

*Journal of the
American Musical
Instrument Society*

VOLUME IX • 1983



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The Bassoon in Chamber Music of the Seventeenth Century

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THE BASSOON (*Fagott*) was the only reed instrument to be assigned solo parts on a regular basis by composers of the seventeenth century, and thus was the chief survivor of a large group of wind instruments in use earlier. Michael Praetorius names no fewer than nine different types of reed instruments, most of which were built in several sizes,¹ but none except the *Fagott* was able to satisfy the demands of composers as they explored the solo possibilities of various instruments at the turn of the century.

The *Krummhorn* and *Schryari* were poorly suited to the dynamic shadings considered necessary; because of the wind capsule, players had no direct embouchure control of the reed. Nor did the *pirouette* of the shawm encourage gripping the reed between the lips, as was necessary with the *Fagott*, *Pommer*, *Sordone*, and *Bassanelli*, the instruments on which players had the greatest control of tone quality and pitch.

Range was also a factor. Most of the Renaissance reed instruments were designed originally to accompany singers or to play transcriptions of vocal music and therefore had gamuts corresponding approximately to the standard vocal ranges. With the growing interest in instrumental music *per se* during the seventeenth century, these ranges were not adequate to meet the demands of composers, particularly since their interests often centered on the violin and its relatively wide-ranging capabilities.

Judging from extant compositions, with the exception of the *Fagott*, the use of reed instruments was sharply curtailed about the time that composers began to specify instruments. The *Sordone* is named in a manuscript that includes compositions by "M.L.H." (Moritz, Landgrave of Hessen-Kassel),² but the work is a multivoiced pavan in Renaissance style. Johann Hermann Schein published a stylistically similar work for four krummhorns in 1609³ and called for three *Bombardons* to accom-

1. Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum*, vol. 2: *De organographia* (Wolfenbüttel, 1619).

2. No. 27 in British Library Add Ms 33295.

3. Johann Hermann Schein, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Arthur Prüfer (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1901-23), 1: 201.

pany singers in 1626.⁴ The *Schalmey* and other reed instruments are specified in German ensemble music occasionally throughout the seventeenth century, but "modern style" canzonas and sonatas for these instruments are not extant in large numbers.⁵

A "modern" canzona by Giovanni Battista Buonamente for violin and *dolzaina*⁶ does enable us to speculate that the latter, a reed instrument known through literary sources dating from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, was a bass shawm, an instrument of particular interest because it coexisted with the bassoon for some time and had much the same range and function.⁷ It might be said that the two were competitors until the shawm became so long and unwieldy, as it was called upon to produce the extended lower register, that the advantage of the hairpin-shaped bore of the bassoon became obvious.

Exactly when the idea of a doubled, parallel bore was originated is uncertain. One well-known example of such a construction is found in the *phagotum*, a short-lived sixteenth-century invention related to the *Fagott* in name only.⁸ Other instruments with doubled-back tubes were the *Sordone*, the bagpipe, and the *Rackett*, whose air channel was coiled several times inside a canisterlike body.

Early in the seventeenth century, prototypes of the bassoon either had parallel channels that were bored through a single block of wood and joined at the bottom to form a continuous conical bore, or they had upper joints that were made separately and inserted into what we now call the butt. If we may believe Praetorius, these two types were called *Dulzian* or *Fagott* indiscriminately.⁹ Marin Mersenne offered a detailed description of the jointed instrument in 1635,¹⁰ setting forth what is probably the first use of the term *basson*, which was assimilated into

4. *Ibid.*, 6: 91–103.

5. Examples are found in: Johann Petzel, *Bicinia variorum instrumentorum, ut à 2 V., cornet, flaut, clarinis, clarino, et fagotto . . . appendice à 2 bombardinis vulge Schalmeyen e fagotto* (Leipzig, 1675); also, *Quatre sonate à 5 bombardi*, an anonymous manuscript from the second half of the seventeenth century. The former is in the Uppsala Universitetsbiblioteket, the latter in the Kassel Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt und Landesbibliothek.

6. From Giovanni Battista Buonamente, *Sonate, et canzoni à 2, 3, 4, 5, et à 6 voci . . . lib. VI* (Venice, 1636). (In the Wrocław Biblioteka Uniwersytecka.)

