THE VALUE OF "GOUDEN EEUW" SONGBOOKS IN THE PERFORMANCE OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DUTCH INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

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SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DUTCH SONGBOOKS are usually studied for their intrinsic value or for their connections to Dutch literature and history. It is less well-known how very useful they are in illuminating other repertoires of seventeenth-century music, especially some of the major collections of Dutch instrumental music of their time. This paper focuses on their application to Jacob van Eyck's *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* from the mid-seventeenth century.[1]

Jacob van Eyck's *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* is a collection for solo soprano recorder of about 150 pieces based on some 120 tunes, each of which is stated in plain form and then followed by anywhere from one to nine variations of decreasing note-values and correspondingly increasing virtuosity — a musical style known as diminution variation. Example 1 shows the first phrase of one of van Eyck's theme-and-variation sets, the "Onse Vader in Hemelryck" (the melody to which the Lord's Prayer has been sung in most Protestant churches for the past 450 years).

Jacob van Eyck was the municipal carillonneur of Utrecht from 1623 until his death in 1657 and is significant in music history for his pivotal role in the development of the carillon into a musically satisfactory instrument.[2] His work *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* itself has long been recognized as one of the finest collections of late Renaissance Dutch music and is also in fact the largest single collection of music for solo woodwind in the history of European music.

With the massive revival of early music in the twentieth century and the large, even overrepresented role which the recorder has played in that movement, it is not surprising to know that the *Lust-hof* has a large international following: modern editions have sold something like 100,000 copies in the past 35 years, a truly amazing figure in this rather specialized field. One wonders, however, what recorder players from Brazil to Japan (not to mention North America) do with a table of contents featuring such impenetrable titles as "Bocxvoetje," "Tweede Lickepot," and "Ho ho op myn brak en winden" (see example 2). Because the pages of the *Lust-hof* give no information about its tunes beyond these titles, it would be in performers' best interest to know as much as possible about the pieces of music that those titles represent. Until recently, however, few of them were fully identified.

Fortunately, the key to this mystery exists and fits the keyhole with great accuracy: the titles of nearly all of these pieces are to be found in Netherlands songbooks, primarily those from the first half of the seventeenth century. Although there is no substitute for examining the books themselves, page by page, the indispensable starting point and guide

to such a search is the Nederlands Volkslied Archief (now part of the P.J. Meertens-Instituut in Amsterdam.[3]

What does one find in these songbooks? First of all, and most simply, the songbooks are a source of the texts that go along with these titles. Secondly, because about one-fourth of the songbooks contain at least some printed music, they are a source of melodic variants. Last, and least obvious, but actually most importantly, they are a bountiful source of *wijsaanduidingen.*

A *wijsaanduiding*, or "tune-indication," consists of a singing direction (usually "Op de voys van" or "Nae de stemme van" or suchlike), followed by a tune title, written above a poem, showing to which melody (ies) the poem could be sung (see example 3). Incidentally, it was also an important money-saving device for printers, eliminating the need for costly music type, since most tune-indications replace rather than supplement printed music. Because the use of a *wijsaanduiding* is a reasonable indication that the tune being cited was considered sufficiently well-known to the potential songbook buyer to be recognizable from its title alone, much as we might write "sing to the tune of 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,'" without having to bother printing the tune, *wijsaanduidingen* in the aggregate are a fair indication of the relative familiarity of the tunes whose titles are present in the songbooks. Moreover, because *wijsaanduidingen* are frequently bilingual (as in example 3, left side), or present multiple options (often different titles for the same tune, as in all of example 3) and reflect whole chains of new texts written to established tunes, they provide excellent clues to the origins and lineages of melodies.

