Johann Jakob Froberger
(1616–1667)

The first great German keyboard composer
Johann Jakob, der frohe Burger?

John James, the merry townsman?
J.J.

Is this he?
Early life

- Protestant court at Stuttgart

- Basilius, his father, Court Kapellmeister 1621

- Court life, cosmopolitan, many foreign musicians

- Musical siblings, J. Christoph, J. Georg and Isaac
Thirty Years’ War
1618 – 1648

The Battle of Nördlingen by Jan v d Hoecke, Oil on canvas.

Bavaria, 5/6 September 1634

Decisive Spanish-Imperial victory over Swedish forces
Froberger’s travels

- Vienna (1634-49, and 1653-57)
- Rome (1637-41, and 1645)
- London (1651/2)
- Paris (1652)
- Dresden, Cologne, Dusseldorf, Zeeland, Brabant, Utrecht, Antwerp
- Brussels
- Heidelberg & Nuremberg (1653), Regensburg (1654 Imperial Parliament), Mainz (1665)
- Madrid
Froberger’s Travels (coach and boat)

Stuttgart

Travails of Travels

- Allemande faite en passant le Rhin dans une barque en grand péril, laquelle se joue lentement à la discrétion
- Plainte faite à Londres pour passer la mélancolie, laquelle se joue lentement avec discrétion
- Beschreibung der plaincte. Johann Jacob Froberger, welcher von Paris auß auf Cales der Meinung in Engellant
- Lamentation sur ce que j’ay esté vole (lament on that which is taken from me)
- After being whipped by soldiers between Brussels and Leuven, an Allemande is headed - To be played freely, and better than the soldiers treated me!
Vienna

Ferdinand III
Archduke
Leopold
(governor of
Spanish
Netherlands)

Ferdinand IV
Leopold I
Ferdinand III, by the grace of God elected Holy Roman Emperor, forever August, King of Germany, King of Hungary, Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Rama, Serbia, Galicia, Lodomeria, Cumania and Bulgaria, Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Brabant, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Margrave of Moravia, Duke of Luxemburg, of the Higher and Lower Silesia, of Württemberg and Teck, Prince of Swabia, Count of Habsburg, Tyrol, Kyburg and Goritia, Marquess of the Holy Roman Empire, Burgovia, the Higher and Lower Lusace, Lord of the Marquisate of Slavonia, of Port Naon and Salines, etc. etc.
Dedicated to Ferdinand III 1649

Libro Secondo
Di Toccate, Fantasie, Canzone, Alleman
de Courante, Sarabande, Cigue, et
altre Partite +

Alla Sac. Ca. S. M.
Froberger’s travels: Rome (1637-41, and 1645)

G. Frescobaldi (1583-1643)
A. Kircher (1602-1680)
G. Carissimi (1605-1674)
J.C. Kerll (1627-93)
Significant as instrumental composer rather than vocal

Toccatas, Capriccios, Ricercars, Partitas, etc.

10 rules on how to play the toccatas

Rule 1: As in a madrigal the tempo varies, now slow, now fast, with pauses where desired, according to the mood of the music and the sense of the words!

Rule 3: Begin slowly with the chords played arpeggiando
Frescobaldi 2nd book of Toccatas
1627, reissued 1637

Toccata Prima
Athanasius Kircher
(1602 – 1680)

Musurgia Universalis
(1650)
Kircher's Relationships between Affections and Musical Elements

Amour
(love)
combination of longing & joy—unstable; calm tempo; rhythm sometimes fast and slow; contrasting intervals reflecting longing & joy
Luctus seu Planctus
(mourning or lamentation)
slow pulse; semitones and irregular intervals; suspensions and dissonant harmonies
Laetitia et Exultatio
(joy and exultation)
fast tempo, esp. triple time and faster dances; leaping consonances; few dissonances and syncopations; higher tessitura
Furor et Indignatio
(rage and indignation)
fast tempo; dissonances
Commiseratio et Lacryma
(pity and weeping)
slow tempo; small intervals
Timor et Afflictio (fear and pain)
moderate tempo; harsh harmonies
Praesumption et Audacia
(presumption and audacity)
virtuosoic display
Admiratio
(admiration or astonishment)
dependent on relationship
Harmony and Counterpoint Dodge!

Athanasius Kircher was one of the first to use combinatorial procedures to mechanize musical composition. In 1650, he described a box containing wooden strips covered with sequences of numbers and rhythmic values; by selecting and combining sequences on these strips according to Kircher’s rules, anyone – even those with no musical knowledge – could compose a hymn in four-part counterpoint. Kircher called this box his “arca musarithmica,” or “music-making ark,” and presented it at as a musical marvel to astound his royal patrons.
Matthias Weckmann (1616–74)

Pupil of Heinrich Schütz, who had travelled to Italy meeting G. Gabrieli and Monteverdi.

1650-ish competed against Froberger in an organ competition organised by the Elector of Saxony.
Paris 1652

- Louis Couperin (1626-61)
- Chambonnières (1601-72)
- Blancrocher (1605-52)
- Dufaut
- Gaulthier
Tombeau fait à Paris sur la mort de Monsieur Blancheroche; lequel se joue fort lentement à la discretion sans observer aucune mesure.
Back in Vienna 1656
Ending of Lamentation on the death of Ferdinand IV (1633-1654) in Suite 12, in the “Libro Quarto” (1656)
Lamentation faite sur la mort très douloureuse de Sa Majesté Imperiale, Ferdinand le troisieme; et se joue lentement avec discretion. An. 1657.
What made Froberger great?

- Creation of a large body of pioneering work
- Beautiful music filled with craftsmanship, invention and intense emotion
- Waypaver
- Promoted travel as a means of education
- Sought out the top musicians, and the most interesting people
- Communicator, networker, maintained contact with acquaintances, worked on friendships
- Publication/dissemination of works into 18th century
- Humour
Princess Sybilla, Dowager Duchess of Würtemberg-Montbéliard (1620-1707)
From [your] letter, which pleased me very much, I gath-ered 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 great-est pleasure. . . Would to God that I could be so fortunate as to be with you, Sir, since no one in my circles under-stands 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
Performance Issues

- Sources/editions
- Frescobaldi rules, stylus fantasticus
- Avec discrétion
- Duple gigues converted to triple
Gigue in e minor
Gigue in e minor (Bauyn MS)
Froberger Gigue - binary and ternary

Ex. 48
Gigue (Suite VII), Froberger’s autograph

Gigue (Suite XXIII), Bauyn MS
Avec discrétion
Autograph in Sotheby's manuscript Méditation sur ma mort future, 'signed' by the composer at the end NB Memento Mori Froberger?