7. For a discussion of the *dolzaina*, see Brian Klitz, "A Composition for Dolzaina," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 24, no. 1 (spring, 1971): 113–18.

8. See Francis W. Galpin, "The Romance of the Phagotum," *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 67 (1940–41): 57–72.

9. Praetorius, *De organographia*, 38.

10. Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie universelle* (Paris, 1635), trans. Roger E. Chapman (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957), 372–76.

Cantus

Bajón

Be - ne - di - ctus Do - mi - nus De - us I - sra - - - - el

EXAMPLE 1. Juan Ginés Perez, "Benedictus," meas. 1–11. From *Hispaniae schola musica sacra*, ed. Phillippe Pedrell (Barcelona, 1894–98), 5: 1–5. *Altus*, *Tenor*, and *Bassus* rest.

English in the eighteenth century. During the seventeenth century, English writers clung to their word for the early bassoon, *curtal* (from the Latin *curtus*: shortened), first seen in a household account of 1574.¹¹ The earliest Spanish sources refer to *bajón*, *bajoncillo*, or *bassoncico*, but the term *Fagott* was clearly favored by Italian and German publishers and composers, who used it consistently throughout the century.¹²

Paintings, literary descriptions, and a few surviving scores indicate that the bassoon's earliest musical role was to provide or to support the bass voice in mixed vocal-instrumental ensembles. One of the earliest extant compositions including the bassoon is a sixteenth-century "Benedictus" by Juan Ginés Perez (ex. 1). It is significant that Perez includes no instrument other than the bassoon, which supplies a bass line for the solo voice (based on the chant for the Cantic of Zachary, Maundy Thursday) that introduces each choral section.¹³

The bassoon also supplied the lowest voice in instrumental transcriptions and dances. Its capabilities as a tenor instrument were not exploited until well into the eighteenth century, because that range was traditionally covered by smaller members of the bassoon family. A score by Giovanni Pietro Flaccomio¹⁴ indicates that the "bassoncico alias fagotto piccolo" was to double the alto part, ranging from *a* to *a'*. But few scores have come down to us with parts for bassoons in sizes other

11. Lyndesay G. Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1965), 9.

12. This conclusion was formed after noting the instruments named in some 600 chamber works found in seventeenth-century collections, many of which are listed in Ernst Hermann Meyer's *Die Mehrstimmige Spielmusik des 17. Jahrhunderts in Nord- und Mitteleuropa* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1934) or in the catalogues of the Deutsches Musikgeschichtliches Archiv, Kassel.

13. The entire work is printed in *Hispaniae schola musica sacra*, ed. Phillippe Pedrell (Barcelona, 1894–98), 5: 1–5.

14. *Concentus in duos distincti choros, lib. I* (Venice, 1611). (In the library of the Hispanic Society of America in New York City.)

than the seventeenth-century instrument that became standard.¹⁵ It had six fingerholes on the front, which, when covered, produced the pitches *G* to *e*, as on the modern instrument. A key on the front of the instrument served the *F*-hole, extending the natural scale downward a major second. A second key, which produced *D* when closed, was on the reverse of the instrument and was operated by the lower thumb, which also stopped the *E*-hole.¹⁶ The lowest tone was sounded when the upper thumb covered the *C*-hole. Notes above *f* were produced by overblowing, and, according to Praetorius, a theoretical range of two and one-half octaves was possible, although our survey indicates that the range of this bassoon seldom exceeded *C* to *d'*.

An anonymous *Sonate à 8* for four viols, four bassoons, and continuo from the second half of the seventeenth century includes four bassoon parts that range collectively from *BB flat* to *g'* (ex. 2).¹⁷ Bassoons of smaller sizes were undoubtedly employed for the two higher parts, but no special kind of bassoon is called for by name, so the composition offers little insight into the uses of higher-pitched bassoons, except to reaffirm that they were employed. The individual bassoon ranges are:

- Bassoon I: *f* to *g'*
- Bassoon II: *c* to *g'*
- Bassoon III: *B flat* to *b flat*
- Bassoon IV: *BB flat* to *f*

They do not fit into Praetorius's range categories,¹⁸ nor are they transposing instruments of the type found in the eighteenth-century composition by Johann Kaspar Trost.¹⁹ This is not unexpected, since there is no period in the history of music when the size and pitch of smaller bassoons were standardized.

