THE NORDIC MINUET

ROYAL FASHION AND PEASANT TRADITION

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and Anne Margrete Fiskvik

A New Chapter in European Dance History

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ISBN Paperback: 978-1-80064-814-2
ISBN Hardback: 978-1-80064-815-9
ISBN Digital (PDF): 978-1-80064-816-6
ISBN Digital eBook (EPUB): 978-1-80064-817-3
ISBN HTML: 978-1-80064-820-3

NORDISK KULTURFOND

NTNU

DOI: 10.11647/OBP.0314

Front cover: Pierre Jean Laurent, *Veiledning ved Undervisning i Menuetten* ['Guidance for Teaching the Minuet'], ca. 1816, Teatermuseet, København. Photo: Elizabeth Svarstad. ©Royal Danish Library

Back cover: Otto Andersson, *Folkdans, Kimito ungdomsförening* ['Folkdance performed by the Kimito organization'], 1904. The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, https://www.finna.fi/Record/sls.SLS+105+b_SLS+105b_66?lng=en-gb, CC BY 4.0

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13. Minuet Music in the Nordic Countries

Andrea Susanne Opielka, Petri Hoppu, and Elizabeth Svarstad

After the minuet began to assert itself as a fashionable dance around 1650 in France, it took about twenty-five years until it enjoyed increasing popularity among the nobility in the Nordic countries. Later, in the eighteenth century, the citizens in the cities and the peasants in the countryside were caught by minuet fever. The minuet's popularity and its specific appearance in the North are illustrated in handwritten music books written in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. These contain popular dance forms, and they reveal the rise, wide popularity, and decline of the minuet during the long eighteenth century. Many of these books were used over a long period of time, changing ownership several times, and being continuously updated with new tunes and dances. Their authors came from various backgrounds. Some were professional musicians such as town and military musicians; others were priests or farmers.

Musical Life at the Royal Courts in Sweden and Denmark

French culture's influence was strong at the Swedish and Danish royal courts during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among several other phenomena, the minuet, both as a dance and a musical form, was introduced early in the Nordic countries. In 1676 Favonius wrote a poem on the occasion of a noble wedding in Stockholm and mentioned, among other dances, the

 https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0314.13

minuet. This is the earliest evidence of the minuet in Sweden.[1] After the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and the Peace of Roskilde (1658), the country rose to become a major power in Europe. When Queen Kristina followed her father Gustaf II Adolf to the throne in 1644, court music's heyday began. Shortly after entering the throne, the art-loving monarch engaged a French ensemble with six violinists and a singer ('La Bande Française'). French music was extremely admired at the court, and this interest likely paved the way for the minuet to enter the culture of Sweden.[2]

From 1640 to 1718, various Düben family members held the office of court Kapellmeister, of whom Gustav Düben (ca. 1628–90) is of particular importance. In 1644 he took a study trip to Paris, where he experienced and closely studied the latest musical developments. Later, he laid the foundation for the famous Düben collection, which contains more than thirty thousand handwritten pages about twenty-three hundred musical works by over three hundred known composers and numerous unknown masters. The focus of the collection, which was created between 1640 and 1720, is North German church music. Still, it also contains French opera music as well as German and Italian instrumental music. The collection was bequeathed in 1732 to the University Library in Uppsala. It contains a good representation of the musical activities at the Swedish court. Among the small pieces of music by unknown authors, one finds four minuets. The small number indicates that the dance had just begun to establish itself in Sweden. Magnus Gustafsson estimates that the sheet music's minuet dates back to about 1660, and it follows the basic form with two eight-bar parts, which are repeated each time.[3]

While the music at the royal court in Copenhagen in the first decades of the reign of Christian IV (1577–1648) played a central role and the leading musicians were sent on the King's account for study trips to Italy and England, it lost its importance increasingly in the last twenty years of his reign. The reason was a devastating defeat suffered by Denmark in 1626 during the Thirty Years War, which resulted in military collapse and national bankruptcy, and the loss of one-third of the country's total land area. Later, however, Queen Sofie, who came from the court in Braunschweig to Copenhagen and had been an enthusiastic admirer of French culture from childhood, brought a new musical upswing and

1 Gunnel Biskop, *Menuetten—älsklingsdansen. Om menuetten i Norden—särskilt i Finlands svenskbygder—under trehundrafemtio år* (Helsingfors: Finlands Svenska Folkdansring, 2015), pp. 27–28.

2 Erik Kjellberg, 'Die Musik an den Höfen', in *Musikgeschichte Nordeuropas,* ed. by Greger Andersson (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001), pp. 87–104 (p. 95).

