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BRILLIANT  
CLASSICS

Johannes  
de Lublin  
tablature (1540)

keyboard music  
from Renaissance Poland

Corina Marti

Renaissance Harpsichord



## TABULATURA IOANNIS DE LYUBLYN (1540)

*authorship of the vocal model/intabulation unknown unless otherwise indicated*

### I.

1	[Preambulum in g] (161r)	1'35
2	Surrexit Dominus valete luctus (70v)	1'34
3	[Passamezzo antico] / Proporcja <i>Jeszcze Marczymye</i> (188v/189r)	3'40
4	[Deus qui sedes super thronum] (after Johann Walter) (204r)	4'54
5	<i>Zaklolum szȳa tharnem</i> (215r)	1'23

### II.

6	[Preambulum] in e (19v)	1'02
7	Absolon [= Rex autem David] (after Antonio de Ribera) (253v)	2'32
8	Corea (212r)	1'16
9	<i>Poznanie</i> (112r)	1'19
10	Francigenum [= Le content est riche] (after Claudin de Sermisy) (28r)	1'32
11	[D'ung desplaisir] (after Jacotin Le Bel) (28v)	2'07
12	[Corea] (103v)	0'50
13	[Corea] (111v)	0'31
14	Preambulum in a per h (91v)	0'29
15	Date siceram merentibus [= Je ne puis me tenir] (N[icolaus] C[racoviensis], after Jhan Gero) (200v)	2'55

### III.

16	Preambulum super d (19r)	1'54
17	Bona [?corea] (218v)	1'49
18	<i>Veschol</i> [= Dont vient cela] (after Claudin de Sermisy) (90v)	2'42
19	Ad novem saltus (220r)	1'29
20	<i>Hayduczkȳ</i> (220v)	1'33
21	Vita in linga moritur (after Ludwig Senfl) (171r)	2'40
22	Pressa (95v/165v)	2'37
23	Preambulum in d (N[icolaus] C[racoviensis]) (160v)	1'24
24	<i>Schephczyk ydzȳe po ulȳczȳ schȳdelka noschacz</i> (222r)	1'27
25	[Corea] (222v)	1'43

### IV.

26	Preambulum super f (98v)	2'17
27	Ave Jerarchia (N[icolaus] C[racoviensis]) (108v)	1'50
28	Colenda Severini (?Severinus Konij) (146v)	2'35
29	Anglicum (200r)	1'43
30	Preambulum in d (233r)	1'06
31	Dulce memorie [= Douce memoire] (after Pierre Sandrin) (197v)	1'19
32	Plus mille regres [= Plus nulz regretz] (after Josquin des Prez) (254v)	3'53
33	Aliud preambulum (242)	1'24
34	Rex (132r)	1'41

### V.

35	Tribulatio [et angustia] (?after Josquin des Prez) (235v)	3'06
36	[Corea] italica (221r)	1'16
37	Conradus (37r)	1'06
38	Preambulum in c (18v)	1'17
39	Sicut lilium inter spinas (after Antoine Brumel) (97v)	2'35

**74'25**

## Corina Marti

*Renaissance harpsichord* Volker Platte (2017), after anon. Neapolitan, c.1520

## TABVLATVRA IOANNIS DE LYVBLYN CANONIC. REGLARIV. DE CRASNYK (1540)

These are the words embossed on the cover of the manuscript preserved in Kraków and regarded as the largest collection of keyboard music from 16th-century Europe. This inscription gave this collection its common name, the ‘tablature of Jan of Lublin’. The words on the cover tell us that the book belonged to the monastery of Canons Regular in Kraśnik near Lublin (‘canonic[orum] reg[u]lariu[m] de Crasnyk’), as well as informing us that it was bound in 1540. Within the covers made of boards covered in brown leather, by now somewhat worn, we find 260 paper folios with the dimensions 320 × 205 mm. The manuscript contains more than 230 compositions, two theoretical treatises, and over 250 music examples with a didactic purpose. The musical content is notated in the so-called ‘older’ German organ tablature notation, a combination of music notes and letters. Changes in the handwriting indicate that a number of people were involved in the book’s creation, and the dates which appear next to some compositions suggest that its compilation took longer than a decade (1537–1548). There is no doubt that the main scribe and owner of the book was Jan of Lublin, whose name stands out on the cover.

