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JOAN MYERS, *Editor*

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ORNAMENTATION OF FLEMISH CHANSONS AS FOUND IN THE LUTE DUETS OF FRANCESCO SPINACINO

By LYLE NORDSTROM

As one of the earliest sources among extant lute tablatures, the two lute books of Francesco Spinacino, published by Ottaviano Petrucci in 1507, are of prime importance to both the musicologist and the performer of Renaissance music. All of the chansons intabulated by Spinacino are by fifteenth century Flemish composers, most drawn directly from Petrucci's earlier publications, *Harmonices Odhecaton A.*, *Canti B*, and *Canti C*. In view of the scarcity of information on the performance of Flemish music, these tablatures deserve a more careful inspection than they previously have been given. Only fifteen of the thirty-eight compositions in *Libro Primo* and seven of the forty-three compositions in *Libro Secondo* are found in modern editions, and then mostly in scattered unpublished sources.[1] This neglect is partially due to the destruction of all copies of these lute books during World War II, except for one photostatic copy that fortunately was made by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Included in these two books of tablature are a total of six lute duets, five in *Libro Primo* and one in *Libro Secondo*. They are all transcriptions of Flemish chansons (instrumental and vocal). It is of interest that they are printed in score, one part aligned below the other, since later publishers usually separated the two lute parts, printing them on separate pages or even in separate books (thereby avoiding page turns). Petrucci's method is certainly more advantageous for ensemble, as each performer can see both parts simultaneously. The following compositions are intabulated in this

[1]Twelve of these are found in Benvenuto Disertori, *Le Frottole per Canto e Liuto Intabulate da Franciscus Bossinensis* (1964), pp. 176-247. Three are found in H. Colin Slim, "The Keyboard Ricercar and Fantasia in Italy, ca. 1500-1550, with Reference to Parallel Forms in European Lute Music of the Same Period" (Unpublished dissertation, Harvard University, 1961), pp. 598, 601, and 602. Two are found in Arnold Schering, *Geschichte der Musik in Beispielen* (Leipzig, 1931), Number 63.

way:

Libro Primo:

fol. 11 Juli amours (The original chanson is by Ghiselin)
fol. 16 De tous biens (Hayne)
fol. 19 La Bernadina de Josquin (des Pres)
fol. 21 Je ne fay (Anon)
fol. 23^{v} Jay pris amours (Anon)

Libro Primo:

fol. 38^{v} Fortune desperata (Anon)

The solo chanson settings and these duet settings use different compositional techniques and, consequently, the ornamentation style is slightly different. Only the ornamentation in the duets will be discussed in this article.

In the duets, the tenor and bass are played by one lute (named "Tenor" by Spinacino) while the other lute plays a free diminution of the cantus, occasionally covering almost three octaves. This method of performance was probably quite common around 1500, as Tinctoris gives this description in 1484:

> The lyre which is called the lute, we use at feasts, dances and public and private entertainments, and in this, many Germans are exceedingly renowned. Thus some teams will take the treble of any piece you care to give them and improvise marvellously upon it with such taste that the performance cannot be rivalled. Among such, Pietro Bono (Avogari), lutenist to Ercole, Duke of Ferrara, is in my opinion pre-eminent.

(Later, in talking about the vihuela, a Spanish form of lute, he says:)

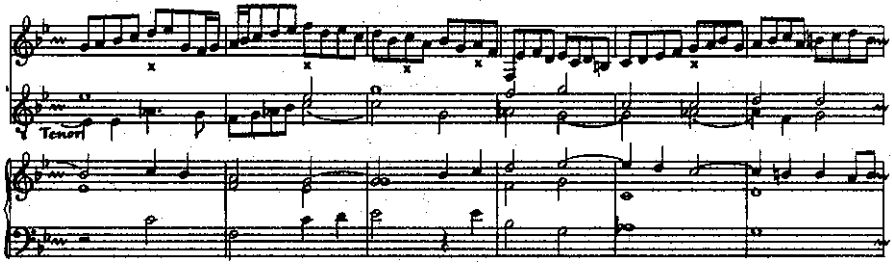
> Nor must I pass over a recent event, the performance of two Flemings, the brothers Charles and Jean Orbus, who are not less learned in letters than skilled in music. At Bruges, I heard Charles take the treble and Jean the tenor in many songs, playing this kind of viola so expertly and with such charm that the viola has never pleased me so well.[2]

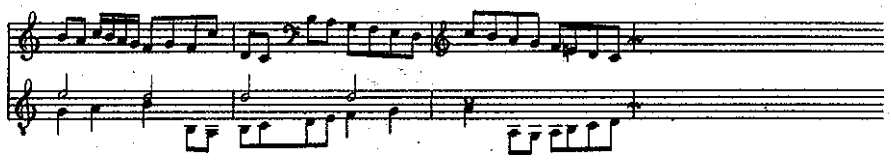
The cantus diminution has constant motion in minims (♩ in the transcription). It is entirely instrumental in character, with many leaps of sevenths and ninths, as well as octave displacement of scales.

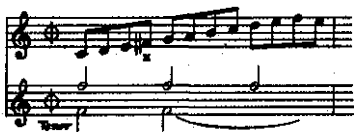
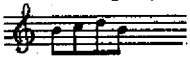
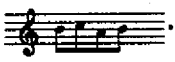
[2]Anthony Baines, "Fifteenth-century Instruments in Tinctoris's 'De Inventione et Usu Musicae,' " *Galpin Society Journal*, III (March, 1950), p. 19.

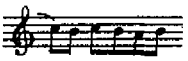
The movement is generally stepwise, but there are many more leaps than are found in the diminutions from the second half of the sixteenth century. The first note of each measure is consonant with the Tenor, but otherwise there is little heed given to consonance and dissonance. Rests are generally overridden.

The following excerpt is one example from the intabulation of "De tous biens." It exemplifies Spinacino's disregard for consonance on strong beats, except at the beginning of each measure. The more striking dissonances have been marked with an "x." This sort of angular line, with a wide range of leaps, is typical of Spinacino's ornamented line.

Ex. 1. "De tous biens," m. 9-14. Spinacino's intabulation and the corresponding measures from the mensural original (transposed)

Octave displacement of notes, especially notes that would have been repeated notes, and sudden changes of tessitura such as those found in Example 2, are also common.

Ex. 2. "La Bernadina de Josquin," m. 30-32

Spinacino, like his contemporary Dalza, rarely follows a strict modal scale, and cross relations are surprisingly frequent. They occur twenty-six times in the setting of "Juli amours" alone.

Ex. 3. "Juli amours," m. 3

In view of extant late Renaissance and Baroque ornamentations, embellishment at cadences might be expected to be more florid than that found in the body of these intabulations. In the solo intabulations, the majority of cadences remain unornamented, even at final cadences and other structurally significant points. Spinacino apparently preferred to gain emphasis by slowing the motion rather than by increasing it. Those cadences that are ornamented display a variety of simple ornaments, the most frequent being  and  .

The *groppo* figure  , which becomes so popular in the publications of Attaingnant and others, is used only occasionally. It is almost never used in the solo intabulations and only sparingly in the duets. Continuous minim motion (♪ in the transcriptions) in the duets may account for Spinacino's use of these particular ornaments. That is, the *groppi* are one degree faster (♬) than the ornamentation directly before or after, thus tending to mark the cadence. Once this figure has been used, Spinacino applies it consistently throughout the piece, almost as a melodic motive. For example, in the intabulation of "De tous biens," the *groppo* is used not only in three of the seven cadences but also in three other places. In "La Bernadina" it is not used at all.

In these duets, then, ornamental figures are used to weave a very free embroidery upon the cantus line. Spinacino has certainly made only the barest starting point of the melody—indeed, one is often hard put to find the original line in these ornamentations. It is equally difficult to discover any consistent rules that he might have followed in the application of ornamental figures.

In view of this apparent caprice, the question must be raised as to whether or not a valid system of early Renaissance ornamentation can be derived from these tablatures. It is entirely possible that the dissonance and cross relations reflect only idiosyncrasies of Spinacino, or the lute idiom, or both. The clashes certainly are less harsh on a lute, with its rapid sound decay, than with a voice or most other instruments.

Instrumental music has been assumed to follow the vocal idiom in the Renaissance, embodying the contemporary musical usage. If this is the case, then the love of cross relations could have been common practice, and free treatment of dissonance in ornamentation might have been found in vocal practice as well. The strongest argument against this approach lies in the frequent skips and wide tessitura of the written-out diminutions of the cantus. They do not make a good model for vocal ornamentation, although they are quite suitable for most instruments.

Only further research into tablatures and the relationship between vocal and instrumental music will answer these questions with any degree of certainty. Until this research is completed, Spinacino's tablatures raise an important area of thought for the performer of Flemish music. Perhaps the stylistic changes that took place over the century have a counterpart in the use of ornamentation, a consideration that is virtually ignored today. Too many modern performers take the rules of Virgiliano or similar models and apply them indiscriminately to the music from 1450-1600, a practice as valid as using French *agrêments* in the music of the very late sixteenth century.[3]

It is quite possible that early Renaissance ornamentation was much freer and more dissonant than is commonly thought, especially in instrumental music. If Spinacino's intabulations represent any sort of norm for Flemish music, dissonances would certainly be commonplace. The existence of this dissonant ornamentation should be part of the body of common knowledge available to every performer of Flemish music.

[3]Compare Spinacino's ornamentations with the late sixteenth century practice as is typified by the fourth rule given by Aurelio Virgiliano:

> The note of the subject should be played on the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the beat. When it is not suitable to return to the subject in the middle, play a note that is nearby and consonant, excepting the note a fourth higher [than the subject]. Aurelio Virgiliano, *Il dolcimelo, dove si contengano variariati passaggiate, e diminutione* (Bologna, unpublished manuscript from the late sixteenth century), p. 3.

* * *

THE INSTRUCTIONS OF ALESSANDRO PICCININI

By STANLEY BUETENS

In the introduction to his book of music *Intavolatura di Liuto e di Chitaronne, Libro Primo* (Bologna, 1623; now available in a facsimile edition published by the Antiquae Musicae Italicae, *Monumenta Bononiensia,* Bologna, 1962), Alessandro Piccinini presents his readers with detailed instructions on how to play the music that follows. These instructions are of prime interest to the lute scholar and performer, since Piccinini writes with great specificity and covers subjects usually omitted by earlier writers–such as how to play ornaments, how to use the fingernails, and how to arpeggiate.