3 Magnus Gustafsson, *Polskans historia: en studie i melodityper och motivformer med utgångspunkt i Petter Dufvas notbok* (Lund: Lunds universitet, 2016), p. 328.

a new geographical orientation. In 1654, a French dance band with six to seven members was hired at the court in Copenhagen, and it was initially run for ten years by Pascal Bence and then by Gaspard Besson.[4] It is probable that these French musicians also brought a new dance to Denmark, as the minuet was establishing itself as a fashionable dance in their homeland at the same time. The oldest reference dates back to 1667, when Claus Hansen Bang wrote a poem with the Danish King Christian V on Charlotta Amalia von Hessen-Kassel's wedding, adding a melody called 'Le muneve.'[5]

Thus, the courts in Stockholm and Copenhagen depended heavily on foreign musicians and brought particular interest to the French repertoire, which was well known and popular throughout Europe. When the great Swedish power was about to die out, after the Great Northern War (1700–21), musical life was given new impetus. To save money, the court chapels significantly reduced the number of musicians, but the increasingly emancipated bourgeoisie intensified its cultural engagement. A concert at the Hotel Stadt Hamburg in Copenhagen in 1727 and a concert at the Ritterhaus in Stockholm in 1731 laid the foundation stone for public concert life in the two metropolises.[6] The boundaries between courtly and popular music and between aristocratic and bourgeois activities became increasingly blurred. Simultaneously, the minuet found fertile ground, and in the second half of the eighteenth century, it became the most popular fashion dance in the Nordic countries.

Town Musicians

In addition to the court orchestra members in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so-called town musicians played a central role in establishing the practice of secular music, some of whom were also known as city pipers. This office was a widespread European phenomenon in Scandinavia and Germany, Holland, England, and France. In addition to the organists and cantors, the town musicians were the most crucial urban music culture bearers. Their tasks were, among others, to direct the secular ceremonial music, to play for the military fleet, to assist the organists with church music, to blow from the tower at fixed times, to cooperate with the Latin School, and to teach music lessons to well-heeled citizens.[7] Fulfilment of these manifold obligations required the mastery of numerous instruments. town musicians were considered respected artisans,

4 Kjellberg, p. 97.
5 Biskop, p. 179.
6 Andersson, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 102.
7 Jens Henrik Koudal, *For borgere og bønder—Stadsmusikantvæsenet i Danmark* (København: Museum Tusculanum, 2000), p. 133.

but they were inferior in status to the organist. They often employed several journeymen and trained apprentices with five years of experience to have enough musicians available for the tasks to be performed. Their salary was meagre. Some town musicians even received no fixed salary, surviving on free housing as payment.[8] However, in return for their services, they were usually granted the exclusive right to perform on private occasions. In particular, the celebrations and festivities of those with high social status could be very lucrative, so this monopoly position guaranteed the town musicians a sufficient income.

The form of music organization just described was prevalent in Denmark and Norway, which belonged to the Danish Empire. The earliest evidence of a municipal musician appointed by the mayor dates back to the year 1500 from Aarhus.[9] One of the oldest surviving musician contracts was completed in Ribe in 1569 with Hendrik Schølere.[10] From 1670, Danish town music was strictly regulated, and there were twenty royal privileged places, which were extended to twenty-six places by 1730. Due to the great importance of agriculture, the towns maintained very close relationships with the surrounding farming villages. Accordingly, the strictly regulated music system was also extended to rural areas so that each area included a town and the surrounding province. The end of this organizational form came in April 1800, when the Town Musicians' Office was merged with the Organists' and Cantor's Office by a royal resolution. The reasons for this decision were myriad. One was that instrumental music had become increasingly demanding since Beethoven, so that the artisans in demand were no longer those who were familiar with many instruments but those who specialized in a single instrument.[11]

In Sweden and Finland, which belonged to Sweden, the musical activities were organized differently from the outset. Here, the town organist played the central role. He was awarded all the musician's privileges. This included playing at weddings and hiring fellows to help him with the various activities. However, this regulation affected only the towns; the provinces remained unaffected. Therefore, there were no leases in rural areas as there were in Denmark.[12]

Dance music dominated the town musicians' and provincial musicians' repertoire, as one of their most important tasks was to play for dancing at festivities. Thus, they needed a wide-ranging catalogue that was always up to date and attuned to the latest fashion. For the dissemination of dance tunes, these musicians played a key role. Printed music was expensive and difficult

8 Koudal, *For borgere og bønder,* p. 152.
9 Ibid., p. 69.
10 Andersson, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 104.
11 Koudal, *For borgere og bønder*, p. 197–98.
12 Andersson, *Musikgeschichte*, p. 110.

to obtain, so many pieces were passed on 'by ear' or by handwritten copies. Valuable references to the minuet's position in the repertoire of the eighteenth century are found in these numerous handwritten music books.

