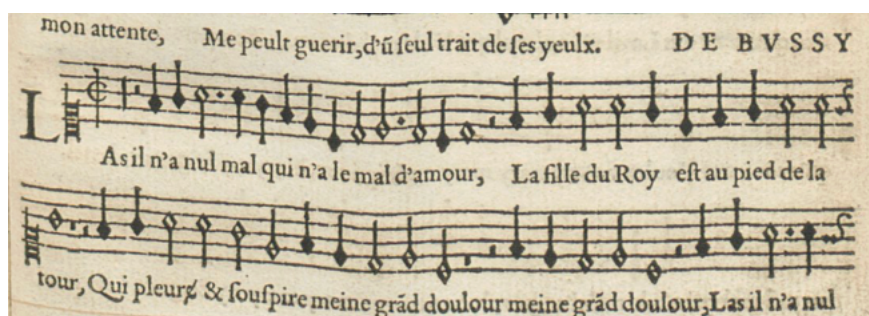


Unknown Composers for the Lute: De Bussy

“Qui souhaitez avoir tout le plaisir”

There are hundreds of sixteenth-century composers who have written music for the lute. Francesco da Milano, Alberto da Ripa, Valentin Bakfark ... and of course John Dowland. In addition, there are hundreds of composers whose works have been intabulated. Some names sound very familiar, Josquin des Prez, Heinrich Isaac, Cypriano de Rore or Orlando di Lasso. Extensive biographies have been written of them. Of others we only know their name. This article is about a composer from the latter category. With an intriguing name. Everyone knows Debussy, but a namesake of his also composed in the sixteenth century. De Bussy, sometimes also written as De Bussi. We only know his last name, no date or place of birth, nothing. Was he from Bussy in France? Was he an ancestor of our Claude? We don't know. What we do know is that his name is only found in the editions of Le Roy & Ballard, that they published a dozen French Chansons under De Bussy's name and that one work, possibly by De Bussy, Qui souhaitez avoir tout le plaisir, was also intabulated for lute. De Bussy first appears in 1553 in the Quart Livre de Chansons. We meet him again in 1554, 1557, 1559, 1561, 1573 and 1583, always in the editions of Le Roy & Ballard^[1].



III.1: example from the Quart Livre de Chansons (1553)

[1] Le Roy & Ballard 1554 (Tiers Livre de Chansons); Le Roy & Ballard 1554 (Premier Recueil de Chansons): this book contains the first version of Qui souhaitez; Le Roy & Ballard 1557 (Tiers Livre de Chansons), Le Roy & Ballard 1559 (Treziesme Livre de Chansons), Le Roy & Ballard 1561 (Tiers Livre de Chansons), Le Roy & Ballard 1573 (Tiers Livre de Chansons), Le Roy & Ballard 1583 (Vingtdeuxieme Livre de Chansons).

To make things even more complicated, *Qui souhaitez avoir tout le plaisir* is often attributed to other composers^[2]. It is the first piece in the *Vingtneufiesme [Livre] Contenant XXIX.Chansons Nouvelles à Quatre en deux Volumes*, printed by Pierre Attaignant in 1549. Pierre Sandrin is listed as the composer in the index. In *Le Premier Trophée de Musique*, printed by Granjon in 1559, Gentian is the composer on duty.



III.2: example from the *Vingtneufiesme [Livre] contenant XXIX.Chansons* (1549)

There are six lute editions and two manuscripts with an intabulation of *Qui souhaitez avoir tout le plaisir*^[3]. It concerns three French and three German editions. The manuscripts, now in Sweden, are often linked to Guillaume Morlaye, a student of Albert de Rippe, the Alberto da Ripa from above, who in the meantime had moved from Italy to Paris and had Frenchified his name. The first French lute edition with *Qui souhaitez* is the *Cinquiesme livre de tabulature de leut* from 1555 by Albert de Rippe, the fifth book in a series of six edited posthumously by his student Guillaume Morlaye. According to him, Pierre Sandrin is the composer. A year later, in 1556, the work returns in Julien Belin's *Premier Livre*. Here the piece is attributed to Gentian.