Piccinini was a lutenist at Ferrara in the service of Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara, in 1594. There he was acquainted with Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, also a lute player, and met Giulio Caccini. These facts alone make his instructions extremely valuable and establish his credentials to write them. They also pose the intriguing, if unanswerable question of whether or not Gesualdo and Caccini played in the same manner as Piccinini.

The lute music written in Italy during the first half of the seventeenth century is perhaps the least known body of lute music in the entire history of the lute. This music has only recently become a subject for investigation and still is not played or known through many modern editions. French music of this period is at least known through the publications of the French musicological societies and the CNRS editions, although it is still not known to concert audiences.

In France through the experiments of Dufault and Chancy, and later, the Gaultiers, a new kind of solo lute music developed in the seventeenth century. The French experimented with new tunings, ornamentation, and subtle ways of obscuring rhythm, melody, and counterpoint–the so-called "precious" style. In Italy, however, the emphasis was on large lutes, which has given rise to the mistaken belief that the only use for the lute, chitarrone, and theorbo in this period was to accompany singing and to realize the figured bass. But

a solo literature did develop, completely independently of musical currents in France. The Italians maintained the old tunings, merely adding low diapasons on their instruments to increase the power of the bass line. They added to and modernized the music of the past, rather than radically transforming it as in France. They rendered rhythm and counterpoint as clearly as possible to the listener. Piccinini's instructions exemplify this Italian desire for clarification of musical intent, as does the music that follows in his collection. Indeed, the main aesthetic purpose of lute playing, according to Piccinini, is to render the music as delightful and enjoyable as possible.

Piccinini's instructions deal with the technique of the lute, with only a brief mention of the chitarrone. However, the chitarrone and the theorbo (which Piccinini equates with the chitarrone) were more important instruments in Italy at this time and would remain so for the rest of the century. They were the instruments for which almost all the seventeenth-century lutenists wrote their tablatures. Piccinini is unique in that he still wrote for the plain lute, but it must be noted that by his time the lute had thirteen courses! Piccinini's chitarrone had fourteen courses, with the upper two tuned an octave lower than on the lute. Piccinini does not clarify why certain pieces are for the lute and others for the chitarrone; indeed, most pieces work on either instrument with only a minor adjustment in the tuning of the diapasons. However, the pieces for chitarrone have very few scale-passage runs between the top three courses, which is not unexpected given the tuning of the top two courses.

Consistent with the style of his time, Piccinini's writing is pompous and sometimes imprecise. It is often necessary to know what he is trying to say in order to understand his meaning. For this reason, the translation that follows is occasionally somewhat free. Where the original is verbose or repetitive, this translation has been abbreviated by the use of ellipses. The original Italian has been given in parentheses whenever a word is of special importance or open to a different translation. My additions or comments are in brackets.

Chapter I. To serious lute students

Among all musical instruments, the lute is so renowned and worthy that there is no one, however mediocre in intelligence or indeed even in [knowledge of] music, who does not know from the excellency and sweetness of [the lute's] melody, how great is its musical perfection; with it, a composition can be transposed higher or lower (*si può suonare una compositione meza voce, una voce, e*

due più altre, e più basso) by virtue of having the semitones in any place. Add to this the wonderful convenience of being able to play the instrument walking, sitting, and in any other way you please—something not to be taken lightly. Now, about this noble and royal instrument I wish to give beginners some very important advice, which long study and years of teaching have made me realize to be very useful—not in order to show myself wiser than others, but solely for public and universal benefit. Being aware through experience how important a good foundation is to those who wish to become excellent players, my instructions will be material concerning the most important things; and whoever wishes to make himself perfect in this profession would do well to read [them] more than once and then strive hard to put [them] into practice. If you do this, I do not doubt that in the end you will know through personal experience how obligated you should be to this my work.

Chapter II. On playing cleanly (*Del Suonare netto*)

Playing cleanly is the most important skill that a player strives to attain. Each minim should be as pure as a pearl. He who does not play in this way has little self-esteem; in France no one has any self-esteem, and no one plays cleanly or delicately. Great diligence is required to learn to play cleanly.

Chapter III. On playing soft and loud (*Del Suonare Piano, e Forte*)

Of the many attributes distinctive to the lute, the possibility of playing soft and loud is the best, and has a very beautiful effect (*cosa molto affettuosa*). The use of it depends on the effect desired: When a composition is happy, you must play loudly but not crudely or harshly; you must play loudly, especially in fantasies and canzonas, the string that has the subject or imitation, but keep the accompaniment soft so as not to smother the subject; you must play softly when there is chromaticism, melancholy, slow meter, or dissonance (*durezze*), but always in such a way that the tone is sweet and not dampened or muted. Cleverly slowing the meter somewhat makes your playing even more effective (*più affettuoso*). There are few pieces in which the clever player will not have ample opportunity to practice this wavering kind of play; that is, soft and loud. Where the music is dissonant, you can play as they do in Naples: When they play a dissonance, they repeat it now soft, now loud; and the more dissonant it is, the more often they repeat it. In truth, this succeeds better in fact than in words, particularly with

those who like to hear expressive playing.[1]

Chapter IV. How to make the lute sound sweeter (*Dove renda il Liuto miglior Armonia*)

The lute and also the chitarrone sound sweeter when played halfway between rose and bridge, and the right hand should be held there.[2]

Chapter V. The right hand and its rules

To learn to hold the right hand well, make a fist and then open it a little until the fingers are touching the strings. The thumb should be stretched out and the little finger positioned on the belly, where it will stay.

Chapter VI. How to use the thumb

The thumb, which should not have a very long nail, moves in this way: When you play a string, move the thumb toward the belly so that it falls on the lower adjacent string and keep it there until it has to pluck again. And when two or more strings are played together (*e quando si suona una pizzicata*), the thumb must still make the same movement. This not only sounds good (*buona armonia*), but is very convenient, especially when you play on the [low] basses.[3]

Chapter VII. How to use the index, middle, and ring fingers

The other three fingers, i.e., the index, middle, and ring, ought

[1]This is perhaps the earliest reference in a lute book–and one of the earliest references anywhere–to playing loud and soft. This idea was, of course, current with the "stile rappresentivo," whose main emphasis was on expressive and passionate singing. Frescobaldi and others at this time discussed the changing of meter for expressive purposes.

[2]The right hand has finally moved away from the bridge, where it was placed throughout the sixteenth century, towards the rose. This is probably also the first mention of playing the lute "sweetly." Sixteenth-century writers never mentioned the sound of the lute.

[3]Here is a clear and unique description of how the thumb should play with what today is called an "apoyando" stroke. The later French and German instructions for the Baroque lute recommend the same movement. Piccinini uses an odd word for chord, *pizzicata*.

to have somewhat longer fingernails. The nails should just pass beyond the flesh and be oval-shaped; that is, longer in the middle than at the sides. When you play a chord or a single string, touch the string with the tip of the flesh and push it towards the belly, letting the nail glide over both strings. This makes a beautiful sound, because you play both strings of the pair.[4]

Chapter VIII. How to play two strings [courses] together

Always play two strings together with the thumb and middle finger, except when there is a dot under a chord in the upper strings, then use the index and middle fingers.

Chapter IX. The *groppo* (*gruppo*) and its difficulty

The cadential *groppo* is very difficult, and in order to play it [each note] equally [in tempo] and fast . . . I have found that using the index finger alone, striking the string up and down with the end of the nail, succeeds wonderfully well, because of the speed and clarity [thus achieved]. This method was so easy for me that together with the *groppo* I could [play] another moving part with the thumb.[5]

Chapter X. How to execute *tirate* [single-line runs] and *groppi*

To do *groppi* and *tirate* in the ordinary way, you must stretch out the thumb holding the index finger under it at right angles (*come una croce*). The middle and ring fingers should be stretched out but not rigid. In order not to tire the arm, use little movement of the fingers that play the *tirata*. Be careful not to strike the thumb note more powerfully than the note of the other finger, but rather [strike them] equally so that you cannot tell any difference between them. Many, while doing the *groppo* with these fingers, want to accompany

[4]Piccinini gives one of the earliest descriptions of playing with nails. It is also an explicit description of how the nails should look. His discussion of how to pluck a string is novel in lute instructions.

[5]This is the first we hear of this type of stroke since the "dedillo" stroke of the Spanish vihuelists. In Chapter XXXI Piccinini explains that he came to use this stroke as a result of hearing the mandora (*Mandolla*) played in France in this manner—it impressed him enough to adapt the technique to the lute. (See Mersenne, *Harmonie Universal*, for a detailed description of the mandora.)

[play] another moving part, as I have explained in Chapter IX, but this is unrealistic; because with every pluck that they make in the accompaniment, they lose one [note] of the *groppo*—but by speed, the hearing of many is deceived.[6]

Chapter XI. Arpeggiation on the lute and what it means (*Dell' Arpeggiare nel Liuto, che cosa s'intende*)

To arpeggiate [see commentary below] on the lute means to play *tirate* or *passaggi* with the index and middle fingers while the thumb plays another part. This type of playing is very easy but still delightful to the ear, because the two fingers make a similar movement, producing a smooth sound (*le due ditta con il motto medesmo, che fanno rendono il suono ancora eguale . . .*). I suggest that wherever possible you should play this way.[7]

Chapter XII. How to arpeggiate

To arpeggiate you must play with the tips of the nails, making little movement of the fingers. If the thumb is held very stretched out, your playing will be agile and you will easily achieve speed. The thumb should still land on the adjacent string, as explained in Chapter VI. Sometimes I do the arpeggio near the bridge with the tip of the nail, while the thumb plays the cantus firmus, thereby achieving a silvery [metallic] tone that is very delightful. Thus, arpeggiation very well suits the accompanied *groppo* explained in Chapter IX, with the thumb playing the other part; but in effect you will not achieve as great a speed or grace as with one finger alone.[8]

[6]Piccinini still requires the thumb-index stroke for runs, but now all notes must be equal in intensity. He advises against trying to play another part while doing a *groppo* figure with the thumb-index stroke, since to play any extra notes would require dropping the same number of notes from the *groppo*. But he explains that some players get away with this because they play it quickly. See Chapter IX for the correct way to do the *groppo*.

[7]There is a lack of clarity here. His use of the words *tirate* and *passaggi* seems a bit loose, but perhaps any fast notes are *tirate* to Piccinini. He seems to use the word *arpeggiare* on the lute to refer simply to the middle-index stroke.