While organists were expected to compose their own sacred music, town musicians were rarely perceived as creative artists. For the most part, they confined themselves to performing functionally defined music as musicians. One of the most significant exceptions was the composer Georg Philipp Telemann, who held the post of Music Director in Hamburg.

Important Musicians in Norway and Finland

Since Norway was part of Denmark and Finland belonged to Sweden during the age of the minuet, neither country had sovereignty or a royal court. Musical activities outside the pastoral environment were dominated by the town musicians. The cultural opportunities to establish oneself as a composer and make a name were limited in the Nordic countries. Most town musicians did not write their own works because they would not have been recognised for doing so. An exception was Johan Daniel Berlin (1714–87), born in Memel within the current Lithuanian boundaries, but who came early to Copenhagen and served from 1730 to 1737 as an apprentice to the town musician Andreas Berg. Berlin then received the office of town musician in Trondheim, which he held for thirty years. In addition to this, from 1740 he was also active as an organist of two churches. Berlin shaped the cultural life in Trondheim by organizing concerts, developing musical instruments, and writing the first musical textbook in Danish, *Musicaliske Elementer* (1744). His interests went far beyond music: he also carried out meteorological and astronomical observations and worked as a map artist and architect. Though Berlin is best known for his musical compositions, unfortunately very few of these have been preserved: extant ones include three symphonies, a violin concerto, a sonatina, and various small pieces for harpsichord. Among these, one can also find a handful of minuets titled 'Minuet'.[13]

Similarly, the violinist and composer Eric Ferling (1733–1808), born in Åbo in the Swedish-speaking part of Finland, stands out as a cultural force in the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1761 he began his duties as a violinist in the royal band in Stockholm, and twelve years later, he was promoted to concertmaster. Ferling regularly arranged his own chamber concerts in the Orangerie in Stockholm, where works by modern composers such as the string

13 Karl Dahlback, *Rokokkomusikk i trøndersk miljø. Johan Henrich Berlin (1741–1807)*. Norsk musikkgranskning. Årbok, 1954–1955 (Oslo: Tanum, 1956), pp. 137–274

quartets of Haydn were performed. In 1790 he returned to his homeland to lead the newly founded Musical Society in Åbo as concertmaster and to promote the town's musical life. Some of Ferling's compositions have survived, including vocal music and two violin concertos, as well as a quadrille, three contras, and three minuets.[14]

Danish Music Books with Minuets

One of the most well-known Danish music books was written by Jens Christian Svabo, who was born in 1746 to a pastor in the Faroe Islands. After graduating from the Latin School in Tórshavn in 1765, he went to Copenhagen. There he studied natural history and economics but was also interested in the Faroese language and literature. He became known through a historical-topographical description of his home islands, the first Faroese-Danish dictionary, and the tradition of fifty Faroese dance ballads. Svabo, however, also mastered the violin and, in 1775, began work on a music book in which he recorded melodies that he had heard in the bourgeois milieu in Copenhagen. When he finally returned to his homeland in 1800, he took the violin and the music book with him, and he likely played at dances in the small Faroese capital. As early as 1781, Svabo had reported: 'At festive weddings and amusements, especially in Tórshavn, the Faroese dance begins to become very out of favor, and instead, minuets, Polish, English, Scottish reels and country dances are introduced.'[15]

Svabo's music book was completely forgotten after his death and was only rediscovered in 1928 in an old house in Tórshavn. Today it is kept in the Faroese National Library *Føroya Landsbókasavn*. It consists of a cover sheet and one hundred and seventy-seven pages of notes. These contain melodies written not only in different pens and inks but also in varying styles of handwritings. Presumably, Svabo asked musician friends to enter songs they knew into his book. All melodies are unisonous and noted for violin. When starting the project in 1775, Svabo seems to have planned its structure as he noted thirty-eight minuets first. Later, however, the pieces and dances follow arbitrarily, presumably following the chronological sequence in which he happened to hear them. That the music book begins with minuets clearly shows the importance and absolute priority of this dance in the second half of the eighteenth century. In the further course of the manuscript, minuets appear regularly, the last of

14 The Royal Swedish Academy of Music 2021, 'Eric Ferling', *Swedish Musical Heritage*, https://www.swedishmusicalheritage.com/composers/ferling-erik/

15 Jens Christian Svabo, *Indberetninger fra en reise i Færøe 1781 og 1782,* ed. by N. Djurhuus (København: C.A. Reitzel, 1976), p. 320.