Who was it, then, who created this impressive collection? It is difficult to establish the facts of his biography, since we cannot always be sure that all the references to ‘Joannes de Lublin’ concern the person of interest to us (it was quite a common name). We assume that the owner of the tablature was educated at the university in Kraków, where in 1508 he was awarded his baccalaureate. From 1528 he was probably an altarist at the Marian church in Kraków, where he was also a member of the mansionary brotherhood. He probably worked as an organist there until at least 1535, when his name appears in documents for the last time. By 1540 – at the time when the tablature was being bound – he must have already been in Kraśnik, but we know nothing about his life at the monastery. We only know that Jan of Lublin died on 14 November 1552, a fact diligently noted in the monastic obituaries. This is a life reduced to a few facts, with the manuscript bearing his name occupying the central place among them.

On the first pages of Jan of Lublin’s tablature we find a theoretical treatise which discusses the instrumental counterpoint for organists. It contains a set of rules concerning the principles of composing a four-part work based on a melody taken from plainchant (*cantus firmus*). The text is illustrated with many musical examples, and also refers to the *Fundamentum* – a set of counterpoint patterns useful in composing. These are scattered at various points in the manuscript. On the last two pages of the book we find tuning instructions for the organ, i.e., the manner of achieving the most satisfactory sound for

various intervals. The two treatises are an invaluable source of knowledge about organ music in the first half of the 16th century, allowing us to learn its governing principles, in many details so very different from the principles of vocal music. We assume that the author of these texts is Jan of Lublin.

The tablature was thus a compendium of theoretical knowledge, useful for teaching organists, although for the most part its contents deal with matters that are very practical. We find there an extensive choice of repertory to be played during the liturgy. These are largely arrangements for the organ of various vocal works, both polyphonic (e.g., mass sections and motets) and monophonic (plainchant melodies and religious songs). However, the set of compositions entered here is much richer: there are also intabulations (i.e., instrumental versions) of secular polyphonic songs, as well as



pieces originally composed for a keyboard instrument, above all preambula and dances. The richness of this repertory is truly impressive, both in terms of the musical genres and composers represented, and the instrumental techniques employed. We find here works of Polish, German, Italian and French origin, including older ones from as far back as the end of the 15th century, as well as new ones.

Studying the contents of the tablature is like a journey into the unknown without a guide or a compass, since the compilers entered compositions without any apparent plan or order. Liturgical pieces are intertwined with secular ones, short and simple pieces with more complex ones. Some compositions break off, only to be continued many pages later. We find the same melodies arranged in many different ways, and different pieces with the same titles. A detailed analysis leads us to the conclusion that the oldest part of the manuscript was written prior to 1540, perhaps in Kraków, and in this part some of the compositions are grouped thematically. However, most of the pages were filled in after the book had been bound, undoubtedly at Kraśnik. It was not necessary to introduce a systematic order into this enormous anthology of organ music: its scribes were also its users, and for them navigating through the thicket of various compositions probably did not pose major problems.

This diversity of somewhat chaotically juxtaposed compositions offers modern performers a myriad of possible interpretations. The tablature of Jan of Lublin may be viewed from different perspectives, both as a document of organ practice at a specific musical centre, and as a source of music for keyboard instruments to be used in different contexts and on different occasions. One might be tempted to use these compositions to reconstruct a mass sung alternately with organ playing (the *alternatim* technique), but one could also use it to highlight the virtuosity of a musician demonstrating the full range of his talent outside the church. Multifunctionality was a feature of many music collections at that time, as was the freedom of choice of instrument on which the compositions included in them were to be performed. In the case of the tablature of Jan of Lublin we should consider not only the organ, but also the cembalo, the clavichord, the claviorganum or the harpsichord, chosen as appropriate for the specific kind of repertory.

Compositions which could be performed outside the church included primarily those without a clear connection to the liturgy. The tablature includes more than twenty preambula, in different keys, which could serve as short introductions to larger compositions. Their character is semi-improvisatory, with extensive use of typically instrumental figurations. Longer dance-like pieces carry specific titles or just the name 'corea'. They are characterised by clear rhythms and repeatability of short sections and,

in accordance with the old tradition, after a section in duple metre comes a section in triple metre (*proportio*). The melodic line for the right hand comes with chordal accompaniment in the left hand. The other pieces are intabulations of vocal compositions: we find among them chansons by such composers as Josquin des Prez, Claudin de Sermisy or Pierre Sandrin, as well as numerous motets. In contrast to homophonic instrumental compositions, they belong to polyphonic repertory, where most frequently we have four simultaneous voices. Polyphonic artistry at its highest, with extensive use of imitation, can be heard in the motets *Deus qui sedes super thronum* by Johann Walter, *Sicut lilium inter spinas* by Antoine Brumel, and *Tribulatio et angustia* attributed to Josquin. It is difficult to assign some pieces to a particular genre, and it is also not known whether they were originally composed for an instrument or whether they derive from a vocal original; for example, *Pressa* is one of the pieces that present such problems.