Bassoons pitched a fourth lower (*Quart-Fagott*) or a fifth lower (*Quint-Fagott*) than the standard bassoon were the largest sizes known to Praetorius, but he tells us that Hans Schreiber, a master instrument maker from Berlin, was at work early in the seventeenth century constructing a "unique and remarkable" instrument to sound a full octave below the

15. For an eighteenth-century work for higher-pitched bassoon, see H. Jean Hedlund, "Ensemble Music for Small Bassoons," *Galpin Society Journal* 11 (May, 1958): 78-84.

16. Some instruments were so constructed that the lower thumb operated an *E*-key and stopped a *D*-hole.

17. The manuscript is in the Kassel Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt und Landesbibliothek.

18. Praetorius, *De organographia*, 23.

19. Hedlund, "Ensemble Music."

Viole I

Viole II

Viole III

Viole IV

Fagotto I

Fagotto II

Fagotto III

Fagotto IV

Continuo

EXAMPLE 2. Anonymous, *Sonate à 8* (ca. 1675), meas. 1–8. From a manuscript in the Kassel Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt und Landesbibliothek.

Dulzian, thus comparable to the modern octave-transposing contrabassoon. Unfortunately, no seventeenth-century scores with parts for bassoons pitched lower than our modern instrument have been uncovered.²⁰

Biagio Marini was among the earliest composers to assign the bassoon significant solo parts, in his *Affetti musicali . . . opus I* (Venice, 1617), a collection that includes “La Foscarina,” often cited as the piece containing the first written tremolo in violin literature. The noted passage, for two violins or *cornetti*, trombone or bassoon, and continuo, demands

20. For a discussion of the history of the contrabassoon, see Langwill, *The Bassoon and Contrabassoon*, 112–42.

Violino ò
Cornetto I

Violino ò
Cornetto II

Trombone ò
Fagotto

Continuo

tremolo con l'arco

tremolo con l'arco

tremolo col strumento

metti il tremolo
5 6 5 6# 5 6 6 6 6 6 5

EXAMPLE 3. Biagio Marini, "La Foscarina," *Affetti musicali . . . opus I* (Venice, 1617), meas. 71–75. From the copy in the Bibliotheka Uniwersytecka, Wrocław.

also that the bassoonist execute a "tremolo col strumento" (ex. 3). While we know that during this period the tremolo was a measured device in which string players executed the equivalent of four sixteenth-notes per quarter-note, and that organs had tremolo stops that would have allowed the player of Marini's work to "mettere il tremolo" mechanically, the question remains as to how the bassoonist (or trombonist) could have produced a tremolo that would have been equivalent to that of the other instrumentalists. Fortunately, we have a work by Giovanni Battista Riccio entitled "La Grimaneta" that sheds some light on this question. "La Grimaneta" contains written-out tremolo passages for two wind instruments in which the players were required to produce a tremolo by repeating two eighth-notes (rather than four sixteenth-notes) per quarter-note (ex. 4).²¹ The fact that Marini wrote half-notes for the violins and whole-notes for the bassoon in his tremolo passage, where one or the other would have served both winds and strings, tends to support the contention that Riccio's work reflects a standard performance practice of the early seventeenth century.

In "La Foscarina," called by Marini a *Sonata à 3*, the three solo instruments imitate one another with no apparent regard for idiomatic technical problems. The frequent duplication or elaboration of the continuo line by the bassoon is a result of the coincident ranges of the two parts. The bassoon is clearly a solo participant, not a continuo instru-

21. From *Terzo libro delle divine lodi musicali* (Venice, 1620). (In the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Frankfurt am Main.)