[8]His description of changing tone color by playing near the bridge is also something new in lute instruction books.

Chapter XIII. Rules for the left hand

The left hand must be free, [in that it] should not touch the neck at any place. Only the thumb remains as a prop behind the neck and should be held low and stretched out. The other four fingers must be arched, with the tips near the strings, ready [to play]. This is very important advice.

Chapter XIV. When to hold down the fingers

The holding down of fingers on the strings when necessary (which few observe) is very important. . . . Whenever you play a chord followed by a single note, make every effort to hold the fingers firm on the strings while playing that which follows. And when a dot is placed above a number [note], as for example $\dot{2}$, you must hold fast that finger while you play that which follows.[9]

Chapter XV. Moving the fingers from one fret to another and from one string to another

. . . Before lifting your fingers from a chord, observe well which finger is best able to finger the next note or chord, so that you will not err, or at least not often.

Chapter XVI. Three kinds of trills (*tremoli*)

Trills are a very great ornamentation to playing, and there are three types. The first is the long trill, and it is used where there is a long note value. To do it [this trill], pluck delicately and quickly many times with the tip of whichever finger is most convenient. If you trill a zero [open string], trill on the first fret; if you ornament the first fret, trill on the second; the second on the third; and so on successively. The trill should last as long as the note value.[10]

[9]The technique is not very well described here, but the intention is good. He means that you should not release notes that have a harmonic or contrapuntal function for single notes that follow. The dot above a number to indicate a tenuto is new.

[10]Piccinini's three ornaments for which he gives no signs are the long trill, the mordent, and the vibrato. His description of the first does not include whole tone trills, which surely must have been done; perhaps this is just an oversight by Piccinini. The second ornament is what later became known as a mordent and cannot, of course, be done on an open string. As for the third ornament, the vibrato, Vallet, in his *Pièté royale*, 1620 (see the article on Vallet in this issue), describes it in similar terms and even gives a sign for it.

Chapter XVII The second trill

The second trill is fast and can be done in an infinite number of places. It gives great pleasure. Here is an example of how to do it: Place the little finger on the third fret of the first string and at the same time put the middle finger on the second fret. Quickly pluck the string, lift the little finger slightly off the string, and with force return it to the same place. To do it on the first fret, only one finger is necessary, lifting and returning as has been discussed.[10]

Chapter XVIII. The third trill

The third trill is seldom used because it tends to free the hand [take the hand out of normal position]. For example: Place the little finger on the fifth fret of the third string and pluck the string at the same time, pressing hard and shaking the whole hand strongly. You will quickly hear that the string wavers a little, and so it is done.[10]

Chapter XIX. Where to ornament

In all places where there are pauses, long or short, you should put an ornament. Here you should do one kind of ornament, and there another, on every string and fret, depending on what convenience dictates. As long as the note values are at least quavers, and you have time, ornamentation will always have a good effect. Because there are an infinite number of places where you can ornament, and not wishing to clutter the tablature with ornament signs, let this advice suffice: Do not become fatiguing and wearisome by putting in too many ornaments. Play gracefully and make sure not to tire the listener.

Chapter XX. Explanation of some signs that are in the tablature of this book [This seems to be the heading for the following five chapters since no text follows.]

Chapter XXI. Notes without dots under them

Notes without dots under them are always played with the thumb, on both the lute and the chitarrone.

Chapter XXII. A dot under a note

When there is a dot under a number [note], always play it with the index finger. The following number without a dot is usually played with the middle finger or thumb according to the situation.

Chapter XXIII. How to know with which finger to begin playing

The last number in a passage must be played with the index finger, so count back to find out with which finger to begin. Since this is a long process, for brevity I will say begin with the thumb or middle finger [if there is a chord] when there are an even number of notes to play, e.g., two, four, six; but when there are one, three, or five notes, the playing will begin with the index finger. This is an infallible rule.[11]

Chapter XXIV. The hold-dot (*punto fermo*)

A *punto fermo* is a dot above a number, such as $\dot{2}$, that indicates that you must hold down the finger [stopping that note] while playing that which follows. . . .

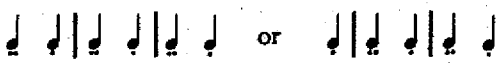
Chapter XXV. The slur sign for lute and chitarrone

When a passage has a curved line ⌣ over or under the notes at the beginning of a passage, begin slurring and continue slurring the entire passage until the time value changes.[12]

Chapter XXVI. How to play a slur when the passage rises

Play the first note of the passage with the thumb when you find a slur mark, and with the left hand hammer down on the following frets [to make the notes of the slur]. When changing strings, pluck

[11]This is rather unclear as he gives it. What Piccinini means simply is:



[12]The use of slurs in lute music is something new at this time. Piccinini does not give them exactly where he wants them; instead he places them at the beginning of a run and the player must continue slurring according to the rules in Chapters XXVI and XXVII until the rhythm changes.

the first note [with a right-hand finger] and then continue hammering down. . . . Hold the fingers low and hammer down dexterously on the string.

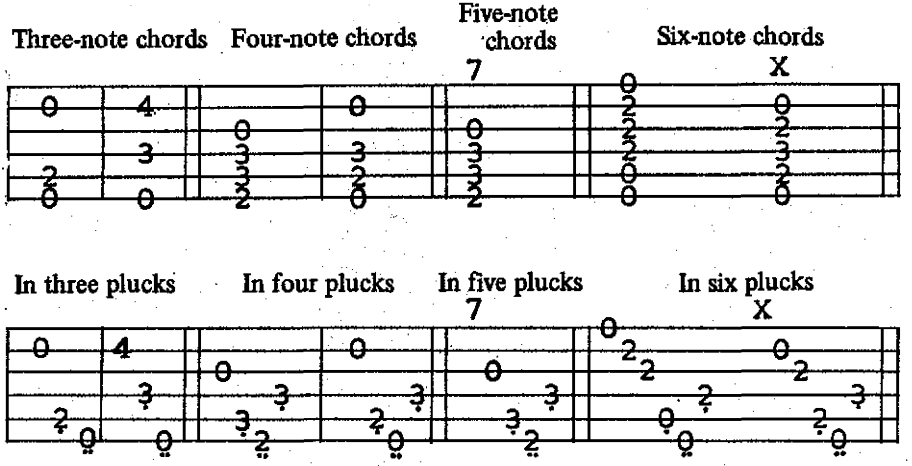
Chapter XXVII. How to play a slur when the passage descends

The right hand plays as above. When the left hand lifts a finger from a string, you must pull the string with the tip of the left-hand finger, so that you make it sound with just that finger. . . . [Here Piccinini confesses that he does not much like this method of doing runs because it lacks variety. He says, however, that it works better on the chitarrone and then proceeds to give a short history of the origin of this instrument.]

Chapter XXVIII. Origin of the chitarrone and pandora [outside the scope of this article]

Chapter XXIX. How to play chords on the chitarrone

When you have to play a chord of three notes, do it in three plucks, one after the other; a chord of four notes, in four plucks; etc. Just three fingers—the thumb, index, and middle—play these chords.

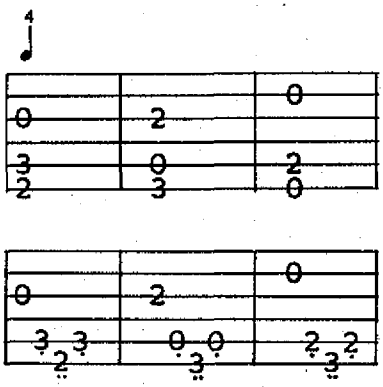


These are called arpeggiated chords (*pizzicate arpeggiate*)

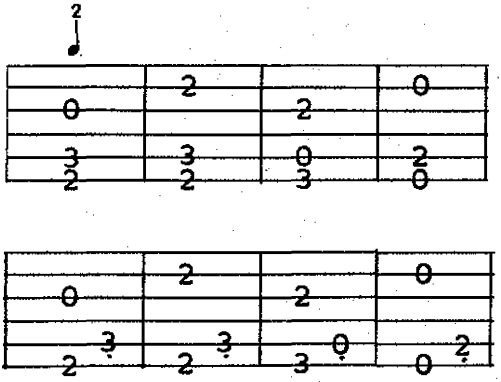
because they are similar in sound to chords played on the harp. All chords played on the chitarrone should be played as discussed above, even when there are no signs given for it in the tablature. However, in fast pieces such as *Correnti* where you must move quickly from one chord to another, play the chord in one blow, as is done on the lute.

Chapter XXX. The sign for special arpeggios

In certain places there will be a "4" above the rhythm sign of a chord, such as , and this chord is then to be played in four strokes, even when there are only three notes:



Where the rhythm sign has a "2" above it, such as , the arpeggio must be done in two strokes:



This manner of arpeggiating is new and has a very good effect. Both the chitarrone and the lute can play soft and loud and ought to be practiced with this [manner of arpeggiating] as stated in Chapter III.

Chapter XXXI. *Tirate* and slurs

Tirate with slur marks are done as I have explained in Chapter XXV, as are slurred *groppi,* which succeed very well [played this way] but are perhaps weak. Therefore, playing them [*tirate* and *groppi*] with one finger alone as explained in Chapter IX succeeds beautifully on the chitarrone, by making the notes equally clear, fast, and clean; but up to now [this has been] practiced by no one except perhaps by my urging.

[Here he explains about the mandora (*Mandolla*).]

Chapter XXXII. Conclusion of all the above instructions

[This is a brief summary of the intent of the instructions.]

Chapter XXXIII. The compositions for two and three lutes

[This is a short description of the two ensemble pieces, one for two lutes and one for three lutes, and a brief history of their first performance.]

Chapter XXXIV. The archlute and its invention

[This is an interesting but rather strange account of Piccinini's invention of an instrument called an archlute (*Arciliuto*). The nature of this instrument and whether or not Piccinini has told the complete truth is discussed in an article by Georg L. Kinsky, "A. Piccinini und sein Arciliuto," *Acta Musicologia,* X (1938).]

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE INDICATIONS IN EMANUEL ADRIANSEN'S LUTE ENSEMBLE MUSIC

By JOAN MYERS

There is evidence that throughout the sixteenth century professional musicians and upper-class amateurs frequently used mixed ensembles of soft instruments, including the lute, to play the popular chansons of the time—an instrumentation often overlooked by music historians intent on describing the Renaissance love of "families" or consorts of like instruments. Yet, there is little surviving music specifying exact instrumentation and little information on how to adapt existing music, primarily chansons and madrigals, to a given combination of instruments. Emanuel Adriansen's *Pratum Musicum* . . . (Antwerp, 1584)[1] contains pieces for various groupings of lutes and voices and thus provides a valuable insight into the performance practice possibilities of this musical genre.

