THE PRINCIPLES OF KEYBOARD TECHNIQUE

IN IL TRANSILVANO BY

GIROLAMO DIBUTA

Presented by

Catharine Pearl Crozier

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INTRODUCTION

Girolamo Diruta's Il Transilvano in two parts, 1597 and 1609, is one of the most important works in the history of keyboard technique. It is the first instruction book in which an actual style of playing is given and a distinction made between the technical treatment of the organ and harpsichord. It not only contains invaluable knowledge of the Italian harpsichord and organ technique of the sixteenth century, but it includes, along with keyboard pieces by eminent composers, the first examples of études for the clavier.

Diruta wrote the book for a beginner, and it teaches how to read music, to play, to understand harmony, transcribe vocal music for the organ, and to combine most effectively the stops of the organ. He gives, also, instruction in the proper use of the music for the church service and some rules for singing.

Il Transilvano, dedicated to the Prince of Transylvania, is written in dialogue, a customary form used for early instruction books. It takes its name from one of the interlocutors, a citizen of Transylvania, who has been sent to
Venice by his prince\textsuperscript{1} to find out all he can about music and to collect compositions by the most famous composers of that day.

The entire book is devoted to the conversation between Diruta and his pupil, Transilvano, who, incidentally, proves to be a very good student. With the completion of the book, he has become an accomplished musician, so he hurries away to Transylvania to give to the prince and to his organist, Romanini, all the knowledge which he has gained.

\textit{Il Transilvano} is the only known book written by Diruta. It is divided into two parts which were printed at different times. Although it is possible that the first printing of Part I was in 1593,\textsuperscript{2} the oldest preserved edition is dated 1597. One copy of this edition is in the British Museum in London; the other is in the Liceo musicale in Bologna. The printings of Part I and Part II are listed as follows:

Part I

(1593)

1597 (Liceo musicale, Bologna)

1612 (Liceo musicale, Bologna)

(Continued on next page)

\textsuperscript{1}H. Mendel, \textit{Musikalisches Conversations-Lexicon} (Leipzig: List und Francke, [1870-1887]), III, 178. Transilvano is considered here to be the prince himself, whose full title is Prince Siegismund Bathory of Siebenbürgen.

\textsuperscript{2}Carl Krebs, "Girolamo Diruta's Transilvano", \textit{Vierteljahresschrift für Musikwissenschaft} VIII (1892), 315. The dedication letter in the 1612 edition is dated 1593.
1615

1625 (Liceo musicale, Bologna; Royal Library, Wolfenbüttel)

1626

Part II

1609 (Liceo musicale, Bologna)

1610

1622 (Liceo musicale, Bologna)

1639

The editions used by the writer are Part I, 1625, which is owned by the Sibley Music Library, and Part II, 1622, obtained on film from the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C.

All editions up until 1609 were printed by Giacomo Vincenti; the remainder were printed by Alessandro Vincenti.

F. J. Fétis, Biographie Universelle des Musiciens (Bruxelles: Meline, Cans et Compagnie, 1837), III, 312.
J. Gottfried Walther, Musikaliches Lexicon (Leipzig: Wolfgang Deer, 1732), p. 211.


3Loc. cit., This edition cited by Lavoix-sons, but doubtful.


5Alessandro Vincenti, Indice di Musica (Venetia, 1639) ed. Robert Eitner, p. 37. Here the book is listed without a date and priced at 14 lire.
The book contains no illustrations. Except for the floreasted borders and the printer's sign on the title page in both parts, the only decoration in the book is the ornamented initial letter in the foreword, in Merulo's letter, and at the beginning of the dialogue. There is also a floreasted margin at the top of the first page of dialogue and at the end of the foreword in Part I and Part II. The printing for the musical examples is done by the single impression process.

Part I contains sixty-three pages, twelve and three-quarter inches by eight inches in size, not including the index page which is inserted at the end. The original binding to Part I is lacking. Part II is divided into four chapters totalling twenty-six pages, with an additional index page at the end.
THE LIFE OF GIROLAMO DIRUTA

Little is known concerning Diruta's life. According to Krebs, a document by Colleoni states that he was admitted into the monastery in Correggio on June 19, 1574, but it does not state whether he entered as a boy to receive his education or as a brother of the order. Krebs estimates that his birth-date was between 1554–1564. The fact that Diruta calls himself Perugino indicates that he was born in Perugia, and the name Girolamo comes from a family which originally settled in Diruta, a castle near Perugia.

At the end of Il Transilvano, Part I, Diruta tells his pupil that dissatisfaction with his early instruction caused him to travel to various cities in search of a good teacher. He mentions the most notable of his instructors, Zarlino, Porta and Merulo in the second chapter of his Il Transilvano, Part II.

Of all his teachers, Claudio Merulo had the greatest influence upon Diruta as an organist. Diruta tells his pupil that he first resolved to study with Merulo when he heard him play in Venice. He says,

Krebs, "Diruta's Transilvano", YfWW., VIII, 308.
... seeing my errors, I resolved to improve myself, and, seeking in search of other cities, I finally came to this most serene city of Venice and heard in the famous Cathedral of St. Mark a duel between two organs answering one another with such artifice and gracefulness that I was amazed. Desirous to meet those two great champions, I stopped at the entrance where I saw Claudio Merulo and Andrea Gabrieli, both organists at St. Marks. I resolved to follow them, particularly Signor Claudio. It is with his knowledge and with study that I lost my bad habits ... This was the principal reason which induced me to write this work.1

In Il Transilvano Diruta speaks modestly of his own accomplishments and gives all credit for his ability to Merulo, "the most excellent Signor Claudio, my master and teacher... whose breast is a nest of courtesy."2 Merulo, in turn, confers upon Diruta the highest words of praise, as he says in his letter at the beginning of Il Transilvano, "It is to my glory that he is my pupil, because in this dissertation he has brought honor to both of us."3

Diruta’s ability was admired, moreover, by other contemporary writers such as G. Franchini, in his Bibliographia, who says that he is Merulo’s most famous pupil, C. Antegnati, who praises Il Transilvano in L’Arte Organica, and Bononcini, in Musica practica, where Diruta is named

1 Appendix I, p.
2 Ibid., p.
3 Ibid., p.
among the famous musicians who had adopted the system of
twelve modes.\(^1\)

According to Krebs, Diruta was organist at the
cathedral in Chioggia sometime between the years 1593 and
1609. By 1609 he had gone to the Cathedral of Agobbia,
since the edition of *Il Transilvano*, Part II, for that year
contains the statement of this fact. The date and place of
his death are unknown. Rossi-Scotti says he died while
chapel master at Chioggia, but he gives no reason for this
assertion.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Krebs, "Diruta's Transilvano", *VFMM*, VIII, 342.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 313.
KEYBOARD INSTRUCTION BEFORE IL TRANSILVANO

Before beginning the discussion of the principles of keyboard technique in Il Transilvano it will be necessary to give a brief review of the keyboard instruction books which appeared before the publication of this book. The comparison of Diruta's instruction book with the earlier ones will show how far he had progressed in respect to a well-ordered instruction in keyboard technique.

In the sixteenth century the knowledge of music was essential to a cultured man. Singing was the favorite study and instrumental playing came next. Of all the instruments the lute was one of the most important because of its possibilities for nuance; but as gradual improvements were made in the construction of keyed instruments, the lute, which was difficult to tune and to care for, fell more and more into disuse, and keyed instruments, particularly the clavichord and harpsichord, were much in the favor of amateur players.

Even though the study of music was taken very seriously the instruction must have been superficial. Pietro della Valle, in his treatise, Della Musica dell' età nostra\(^1\) writes that his musical study as a boy included singing, composition and clavier instruction along with lessons in

\(^1\)Krebs, "Diruta's Transilvano", YMAY, VIII, 356.
playing the theorbo, the violin, and the viol da gamba.
Such a comprehensive study as this could hardly be a
thorough one, since the pupils learned mostly through oral
instruction. Learning from books was limited principally to
solmization, mutation, tones, note-values, and counterpoint.
The need for a practical system of teaching had already been
suggested by H. Finck, C. Luseinius, and Vincenzo Galilei.

Probably there were instruction books that have been
lost, but to our knowledge there are scarcely more than six
manuscripts or books before Il Transilyano which give any
rules for keyboard technique.

The earliest known printed work which contains a
description of instruments and their use is Sebastian
Virdung’s Musica getutscht, 1511. Virdung explains that it
is impossible to give rules for finger position in writing.

1H. Finck, Practica Musica (Viterbergae: G. Rhavv, 1556).
2C. Luseinius, Musurgia (Argentorati: Ioannem Schottum, 1536).
3V. Galilei, Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna
(Fiorenza: G. Varescotti, 1591).
4French translation, 1529; Dutch translation, 1568.
5Sebastian Virdung, Musica getutscht, 1511. “It is impossible
for one to put in writing just how you should apply your
fingers to the holes of the pipes or the same to the frets
and strings of the lute or to the keys of the keyed instru-
ments. I do not believe that anyone would like to describe
all of these things because of the diversity of the counter-
point and diminution. So, therefore, you must first of all
have a little skill with the fingers, and then I trust you
to learn well on the instruments through the use of tabla-
ture which is set before you. However, to learn the counter-
point and to play it ad placitum, to play for choral song
besides, that I will give in another book. Therefore you
can undertake here what you wish.” Fol. Div. IV
Agricola's *Musica instrumentalis*, 1529, 1545, and Luscinius' *Musurgia*, 1536, contain the essential points in Virduns's book, but they do not discuss a particular technique for the keyboard. Luscinius makes the point that the pupil should have lessons with an experienced organist.

The oldest preserved manuscript that explains theoretically the methods of playing is the *Fundamentbuch* of Hans Buchner von Constanz. A manuscript copy of the tablature dated 1551 is in the Library of the University of Basle.

Buchner, a pupil of Hofhaimer, gives for the first time the basic rules for fingering, along with explanations of the keyboard, note-values, the mordent, notations and other fundamentals of instrumental playing. Here organ playing and composition are treated independently for the first time.

The fingering is numbered from the forefinger with the numbers 1,2,3,4. The thumb is given the number 5. The same numbers with a line drawn through them are used for the left hand (1,2,3,4,5). Buchner's nine rules, freely translated, are these:

1. *Ibid.,* (Fol. Div. E-1r.) "Learn first the clavichord, then the lute, then the flute. Then what you have learned on the clavichord will make it easy to play the organ, the harpsichord, the virginal, and all other keyed instruments."


1. Look at the following note, and then choose a suitable finger for the first note.

2. to 5. Fingering for four-note passages.

Right hand- f e d c c d e f e d/d e d c d
g 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 4 3 4 3 2 3

Left hand- a g f e c d e f c d e d e d c d
g 3 2 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 2 3


7. Finger sixths with 5.

8. Finger the octave with 5.

9. Do not play two successive notes with the same finger.

There is a Polish tablature by Johannes de Lublin\(^1\) assembled from 1537-1549 which corresponds basically with Buchner's, but it gives no particular consideration to keyboard technique.

Juan Bermudo's \textit{Declaracion de instrumentos musicales}, Ossuna, 1555, is a very interesting book written for the beginner. Bermudo emphasizes the necessity for good hand position and the use of correct fingering for running passages and ornaments. He says,

Take special care not to learn from a "barbaric" player or you will suffer distress all your life. It is worth more to pay twice as much money to a good player who will teach you the right time than a small amount to one who knows nothing about placing the hands on the organ. When you have good hand position and understand this book you can transcribe beginning compositions on the Monochord [clavichord].

Bermudo also advises the beginner to have two hours of instruction each month. The first hour should be devoted to the master's explanations, the second hour to the performance of music by the student. After six months he feels that the pupil should be a capable player. When he can improvise free Fantasias on the organ he will be a mature musician. Bermudo remarks further that he has not seen a very fine player who had not spent at least twenty years in unbroken study.

