaking of the others, deserves a profound meditation, as [it is] very important and consistent, never missing a single moment to mark the hour in its time, although it is uncertain which is the last of this life. . .²⁶

Although Sainte Marie Magdeleine's treatise itself is of a different literary type, the dedication engages with the genre of devotional literature, employing both the overall tone of piety and the specific imagery of the clock as a vehicle for repentance and awareness of death.

That meditative prayer is an activity requiring suspension of time is conveyed further by Pierre Roullé, in his volume *La vie de salut*. Roullé defines 'méditation' as follows:

Of meditation: Meditation is the preparation for prayer and for request, in reducing one's meditations to requests. Meditation is a type of prayer **that lasts some length of time**, and it is done with the goal of obtaining some virtue, thinking of some mystery that may aid in the acquisition of that virtue.²⁷

Roullé does not define the precise length of time that meditation should last; indeed, his description seems so vague as to imply that measure of time during meditative prayer is either impossible or irrelevant. It may be significant that the example that Roullé proceeds to give of a virtue that may be obtained through meditation is patience: through meditation on the patience that Jesus exhibited in his suffering, the modern religious person may learn to be patient—to suspend time. Indeed, Roullé implies that such a suspension of time is a necessary part of meditation—that which allows meditation to achieve its desired effect.

Memento mori Froberger?

Charles Drelincourt's son Laurent, also a Protestant cleric, continued his father's tradition of writing devotional poetry; in 1677 he published a collection of *Sonnets chrétiens sur divers sujets* (Christian sonnets on diverse subjects), which was reprinted many times well into the 18th century. His introduction connects his sonnets with music, and also with modern awareness of time:

The sonnets, by their brevity, are accommodated to readers, because they do not allow time to be lost. These are somewhat like separate little songs, the music for which is not boring, because it is short; and these are somewhat like short walks, at the end of which one may feel refreshed, and rest.²⁸

The reader of Laurent Drelincourt's poetry may gain the benefit of meditation and private prayer without compromising his engagement with the world. The modern reader would only have patience to study a short piece of poetry, since he would be nagged by the feeling that time was passing, and that he might be missing something by remaining secluded. In Belin's words, 'Drelincourt adapts himself visibly to the taste of the generation of 1670, which would no longer stand for overly long works'.²⁹

Drelincourt's analogy between music and prayer carries implications for an interpretation of Froberger's 'Méditation'. As with Drelincourt's meditative sonnets, some of which deal specifically with

death, Froberger's 'Méditation' requires only a brief removal of the player from day-to-day activities—those activities commonly marked by the passage of time. Still, during a performance or private rendering of the work, it is essential that time be suspended. Froberger expresses this requirement through the indication that the piece should be played with *discretion*, a term most often defined in terms of metre and the passage of time. The temporal liberties suggested by this rubric are supported by Sibylla's statement that only those who have learned the piece from Froberger himself can play it with the 'right discretion'.³⁰ The intimate, personal interpretation of the piece as it navigates the progression of time is something that only the composer could convey correctly.

The relationship between Froberger's 'Méditation' and the cultures of meditative prayer in France does not, of course, fully explain the work's musical language. As already noted, this work participates in the traditions of musical tears and lamentation shared by other *tombeaux*, along with some allemandes and unmeasured preludes. But Froberger's *tombeaux* and laments offer a musical picture of death as a past event—their composition may be viewed as an act of reflection or mourning.³¹ The 'Méditation', together with the elusive 'Memento mori Sibylla', stand apart from these other works in that they constitute an explicit musical consideration of the prospect of death in the *future*. In contemplating the future event of death, Froberger's 'Méditation' juxtaposes the musical traditions of lament with the literary genre of devotional *méditations*. Froberger, living in Paris in 1660 amid an active culture of the composition and recitation of devotional texts, contributed his own autobiographical musical essay to that literary tradition, which constituted such an important aspect of French popular religion in the 17th century. Like the authors of devotional literature, Froberger saw death as a future event through immersion in the

present moment. By suspending time through performance 'with discretion', he closed himself off—if only briefly—from the notion of time as a regular, predictable progression, governed and symbolized by the clock. The work enables the contemplation of death—repeatable in every performance—through the dream-like state of devotional meditation. It served the player as a tool to situate himself in the present instant, freezing time long enough to understand his place in it.

