

WORKS OF MUSIC

FOR THE KEYBOARD, HARP, AND vihuela, by Antonio de Cabeçon, chamber and chapel musician of our lord King Don Phillippe.

RECOMPILED AND WRITTEN IN TABLATURE BY HERNANDO
de Cabeçon, his son. Also chamber and chapel musician of his Magesty.



WITH PRIVILEGE

Printed in Madrid en the shop of Francisco Sanchez. Year MDLXX.

Modern notation and translations by Chad Goerzen, Year MMXVII.

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TO THE S.C.R.M.

THE KING DON PHILIPPE

OUR LORD

Hernando de Cabeçon his servant.

It would have been no small thing, the venture of Antonio de Cabeçon my father, if he was succeeded after his life by only the two main things he held dear, Art and Music, which was well esteemed by all, and having it employed in the service of H. M. whom he valued greatly; and although this book and I are left as his estate, we who are so far from equaling my father, it was necessary to leave us entrusted to the Royal clemency and generosity of H. M. who has always been accustomed to take under his protection and to have mercy on the children of the servants who die in their service. This I have experienced on my own part, having received from H. M. the place and seat that my father had in his Great house, providing as much kindness in me in quantity that I lack in being my father's equal. This book now appears before H. M. as heir and successor of his genius, although it is not as rich as it could have been had its Author had the time and quiet needed to complete it. I ask of H. M. that according to his Royal custom he receives it under his protection and guards it as his own child raised in his Royal house as much as I desire to serve H. M.

The following pages are omitted from this translation:

- The royal copyright
- An essay on the value of music
- Poems in honor of Antonio composed by Joan Christophori Calveti Stellae, Pedro Laynez, Juan de Vergara, and Alonso de Morales
- A description of how to read the tablature, however the final two pages of this section follow below

* A note: the verb to gloss (glossar) is used frequently throughout, and it is used to denote the practice of ornamenting slow notes by dividing it into faster notes.

DECLARATION [final page]

Those who would like to use this book for the vihuela, mind that sometimes two voices that are glossed conflict. You have to leave out the one voice that seems to have the smallest role, thus you can play with facility all that in this book is written, especially those who are accustomed to play the seven course vihuela.

The harp resembles the keyboard in that all that can be played on the keyboard can also be played on the harp without much difficulty.

Curious wind-players [menestriales] can take advantage of this book, in seeing inventions in glossing that are true to the composition, and seeing the license that each voice can take without damage to the other parts. This is found in many motets, songs, and fauxbourdons that they play, that with little difficulty they can extract from this tablature.

Those who would like to enjoy this book but don't play any instrument should begin to play the first duos, which are easy, and understand the meter, and so little by little begin the works for three and four voices which are not heavily glossed, until their hands become capable. But in my opinion, those who would advance quickly in this art should pay attention to those who have a good way of playing. Some days, since just this cannot teach by extension with the perfection necessary, that with the more practice towards perfection, finding so many niceties in this book, that they need not be envious, that which no world master could teach them.

THE MANNER OF PLAYING IN ORDER TO climb and descend the keyboard.

With the right hand you are to climb with the third and fourth finger, and descend with the third and second, counting from the thumb which is the first. With the left you are to climb with the fourth and go consequently with the first, next return to the fourth, and so go climbing as high as you want. You are to descent from the thumb until the fourth, and afterward continue descending with third and fourth until where you want.

To play sixths and fifths with the right hand, you are to use first and fourth fingers, with first and third for the second; thirds are played with fourth and second, and first and third, and third and fifth for the second. This is written for those who do not know how to play, and note that you may never play two keys with one finger, and pay attention that you play as cleanly as possible. Until you can play a work precisely in time and without error, don't begin another, as this will lead to working in vain. Afterward you will find glosses that you could not play with this order of fingers, each one you must play with the fingerings that best suit it.

The ornaments you should play with the right hand using third and fourth fingers, or with second and third fingers; and with the left hand with third and second, or with second and first fingers. Ornament the upper part as quickly as possible, and do not hold the note long, but as short as is possible, always putting force on the keyboard that the figure in the tablature notates when calling for an ornament.

Advisories.

Whereas I know I have done a great grievance to my father, may God bless him, in having wanted to gather in this book some things that he taught to his students, since it has not been the case that these were intended for this. However, seeing the advantage to be gained from them, works given by such hands, has moved me to bring them to light with no small effort on my part, having attempted to perfect them as much as possible. If some faults are seen, I ask your patience, that you accept my intent that everyone may take advantage of this work, especially the religious, as there is no excuse not to labour in this art to bring glory to our Lord.

Occasionally you may encounter in glossed works parallel fifths or octaves that seem to be in error. These are retained out of convenience, so as not to lose the full sound of the gloss by leaving them out, since the keyboardist has the same license while glossing that the singer has when singing.

Sometimes the sign for ligatures or rests has been left out; note that if a note length is insufficient, if the previous note will sound good in the space of the missing sign it is a ligature, but if it will sound bad it is a rest: be advised about this so you may use your judgement.

Note that when among the low voices there may be a sign of a sharp or flat that causes a voice to be misguided by having or lacking sharps or flats, if there are bass notes that gives an erroneous seventh or ninth, that this is a fault of printing, you must choose for yourself the more harmonious voice.