EXAMPLE 4. Giovanni Battista Riccio, "La Grimaneta," *Terzo libro delle divine lodi musicali* (Venice, 1620), meas. 81–84. From the copy in the Stadt- und Universitätsbibliothek, Frankfurt am Main.

ment, and the bassoonist is required to be as facile as the violinists (ex. 5). This is true, also, in "La Aguzzona," another sonata from the same opus, which includes *g sharp* for the bassoon.²²

Early in the seventeenth century, the concept of instrumental writing had not developed to the point where idiomatic compositional techniques for all individual instruments were recognized. This is attested to by a sonata for two violins, two bassoons, and continuo by Francesco Usper (Sponga), published in Venice in 1619. Included in a collection²³ of fourteen vocal motets and a *Battaglia per cantar e sonar à 8*, this piece closely resembles a sixteenth-century multivoiced composition to which the continuo has been added. It is imitative, and all four solo voices are treated as equal, except in the incipient middle movement, which is a rhythmically simpler passage for two bassoons and continuo. For the most part, Usper orchestrates his instruments in pairs in a seemingly random fashion while presenting a series of juxtaposed melodic ideas, which he distributes among the violins and bassoons without any apparent awareness of their different technical potentials.

Dario Castello wrote two books of *Sonate concertate in stil moderno*²⁴ that include nine sonatas with solo bassoon parts. His compositions are of

22. Since meantone tuning was in vogue during this period, we may infer that bassoons, built to produce G sharp in tune, were not equipped to play A flat, since the pitch discrepancy between those two tones under the prevailing tuning system would have prohibited the use of a single tone-hole for both pitches. Whether or not the difference could have been accommodated by lipping is a moot point.

23. Sponga's *Compositioni armoniche . . . opus 3*. A copy is in the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.

24. Both were published in Venice: book 1 in 1621, 1629, and 1658; book 2 in 1629 and 1644. Copies (of both) are in the Wrocław Biblioteka Uniwersytecka.

Violino ò Cornetto I

Violino ò Cornetto II

Trombone ò Fagotto

Continuo

EXAMPLE 5. Biagio Marini, "La Foscarina," *Affetti musicali . . . opus I* (Venice, 1617), meas. 1–6. From the copy in the Bibliotheka Uniwersytecka, Wrocław.

particular interest because he was in charge of wind instruments at St. Mark's in Venice in 1629, and because his remarks concerning the difficulty of the works suggest that in them he exploited what he considered to be the technical extremes of the bassoon. They are "modern" not only in that they employ *concertato* techniques, but also because they are among the earliest compositions to include tempo markings and to make extensive use of up-to-date devices such as the instrumental trill.

The trombone is the only other wind instrument assigned an important role frequently in Castello's twenty-nine sonatas; no other wind instrument is named except in book 2, where the last composition is titled "In ecco per doi cornetti a due violini." A few parts for the antiquated pommers and shawms continued to be written throughout the century, and *flauto* was specified rarely, but scores naming the bassoon, trombone, or cornett, the latter especially as an alternative for violin, far outnumber those that mention other wind instruments. The trum-

pet (*clarino*) appears in numerous scores in specific localities (e.g., Bologna and Leipzig), but it seldom appears in chamber music of the first half of the seventeenth century, and it does not seem to have enjoyed the same widespread geographic use as the bassoon, trombone, and cornett.

In a *Sonata à 4* by Giovanni Valentini²⁵ that includes the latter three winds, the bassoon sets the pace in an initial solo passage, and the work continues with typical passages of increasing rhythmic complexity without any idiomatic differences in style among the instruments. Johann Petzel also combines wind instruments in his duo for *clarino*, *Fagott*, and continuo,²⁶ in which the playing range of the bassoon is extended upward to *e'*, the earliest published work of those examined to include this note.²⁷

Of the twenty-four sonatas in Philipp Friedrich Buchner's Opus 8 (Frankfurt, 1662), sixteen call for bassoon, mostly in conjunction with various string instruments. In fact, Buchner provides in his collection a concise compendium of all the more common bassoon-string combinations of the seventeenth century, as well as a composition for two bassoons and continuo.²⁸

On the basis of those works for bassoon that still survive, we must recognize Giovanni Antonio Bertoli as the outstanding bassoonist-composer of the seventeenth century. His *Compositioni musicali . . . fatte per sonare col fagotto solo* (Venice, 1645), nine sonatas for bassoon and basso continuo published in score arrangement, represent the earliest collection made up entirely of solo sonatas.²⁹ They are also a milestone in the history of bassoon literature. As Bertoli suggests in his preface, they offer a challenge to bassoonists, as they demand a technical facility previously unexploited.

