

Dating Trille Labarre's *Nouvelle méthode*: Caught Between Printing and Publishing?

By Kenneth Sparr

In the parent article to which this copublished essay is appended, "Barthélemy Trille Labarre: 'professeur de guitare et compositeur, élève d'Haydn,'" we arrive at a point where a chasm of bibliographic uncertainty opens before our very eyes. When was Trille Labarre's noteworthy five-course guitar method engraved and printed? And when was it actually *published*—sold to the public? Could years have elapsed between the two activities? Anyone who has studied the history of music printing would answer that question with a resounding "Yes, indeed—often, in fact!"

This essay reviews the various methods used to date undated printed music of that era in the hopes of achieving some clarity. The first technique involves looking for personal names, like dedicatees, engravers, and publishers. The latter approaches are more analytical.

Personal names

There are no dedications either in the method, Opus 7, or in Opus 8, which means that the financing of these works would have been entirely on the publisher and the author. Whom might Trille Labarre have approached for such underwriting?

Baillon's widow was winding up her business and would not have been interested, as the plates for her late husband's method with a nearly identical title still were usable for additional printings, as was announced in her catalogue of 1786. Trille Labarre had to find another publisher willing to take the risk of printing and publishing (marketing) his method. As shown above, Naderman included it in his catalogue together with Trille Labarre's Opuses 2-4 and 8. However unlike Opus 8, the method was not advertised in the Paris press nor is it mentioned in Naderman's later catalogues from August 1792. As no copy of a Naderman edition has been found (if it ever was published!), it is difficult to establish a precise printing date for the method. Most likely Naderman never published it. The same may also be the case with Trille Labarre's Opuses 3-4.

As will be shown, Pierre Leduc published the method later but it is not found in his catalogues from c. 1797-98. It first appears in a supplement to his catalogue, dated to about 1801 and it reappears in his 1803 catalogue.¹ The engraver of Trille Labarre's method, Lefrançois, was active between 1791 and '98, which suggests that the plates for the method were made between those dates. The existing plate number, 10, gives not much information, as both Naderman's and Leduc's plate numbers are very irregular. Of greater interest is Leduc's address, which suggests a date between April 1797 and May 1800.² During this period Leduc advertised many other editions in the Paris press, but not Trille Labarre's method.

Dated advertisements

Antoine Marcel Lemoine, in his *Nouvelle Méthode de guitare...*, advertised in March 1799, refers to Trille Labarre's method and writes: "I am not the only one who has written in this way. The Trille Labarre method is using the same principle, and I am sure that the famous Vidal; the first *professeur* we have on this instrument, will agree."³ This suggests that Lemoine was familiar with Trille Labarre's method well before March 1799. The method was announced in the 10 March 1799 issue of the *Intelligenz-Blatt zur Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* under the heading *Neue Musikalien*, but there was no information about the publisher.⁴

Leduc's financial problems perhaps affected the marketing as well as the printing of Trille Labarre's method. Leduc's music business had prospered until 1794, but after that year he was heavily in debt. He discontinued his business in France in 1804.⁵ This leads us to believe that very few copies of it were actually printed by Leduc. It may also have fallen slightly out of fashion, given the emergence of the lyre-guitar, to which Phillis, Porro, Gatayes and Doisy were quick to adapt in their methods from

1799 to 1802. Trille Labarre's method probably was printed from its original plates of 1788-91, but not until nearly ten years had elapsed.

Physical details

There are some noteworthy details concerning the copy of Trille Labarre's method located in Prague. The provenance of this copy is the castle Frýdlant (until 1918 Friedland) in Bohemia. Count Christian Philipp von Clam-Gallas (1748-1805), a Bohemian aristocrat, was a former owner. Clam-Gallas is said to have played the piano well.⁶ There is quite a lot of music for the guitar formerly in the

Clam-Gallas family collection and the Frýdlant collection, now in the Czech Museum of Music.⁷ The watermarks of the copy in Prague are identical with the ones in my copy of the method. The page sizes of both methods are also about the same. The paper come from a French paper mill, *Moulin de la Vigne*, and was made by a Claude Missonnier. The same watermark can be found in other sources between 1744 and 1772, so it is difficult to be very precise about the dating of the paper. However, it seems likely that the copies of Trille Labarre's method in Prague and in my collection were printed at about the same time.⁸

¹ As with printed music, it is sometimes difficult to date music publishers' catalogues with precision.

² Devriès and Lesure, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs...*, 103. Cari Johansson, *French music publishers' catalogues of the second half of the eighteenth century*. Publikationer utgivna av Kungl. Musikaliska akademiens bibliotek 99 (Stockholm, 1955), 86.

³ Antoine Marcel Lemoine, *Nouvelle Méthode de guitare à l'usage des Commençans, Divisée en trois Parties...* (Paris: l'auteur, 1799), 10. Original French text: "Je ne suis pas le seul qui ait écrit de cette manière; la Méthode de Trille Labarre est dans ce même principe, et je suis sur que le célèbre Vidal, le premier professeur que nous ayons sur cet instrument, en conviendra lui même." Reproduced in *Guitare. Methodes – Traités – Dictionnaires et Encyclopédies – Ouvrages généraux*. Volume réalisé par Caroline Delume. *Methodes & Traités 18*, Collection dirigée par Jean Saint Arriman. Série 1 France 1600-1800. Volume II. (Bressuire 2003), 148.

⁴ *Op. cit.* in text (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1799), col. 42.

⁵ Devriès & Lesure, *Dictionnaire des éditeurs...* Vol. I., 101.

⁶ *Österreichisches Musiklexikon* Online http://www.musiklexikon.ac.at/ml/musik_C_2/Clam-Gallas_Familie.xml?frames=no (2017-12-19).

⁷ *Národní muzeum - České muzeum hudby, hudebně-historické oddělení*.

⁸ This information is based on an e-mail 2017-07-09 from Josette Telford, *AFHEPP (Association Française pour l'Histoire et l'Étude du Papier et des Papeteries)*. I'm grateful for her information.