

Pavane 'The image of melancholy' and Galliard 'Ecce quam bonum' – Anthony Holborne

(For Unit 3: Developing Musical Understanding)

Introduction

Anthony (or Antony) Holborne (c.1545–c.1602) was not a major composer like such contemporaries as Tallis, Byrd, Dowland and Gibbons, but he played a significant part in the development of English instrumental music.

Holborne's Pavane and Galliard (published by him in 1599) are 'consort music', a popular form of domestic instrumental music-making in England at the time. The word 'consort' probably corresponds with the Italian term 'concerto' and the French word 'concert', both of which originally implied an ensemble of voices or instruments rather than any particular form of piece. Many works (like Holborne's Pavane and Galliard) were composed for consorts of viols; others were for mixed instrumental ensembles, known as 'broken consorts'.

[Note: The spelling 'Pavane' is used in this article when reference is made to the anthology piece; 'pavan' (lower-case 'p' and no 'e') refers to the type of dance].

The pavan and galliard were court dances of the 16th and early 17th centuries. The pavan and galliard often formed a contrasting pair of dances, anticipating the more extended dance suites of the Baroque. As with Baroque dances, pavans and galliards by composers such as Holborne were for playing and listening to, rather than providing accompaniments for the dance.

The word 'pavan' was probably a corruption of 'Paduana' (meaning 'of Padua', the Italian city): Holborne's 'The image of melancholy' is actually labelled 'Paduana'. A pavan was sedate in character, almost always in duple metre, and in three sections each heard twice. A galliard had the same kind of structure, but was lighter and quicker and in triple time.

It is not clear why Holborne called his Pavane 'The image of melancholy' – the tonality is major not minor, and the opening four-note descending motif corresponds only in shape, not tonality, to the famous 'tears' motif of Dowland's 'Lachrimae' pavan. The Latin title of the Galliard is the start of Psalm 133 (in English 'Behold, how good [and joyful a thing it is, brethren, to dwell together in unity]'). The two pieces appear together in Holborne's 1599 publication, but there is no reason to think that they were actually *composed* as a pair.

Performing Forces and their Handling

Holborne's Pavane and Galliard were for an 'unbroken' (or 'whole') consort of five instruments – viols, violins, or wind instruments (for example recorders). See the note in the Anthology, page 191.

Holborne's pieces seem particularly well suited to viols, almost certainly with two trebles, one tenor and two basses.

Unlike instruments of the violin family, viols:

- Had frets.
- Were played held downwards on the lap or between the legs (not even a treble viol was tucked under the player's chin) with a differently-shaped bow.
- Had flat, not convex, backs.
- Usually had six strings.

Holborne does not make big demands on his (almost certainly amateur) performers:

- The widest range for any part (the lowest part in the Pavane) is an octave and a 5th. Each of the top two parts in the Galliard spans only a minor 7th.
- The writing is broadly similar to much contemporary writing for voices – there is no virtuosity or display. However, all players are kept continually active – rests, never longer than one minim beat, are very few.

Texture

- The texture is *five-part* (consistently, with scarcely any rests).
- The texture is clearly layered in the sense that in each piece each part has its separate range, and there is little crossing of parts. (The ranges are different in the two pieces, those of the Galliard being somewhat higher).
- The second section of the Galliard is *homophonic* (and more clearly 'dancelike' than the other sections of the piece or the Pavane).
- The rest of the music is *contrapuntal*...
- ...with some *imitation* (e.g. at the start of the Pavane the second-to-lowest part imitates the top part one minim beat later).
- Note that imitation does not always stand out clearly, because entries are embedded within a dense texture almost without rests (as at the start of the third section of the Pavane). Ideas are not normally shared between all voices (as in a fugue).

Structure

Each piece has three sections (or 'strains'), each of them repeated.

This was usual for pavans and galliards. Writing in the 1590s, Thomas Morley, the composer and writer, says that strains are 8, 12 or 16 bars in length. Such numbers divisible by 4 suit music for dancing. Holborne's Pavane, clearly not a piece for dancing, has 'irregular' section lengths. The Galliard is more dancelike in style, especially in the second section, and has eight-bar sections throughout.

Tonality

Pavane

Note: The Pavane looks and sounds to most people nowadays (who are used to the major-minor key tonality that evolved in the 17th century) like a piece in D major. Such a 'presentist' view is permissible, even helpful, so long as we remember that Holborne's approach would have been different. Quite how different, and exactly how he viewed 'modes', is beyond the scope of AS- and A2-level study.