All nine of Bertoli's sonatas are sectional, and each section consists

25. The manuscript is in the Kassel Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt und Landesbibliothek.

26. Pezel, *Bicinia*.

27. A *Sonata Solo Fagotto* by "G.A.S." in the Biblioteca Estense of Modena includes a written *e'*; the manuscript is dated 1686. Antonio Bertali (d. 1669) also called for *e'* in an unpublished, undated sonata for two violins, bassoon, and continuo; the manuscript is in Uppsala.

28. Earlier trio sonatas for bassoons are found in Biagio Marini's *Opus 8* (Venice, 1626). For a discussion of these sonatas by Buchner and Marini, see Brian Klitz, "Some 17th-Century Sonatas for Bassoon," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 15 (1962): 199-205.

29. William S. Newman, *The Sonata in the Baroque Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 48.

of an introduction (or interlude) for the continuo alone, followed by a longer passage for continuo and solo bassoon, usually derived from material previously presented by the continuo. Like all seventeenth-century solo sonatas for bassoon, Bertoli's compositions lack the polarity of outer voices characteristic of most of the music of this period, because the solo and continuo lines are active in the same range. As a result, the bassoon part often appears to be an embellished version of the continuo part, achieving independence chiefly through the execution of intricate rhythmic patterns that become increasingly more complex within each sonata. Sustained tones for the bassoon are rare, and lyricism is practically nonexistent. The virtuosic nature of Bertoli's solo writing is illustrated in fig. 1, which shows a page of the original notation of sonata no. 3. Six systems are presented on this page, with the solo line placed above the continuo line. This facsimile also shows a characteristic alternation between duple meter (notated in the time signature C) and triple meter ($\frac{9}{4}$) in the solo line. The effect appears calculated for instrumental display and makes one wonder whether Bertoli, in composing his sonatas, may not have written out the kinds of flamboyant passages that were improvised regularly in instrumental performance.

Bertoli's disjunct passages with large leaps, idiomatic for the bassoon, are found also in the *Canzoni, fantasie, et correnti* (Venice, 1638) of his Spanish contemporary Bartolomeo de Selma.³⁰ Bertoli's and de Selma's collections of music for bassoon were published in Venice, and copies of both publications are now found in Wrocław (Breslau), where de Selma was employed after leaving the post he held as bassoonist at the court of Archduke Leopold in Innsbruck from 1628 to 1630. All of the works in de Selma's collection are for a bass instrument, and most call for the generic *basso solo*. Only a single part of one fantasia (no. 10) is specifically titled *per fagotto solo*, but in view of the composer's reputation as a performing bassoonist, there seems little doubt that he had his own instrument in mind when composing the rest of the pieces as well.

30. Part of one of de Selma's compositions from this collection is transcribed in Albert Lavignac and Lionel de la Laurencie, eds., *Encyclopedie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire* (Paris: C. Delagrave, 1913-34), part 1, vol. 4, pp. 2086-87. Three others have been edited by Santiago Kastner (New York: Schott, 1971): *Fantasia ex D für Fagott und Basso Continuo* (fantasia no. 5), *Fantasia ex F für Fagott und Basso Continuo* (fantasia no. 8), and *Canzon à 2 bassi, für 2 Fagotte oder Posaune und Fagott und Basso continuo* (canzon no. 23).

Composizioni Musicali Di Gio: Antonio Bertoli: A 51

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a sonata. It consists of 12 staves of music. The notation is in a single system, with each staff containing a different part of the composition. The music is written in a style characteristic of the 17th century, with various note values, rests, and clefs. The title 'Composizioni Musicali Di Gio: Antonio Bertoli:' is printed at the bottom left, and the page number 'A 51' is printed at the bottom right.

FIGURE 1. A page of the original notation of sonata no. 3 from Giovanni Antonio Bertoli's *Composizioni musicali . . . fatte per sonare col fagotto solo* (Venice, 1645). Facsimile courtesy of the Bibliotheka Uniwersytecka, Wrocław.

The preface to de Selma's collection includes the following sonnet by Fra Panta, who is identified as a conventual in the Augustinian order, of which de Selma was also a member. Evoking images from Greek mythology, the poem claims god-given and god-pleasing abilities for the composer as a bassoonist.

