BAROQUE DANCE

To understand and interpret musical style of the Baroque era (1600 to 1750) we need to explore a wider field of the Baroque times – the social and political events, the art and architecture, and most importantly Baroque Dance.

During the reign of Louis XIV (1638 – 1715) in France the arts flourished. Not only was the King a great patron of the arts, he was also a skilled performer as instrumentalist, singer and above all an outstanding ballet dancer.

Dancing was popular not only at Louis XIV’s court but in many aristocratic ballrooms; the influence of Louis XIV’s court was widespread and French dancing masters (with their manuals) travelled throughout Europe.

Dancing was considered to be healthful exercise for women, and was a necessary skill for men along with fencing and riding.

The Dance Suite, rhythmic patterns from dances pervaded all Baroque music, and instrumental pieces inspired by court dances were frequently grouped into Suites.
BAROQUE DANCES

Dances from the Baroque period had a great influence on keyboard music. Dance forms included allemande, bourree, chaconne, courante, gavotte, gigue, hornpipe, minuet, musette, polonaise, rigaudon, sarabande, tambourin. Some of the dances were based on folk dances.

Minuet the “queen of dances”, the most popular dance of aristocratic society – often performed by one couple at a time, after bowing to the King or whomever was presiding while others observed. The dance had small steps and a complex two bar foot pattern.

Allemande of German origin, duple meter, intricate footwork.

Courante (courir, to run) used mostly hop-step combinations

Gavotte regular part of formal court balls; a joyful dance in duple meter, had “springing” steps

Sarabande originally from Latin America and Spain, became very popular in Europe; is in triple meter with frequent accents and longer notes on second beat, a stately, dignified dance.

Gigue to frolic or leap; lively joyous dance with virtuoso footwork; often in compound triple meter with uneven rhythm, short – long, short – long.

There are many web sites demonstrating baroque dances, suggest youtube minuet ball dance steps WV classes youtube minuet Royal College of Music

Minuet Feet – toes pointing slightly outwards. Slight bend of the knees as you come back to upright right foot takes a step forward – this is on beat 1; next left foot by instep of right foot – beat 2; then on beat 3 bend the knees and as you come up left foot takes small step forward this is beat 4; beat 5 right foot takes small step forward; then on beat 6 left foot small step forward, bend both knees as you come up right foot takes step forward this is beat 1 then etc etc.

For a very clear demonstration of this go to you tube minuet ball dance steps WV classes, this 15 minute demo with group of teenagers is very clear and near end the group dances the steps to Baroque music.

Anyone interested in exploring Baroque dance further, I plan to have a get together near end of February to talk about possibilities in Adelaide, to register interest please e-mail me at rj.mcleod1@bigpond.com Rosslyn McLeod
GAVOTTE
A dance in common time. First written record of this dance from 1588 where the dance pattern started on the first beat with a long step followed by 4 quick hopping steps and long landing beat over a 2 bar phrase.

In 2/4 1 2 1 2
Steps: Long bend, hop, quick, quick + together

The gavotte became courtified at the French Court between 1700-1760. This process involved moved the bar line half a bar, and today we recognise a Gavotte as starting on the 3 beat with a 2 beat upbeat. For us as players the weaker half bar has now become the main beat.

The dancers now start the dance steps half a bar later leaving out the long step at the beginning. The implication of this is the main beat of the bar (for the dancers) now occurs on what was originally the middle of the bar.

This has more implications for the dancers as the dance ends with an Accent on the last long note. F

(1 ) 2 1 2
Steps                           hop, quick quick + together long bend

You will find Gavottes written before 1750’s starting on the first beat.

See Loeillet’s Allegro Flute Grade 3 List B.

After 1760’s the Gavotte as a dance form disappears. It evolved into Bransles and Cotillons

BOURRÉE is a lively dance. It starts with an up-beat on beat 4. It has a feel of 2 beats per bar, these can be duple or triple. Part of the bourée step is the last half of the French Minuet dance step: Left, Right, Left, continues Right, Left, Right.

In triple time:

1 2 3 4 5 6 all even steps
Left Right Left Right left Right
OR Duple Time:

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4
hop Left Right Left right left right left right left land ______

The Rigdeon is almost identical to the bourée.

ALLEMANDE Almand, Almain
Up to 1580 THE Allemande in duple or quadruple time was a slow dance with 2 pulses. [One, two, three hop] and generally had a 1 beat upbeat.

The triple time Allemande which was used at the French Court from 1700 became a faster dance and it closely resembles the Deutscher /Teutscher (a fast dance resembling the waltz, which evolved from the minuet.)

Steps: step, hop, hop. (all equal beats)

COURANT always in 3, has distinct steps depending on the number of pulses in the bar.

The slow 3 beat note (a slow glide) called tempo de courant,
2 beat followed by a one beat called a coupé (Glide+ step)
3 equal beats par de courant, (Rise, glide, leap).

SARABANDE, Sarabanda
This dance originally from Spain was a fast sensuous dance. At the French Court (1700’s) it slowed down.

The Sarabande was never a dance for couples, it was a showpiece solo dance and as such had no recorded dance steps. It was regarded as improvisation dance to show off the dancer’s skills.

MINUET There are 2 forms of the dance Minuet.

The French Form, (non hemiolic) which has a distinct EQUAL 2 pulse feel.

6 1 2 3 4 5 6
Right_____ full ___Plié Left right Left&Plié
S L O W Quick Quick Quick

The change in meter is on the 4th beat.

The English Form

6 1 2 3 4 5 6
Full Plié Right Full Plié Left Right Left Full Plié

The change in meter is on the 3rd beat giving 2 UNEQUAL pulses.

A Passiepieid is a fast Minuet with jeté (fast leaping steps).