them on the penultimate page. Altogether, Svabo wrote down forty-nine dances that he explicitly described as a minuet. In addition, other pieces have the character of a typical minuet but are not marked as such. Overall, the minuet tunes account for nearly thirty percent of the entire repertoire. The music book also contains various other dances such as *La Nouvelle Allemande*, *Polonaise*, *Dantz*, *Contra Dantz,* and *Englis*. The traditional minuets formally correspond exactly to the European tradition. They are simple and consist of two parts, both of which are repeated. The parts have an even number of bars and are often composed of eight + eight bars, eight + ten, ten + twelve, eight + sixteen, or twelve + twelve bars. However, it is striking that none of the minuets Svabo recorded contain a trio.[16]

The so-called *Music Book of the Brothers Bast* is one of the most extensive and representative sources from the eighteenth century in Denmark. It was created by Christian Frederik Bast (b. 1743) and Poul Danchel Bast (b. 1747), who grew up as sons of a pastor in Horslunde (Lolland) and received their first music lessons there. Later, they went to Copenhagen to study theology and financed their education by playing music for dancing at private parties and guilds of the bourgeoisie. Both subsequently stood as priests of distinguished parishes. The music book that now bears their name was written about 1763–82; it originally consisted of five individual notebooks that were later bound together in leather. Whether some of the three hundred and fifty tunes it contains originally come from the island of Lolland is no longer discernible. However, it is certain that the collection contains many dance tunes that were popular and that minuets and English dances dominate the repertoire. The Bast brothers' book offers several clear parallels with Svabo's music book. Again, the melodies were written with different pen and ink and in various handwriting styles. Presumably, the Bast brothers asked friendly musicians to record the tunes they knew in the book. All melodies, again, like Svabo's, are unisonous and meant for violin. Their book contains one hundred sixty-nine minuets, which is forty-eight percent of the total melodies. Of these minuets, almost precisely half consist of eight + eight bars, each repeated. Both parts have an even number of bars in the other minuets, with ten, twelve, or sixteen bars occurring most frequently. Although the music books of Svabo and the Brothers Bast were written in Copenhagen during the same period, there is a significant difference in minuets: while Svabo renounces the trio, the brothers Bast include fifty-nine minuets (thirty-five percent) with a trio.[17]

16 Jens Christian Svabo, *Nodebog*. Manuscript (1775), National Library of the Faroe Islands, Tórshavn.

17 Brødrene Bast, *Violinnodebog* (1763–82), C II 5, 4°, Royal Library, Copenhagen.

Another revealing book belonged to the farmer's son and merchant Rasmus Storm (1733–1806), who spent much of his life in Fåborg on the island of Funen. Thus, his collection of melodies does not represent the bourgeois life in Copenhagen but provides information about life in the Danish province. We do not have any information about Storm's musical education, but it is clear that he was neither a town musician nor an organist and seemed to have only played music in his free time. From 1762, Hans Christian Mølmark had the right to play in the county Fåborg at festivals for the farmers. He was close friends with Storm and, occasionally, may have passed the privilege to him. Storm's music book was a book for violin players and was probably also used for teaching. From the repertoire, it can be dated to about 1760. Although the book comes from the countryside, its content is by no means provincial. Some of the tunes were also found in contemporaneous sources from metropolises such as Leipzig or other countries such as Finland. The book includes seventy-one melodies on forty pages, and they were written in fifteen different handwriting styles. The Polsk Dans and the minuet are the most commonly represented dances, with the thirty-six minuets making up over fifty percent of the entire repertoire. Many minuets have a stable structure with four- or eight-bar parts, but in one-third of the cases, six-, ten- or twelve-bar periods appear. Fourteen minuets in Storm's book contain a trio.[18]

As part of the publication of Storm's music book, Jens Henrik Koudal has examined in detail the extent to which the tunes included there are also found in other collections.[19] Twenty-one of Storm's tunes appear in other Danish manuscripts, though only three of his tunes appeared before 1821 in printed editions. Numerous parallels occur in music books created between 1740 and 1780 for the bourgeois or the academic middle class audience. The melodies in these works also appear in the collections of Jens Christian Svabo and the brothers Bast. More than a third of Storm's tunes must have been well known and widespread at the time. Due to the rapidly changing musical fashion, which spread from commercial city to commercial city, musical pieces had only a relatively short life of about thirty to forty years. Therefore, it is striking that the same melodies are found in music books from the same period, as if aspects of the social milieu or geographic proximity play only a minor role. Where the individual melodies originated and their composers are, in many cases, lost to history. However, the songs certainly spread rapidly, mainly through handwritten transcriptions or through audience members listening and repeating them. In some instances, the

18 Jens Henrik Koudal, *Rasmus Storms Nodebog. En fynsk tjenestekarls dansemelodier o. 1760* (København: Kragen, 1987), p. 19.