[2] A version by Pierre Certon has a different melody (*Premier Livre contenant XXV. chansons nouvelles à quatre parties en deux volumes*, 1550). The version by Clément Janequin also has another melody and is printed by Nicolas du Chemin (*Second Livre convenant XXVI.chansons nouvelles à quatre parties en deux volumes*, 1549).

[3] There are two intabulations for guitare in the *Quart livre de tabulature de guitare uit 1553* (Le Roy & Ballard) and the *Selectissima elegantissimaque* printed by Phalesius in 1570. There is an intabulation for guitare of another piece by De Bussy: *Escoutez ma complainte* (*Cinquièsme Livre de Guiterre 1554* (Le Roy & Ballard)). For lute no intabulation exists.

The third one of the French editions, all printed in Paris, is The Sixiesme Livre de Luth, published by Le Roy & Ballard in 1559. The composer now is De Bussy. The versions of Belin and the Rippe are very similar to each other, including the expansion with a four-bar final cadence that is omitted in the print of Le Roy.

Meanwhile, in 1556, Heckel published his two books of lute duets in Strasbourg, the Discant Lautten Buch/Tenor Lautten Buch. In the Discant Lautten Buch we find among the solo works a piece entitled "Qui son haider", a corruption of Qui souhaitez. This book was reprinted in 1562 and there we find it under yet another name: "Qui son heritier". Otherwise, the two editions of Heckel are identical. Finally, twenty five years later, in 1586, Kargel publishes his Lautenbuch viler Newerlessner fleissiger schöner Lautenstück, containing "Qui souhaittes 4.vocum Gentian". The German prints, all three of them from Strasbourg, are harmonically more elaborate than the French prints.

The two manuscripts that are now preserved in Uppsala in Sweden date from the same period (1560-1580). The version in S-Uu Vok.mus.i Hs.87 is the only lute intabulation where the text is attached. The version in S-Uu Instr.mus.i Hs.412 is very similar to the French prints.

QUI SOUHAITEZ AVOIR TOUT LE PLAISIR Q'UN
AMI PEUT VOULOIR HONNESTEMENT

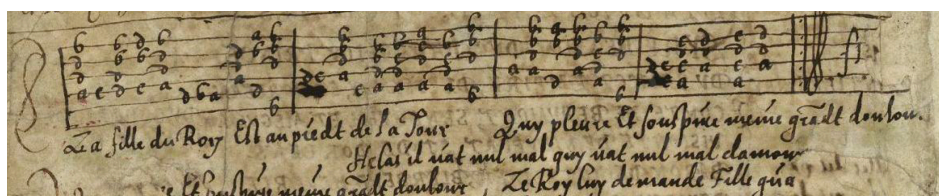
PRENEZ EXEMPLE À MON CHASTE DÉsir ET
VOUS MIREs À MON CONTENTEMENT

MAIS QUI VOUDRAIT AUDACIEUSEMENT
VOLER AU CIEL OU MON AMOUR SE TIENT

ON LUY DIROIT AYZEZ HUMAINEMENT
CEST AU SOLEIL QUE LA LUNE APPARTIENT

“Las il n’a nul mal”

a doubtful case



III.3: example from F-VALb Ms.429, f.2v

The "Libvre de Musique" (F-VALb Ms.429) of Charles III of Croÿ, Duke of Aerschot (nowadays in Belgium), dates from the end of the 16th century. It starts with the words "Libvre tout fait de ma propre main...". So our duke wrote it himself and perhaps the music fragments are also from his hand. Most of the pieces are noted twice in the book. They do not bear titles, but based on the texts that is written with them, we can find out their identity. For example, in the first piece we read "La Fille du Roy Est au piedt de la Tour... Helas il n'at nul mal...". Charles wrote down the lute tablature and text in April 1597. And this is where De Bussy comes in again. "Las il n'a nul mal" was first published under De Bussy's name in the Quart Livre de Chansons of 1553, published by Le Roy & Ballard, in a three-voices version. However, there is an almost identical but now five-voices version of "Las il n'a nul mal" by Claudin Le Jeune (1528-1600), first published in Antwerp (Livre de Melanges, 1585). The lute tablature is notated without rhythmic indications and is not entirely without mistakes. It is not really a full-fledged intavolation, but rather a sketch. So we can't find out which version Duke Charles III used, but it seems more likely that it is Claudin Le Jeune's version.