

Paul Peuerl (1570 - after 1625)
Neue Padouan, Nuremberg, 1611
Weltspiegel, Nuremberg, 1613

For many years the composer Paul Peuerl was known to only a relatively small number of scholars, and this fact may also explain why his person continues even today to be surrounded by all sorts of myths. The conjecturing begins with his name. On the title page of the *Neue Padouan*, his first printed collection of instrumental pieces, a work published in Nuremberg in 1611, Peuerl is designated as »Bäwerl,« which evidently means »Bäuerl(ein)« (little farmer). His name is spelled »Beuerlin« in 1620 and »Beurlin« in a Linz organ tablature of 1613. For today's readers of German the diminutive for »small farmers or »peasant« is no longer all that clearly recognizable in this form, and this meaning could hardly be guessed from »Peuerl,« as our composer is designated by name on the title pages of printed editions from 1613 and 1625. For its part, the spelling »Peurl,« as his name appears in many written documents penned by seventeenth-century clerks, perhaps more closely corresponds to the pronunciation of those times. Here we also find the first explanation for the different spellings: he himself mostly called himself »Peuerl,« and the other forms were employed by third parties, with the divergent spellings increasing, so we note, with the distance from his person. (The introduction in the printed edition of 1611 is not signed by Peuerl and in all likelihood was written by the publisher.) Our second reason is to be found in the differences between the German regional dialects (more on this below). The assumption that Peuerl, since he was attested only in Austria, also must have been born in Austria, is incorrect. He numbers among the many musicians over the centuries who immigrated to Austria and felt so comfortable there that they ended up remaining there and thus becoming incorporated fully into Austrian music history (with Beethoven and Brahms being the most famous examples here). The third point is that Peuerl had a place to fill: he was regarded as the inventor of the so-called variation suite and thus was responsible for one of the few Austrian formal creations in music history. This claim also has to be challenged. Finally, it is quite apparent that Peuerl's life cannot be properly understood without consideration of the circumstances of his times, in particular in view of the Counter Reformation and the conflicts between the religious confessions. According to the Stuttgart baptismal register, Paul Peuerl (»Paulus Beuerlin«), the son of the husband and wife Hans Beurten of Entringen and Catharina Beurlin (née Ochs, the daughter of Jerg Ochs of Stuttgart, married in 1563), was christened in Stuttgart on June 13, 1570. He thus must have been born on the same day or only a little earlier. Further information about Peuerl's parents, his early years, education, and the like has not been forthcoming, but Hieronymus Beuerlein (Beuerlein), an organist attested in Wertheim in 1608, might have been a relative. It is also possible that Peuerl was related to a Samuel Beuerlin from Markgröningen, near Stuttgart, who latinized his name (»Agricola«). On the recommendation of the principal of the Protestant Regional School in Linz, this Beuerlin became preacher to Wolf Jörger in Tollet and Köppach, Upper Austria. While serving as the Protestant pastor in Wilfersdorf, Lower Austria, he married a woman from Miespach in Linz in 1586. If the interpretation of the monogram »S./A.P.