19 Ibid., pp. 23–24.

melodies changed, and variants coexisted side by side. A comparison of Storm's versions with the notes in other music books reveals some striking differences. These are so significant that Storm could not have known any of the other music books and copied directly from them. When writing down the melodies, he must have relied either on sources that no longer exist or on his memory.[20]

Koudal has also found sixteen of Rasmus Storm's minuets in other Danish music books, ten of them by Svabo and nine by the brothers Bast. Of particular interest is the minuet listed as 'No. 67' in Storm's book.[21] It appears on page sixty-eight of the Bast brothers' book and, without title and trio, on page eighty of Svabo's book. Furthermore, Hakon Grüner-Nielsen recorded it in 1918 as the 'Mollevit'—part of the living tradition he learned about through Hans Andersen in Rise on Ærø. The same melody also appeared with a dance description in the folk-dance book *Gamle Danse fra Fyn og Øerne* (1941).[22]

Minuets in Norwegian Music Books

Several eighteenth-century music books also give information about the minuet's distribution in Norway, which was then part of Denmark. Professor Hans Olav Gorset at the Norwegian Academy of Music has shown in his research that minuet music held a central position in Norway at that time. Minuet tunes are well represented in Norwegian music books from this period. Indeed, more than fifty percent of the tunes in Gorset's main sources are minuets. The genre was dominant.[23]

The so-called music book by 'Peter Bang' bears this name on its front page along with the date 1679.[24] Unfortunately, it has not been possible to identify Peter Bang or even to determine if the name is not a pseudonym. The music book consists of one hundred and eight pages, which can be clearly divided into an older part and a newer part. The first melodies were probably not written before 1700, and some content-related aspects even point to a time as late as 1740. The music book was in use for well over a hundred years and eventually appeared in Bergen around 1850 but did not necessarily originate from this area. It contains

20 Ibid., p. 26.
21 Ibid., p. 120.
22 *Gamle danse fra Fyn og øerne* (København: Foreningen til Folkedansens Fremme, 1941).
23 Hans Olav Gorset, *Fornøyelig tiids-fordriv. Musikk i norske notebøker fra 1700-tallet: beskrivelse, diskusjon og musikalsk presentasjon i et oppføringspraktisk perspektiv* (Oslo: Norwegian Academy of Music, 2011).
24 Peter Bang, *Notebok. Samlebind med dansemusikk for luth eller fiolin* (1679), Norsk Musiksamling, ms 294:35a-c, National Library, Oslo.

dances, marches, psalms, and other small pieces in no particular order. About a third of the tunes are also found in other sources from the eighteenth century, and some of them were very common even over a more extended period of time. Of the hundred melodies in the older portion of the text, twenty-four are written in French lute tablature for viola da gamba and seventy-six appear in the ordinary notation for violin. About half of them are minuets.[25] The repertoire has similarities with the book of the brothers Bast and that of Rasmus Storm. These include a standard minuet (No. 5 in Storm; No. 13 in Bang Lautentabulatur and No. 19 in Bang treble clef notation), as well as a piece called 'Contiliong Menuet' (Bang No. 44), which bears the title 'Menuet de France' in Storm's book (No. 15). Besides this, Storm's 'Vindt Mølle Menuet' (No. 30) appears in Bang as 'La ere de Malte' (No. 15).[26]

The music book by Hans Nielsen Balterud (1735–1821), dated 16 April 1758, is also of great importance. Balterud came from Aurskog, east of Christiania (Oslo), and was a wealthy farmer, timber merchant, and mill operator. Also, he was an outstanding violinist and signed a contract in 1770 with Oslo Town Musician Peter Høeg, so that he was officially allowed to play at festivals in his area. It is also reported that Balterud played a minuet with his rich neighbour, Christopher Hareton, as a part of a bet. His music book consists of one hundred and sixty pages with three hundred and ninety melodies, some of which have survived only as fragments. The many corrections it contains show that it was meant for personal use. The book's two hundred and ninety-five minuets account for seventy-five percent of the repertoire, and these often feature the traditional form with two eight-bar periods and a trio. Most of them are anonymous, but two minuets are by Johan Henrik Freithoff, a violin virtuoso who later made his career in Copenhagen and was one of the most important Norwegian composers of his time.[27] Some of the traditional tunes have an extensive range of pitch, many accidentals, and require double stops. Sometimes it is even necessary to retune the instrument, e.g., in the two 'Menuet forstæmt' Nos. 372 and 379. The high level of musical complexity reinforces the level of Balterud's skill and the breadth of his repertoire, which included both the bourgeois music of the town musicians and the folk practice of the country players. The aforementioned 'Menuet de France' from Storm's music book is also be found in Balterud's book with the title 'Polske Menuet' (No. 136).[28]

On 14 January 1751, Martinus Calmar (1727–60) began to write a music book for piano in which he included a total of ninety-three tunes on sixty-eight pages.

