

# La famille Playford : des artisans du livre

Par Cécile LAYE

La famille de John Playford prend racine dans la région de Norwich à l'Est de l'Angleterre. Les Playford travaillent dans la vente et l'édition du livre, en particulier les livres scientifiques et musicaux. C'est une famille considérée qui porte blason et qui a des liens avec l'Écosse.

À la mort de son père, en 1639, le John Playford qui nous occupe a 17 ans. Il part tenter sa chance à Londres et il devient l'apprenti d'un certain Benson, pendant sept ans. En 1647, il ouvre une boutique près de Temple Church, qui va vite devenir le haut lieu de l'édition musicale de la capitale.

Peu de temps après avoir publié la première édition du «*Dancing Master*» (enregistrée et soumise à la draconienne censure de Cromwell le 7 novembre 1650 et publiée en mars 1651), Playford se marie avec la fille d'éditeurs d'ouvrages de théologie et de politique. Ayant hérité de son père, madame Playford fera l'acquisition d'une grande maison qu'elle transformera en école, jusqu'à sa mort en 1679.

Playford confie l'impression de la 6<sup>ème</sup> et de la 7<sup>ème</sup> édition du «*Dancing Master*» à son neveu. Ce sont les dernières à être éditées sous son nom. En 1684, John Playford passe la main à son fils Henry. Il meurt 2 ans plus tard, respecté de tous. Purcell compose une élégie pour celui qui aura été son ami et son éditeur.

Henry Playford conduira les éditions du «*Dancing Master*» à partir de la 8<sup>ème</sup> en 1690, et jusqu'à sa mort en 1706. Il va beaucoup renouveler le matériel chorégraphique des éditions dont il aura la charge, en renonçant à beaucoup de danses publiées par son père afin d'en privilégier de nouvelles plus conformes aux goûts du jour et aux exigences d'une société qui a déjà beaucoup changé. C'est John Young, un luthier, qui publiera les dernières éditions, lesquelles font figure de mémoire de la contredanse.

Au fil du temps, les éditions vont pas mal se transformer, et notamment la musique deviendra plus lisible : dans la 1<sup>ère</sup> édition, beaucoup de mélodies ne présentent pas de barres de mesure. Elles sont proposées pour la viole. Mais dès la 3<sup>ème</sup> édition, les mélodies sont mesurées et transposées pour le violon. Dans la 11<sup>ème</sup> édition, en 1701, la musique est écrite à l'aide de «*nouveaux caractères*» : les croches sont reliées et les notes sont rondes et non plus losangiques.

Pour illustrer ces transformations, nous reproduisons ci-dessous différentes versions de la danse «*Cuckolds all arrow*». Cette «*vieille danse anglaise*» réclamée par le roi Charles II au bal de Whitehall du 31 décembre 1662 devant Samuel Pepys qui relatera la soirée dans son journal, sera publiée dans toutes les éditions successives, alors que «*Rufty Tufty*», autre carré pour deux couples, sera abandonné dès la 2<sup>ème</sup> édition !

Samuel Pepys, qui jouait du flageolet, de la viole de gambe, du luth, du théorbe, du clavecin et qui, pardessus tout, adorait chanter, connaissait bien John Playford, comme tous les mélomanes londoniens de cette époque. Le célèbre diariste le mentionne plusieurs fois dans son journal : c'est chez lui qu'il achetait les dernières partitions de Henry Lawes, Christopher Simpson, Matthew Locke et Henry Purcell.

*Books printed for and sold by Henry Playford at his Shop in the Temple-Change  
in Fleet-Street.*

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Livres imprimés et vendus par Henry Playford.

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Sur les trois reproductions suivantes,  
on peut voir l'évolution de la table des symboles utilisés par Playford

A T A B L E Explaining the Characters which are set downe in the Dances,

A Double is foure steps forward or back, closing both feet.

A Single is two steps, closing both feet.

Set and turne single, is a single to one hand, and a single to the other, and turne single.

D.	Is for a Double.
S.	Is for a Single.
Wo.	Stands for woman.
We.	Stands for women.
Cu.	Stands for Couple.
Co.	Stands for Contrary.
2.	Stands for second.
3.	Stands for third.
4.	Stands for fourth.
.	Stands for a straine playd once.
∴	Stands for a straine playd twice.
∴∴	Stands for a straine playd thrice, &c.

These Characters expresse the Figure of the Dance.

☾ This stands for the Men.

○ This for the women.

The sex-symbols at the foot of this Table were incorrectly printed by Playford. The symbol ○ should have been for men, ☾ for women.

A T A B L E of the Explanation of the several Characters made use of in this Book.

D. ———	Stands for Double. A Double is four steps forward and backward, closing both Feet.
S. ———	Single. A Single is two Steps, closing both Feet.
Set and turn S. }	Is a Single to one hand, and a Single to the other, and turn Single.
Wo. ———	Stands for Woman.
We. ———	Women.
Cu. ———	Couple.
Co. ———	Contrary.
1. ———	First.
2. ———	Second.
3. ———	Third.
4. ———	Fourth.
Proper ———	Is when the Men and Women are on their own Sides.
Improper ———	Is when the Men are on the Woman's side, or the Women on the Men's side.
. ———	For a Strain of the Tune played once over.
∴ ———	For a Strain twice over.
∴∴ ———	For a Strain thrice over.
☾ ———	This stands for the Men's Places in the Figure on the top of each Page.
○ ———	This stands for the Women's Places in the Figure on the top of each Page.

