

## MUSIC SUPPLEMENT TO LUTE NEWS 33 (JANUARY 1995): THE COMPLETE LUTE MUSIC OF ROB[ERT] ASCUE

This tablature supplement includes the complete lute music of Mr. Rob(ert). Ascue, Askue, or Askew. Unfortunately, he cannot be identified other than from the ascriptions to the music here, as there is no reference to him in court records, or amongst the records of the households of potential patrons.<sup>1</sup> However, it seems very likely that the music was written by him rather than being dedicated to him from the title of the first piece, so that he was probably a composer of music for the lute. He left us three solos and a duet treble in renaissance tuning all in typical English 'Golden Age' style revealing little of individual character, which are nevertheless worthy of a place on the music stand of twentieth century lutenists. It is a bonus that the music includes an English lute duet to add to those already available in modern editions and I am very grateful to Stewart McCoy for reconstructing a ground to fit the orphan treble. The cittern solo entitled *Conceipte Rob Ascue*, on ff. 6v-7r of Cambridge University Library MS Dd.4.23, c.1595 is presumably by the same composer, and it may even be a cittern arrangement of a lost lute solo and is transcribed for lute here. Ascue's music is not found in modern editions, except no. 2, in a keyboard transcription, 'Gigg' in *An Anthology of English Lute Music* by David Lumsden, (Schott, 1953), no. 34, and as lute tablature in *The Compleat Beginner* by Anthony Rooley (Early Music Publications, 1976), no. 43.

Ascue's variations on the tune known as 'Bonny sweete Robin' from a ballad registered in 1594 is quite different from the many other solo lute versions. One source is ascribed to Ascue and another three are nearly identical concordances. The setting in the Euing lute book comprises four variations on a 24-bar sequence of 8-bar sections an A and B strain and a division on the B strain. The other sources are all truncated versions of the second and third variations only, two identical and in the same tonality and the fourth transposed down a tone with the A and B strain exactly the same but the B strain division quite different. Cognate versions include the settings in D minor, by John Dowland in GB-Cu Dd.9.33, ff. 29v-30r *Robin Jo Dowland*; the Jane Pickeringe lute book (GB-Lbl Eg.2046), f. 22v *Sweet Robyne* & f. 35r *Sweet Robyn*; Fuhrmann 1615, pp. 114-115 *Galliarda 6.J.D.* [Poulton and Lam, *The Collected Lute Music of John Dowland* (Faber, 1974/R 1078 & 1981), no. 70] and by Thomas Robinson in *The Schoole of Musicke* (London 1603), sig. Iiiv *Robin is to the greenwood gone*, as well as the anonymous versions in GB-Cu Dd.2.11, f. 53r: *Robin*; GB-Gu Euing 25, f. 3r: untitled; IRL-Dtc 408/II, p. 113: *Robin hood is to the greenwood gone*, and the versions in C minor in US-Ws V.b.280 (Folger), f. 16v: *Robin is to the Greene wood Gonn*; GB-Lam 601 (Mynshall), f. 8r: *Bonny sweete Robin*; D-Kl 4<sup>o</sup>.108/2 Montbuysson, f. 3v *Schön wehr ich gern*; GB-Lam 603 (Board), f. 12v: *Bony Sweete Robin*; IRL-Dtc 408/I (William Ballet), p. 27 *Bonny Sweet Robin*. A duet part for lute also survives in GB-Cu Dd.3.18, f. 11r *Robin is to the Greenwood gone*,