Bermudo numbers the fingers from 1 to 5 with the thumb as 1, and says that these general rules for fingering are to be observed:

1. In a succession of notes watch to see what follows, and take a fingering which will make the progression smooth and easy.
2. Use all the fingers.
3. The fingering for scale passages are given in the example. (No practice piece is shown with the fingering marked).

Right hand - cdedefgabc etc. c b e g f e d c
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1
Left hand - cdedefgabc etc. c b a g f e d c
4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

4. Octaves are to be played with $\frac{5}{4}$. In the short octave the lower keys should be struck with the last two fingers together, one over the other.¹

5. Sixths are played with $\frac{4}{3}$ or $\frac{5}{4}$.

6. Thirds are played with $\frac{3}{2}$ or $\frac{4}{3}$.

7. When playing three or four notes together one should take two or three with the left hand, leaving the right hand free to embellish the melody.

¹The short octave served to extend the compass of the keyboard downward without the actual addition of keys. By the substitution of certain diatonic notes for those which the lowest keys would normally sound, the keyboard could contain the essential bass notes and, at the same time, save space by omitting the notes which were not useful. The arrangement, which was not always the same, applied both to the organ and to keyboard instruments such as the spinet or harpsichord. Here is one example of a sixteenth century short octave:

F# G# would sound D E F G A or C# D# would sound A B E F G A
The short octave on Diruta's instrument was this:

D E F G A B C D E

A c-scale played with the first arrangement given above would appear on the keyboard to sound the notes in the second part of the following example:

The low sharp keys were not badly missed, because they were used very little before the adoption of equal temperament.
The chapter on Redobles (an ornament like our shake or ordinary trill) has no examples. Bermudo says they are difficult to explain in writing. Even so, his description is clear. They are to be used diatonically with the whole or half step above or below. An octave can be ornamented as it is struck by playing one note above it, another below it, so that the interval of a sixth or tenth is heard first. In the same way a fifth can be embellished with a third or a third with a fifth. Although Bermudo does not give an example, the effect must have been this:

Bermudo cites one famous player who trilled on a note with two fingers together, producing the effect of a third. He does not say who this player is, but no doubt he is modestly referring to himself. For the practice of these ornaments the fingers on both hands should be exercised, he advises, and an hour's instruction given each day by a teacher.

The Arte de Tàñer Fantasia, Valladolid, 1565, written by Tomas de Santa Maria, is more advanced than Bermudo's work. He advises sixteen years of study and compares a good player, who is graceful and masterful, to a bad player who is clumsy and aimless. He recommends himself as a good teacher and makes these requirements for good playing:
1. Play in time.

2. Keep a good hand position. The hands should be curved claw-like as the cat's paw. The fingers from 2 to 4 (he numbers 1 to 5 from the thumb) must always stay over the keys. The thumb must be very loose, lower than the fingers, and curved in. The second finger must be somewhat raised and remain higher than the other three fingers. The arms must be held in from the elbows without pressing too much on the body, and the hands should be drawn together.¹

3. Strike the keys correctly. Stretch the fingers out so that the nails do not strike. Attack the keys at the edge, keeping the fingers close to the keys. On a clavichord hold the key down so the tangent will remain on the string. On other instruments, also, hold the key down for the correct time-value of the note.

¹In Gaffurio's *Theorica Musice*, 1492, p. 101, there is a woodcut which, if we may trust the accuracy of the artist, shows very well the position of the organist. The author sits before the organ, with the keyboard breast high; he reaches up to the keys and appears to draw them down from below.
4. Runs must be executed up and down fluently. The fingering is differentiated between slow, medium fast, and rapid scale passages. The hand should be turned a little in the direction toward which it is playing the passage. The following examples of fingering are for rapid passages of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and eighth and quarter notes in the left hand.  

Right hand- \( \text{c d e f g a b c\#} \)
\[ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \ 4 \]
\[ \text{or} \]
\[ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \]
\[ \text{d e f\# g a b c\# d} \]
\[ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \ 4 \ 3 \ 4 \]

Left hand- \( \text{g a b\# c d e f g a} \)
\[ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \ 4 \ 3 \ 2 \ 1 \ 4 \]
\[ \text{a g f e d e b\# a g} \]
\[ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 1 \ 2 \ 3 \ 4 \ 1 \]

5. The interval of the third is played with \( \frac{2}{1}, \frac{3}{1}, \) and \( \frac{4}{2} \) (when a trill is made on one note). Fifths and sixths are fingered with \( \frac{5}{2}, \frac{4}{1}, \) and \( \frac{3}{1} \) (the latter if a trill is used). Octaves are played with \( \frac{5}{1}; \) the short octave fingering is the same as that for a third.

Kinkeldey, Orgel und Klavier…, 35. Santa Maria gives no examples with fingering. Kinkeldey has taken these from the text. He also gives variations of the fingering for different scales, p. 36-7.

Fedrell, Philipio, Hispaniae Schola Musica Sacra (Barcelona: Pujol, 1894) III, xxxiii-xxxiv, indicates a slight variation in the scale fingering given here for Santa Maria, but the use of the c-major scale instead of the scales given by Kinkeldey may explain the difference.
6. One can enliven simple passages with various ornaments if the ornaments are not long enough to detract from the music. One note can be lengthened and more strongly accented at the sacrifice of another. The names of the ornaments are the Redoble and the Quiébro. 

Redobles are made on whole notes, using the upper and lower auxiliary tones. Quiébros are made on half and quarter notes, using only one auxiliary tone. The following example shows the simple form of the ornaments. Both of them are subject to variation.¹

![Musical notation]

Elias Nicolaus Ammerbach's *Orgel oder Instrument Tabulatur*, Leipzig, 1571, presents a new organ tablature in which all voices are notated in letters. The introduction to the book describes the keyboard, the tablature signs, the tone system, the execution of mordents, and the tuning of keyed instruments. Ammerbach says that whoever learns to play the organ can then play the positive, regal, virginal, clavichord, harpsichord, and similar instruments.

¹Kinkeldey, *Orgel und Klavier...*, p. 11-45
Ammerbach explains his fingering with fifteen examples of fingered passages. He says, "Since... all grasp of the fingering cannot be made clear through rules, I will show the same instead through examples, from which one will be able to judge easily in this other manner." ¹

In his series of pieces Ammerbach observes a certain system of order in difficulty and says in the introduction,

Because the beginners are not soon accustomed to using their fingers to such a degree that they can play runs and coloratura and at the same time read the notes, the set rules for the application of fingering become familiar through practice. I have set a few well-known German tenors, in a simple way, from the notes into tablature, by which beginners can practice at first and be able to make use of the rules. After this there follow in another part some pleasant little German dances, merry galliards and passamezzi which are usually desired by young people and more willingly learned than motets. Finally I have added in the third part some generally joyful motets and ornamented them with coloratura and runs, in which a young man insofar as he has acquired the habit of practice can train himself and can use the style and coloratura in other pieces.²

The numbering for the fingers begins with 0 for the thumb, then 1, 2, 3, 4 from the forefinger. The following example of the scale uses modern fingering for convenience in reading.³

¹Quoted by Krebs, "Diruta's Transilvano", Vienna, VIII, 358.
²Loc. cit.
The fingering for thirds is $\frac{4}{2}$; fourths, fifths, and sixths are fingered with $\frac{5}{2}$, sevenths, octaves, ninths, and tenths with $\frac{5}{1}$.

Ammerbach writes the moment in this way:²

Antonio de Cabezon's son, Hernando, collected his father's works and, with some of his own and of Antonio's brother Juan, he published in Madrid, 1573, the collection Obras de musica para tecla arpa y vihuela (musical works for keyboard instruments and plucked instruments). The introduction to this work gives some technical rules for notation, time, and fingering. The fingers are numbered from 1 to 5 with the thumb.³

Fingerings for thirds are $\frac{4}{2}$, $\frac{3}{1}$, $\frac{5}{2}$; for fifths and sixths, $\frac{4}{1}$ or $\frac{3}{1}$.

Ornaments are played with the upper auxiliary note, as quickly as possible, in order to give the principal note.

¹Ibid., p. 60.
²Ibid., p. 24.
³Krebs, "Diruta's Transilvano", VfEM., VIII, 364.
most of the sound. The fingering is this:
Right hand - 3 and 4 or 2 and 3
Left hand - 3 and 2 or 2 and 1

Two keys should not be grasped with one finger, and
one passage should be finished in the correct time before a
new passage is taken.

Whoever desires to be a skillful performer should
take instruction a single day with a good player, but for
further study he needs only to follow this book.

The order of the pieces is systematic. They pro-
gress from simple two-voiced compositions for beginners to
those with six voices, and they include arrangements of
liturgical themes, vocal compositions, variations, and four-
voiced tientos. The latter are longer preludes resembling
the ricercar in form.

This work of Cabezón completes the survey of key-
board instruction before the publication of Il Transilvano.
At the end of the discussion concerning Diruta's work,
there is a fingering chart, added for convenience in compar-
ing the methods of Diruta with his predecessors.
THE PRINCIPLES OF KEYBOARD TECHNIQUE IN IL TRANSILVANO

BY GIROLAMO DIRUTA

On the title page of both Part I and Part II of Il Transilvano the book is described as a new work, very helpful and necessary to professors of the organ. In reference to Part I Diruta states that it is a book "...in which one learns quickly and easily to play upon keyboard instruments, to manage the hands in making diminutions, and to understand tablature, proving the truth and necessity of its rules with Toccatas by various excellent organists at the end of the book." Part II contains "...the true method and rules for placing each voice in tablature, with all kinds of diminutions. At the end of the book there is the rule which shows with brevity and facility the method of learning how to sing."

These statements made in Il Transilvano promise a comprehensive method for the organist, a promise which Diruta ably fulfills. He begins with such elementary study as the names of the notes in the musical scale (which he calls the musical alphabet), the formation of the scale according to the hexachord system, the names of the clefs, and the names of the note-values. Then he gives rules for keyboard technique and for playing diminutions. In Part II he teaches Transilvano to arrange vocal music for the organ and gives him rules of counterpoint, so that he can compose for the organ. Diruta explains the system of twelve modes, their transposition, and
how to use them most effectively. Then he illustrates his lessons with a series of *Ricercari* in all twelve modes, composed by the most eminent men of his time.

The last section of Part II instructs the organist in the method of accompanying the church service and in transposing or modulating between the responses. The examples of music are preludes on church hymns. Diruta also gives advice concerning the proper use of the organ stops and the best stop-combinations for certain pieces. At the conclusion of the book Diruta states his rules for singing.

The purpose of this thesis is to present the principles of keyboard technique as set forth by Diruta. The material is limited to Part I which contains Diruta's entire discussion dealing with the technical side of organ playing.

After the title pages and the letter of Claudio Merulo the text begins with a soliloquy by a citizen of Transylvania, who, throughout the entire work, is called only by the name of Transilvano (Transylvanian). He feels that he is very fortunate to be in the famous city of Venice on the day of the Feast of the Ascension, when he can hear beautiful music in the churches. He is looking for the Chevalier Michele whom he meets, by chance, walking with Father Diruta. Transilvano makes known the purpose of his visit; the Prince of Transylvania has sent him to find a collection of music by famous composers. But he is not satisfied only with the music. He wants to learn Father Diruta's rules for playing "that supreme instru-
ment", the organ. Diruta is most willing to teach him, and they begin the lessons at once.

