RICHARD HUDSON

THE FOLIA, THE SARABAND,
THE PASSACAGLIA, AND THE CHACONNE

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF FOUR FORMS
THAT ORIGINATED IN MUSIC
FOR THE FIVE-COURSE SPANISH GUITAR

Volume IV
THE CHACONNE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY
HÄNSSLER-VERLAG
1982
68.735/40
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THE CHACONNE

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSICOLOGY
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THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHACONNE

The chacona was a dance popular in Spain during the first quarter of the 17th century. It was accompanied by the guitar, percussion instruments, and the singing of a text. The single phrases that constituted the guitar accompaniment appeared in the Italian guitar books between 1606 and 1640 and were presumably repeated as an ostinato for each line of a text. Although not as numerous as the passacaglias in the same sources, the ciacona were subjected to the same process of harmonic expansion and experimentation, and occasionally several occurred together in a brief chain. As a variation form, the ciacona joined the passacaglio in continuing a method of composition that had been established a century earlier in the riprese and ritornelli of the Renaissance popular style (see Volume III for examples). In Italy the variation ciacona was especially important during the second quarter of the century in vocal music and somewhat later in music for instrumental ensembles. There was a continuing interest in the form when the punteado style emerged in guitar music, but it gradually died out in both guitar and keyboard music during the later part of the century. In France two apparently separate courses of development were important: the earlier chaconne that appeared in lute and keyboard music (where the passacaille was very rare), and the later orchestral chaconne, which, like the passacaille, became extremely popular. The English chaconne was influenced by both French types, as well as by the tradition of the ground bass. In Germany, Italian and French influences met, as in the case of the passacaglia, to bring the form to its final state of development.

The compositions of this volume appear in three groups. The first includes the guitar examples before 1640, arranged to show their harmonic and structural development and hence not necessarily chronological. The variation chaconnes are then in two chronological groups, the first devoted to Italy, the second to France, Spain, England, and Germany.

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THE GUITAR CIACCONA BEFORE 1640

1. La ciaconna

(a) Sopra l'A

(b) In un'altro tono sopra la B

(c) Ma in un'altro tono hoggi è più usata, cioè sopra la G

Con il medesmo modo potrassi ancora sonare l'istesso Balletto sopra l'altra lettere.

2. Ciaccona, terzo modo

(see Plate I)  

Benedetto Sanseverino, 1620

3. Chacon

c. 1630

4. Cesconna per G

c. 1625

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