which may have been intended to go with the bass viol part in GB-Cu Dd.5.20, f. 3r *Robin is to the G: gone*; as well as settings for cittern in Holborne 1597, sig. D2 *Bonny sweet Robin*; for lute in GB-Cu Nn.6.36, ff. 19v-20r *Robin*; for viola da gamba in the the Manchester Gamba Book (GB-Mp BRm 832 Vu 51), pp. 14-15 *Roben is to the greenewood gone Richard Sumarte*; for keyboard in Will Forster Virginal Book (GB-Lbl RM24.d.3), p. 430 *Robin Hood*; US-NYp Drexel 5612, p. 192 *Bonny sweet Robin* by William Byrd; Fitzwilliam Virginal Book (GB-Cfm 168), pp. 32-33 *Robin Jhon Munday* & pp. 234-236 *Bonny sweet Robin 9 Giles Farnaby*; GB-Lbl Add.17786, f. 15r *My Robin is to the*; GB-Lbl Add.23623, f. 13v *Bonni well Robin van Doctr Jan Bull*; and for instrumental ensemble in Thomas Simpson *Taffel-Consort* 1621, n<sup>o</sup> 29 *Ricervar*. Similarly titled settings of a different tune are found for lute in GB-Cu Dd.2.11, f. 66r *Robin*, and Robinson 1603, p. 46 *Bony sweet boy* and for bandora in GB-Cu Dd.9.33, f. 82r *Bonny sweet boy Band*. Yet other tunes are in IRL-Dtc 408/II, p. 104 *Robin Hood* [lute], and GB-Cu Dd.9.33 f. 81v *Robin Hood Band* [bandora]; US-Ws V.a.159 (Giles Lodge), f. 5r *Robin Hood*; GB-Cu Add.2764(2), f. 12r untitled [lute] and GB-Ob D.247, f. 47r [keyboard]. See John Ward, 'Apropos The British Broadside Ballad and Its Music', *J. Amer. Mus. Soc.*, 20, pp. 28-86, 1967. [Additional: all versions of the Robin tunes and an extended list of concordances and cognates can be found in *Lute News* and *Lutezine* 106 (July 2013).]

### Worklist

#### 1. Robin

1a. GB-Gu Euing 25 ff. 46v-47r *Robin boode p[er] Mr Ascue*

1b. GB-Gu Euing 25, f. 31r untitled

1c. GB-Cu Add.3056, f. 32v *Robin galliard*

1d. GB-Lbl Add.31392, f. 25r *Jolly Robin* [C minor] [nearly identical transcription] identified by Martin Shepherd  
A section of 2 strains of 4 and 8 bars each with divisions is the unit on which 4 complete variations are based. This version is in D minor for lute with a seventh course tuned to D.

2a. GB-Cu Dd.2.11, f. 100r *A Gigg. R Askue*

2b. GB-Cu Dd.5.78.3, ff. 33r-32v untitled

Three strains of 4 bars in D minor with a seventh course tuned to D.

3. GB-Cu Dd.2.11, f. 80r *Askews galliard*

Three strains of 8 bars each with divisions, in F major for 6 course lute. I have substituted an open note on a seventh course in F for A on the sixth in the original throughout.

4. Galliard, treble and ground duet.

GB-Cu Dd.9.33, f. 88v R. *Askue* - LUTE I: treble

Two strains of 8 bars, each with divisions, for 6 course lute.

LUTE II: ground, reconstructed by Stewart McCoy and reproduced with permission

5. GB-Cu Dd.4.23, ff. 6v-7r *Conceipte Rob Ascue* - cittern and lute transcription

*John H Robinson - January 1995/Revised June 2022*

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Andrew Ashbee and Lynn Hulse for this information.