Diruta's first rules for playing are concerned with the position of the organist. In order to play well an organist must have the poise which results from the correct approach to the instrument. Diruta's rules in a free translation, are as follows:

1. Sit at the center of the keyboard.
2. Sit erect, and do not make unnecessary motions.
3. Let the arm guide the hand. The arm and hand should be on an even plane, level with the keyboard, so that the hand does not hang down from the keys.
4. Place the fingers evenly on the keys and somewhat curved. Keep the hand relaxed, and let the fingers rest lightly on the keys. To illustrate this rule he says that, "When you wish to slap a man in anger, you tense the hand and wrist, but when you wish to caress, you keep the hand relaxed and light as though you were caressing a child."

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1 It is an amazing fact that all these rules correspond exactly, in their application, to the rules of modern organ technique. Diruta's rules, especially those concerning the touch and the relaxation of the arm and hand, are the fundamental points in organ playing today.

2 Appendix I, p. 11.
5. Let the fingers press, not strike the key. This produces a good legato and keeps the note-values even. When the key is struck and the finger lifted off the key, part of the sound is lost. (Diruta's musical example shows the difference between precise note-values and those carelessly played).  

[Music notation]

Now Transilvano says that he recalls having heard this broken effect before but supposed that something was wrong with the organ. Then Diruta explains that this striking of the keys is the fundamental difference between playing the organ and playing quilled instruments such as the harpsichord. Diruta, with this statement, becomes the first writer to make a distinction between the manner of playing these two instruments. He speaks of a player of quilled instruments as a "dance player" and the organist as a player of "music".

Diruta's reference to players of quilled instruments such as the harpsichord as "dance players" is a broad statement. He tells Transilvano that the Council of Trent

1Ibid., p. 19.
forbade the playing of dances or "dishonorable Canzoni" on
the organ because "it is not desirable to mix profane with
sacred things". It would seem, then, that he gives the
title of "music" to sacred music alone. But he does not
limit his organ pieces to sacred compositions, for he in-
cludes Toccatas, Ricercari, and Canzoni in his pieces for
study. We may conclude that his terms, "dance music" and
"music", may be compared to the modern terms, "light music"
and "serious music". To him the organ was the proper instru-
ment for the more serious forms of composition, and the harp-
sichord was more suitable for music of a lighter type. He
says further that the dance player cannot help striking the
keys of the organ when he plays it, and of course this is the
wrong style of organ-playing. On the other hand, an organist
is not a good harpsichord player because the method of play-
ing differs. The quilled action of the harpsichord requires
that the keys be struck; moreover, the sound of the harpsichord
is not sustained as it is on the organ, so the player
must repeat notes and ornament the melody in order to make
the sound more continuous. Except for striking the key and
using much more embellishment in the music, Diruta advises
the harpsichordist to observe his rules as carefully as if he
were an organist. He also recommends for study the works of
Claudio Merulo, his teacher.

1Appendix I, p.
Diruta then proceeds to the instruction in finger- ing, which he says is an important study for both harpsi- chordists and organists. To make his fingering rules easier to follow he classifies the fingers as "good" or "bad" fingers to be played on "good" or "bad" notes. Diruta's "good" fingers play the accented or "good" notes and the "bad" fingers play the unaccented or "bad" ones. He numbers the fingers from 1 to 5 starting with the thumb. The first finger plays a "bad" note, the second finger a "good" one, the third "bad", the fourth "good", and the fifth "bad".

The third finger is the most used, because not only does it play "bad" notes in the ascending and descending scale, and "bad" notes which leap, but it is important in the playing of ornaments. Although Transilvano seems to understand Diruta's method of teaching fingering by calling the fingers and notes "good" and "bad", the system seems very awkward in comparison to the modern method of marking fingering. Diruta does not use numbers for the fingers in any of the examples he gives. The following example is the realization by the writer of scale fingerings for the right and left hands as described by Diruta.¹

¹Krebs, "Diruta's Transilvano", *VfM*, VIII, 364. Krebs' statement and his example showing that Diruta always crosses a longer finger over a shorter one, thereby indicating an advancement over his predecessors, is to be questioned, since Diruta's instructions for fingering with 2 and 3 for the ascending and descending scale in the left hand are clearly stated. (See Appendix I, p.
Diruta explains to Transilvano that he had definite reasons for not using the first and second fingers in the right hand or the fourth finger of the left hand in the descending scale. He says that in spite of the fact that certain skillful players use those fingerings with apparent success, he considers their use to be very clumsy. The first fingerings, 1 and 2, for the ascending scale of the right hand, might force the thumb to be used on a black key and throw the hand out of position because of the shorter key-length.\footnote{Diruta’s avoidance of the thumb is not a practice taken over from his predecessors. Bermudo, Santa Maria, Amsterbach, and Cabezon all made use of the thumb, although in a limited way and mostly in the left hand. c. f. Chapter III.} The use of the fourth finger of the left hand for a descending scale is not good, according to Diruta, because it is weaker than the same finger of the right hand.

Diruta’s examples for the practice of fingerings are written in various note values to illustrate the use of good and bad fingers. The good finger is marked B (“buono”, good); the bad finger is marked C (“cattivo”, bad). These markings are made at the beginning of each exercise. As it was mentioned previously, the notes with the stress are “good” notes. For example, the third exercise begins with a rest the same value
as the first note, causing that note to be unaccented and, therefore, to be played with a "bad" finger.\textsuperscript{1} The fingering in the fifth example is not marked with the usual alternation B C B C. Evidently, it is marked this way so that a good finger will fall on the last note of a scale line. The fingering would be this:

\textbf{Fifth example with varied note-values.}

\begin{center}
\begin{music}
\begin{staff}
\begin{musicnotes}
E4 \fingergap E2 4 3 4 3 \fingergap G2 4 3 4 3 4 \fingergap \to\!
\end{musicnotes}
\end{staff}
\end{music}
\end{center}

Diruta's instructions for interval fingerings are not so precise. The octave is to be played with $\frac{3}{4}$, the fifth with $\frac{5}{4}$ or $\frac{5}{3}$, while the intervals of the sixth, fourth, and third are played with the fingers that are the most convenient.

These interval fingerings are given with Diruta's rules for playing from tablature. His musical example is notated, in accordance with the Italian practice of that time, on two staffs with eight lines for the left hand and five lines for the right. The soprano and alto are played with the right hand, the tenor and bass with the left. For convenience in wide stretches, Diruta states that the alto and tenor can be played sometimes with the right hand, at other times with the left. The fingering which Diruta suggests for the first two bars of the example does not permit a strict legato.

\textsuperscript{1}Appendix I, p.

\textsuperscript{2}This fingering is realized by the writer.
### Scales

![Scales Diagram]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Right Hand</th>
<th>Left Hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hans von Constans</td>
<td><code>[R. 2 3 2 3 -- -- -- -- 4 3 2 3]</code></td>
<td><code>[L. 4 3 2 3 -- -- -- -- 2 3 2 3]</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Bermudo</td>
<td><code>[R. 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 - 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1]</code></td>
<td><code>[L. 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 - 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4]</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas de Santa Maria²</td>
<td><code>[R. 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 - 4 3 2 3 2 3 2 3]</code></td>
<td><code>[L. 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 - 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4]</code> (or) <code>[R. 2 3 2 1 2 1 2 1 - 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4]</code> (or) <code>[L. 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 - 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4]</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolaus Ammerbach</td>
<td><code>[R. 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 4 3 2 3 2 3 2 3]</code></td>
<td><code>[L. 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3]</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio Cabezón</td>
<td><code>[R. 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 - 4 3 2 3 2 3 2 3]</code></td>
<td><code>[L. 4 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 - 1 2 3 4 3 4 3 4]</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girolamo Diruta</td>
<td><code>[R. 2 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 2 3 2 3 2]</code></td>
<td><code>[L. 4 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2]</code></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Intervals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
<th>Fifth</th>
<th>Sixth</th>
<th>Seventh</th>
<th>Octave</th>
<th>Ninth</th>
<th>Tenth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hans von Constans</td>
<td>(4 2)</td>
<td>5 2 2 1</td>
<td>5 - -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juan Bermudo</td>
<td>(3 4 1 2)</td>
<td>4 5 - 1</td>
<td>5 - -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas de Santa Maria</td>
<td>(2 3 4 1 1 2)</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 1</td>
<td>5 - -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolaus Ammerbach</td>
<td>(4 2 2 2 2 1)</td>
<td>5 5 5 1 1 1</td>
<td>5 5 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio Cabezón</td>
<td>(2 3 5 4 1 3)</td>
<td>4 3 4 3 - -</td>
<td>- - -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girolamo Diruta</td>
<td>(Fingers most 4 5 Fingers)</td>
<td>(convenient 1 2 most convenient)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹The scales and intervals are marked with modern fingering.

²Kinkeldey, Orgel und Klavier..., p. 35-39. For further scale fingerings c. f. Chapter III.
between notes that are not repeated, for the bass skips a fifth with the same finger.\textsuperscript{1} Modern finger ing would play the same interval succession with $\frac{5}{2}$, $\frac{3}{1}$, in order to keep the parts connected.

The chart on page 29 presents a survey of the fingering for scales and intervals taken from the discussion before and including Diruta.

The next exercises which Diruta gives to Transilvano pertain to the playing of diminutions. The word "diminution" was a general term used to describe a kind of musical improvisation in which the player ornamented a composition by breaking up long notes into shorter note groups. Diruta uses the word here in connection with the exercises which will enable his pupil to play more advanced pieces.

These exercises are written in sequential patterns for the right and left hand. Diruta calls them the "exercises by step" and the "exercises with good and bad leaps." Diruta explains that the exercises by step are scale passages. By a "good" leap he means any consonant or dissonant interval that is made when a "good" note leaps; a "bad" leap is a leap made by a "bad" note. In other words, a "good" leap is one which is made on an accented note, a "bad" leap on an unaccented one. Diruta's example uses the interval of a seventh for illustration.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} Appendix I, p.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p.
Example for the right hand with good leaps.

Example for the right hand with bad leaps.

No fingerings are written in these exercises. Diruta expects his pupil to remember the rules for "good" and "bad" notes. His only reference to the fingering is made when he tells Transilvano to use the fourth finger of the left hand on the last note of a descending passage if it is a "good" note. Then he reminds him again that if organists "would keep their hands light and supple, they could play the most difficult passages with ease." Transilvano replies, "You speak the truth... Now pray tell me something about Groppi and Tremoli."¹

Diruta explains that the Groppi and the Tremolo are two forms of ornamentation used in the process of diminution. In Part II, Book I, of Il Transilvano (1622) he mentions three other ornamental figures, the Minuti, the Accenti, and the Clamationi. The Minuti break up a melody into continuous diatonic passages, whereas the remaining forms of diminution embellish the melody by shorter note groups.

¹Appendix I, p.
Example of the Minuta in the tenor voice.

The **Accenti** in Diruta's example correspond to the modern changing note.

The **Clamatione** fill in the interval of a third with a dotted eighth and sixteenth.

The **Groppi** divide long notes into scale passages and figurations resembling the modern turn. The many examples given are written in ascending and descending passages and in passages with accidentals. One form of the **Groppi** is as follows:

These are to be played with the third and fourth fingers of the right hand and the second and third fingers of the left. The first and second fingers can be used if it is more convenient to do so.

The **Tremolo** which Diruta describes is like the modern shake or longer trill. The following example shows one

---

1Ibid., p.
tremolo with the right hand.\footnote{Appendix I, p.}

\begin{music}
\begin{musicstaff}
\begin{musicpartition}
\begin{musicdecoration}
\end{musicdecoration}
\end{musicpartition}
\end{musicstaff}
\end{music}

He says, "Play them in a sprightly manner and with agility."\footnote{Ibid., p.}

These are his rules for making good tremoli.