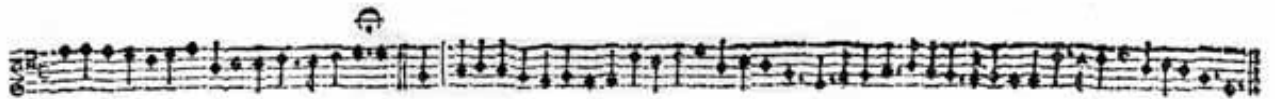
The Figure half round, is the Hey half round.  
The whole Figure, is the Hey all four round.

**A TABLE explaining several Characters , which are set down in the *Rules for Dancing.***

D.	Is for <i>Double.</i> A <i>Double</i> is four steps forward and backward closing both Feet.	
S.	Is for a <i>Single.</i> A <i>Single</i> is two steps closing both Feet.	
	<i>Set and turn Single.</i> Is a <i>Single</i> to one hand, and <i>Single</i> to the other, and turn <i>Single.</i>	
Wo.	Stands for <i>Woman.</i>	
We	Stands for <i>Women.</i>	
Cu.	Stands for <i>Couple.</i>	
Co.	Stands for <i>Contrary.</i>	
2.	} Stands for {	
3.		} <i>Second.</i>
4.		
·	} <i>Fourth.</i>	
·		This is for a <i>Strain</i> play'd once.
·	This is for a <i>Strain</i> twice	
These two Characters express the Figure of the <i>Dance.</i>		
●	This stands for the <i>Men.</i>	
○	This stands for the <i>Women.</i>	

**L'évolution de la partition musicale de  
« *Cuckolds all a row* », de la 1<sup>ère</sup> à la 17<sup>ème</sup> édition :**

*Cuckolds all a row*      *For foure*      ○ ●



Meet all forwards and backe .: That againe .:	Turne back to back to the Co. We. faces againe, goe about the Co. We. not turning your faces .: Turne back to back to your owne, faces againe, goe about your owne not turning faces .:
Sides all with your owne .: Sides with the Co. .:	Men change places We. change places, hands all, goe round .: We. change places, men change places, hands all and goe round, to your places .:
Armes all with your own .: Arms with the Co. .:	Men put the Co. We. back by both hands, fall even on the Co. side men cast off to the right hand, your We. following, come to the same place againe .: put them back again, fall on your owne side, men cast off to the left hand, and come to your places, the We. following .:

« *Cuckolds all a row* », 1<sup>ère</sup> édition.

Cuckolds all a Row.

For four, or eight.



The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). It contains a melody with various note values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, along with rests. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a common time signature (C) and contains a bass line with similar note values and rests. There are some markings above the top staff, possibly indicating phrasing or dynamics.

Meet all forwards and back  
again :

That Turn back to back to the Co. We. faces again, go about the Co. We. not turning your faces. Turn back to back to your own, faces again go above your own not turning faces :

Sides all with your own  
We: : C. :

Sides Men change places, We. change places, hands all, go round. We. change places, men change places, hands all and go round, to your places :

Arms all with your own  
We: the Co. :

Arms Men put the Co. We back by both hands, fall even on the Co. side, men cast off to the right, your We. following come to the same place again. Put them back again, fall on your own side, men cast off to the left hand, and come to your places, the We. following :

« Cuckolds all a row », 4<sup>ème</sup> édition.

Cuckolds all a row.

For four, or eight.



The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). It contains a melody with various note values including quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, along with rests. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a common time signature (C) and contains a bass line with similar note values and rests. There are some markings above the top staff, possibly indicating phrasing or dynamics.

Meet all forwards and back  
That again :

Turn back to back with the co. we. faces again, go about the co. we. not turning your faces. Turn back to back to your own, faces again, go above your own, not turning faces :

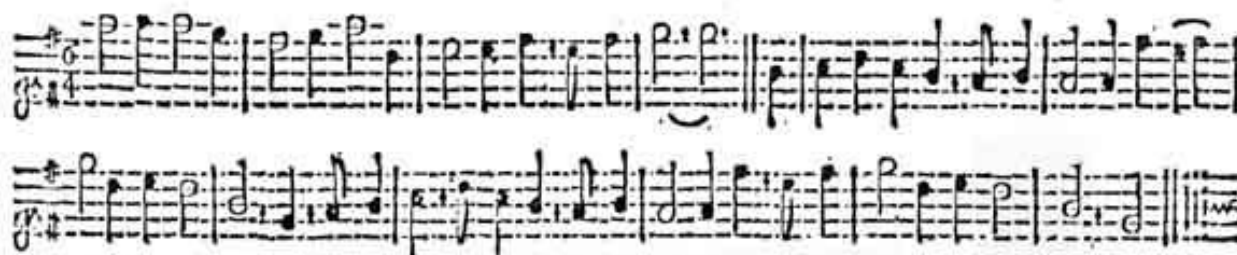
Sides all with your own  
Sides with the co. :

Men change places, we. change places, hands all, go round. We change places, men change places, hands all and go round to your places :

Arms all with your own  
Arms with the co. :

Men put the co. we. back by both hands, fall even on the co. side, men cast off to the right, your we. following come to the same place again. Put them back again, fall on your own side, men cast off to the left hand and come to your places, the we. following :

« Cuckolds all a row », 10<sup>ème</sup> édition.



Meet all forwards and back. Turn back to back with the co. We. faces again, go about the co. We  
That again. not turning your faces. Turn back to back to your own, faces  
again, go above your own, not turning faces.

Sides all with your own. Men change places, We. change places, hands, all go round. We. change  
Sides with the co. places, Men change places, hands all and go round to your places.

Arms all with your own. Men put the co. We. back by both hands, fall even on the co. side,  
Arms with the co. Men cast off to the right, your We. following come to the same place  
again. Put them back again, fall on your own side, Men cast off to  
to the Left-hand and come to your places, the We. following.

C 1