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INTRODUCTION

Johann Caspar Kerll: Four Suites

Born 9 April 1627 in the Saxon village of Adorf, Johann Caspar Kerll probably received his earliest musical instruction from his father, organist Caspar Kerll. While still in his teens, Kerll found a powerful benefactor in Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, who sponsored Kerll's study in Vienna in the 1640s with Giovanni Valentini, then imperial Kapellmeister. After Archduke Leopold Wilhelm became regent of the Netherlands in 1647, Kerll went to Brussels, where he served as Leopold Wilhelm's court organist. The archduke was anxious to obtain the services of the renowned Giacomo Carissimi, but when the Italian master declined to be lured to Leopold Wilhelm's court, Kerll was sent to Rome to study with him; presumably, Leopold Wilhelm hoped in this way to imbue the music of his Brussels court with some of the elements of Carissimi's style. Kerll returned to Brussels in 1652. When Leopold Wilhelm disbanded his court in 1656, Kerll became Vice Kapellmeister at the court of the Bavarian elector Ferdinand Maria in Munich; upon the death of Kapellmeister Giovanni Giacomo Porro later in the same year, Kerll was named Kapellmeister. This position entailed responsibility for the numerous performances of church, theater, and chamber music at the elector's court. Kerll himself composed many of the works performed at court, and it has been said that under his direction Hofkapelle performances achieved once again the excellence they had enjoyed under Lassus during the previous century. Kerll's most illustrious pupil during his years in Munich was the young Agostino Steffani.

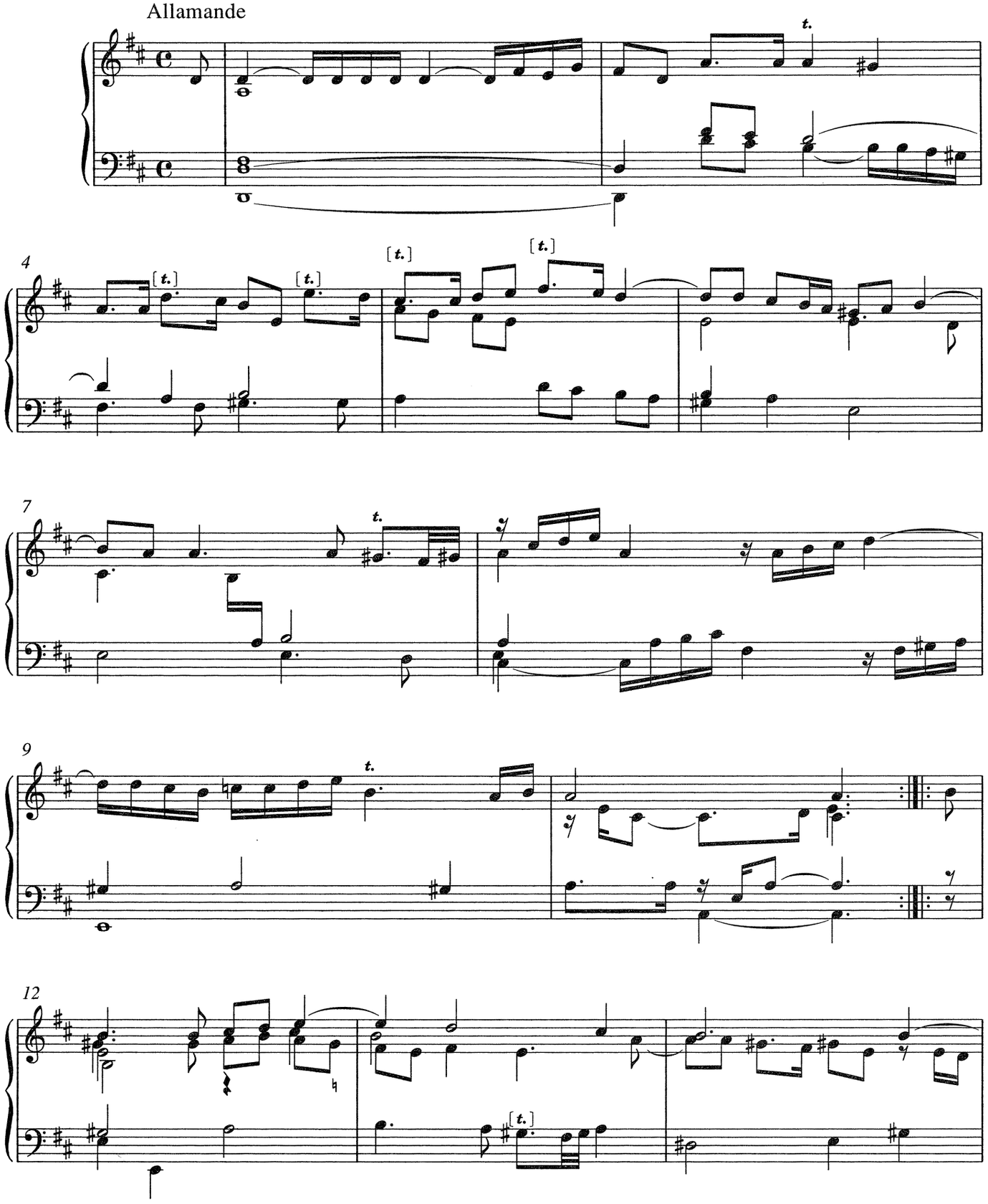
In 1673 Kerll abruptly left his post in Munich and moved to Vienna, apparently with no immediate prospect of employment. The reason for Kerll's resignation appears to have been a quarrel with certain of the court's Italian singers, who reportedly were unable to perform a work in which Kerll had introduced unusual intervals and other audacities. On 1 January 1675, Emperor Leopold I, who had ennobled Kerll in 1664, granted him a pension; in March 1677, Leopold took Kerll into his service as one of his court organists. Kerll's colleagues in this office included his friend Alessandro Poglietti. During the great plague that ravaged Vienna in 1679, Kerll composed the organ versets that he was later to publish under the title *Modulatio organica*. In 1683, following the Turkish siege of Vienna, Kerll returned to Munich. Despite having left Vienna, Kerll retained the position of imperial court organist until the end of 1692.

In 1685, the Bavarian elector Max Emanuel, who had succeeded Ferdinand Maria upon the latter's death in 1679, married the Austrian archduchess Maria Antonia. Kerll marked this union between the houses of Bavaria and Austria—and his relationship to both—with the publication of his *Modulatio organica* (Munich, 1686), offered as a wedding present to Maria Antonia. Kerll's activities in the final years of his life remain obscure. His last pupil was Franz Xaver Murschhauser (1663–1738). Kerll died on 13 February 1693 in Munich and was buried in the crypt of the Augustinian monastery there. A commemorative tablet, which disappeared during the nineteenth century, bore the following verses:

Musices erat iste decus,	He was music's glory,
trahit velut Orpheus	considered a second Orpheus
Alter Caesareas Aquilas,	to the imperial eagles
Bauarosque leones.	and Bavarian lions.
Austria dum quoque	While Austria also
alaudas laudat eiusque	praises his larks,
Modos musicos	Europe continues to seek
Europa requirit.	his musical measures.

During his earlier years in Munich (1656–73), Kerll was concerned mainly with the composition of operas and church music, and he continued to compose Masses through the subsequent years spent in Vienna.

Suite No. 1

A:GÖ Kerl 2, fols. 88r–90v

Allamande