In search for the identities of the tunes on which the *Lust-hof*'s variations are based, two main types of songbooks proved the most fruitful: the predominantly secular (with a smattering of "stichtelijk"), pastoral, amorous collections from the northern Netherlands, spanning the full first half of the seventeenth century; and the exclusively devotional books published in the southern Netherlands, chiefly in Antwerp, from around 1615 to 1635. The northern books included the collections by important authors, such as Jan Starter's *Friesche Lusthof*, Dirk Camphuysen's *Stichtelijcke Rijmen*, Adriaen Valerius' *Nederlandtsche Gedenck-clanck*, Dirk Pers' *Bellerophon* trilogy, Cornelis de Leeuw's *Christelijcke Plicht-Rymen*, and a whole shelf of books by Jan Harmensz Krul. But it also included a great number of anonymous anthologies, typically with a town name and a reference to love in the title — books like *'t Amsterdamse Minne-beeckje, Haerlemse Somerbloempjes, Utrechts Zangprieeltje, Venus Minne-gijfjes*, and *'t Zeeuws Nachtegael.*

The southern collections include books by Salomon Theodotus and Jan Stalpart van der Wiele, and others, along with any number of anthologies, almost invariably sporting papal approbation and with the word"Gheestelijck" in the title: *De Gheestelijcke Leeuw, De Gheestelycke Nachtegael, 't Gheestelijcken Paradijsken, Het Blompot der Gheestelijcke Liedekens*, and *'t Prieel der Gheestelijcke Melodie.* Surprisingly, the pool of tunes used is not vastly different for these two types of books, despite their very different origins and intents.

What information did these songbooks collectively provide? As mentioned, songbooks are a source of texts, melodies, and *wijsaanduidingen* or *wijzen*, for short. For the 124 melodies in the Lusthof, the songbook repertoire provided 70 Dutch texts, over

500 melody variants, and 1500 *wijzen*, all this just in first editions alone. The *wijzen* gave a fair picture of the extent in time, in area, and in popularity for each of the melodies Van Eyck used in his book. (To illustrate the extremes among the 124 melodies used in the *Lusthof*, the bottom twenty tunes never occur in any known Dutch songbook, whereas for the top twenty it is a greater challenge to find a songbook in that whole century without a text set to that tune than to find one with). But in addition to spread and popularity, the *wijzen* pointed sufficiently clearly to the tunes' countries of origin so that further research, chiefly in London, Brussels, and Paris, eventually yielded about 110 texts and the identity of about 100 of the 124 melodies, including extensive lists of other instrumental and vocal settings of each of the tunes. For the most popular tunes, these lists run into the dozens.

The tunes of the *Lusthof* turned out to typify the melodic repertoire of the Netherlandic songbooks in two basic respects: one, a high ratio of secular tunes to sacred tunes (about five to one in the *Lusthof*), and two, by country of origin, an overwhelmingly French and English influence, along with a smattering of Italian, Spanish and German music. In fact, the deeper one digs, the fewer tunes turn out to be Dutch. Actually, almost none are demonstrably Dutch in origin, and the others are likely to be cases in which, although the oldest extant source is a Dutch songbook, the true English or French (or whatever) identity has simply not been found.[4] Thus a table of contents which at first glance looks quite Dutch turns out to be overwhelmingly not so. A recent writer on Dutch songbooks, Louis Grijp, puts it this way:

> The almost complete absence of original Dutch melodies is striking in this Golden Age of Dutch culture, which immediately follows the period of the great Netherlandish polyphonic school. An explanation may be found in religious and political circumstances. Calvinism, the official religion of the young Republic, did not allow professional music in the services. Moreover, the Republic did not have a strong central court. Thus no professional choruses, or orchestras existed — professional musicians were restricted to town musicians, organists and music teachers.[5]

Overwhelmingly, the Dutch used other people's music when writing their songs, but, Grijp goes on to argue, the quality and extent of *contrafactum* song achieved by the Dutch in this period — that marvelous paradox, a song culture without composers — has scarcely ever been equalled, and surpassed the newly-composed song repertoire of a number of other nations.

Thus the tune-indications found in Dutch songbooks reached into the past to find origins; they also pointed to the future and destiny. The direction was fairly consistently gutterwards. For example, a lofty French court air of 1629, "Voicy tantost la froidure bannie" (shown in example 3) passed through Wallonia as a lesser love song, through England as theater music, through Dutch songbooks as a ballad about Amsterdam prostitutes, and was last heard of in the early eighteenth-century *Boerenlietjes* dance-fiddle anthology with the title "Isabelle heeft in't hemdt gepist." This astonishing longevity is, by the way, not unusual: another court air of 1629, a rare Spanish-language *air de cour*,

"Repicavan las campanillas," written to commemorate the 1611 engagement of Louis XIII to Anne of Austria, is still found in Dutch songbooks as late as 1765. In fact, the bulk of the tunes used in the *Lusthof* were current throughout the entire seventeenth century.

