

GIBBONS ORGAN MUSIC TRANSPOSED

The lowest note, C, of the normal organ in the England of Gibbons' day corresponded to F in written vocal music and had a 5' pipe (around the pitch of today's G). Thus it is likely that most of the pieces written for organ sounded about a fifth higher than when played on an instrument pitched at $a = 440$. In the case of many of the pieces, transposing them up makes musical sense. For instance the plainsong of MB 48 having d as its main note lies in a more comfortable vocal range, while several pieces with semiquaver runs in the left hand have lightness and clarity which is lost when played at modern pitch.

Large organs built at the beginning of the 17th century were pitched an octave lower with C 10'. This was the case in Westminster Abbey where Gibbons was organist. Some of his fantasies seem to have been written with such instruments in mind, in particular the *Fancie for Double Organ* - the title probably referring to a 10' rather than 5' organ: (The piece is clearly not written for two manuals as has been thought simply because, later in the seventeenth century the expression 'double organ' meant a two-manual instrument.)

The Early English Organ Project has produced two instruments on which the music in the category 5' can be played as originally written sounding at the higher pitch. I have transcribed these piece transposed so that they may be played on normal instruments at the pitch at which they probably sounded in Gibbons' day. The 10' pieces may be played on the few G-compass organs that survive in England, or played an octave higher than written here on organs with a 16' diapason on the manual.