1. The \textit{tremolo} is played with the upper auxiliary note.

2. The \textit{tremolo} takes half the value of the principal note.

3. \textit{Tremoli} are introduced at the beginning of a Ricerca, Canzone, or any other piece of music, when the subject is given out by a single voice. They are to be used for the adornment of any melody when the part is written in note values which are not too short for embellishment.

4. The rules for good and bad notes do not apply to \textit{tremoli}. They are to be played with successive fingers, no matter which finger falls upon the \textit{tremolo}.

a. The exception to this rule occurs with syncopated notes or with two notes of the same value on the same line or space. They cannot be played with successive fingers, but with the fingers which are most convenient.
At this point Transilvano works out, orally, the fingering for the tremoli in the last two examples, and Diruta pronounces them to be correct.\footnote{Ibid., p.} The example given here has been realized by the writer from the rules given by Diruta.

Tremoletti on eighth notes.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{l}
\textbf{Right hand} \\
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{tremolo_example_right_hand.png} \\
\textbf{Left hand} \\
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{tremolo_example_left_hand.png}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

Diruta explains that these two examples of tremoletti and the tremoli on notes which descend by step are more difficult than the other examples. The tremoli on notes descending by step are frequently used by Claudio Merulo. This tremolo changes the note values somewhat.\footnote{Appendix I, p. Example}

Diruta does not hold to his rules in his examples. He emphasizes the point that tremoli are to be played with the upper note, yet in spite of this, in the example of tremoli on half-notes, the last part of the example on quarter-notes and in the tremoletti on eighth-notes, there are tremoli which use the lower auxiliary note. This inconsistency is an example of the confusion concerning the treatment of trills and shakes which has persisted until the present day.
Transilvano, however, seems to have no difficulty with these problems, so Diruta gives him a set of pieces to practice. These are compositions by himself and by other composers whom he considers to be also "men of merit." Diruta tells Transilvano that first he must practice his exercises and then the pieces will offer no difficulties. Transilvano says,

... tell me whether someone who has bad habits in his hand can correct them by the use of these rules.

Diruta replies,

... a well-proportioned man whose tongue is impeded is in such a condition that he cannot express his opinions. The tongue of the organ, as you know, are the hands; if these do not operate correctly many defects will appear. The same may be said of a beginner who plays things which were studied and learned badly. If he wishes to play according to the regulations it will be necessary for him to abandon everything he has learned and to take up the basic principles according to this rule, just as one who has never studied may, by observing my rules, improve in a very short time.

Transilvano says,

So then it appears that this rule will benefit everyone, beginners and even those who praise themselves very highly.

And Diruta humbly replies,

Let everything be in the praise of the Lord.¹

¹This reference and those above are taken from Appendix I, p.
CONCLUSION

This concludes all of the statements regarding the technique given by Diruta in *Il Transilvano*. A glance at the chart giving a survey of fingering in the instruction books of the sixteenth century\(^1\) will show that there is no actual improvement in Diruta's fingering. Diruta repeatedly warns his pupil against awkwardness at the keyboard, but his fingering, to a modern player, is awkwardness itself.

The significance of Diruta's book lies in the carefulness and the thoroughness of his teaching. His remarks concerning the position of the player, the relaxation of the arm and hand, and the proper attack on the key are fundamental points of organ instruction today. The distinction that he makes between organ touch and the touch used on other keyboard instruments is a definite advancement over the older methods, which seemed to classify all keyboard instruments together in regard to the technique of playing. Diruta's book gives, for the first time, an actual school of playing which considers both the technical and the aesthetic treatment of the organ and harpsichord, separating them according to the suitability of the organ for serious music and the harpsichord for music of a lighter type.

\(^1\) c. f. Chapter III, p. 29.
The importance of *Il Transilvano* was not appreciated, apparently, by later historians who mentioned the book. Hawkins gives the general content of the book, and Forkel expresses the same opinion as Burney, who says,

> It contains instructions for playing the organ and other keyed instruments, with preludes by most of the celebrated organists of Italy at the time; but in these no keys are used but those of the church, and all the passages consist of running up and down the scale with both hands alternately, without other intention than to exercise the fingers in the most obvious and vulgar divisions then in use.

But this very fact mentioned by Burney, that the pieces were written for the intention of exercising the fingers, is one of the significant points concerning Diruta's method of teaching. He includes, as illustrations of his rules, entire pieces for the practice of special technical problems bringing about for the first time the appearance of actual clavier études. The pieces of music appearing in other method books such as the *Obra de musica* of Cabezón, where the pieces are graded in order of difficulty, are practice pieces, to be sure, but they are miscellaneous compositions, which do not call for the working out of a particular technical problem.


Diruta carries out his principles by including, along with compositions by his contemporaries, three Toccatas written by himself for the practice of "steps" and "good" and "bad" leaps,\(^1\) and a "Tocata on the Eleventh and Twelfth Tones"\(^2\) that gives an excellent illustration of his diminutions.

It was many years after Diruta that any systematic method of organ instruction was evolved. Organ playing was taught largely by the oral explanations of a teacher and the performance of music which the teacher may have composed for instruction purposes. The instruction books which came immediately after *Il Transilvano* still concerned themselves more with rules of composition or improvisation, giving only a few fingering indications for short passages. Michael Praetorius, in the second volume of the *Syntagma Musicum*, the *Organographia* (1619), says,

As then, however, many of them let themselves think something unusual and therefore wish to despise some organists because of the fact that they do not use this or that particular fingering, which, however, in my opinion, is not even worth bothering about, for one plays passages with the first, middle, or last fingers, either up or down. Indeed, if one could also help play with the nose and was able to make and bring out everything fine and pure, true and agreeable to the ear, there would not be much use in worrying about how and in what manner such things were brought about.\(^3\)

\(^1\)Appendix I, p.


\(^3\)Michael Praetorius, *De Organographia*, Vol. II of the *Syntagma Musicum*. ("Wolfenbüttel, 1619*). Facsimile ed. by W. Gurlitt. (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1929), 44.
The Wegweiser,\(^1\) which first appeared in Augsburg in 1689, was written by an anonymous writer, and by 1753 it had twelve editions. The popularity of the Wegweiser in Central and Southern Germany at the beginning of the seventeenth century makes it highly probable that J. S. Bach used the book in his first lessons at the organ. It is the next book of importance for keyboard instruction, following over one hundred years after the publication of Il Transilvano. The book contains basic instruction regarding music, fingering, position of the player, clefs, ornaments, and figured bass. There is also instruction concerning church music and advice to the organist about the music of the mass.

There are fifty-five pages of music including exercises in each of the eight church modes and "light and easy" exercises for the pleasure of the student. The latter are real pieces written in forms such as the Toccata, Toccatina, Variatio, Fuga, and Tastata. They are all rather short, but very well-written and enjoyable pieces which are used today for beginners.\(^2\)

It was not until the time of Nicholas Jacques Lemmens (1823-1881) that the principles of organ playing were co-ordinated and combined with a systematic study of pedal technique.

\(^1\) Wegweiser die Orgel recht zu schlagen (Augsburg: J. Koppmayer, (1692) 2nd. ed.

\(^2\) Harold Gleason, Method of Organ Playing (Published by the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, N. Y., 1940) 2nd. ed. The pieces from the Wegweiser are manual and pedal pieces.
His book contains exercises for the perfection of a legato style on the organ, short practice pieces with fingering marked in them, a section concerned with pedal technique, followed by simple pieces with pedal, and a collection of longer organ pieces at the end of the book, containing indications of stops to be used, but having no fingering or pedalling marked.  

Guilmant has traced the French school from Bach, through Krebs, Kirnberger, Kittel (Bach's last pupil), Berner, Rinck, Hesse, to Lemmens. From this French school has descended a long line of distinguished organists.

In view of the surprising lack of organization in the principles of keyboard technique for the organ until the most recent times, Diruta's *Il Transilvano* gains even more importance as an instruction book in which the author shows himself to be not only a man of thorough knowledge and excellent musical taste, but an instructor so far-seeing that his fundamental principles have held good to the present day.

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PERIODICALS


MUSIC


APPENDIX I

TRANSLATION OF IL TRANSILVANO
IL TRANSILVANO
DIALOGO
SOPRA IL VERO MODO DI SONAR
Organi, & Instrumenti da penna.
DEL R. P. GIROLAMO DIRVTA
PERUGINO,
Dell'Ordine de' Frati Minori Conv. di S. Francesco.

ORGANISTA DEL DUOMO
DI CHIOGGIA.

Nel quale facilmente, & presso s'impara di conoscere sopra la Tastatura del Organo di ciascuna parte, & come nel Diminuirla si desino trasportar le mani, & il modo d'intendere la Intuolatura; proponendo la necessità delle sue Regole, con le Toccatie de diversi Ecellenti Organisti, poste nel fine del Libro.

Operazione nuova e ritrovata, utillissima, & necessaria a Professori d'Organo.

AL SERENISSIMO PRINCIPE
di Transilvania.
CON PRIVILEGIO.

IN VENETIA, Appresso Alessandro Vincenti. MDCXXV.
THE
TRANSLVANIAN
A DIALOGUE
ON THE TRUE MANNER OF PLAYING
THE ORGAN AND QUILLED INSTRUMENTS

by the Reverend Father Girolamo Diruta
of Perugia
of the Order of the Brotherhood of the Monks-minor
of the Monastery of St. Francis
Organist of the Cathedral
of Chioggia

In which one learns quickly and easily to play upon keyboard instruments and how to manage the hands in making Diminutions, and also the manner of understanding Tablatures, proving the truth and necessity of its rules with Toccatas by different excellent organists, which are to be found at the end of the book.

A useful and newly completed work which is necessary to all professors of the organ.

To the Most Serene Prince
of Transilvania

With privileges

Printed in Venice, by Alessandro Vincenti, 1625.
The Author of the Work
to the Prudent Readers

All the arts and sciences which are understood by the human intellect through the disposition of God's providence, are reduced to a basic principle, and their teachers are accepted and honored by everyone. So when speaking of philosophy one thinks of Aristotle; in medicine one thinks of Hippocrates; in poetry, among the Latins, one honors Virgil; and among the poets in our vernacular tongue, Petrarch. In the Sacred Letters when one mentions the prophet, David is inferred, just as we think of St. Paul when an apostle is mentioned. For all these who become well-versed in their knowledge, retain the name of Excellence, corresponding to that which occurred in the early days in the Faculty of Music, giving the title of Excellence to Orpheus, and to Amphion. And we clearly see that today the title of Excellence is given to musical instruments, especially the organ, which embodies all other instruments, that is, the virtue of all other instruments, in which one realizes the value of the music in the various voices and in the sounds.