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a

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a

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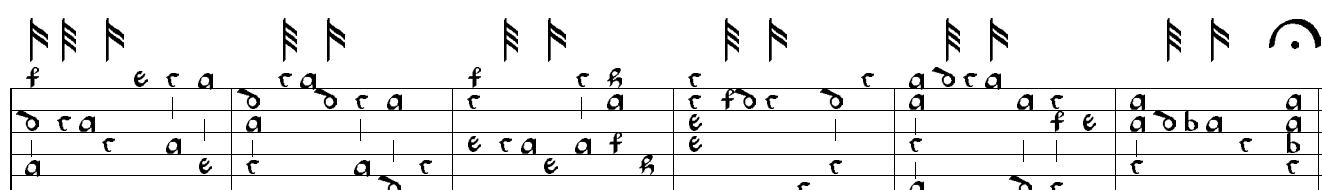
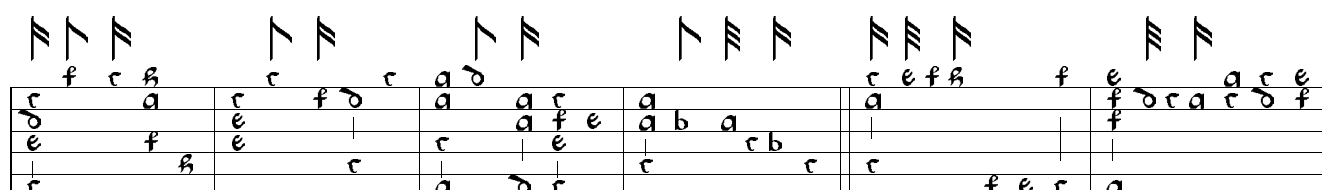
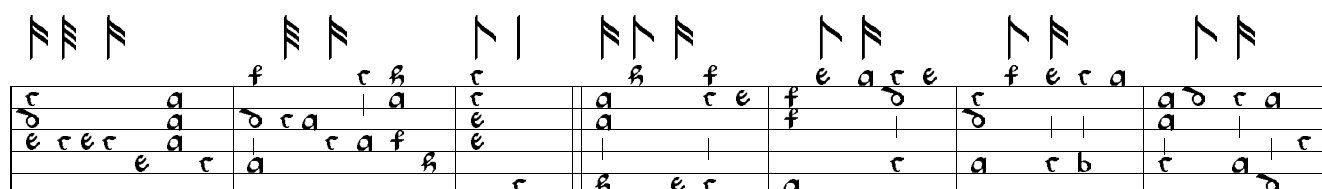
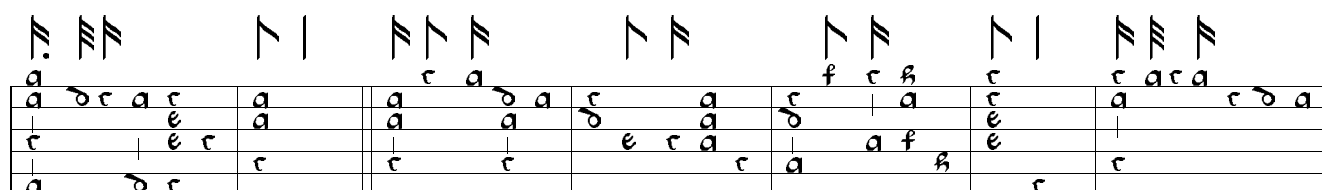
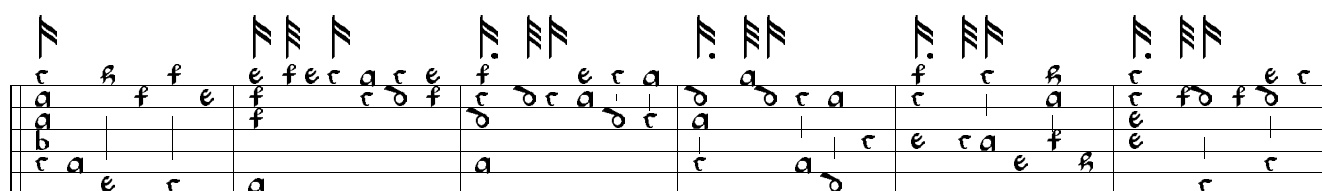
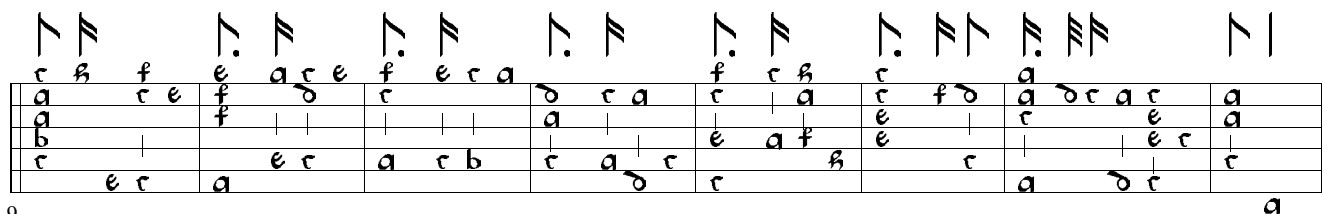
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## 1c. Robin Galliard - Robert Ascue - 2xABB8