Section 1, then, may be described as:

- Solidly in D major, apart from...
- ...hints of A major (bars 10–11 and 13–14)...
- ...and G major (very briefly in bars 11 and 12, although the two C naturals are contradicted by the intermediate C sharp in the bass).

Section 2:

- To achieve some tonal contrast as the new section begins, Holborne introduces several C naturals in bars 17–23, but G major is by no means secure, with C sharps in bars 18, 20 and 22 alternating with the C naturals and producing near-false-relation effects.
- To maintain tonal contrast with Section 1, there is a touch of E minor in bar 27 and the section ends with a perfect cadence in A major.

Section 3:

- Solidly in D major, apart from...
- ...hints of A major (bars 48–49 – despite the C natural – and 53–54)...
- ...and the hint of G major (C natural in bar 46).

Galliard

The Galliard also has D as its tonic, but its tonality is minor. Given the lack of a flat in the key signature, we could consider the tonality overall to be Dorian mode (although with C sharpened when it forms part of a chord of A).

Section 1:

- D minor – most clearly at the end, with perfect cadence and tierce de Picardie. The opening A chord is heard (at least retrospectively) as V in D minor.

Section 2:

- Some tonal contrast here – A minor (bars 9–12 end with a perfect cadence and tierce de Picardie).
- The whole section ends with a Phrygian cadence in D minor (or did Holborne think of this as a cadence in the Phrygian mode on A?).

Section 3:

- F major (bars 17–21).
- D minor (bars 21–24, with perfect cadence and tierce de Picardie).

Harmony

- The harmony is largely consonant, being based on triads in root position (chiefly) and first inversion.
- These chords are often decorated with passing notes (e.g. the C natural in the Pavane, bar 17).
- Suspensions provide accented dissonance, often in perfect cadences or in other non-cadential progressions leading to chord I (e.g. in the Pavane, top part, bar 4). Suspensions often have ornamental resolutions (e.g. the same passage from the Pavane has C sharp, B, C sharp rather than a single C sharp).
- These pieces predate the major-minor tonality and functional harmony that emerged in late Baroque times, but some of the harmony is broadly similar in effect, in particular with perfect cadences at section endings (e.g. Pavane, bars 14–16) and imperfect cadences (Galliard, bars 3–4 and 15–16).
- There are some false relations (notably G and G sharp in the outer parts, Pavane, bar 13), and some 'near false relations' as in the second section of the Pavane (bars 17–23 as previously noted).

Melody

- In the Pavane there is conjunct (stepwise) movement most of the time in the four upper parts (there are only three small leaps in the top part of Sections 1 and 2), and there are no leaps greater than a perfect 5th.
- The bass part of the Pavane has many more 4ths and 5ths than the other parts (the only larger interval is an octave at bars 25–26). Its different character is due to its role in defining the harmony, which has a large number of moves between chords a 4th or 5th apart.
- Each line is carefully balanced, with for example leaps in one direction followed by movement (often stepwise) in the other.
- In the Galliard the lowest part has a less characteristically bass role than in the Pavane; it also engages in imitation more frequently.
- Melodic inversion is occasionally used, perhaps most strikingly at the start of the Galliard (with the fourth part ascending while the others descend).

Rhythm and Metre

- The Pavane is rhythmically smooth and flowing with many minims and crotchets, crotchets, dotted minims followed by pairs of quavers or single crotchets, and occasional semibreves. There are virtually no rests.
- The Galliard has many lively dotted crotchet-quaver rhythms in the first strain, as befits its different character.
- Syncopation is used in both pieces, but most strikingly in the Galliard where the fourth part has phrases whose initial dotted crotchets fall on the weak halves of minims (bars 1–2).
- As one would expect, the Pavane is in simple duple metre (with a minim beat, 'cut common time')...

- ...while the Galliard is in simple triple (with a minim beat, 3/2).
- The Galliard, like many Renaissance and Baroque dance movements in triple time, employs *hemiola*, where (at the approach to a cadence) triple metre is temporarily replaced by duple. This is clearest in bars 14–15, where there are three groups of two minim beats instead of two groups of three. (Something similar happens in bar 3, where a bar of 3/2 is replaced by a bar that is effectively in 6/4 – two dotted minim beats instead of three undotted minim beats).

Further reading

For interest and additional information, some of which goes well beyond the demands of AS-level Music, you may wish to refer to one or both of the following sources:

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. S. Sadie (London 2001). Articles on Consort, Galliard, Holborne, Pavan, Viol

B. Jeffrey, 'Antony Holborne', *Musica Disciplina*, xxxi (1968), pages 129–205.