What, then, may be the deeper significance of the Princess Sibylla's letter to Huygens following Froberger's death? Huygens and his family were innovative in their preoccupation with marking the passage of time, and, as Dekker suggests, there was more than one way to express that preoccupation: Constantijn kept his diary, Christiaan worked as a horologist. The marking of time on a day-to-day basis was connected with an awareness of the imminence of death, apparently symbolized in modern portraiture by the clock.

But if the clock served as one modern means for the negotiation of time, authors of devotional literature in France offered another. Their writings provided a refuge from the clock—one that also functioned as a *memento mori*. As in a dream, time would be suspended long enough for the reader to locate himself in the temporal sphere. Drawing on this model, Froberger composed his own 'Méditation'. In closing the piece, he inscribed it with the words, 'Memento mori Froberger?', appending the question-mark as if to ask whether a suspension of time could, like a predictable ticking clock, serve as a sufficient reminder of death—whether a musical work might shed light on the place of the individual in the modern world.

The 'Méditation' was a persistent, lasting record of the composer in his attempt to freeze time. For Sibylla, it might enable a glimpse of Froberger at the keyboard, a memento not of the composer's silent death, but of his living, sounding music.

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1 ‘Von desselben Schreiben, welches mir sehr angenehmen, habe ich vernomen, wie hoc her mit mir beklaget den Verlust meines lieben und aller ehrenwertesten Lehrmeisters seligen Todt, welchen ich noch däglichen hertzlich betraure, wan ich bedencke was Kunst und Geschicklichkeit mit ihme abgestorben, und seiner weitern Unterrichtung, welches mein grösste Ergetzlichkeit gewesen, ich nit mehr geniessen kan . . . Wolte Gott, ich were so glickselig einmal bei dem Hern Chevallier zu sein, dan ich niemands umb oder bei mir habe, so dise edle Kunst verstehet. Wolte gern das *Memento mori Froberger* bei ihme schlagen, so guet mir müglichen were. Der Organist zu Cöllen, Caspar Grieffgens, schlägt selbiges Stuck auch, und hat es von seiner Handt gelernt, Grif vor Grif. Ist schwer aus den Notten zu finden. Habe es mit sonder Fleis darumb betracht, wiewol es deutlich geschriben. Und bleibe auch des Hern Grieffgens seiner Meinung, das wer die Sachen nit von ihme Hern Froberger seliger gelernet, unmüglichen mit rechter Discretion zuschlagen, wie er sie geschlagen hat. Der liebe Gott gebe das wir alle Music liebhabende uns bei ihme im himlischen Musenchor ergötzen megen. Amen.’ Transcribed by R. Rasch in ‘The Huygens—Froberger—Sibylla correspondence (1666–1668)’, in *The harpsichord and its repertoire: Proceedings of the International Harpsichord Symposium, Utrecht, 1990*, ed. P. Dirksen (Utrecht, 1992), pp.241–2. A facsimile of the letter is available in *Driehonderd brieven over muziek van, aan, en rond Constantijn Huygens*, ed. and trans. R. Rasch (Hilversum, 2007). A record of the letter (no.6607) is available at the on-line archive of the Huygens correspondence, at www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/Huygens/brief/5796 (accessed 7 July 2011). My thanks to Neal Zaslaw for his assistance with this translation.

2 For a report on the sources and a transcription of the rubrics, see D. Schulenberg, ‘Crossing the Rhine

with Froberger: suites, symbols, and seventeenth-century musical autobiography’, in *Fiori musicali: Liber amicorum Alexander Silbiger*, ed. C. Fontijn and S. Parisi (Sterling Heights, MI, 2010), pp.271–302, at pp.273 and 277. The other sources in question are the ‘Hintze’ manuscript, held by the Yale School of Music, and Ms. ‘X’, offered at Sotheby’s, London in 2006 (see n.7). As Peter Wollny notes, the discovery of the Berlin manuscript, and the rubric attached to the ‘Memento mori Froberger’ in that source in particular, offered the first information concerning the composer’s whereabouts during this period. See P. Wollny, preface to *Johann Jacob Froberger: Toccaten, suiten, lamenti: Die Handschrift SA 4450 der Sing-Akademie zu Berlin* (Kassel, 2004), pp.xvii–xxiii. The ‘Méditation faite sur ma mort future’ is found in the manuscript on p.63 and in Wollny’s transcription on p.45.