GB-Cu Add.3056, f. 32v



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## 2a. A Gigge - Robert Ascue - 7D ABC4

GB-Cu Dd.2.11, f. 100r

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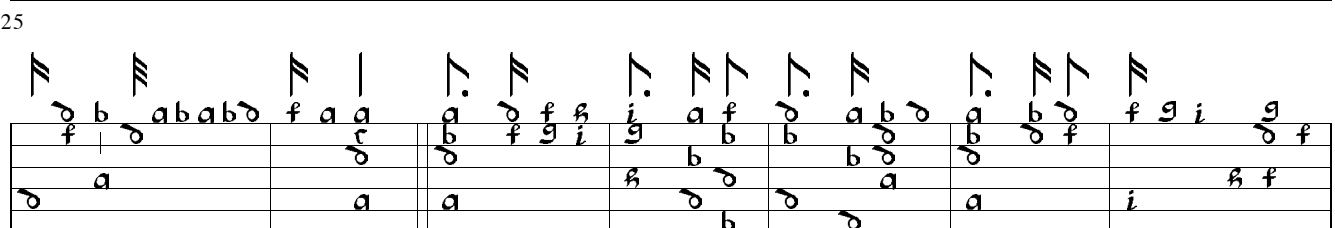
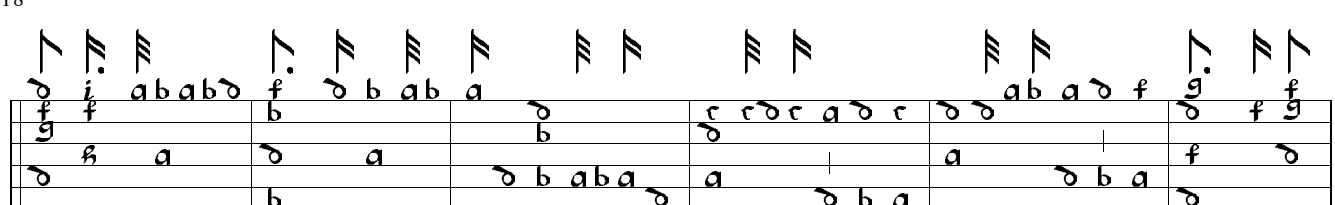
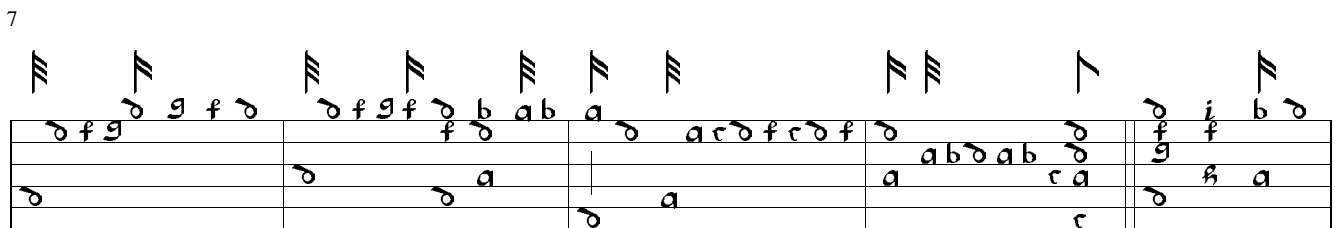
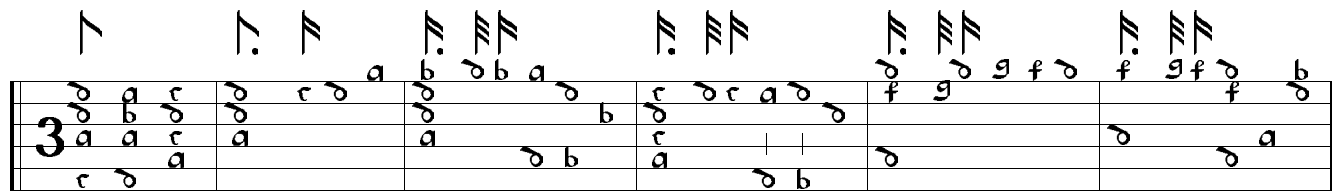
## 2b. Untitled - Robert Ascue - 7D ABC4