Now, of what value to the performer of van Eyck's music are these heaps of information about texts, tune-indications, national origins, variant melodies? Begin by considering two complications inherent in the Lusthof: first, the book was printed rather carelessly; and second, Van Eyck was blind, and thus dictated this music to an amanuensis. For these two reasons, the printed notes are often unreliable.

So first of all, there are the advantages of knowing the *tune* and variant forms of the tune from the songbooks contemporary with the *Lusthof.* Armed with that information, one can now correct, or in some cases, even supply, the notes of the plain tunes which precede the variations, and on which the variations are closely based. There are five sorts of cases: the tune is missing; the tune is clearly incorrect; the tune is hidden inside a variation by mistake; the tune is interwoven with the variations by design; and the tune fails in spots to align with the variations, suggesting that one or the other must be faulty. In all these cases, the musical information from the songbooks nearly always provides clear solutions. For example, in the *Lusthof,* the tune "Waeckt op Israel" contains a cadence unlikely for its time; comparison with songbook versions of the tune clearly show that this is a music-printing error (see example 4).

Next, move from music to words: knowing the *text* of a melody has three concrete advantages for the performer. First, knowing the text clears up any phrasing ambiguities. A frequent problem, for example is knowing whether a note is the final note of a weak cadence ending the preceding phrase, or an upbeat to the following phrase (see Example 5, from "Pavane Lachrymae"). Secondly, because the printer of the *Lusthof* had no single-sided repeats sign (see for example the repeat signs in example 5), all the many repeat signs in the books are indiscriminately doubled. With the text in hand, one has a basis for deciding which of those signs would actually be single and which double: if the text has two lines per musical phrase, you repeat; if it has only one, you probably do not (although sometimes a single line of text was meant to be repeated, as in a refrain).

Finally, the text tells you the general character of the song, something that is certainly not always obvious simply from the music itself. Two melodies that look similar on paper turn out not to be, once the texts are added: the one is an earthy celebration of the month of May, the other an ethereal Christmas hymn. "Aerdigh Martyntje" turns out to be the above-mentioned ballad about prostitutes in Amsterdam. The average recorder player doesn't know that "Bocxvoetje " means "Goat-foot," that is, the god Pan, and thus learns for the first time that this song is about satyrs having their way with nymphs; in all these cases, one just can't play the piece the same way afterwards.

In this way each piece takes on individuality, history, association, colour, so that the pages of the *Lusthof* begin to look more like they must have to a seventeenth-century player: not a long list of strange titles but rather an anthology of well-known favourites. And when performing music in diminution-variation style, in which the given melody forms the spine of each successive variation, the better grasp the performer has of the tune, the more convincing the flow of the variations is likely to be.

Two more comments on texts: from songbooks one can get an idea how well any original text was known once it arrived in the Netherlands: we find everything from the hopelessly garbled ("Si vous ne voulez me guerir" is found as "Si voez mene voule gare") to a case such as "Amarilli mia bella," in which a complete literal translation is printed right alongside the Italian original (see example 6).

Furthermore, the Dutch songbooks sometimes lead to a text for a piece of music with which no text had been associated before; for example, that apparently quintessentially instrumental "Nightingale" tune found in many seventeenth-century keyboard settings (and also, in our century, in Ottorino Respighi's *The Birds*) has a full text.

There is one final link of the *Lusthof* to the songbooks of the time. We have seen that the titles, origins and nature of the melodic repertoire of Van Eyck's work matches those of the songbooks. So it will not be a surprise to find that their intended audience is also demonstrably similar. Recent sociological research into the Dutch songbook culture has shown that the songbooks of the early seventeenth century were aimed at a well-to-do, young, unmarried public with money in its pocket and love on its mind.[6]

It turns out that for at least a decade before the *Lusthof* was printed, Jacob van Eyck played the recorder in public in Utrecht's Janskerkhof. From poems of the time we know that the Janskerkhof, then the second-largest green area in Utrecht (now a parking lot) was, in the evening, a magnet for strolling and flirting. In the same lofty poems that describe the amorous atmosphere, Van Eyck is mentioned by name and his music praised as adding to the mood.[7] So at least on balmy evenings in Utrecht in the 1640s, the worlds of the *Lusthof* and the *liedboek* coincided.