Evidence of the use of mixed ensembles in the sixteenth century comes from several sources. Paintings of the time are full of many instrumental and vocal combinations involving the lute. Such paintings as "The Prodigal Son Among the Courtesans" (Paris, Musée Carnavalet; flute, lute, two singers), "Open-Air Concert" (Bourges Museum; spinet, lute, flute, bass viol), and "Musical Gathering" (Pozzoserrato; Treviso, Museo Civico; spinet, lute, viola da braccio, flute, two singers) are typical. In addition, there are numerous early descriptions of banquets and theatrical presentations mentioning large mixed groups of instruments and voices playing three-, four-, and five-part songs. A typical Italian *intermedio* by Alessandro Striggio in 1567 had nine Muses and three Graces appearing on a cloud in the heavens singing a madrigal for five voices, supported by

[1]For a general discussion of Adriansen and his lute books, see Godelieve Spiessens, "Emmanuel Adriaenssen et son Pratum Musicum," *Acta Musicologica*, XXXVI (1964), pp. 142-151, and Spiessens, "Introduction" to *Luitmuziek van Emanuel Adriaenssen (Monumenta Musicae Belgicae*, X) (Antwerp, 1966).

one lute, one lyra, four viols, two trombones, and one mute cornett.[2] If, as Robert L. Weaver suggests in his article "Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation," the women sang the three upper parts, the viols and mute cornett combined to play all five parts, the trombones reinforced the two lower parts, and the lyra and lute made up an embryonic continuo, we still do not know the nature of the continuo parts that the lute and lyra played.

Emanuel Adriansen's intabulations offer one solution to this problem. They show what an ensemble leader might do if given a particular ensemble with which to play a popular piece of music. Adriansen writes for various combinations of lutes and voices: one lute and two, three, or four voices; two lutes and three or four voices; four lutes and four voices; and three lutes alone. His music includes some of the most famous pieces of the time, such as "Io mi son giovenetta" by Alfonso Ferabosco, "Anchor che col partire" by Cypriano de Rore, "Susanne un jour" by Orlando di Lasso, and "Vestiv'i colli" by Palestrina, as well as many lesser known Italian songs much in vogue at the time. A study of Adriansen's use of the lute in these different groups is not only interesting to the music historian, but also is valuable to the modern lutenist who often finds himself arranging music for the lute to accompany various ensembles.

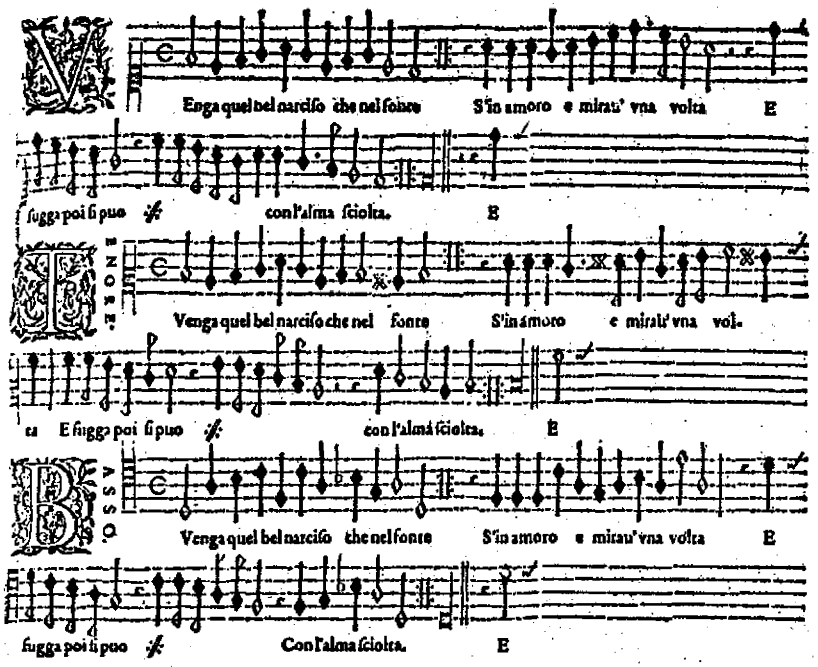
Adriansen was widely recognized by his contemporaries for his ability to intabulate mensural music. "I have set downe no rules for transposing out of Musicke to the Scale of the Lute, because you that delivered in the most elegant field of Emanuel Adrianus, an excellent Musitian, and in many other Bookes," wrote J. B. Besard in the "Necessarie Observations belonging to the Lute, and Lute Playing."[3] In the introduction to his 1592 *Novum Pratum Musicum* . . . Adriansen gives his rules for intabulating songs, which consist primarily of charts showing where each note of the scale should be placed on the lute fingerboard for each of the modes. He concludes by giving an example of how to intabulate a three-voice song, "Venga quel bel narciso," first putting the mensural notation into a lute tablature score and then adding rhythm signs, musica ficta, and cadential ornamentation (see Example 1).

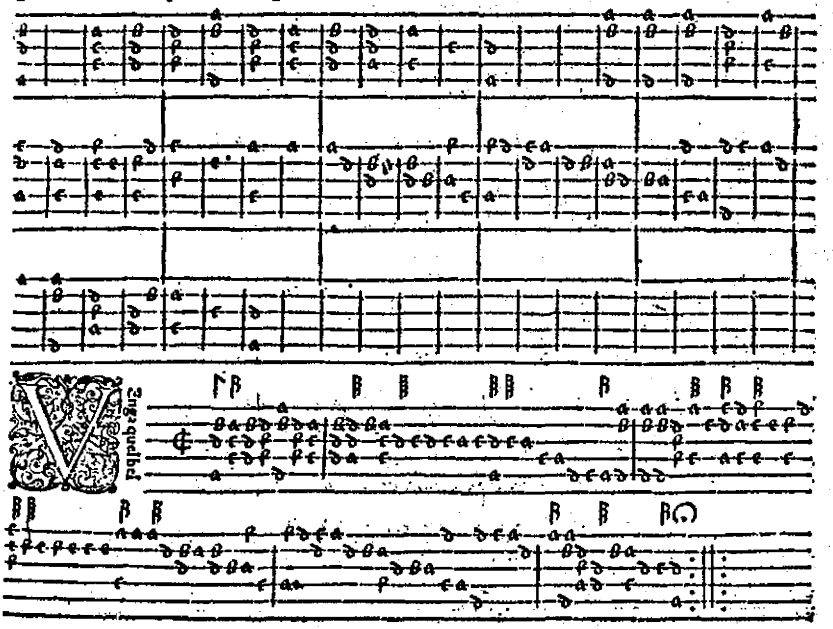
With rare exceptions Adriansen's settings for solo lute and voices contain literal lute transcriptions of the vocal original, much like "Venga quel bel narciso," with the appropriate vocal parts given in mensural notation. "Madonna mia pieta" (Example 2) for lute, soprano, and bass is typical of Adriansen's intabulation style. A

[2]Robert L. Weaver, "Sixteenth-Century Instrumentation," *Musical Quarterly*, XLVII, No. 3 (July, 1967), pp. 363-378.

[3]Robert Dowland, *Varietie of Lute Lessons* (1610), Lith. facs. by Schott and Co. (London, 1958), p. 12.

Ex. 1. *Novum Pratum Musicum* (1592)

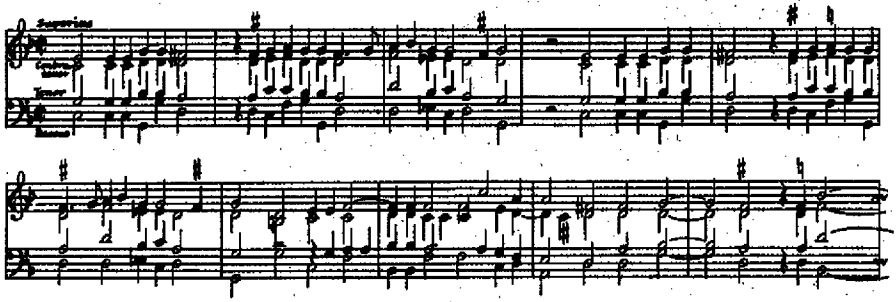
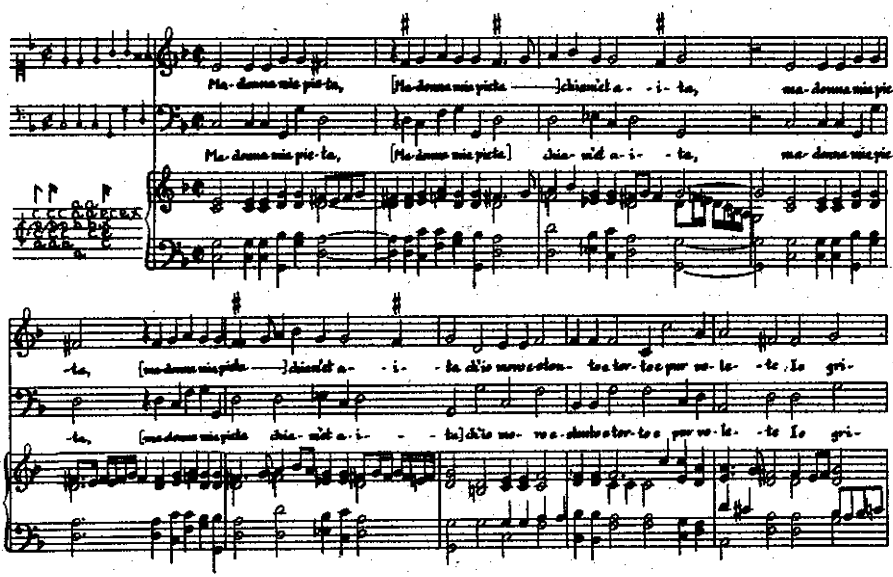