25 Gorset, pp. 94–95.
26 Koudal, *Rasmus Storms Nodebog*, pp. 114–17.
27 Gorset, pp. 102–105.
28 Koudal, *Rasmus Storms Nodebog*, p. 116.

The Christiania-born musician was sent to Kongsberg to study with his uncle, the town musician Jørgen Otto Adler. Calmar's *Collection of Various Beautiful Pieces for Piano* consists of a mixture of original compositions and works by well-known composers such as Georg Philipp Telemann or Georg Friedrich Händel.[29] No doubt Calmar received a broad musical education and may, therefore, be considered a professional musician. Nevertheless, he also maintained close contacts with rural milieu and folk traditions. Calmar's music book is an exciting source because it is situated between great composers' printed works and handwritten music books. The twenty-seven minuets account for thirty percent of the repertoire and consist of a mixture of original compositions, anonymous traditional pieces, and a minuet by Telemann. Except for two minuets with a trio and a minuet with three variations, all melodies consist of a simple, two-part form. His composition 'Minuet No. 11' exhibits typical characteristics of Calmar's musical style. It is in F major and consists of two parts with ten + twenty-four bars. While the harmony is simple and the bass voice keeps the basic rhythm, the melody unfolds with certain virtuosity. His objective seems to have been to create small works of musical art and not simply serviceable-but-interchangeable dance tunes.[30]

Fascinating in this context is a minuet book by the Christiania town musician Peter Høeg, published in London around 1770 under the following title: *A Tabular System Whereby the Art of Composing Minuets Is made so Easy that Any Person, without the Least Knowledge of Musick* [sic], *may Compose Ten Thousand, All Different, and in the Most Pleasing and Correct Manner*. The work, addressed to the layperson, facilitates the creation of simple, musically correct minuets with two x eight bars. For each bar, the book offers forty-eight different options, one of which is chosen at will. The sixteen selected bars are then strung together—and the music is ready.[31] Balterud seems to have known and applied Høeg's Minuet Book. Gorset has shown that numerous bars of his minuets are identical to Høeg's timed suggestions.[32]

Two other examples of music books (without dance descriptions) that contain minuet melodies are the manuscripts *Samling av menuetter og engelskdanser* and Sven H. Walcke's *Dansebok*.[33] Both of these manuscripts are written for two violins and include a significant number of minuet tunes.

29 *Fra M. Calmars notesamling*, ed. by Anne Svånaug Haugen and Sigurd Hukkelberg (Kongsberg: Kongsberg spel- og dansarlag, 2001).
30 Gorset, p. 107.
31 Ibid., p. 30.
32 Ibid., pp. 108, 197.
33 *Samling av menuetter og engelskdanser.* (1781), Mus.ms. 7081, National library, Oslo; Sven H. Walcke, *Dansebok.* (1804), Mus.ms. 295, National library, Oslo.

Gorset's dissertation distinguishes between dance music and other types of music in his dissertation, but he maintains that approximately two thirds of the tunes in the sources he has used are dance music.[34] Since eighteenth-century Norwegian sources offer relatively few descriptions of the dance minuet, a question has been why there are so many minuets in the tune books. The large number of minuet tunes can be explained to a great degree by the dance practice and its need for accompaniment, despite the small amount of information describing minuet dancing.

Minuets in Music Books from Finland

In Finland, minuet melodies are found in several handwritten music books from the early eighteenth century. The oldest one, the Tuulos manuscript (1720), which was found in Gothenburg, Sweden, has unfortunately disappeared. According to Finnish composer Heikki Klemetti who saw the manuscript in the early 1900s, it contained sixty-five melodies, of which fifty-five were minuets. Klemetti published one of the minuets as a facsimile and another one as his arrangement in a 1936 article entitled 'A New Old Music Book'.[35] The Finnish music scholar Eero Nallinmaa has suggested that the manuscript was brought to Finland between 1721 and 1730, that is, soon after the Russian occupation (1714–21) during the Great Northern War (1700–21).[36]

During the following decades, the minuet was the most popular dance melody form in music books found in Finland (see Table 13.1).