The tablature of Jan of Lublin contains compositions from various parts of Europe. However, what make it largely unique are its associations with the Polish culture. A number of dances are given Polish titles which point to songs as their possible source: *Jeszcze Marczynye* [Martin again], *Zaklólam szją tharnem* [I pricked myself with a thorn] and *Schepbczyk jǳyje po ulǳczyj schjǳdelka noszbacz* [A cobbler walks along the street carrying a crochet]. There are names or monograms of Polish musicians: many of the intabulations were the work of Mikołaj of Kraków (Nicolaus Cracoviensis), who may also have been the author of some of the pieces, while two compositions are attributed to Seweryn Koń (*Colenda Severini*). At the time of writing of Jan's tablature, musical culture in Poland was living through a period of true blossoming. King Sigismund Augustus employed the outstanding Hungarian lutenist Valentin Greff Bakfark at his international court, which was soon to see the appearance of a number of talented composers: Waclaw of Szamotuły, Marcin Leopolda and Mikołaj Gomółka.

The tablature of Jan of Lublin is not an isolated document relating to organ music in 16th-century Poland. Much evidence points to the conclusion that keyboard music was the subject of particular nurture there. A tablature of the monastery of the Holy Spirit in Kraków, less voluminous but with a similar repertory, was written during the same period (1548), but unfortunately it was lost during the Second World War. This makes the pages filled with music that are held within the covers inscribed TABVLATVRA IOANNIS DE LYVBLYN even more precious.

**Paweł Gancarczyk**

Translation: Zofia Weaver

Harpichord and recorder virtuoso **Corina Marti** is recognised internationally for her 'strikingly superior and expressive' interpretations (*Toccata*), and 'infallible' performances (*Diapason*).

She leads a full life as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher, travelling regularly across Europe, North and South America, and the Middle and Far East.

Her extensive discography of repertoire ranges from the 14th-century *istanpitte* and intabulations to – and beyond – the chamber music and solo concertos of the High Baroque and reflects the breadth of her musical interests and technical skills.

She has appeared with numerous early music ensembles and orchestras (including Hespèrion XXI, Coro della Radiotelevisione svizzera and the Helsinki Baroque Orchestra) and is artistic co-director and founding member of La Morra, an award-winning late-medieval and early-renaissance music ensemble which 'never fails to keep the listener's attention alive' (*Gramophone*).

Her ongoing research into aspects of the repertoire and the reconstruction of late-medieval and early-renaissance keyboard instruments and recorders has contributed substantially to the present-day revival of these instruments. She teaches the next generation of early music performers at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Basel, Switzerland, and in masterclasses worldwide.



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*This album is dedicated to Marcin Majchrowski*

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Renaissance harpsichord in maple by Volker Platte (2017), after an anonymous Neapolitan model (c.1520) with iron strings housed at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Stops: 8', 4' · Range: C/E – g", a" · Pitch: a' = 494 Hz

Recording: September 2017, Beinwil Monastery, Beinwil (Solothurn), Switzerland

Balance engineer, Producer, Editing & Mastering: Jonas Niederstadt

Artist photography: Dirk Letsch

Cover: manuscript detail of 'Ad novem saltus' [track 19] in the Johannes of Lublin tablature (Kraków, BN PAU i PAN, Ms 1716, f. 220r)

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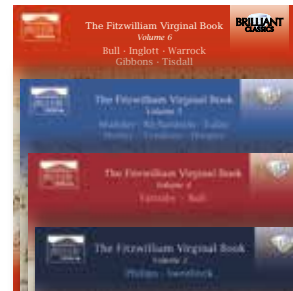
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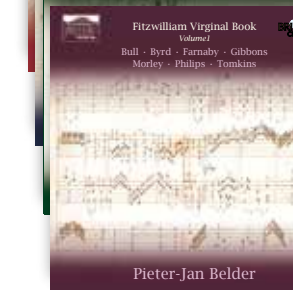
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