We have seen how useful the songbook repertoire can be in fleshing out Van Eyck's *Lusthof*. Similar work could be done for other Dutch instrumental collections of the time. The usefulness of this work extends beyond Dutch music though: precisely *because* the Dutch were such borrowers and so few of their melodies were homegrown, and because the information in the songbooks is so interconnected and overlapping, identities of melodies end up — in the increasingly international musical language of the seventeenth century — providing information about the origin and spread of music from all over Europe, from Caccini and Gastoldi in Italy to Dowland and Bull in England. Yet within the field of music history, Dutch songbooks are a little-known and underused resource.

NOTES

1 The *Lusthof* was published by Paulus Matthysz in Amsterdam, in two volumes and various editions, beginning with *Euterpe oft Speel-goddinne* (1644, a "pre-edition" of the *Lusthof* part one) and continuing with two editions apiece for *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* part one (1649, 1655) and part two (1646, 1654). Twelve copies of one or another volume are known to be extant; modern editions abound.

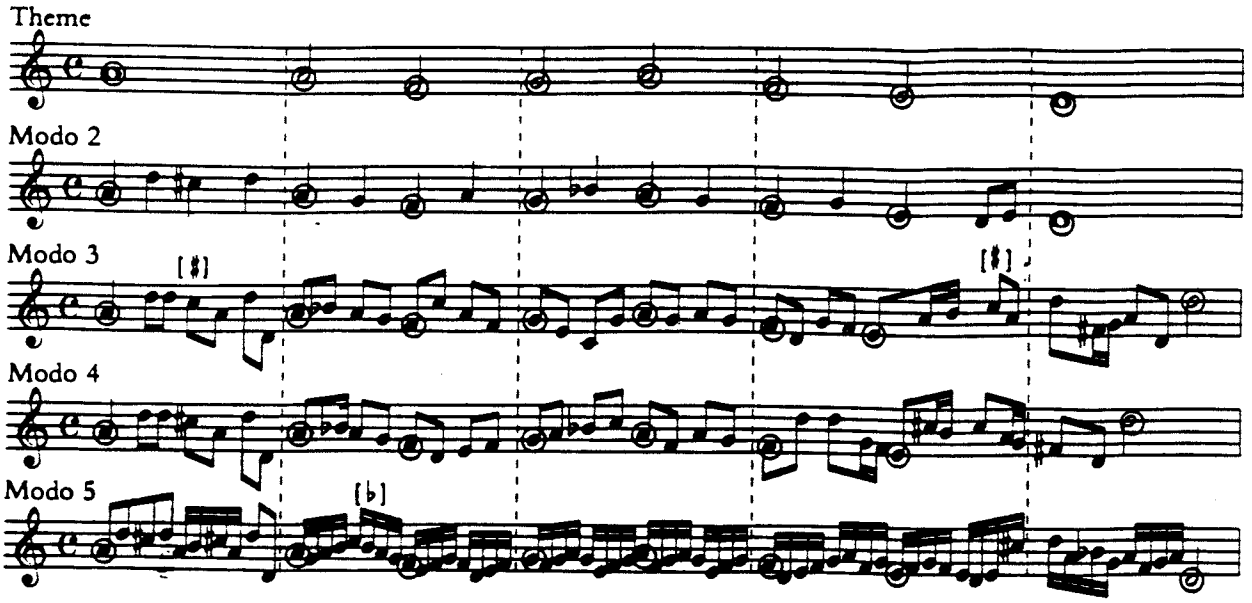
2 For further information on Van Eyck's life and work, see the author's *Jacob van Eyck's Der Fluyten Lusthof (1644-1655)* (Utrecht: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1991), especially chapter 2.

[3] Two reference books are also essential guides to using Dutch songbooks: 1) D. F. Scheurleer's *Nederlandsche Liedboeken* (1912-1923), reprint ed. Utrecht: HES, 1977), which covers all Dutch songbooks, both sacred and secular, with and without music, but in a manner incomplete by current biographical standards; whereas 2) C.A. Höweler & F.H. Matter's *Fontes Hymnodiae Neerlandicae Impressi 1539-1700* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1985; Bibliotheca Bibliographica Neerlandica XVIII) is of excruciating thoroughness, but covers only sacred collections containing music.