So then the organ is called the King of Instruments, justly accepted in the sacred churches of God to give praise and honor to His Majesty. With the same reasoning, the human
hand is referred to as the Organ of the Organs; that is, the instrument which, to operate, makes use of all the instruments which belong to the operation of it. This is not known by many who believe that the organ is nothing but a musical instrument which is used in churches to accompany sacred choirs and the voices of the cantors. The Psalm, "Laudate Dominum in cordis, e Organo," calls for the lute, chitarra, lyre, harpsichord, and clavicembalo. The organist uses these to demonstrate his ability to sing and play. So the organ is called Excellent, because it embodies in itself all the musical instruments, and, moreover, it can represent the human voice with its breath, and the hands which play it. The pipes, no matter of what material they are made, represent the human throat, from whence passes the breath to form the sound and the voice. One may almost say that the organ is an artificial animal which speaks, sings, and plays by means of the hands and through the art of man. And for this reason it should by well constructed and ornamented and used only in the sacred Offices, to praise, with its voice and with its sounds, the great and marvellous works of His Majesty. Among all the principal organs which are famous, that of the city of Trient is most beautiful; that of the Cathedral of Oggobio [Agobbio] is marvellous; and well worthy of being seen and heard is that of the Church Cathedral of
Cagli. Everything is embodied into these instruments to make smooth harmony and sweet consonance. A thing which I have seen for a fact, and carefully observed, amazed me, in that, of the many noble and excellent organists who have played this famous instrument the organ, none has ever fully brought out the excellence of the instrument and the manner of treating it. However, with the good peace of all, with all respect to them, with honor and glory to God, and with satisfaction of the Christian ears, and by the intelligence of the elevated souls who have enjoyed an honored faculty, I have deliberated, with His Majesty's help, and given to the world my voluntary efforts regarding the use of this illustrious instrument. Since it is the chief and principal of all instruments, and if the true method of using it is clearly understood, then its sweetness and smoothness, which combines all instruments, representing on earth the smooth harmony and the blessed spirits of Heaven, in praise of God, is well expressed by a verse on the organ of St. Peter of Perugia: "Haec si contingunt Ferris quae, gaudia Caelo?" as if to say, "If on earth one enjoys such smooth harmony which is taken in by the human ear through such art, what rejoicing and pleasure must there be in the angelic choruses and the blessed spirits in heaven?" It is truly this marvellous instrument, the organ, which is called excellence. Like the human body governed by the soul, as has
been said, its first aspect really delights the eye, and
the sounds reaching our ears, like words coming from the
heart, represent the internal disposition of the spirit which
it governs, having the bellows corresponding to the lungs,
the pipes to the throat, the keys to the teeth, and the
player to the tongue, who with light movements of the hand
makes it play and speak smoothly. It is here that everyone
should, with all his power, proceed by the most perfect
means, otherwise the results can be compared with a beautiful
specimen of a man, whose appearance is spoiled by his stum-
mering. But, as the gracefulness of well-colored figures
will distract the eye of the onlookers, the smoothness of
well-proportioned harmony reaching the ears of the listeners
will penetrate their secret thoughts and hidden passions.
Duly placed in the Temple of God, it invites, and even forces,
the devout and faithful spirits to listen to the praises and
the honors, which, with its sounds and voices, it expressively
accompanies and gives to the highest glory of God. This
reasoning has moved me to give some rules and demonstrate
some methods really necessary to know in order to exercise
the virtue of such an instrument. I have been asked by many
who have heard my discussions to publish my thoughts to the
world for the general benefit of all those who find delight
in music, and who wish to make progress. This I do much
more voluntarily since I have been encouraged by the very ex-
cellent Signor Claudio Serulo of Correggio, as you can see by his letter how much these rules are necessary in order to understand the true manner of playing. But I hope that those who read my rules will not accuse me of too much arrogance if I have not given full satisfaction to such a noble endeavor, considering that nothing is perfect at first, no matter what the art or science may be. One arrives at perfection by steps, by time, and by study. I hope that I have attained that goal with my new work, and that it will be well-received and honored by those intelligent persons who read it.
The Letter
of
Claudio Merulo of Correggio

In every branch of art, gentlemen, in order to become adept in a particular profession, one must realize that each profession has its own beginning and end. There frequently occur observations which cannot be entirely perceived by those not fully acquainted with the profession. But since my first book has gone to print, my Canzoni alla Francese, which I have written in tablature, I wish to give advice which would be of great assistance to everyone concerning the order rules which should be observed, which, if they seem insignificant at first glance, are, however, of such importance that the performer will be greatly enlightened by knowing them. This warning, then, I deem necessary to give to Your Highness in order to overcome any difficulties which may occur while playing my tablatures. It is necessary to know the orders with which I regulate those diminutions which I usually adopt. But, finally, it will be easy for everyone to put these rules into practice with the knowledge of the correct fingering to be used to begin the minuta, or tirata\(^1\) which one wishes to call for, and also the knowledge of the skips in the right hand as well as the left. It will be well to remember that a book was writ-

ten some time ago by the Reverend Father Girolamo Diruta, who, because of his merit, is at present organist at the Cathedral of Chioggia under the Most Reverend Bishop of that city. It is to my glory that he is my pupil, because in this dissertation he has brought honor to both of us. In this same book he has dextrously treated everything that is useful to know in this practice, letting me know, before I could stop him, for I was in the act of doing so, that without asking the opinion of others he has obligingly favored me by dedicating it to me, giving, with many resolutions the reasons for every occurrence, which struck me with amazement when I tried them. I even persuaded him, for the benefit of the public, to bring this book to light, as, I believe, without doubt, he has done. Every diligent person should study this book, so that he may know the manner in which he must treat tablatures. This work is a bright light to keep one from progressing in darkness. Meanwhile, I pray that Your Highness will be benevolent toward me and accept my work whole-heartedly, and that it will be a great help to you.
THE TRANSILVANIAN DIALOGUE

by the Reverend Father Girolamo Diruta

of the Order of Monks-minor of the Monastery of St. Francis,

The true method of playing the organ

and quilled instruments

Interlocutors

The Transilvanian and Diruta

Tr. At last after a long and tedious journey, thanks be
to God, I have arrived safe and sound in this illustrious
city of Venice, and I am happy that I have come on the day
of the celebrated Feast of the Ascension; also I wish to
pay my respects to His Excellency, the Prince and his court
and to hear beautiful concerts and harmonious songs, which,
if I am not wrong, are sung in honor of this feast day. To
accomplish these desires, I have asked the illustrious Sig-
nor, the Chevalier Michele, who had sent for me through the
prince, to show me the way to gratify my wishes. However,
if I err not, I see him there between two gentlemen coming
through the gates of Saint Mark's. Finding this gentleman
so easily will facilitate the carrying out of my desire.

Chev. Sir, God bless you. I am happy to see you and to hear
about my prince from your lips rather than by letters.
Tr. I believe your beloved prince is well. My reason for being here is that His Excellency loves music and concerts, and he has sent me from Transilvania to Italy to find a compilation of works of the most famous men in the art of music and instruments. I have found the greater part of these works, but what I most desire and what particularly delights me, I have not yet obtained. For, after having found the rules and methods of playing every sort of instrument, there have never fallen into my hands rules which teach one to play perfectly that supreme instrument, the organ.

Truly, I have obtained the volume of *Canzoni alla Francesca* written in tablature by the illustrious Signor Claudio Merulo of Correggio. I set out to obtain the real manner of playing the organ from this Reverend Father, Girolamo Diruta, whom I should like to interview through your highness, a thing which would be very dear to me. I would pour out my soul to him and my ardent desire not only to carry back with me, but to learn directly from him the secrets concerning the rules for playing the organ well.

Chev. Most just desires, in truth, and honorable and worthy of praise, and it pleases me that you have arrived here opportune on so solemn a day, where you will not only be able to speak to the Reverend Father for whom you are searching, but also to uncover the greatness of this very serene city. Luck is with us; he is approaching us. Father Diruta, I
would like to have a few words with you at your convenience.

Dir. Tell me what you wish, Illustrious Signor Cavallieri, for I am always ready to listen and to serve you.

Chev. This gentleman, my very good friend, who has just arrived in Venice, wishes to express to you his desire to study caused by your rare virtues and by the praises given you by the most excellent Signor, Claudio Merulo of Correggio, who has said, according to this gentleman, that it is impossible to play the organ perfectly without a certain rule recently discovered by Your Reverence.

Dir. The praises given me by the most excellent Signor Claudio, my master and teacher, are not caused by my virtue but by the nobility of his soul. As one whose breast is a nest of courtesy, who enjoys praising those who, in a small way, go about imitating the art of which he is the head and master. However, while I have been going around imitating and probably have learned nothing regarding organ playing, I am here to give you that little that I know regarding the art, with no trouble at all.

Tr. Your Reverence is too courteous. When will you allow me to repay your kindness? Signor Chevalier, since I believe the occasion has presented itself, give me leave to speak with you, for it will be very gratifying to be with Your Highness this evening.

Chev. I am glad you will be taken care of; you shall see.
Tr. Now, Father Diruta, if it pleases you, will you begin that which you have promised me? I shall listen gladly, and, if possible, commit to memory everything you will teach me.

Dir. I am ready to carry out my promise, but it will be to your convenience if we proceed to my study, where, with the help of my instruments, I shall be able to demonstrate my lessons more clearly. We have now arrived.

The Musical Alphabet

Every science has a method of approach. So one pretends to use an alphabetical method which shall have only seven letters, A B C D E F G. And with these letters one learns easily, in a certain length of time, the "musical hand."

Tr. You are right to proceed in that easy manner.

Dir. I shall attempt to make it easy wherever possible.

The Application of the Alphabet to the Musical Hand

Dir. Now then, proceeding with my intention, in which the "musical hand" is used in connection with the seven letters, you must retain this order. In A, you must say, A la mi re; in B, B fa, b mi; in C, C sol fa ut; in D, D la sol re; in E, E la mi; in F, F fa ut; in G, G sol re ut. These letters are repeated as in the days of the week, which are seven,
the octave being called the first. And now we must apply
the alphabet to the keyboard, on which one must keep the
same order. But first I must call your attention to the
fact that the keyboard of the instrument, whether a quilled
instrument, or monochord, or organ, has a different begin-
ing. For some begin with mi-ru-ut; others start differently.
Tr. In grace, explain what you mean by mi-re-ut.

Keyboards with Different Beginnings

Dir. Mi, re, and ut are naught but when at the beginning of
the keyboard, after two white keys, three black keys are
found. But when at the beginning there are three white keys
and one black key, this will be minus the mi-re-ut.
Tr. I have understood perfectly. But tell me, why do you
not start the "musical hand" as it is used by many authors,
that is, to begin with Gamma ut; A re; B mi; and so on?
Dir. For two reasons. First, the keyboards have different
beginnings, as I have said before, so I cannot begin with
ut, for I do not find the first key corresponding with its
name. The second reason, that I start with A and say A la
mi re, and not A re, is this; that in A re, there is not but
one note, but saying, A la mi re, one finds three notes,
la, mi, re; la to descend; re to ascend with b ; mi with
b♭; this you will find later in reading notes in all keys.
And I could add to this, that in the "musical hand," when one
begins from Gamma ut and goes to E la, one does not find but twenty notes, whereas on the keyboard there are more than thirty.

How the Hand, or the Alphabet, is Recited over the Keyboard

Now then, when you wish to recite this musical alphabet on the keyboard, there being mi, re, and ut, the fourth white key shall be the first key of A la mi re, and when mi, re, and ut are not found, the third key shall be the same, and above this third, or fourth, key, you shall say A la mi re, and above that, B fa, b mi, proceeding with the white keys.\(^1\) C sol fa ut, D la sol re, E la mi, F fa ut, G sol re ut, and I say, G sol re ut, to continue upon the following key, which shall be the octave of the first A la mi re, repeating the alphabet as many times as necessary until you reach the end of the keyboard; for, according to the rule, one should stop the eighth key, and keep and retain that name which the first has, as in the days of the week.

Explanation of the Clefs

Besides this, it is necessary to know which and how many clefs there are. The first is F fa ut; the second is C sol fa ut; the third is G sol re ut, which have the following appearance:

\(^1\)C.F. Chapter IV, p. 13 Note on the short-octave.
The F fa ut       The C sol fa ut       The G sol re ut

In which Keys the above Clefs are found

The F clef, fa ut, is found on the sixth key above the first A la mi re, that of C sol fa ut, five keys above F fa ut; the G clef, sol re ut, five keys above C sol fa ut. These appear in such a manner that the distance of a fifth separates one from the other. The F clef, fa ut is to be used in the bass part; the C clef, sol fa ut in the tenor part, and all other parts; the G clef, sol re ut only in the soprano part. I also want to show you all the figures or notes, which shall be called thus:

The Species of all the Notes

Maxima Longa Breve Semibreve Minim Semiminim

Crome Semicrume Bisrume

The Maxima, equivalent to eight beats; the Longa, four

1 Modern notation is given after each example except for the first two notes, which have no modern equivalent.
beats; the breve, two beats; the semibreve, one; two minims to one beat; four semiminims to one beat; eight cromes to one beat; sixteen semicromes to one beat, and thirty-two bisicromes to one beat.

