

Schola Cantorum Basiliensis

Study Day “Singing the Galliard”

Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in collaboration with
Musikwissenschaftliches Seminar der Universität Basel



Tuesday 21 October 2025

9:30 – 17:00

Kleiner Saal, Musik-Akademie Basel, Leonhardsstrasse 6, CH-4051 Basel

free admission

Dancing and singing at the same time is rare today. However, written records reveal that dance songs have been an integral part of musical culture for as long as musical practices have been documented. The years around 1600 saw the heyday of texted dance tunes. And among the extant sources, the sung galliard is the most prominent dance.

Initially, the galliard was a purely instrumental dance popular in France and Italy. With its lively ternary rhythm and its hops, jumps, and leaps, by the 1530s the galliard had become fashionable in all social classes. But it was more than a dance, as the term *gaillard/gagliardo* rather epitomized an attitude, expressing strength, energy, and virility. In the early 1590s, the Italian singer and composer Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi set a trend with his printed collections of *balletti per cantare, sonare e ballare* – dances to be sung, played, and danced – in which galliard songs make up the bulk. This trend rapidly spread north of the Alps, particularly in the German-speaking area.

In our study day we will explore the cultural contexts and performance practices of the galliard, a dance that required particular physical strength and agility especially from the male dancer. Moreover, focussing on the German sung galliard and its relationship with the Italian model, we will approach the following questions:

- What was the relationship between dance steps, music, and lyrics, particularly with regard to phrasing and rhythm?
- How were poetic and musical structure aligned?
- What changes occur when the Italian sung galliards are set to a new German text?
- What were the typical instrumentations?
- How can the singing, dancing, and instrumental accompaniment be balanced? Etc.

There will be introductory inputs by Hanna Walsdorf and Martina Papiro; Gabriele Miracle and Hubert Hazebroucq will each offer a presentation followed by a practical workshop.

- Free admission
- Active participation is encouraged; please contact us to receive the selection of sheet music.
- Students of the SCB who wish to participate actively are requested to register via ONLA by the 12th October.
- <https://onla.fhnw.ch/info/index.html?idanlass=9849045>

Contact / information:

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**Tuesday,
21/10/2025**

Kleiner Saal

09:30

Introduction

09:40

Hanna Walsdorf
Universität Basel

*Singing for Dance and Dancing to Songs around 1600:
Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi's "Balletti a 5 voci" (1591) and its
International Impact*

10:10

Gabriele Miracle
Amelia, I

Dancing with the Sword. The Gagliarda on the Renaissance

10:40

Coffee Break

11:00

Gabriele Miracle
Amelia, I

workshop with students

11:45

Martina Papiro
SCB

*Raised Legs, Jumps, and Other Visual Characteristics of
Dancing the Galliard in Iconography*

12:15

Lunch Break

13:45

Hubert Hazebroucq
Conservatoire
Régional de
Paris/SCB

*The Danced Gagliarda at the time of Gastoldi –
introduction & workshop with students*

15:45

Coffee Break

16:00

Experimental session with different instrumental and vocal
combinations and concluding discussion.

17:00

End

(6 October 2025)

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ABSTRACTS

HANNA WALSORF: *Singing for Dance and Dancing to Songs around 1600: Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi's "Balletti a 5 voci" (1591) and its International Impact*

The first galliards with German lyrics are documented from the 1590s onwards, namely in the collection *XXX Newer Lieblicher Galliardt, mit schönen lustigen Texten* (30 New Pleasing Galliards, with Beautiful Joyful Texts), published in 1593 by the Altenburg choirmaster Nikolaus Rost (c. 1542–1622), and its sequel *Der Ander Theil Newer Lieblicher Galliardt* [...] from 1594, both printed in Erfurt. Rost's galliard songs were composed after the model of Gastoldi's *Balletti a cinque voci* (1591) and were apparently a resounding success. Subsequently, a veritable dance song hype seized the German-speaking lands, especially on the Nuremberg music market, where several collections of dances with German texts appeared in quick succession until around 1625. This input aims to provide an overview of how the texted galliard circulated across national, social, and linguistic boundaries.

GABRIELE MIRACLE: *Dancing with the sword*

A chronicle of the Battle of Lepanto (1571), in which the fleet of the Holy League confronted the Ottoman ships, recounts that Don Juan of Austria, leading the Spanish galleys, ordered the lowering of the banner representing Christ the Redeemer and, at that moment, commanded the trumpets and drums to play a *gagliarda*. To the rhythm of the music, Don Juan himself performed impressive dance steps, together with two other gentlemen. It is no coincidence that Don Juan chose this dance to inspire courage in his men and to instill fear in his enemies. This paper aims to explore the close relationship between dance and warfare in European Renaissance and Baroque culture.

MARTINA PAPIRO: *Raised legs, jumps, and other visual characteristics of dancing the galliard in iconography*

As a lively hopping dance, the galliard differs significantly from the dignified walking dances of the Renaissance. However, the characteristic hops and jumps are challenging for the dancers: how can one dance the strenuous, athletic galliard while maintaining an elegant, graceful posture befitting one's status?

Historical iconographic sources offer possible answers to this question. In addition, the images provide us with information on the following points: Who danced the galliard? When, how, and where? What are its visual characteristics?

In addition to the sociocultural context of the galliard, we also address the questions raised during the study day: are there any depictions of sung galliards? Which musical instruments accompany them and in what combination? What is the relationship between musicians, dancers, and singers?

HUBERT HAZEBROUCQ: *The danced Gagliarda at the time of Gastoldi*

Most of the Italian sources for dances between 1560 and 1614 mention or give instructions on the steps for the Gagliarda and their many virtuosic variations. The *balli* described by Caroso (1581, 1600), Negri (1602) or Santucci also provide numerous choreographed sequences (including one set to music by Gastoldi), with derivations from or to other types of dances (Pavana, Saltarello, Nizzarda, etc.). These sources showcase an extensive variety in terms of technical levels, combinations, rhythmic play, and phrasing. We will study some of these sequences to highlight the structure of the music in relation to the construction of the steps, as well as the variety of rhythmic exploration, to support the musical interpretation of this form.