« as »Samuel/Agricola Peuerlin« is correct, then he would have been the copier or owner of the abovementioned Linz organ tablature including intabulations of instrumental compositions by Peuerl (identified as »Beurlin« and by the genitive »Peurlini«). It would also be quite possible that Beuerlin encouraged or arranged for Peuerl's move to Austria, namely to assume the post of organist in Horn, Lower Austria, on November 1, 1601. It is striking that in Austria the family name (not only of Paul Peuerl but also of his brother Conrad, who was three years his senior and last attested in Wiener Neustadt) was written only without the final syllable. (In the Bavarian-Austrian dialect this syllable was used to form the feminine form of family names and not, as in the Württemberg dialect, to form the diminutive. As is well known, in the former dialect the diminutive is formed simply by adding a final »-l.«) In addition, families by the name of »Peuerl« were already residing in Austria (e.g., again in Linz or Enns but also in Steyr or Graz), so that (apart from the question whether or not they were relatives) one also has to consider the possibility of a deliberate adaptation of his name to Austrian spelling practices. Paul Peuerl's move to Horn, Lower Austria, may have been facilitated by Johann Brueder (»Bructerus«), a preacher and holder of a master's degree. Originally from Balingen Württemberg, Brueder had studied in Tübingen, had gone to Eferding, Upper Austria, to serve as a deacon in 1583, and was the preacher in Linz for fourteen years before assuming the same function in Horn in 1598. In Horn Brueder was Peuerl's superior in two respects; Brueder was the pastor and school inspector, and Peuerl was an organist and teacher. Otherwise we do not know all that much about Peuerl's years in Horn from 1601-09. Our only sources are the records of the town council, which paid his salary, and from these documents we learn that he was married and had a child, was very well integrated into town life (subject to military service as well as a member of the rifleman's guild), fought out many a quarrel (e.g., with the »Tower Men,« who competed with him as entertainment and dance musicians), quickly acquired a reputation as an organ expert, and had already done some composing. Evidently in Horn at the very latest Peuerl had also become friends with Jakob Tydeus (»Tydaco«), a native of Pomerania and the school's vice principal. When Tydeus entered into negotiations with Steyr, Upper Austria, in 1608 and then moved there in 1609 to serve in the same school function, Peuerl evidently followed him not too long afterward. Both moves had to do with the fact that the Upper Austrian provincial diets, cleverly taking advantage of the strife between the two brothers Emperor Rudolf II and Archduke Matthias, had reintroduced the Lutheran liturgy in all provincial princely towns as of September 1, 1608, and had joined the so-called Horn Confederation. It was thus that Steyr Protestants once again set about