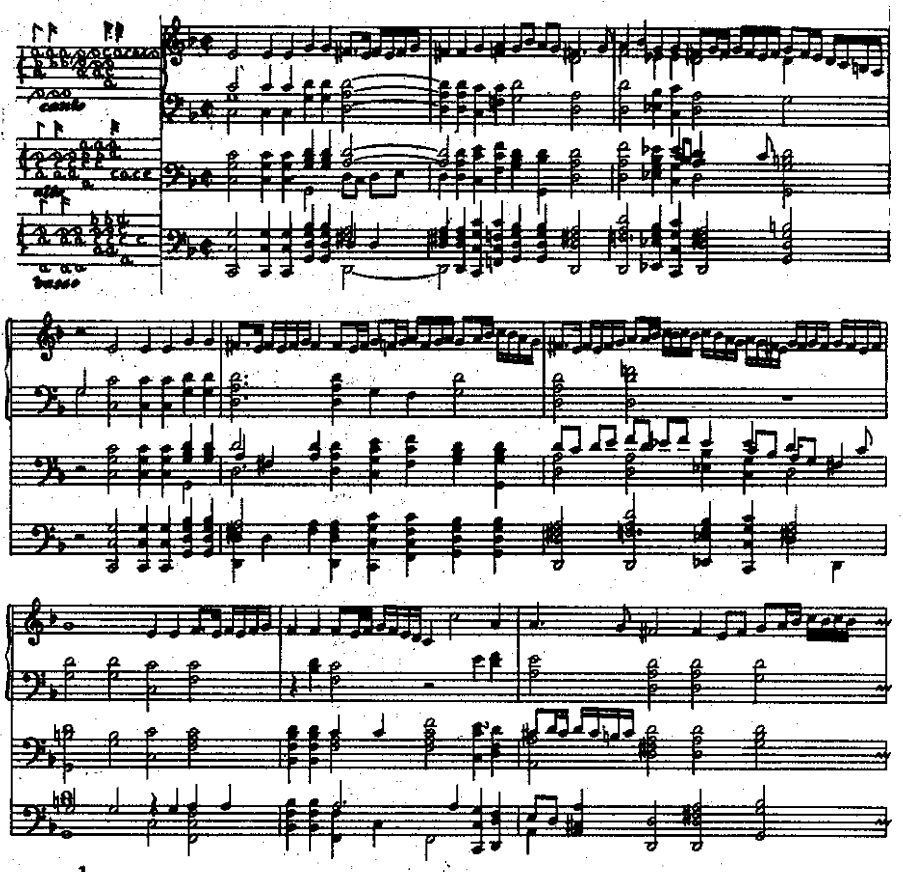
Paradigma Carminis Trium vocum in Scalam Teſtudinis redacti: ex quo prudens Citharœdus facilè colliget, Scalam quatuor ſpacijs in ſingulas menſuras, ſeu tactus Muſicos diſtinguendam prius eſſe, quàm ipſam Cantilenæ tranſlationem auſpicabitur.

comparison with Lasso's original song shows that Adriansen gives the soprano and bass mensural parts literally, not even bothering to add musica ficta. The lute intabulation includes all four parts of the song with little transposition of voices and only a few added cadential ornaments. Only at points where the motion of the song slows or where both voices have rests does Adriansen add a little "filler" ornamentation in the lute part to sustain interest and to keep the momentum going (note measures 1, 3, and 9-10). He evidently considered the lute part as a sort of continuo accompaniment to the voices with little other function than that of setting off the voices.

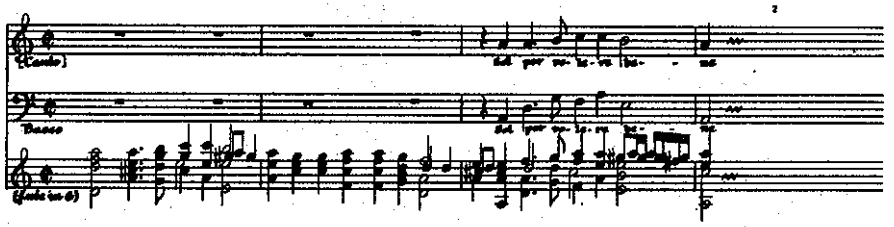
A quick look at the lute tablature shows that this type of intabulation is not easy to play. A strict four-part chordal setting requires numerous *barres* and difficult chords. And this song is simple in comparison with many others in Adriansen's collection, some of which are intabulations of five-part songs that require *barres* throughout the entire piece. It is doubtful whether many early lutenists were any more capable of this sort of playing than their modern counterparts. In any case, one wonders if the end result justifies the effort required. Such strict intabulations were a common exercise given beginning lute students in the sixteenth century; it seems probable that some especially unidiomatic surviving examples were either never meant to be played at all or at best simplified for actual performance. Adriansen's intabulations are never totally unplayable, but his insistence on faithful reduction of the original polyphony does make these solo lute accompaniments difficult and exhausting.

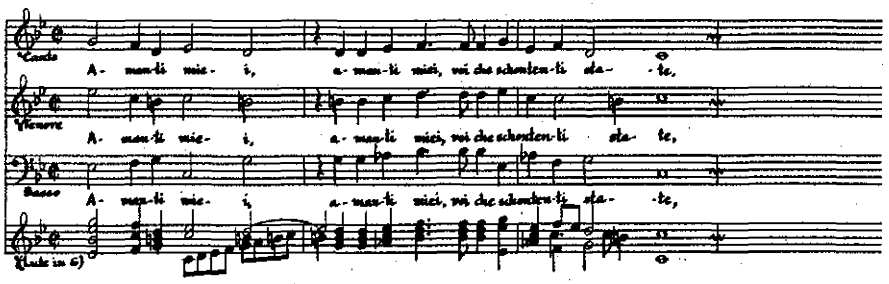
Perhaps either or both voice parts in these settings could be played on melodic instruments such as the flute or viol, although Adriansen makes no mention of such instrumentation. It is certainly possible to play "Madonna mia" as a lute solo without the two voices, and this would be consistent with the many solo lute transcriptions found throughout the sixteenth century. In some intabulations, Adriansen omits the soprano part or places it in fragmentary form below the alto part and indicates that the soprano voice must sing ("Le Sup. doit estre chante"). In these songs the alto part serves as the upper part of the intabulation, and the total effect of lute and voices is much freer than in the "Madonna mia" strict setting. An instance of this type of setting can be seen in Example 3 from "Un tempo sospirava" (from the 1592 *Novum Pratum* . . .).

Adriansen's arrangements for lute and three or four voices and for several lutes with voices are similar in style to "Madonna mia" in that the mensural voice parts are given literally and the lute parts are more or less exact transcriptions. Indeed, the addition of more voices seems to discourage Adriansen from even the few freedoms he allowed himself in the pieces for lute and two voices. Very few songs

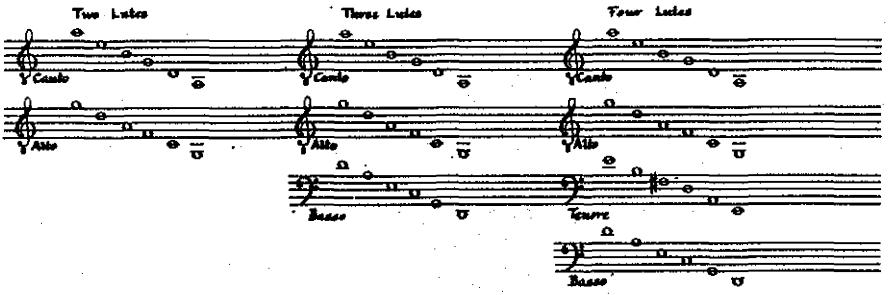
Ex. 2. O. di Lasso, "Madonna mia" (*Il Primo Libro* . . . Antwerp, 1555), keyboard transcription

Adriansen, "Madonna mia" for lute, soprano, and bass (*Pratum Musicum*, 1584, 1600)

[1]No F in original

Ex. 5. Adriansen, "Madonna mia" for three lutes (*Pratum Musicum*, 1584)

[1]F in original
[2]F♯ in original
[3]Eb in original

Ex. 3. "Un tempo sospirava" (*Novum Pratum Musicum*, 1592), m. 1-3

contain more than simple cadential ornamentation, and the voice parts are not rearranged as in "Un tempo sospirava." Occasionally the lutenist adds a simple figure to connect two phrases, as in the following opening section of "Amanti miei" for lute, soprano, tenor, and bass; but these instances are rare and only occur when all the voices move in slow note values or have a common rest (see Example 4).

Ex. 4. "Amanti miei" (*Pratum Musicum,* 1584, 1600), m. 1-3

Adriansen's pieces for more than one lute and voices offer additional insights into ensemble practice of the time. As is typical of many of the surviving works for lute ensembles, these pieces use lutes of different tunings. Below is a chart showing relative pitches for the various combinations:[4]

Tuning Chart



[4]G. Spiessens in her *Luitmuziek* . . . uses relative tunings a whole tone lower for the three- and four-lute pieces.

It should be mentioned at this point that there seems to be an unusually large number of mistakes in the trios and quartets—occasional wrong chords and frequent conflicts of major-minor harmonies. Few of these errors occur in the soprano lute part—most occur in the bass part—and it seems likely that the difficulty of writing for differently tuned lutes explains Adriansen's errors.

The pieces for two lutes and three or four voices are again strict lute reductions of chansons, although the higher lute generally has the soprano part uppermost and the lower lute has one of the middle parts on top. Both lutes have the original bass part and full chords. A slightly different type of setting occurs in "Tre gratiosi Amanti" in which the original six-voice dialogue by Giovanni de Macque is divided up between two lutes and three voices.

The two pieces for four lutes and four voices are a logical extension of the songs for two lutes and voices discussed above. Both "O Villanella" and "Als ick u winde" are simple homophonic four-voice songs, and Adriansen uses the lutes to add sonority by doubling the vocal parts and adding full chords. In both cases the soprano lute has the soprano part uppermost, the alto lute has the alto part uppermost, the tenor and bass lutes have the tenor part uppermost, and all four lutes have the bass part with accompanying harmonies. The upper two lutes add occasional cadential ornamentation. Several performance possibilities are apparent from this arrangement: The voices and lutes may perform the song together with either or both groups repeating the song individually; or, since each melodic line is doubled and tripled in the lute parts, one or more singers or lutes may be omitted entirely. This type of performance was probably common in the sixteenth century, combining groups of viols, recorders, and lutes (and perhaps other soft instruments as well) with voices on simple songs. Adriansen's settings are the only surviving examples of written out lute parts for such an ensemble; his thickly chordal accompaniments are an effective approach to the problem. His style presages the development of continuo playing in the early seventeenth century when lutes were used to accompany everything from solo singers and small ensembles to opera orchestra, utilizing the bass and melodic lines (or gradually just the bass line) and filling in chords.