[4] The national origins of the *Lusthof* tunes came out to be roughly 40% French, 30% English, 25% Dutch and 5% "Other" (Spanish, Italian, German, Latin liturgical) when the "Dutch" category included cases in which a tune of unknown origin, but with a Dutch title, would be called "Dutch" by default. With the use of educated guesses, the percentages might look more like 50% French, 30% English, 10% Other, and 10% tunes truly of Dutch origin.

[5] Louis Grijp, *Het Nederlandse lied in de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: P.J. Meertens-Instituut, 1991), 321.

[6] E.K. Grootes, "Het jeugdig publiek van de 'nieuwe liedboeken' in het eerste kwart van de zeventiende eeuw," in: W. van den Berg and J. Stouten, *Het woord aan de lezer* (Groningen, 1987), 72-88.



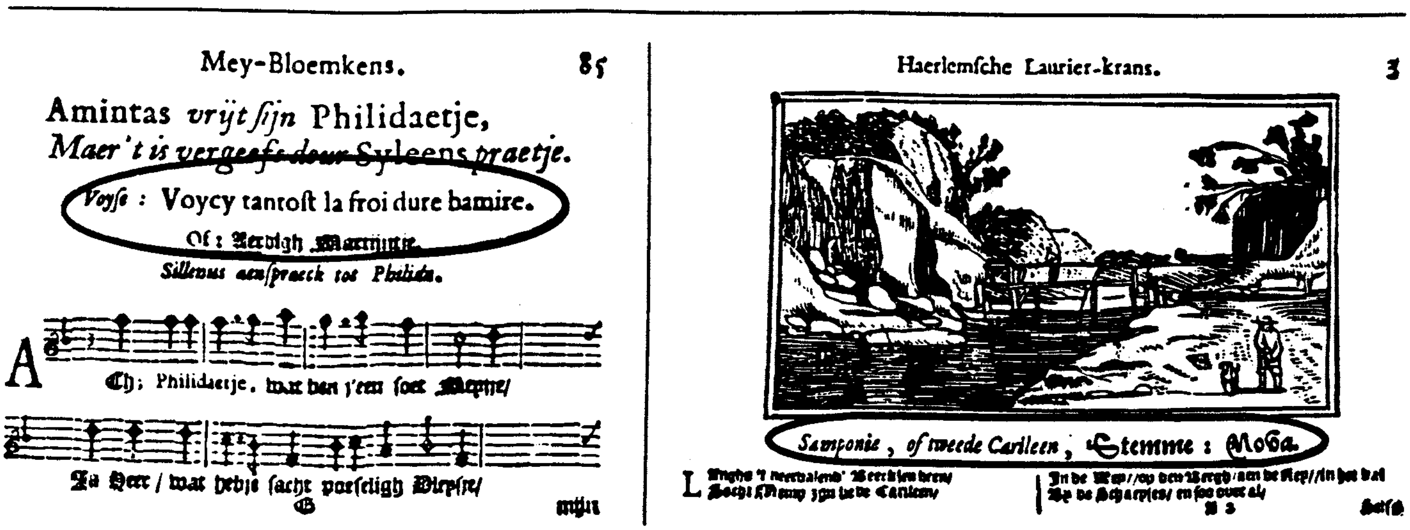
Example 1. The first phrase of the theme and four variations on "Onse Vader in Hemelryck" from Jacob van Eyck's *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* (Amsterdam, 1649). Circled notes show the tune as it surfaces in the variations.

