

Anthoni van Noordt (c. 1619–75) published his *Tabulatuurboeck van Psalmen en Fantasyen* in 1659, making it one of the oldest sources of organ music from the Netherlands. This may seem surprising, given the rapid growth of interest in organ music and organ building nearly everywhere in Europe in the first half of the century. According to Leon Berben, this book of 10 psalm variations and 6 fantasies was designed for the small organ in the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam, not Van Noordt's own large instrument at the city's Nieuwerijds Kapel.

Berben suggests Van Noordt might have conceived his anthology of tablatures as a kind of primer for organists interested in learning how to improvise – a stock in trade for every organist. Among his improvisations one may observe a full range of ornaments, including mordents, suspensions, scale-like passages, and trill- and turn-like figures. It shows that organists in the Netherlands were improvising at the keyboard much as Italian and German organists were in this period.

Berben performs these with complete mastery on the Van Hagerbeer organ at the Pieterskerk in Leiden. The oldest parts of the organ date to the 15th Century, but the instrument has seen many changes since. Berben's ornaments and passages sound nimble and light – an excellent performance. © 2023 American Record Guide