GB-Cu Dd.5.78.3, ff. 33r-32v

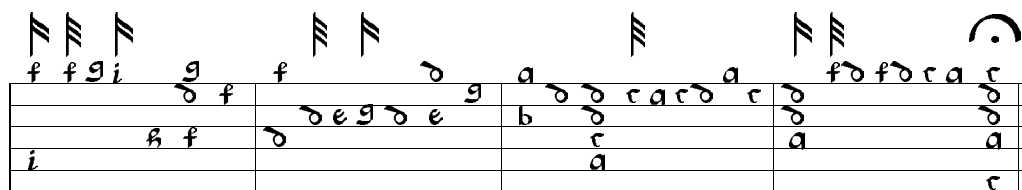
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## 3. Galliard - Robert Ascue - AABBC8

GB-Cu Dd.2.11, f. 80r



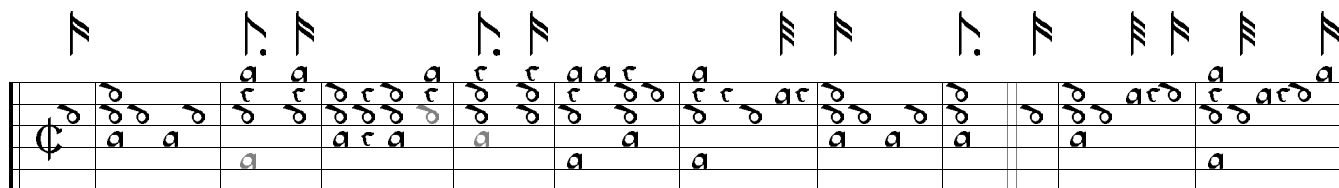




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App. Pretty Nancy - cittern lute transcription 3x8bars

GB-Cu Dd.4.23, f. 6v



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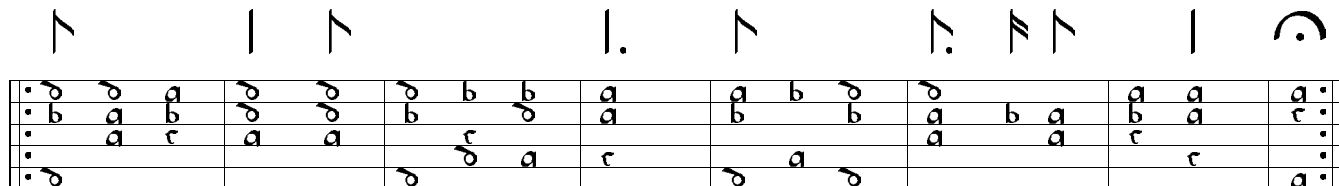
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4b. Galliard - Robert Ascue - ground AB8

Reconstructed by Stewart McCoy



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4a. Galliard - Robert Ascue - treble AABB8

GB-Cu Dd.9.33, f. 88v

	d c d a r	e a e	a r a r d c a r d c a	e a e	d c d f d f h f h i f h i h f	i
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e			i	d abd ar d
era				

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[illegible]

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				dra
				r

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## 5a. Concepte - Robert Ascue - cittern AABBB

GB-Cu Dd.4.23, ff. 6v-7r

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## 5b. Concepte - Robert Ascue - lute transcription AABBB

GB-Cu Dd.4.23, ff. 6v-7r

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