Tu Selma Salaverde al suono eletto
 Nutrito in fra le Muse Aonie Dive
 Sei nel sonar le tue Etheree Pive
 De Fagottisti principal soggetto

E mentre il fiato tuo dal nobil petto
 Esce nel cavo Bosso in questo rive
 Fa dolce melodia, più ch' all' Argive
 Non sè quel, ch' é del Ciel nuntio ediletto

E la tua Sinfonia sonora arresta
 Col lieto suon delle canzon suavi
 L'aure ad udir gl' acuti modi, e gravi

Se con la lingua, e man qual vento presta
 Ricerchi poi i numeri sonori
 (Celeste Orfeo) tu rapisci i Cuori.

(You, Selma Salaverde, for music chosen,
 Nourished among the eternal goddesses, the Muses,
 Playing your ethereal pipes,
 You are the principal subject of bassoonists.

And when the breath from your noble breast
 Comes out of the hollowed boxwood on this shore,
 It makes [more] sweet melody
 Than did the messenger [Hermes], delight of the gods,
 bring the Argive.

And your sonorous symphony,
 With the pleasant sound of the lyric canzona
 Makes the breeze pause to listen to the rousing
 and the solemn modes.

If with your tongue and your wind-swift hand
 You go on to search for the sounding numbers,
 Heavenly Orpheus, you will enrapture all hearts.)

The compositions by this "heavenly Orpheus" of the bassoon display most of the characteristics found in those by Bertoli, and it would be remarkable if Bertoli had written his music without having seen or heard de Selma's. Bertoli's rhythmic complexities were not favored by de Selma, but both composers used the same formal outline with its incipient

movements, the progressively faster variation figures, the melodic contours, and the virtuoso passages.

De Selma's publication is significant also in that it includes the earliest written *BB flat* for bassoon, a note made possible on later bassoons by the addition of a bell joint and third key. Since these improvements are not documented until the eighteenth century, and the low *BB flat* is so infrequent in bassoon parts of the seventeenth century, de Selma must have had either an exceptional instrument or a device that allowed him to lengthen his instrument temporarily for that single note. The latter possibility seems unlikely, however, because of the passage in which the *BB flat* lies.

Philipp Friedrich Bøddecker (1615–83), now best remembered as an organist at Stuttgart, was a bassoonist with the Darmstadt orchestra until 1634. His *Sacra Partitura*, published in 1651, includes a sonata for violin, bassoon, and continuo³¹ in which the violin repeats "La Monica" throughout, while the bassoon—obviously the principal instrument of the ensemble—plays variations of increasing complexity on that melody.

The collective activities of Bøddecker, de Selma, and Bertoli, and the colleagues and patrons that they name, place them in central Europe, often in the service of the Hapsburgs during a period when the interrelationship between the Austrian aristocracy and their Spanish cousins provided numerous opportunities for musicians to meet and exchange information. A composite of the known facts about their lives shows their travels ranging from Madrid to Breslau, from Venice to Darmstadt, and touching Strassburg, Stuttgart, Munich, Innsbruck, and Vienna. Certainly they were not the only bassoonist-composers in these musical centers, and it is easy to believe that they must be representative of others whose activities also stimulated interest in the instrument and caused bassoonists and composers to explore further the bassoon's potential.

Unfortunately, we have few seventeenth-century scores from England or France that testify to the use of the bassoon as a chamber instrument.³² William S. Newman cites Johann Ernst Galliard's *Six Sona-*

31. Edited by Max Seiffert and available in modern edition in *Organum*, 3d series, Chamber Music, no. 33 (Lippstadt: Kistner and Siegel and Co., n.d.). This edition inexplicably omits all the trills included in the original.

32. A sonata in B flat for two bassoons (or cellos) and continuo by "Mr. Carolo" is one of a relatively small number of English trio sonatas for bassoons. The undated manuscript, in the Durham Cathedral Library, is probably from around 1700. It is available

tas for the Bassoon or Violoncello with a Thorough Bass (London, 1732) as being the first sonatas to have been composed in England, and offers nothing in his discussion of France³³ to refute what our survey strongly suggests—that the musically conservative attitude of the English, whose fondness for the ensemble fantasia was slow to wane, and the dogged defense of the French in the face of Italian musical incursions denied the bassoon a significant role in those countries.