3 Howard Schott has considered the range of meanings that the word *discretion* might have carried for the temporal execution of Froberger’s music, suggesting that the word is used in apparently contradictory ways: for some writers, it meant ‘rhythmical freedom, what one might call Frescobaldian *tempo rubato*’, and for others it implied ‘a literal *tempo giusto*’. Schott cites Mace, Mattheson and others in the first camp and Brossard in the second; ultimately, though, he concludes that ‘The earlier usage, that stemming from Frescobaldi and described most clearly by Mattheson, would seem to be the one intended: the rhythmical freedom imported by the word *discretion*’. This conclusion would seem to be supported by Sibylla’s statement that, even though the notation of the ‘Méditation’ is clear, she cannot replicate Froberger’s execution. See H. Schott, ‘Parameters of interpretation in the music of Froberger’, in J. J. *Froberger: Musicien européen: colloque organize par la ville et l’École Nationale de Musique de Montbéliard, Montbéliard, 2–4 novembre 1990* (Paris, 1998), pp.99–120, at pp.101–4.

4 This is the title of the piece as given in Berlin SA 4450. A more general example of the lamenting or

grief-laden character of lute and harpsichord allemandes, preludes and *tombeaux* is the thematic connection between some of these pieces and John Dowland’s plaintive *Lachrimae*, musical works that grew out of the Elizabethan-era interest in melancholy. On the relationship between Dowland’s *Lachrimae* and the lute repertory of France and Central Europe, see P. Holman, *Four and twenty fiddlers: the violin at the English court, 1540–1690* (Oxford, 1993), pp.160–70; on the dissemination of the English style in Central European consort music, see A. Bianco, ‘Nach englischer und frantzösischer Art’: *Vie et oeuvre de Carlo Farina* (Turnhout, 2010). A great body of literature exists on Dowland’s music in the context of English melancholy; see, for example, R. H. Wells, ‘John Dowland and Elizabethan melancholy’, *Early Music*, xiii/4 (1985), pp.514–28, and A. Rooley, ‘New light on John Dowland’s Songs of Darkness’, *Early Music*, xi/1 (1983), pp.6–21.

5 See, for example, D. Moroney, ‘The performance of unmeasured harpsichord preludes’, *Early Music*, iv/2 (1976), pp.143–51. On the relationship between Froberger’s pieces played with *discretion* and the German *stylus phantasticus*, see P. Collins, *The stylus phantasticus and free keyboard music of the north German Baroque* (Aldershot, 2005), pp.90–2.

6 In his classifications of French keyboard music, Richard Troeger places the *tombeau* and the unmeasured prelude in the same general category, writing that the music in this group ‘is often free in its rhythm, part-writing, and formal construction; in its textural variety it manipulates the fullest advantage the inflexible dynamic of the harpsichord’. R. Troeger, ‘Metre in unmeasured preludes’, *Early Music*, xi/3 (1983), pp.340–5, at p.341. Troeger also notes the presence of a parallel passage in Froberger’s ‘Tombeau de M. Blancrocher’ and an unmeasured prelude of Louis Couperin, suggesting that Froberger’s lamenting *discretion* involved the same metrical freedom inscribed in the French unmeasured notation (p.342).