The Rule for the Mutation of the B Natural Sign

We now come to the mutations, and I want to give you a rule which will help you to read in a short time in all clefs, and in all parts, and on all the keys of our instrument. The first mutation, in the scale with the natural sign, , occurs in three places; in A re, D re, E mi, in E la mi, to descend; in D re to ascend; in A re to ascend and descend. 

Tr. In faith, give me examples of these mutations.

The Keys of the Mutation of B Natural

Dir. Mutation is the changing of the name of one note to the name of another note on the same line or space, in the same pitch or key; thus on each A re, and on each D re, in ascending, say la. These mutations are found and can be seen better in a scale on the keyboard. Moreover, these seven letters, A B C D E F G, are dissimilar among themselves and are also dissimilar in pitch and on the keyboard, so that from the first to the seventh tone, inclusive, proceeding naturally, not a similar voice nor key is found, but arriving at the octave below or above one finds such similarity
that one has, at the octave, a similarity of the sound and keys; also, in regard to the letter one finds the same conformity which governs the sound. So then, proceeding from A re, one proceeds until G ut. This is repeated in returning. But in descending one proceeds to A re and then to G ut. One begins as is indicated in the examples; and to clarify these places of mutation, they shall be indicated with the letters of the mutations and with black notes, with which, ascending, whether they be A re or D re, one always says re, just as it is always called. Then in descending, on F mi, or A re, one always says la, as the following scale illustrates;

The scale on the keyboard for ascending with B natural

![Ascending Scale with B Natural](image)

The scale on the keyboard for descending with B natural

![Descending Scale with B Natural](image)
Now then, for the reasons given before, the first note of the scale shown above shall be ut, which shall be the first white key; re the first black key; mi the second black key. F shall be on the second white key where the keyboard begins when mi, re, and ut are lacking. And one proceeds with the above order.

**Rules for the Mutation of B Flat**

Since we have discussed the mutation of B natural, it is necessary to know the mutation of B flat, which is made with these letters, D re, G re, A re; on each A re in descending, on each G ut in ascending, and on each D re in ascending and descending. For this reason, on D re and on G ut, in descending, say re, and on D re and on A re in descending say la, as is shown in the example below. You should know that whether it occurs on lines or spaces, the letter B is played on a black key instead of a white key.

The scale on the keyboard for ascending with B flat
The scale on the keyboard for descending with B flat

Tr. I have understood perfectly.

Dir. Now that you have heard about mutation on the keyboard
I wish to have you practice something by which you will
benefit, that is to know the modulations of all the parts,
namely the position of the bass and of the other parts, as
is shown in the following examples:

Modulations of the bass for B natural

Modulations of the tenor for B natural
Modulations of the alto for B natural

By practicing these examples you will learn to read notes quickly in all parts. This practice will also easily teach you the tablature, to play on one part, and to read from a score. We now come to the Modulations on B flat.

Modulations of B flat in the bass

1The letters with an asterisk obviously are reversed by mistake.
Modulations of the tenor with B flat

Modulations of the alto with B flat

Modulations of the soprano

True. This practice has benefited me greatly. But tell me the difference between the B natural and the B flat.

The Differences between B Natural and B Flat

Duer. I can cite many reasons, but shall confine myself to the easy practice, with simple explanations, a most important thing. The sign which indicates the sound of B flat is this letter, B, and it is found at the beginning of the song, and naturally it is found in the chord, or the black key of

1The last note in the first staff is probably intended to be E.
B fa, B mi and, with accidentals, on the black key of F la mi. This voice, or sound, renders the harmony smooth and more suave, and for this reason is called flat. The natural sign, or the sharp sign, is not placed at the beginning of the Cantilena, for whenever it does not appear, B is sung natural. But the and # sign are found in different places of the Cantilena. The natural sign tends to make the harmony stronger, more acute, so many call it hard B.

TR. Tell me, in grace, how do these signs and # effect a voice and a tone?

The Effect of the Sign # Hard

Dir. These signs are used for convenience, but one is as significant as the other. In a melody or tone, it will raise a note a minor semitone, which is nothing but the distance between fa and mi, of B fa, B mi; the fa is played on the black key, and mi on the white key, as the following example will show.

All the uses

For a better explanation I can give you another example showing how the sign B# may transform the note ut into mi, and the fa into mi, and the sol into mi.

1The sharp sign is used to cancel a flat to make it natural.
To explain their nature better; those notes which should be played on white keys are played on black keys (as you have seen above) and when the notes which are played on the black keys are sung with B flat, this makes them change to the white keys, as shown in the following example:

Tr. I have perfectly understood the nature of these signs, $\flat$, $\#$, which will certainly be of great use to singers.

Dir. Now that you have heard the nature of the above signs, the manner of observing the rules of the "musical hand" on the seven letters, and the mutations of B natural and B flat, I will now prepare myself to explain that which has been hidden for a long time, and which you desire to know, the rules for playing the organ.

Tr. God be praised, that I have arrived at my desire. I shall be more than attentive.

The Rules for Playing the Organ according to Regulations, with Gravity and Grace

Dir. The rules at first would seem rather obscure and difficult, but, shown by me with clear examples, they will be
very simple and clearly evident. To begin; the rules are founded on definite principles, the first of which demands that the organist seat himself so that he will be in the center of the keyboard; the second that he does not make bodily movements but should keep himself erect and graceful, head and body. Third, he must remember that the arm guides the hand, and that the hand always remains straight in respect to the arm, so that the hand shall not be higher than the arm. The wrist should be very slightly raised, so that the hand and arm are on an even plane. What I say for one hand applies to the other. Fourth, the fingers should be placed evenly on the keys, and somewhat curved; moreover, the hand must rest lightly on the keyboard, and in a relaxed manner; otherwise the fingers will not be able to move with agility. And finally, the fingers should press the key and not strike it. And even if these principles seem to have no value, they should, nevertheless, be taken seriously for their usefulness. Abiding by these rules, a smooth and sweet sound will be attained.

Tr. I agree with you that the rules are useful and necessary, but I should like to know why the harmony will suffer if the head is not held erect, nor the finger curved.

Dir. I reply that the harmony does not suffer, but that by his manner at the organ, one can decide whether or not the organist is a serious student. Claudio Merulo is of the same
opinion. If one makes unnecessary contortions, he will look like a ridiculous comedian. And herewith arises another difficulty; that the efforts of a person are not as successful as they should be, for everyone practices the art inefficiently, thereby giving rise to those difficulties of which many persons complain to me. When they pointed to difficult sections, I said that these were easy, and when I taught them these rules and principles, they realized that it was their ignorance of the correct approach, and not the difficulty of the piece, which inconvenienced them.

TR. Will the works of other valorous men succeed with these rules as well as those of Signor Claudio Merulo?

MR. If one abides by the rules set down in this discussion, he will be able to play the works of all the masters, besides those intended for other instruments, that is the works and rules compiled by Girolamo da Udine, concert master to the Signoria da Venetia, and even those virtuoso works by Giovanni Bassano, in whose works you may see all sorts of diminutions, passages for cornet, violin, and voice. These diminutions are very difficult, and they will never sound well on the organ unless these rules are followed.

TR. Very good! Now let us return to the above-mentioned directions. What an ugly thing it is to see one play without gravity, as you say, making a thousand acts of contortion with the body, leading one to laughter rather than
pleasing the ear. What does it matter whether or not the arm guides the hand, and the hand remains level? Tell me that along with the rest.

**How the Arm must Guide the Hand**

**Dir.** This is probably more important than all else, and if you have ever noticed those who have developed bad habits concerning the hand, you know how they cripple themselves by hiding some fingers and by holding the arm so low that the elbow is below the level of the keyboard, giving the impression that the hand is dangling from the keys. All this occurs because the hand is not guided by the arm, so it is no wonder that performers labor with such difficulty. If I could depict a hand which produced this effect, you would easily understand how the hand should be guided by the arm, and also how the hand and fingers should be curved.

**The Method of Curving the Hand and Arching the Fingers**

This is easier to show you than the first rule. You must know that in order to curve the hand, one must draw the fingers in somewhat, and by so doing the hand will naturally arch itself, and thus must you place the hand on the keyboard.
The method of Keeping the Hand Relaxed and Light

To tell you how to keep your hand easy and relaxed on the keyboard, I will give you an example. When you wish to slap a man in anger, you tense the hand and wrist, but when you wish to caress, you must keep the hand relaxed and light, as though you were caressing a child.

Tr. With the example I fully understand how one should hold his hands. But tell me the effect one gets by pressing or striking the key.

The Effect of Pressing and That of Striking the Key

The effect is this, that by pressing the keys the harmony is united, by striking them it is disjointed, as you will clearly see in the following example. One example shows how, while singing, the breath is taken gradually with every note, and particularly on minims and semiminims. Observe the example in the semiminims, and by singing it as I have said, you will produce a half breath between each note, as the second example shows;

First example good

Second example bad

This will happen to organists who lose half the sound when they lift their hands and strike the keys. Many fall into
this error. Many, also, playing in such a manner, will exhaust the wind in the organ, so that it remains without sound for a half beat and often for a whole beat, giving the impression that they are playing the harpsichord and that they are about to begin a Saltarello.

**Tr.** I have heard those awful effects many times, but I thought that they resulted from faulty operation of the bellows. But now I begin to see the difference between playing the organ and clavichord and other quilled instruments, and between playing dances and music.

**The Reason that Dance Players Cannot Play the Organ**

**Dir.** And herewith arises what the Sacred Council of Trent prohibited, that with church organs one should not play "Passi e mezzi" and other dance songs nor lascivious and dishonorable Canzoni. For it is not desirable to mix profane with sacred things; and it seems that the organ cannot tolerate being played by such performers. If these dance players wish to play something musical, they cannot help striking the keys. This is why dance players rarely play the organ musically. On the contrary, the organist will never play harpsichord or dance music well, because the method of playing differs.

**Tr.** Excellent warning to those players of dance music. I believe they may also derive benefit from this warning.

**Dir.** In fact, they should be grateful. They should find this
hint very useful, for by keeping the above rules in mind, they can learn to play with facility and gracefulness. Moreover they should observe the other suggestions which I have given regarding the hand, except the striking of the key, and leaps of the hand, to give grace and air to their dances.

Tr. Good, but why can not one who plays dance music well, play music well on the organ, and why cannot an organist play dance music well?

Manner of Organ-playing and Playing Dances on the Harpsichord

Dir. I say that the dance player will have to abide by the above rules if he desires to play music on an organ. The organist wishing to play dances must observe the rules, but he is allowed to jump and strike with the fingers. He is allowed this for two reasons; first, the harpsichord must be struck because the Saltarelly demand it and the action of the quill is best put into play; second, to give grace to the dances, the organist wishing to play dances is allowed to strike with his fingers as well as any other player. But the dance player who wishes to play the organ is not allowed to do this.