No tutors or instructional materials for the bassoon are known to have been published before 1687, when Daniel Speer's *Grund-richtiger, kurz, leicht und nöthiger Unterricht der musicalischen Kunst* appeared in Ulm.³⁴ Speer's essay on fingering was replaced in his second edition (1697) by a diagram that represents the earliest known fingering chart for bassoon (fig. 2). Also included is a response to his own question regarding construction and fingering of the instrument, in which, after explaining that the left hand should be held uppermost, he adds:

Solte aber jemand die rechte Hand oben bey dem Munde gebrauchen, so verstehet sichs, das, was von der Lincken allhier im Greiffen gesagt, in die rechte Hand alsdann kommet.³⁵

(Should, however, anyone use the right hand uppermost, near the mouth, it is to be understood that what is given here in the fingering chart for the left hand then applies to the right hand.)

Speer thus confirms that the manner of holding the instrument had not yet been established, and the "winged" F-keys that could be reached by the little finger of either hand would have been necessary on the bassoons he knew. Except for low *C sharp*, every chromatic could be produced by half-holing or fork-fingering, though they were not all equally reliable to be sure. Chromatics in the lowest register were assiduously avoided, and while bassoonist-composers did call for all chromatics between *c* and *d'*, *b flat* and *e flat* were by far the most common, the others occurring infrequently.

Speer's two sonatas, included to show the "nature and manipulation" (*Art und Manieren*) of a bassoon, could be played on two or three bas-

in a modern edition (London: Musica Rara, 1969), Brian Klitz, ed.

33. Newman, *The Sonata*, 325–26, 351–66.

34. No trace of either Italian or Spanish [woodwind] instruction books has been discovered for the period preceding 1750," according to Thomas E. Warner in *An Annotated Bibliography of Woodwind Instruction Books, 1600–1830* (Detroit: Information Coordinators, 1967), xiv.

35. Daniel Speer, *Grund-richtiger . . . jetzt wol-vermehrter Unterricht der musicalischen Kunst* (Ulm, 1697), p. 241. A copy is in the Brussels Bibliothèque royale Albert I^{er}.

Num. II		Fingert.		p. 241	
C		c		a	
D		d		b	
Dis		dis		h	
E		e		cis	
F		f		d	
Fis		dis		d	
G		g		dis	
Gis		gis		e	
A		a		f	
B		b		f	

FIGURE 2. The fingering chart for bassoon found in Daniel Speer's *Grund-richtiger . . . jetzt wol-vermehrter Unterricht der musicalischen Kunst* (Ulm, 1697). Facsimile courtesy of the Bibliothèquc royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels.

soons (i.e., with or without continuo). The sonatas range from *d'* down to *BB flat*, even though the latter note is not included in Speer's fingering chart. The compositions are perhaps the earliest examples of pedagogical material for bassoon, although had Speer not identified them as such, it is doubtful that didactic intent could be determined from their content, since they closely resemble the many other sonatas published in collections of the late seventeenth century.

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In the approximately 600 individual solo and chamber works of the seventeenth century examined for this study, the bassoon was named 59 times. The trombone (named 65 times) and the cornett (58) were called for with comparable frequency, notably more often than the clarino or trumpet (33), the recorder (6), the bombard (2), the transverse flute (1), the sordone (1), the dulzaina (1), or the shawm (1). While

these six hundred pieces do not constitute the totality of seventeenth-century chamber music that includes winds, they do offer sufficient information to document the seventeenth-century bassoon that ranged from *BB flat* to *e'* as the survivor of a family of bassoons made earlier in various nonstandardized sizes, and as the most widely used reed instrument of that century. It was therefore the most successful of attempts to construct bass instruments in a form in which they could be conveniently held and played. It provided the bass voice in old-fashioned contrapuntal works still favored by some composers, and also participated as both a solo and continuo instrument in "modern" chamber music, the most technically demanding of which was written by bassoonist-composers. In some cases it was assigned parts as challenging as those written for any instrument of the period, including strings. Thus it is able to claim the distinction of being the only reed instrument with a preserved repertoire dating back more than 350 years—a continuity and longevity of usage approached among modern wind instruments only by the trombone.

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