- 7 See B. van Asperen, 'A new Froberger manuscript', *Journal of Seventeenth Century Music*, 13/1 (2008), par. 3.2 and passim.; http://sscm-jscm.press.illinois.edu/v13/noi/vanasperen.html#_edn2.
- 8 F. R. E. Blom, "What Has Been My Weight on Earth": the autobiography of Constantijn Huygens', in *Modelling the individual: biography and portrait in the Renaissance, with a critical edition of Petrarch's Letter to posterity*, ed. K. Eenkel, B. de Jong-Crane and P. Liebrechts (Amsterdam and Atlanta, 1998), p.205.
- 9 R. Dekker, 'Watches, diary writing, and the search for self-knowledge in the seventeenth century', in *Making knowledge in early modern Europe: Practices, objects, and texts, 1400–1800*, ed. P. H. Smith and B. Schmidt (Chicago, 2007), pp.127–42, at p.127.
- 10 On the periodization of this literature, see T. C. Cave, *Devotional poetry in France, c.1570–1613* (Cambridge, 1969), pp.xii–xiii. The *terminus* date for Cave's study, as he explains, marks roughly the point by which the various genres of devotional literature had been established; authors built upon those genres during subsequent periods, including the one under consideration here.
- 11 See Schulenberg, 'Crossing the Rhine with Froberger', p.276. This image is reproduced in *Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Musiksammlung, Mus. Hs. 18707 (Froberger Autographs)*, ed. R. Hill (New York, 1988), p.112v.
- 12 A. M. Cohen, *Technology and the early modern self* (New York, 2009), p.41. The first two chapters of Cohen's book explore the impact of the clock on conceptions of time, and on ways in which time was organized in the Early Modern era.
- 13 Dekker, 'Watches', p.130.
- 14 See Dekker, 'Watches', pp.130–1 and 133; also A. Van der Kraan, 'The Dutch East India Company, Christiaan Huygens, and the marine clock, 1682–95', *Prometheus*, 19/4 (2001), pp.279–98, at p.286.
- 15 In the years following his son's invention, Constantijn Huygens was in Paris a good deal as a diplomatic representative of the court of William of Orange, and as Bram Stoffele has noted, he spent ample time there promoting the position of Christiaan and his scientific instruments—including timepieces—within courtly circles; Constantijn's efforts may have contributed to Christiaan's appointment, in 1666, to the newly founded *Académie Royale des Sciences*. See B. Stoffele, 'Christiaan Huygens—a family affair: fashioning a family in early-modern court-culture', Master's thesis, Utrecht University (2006), pp.6, 95 and *passim*; also Van der Kraan, 'The Dutch East India Company', p.283.
- 16 See E. TeSelle Boal, 'Purcell's clock tempos and the fantasias', *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, 20 (1983), pp.24–39, esp. pp.29–30. See also E. Segerman, 'A re-examination of the evidence on absolute tempo before 1700, I', *Early Music*, xxiv/2 (1996), pp.227–48, and Segerman, 'A re-examination of the evidence on absolute tempo before 1700, II', *Early Music*, xxiv/4 (1996), pp.681–9.
- 17 On the integration of humanism into the religious sensibilities of 17th-century France, see H. Phillips, *Church and culture in seventeenth-century France* (Cambridge, 1997), pp.18ff.
- 18 See especially C. Belin, *La conversation intérieure: la méditation en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris, 2002). Belin analyses in detail the different theological approaches inscribed in the devotional literature that emerged from different religious orders and sects. Cave, *Devotional poetry in France*, deals with an earlier body of literature, but it was during that earlier period that the conventions of the genres were fixed. Cave's discussion of the poetry of *memento mori* appears on pp.146–83.
- 19 Belin, *La conversation intérieure*, pp.114–15. 'Prier et méditer deviennent Presque synonymes. . . et la pratique conjointe de ces deux activités doit pouvoir se concilier avec n'importe quelle condition ou n'importe quell état de vie.' Translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.
- 20 Belin, *La conversation intérieure*, pp.114–15.
- 21 On the genre of penitential prayer, see Cave, *Devotional poetry in France*, pp.94–145.
- 22 On notions of time in the French devotional literature in the 17th century, see Belin, *La conversation intérieure*, pp.343–64.
- 23 J. de Saint-Samson, *Méditations pour les retraittes ou exercices de dix jours* (Rennes, 1655), p.136. 'Pensons à la Mort une ou deux fois chaque jour, l'envisageans comme le point de nostre entrée à la vie eternelle, ou à la peine, soit temporelle, soit eternelle. Nous ne sçavons quand elle arrivera: Ce sera peut-estre demain.'
- 24 'afin de n'estre point surpris sans les riches & precieux vestemens des bonnes oeuvres.' De Saint-Samson, *Méditations*, p.136.
- 25 'Les Anciens peignoient le tems avec des ailes: Ce qui estoit un riche emblème de son incroyable vitesse. Et le Saint Esprit compare nostre vie à la navete d'un tisseran, à un ouvrier à loüage, à un courier, à une barque de poste, & à une aigle volante. Il en parle comme d'une ravine d'eau, d'une nuée, d'une vapeur, d'un vent, & d'un souffle . . . Enfin, toutes les choses du Monde qui ont le plus de legereté & d'inconstance, & dont le mouvement est le plus soudain & le plus rapide, son employees en l'Ecriture, pour nous représenter la vanité de nostre vie, & la brieveté de nos jours. Outre que nostre vie est de peu de durée, elle s'écoule insensiblement. Il en est comme d'une horloge, dont les roués tournent sans cesse, encore que l'aiguille nous en semble immobile . . . De mesme, soit que nous veillions, ou que nous dormions: que nous marchions, ou que nous nous reposions: que nous mangions, ou que nous jeûnions: que nous travaillions, ou que nous ayons les bras croisez, nous avançons insensiblement vers le tombeau.' C. Drelincourt, *Les consolations de l'âme fidèle contre les frayeurs de la mort avec les dispositions & preparations necessaries pour bien mourir* (Paris, 1656; Geneva, r/1660), pp.91–2.