Adriansen's three pieces for three lutes without voices represent still another type of ensemble with which to play familiar pieces. In this case, however, the lutes are not subservient to voices and may take more liberties with their parts. These trios are of special interest since all three also occur as pieces for lute and two voices earlier in the book; thus the differences in style of the lute parts may easily be

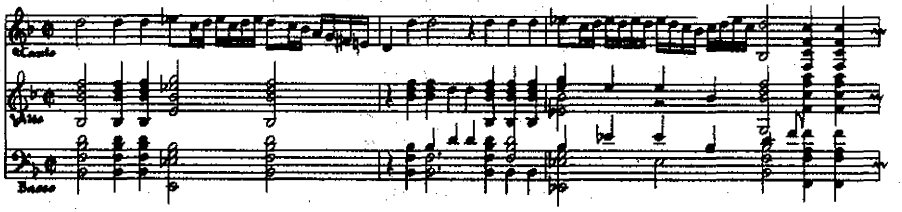
compared. In addition, Adriansen's style of ornamentation and musica ficta usage is more readily apparent in the trios than in the pieces with voices.

"Madonna mia," the three-lute counterpart of the setting for lute and two voices discussed earlier, is typical of Adriansen's style (see Example 5). Adriansen divides up the lutes in the same way that he did in the pieces for four lutes and four voices: The soprano lute has the upper part on top, the alto lute has the alto part uppermost, the bass lute has the tenor part uppermost, and all three lutes have the original bass part and added harmonies. As seen by a careful comparison with Lasso's original song, Adriansen takes no liberties with the original harmonic setting. The song is reproduced literally with only the voice leading adjusted to fit the respective lute parts. However, he does seem to avoid doubling the third of a chord when it appears as the melody note (in at least one of the two other lute parts), which gives prominence to the upper part and makes the total harmonic sound more delicate.

The soprano lute now takes the place of the voice and leads the ensemble with a lovely, graceful ornamentation. This ornamentation not only serves the same purpose that it did in the version for lute and two voices—that of filling in rests and keeping the motion of the song going—but it goes beyond this to provide an almost classical embellishment of phrases. The type of ornamentation used is typical of that used throughout the sixteenth century: It is consonant, beginning on the note written, and uses a set formula to arrive at the following note. Cadential ornamentation consists of some variant of the *groppo.* What is interesting about Adriansen's ornamentation is the way it is used to heighten the emotional impact of a phrase rather than merely to fill in intervals. Rather than being a virtuosic display, such as the diminutions of Girolamo dalla Casa or Giovanni Luca Conforto for winds, Adriansen's ornamentation is a restrained outgrowth of the natural phrase structure. The lower two lutes have an occasional slow moving ornamentation, but the soprano lute is the acknowledged leader.

Adriansen's other two trios, "Io vo gridando" and "Donna crudel," are similar in style to "Madonna mia," although each has certain distinctive characteristics. "Io vo gridando" is based on a five-part song, and thus the alto lute has the alto part uppermost, and the bass lute has the tenor part uppermost, with the less important *contra* part merely included in the harmonies. The musica ficta in this song is of special interest, since in the first measure Adriansen uses a descending D major run against a $B^{\flat}$ chord in the other two lute parts. This same incongruity of harmony reoccurs in measures 6 and 18 and thus seems intentional on Adriansen's part, perhaps to

express the "I go screaming" words of the text (see Example 6). It is also interesting to note that the ornamentation used in this trio is fitful–again expressive of the text–in contrast to the graceful, naturally flowing diminutions of "Madonna mia." "Donna crudel," also based on a five-part song, is set somewhat differently. Both the soprano and alto lutes have the soprano part uppermost, and the bass lute has the tenor part uppermost. Since the soprano lute has most of the ornamentation, this creates the strange combination of the melody being played simultaneously with its ornamentation. Adriansen also takes the freedom in this piece of adding a short triple section at the end (absent from the version for lute and two voices).

Ex. 6. "Io vo gridando" (*Pratum Musicum*, 1584), m. 1-3

Adriansen's style of intabulation and ensemble writing is quite consistent with the late sixteenth century emphasis on maintaining polyphonic parts–the original parts of the chanson are faithfully reproduced in the lute tablature, and the lute is more or less free to add ornamentation depending on whether or not voices are present. However, considerable variation must have existed among writers of the period as to how much ornamentation should be added and how the voice parts should be divided among the ensemble players. The differences of style in the lute duets of Phalese, Krengel, and Terzi attest to this. Since Adriansen provides us with the only written out lute parts for ensembles of voices and several lutes, his music is a valuable tool in any modern attempt to recreate mixed ensemble instrumentation of the late sixteenth-century chanson.

NICOLAS VALLET'S LUTE QUARTETS

By STANLEY BUETENS

In 1616 Nicolas Vallet, a French expatriate living in Amsterdam, published a collection of lute music that contained seven very remarkable pieces: quartets for four lutes. Although previous attempts had been made to use more than two lutes at one time, this was the first attempt to exploit the full potential of such a combination. Not only does each lute have an idiomatic solo part of its own, but all are combined to make a beautiful and satisfying whole.

Little is known about the life of Nicolas Vallet. He was born in 1583 in Corbeni, France. He toured France as a lutenist and in 1613, for reasons that remain unclear, moved to Amsterdam. There he continued playing the lute and became a leading lute teacher in that city. We know he accepted an apprentice in 1616.[1] In 1621 Vallet signed a contract with an Englishman named Richard Swift in which the two men agreed to play together for weddings, masquerades, and the like. This partnership was expanded into a quartet in 1626 with the addition of two more English partners, Edward Hancock and Robert Tindel.[2] In 1633, evidently in straitened circumstances, Vallet was evicted from his house for nonpayment of rent.[3] This unhappy fact in unfortunately the last dateable event of his life.

An interesting if tenuous connection exists between Vallet and the New World. Vallet was acquainted with the important Pauw family of Amsterdam. His *Het tweede Boeck* . . . of 1616 and later editions are dedicated to Pieter Pauw among others; and in the *Pièté royale* . . . of 1620 is an engraved plate giving the name and coat of arms of Jacomo Pauw, Pieter's brother. A third brother, the most eminent of the three, was Michael Pauw who in or about 1629 founded the colony of Pavonia on the western shore of the Hudson River opposite New Amsterdam, which is, of course, New Jersey today. It is possible that Michael brought lutes and copies of Vallet's books with him to the New World.

[1] *Tijdschrift der Vereeniging voor Noord-Nederlands Muziek-geschiedenis*, X (1919), pp. 142-143.

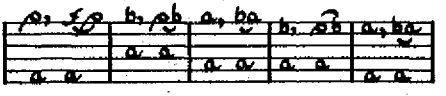
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 144-147.

[3] Dirk J. Balfoort, *Het muziekleven in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 1938), p. 49.

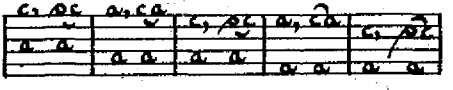
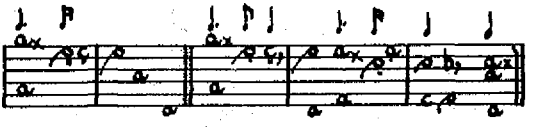
Vallet's first publication, *Secretum Musarum* . . . , appeared in Amsterdam in 1615 and was republished in 1618 with a French title and an introduction as *Le secret des Muses* . . . . His fame rests mainly on this book. Also in 1615 appeared *Een en twintig Psalmen Davids* . . . , a collection of twenty-one psalms set for one voice and lute. In 1616 appeared *Het tweede Boeck van de Luyt-Tablature*, . . . in which the lute quartets are found. This same collection was reprinted twice more, in 1618 and 1619, under a French title, *Le second livre de Tablatur de Luth* . . . . Both reprints contain the quartets, since the same engraved plates were used. In 1620 Vallet published another book of psalms, this time for lute solo, entitled *Piété royale, c'est a dire: Les 150 Pseaumes de David* . . . . The melody of each psalm is in the upper part and is meant to have the words sung along with it in any of four languages—Latin, Dutch, German, or French. When ornamented repetitions are provided for the lute, symbols are used to indicate changes of syllable in the text. Vallet's last work, *Apollinis susse Lever,* published in 1642, is a collection of duets for violin and bass; unfortunately, the violin part has been lost.[4]

Vallet's books present some interesting "firsts" in the history of lute music. His are the first lute books in French tablature to explain the ornament signs used in the book. Only in the *Capirola Ms.* (ca. 1517) does this happen before. In Robinson's *School of Music* (1603), there is a brief, unclear discussion of ornaments, but no ornaments are included in the music. Vallet uses two ornament signs in his *Le secret des Muses* and a third later in *Piété royale.* In *Le secret des Muses* his ornament chart appears as follows:

Par b mol



Par bequare



[4]One of these pieces, entitled "Tanneken," survives complete in Oxford, Christ Church Ms. 1013-1015. I am indebted for this information to Dr. Charles Warren Fox.

The comma or short appoggiatura is used throughout the Baroque period to mean the same ornament Vallet describes. The value of a note with the comma is divided with the upper auxiliary taking the first half. In the chart "par b mol" and "par bequare," the first chord in each measure is to be played like the figure occupying the second half of the measure.

The longer trill sign is also used in Baroque lute music, but not as consistently as the comma. The symbol used for this ornament is ×. Vallet says that it is similar to the first ornament (the comma) except that it must be repeated two or three times depending on the value of the note. It is to be used especially on dotted quarter-note values followed by an eighth or two sixteenths, and seems to be primarily a cadential ornament:

> Finalment le sixiesme signe ou marque souz cette figure, x, est semblable a la precedente, sauf, qu'il faut redoubler a tirer la corde de la main gauche soit deux ou trois fois, specialement quand la marque susditte est posée souz une notte noire suivije d'un poinct et d'une crochue, ou bien aussi d'une blanche. ("Petit Discours," *Le secret des Muses)*

Both signs are used liberally but not consistently in the quartets, and undoubtedly the performers would have added even more.

The *Pièté royale* contains the first description and use of the vibrato. A double cross # indicates this ornament which Vallet describes as follows:

> . . . seulement vous serez advertis que là ou vous rencontrerez des doubles croix en cette forme # il faut mignarder la corde d'un doigt seul, scavoir est tenir le doigt ferme sur la lettre qui prescede ladite croix et branler toutte la main si vittement que faire ce pourra. ("Advertissement aux amateurs," *Pièté royale*)

With the possible exception of the Spaniard Venegas de Henestrosa, who in 1560 mentions something like a vibrato,[5] Vallet seems to be the first to mention it as a conscious ornament. At the same time in Italy, Allessandro Piccinini in his *Intavolatura di Liuto e Chitarrone* (1623) describes this ornament in terms similar to Vallet's but gives no symbol for it.