Table 13.1: Minuets in Finnish music books 1751–79

Manuscript	**Year**	**Number of melodies**	**Minuets**
Johan Forsshell's Music Book[37]	1751	29	21
A. C. Öhrbom's Music Book[38]	1759	18	4
Untitled Music Book[39]	1766	47	21

34 Ibid., pp. 167–168.
35 Heikki Klemetti, 'Uusi vanha nuottikirja', *Suomen Musiikkilehti*, 14 (1936), 4–6.
36 Eero Nallinmaa, *Barokkimenuetista masurkkaan. Sävelmätutkimuksia* (Tampere: [n.pub.], 1982), p. 20.
37 Johan Forsshell, *Notbok.* Manuscript (1751), University Library of Helsinki, Manuscript Collection.
38 A. C. Öhrbom, *Notbok.* Manuscript (1759), Sibelius Museum, Turku.
39 *Notbok 1766*. Manuscript (1766), University Library of Helsinki, Manuscript Collection.

G. Hannelius's Music Book[40]	1760s	30	14
Hinrich Jacob Bruun's Music Book[41]	1770s	40	16
Untitled Music Book 1779[42]	1779	61	35

One of the most interesting of the above-mentioned music books is dated 29 January 1759, and it belonged to Anna Catharina Öhrbom from Taimo near Åbo (Turku). It gives information about the musical taste of the upper classes in the middle of the eighteenth century and contains eighteen melodies for piano, among which are four minuets (Nos. 9–12). The relatively small number could indicate that the French fashion dance was just beginning to establish itself in the vicinity of Åbo. However, Admiral Tersmeden's accounts imply that the minuet was already established by that time. Reporting on a picnic he attended in Beckholmen near Åbo on 31 March 1748, he wrote, 'The dance with minuets of the most distinguished ladies began at 7 o'clock and continued with contrasts'.[43]

The four minuets from Öhrbom's music book offer no surprises. They are designed as a traditional, two-part form without a trio. All phrases are regularly formed and consist of eight or twelve bars with repetition. The melody always sounds in the upper voice, while the left hand accompanies with simple chords. Comparison with the book of notes begun in 1779 by an anonymous musician suggests that the minuet tunes in Finland hardly changed since 1759. In this latter manuscript, now held at the Sibelius Museum, only the melody parts are noted, characterized by simple rhythms, many repetitions of sound, small runs, and broken chord progressions. Their structure is even more regular than the examples in Öhrbom's book of notes. Virtually all the minuets consist of two parts, each with eight bars, which are repeated. In some cases, the minuets include a trio.

In later music books, minuets are found significantly less often. The so-called *Pieni Nuottivihko* [*Small Music Booklet*] from the 1780-90s contains only two minuets out of thirty-eight melodies.[44] A manuscript for two violins from the turn of the nineteenth centuries has ninety-three melodies, of which only eight are minuets.[45] A music book written between 1802 and 1806 in Gamlakarleby for

40 G. Hannelius, *Notbok.* Manuscript (1760s), Sibelius Museum, Turku.
41 Hinrich Jacob Bruun, *Notbok.* Manuscript (1770s), University Library of Helsinki, Manuscript Collection.
42 *Notbok 1779.* Manuscript (1779), Sibelius Museum, Turku.
43 Otto Andersson, *VI A 1 Äldre dansmelodier. Finlands Svenska Folkdiktning.* SLS 400 (Helsingfors: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 1963), p. 36.
44 *Pieni nuottivihko* (1780s and 1790s), University Library of Helsinki, Manuscript Collection.
45 *Notbok* for two violins. Manuscript (turn of the 1700s and 1800s), Sibelius Museum, Turku.

Anders Lund contains a total of thirty-five dance tunes but only two minuets.[46] Anders Johan Skragge's manuscript from 1810 includes seven minuets out of one hundred and sixteen melodies, whereas Anders Juurela's manuscript from 1825 has only a single minuet among its one hundred and sixty-seven melodies.[47] In music books from later decades of the nineteenth century, minuets do not appear at all.

According to the manuscripts published before 1780, the minuet had almost no other competitors than Polish dances, which, in most manuscripts, are called Polonaises (*polonesse, polonoise*). The few other melodies that appear are marches, instrumental tunes, or country dances. Music books published around 1780 and into the early 1800s, however, suggest that a change in the repertoire happened over an astonishingly short time. The *Pieni Nuottivihko*, for example, is dominated by waltzes, and other manuscripts from the turn of the century contain many country dances. Nallinmaa cautioned us not to draw strong conclusions from the changes in music books since these texts do not give a reliable picture of the dance repertoire among the Finnish upper classes.[48] However, other sources support this conclusion, so, therefore, one could expect that the minuet did vanish quite rapidly at that time.

