

PREFACE TO THE FACSIMILE REPRODUCTION
OF THE ORIGINAL EDITION OF
GOTTFRIED KIRCHHOFF'S
L'A.B.C. MUSICAL
CONTENANT DES PRELUDES ET DES FUGUES LES TONS
POUR L'ORGUE, OU LE CLAVECIN . . .
AMSTERDAM, c. 1734

ANNOTATED, AND REALIZED
FOR BASSO CONTINUO
by
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The first known reference to Gottfried Kirchoff's *L'ABC Musical* is found in the first part of F. W. Marpurg's *Abhandlung von der Fuge* (1753), where he refers to the composers' "well-known fugues in all 24 keys."² Although Marpurg does not mention the title, *L'ABC Musical*, he clearly is referring to Kirchoff's publication. Since the collection in fact contains preludes and fugues in only 16 and not 24 keys, it is evident that Marpurg either had never seen or only glanced at the volume. His confusion about the contents likely stems from the title's reference to preludes and fugues in "all keys" ["tous les Tons"], by which Kirchoff presumably means "all commonly-used keys." (There is no reason to believe that the publication originally included 24 preludes and fugues, since at the end of the edition we find the unequivocal notation "Fine.") The same is the case with the authors of nineteenth-century publications,

¹The edition was published by "Compozitor," St. Petersburg, Russia, 2004. An English translation of the preface forms the basis of the present essay.

²F. W. Marpurg, *Abhandlung von der Fuge* . . . Berlin, 1753 (pp. 149–50): "When the late Music Director Kirchoff of Halle systematically indicated the accompanying harmonies by means of figures in his well-known fugues in all 24 keys, he did so to teach his students the basso continuo along with the various ways of entering voices in a fugue."