

General Preface to the Series

English Keyboard Music c.1650–c.1700: A Series of Facsimiles of Manuscript Sources presents a varied and representative selection of original source material in six volumes. The series aims to enhance knowledge and understanding of this repertoire through ready access to important but less-well-known manuscripts. These volumes are addressed to performers, scholars and all interested in the performance and notation of keyboard music.

The importance of keyboard playing to the development and dissemination of musical style in the second half of the seventeenth century is well established. Keyboard instruments gained significantly in popularity in England during this period, supplanting a position previously held by the lute. Instruments suited for domestic use were increasingly available and affordable, while numerous professional keyboard players turned to teaching on a commercial basis. Music publishers, notably John Playford and John Carr, also endeavoured to cater for the burgeoning market of amateur keyboard players by offering collections such as the *Musicks Hand-maide* series (1663/1678/1689) and Matthew Locke's *Melothesia* (1673), while in the 1690s, collections devoted to single composers, notably Henry Purcell and John Blow, also appeared (in 1696 and 1698 respectively).

While the printed sources contain some music of high quality, and perhaps represent the most widely-known pieces at the time, they do not offer a complete picture of English keyboard music in this period. The reasons for this are various. A large quantity of the repertoire is preserved only in manuscript, including a significant amount of music by known composers, in addition to a quantity of high-quality anonymous pieces. These sources offer a unique 'snapshot' of an individual's musical interests, and shed light on the musical contexts that encouraged the writing down of keyboard music in this period. They also illustrate the textual fluidity of keyboard music at this time, since, where concordances with the printed repertoire exist, they often preserve earlier or alternative versions.

This series of facsimiles focuses on six manuscript compilations of keyboard music assembled in England between the middle of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth century. The manuscripts chosen offer an important alternative perspective to the printed sources. Their contents complement those of existing modern editions and facsimiles, and many pieces are being published for the first time. They illustrate a variety of contexts in which keyboard manuscripts were compiled and used, along with a diversity of notational and performance practices. The series aims to offer even coverage of the period as a whole and represent a wide range of different types of music. Two sources represent the start of the period, 1650s–1670s (London, Royal College of Music Library, MS 2093 and London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 1040),

two extend to the 1680s (Haslemere, Dolmetsch Library, II e. 17 and Oxford, Christ Church Library, Mus. 1179), and two represent the 1690s and later (British Library, Add. MSS 31468 and 52363). The compilers of these sources included accomplished amateurs as well as professional musicians who collected keyboard music for their students (amateur or professional), as well as for themselves. They contain some of the earliest suites for plucked keyboard instruments, and music specific to the organ. These sources additionally draw attention to the significant repertoire of arrangements from contemporary theatre music and songs.

High quality digital images have been obtained for the reproductions thanks to an award from the Music & Letters Trust, the support of Norsk Musikforlag, and the generous co-operation of the libraries that own the manuscripts. Most of the manuscripts are sufficiently legible to be used directly from the facsimile images, both for study and in performance. Where the editors consider it appropriate, however, diplomatic transcriptions of the music (in part or in its entirety) will also be provided in modern notation. Each volume contains an extended introduction, written jointly by the editors, detailing the musical and historical contexts for each source, aspects of performance practice and notation, textual relationships with other sources, and scribal characteristics. We are especially grateful to the participating libraries for their permission to publish manuscripts in their collections as part of this series.