A Stronghold of the Minuet: Swedish-speaking Finland

The Swedish-speaking part of Finland is one of the few regions in the north where the minuet has been preserved as a living folk-dance form. Therefore, there is a vibrant melodic tradition that includes younger forms.

An essential source for the melody tradition is the collection *Äldre dansmelodier* [*Older Dance Melodies*], which was published in 1963 by Otto Andersson and contained two hundred and seventy-six minuet melodies. Such a high number has not been handed down from any other Nordic country. Of these tunes, one hundred seventy-two are from the Ostrobothnia region, seventy are from Uusimaa, twenty-six are from Åboland, and eight are from Åland.[49]

Most of the melodies published by Andersson exhibit some of the minuet tradition's typical characteristics. For example, they are written in 3/4 time and consist of two parts, which are repeated. It is noticeable, however, that not a single tune contains a trio. Another unique feature is that some of the

46 Andersson, *VI A 1 Äldre dansmelodier*, p. 44.
47 Anders Johan Skragge, *Notbok.* Manuscript (1810), SLS 1348, Society of Swedish Literature in Finland, Helsinki; Anders Juurela, *Notbok.* Manuscript (1825), University of Tampere, Folklife Archives.
48 Nallinmaa, p. 49.
49 Andersson, *VI A 1 Äldre dansmelodier*, p. 109.

minuets have lyrics, and may have been sung as well as played. Further, both the tonality and the harmonic development and structure vary greatly. An odd number of bars in the phrases and a change between upbeat and downbeat are not uncommon. Occasionally, individual bars in 2/4 or 4/4 time are woven into the three-part minuet rhythm. Irregular periods of five, seven, or nine bars draw a clear parallel with Lully's early French minuets. However, this does not necessarily indicate a direct link between Paris and Swedish-speaking Finland. The peculiarity may have developed in the province, without awareness of customs in the French metropolis. The printed 'Menuet no. 116', recorded after A. Pettersson, consists of seven + five bars and is recorded in both 2/4 and 3/4 time. His popular, lively melody in C major creates a vivacious mood and is different from the court minuet's solemn tone.

Minuet Fever in Sweden

In Sweden, the minuet enjoyed great popularity in the eighteenth century, but it could not prevail in the popular repertoire as in Finland in the long run. Numerous music books bear witness to a great minuet fever which only lasted until the end of the eighteenth century.

By 1911, Tobias Norlind examined the number of dances Menuett, Polsk, and Walzer in the Swedish journal *Musikaliskt Tidsfördrif* [*Musical Pastime*] and found that, between 1790 and 1799, forty-six percent of all dances were minuets, but then the frequency within ten years drastically decreased and fell to nineteen percent. At the same time, the waltz's frequency increased from two percent in the 1790s to thirty percent in the following decade.[50] Magnus Gustafsson has examined the content of nearly eight hundred handwritten Swedish music books for his comprehensive work *Polskans Historia* [*The History of Polska*] (2016), classifying some ninety thousand melodies. The sources cover a period from 1640 to 1880. Among the recorded dances, there are one thousand forty-six minuets (nineteen percent) dating before 1730 and 1840 minuets (twenty percent) from the period 1730–1810. After 1810, however, the number drops to only one hundred and ten minuets.[51]

An example of the absolute dominance of the minuet is the *Piano Book*, written between 1703 and 1727, by Professor Ternsted from Uppsala with a total of one hundred eighty-nine melodies, of which one hundred and fifty are minuets.[52]

50 Gustafsson, p. 323.
51 Ibid., pp. 139–142.
52 Biskop, p. 38.

As in Swedish-speaking Finland, there is also a close link between the polska and the minuet in Sweden. Especially at folk weddings, the two dances often followed one after the other.[53] This close interaction also affected dance music. As the minuet fell further and further out of fashion in Sweden towards the end of the eighteenth century, many minuet tunes went through a transformation. They were slightly changed and then reappeared in the music books as polskas. Sometimes the terms *menuettpolskor* or *polsk menuett* were used, which indicate this conversion process. It even happens that the same melody in a music book is called a minuet, and in another book, a polska. For example, 'Minuet No. 73' from Sven Donat's *Gradebook* (1783–1801) appears as 'Polska No. 24' in a music book by Anders Petter Dufva from 1807.[54]

The Petter Dufva music book comes from northeastern Småland but is preserved only in a copy from the early twentieth century. Of the one hundred and ninety-one surviving melodies, twenty-nine are minuets, one hundred sixty-one polskas, and one waltz. Thus, the music book clearly shows that the minuet had lost its popularity at the beginning of the nineteenth century and could no longer prevail against the polska. The heyday of the waltz had not yet arrived in the Swedish province at this time.[55]

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