reopening their Latin School (shut down in 1599) with the school year 1609. Egydius Weixelberger was brought from Regensburg to serve as the principal, and Tydeus and Peuerl were called from Horn for the posts of vice principal and organist at the Lutheran School Church, respectively. (Georg Taubenrock was hired from Eferding to serve as the school's music director; in Steyr the duties of organist and teacher were separate.) Peuerl was once again paid by the town, and here too the council records offer the most important sources for his life. This time he had himself expressly guaranteed the right to earn additional income as a musician »at weddings, »*Preitspille*«, and banquets« of the citizenry. The godparents of his children born in Steyr included Tydeus and well-known citizens. On the title pages of his printed works he is initially named as "appointed organist at the Lutheran Church in Steyr« (1611), then as »appointed organist of the praiseworthy city of Steyr on the Enns in Austria« (1613), and lastly as »organist and organ builder at present in Steyr« (1625). Peuerl's designation as an organ builder was a mystery until a contract from 1619 between him and the abbot of the Cistercian monastery in Wilhering, Upper Austria, turned up. From the contract it was gathered that the organ (unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1733) in this monastery approximated an organ type formulated theoretically at the same time by Michael Praetorius. This practical realization as well as the connection between a Protestant organ builder, who evidently engaged in such work only on a part-time basis, and a Catholic monastery were cause for surprise. As long as the price and the competence were right, religious affiliation even then was evidently only a secondary consideration. The other, certainly more important question can be explained somewhat on the basis of Peuerl's biographical profile. For centuries the organist's craft had necessarily and self-evidently included the skill (or carrying out minor repairs on his instrument (in particular on the bellows). The step from this level to that of the not-all-that-infrequent double function of organist/organ builder (e.g., Paul Hofhaimer) is therefore a gradual one and not one marked by a strict division of labor. A minor repair job carried out by Peuerl in Horn is documented for 1606 (and there would have been other such jobs). It was for this very reason that the Horn town fathers seem not to have been happy about his departure in 1609; they were already thinking of having a new instrument built and would have needed an expert who at least could have supervised the project. Peuerl's reputation in this field certainly had not come about without good reason. He had barely settled in Steyr and had not yet officially been installed there when he called attention to the imperfections of his organ in the school church (today's Dominican Church), in 1613 he finally had success: a new instrument began being constructed during the autumn of the same year, and he was commissioned by the town council not only to serve in an executive supervisory capacity but also to work on the building himself (for which he was paid an additional sum). In this case too, then, the authorities made use of his knowledge and skills in this field of organ building. When Peuerl applied for a leave of absence in February 1614, his request was approved only with the express instruction that he reach an agreement about this trip with the organ builder (who was still at work). The organ builder was not mentioned by name, but he no doubt must have been from Steyr itself; otherwise the whole matter could not have been dealt with in such a short time. In all likelihood the organ builder in question was Ulrich Schreyer, the son of the organ builder Leonhard Schreyer in Gröningen and the cousin of the Steyer »joiner and organ builder« Georg Hacker, whose successor he had become only in 1613. Schreyer probably wanted to present himself as the new master organ builder with the new instrument in the school church. Even though nothing is known about the specific instrumental design of the organs built by him (in addition to the Steyr organ in 1614, an organ in Freistadt in 1614 and the organ in the Landhaus Church in Linz in 1616), his personal background makes us sit up and listen. A famous meeting of organists had taken place in Gröningen, near Halberstadt, in 1596 on the occasion of the inauguration of the new castle organ built by the Halberstadt organ builder David Beck. Michael Praetorius (1571-1621), who had been the organist at the castle church until 1594, was among those in attendance. Schreyer not only had in all likelihood learned his trade under Hacker but also can be assumed at least to have remained in contact with Gröningen. Peuerl not only supervised the construction of the new Steyr organ by Schreyer but also collaborated on it and certainly acquired much new practical and theoretical knowledge for his own later benefit and use. It is thus that the Wilhering instrument no doubt finds its explanation. Already in the autumn of 1614 Peuerl obtained a leave for a trip to Horn, and a half a year later the Horn town records tell of an inspection of a major organ repair carried out by him in St. Stephen's Church (today's Cemetery Church). In 1613 the Steyer town council granted him permission to keep in his possession the still usable parts of the school organ, which no doubt was of more than just practical importance for him. This permission presupposes first of all that he had a place in which to keep them, perhaps his own workshop. The building of the Wilhering organ doubtless had to do with a legal battle with the guild of Steyr joiners, to which organ builders traditionally belonged. The dispute had been pending since 1619 and dragged on until 1621. Peuerl was instructed to build the organ »at his own expense at home in Steyr« within a stipulated amount of time and then to deliver it and set it up free of charge. Evidently the legal decision was put off until he had finished his work; incidentally, it is also striking that he did not submit any vacation requests at precisely this time. The verdict could only be negative because only domiciled citizens were eligible for admission to the guild. Other building projects and repairs envisaged at this time for organs in Horn (St. George's Town Church), Enns, Freistadt, and Wels at present either cannot be verified or do not present sufficient evidence pointing to Peuerl. Nevertheless, it was not only Peuerl himself who designated himself as an »organist and organ builder« in 1625. On the occasion of his »departure and dispatch« on November 5 of the same year, he was also named in this double function in the council record for the first time. It is possible that the intention was to enable him to continue to earn his livelihood after the resignation that had finally been