26 'Mais mon dessein n'est pas, MONSIEUR, de porter vostre esprit à ces choses physiques; vos pensées plus relevées se portent dans la consideration d'un horloge mystique, qui est la vie de l'homme Chrestien, dont les âges sont autant de lignes horaires, l'une desquelles sans parler des autres, est digne d'une profonde meditation, comme tres importante & infaillible, qui ne manquera pas d'un seul moment à marquer l'heure en son temps, bien qu'incertain, celle-la, est la derniere de cette vie. . . ' P. de Sainte Marie Magdeleine, *Traité d'horlogiographie, contenant plusieurs manieres de construire, sur toutes surfaces, toutes sortes de lignes horaires: & autres circles de la sphere. Avec quelques instrumens pour la mesme pratique, & pour connoistre les heures Durant la nuit: & l'heure du flus & reflux de la mer* (Paris, 1657), [pp.iii-iv].

27 'De la Méditation. La méditation sert de preparation à l'oraison & à la

demande, en reduisant ses meditations en demandes. La méditation est une espece de priere qui **dure quelque espace de temps**, & elle se fait à dessein d'obtenir quelque vertu, pensant à quelque mystere qui peut servir pour l'acquisition de cette vertu.' Pierre Roullé, *La vie de salut ou la maniere de vie qu'il faut necessairement mener en ce monde pour se sauver* (Paris, 1660), pp.206-7. Emphasis added.

28 'Les sonnets, par leur brièveté, sont commodes aux Lecteurs, parce qu'ils ne leur donnent pas le tems de se lasser. Ce sont comme autant de petits Airs séparez, dont la musique n'est pas ennuyeuse; parce qu'elle est courte; et ce sont comme autant de petites Promenades, au bout desquelles on peut prendre le frais et se reposer.' L. Drelincourt, *Sonnets chrétiens sur divers sujets, divisez en quatre livres* (Amsterdam, 1741), p.3v. Quoted in Belin, *La conversation intérieure*, p.149.

29 'Drelincourt s'adapte visiblement au goût de la generation de 1670 qui ne supporte plus les ouvrages trop longs.' Belin, *La conversation intérieure*, p.149.

30 David Schulenberg, in private conversation, has proposed an alternate interpretation of Sibylla's words concerning the organist Caspar Grieffgens: he suggests that her description of Grieffgens having learned the 'Méditation' 'note for note' from Froberger might mean that he learned it by rote, without a score. This interpretation would certainly offer a new perspective on the rubric *avec discrétion*; in any case, it serves as a reminder of the imprecision of Froberger's notation in relation to the free execution required by his lament style.

31 Philippe Vendrix has considered these other works on the subject of death in 'Froberger et la mort', in *J. J. Froberger: Musicien européen*, pp.77-85.



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