Manner of Playing Quilled Instruments Musically

Tr. I like this difference between playing music and dances, but I would like to know why many organists do not play harpsichords as musically as they do organs.
Dir. The most important reasons, to begin with the first, are that the instrument must be quilled equally, and that its action should be easy, and that it must be played quickly so that the sound is not lost. It must be adorned with tremoli and graceful accent. The same effect that one derives from the organ, that of sustaining sound, should be employed on a quilled instrument; for example, when a breve or semi-breve is played on an organ, one hears the entire sound without again pressing the key, but when playing the quilled instrument for the same note duration one loses half the sound. One must, then, with the vivacity and dexterity of the hand, make up for that lack of sound by striking the notes often and gracefully. In brief, he who wishes to play sounds cleanly and gracefully, should study the works of Signor Claudio Merulo, and here he will find all he seeks. What remains to be said is to tell you which are the good and bad fingers, for they compare with good and bad notes. This is necessary for organists and also for dance players. I shall explain.

Tr. Pray, before proceeding, tell me why it is necessary to know which are the good and bad fingers, and which are the good and bad notes.

Which are the Good and Bad Fingers and the Good and Bad Notes

Dir. Now then, since you mention it, I shall not refuse to
satisfy you. You must know that the recognition of the fingers is the most important thing. One may say what he wishes, but such recognition is of the greatest importance. Those who claim that it makes no difference which finger is used to play a certain note, are greatly mistaken.

Now you see that we have five fingers on each hand; the first is the thumb, the second index, the third called medium; the fourth, the ring finger; the fifth, the auricular. The first finger makes a bad note, the second, a good one; the third, a bad one; the fourth a good; and the fifth a bad. The second, third, and fourth fingers are those which do all the work in so far as the fast notes are concerned. The same order is followed with the other hand, that is, good and bad, as is shown in the following example;

\[ B \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } A \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } C \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } C \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } B \text{ } B \]

\text{Tr.} I believe that this rule makes one play infallibly; but tell me, which finger should one use to play the first note of the above example?

\text{Dir.} Using the right hand, play the first note with the second finger, which is the good finger, the second note with the third finger, which is the bad finger, and the third with the fourth finger, which is the good finger, as is the note. Then proceed with the third and fourth fingers, to the end of the example. The last should be played with

\text{1B-Buono-"good;" } \text{C-Cattivo-"bad."}
the fourth finger. This must always be observed in ascending. In descending, begin with the fourth finger and follow with the third and second until the end, which shall be taken naturally with the second finger.

Dr. You mean to say that you begin the good note with the second finger, which is followed by the third and fourth, so that the middle finger accompanies the fourth in ascending, and the second when descending in the right hand.

**How the Middle Finger is the Most Used**

Dr. I must warn you, however, that the third finger must play the bad notes ascending as well as descending, and also the bad notes which leap. Besides, it is the most used finger, for one cannot do anything without using it in ascending, descending, leaping, tremoli, and groppi. At times, one finds bad notes which make wide leaps, as leaps of a third, fourth, and fifth. In this case, these can be made with the first and fifth fingers, as one pleases, and can be done conveniently with one hand or the other. But I must tell you the movement of the left hand, in which one must observe the same order of good and bad fingers. When the notes ascend, the first is played with the fourth finger and so on with the third and second, the second finger always being the final one. But in descending, the first note is played with the second finger, and the following with the third and second, ending with the fourth; ascending and des-
ascending, one proceeds with the second and third fingers of the left hand.

Tr. Pray tell me, why cannot one ascend with the first and second fingers, nor descend with the third and fourth as many skilled players do?

**Why One Should Not Ascend with the First and Second Fingers, nor Descend with the Third and Fourth Fingers of the Left Hand**

Dmr. The question which you ask is of great importance. With all due respect to those skillful players, I say that this method is superior to theirs. The use of the thumb is good when playing B natural, but with B flat, where one must pass over black keys, which are shorter than the white keys, the thumb must turn on the black keys, all of which is very inconvenient; whereas, by using the third finger, the phrase can be played with more agility and facility.

One should not even descend in any manner with the fourth finger, for one does not have the strength in the fourth finger of the left hand that is present in the fourth finger of the right hand. If one insists upon ascending with the second and first fingers and descending with the third and fourth, he may do so, although it will be to his disadvantage. He must observe, however, the rules of the good notes and good fingers, and the bad notes and fingers; otherwise he will never make progress, as can be seen in the following examples:
Tr. Certainly one cannot doubt that your method regarding the third and fourth fingers is better and easier than the others, for in reality, the thumb is very far from the black key, and to press it you twist the whole hand, which will not occur if it is played with the third finger. The experiment made with B natural in the second example is better executed with the thumb, but with B flat it is done with infinite inconvenience.

Dir. Since you have made this trial you should try another; that is, on all manner of black keys, one must observe the good and bad notes. To clarify this, I shall give various examples. Those notes which must be played with the good finger shall be marked with a letter B, and those with bad fingers with the letter C. You will find that the first of all these species of black keys must be played with the good finger except those which have rests of the same value as the notes, as you shall see in the third example;

First example of the good notes

Second example of the dotted notes
Third example with rests of the same value as the notes

Fourth example with rests

Fifth example with varied note-values

Tr. I am satisfied with everything; and since you are so kind, would you please tell me how I can recognize and understand intabulating?¹

Method of Understanding Intabulating

Dnr. I cannot but satisfy your just desire. It should be known that to understand intabulation it is necessary to know that with the left hand one plays the bass and tenor

¹Intabulatin was a method of transferring a vocal composition into instrumental tablature. This practice existed from the beginnings of written instrumental music until around 1600. The modern term for "intabulation" would be "arranging."
parts, which are placed on eight lines. The alto and soprano, played with the right hand, are placed on five lines, so that the middle voices, that is, the alto and tenor, may sometimes be played with the left and sometimes with the right hand.

Ir. I understand.

Mr. For a clearer understanding look at these examples of note against note on a faux bourdon of the First Tone, intabulated in two beats to a measure. In the first measure, you will find the bass and tenor are in the left hand, and soprano and alto in the right.

The broken bar line has been inserted by the writer.
**With Which Fingers One Produces Consonances**

**Dir.** The interval of a fifth must be played with the fourth and first fingers of the left hand, that is, the bass note is played with the fourth finger and the tenor with the first; the second finger of the right hand is used for the alto and the fourth for the soprano. The consonance which follows is a third, and the bass note is played with the fourth finger, the tenor with the second finger, and the alto and soprano with the second and fifth fingers. I must caution you to keep an eye on the clefs, so that it will be easy to find the notes and to place the fingers in order to produce consonances; so that the octave is played with the fifth and first fingers; the fifth with the fourth and first fingers, and the thirds are played in whichever way is found more convenient. What I say of one hand goes for the other.

**Tr.** I understand very well; I should like to know the order in which all sorts of notes are played; if, for instance, the bass note is a breve, the tenor two semibreves, the alto, two minims, and the soprano, four semiminims.

**Dir.** It would take forever to give examples of everything, but from what I shall tell you, you will be able to deduce everything. You must know that when the bass is a breve and the tenor two semibreves, whether they are in thirds,
fifths, or octaves, the first comes on the same beat with
the breve and the second by itself. If the alto has two
minims, the first comes on the same beat with the bass and
tenor, the second minim by itself. If the soprano has four
seminimims the first comes on the same beat with all the
other voices, the second by itself, the third comes on the
same beat with the second minim of the alto, and so on. I
must advise you that two semibreves equal one breve; two
minims, one semibreve; two semiminims, one minim; two
cromes, one semiminim; two semicromes, one crome; and two
bisicromes, one semicrome. With the following example you
can understand.\footnote{In the original copy the chord in the second bar was writ-
ten thus:}
Epilogue to the Suggestisons

We now come to the diminutions, and above all, you must remember the manner in which you must carry and arch the right hand, curve the fingers, and level them so that one does not rise higher than the others; and also, they should not stiffen, nor tighten, nor strike the keys. And remember that the arm must guide the hand and must remain at the same angle as the key, and that the fingers must always articulate clearly, but never strike the keys; and lastly, one finger should never be raised from the others, but while one lowers the other must rise. As a final warning, do not lift the fingers too high, and above all, carry the hand lightly and with alertness. And now, since we must treat diminutions, we shall begin with those by step and then those by good and bad leaps.

Tr. Tell me what you mean by diminutions by step and good and bad leaps.

Meaning of Step, and Good and Bad Leaps

Dir. By step, when the notes continue one after another

\footnote{The broken barline has been inserted by the writer.}
ascending and descending. A good leap is that of an octave or sixth, or other consonant or dissonant interval, as long as the good note leaps; a bad leap occurs when a bad note leaps to one of the above-mentioned intervals, and this bad leap is carried out as is seen in the following examples on ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la. But first you must exercise with the right hand and then with the left, so that you will be able to execute each after all your observations. After you have mastered each separately, then you will be able to play easily the steps and good and bad leaps which I am about to give you with other Toccatas, so that you will prove all that I have said. He who does otherwise will find himself in great error.

Example and exercise for the right hand by steps

Example and exercise for the left hand by steps
Example and exercise for the right hand with good leaps

Example and exercise for the left hand with good leaps
Example and exercise for the right hand with bad leaps

Example and exercise for the left hand with bad leaps
Tr. I understand well, but in the bad leaps I experience a difficulty with the left hand in descending. When I play the seventh note, I do not know whether I should use the fourth or second fingers.

Dir. In all descending notes the last is played with the fourth finger only if it is a good note. I must also tell you that you must practice the above examples of good and bad leaps to accustom the hand, for everything depends on these examples. When one feels sure of playing these examples at the right tempo with all the proper hand positions, all will be well. There is, however, one difficulty, and this is the manner of using the fingers of the right hand. When the fingers are playing an ascending passage one frequently keeps the second finger tense, and also the thumb, and the fifth finger is curved in too far, causing the muscles of the hand to tighten, thereby greatly decreasing the possibility for speed. It is here that many organists, having in the beginning accustomed their hands to these defects, are rarely able to produce smooth harmony. Whereas, had they kept their hands light and supple, they could play the most difficult passages with ease.

Tr. You speak the truth. I believe that it will detract from the harmony and add to the difficulty of the hand. Now, pray tell me something about groppi and tremoli.
Dir. In making groppi and tremoli, I shall give diverse examples. About the first I shall say that they are done in a varied fashion, that is, with semiminims and bisromes. These are found in different ways, as in ascending and descending or with accidentals, as shown in the following examples.

The forms of groppi

1The note marked with the asterisk was sharped in the original. The sharp is obviously intended for the note G. The sharp sign on the note B in the last bar is used, like the modern natural sign, to cancel a flat and make the note B natural.
Tr. What fingers should one use for groppi with accidentals?  

Dir. With the right hand one uses the fourth and third fingers, and with the left hand the second and third fingers, or with the first and second, if it is more convenient.

**Manner of Playing Tremoli**

Dir. I advise you, then, to play the notes in the tremoli in a sprightly manner, and with agility. Do not play them, as many others do, in just the opposite fashion, for they play them with the lower and not the upper note. Observe that violin, viola, and lute players, as well as other instrumentalists, always play the tremolo with the upper and not the lower note, as this example on minims will show.

**Tremolo with the righthand**

Tr. With which fingers should the above tremolo be played?  

Dir. With the second and third fingers. The tremolo which follows is played with the fifth and fourth, and these are the fingers which play the tremoli with the right hand. I
must advice you in this case that the bad finger may play
the first good note of the tremolo.

Tr. In this example, there are eight biacromes. How is
this tremolo to be played?

Dir. When a tremolo has to be played on a note of minia
value, the tremolo must last for the value of a semiminim,
as shown in the above example. This rule must be observed
with all notes, that is, to play the tremolo so that each
note gets half the value, as can be seen in several examples.

To execute tremoli well, one must consider two things; first,
the speed of the notes with which one makes the tremolo,
second, the suppleness of the fingers, so that it is executed
quickly and well.

Tremolo with the left hand

[Music notation]

Tr. With which fingers should the first tremolo be played?

Dir. With the third and second fingers, and the following
tremolo is played with the second and first.