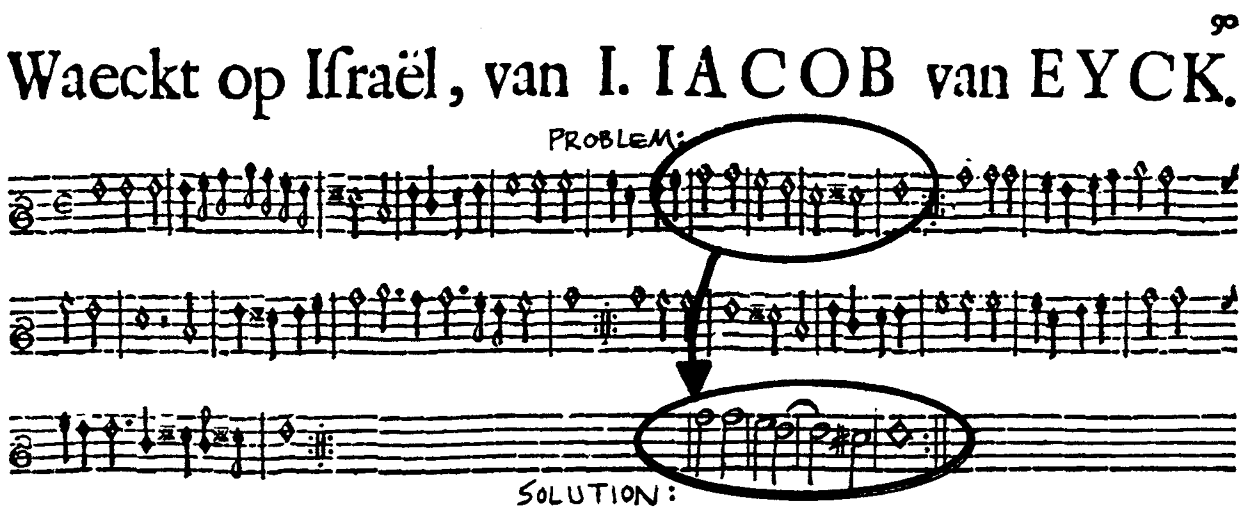
BLADT-WYZER.

tot der FLUYTEN LUST-HOF.

REGISTER. Tot der Fluyten LUST-HOF. 2de Deel

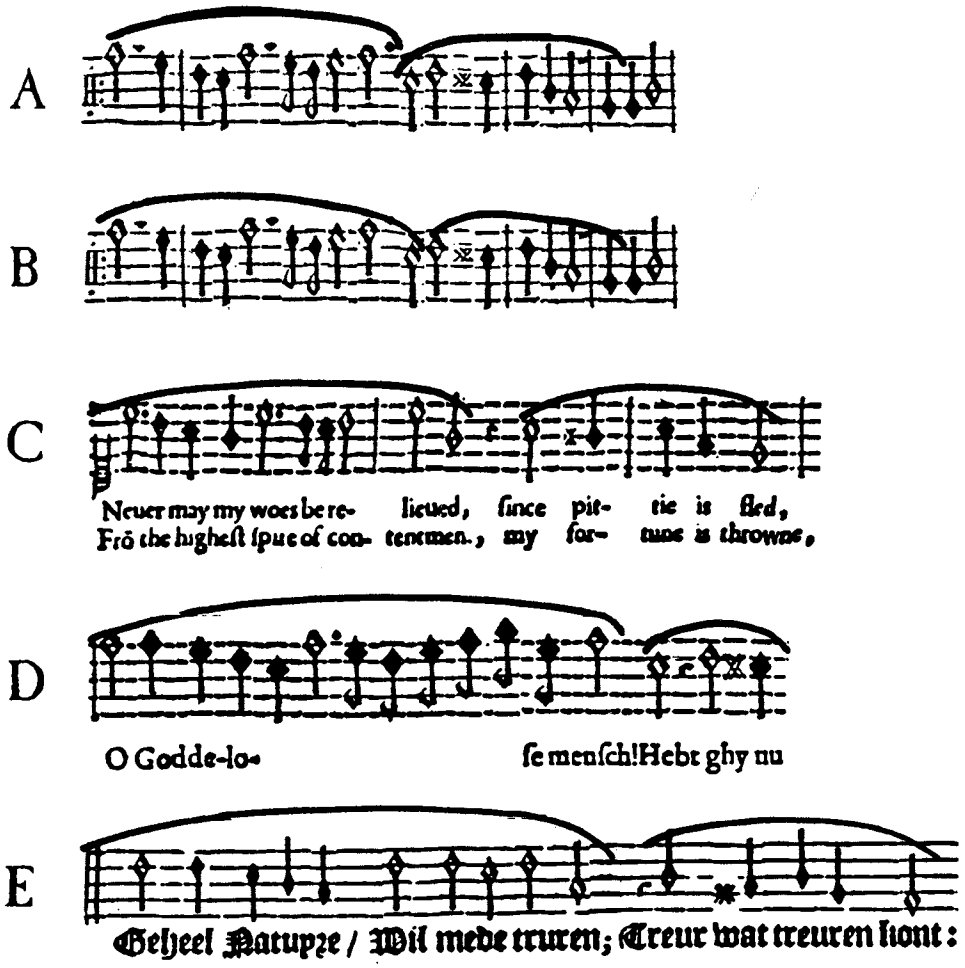
Example 2. The table of contents of the *Lusthof* parts one and two. A first glance shows titles that are mostly Dutch, with a fair amount of French and a few of uncertain linguistic parentage.