forced by the imperial Protestant Edict of October 4. In any event, it does not necessarily follow that Peuerl immediately left Steyr. Protestants are still attested in Steyr in 1627. His name does not appear in the communion lists of converts or in the known lists of emigrants, the last dating to 1629, but names that may be those of his children are mentioned. Perhaps he made ends meet as a musician and/or organ repairman and died somewhere in the countryside.

Surprisingly, apart from the Linz tablatures, Peuerl's works are extant today not in manuscript form but only in printed editions, one of which is incomplete and all of which were published exclusively by Abraham Wagenmann in Nuremberg. A significant percentage of the compositions printed by Wagenmann were by Protestants active in Austria. In addition, he seems to have maintained special contact with the Upper Austrian countryside. That Wagenmann would become Peuerl's publisher was thus somehow almost inevitable. Nevertheless, Peuerl cannot have known Wagenmann personally (at least initially). It is not only that the spelling of Peuerl's name chosen in 1611 is unusual and striking. His designation as the organist »of the Lutheran church,« though not incorrect, is also not entirely accurate inasmuch as the time he had not been officially hired and was remunerated, as we read correctly in 1613, by the town council. Moreover, the introduction is extraordinarily short and stereotypical and above all without the customary dedication to a specific personality. With the publication of Peuerl's *Neue Padouan* of 1611 Wagenmann appears to have wanted to begin to compete with the publisher Paul Kauffmann, who also operated from Nuremberg. Up until that time Kauffmann had printed all the important and pertinent new publications by Valentin Haußmann, Hans Leo Haßler, and Johann Staden, and most recently, in 1609, by Johannes Thesselius, who also worked as a musician in Upper Austria, namely as a castle musician in the service of Baron Jörger in Aschach. In contrast, Wagenmann had been active only as a book publisher until 1610 and did not yet have all that much experience as a music publisher. This is shown, for one thing, by his foreword »to the good-hearted reader« (!). An intermediary could have familiarized the new publisher with the printing process, but, if this is so, then it must have been carried through very quickly. This also means that Peuerl must have composed the pieces, at least in part, while he was still in Horn or wrote them within a quite short space of time in Steyr. Given these factors, the design of the suites can now probably be seen in soberer terms; for ideological reasons all too much was once read into them over the years. The comparison to Thesselius suggesting itself for several reasons, among them the geographical and temporal vicinity of the two composers, the similar titles of their printed editions, and the competition between their publishers, seems to point more to the first possibility precisely because the comparison is more of a contrast: there are relatively clear differences between them. However, the decisive point is (and in this respect the earlier view was entirely correct) that it is here that we first encounter four-movement suites designed as such by a composer and not, as had been the previous practice, as separate movements that could be joined together ad libitum by the user from a larger supply of dances of the same form. The compositional character of the suite is thus also supported by the music, by the more or less strong variation relation of the movements to one another (thus the designation »variation suite«), with this reinforcement coming in the form of additional stylization. The sequence of the movements is entirely uniform, much more strictly treated than in the later so-called Froberg suite type, which at the most, in its ideal type, is supposed to consist of allemande, courante, sarabande, and gigue movements. In addition, in this type what matters is the characterization and then the stylization of the different dance times. For this reason, the two suite forms are not at all to be compared and played off against each other. The fact is that the one is more strongly stamped by the dance, and the other, after Peuerl taken up only by Schein in 1617, only then to be abandoned by him later on, is stamped exclusively by the music. Whether one should really regard the employment of the principle of a variative association as »typically German,« as was done earlier, is nevertheless more than questionable. The meaning of the movement heading »intrada,« leaving trivial notions behind, can be seen along these lines: what is involved is not a dance movement but music for an entrance or a procession (Latin: *intrare* = enter), i.e., to a stylized stepping. Such stepping or striding is by no means limited only to duple time but also would be possible in triple time (particularly in the case of higher stylization, as here). By the way, this is also where the great difference between Peuerl and Thesselius lies; for the latter the intrada is a duple-time movement and one less stylized than the preceding paduana. The seeming relation between Peuerl's suites (»Newe Padouan, Intrada, Dantz, vnd Galliarda ... auff allen Musicalischen Saitenspielen gantz lustig zugebrauchen«) and those of Thesselius (»Newe liebliche Paduanen, Intraden vnd Galliarden, auff allerley Instrumenten zu gebrauchen«) suggested by their similar titles is completely misleading. It is not at all true that Peuerl simply added a further movement to his three-movement suites in order to produce a regular sequence of movements (two duple-time movements and two triple-time movements). Similar conditions must have been behind the abovementioned intabulations in the Linz tablature: they too do not necessarily point to an earlier stage (one closer to Thesselius). Although they are also three-movement suites, they consist of an intrada or (!) paduana followed by a traditional pair of dances, the *Dantz* and *Nachdantz*. The latter movement, earlier often only improvised and not written out, would then be found »lacking« both in Thesselius and in Peuerl's printed version. It would rather be more fitting to understand the intabulations in question as not yet representing binding suites and/or suites with only one possible form of execution. All these suites are thus largely independent of one another and testify first of all to the fact that at this time efforts were being made to develop the corresponding instrumental music. Peuerl's four-movement suites are not, in contrast to what was formerly believed, simply to be understood as the combination of two dance pairs; a more highly stylized, more »upt-to-date« dance pair, more