Vallet is also very liberal with other performance signs that are always welcome to the lutenist. Hold marks in all parts are used consistently, rendering the voice leading precise. Vallet uses various sorts of lines as hold marks:

[5]See Joan Myers, "Vihuela Technique," *Journal of the Lute Society of America,* I (1968), p. 18.

Since bass notes sustain longer than treble notes and since the movement of the bass is usually slower than the music above it, these signs are employed mainly in the lowest voice of each lute part; but from time to time Vallet uses them in upper voices as well. The note from which one of these lines extends is to be held until all music above or below it is played. The shortcoming of the tablature system, uncertainty of voice leading, is thus corrected with these marks. Right- and left-hand fingering is also supplied by Vallet. In the quartets, however, only right-hand fingering is given. A single dot under a letter means that the index finger of the right hand is to pluck the note. Two small parallel lines under a note indicate that the middle finger should pluck it.

Vallet's music requires a different technique than that used in the Renaissance; his technique is more like that needed in the Baroque period. Gone forever is the thumb-index finger alternation for fast passage work. The thumb of the right hand is now extended in the style of the modern classical guitar: "Car le poulce doit toujour renverser en dehors et non pas courber au dedans de la main." ("Petit Discours," *Le Secret des Muses*.) With the gradual addition of bass courses, the thumb henceforth must reach greater distances—a change that culminates in J.S. Bach's lute suites in which the thumb has seven or eight bass courses to play.

The quartets are printed in open-book format, with Superius and Contra parts on left-hand pages, Bass and Tenor parts on the right. Contra and Tenor parts are printed upside down so that four players can read from the same book by placing themselves on opposite sides of a small table. This is undoubtedly the optimum way to perform the music; the author can verify from experience the difficulties of performing these quartets by a group arranged in any other way.

The style of the music is a mixture of the old and new, Renaissance and Baroque. Since all parts are fairly equal, and the writing for the lute is in the old style, the overall feeling is of music of the Renaissance. All lutes are in the Renaissance tuning which reinforces the modal style. The sonority of the quartets, however, recalls the massive continuos of Monteverdi; and the harmonies, though simple, suggest the future rather than the past. Certain movements of the bass are essentially Baroque in that they suggest the specific harmony to be used above them. Vallet tries to use the correct harmonies, but this sometimes leads to trouble, as will be shown later. Each lute part has its own bass line, and these bass lines are nearly identical. This mixture of elements—past, present, and future—creates what can only be called a transitional style.

Much has been made of the dissonances found in this music and

other music of the same period, especially in Besard's *Novus Partus*.[6] It must be acknowledged that in the Vallet pieces some notes are merely printers' errors that should be corrected; an occasional rhythm sign is also misplaced or erroneous. In one quartet, the "Gaillarde," an entire measure in the Superius part is missing. But there are many "wrong" notes that cannot be explained as printers' errors, nor can they be considered the result of the composer's carelessness. It is this writer's view that such "wrong" notes are not wrong at all by the stylistic standards of the time. The composers of lute ensemble music were fully aware that a plucked dissonance was not nearly so disturbing as that produced by bowed or wind instruments. To write idiomatically for the lute was the primary concern of composers such as Vallet and Besard. If a particular passage in a part might lead to temporary harmonic or contrapuntal difficulty, the composer must either "clean it up," perhaps weakening the melodic writing in that part, or leave the difficulty, knowing that in this kind of ensemble it would hardly be noticed.

Exclusive of printing errors, there are two kinds of "wrong" notes in this music. The first is contrapuntal clashes such as parallel seconds. These are the result of expansive writing and concentration on rendering each part logical and idiomatic. They are hardly noticed in the rich, bubbling texture of the music, especially since they usually occur on a low level of meter. The difficulties of writing four parts for different lutes, each with a logical melodic movement, are so enormous that it is a wonder there are not more such "wrong" notes. The second type of "wrong" note is the result of harmonic considerations and is caused by Vallet's desire to harmonize the counterpoints in each part correctly with a proper bass. The four basses occasionally do not agree with each other, causing a temporary confusion in harmony. This is fairly rare and again hardly noticed.

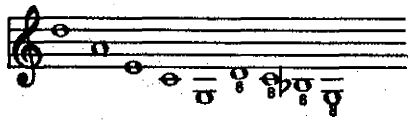
Another striking feature of the quartets is the frequent use of unisons in diminution passages. These frequent unisons come and go quickly, rarely lasting for more than a beat or two; however, they are not unpleasant and may be a device for accenting a given passage.

Vallet tells us nothing about the instruments to be used, although this information is not hard to deduce from his music. His Superius lute is a little lute with nine courses. The string length would certainly be no more than thirty-eight centimeters, roughly equivalent in size to that of the treble viol. There is no reference anywhere else (except possibly in the *Novus Partus* of Besard) to

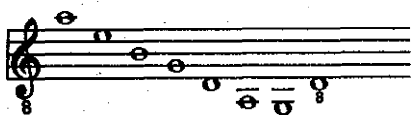
[6]See Julia Sutton, "The Music of J. B. Besard's *Novus Partus*, 1617," *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, XIX (1966), pp. 182-204.

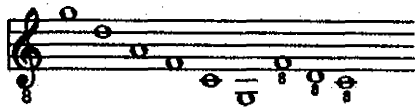
such a small lute with so many courses. The *liutino* used from time to time in Baroque concertos had six courses at most and was more closely related to the Milanese mandolin.

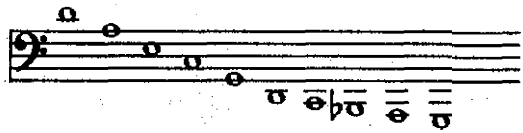
Although no tuning instructions are given, this presents no problem to the experienced lute ensemble player. The Superius lute is tuned:



The Contratenor lute is an A lute with eight courses, tuned a fourth lower than the Superius:



The Tenor lute is one tone lower than the contra and has nine courses. It is the standard G lute:

The Bass lute is tuned a fourth lower than the tenor lute or an octave lower than the Superius. Ten courses are required:



Even in Vallet's time it could not have been an easy matter to obtain exactly these instruments–perhaps he wrote his quartets with a specific group in mind.

THE MUSIC

Vallet presents his quartets consecutively in the following order: "Ballet," "Ballet," "Est-ce mars," "Courante de mars," "Un jour de la semaine," "Allon (sic) aux noces," and "Gaillarde." There

is no indication other than their proximity that the seven quartets were considered a suite by Vallet. It must be noted that there is no connection between them tonally or thematically, with the exception of "Est-ce mars" and its courante which follows. The entire playing time for all the quartets is about thirteen minutes.

"Ballet 1" is a typical *entrata* or march of the period. It owes a debt to the pavan which could be danced nicely to this music. The piece is made up of two four-measure strains, each with a varied reprise. Most of the lutes play some divisions during the reprises, but the fastest movement is typically in the Superius part. All parts share both melodic and harmonic material. A transcription of "Ballet 1" is given on the following page.

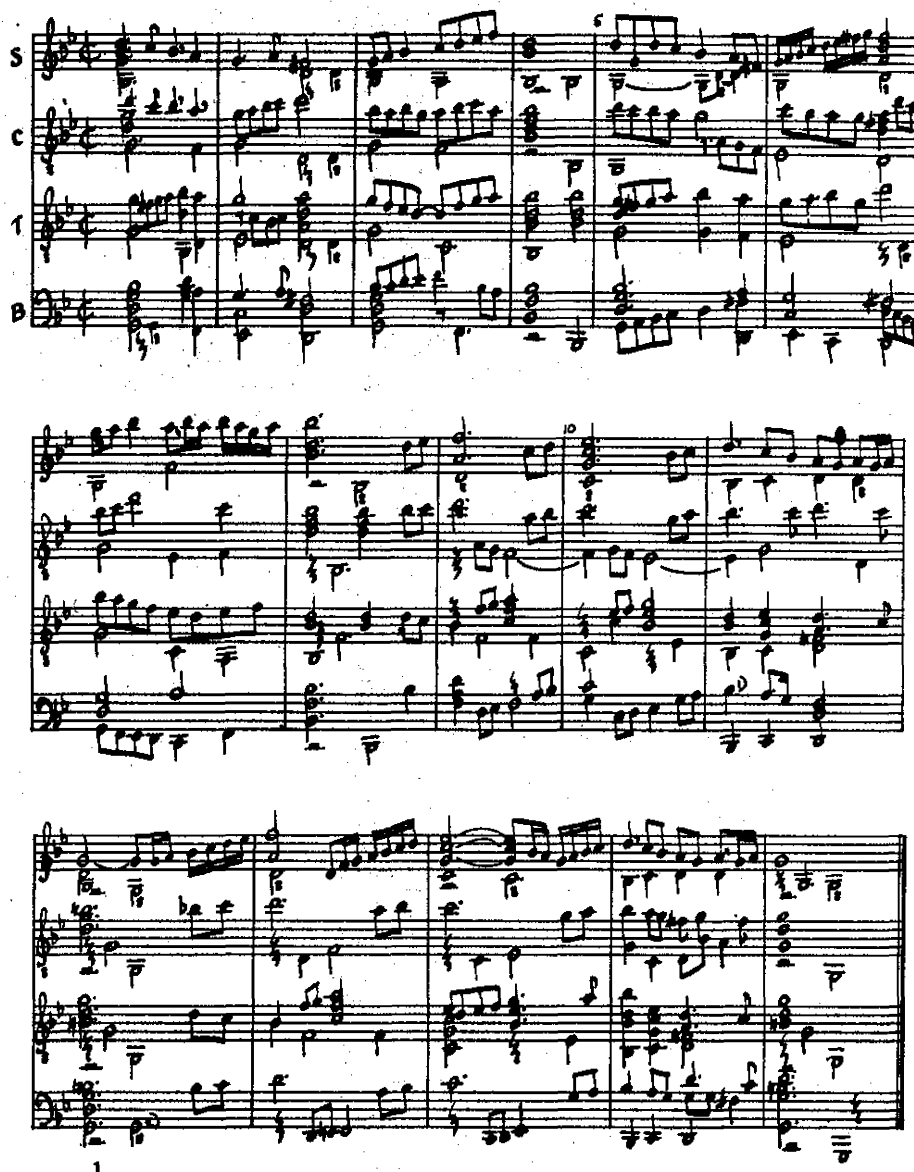
"Ballet 2" is the same kind of dance as "Ballet 1," with one important difference: The phrases are five measures in length, which is rather unusual. However, the AA'BB' form is retained. Another unusual feature is the Bass lute solo in the second reprise. The other parts are kept to a minimum here, allowing the Bass to come out strongly—an example of Vallet's careful orchestration.