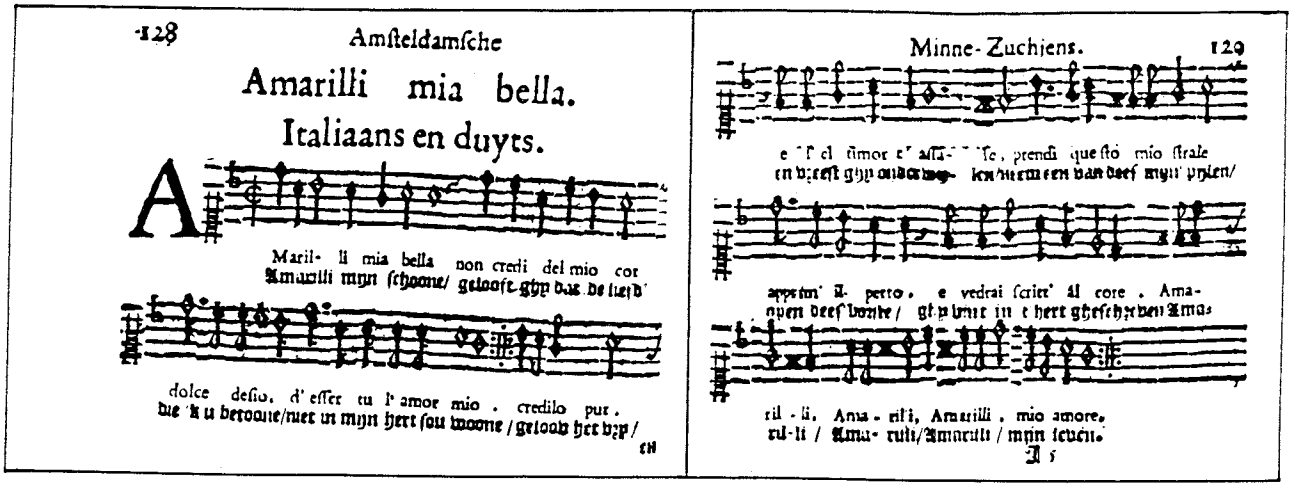
Top: Example 3. Tune-indications (circled) with and without music. At left, the music of a tune called "Aerdigh Martyntje" in the *Lusthof*, here cited also by its original French text ("Voyse: Voycy tantost la froidure bamire," that is, "Sing to the tune of 'Voycy tantost...'"). At right, a text is set to a tune referred to as "Tweede Carileen," with the singularly unhelpful addition, "Tune: New." [Left: *Haerlemse Meibloempjes*, 1649, 85; right: *Nieu dubbelt Haerlems ... Laurier-Krans*, 1645, part II, 3).

