

Both title and thematic material of this Suite are derived from a famous book published in 1589 by Jehan des Preys, at Langres, under the somewhat cumbersome title of "*Orchésographie et traité en forme de dialogue par lequel toutes personnes peuvent facilement apprendre et pratiquer l'honneste exercice des danses*". The author was a canon of the cathedral, Jehan Tabourot, uncle of the poet of that name, but for professional reasons he adopted as pseudonym Thoinot Arbeau, which is an anagram of his name. The discussion of the various dance measures then in favour is assumed to take place between Arbeau and one Capriol, a lawyer. It indicates the rhythms, the steps associated with them, the manner of playing pipes and tabors, and adds nearly fifty dance tunes of the period, from which the late Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock) selected a few to form the material of his **Capriol Suite**.

The "*Orchésographie*", of which Cyril W. Beaumont published an English translation in 1925, is not the oldest treatise extant on dancing. It was preceded by Coplande's *The Maner of dauncynge of Base daunces after the use of Fraunce* (1521, reprinted in 1937), and Caroso's *Il Ballarino* (1581). Meanwhile some of the oldest music publishers, notably Pierre Attaignant, of Paris, had issued books of dance music such as the six *Livres de Danceries* of Claude Gervaise, which made their appearance at intervals from 1547 to 1557. Playford's *The English Dancing Master* was not published until 1650.

## Analysis

1. The **Basse Danse**, which was the height of fashion when Coplande published his guide to its performance, was already obsolete in Arbeau's day, but he includes it in the hope that it may be revived by "modest matrons". The name indicates that the feet were not to be raised but to glide over the floor, in distinction from other dances, such as the Galliard, in which they were raised. Its gait was always stately and dignified.
2. **Pavane**. When the Basse Danse passed out of favour, early in the sixteenth century, its place was taken by the first of a number of dances which went in pairs, one retaining the slow and stately quality of its predecessor, the other of more lively gait. This first pair consisted of Pavane and Galliard. Others which were to follow were the Pasamezzo (a quicker type of Pavane) and Saltarello; the Allemande and Courante; the Sarabande and Gigue. The Pavane, originally Padovana, takes its name from the city of Padua, in Italy.
3. The **Tordion** was originally the concluding figure of the Basse Danse, slightly more animated than what went before.
4. The **Bransle** is of rustic origin. It was then a round dance, usually accompanied with singing. On coming into more aristocratic use it assumed many different forms, from being an incidental feature of the Basse Dance to a more animated style approaching to the Galliard of later years. In *Love's Labour Lost*, Moth, the page, asks his "fantastical" Spanish employer "Master, will you win your love with a French Brawl?" A century after Arbeau a form of it was still being danced at the Court of Charles II.
5. **Pieds-en-l'air** was the name given to a figure of the Galliard.
6. **Mattachins**. Arbeau describes this, in much detail, as an old sword dance of men in armour of gilded cardboard. It was also known as Bouffons.

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