modern because it was Italian, and a less stylized, older, German dance pair, with the latter being exchanged only for the sake of the regular alternation of duple and triple time). Although the dance pair consisting of paduana and galliard may form the two framing movements, the intrada and dance between them are not really to be understood as a matched dance pair but as two independent movements representing the difference between »stepping« and »dancing.« As far as the relative degree of stylization is concerned, the dance is the simplest movement in all the suites and the movement still the closest to the dance function, and the paduana is the most stylized movement of all, i.e., the movement now at the farthest remove from the dance function. The freedom in matters of instrumentation is documented on the title page; even »Saitenspiel« should not be interpreted too narrowly, »for stringed instruments only,« but can very much be understood as referring simply to instrumental music. Here too the compositional texture is (or continues to be) what is more important to the composer.

Peuerl published his *Weltspiegel* in 1613. As a vocal composition, it is what one would have more naturally expected from a church musician and schoolteacher. Here we find, instead of a foreword, a dedication to Georg Henckel von Donnersmarck, Lord on Gfohl and Wesendorf in Lower Austria. The dedication is dated to January 1, 1613, and signed by Peuerl himself. Personal connections between Peuerl and Henckel are not documented, but the former must have been very well informed about the latter's circumstances, probably still from his Horn period. For his part, Georg was in no way the most important or richest scion of the Henckel family; these honors would have to go to Lazarus II, who later served as imperial adviser to Ferdinand III and became the first count in the family line. The title *Weltspiegel* could have been inspired by the drama *Speculum Mundi* (1590) of Bartholomdus Ringwaldt, a preacher from Frankfurt an der Oder who also had written a great many sacred songs. In the texts concerned there are repeated approximations or allusions to the song texts of other composers, but neither a complete textual parallel nor a textual author has been discovered. Their musical texture might add to our biographical knowledge, even if only hypothetically, inasmuch as it corresponds very closely to the vocal oeuvre of Balduin Hoyoul (ca. 1548-94), a native of the Netherlands and a Lasso pupil, the son-in-law of Ludwig Daser (ca. 1525-89) and beginning in 1589 his successor as music director in Stuttgart. It is also clearly in the tradition of the German Protestant song ideal of the composers from the Low Countries, which is to say neither in the tradition of Italian contemporaries (soprano emphasis or picking up on the balletti a la Gastoldi) nor in the tradition of German contemporaries. The conjecture that Peuerl received his musical education as a choirboy in the Tübingen collegiate church, with its vocal resources being called on above all for church music but also for table music and occasionally even to supplement the Stuttgart court ensemble, would fit in very well with all our evidence. The no-longer-extant eight-part motet documented in Horn in 1603 would not automatically bring to mind a piece for two choirs and Venetian design (not to mention suggest itself as the starting point for speculations about Peuerl's life) but rather as an especially erudite piece offered by him on the assumption of his new post. In contrast, over against this background, the canzonas appended to the *Weltspiegel*, since they clearly point to Italy, even seem relatively new.

The selection from Paul Peuerl's first two printed editions presented here endeavors to exploit the resources that were available to the composer with as much diversity and imagination as possible: simple string or wind instrumentation, different combinations of the same and song with instrumental accompaniment, organ and harpsichord intabulation (but not according to the Linz tablature). The purpose is not only to show what the Armonico Tributo Ensemble of Austria can do but also and above all to offer as much variety and lively music as possible. In this way the purpose was also to put to rest once and for all preconceived notions about Peuerl.

Rudolf Flotzinger
Translated by Susan Marie Praeder