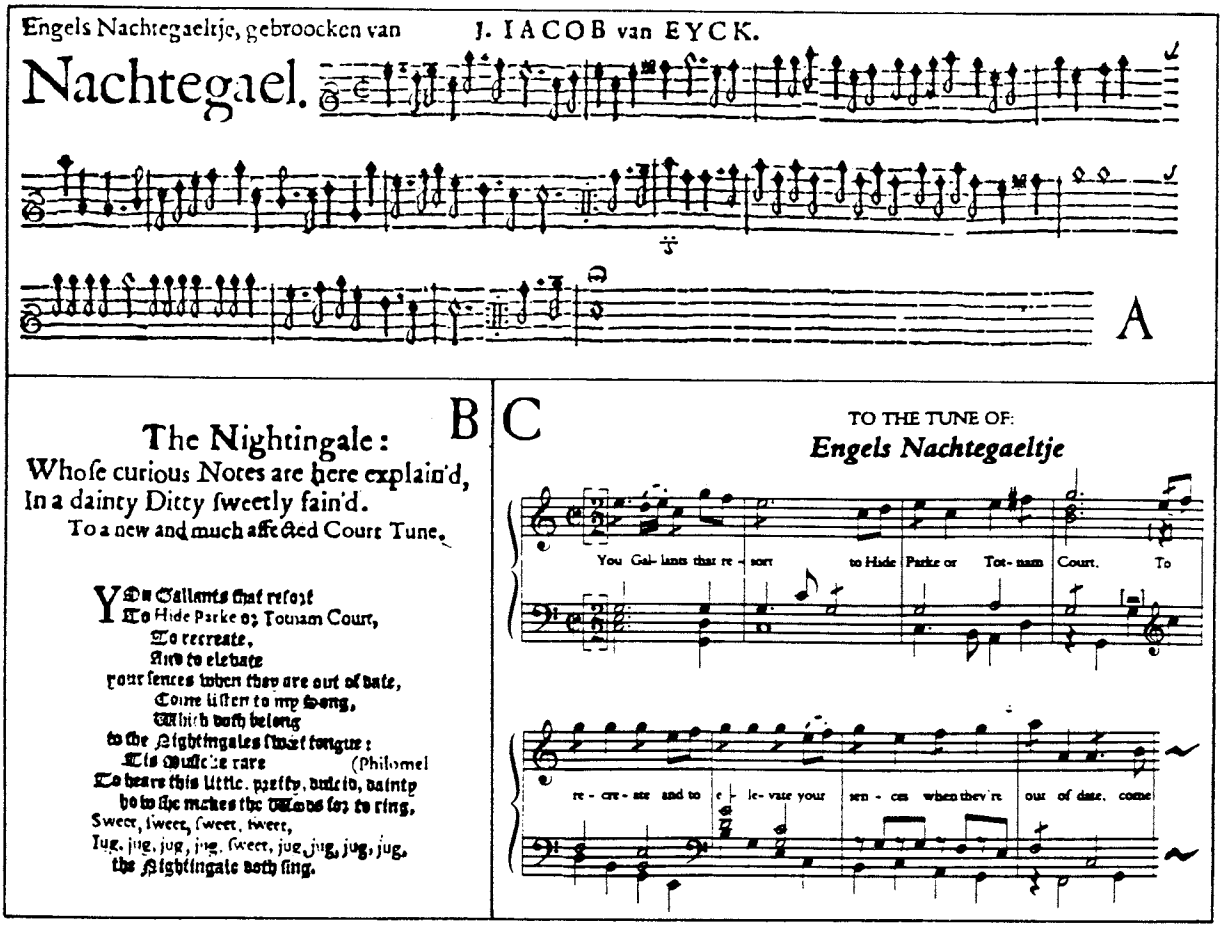
Bottom: Example 4. The circled melodic cadence is extremely unlikely for its time. Versions of the same tune from songbooks of the time enable a correction, to the second version shown.



Top: Example 5. Where does this phrase cadence, to the high note [5A] or a falling cadence after it [5B]? Either way is musically plausible.The text of the original Dowland air shows which way the composer of the tune had in mind [5C]. Interestingly enough, Dutch songbook contrafacta on this tune make use of both strategies [5D, 5E]. 5D (from D.R. Camphuysen's *Stichtelijcke Rymen*, 1624 &c) cadences after the fall, whereas 5E (from A. Valerius' *Nederlandtsche Gedenck-clanck*, 1626) cadences to the high note.

Bottom: Example 6. Caccini's masterpiece, "Amarilla mia bella" was one of the few tunes to arrive in Dutch contrafact culture with its original text intact. Here the Italian original and Dutch translation appear together (in the *Amsteldamsche Minnezuchjens* of 1643.





Example 7. The instrumental tune known as "The Nightingale" (7A) in the seventeenth century fits note-for-note (7C) with an English ballad (7B) of the same name (tune and text both come from England, 1630s; it is still unclear which came first). Text source: *Roxburghe Ballads*, I:296.