Tr. But, tell me, to further impose upon your courtesy,
on what occasions should tremoli be used?

At What Time One Introduces Tremoli

Dir. Tremoli are used in the beginning of some Ricercari
or Canzoni or anywhere else where desired; also when one
hand plays many parts and the other one part alone, this being the part in which one plays the tremoli. Moreover, it is wise to warn the organist that when a tremolo is played gracefully and at the proper moment it will adorn the playing and will give more life to the harmony. I have promised to give you some examples in this regard. The first is done on a minima, the third on a crome. It cannot be done on a semicrome because of its speed. First I will play the minims as they would be used in a subject and then the tremoli in two ways. I will follow with a semiminim and crome, first with one, and then the other hand.

Tremoli on minims

Tremoli on semiminims

1 The flat sign was placed before the note A in the original.

2 The note F marked with an asterisk in the second bar of the example is a quarter-note in the original. The note B, marked with an asterisk in the last bar, is a thirty-second note in the original.
Some organists, (and in particular, Signor Claudio Merulo), use certain tremoli, when the notes descend by step, to cut off the following note, as shown in the following example.¹

These last tremoli seem to be more difficult than the others.

Dir. You speak the truth. They are not things for beginners, but since we are on this subject, and particularly those used by Signor Claudio in some passages of his Canzone alla Francesca, you can see that at first they will be thought to be very difficult, but by observing the rules of the tremoli, you will find them very easy. When you find a tremoletto on any one note, you must execute it with the succeeding finger, whether good or bad, because in the case of tremoli, one should not observe the rule for good and bad fingers. One already sees the reason in the swift passages

¹The writer has corrected the second bar. The original was written like this:
to be seen in the different examples.

Example of tremolleti on crosses

\[\text{Music notation image}\]

Tr. In the first example, I find that the first tremolletto falls on a good note, and is played with the second and third fingers of the right hand. The second tremolletto falls on a bad note and is played with the third and fourth fingers. The third tremolletto falls on a bad note and is played with the same fingers. In the second example, I find the same thing, that the tremolletto of four biscrosses falls on a bad note, and the second tremolletto falls on a good note.

Dir. You have understood correctly, but I want to give you another suggestion, that when you find tremolletti on syncopated notes, or two notes of the same value on the same line or space, they should not be played with the succeeding finger. One cannot execute the passage with the fingers in order. But they should be played with those fingers most convenient in order to execute the passage, as you will find in this example.

\[\text{Footnote:}\text{The note marked with an asterisk was a D in the original.}\]
Tr. The first tremolo falls on a good note and is played with the second and first fingers of the left hand. The second tremolo of four bischromes falls on a bad note, and, playing it with the third and second fingers, you cannot complete the passage with the fingers in order. This is caused by the syncopation which enters on the bad note. The good note of the tremolo should be played with the second and first fingers.

Dir. That is correct. The same order should be observed with the right hand in similar instances. Practice the following examples diligently. And since it is getting late, I shall draw my discussion to a close. If you find other things which disturb you, have patience; we will discuss them later.

Tr. I have encountered no difficulty, because you have given me rules and clear examples, and for the kindness you show me, I am very much obliged to you. If you have found me troublesome it is because I am over-anxious to learn. This is a virtue I uphold, because I am so roused and inflamed that I do not wish to discuss anything else. You have so enlightened me, may I beg of you to allow me to visit you (unless it is inconvenient) and, if it pleases
you, to give me the Toccatas with steps and good and bad
leaps and also those of various men of merit, so that I
may be able to put into practice all the rules.

Dir. I am happy in satisfying you. First you must exer-
cise by steps with the crome. After you have mastered it
up to tempo of the beat, you may make it a semicrome, doubl-
ing the speed of the hand. Similarly, I advise you to
treat the good and bad leaps, and in this way you can play
anything, no matter how difficult.

Tr. I shall not fail. I swear it. It seems a thousand
years before I can go home to start practicing and to see
how much my strength conforms with my desire.

Dir. Since I see that you have so much enthusiasm; go, and
God be with you, and give my greetings to Signor Cavaliere.

Tr. I shall do so. Stay, let us not be too ceremonious.

Dir. I want to accompany you to the door; it is our cus-
tom.

Tr. I am your servant.

See the following page for the list of pieces
pieces which follows the dialogue at this point.
Transcriptions of three of the thirteen Toccatas contained in Part I of Il Transilvano have not appeared, to the writer's knowledge, in other sources. The writer includes these compositions in Appendix II. The following list contains the sources for the remainder of the transcribed Toccata.

I. Toccata by step on the First Tone---------Girolamo Diruta


II. Toccata on the Second Tone with good leaps---------------------Girolamo Diruta

Krebs, C. VfM. VIII, p. 334.

III. Toccata on the Sixth Tone with bad leaps---------------------Girolamo Diruta

Transcribed and edited by the writer. See Appendix II.

IV. Toccata on the Third Tone-------------------Claudio Merulo

Transcribed by the writer. See Appendix II.

V. Toccata on the Sixth Tone-------------------Andrea Gabrieli

Transcribed by the writer. See Appendix II.

VI. Toccata on the Second Tone-------------------Giovanni Gabrieli

Torchi, L. L'Art Musicale... Vol. III, p. 137.

VII. Toccata on the Fourth Tone--------------------Luzzaschi Luzzaschi

p. 14 of examples

VIII. Toccata on the Eighth Tone-------Antonio Romannino

Torchi, L. L'Art Musicale... Vol. III, p. 171.

IX. Toccata on the Eighth Tone-------Paulo Quagliati

Torchi, L. L'Art Musicale... Vol. III, p. 175.

X. Toccata on the First Tone-------Vincenzo Bell'Harver


XI. Toccata on the Second Tone-------Gioseffo Guasti


XII. Toccata on the Ninth Tone-------Andrea Gabrieli

Torchi, L. L'Art Musicale... Vol. III, p. 77.

XIII. Toccata on the Eleventh and Twelfth Tones-------------------Girolamo Diruta

Frebs, C. VIVM. VIII, p. 386.

Dir. If I am not mistaken (nor do I believe I am), that person passing there is The Transilvanian, who is hurrying, I believe, on his way to the monastery, perhaps in search of me. I will meet him.

Tr. God bless you, Reverend Father Diruta. I am just on my way to see you.

Dir. What news?

Tr. The news is that my practice of all the Toccatas has resulted excellently, and when I had difficulty, I overcame it by referring to the rules. I had particular difficulty, (though not with anything else), with your Toccata on the Eleventh and Twelfth tones, placed at the end of the other Toccatas.

Dir. I am glad that you have had no difficulty and, moreover, that you feel that the Toccata on the Eleventh and Twelfth Tones was more varied because I had given you Toccatas with steps and with good and bad leaps. I felt that I could not leave out more important things such as tremolletti and crocettiti, as those make for lively and graceful harmony.

Tr. Everything is justified, but I should like to know why the rule of the good and bad notes in the diminutions is not observed as it is in counterpoint and composition. At times it has been necessary for me to strike the bad notes in the beginning or in the middle of the measure and also
those bad notes which leaps.

Sir. Yes, it is true that in diminution the rule is not observed, but where it can be observed, it is desirable for Toccatas in all diminutions, and it is true that there enter more bad than good notes. But when the passage is played rapidly, the bad notes are not heard; in fact, the bad notes often give grace to the good notes. For in diminution one pays more attention to producing graceful and beautiful passages than to the observations of which you speak.

Tr. I like that. But tell me, that I might understand the results of the virtue of this rule, whether someone who has bad habits in his hand can correct them by the use of these rules.

Sir. There is no doubt of it, and I, through experience, can give you very faithful testimony, because I was given bad beginnings, and through a period of time they became a habit. In this manner, while I played, those who saw and heard me, instead of being pleased, as they should have been, were forced frequently to laugh at me. However, seeing my errors, I resolved to improve myself, and, in search of other cities, I finally came to this most serene city of Venice and heard in the famous Cathedral of St. Mark a duel between two organs, answering one another with such artifice and gracefulness that I was amazed. Desirous to meet those two great champions, I stopped at the entrance, where I saw Claudio Merulo and Andrea Gabrieli, both organ-
ists at St. Mark's. I resolved to follow them, particularly Signor Claudio. It is with his knowledge and with study that I lost my bad habits, acquiring good habits. This was the principal reason which induced me to write this work, so that those who desire to study will not fall into the same errors in which I and others had fallen. When you find a man of learning who really understands fantasia but who finds difficulty in playing it because of poor use of the hand, he can, with this rule, easily correct the hands without losing the fantasia. It happens frequently, through poor use of the hand, that one cannot play a goodpassare, a groppo, or tremolo, and apply his knowledge through his hands. This is what I stated in the beginning, that a well-proportioned man whose tongue is impeded is in such a condition that he cannot express his opinions. The tongue of the organ, as you know, are the hands; if these do not operate correctly many defects will appear. The same may be said of a beginner who plays things which were studied and learned badly. If he wishes to play according to the regulations it will be necessary for him to abandon everything he has learned and to take up the basic principles according to this rule, just as one who had never studied may, by observing my rules, improve in a very short time.

Tr. So then it appears that this rule will benefit everyone, beginners and even those who praise themselves very highly.
Sir. Let everything be in the praise of the Lord. I think
I see Signor Michele. It is he. Let us go. I wish to give
my respects to him.

Sir. Let us go.

Sir. My respects to your highness, Illustrious Signor
Chevalier.

Chevy. I kiss your hands, Reverend Father. It pleases me
to find you and to thank you for the favor you made me in
the person of this gentleman.

Sir. Do not thank me. It was my favor to have gratified
Your Illustrious Highness, as well as this gentleman.

Tr. With silence I give you my just thanks, and I regret
not to be able to satisfy my obligation and all the vivacity
of your spirit. And since I see you so ready to be of help
to others it appears to me that if you let this work of
yours be known it will be a great help to many and satisfy
their prayers, in particular Signor Claudio Merulo.

Sir. Gone now, after such inducement I am glad to do so.
Let those who criticize say what they will.

Chevy. The work in itself is very useful and judicious, and
it is enough that Signor Claudio defends the work, if not
others. Besides this you may also dedicate it to the Very
Serene Prince of Transilvania, a great patron of virtuosi,
and all others who are of that profession.

Sir. I will dedicate this work to the Serene Prince, on
whom I am dependent for my tutelage under his name. I am
convinced of the ability of his soul and also of its rare quality, and that, for example, in its relation to the very excellent Maestro Antonio Rossini, his organist, it will be a welcome thing. Perhaps (and no doubt) I shall arrange, with the help of God, to bring to light also the second book, which I believe is not less helpful than this, considering that to arrive at the perfection of this science or art (whichever you wish to call it) one seeks to understand the manner of tabulating and also the manner of playing in fantasia and the understanding and transposition of all the tones, given to the cantus firmus and figured, a necessary thing for every organist.

Tr. If it is really as necessary as you say, you should not for any reason deprive the world of such usefulness.

And I regret that I must return quickly to Transilvania, for I would like to learn it orally. But since that is not possible I shall enjoy this first book, waiting very anxiously for the other. Meanwhile, Reverend Father, remain happy.

Dir. And you, noble sir, go very happily too, and God be with you.

THE END
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APPENDIX II

TRANSCRIPTIONS OF MUSIC FROM IL TRANSILVANO
All Natural signs in this transcription are printed as sharp signs in the original.
The upper part in the original is given thus:

The G in the third group is evidently a mistake.
1. The Broken Bar-lines have been inserted by the writer.
1. The original copy has an additional c where the asterisk is placed.
Toccata on the Sixth Tone

Andrea Gabrieli

1. The broken bar-lines have been inserted by the writer.
2. The natural signs were sharp signs in the original.