The next piece is Vallet's setting of "Est-ce mars," a popular song of the time. The piece was also set for the keyboard by both Sweelinck and Scheidt. Vallet's setting is rather straightforward compared to those of Sweelinck and Scheidt, which go far afield with their many variations. The tune is stated only once, but the built-in repeat of each phrase allows for a diminution in the Superius. The melody, however, is always present without ornamentation in some part. The following "Courante de mars" is a triple version of the same tune. Two triple measures here equal one of the original tune with the basic form kept intact. Here, however, the inner voices share the variations and diminutions equally with the top voice. This is a lively triple dance more akin to the *corranto* than to the later Baroque *courante*.

"Un jour de la semaine" follows. Its melody may have been a popular song of the time. It is also in a *corranto* rhythm and has a charming, lilting melody. Divisions are found in all the lute parts. The form is more complex than that of the preceding pieces: AA'B with the very long B section lacking clearly marked phrases.

"Allon aux noces" is the only piece of the seven quartets that seems to call for a slow tempo. The music is thick and heavy throughout. The tune is unknown, but the title suggests a rustic origin. The form is AA'BCC. Only the Superius ornaments the melody in the A' section; the other parts have a repeat.

The "Gaillarde" is the last and largest piece of the quartets. It has three very different sections and ends with a great flourish. The form is AA'BB'C. In the reprises, divisions are played only by the

Ballet 1

[1]Rhythm signs misplaced in original
[2]C in original

Superius. The key relationships between sections show that Vallet was still under the influence of modal organization: The first starts in G minor and ends in G major; the second starts in D minor and ends in D major; and the last starts in F major and ends in G major. The lack of tonal connection between sections gives this music an old-fashioned quality for Vallet's own time. However, this type of harmonic movement is very well suited to the "Gaillarde" and to the quartets in general. The "Gaillarde" is perhaps the greatest of the quartets, and all the quartets of Nicolas Vallet are extraordinary expressions of a unique genius. In these quartets we hear the swan song of the old style of lute music—a fitting end to a glorious era.

SAGA OF A TWENTIETH-CENTURY LUTE PIONEER

By SUZANNE BLOCH

For you, readers, who now form a growing generation of lutenists, this is the telling of early years, when one wandered in search of playing the lute, its music, and information for bringing back to life this fascinating and then so mysterious instrument. Lute playing was a lost art whose essence was felt only through paintings and from its mention in literature. The lute's beautiful shape as seen in museums evoked a dream of perfection that became more and more wanted as the world grew harsher and louder and speedier.

The first time I heard the word "luth" was as a little girl, on the way back from a mushroom-gathering expedition in the woods with my father. Laden with a good haul, trudging back on the dusty road, he suddenly burst forth with the song "Joli Tambour." "Do you know where I heard this? It was at a concert in Geneva by a famous Swedish folk singer, Sven Schollander, who accompanied himself on a lute. The audience was very small, so when he came on stage he simply and warmly said, 'Come and sit around me, friend. . . . What is a lute? Well, it is an ancient, very ancient instrument, extremely difficult to play, having many strings.' " All this impressed me strongly. I thought how wonderful it would be to play to a small group and say, "Come and sit around me, friends." As for the lute, I imagined it was a kind of weaving loom that made music.

Many years passed before I was actually exposed to a lute and its music. In Paris, as a student of Nadia Boulanger, I was given a ticket to an exclusive private concert of early music at the home of a Commandant Lecerf. This was "haute societé" and I sat shyly, a bit overwhelmed by this milieu. Lovely ladies came and went, playing a variety of instruments including a lute. I did not have a program—the music was announced by the host—and frankly, I have little memory of the actual music. I went home impressed by something I felt, almost like a recognition of an essence, a feeling of something familiar, close to me; and I decided that one day I would look into this music and the lute.

Two years later at the home of Albert Einstein in Berlin, I heard

his stepdaughter Margo sing German and Hebrew folk songs while accompanying herself on a Tyrolean *laute*, a six-stringed lute-shaped guitar. She told me that they were easy to find in Berlin; and the next day I bought one for seven dollars! At once I wanted to play early music on it and I began arranging accompaniments of troubadour and modal French folk songs. In due time, I graduated to another, more expensive lute that had some extra bass strings, at the high price of fifteen dollars. This was in 1928!

My first "audition" as a lutenist-singer was for the famous conductor Willhelm Furtwangler, who had conducted my father's Rhapsody, "Schelomo" and had become a good friend of the family. I sang and played for him the two or three songs I knew. I hoped he would tell me about a teacher and where I could find music, but he knew absolutely nothing about all this. I had a true, clear, very small untrained voice of which I thought little—this was just a way to start playing the lute—but Furtwangler said to me seriously, "I think you have a voice. Why don't you stay in Berlin and study? Being a good musician, you will soon be able to sing with my orchestra." Fortunately, I did not believe him and I returned to America.

Before I left Europe, I was fortunate enough to find and buy the first published anthology of Renaissance lute music by Oscar Chilesotti and Bruger, the closest thing to real lute music available at the time.

Some years later during a trip to Holland with my parents, I escaped the family and went to Brussels where I timidly walked into the Bibliothèque du Conservatoire. There I was confronted by an old gentleman with pince-nez and a small goatee who sternly asked me what I desired. I fumbled, a bit overwhelmed. "I came from the United States (the wrong sort of introduction at the time) and wanted to see lute music." "What do you know about tablature?" "Nothing, but I am willing to learn," I said. The old gentleman snorted and turned his back on me. This was a turning point in my life—I wanted to flee, to escape those pince-nez, but destiny in the presence of a young assistant librarian intervened. He was Hermann Closson, son of the Conservateur du Musée. Looking at me pityingly, he said, "You will not last a month: First, you are an American and are not serious; second, the lute is so difficult that no one really can ever bring it back. Still, as long as you are here, I shall bring you our most precious book." He brought out the *Hortus Musarum*, and I sat, facing pages and pages of tablature. It's lucky that I didn't see a manuscript first; at least this was clear and seemingly logical. But the *Hortus* was written on five lines. I went to the old gentleman—who turned out to be Van den Borren, the famous musicologist—and in a small voice asked if the five lines meant that the lute had just five

courses. "How should I know?" he squeaked angrily. By then my dander was up. American was I? I'd show them. I went out, bought a cheap little school notebook, and began to copy blindly some of the music. Every day I copied tablature and at the hotel tried to figure it out. Because of my thorough training in solfege and counterpoint, I rapidly learned to hear the music as I copied. I also soon found out that my third course (tuned as on the German *laute*) had to be lowered a half tone. No doubt I could have read something and saved all this guessing, but having had no formal musical education, and having read music history only from superficial books that skimmed over this period, I had to grope and didn't dare ask an expert. Two months later in Paris, I bumped into Hermann Closson. "What are you doing here? What? You didn't give up the lute yet? Incredible!"

At last a dear friend of my father, the great writer Havelock Ellis, told me about Arnold Dolmetsch; so I paid him a visit before returning to America. I arrived one afternoon at his home in Haslemere Surrey, England, and was welcomed by Mabel Dolmetsch, the gentle wife of the "Master." After a rather long wait, Dolmetsch, a little man with a grey beard and terrible eyes, entered, dressed in shorts and sandals and wearing a little knitted cap. He glared at me. I spoke a few formal words. Not a sound came out of him. "Oh, please forgive Arnold. He doesn't like to speak English; he prefers French," Mabel explained. At this I burst forth in my native language, which gave me entrée to a long tirade in which Dolmetsch, embittered by the lack of recognition from musicologists and many musicians, vented his ire by saying about almost everyone, "C'est un cretin." A bit stunned, I told him about my efforts to learn to play the lute, to which he said that I surely had a cigar box for an instrument (which was partly true) and that I should get one of his. I asked if he had any for sale and he hawed and hemmed, "Perhaps, later . . . "—which was all right with me as I could not have afforded one anyway. Then I asked if I might see one of his instruments and if he would play for me, since I had never heard a real lute. He seemed reticent but at last brought out a lute. From the terrible-eyed "Alberich" that he first seemed, he changed into a rather unsure gnome. First he hooked onto his belt a metal holder and clamped his lute there. Then slowly looking at the bridge, then the fingerboard, he played a few easy tunes from the *Straloch Ms.* I was greatly disappointed—the sound was dry and thin. I really (now to my shame) had hoped to hear heavenly sounds like a harp makes, but even better. Yet, there was something, something very genuine, however amateurish technically, something of the past, of intimacy. I felt very confused. All my vision had to adjust. There would be no lush sound, even if one played better. The lute was not a guitar or a harp. It was something

utterly individual, and this attracted me. I left, saying that as soon as I could, I would buy one of his lutes. Dolmetsch was rather irritated because I had watched his right hand plucking the double strings and asked if one was supposed to always pluck both strings of a course, since I noticed he didn't. He roared at me, "Mais non, mais non, I *always* strike both strings." I left almost walking backwards after this outburst. Mrs. Dolmetsch, who spent her life pouring oil on visitors when they left after such interviews, told me she could tell he really enjoyed my visit. I was not so sure.

The following year all my energy was spent earning money for a lute. Every week I taught whole days in White Plains, New York, and in Boston. I traveled to the latter via the Providence Night Line, a sort of floating red-light district in which I rushed in and locked myself in my cabin at once, getting out at six in the morning to take a bus to Boston. This was the cheapest way to get there, and for the sake of a lute, it was worth it.

In the spring I wrote to Dolmetsch that I had saved money for a lute and told him how. He answered at once, impressed and touched that I had worked so hard for a lute. He often said that one should not merely get an instrument, but one should sacrifice in order to get one. He wrote that he had a good German instrument from 1600 that he had restored and was immediately sending with a wooden case that he had built himself. I remember when the big crate arrived—in it, lying in full glory, was a bright green case shaped like a lute and inside it, the beautiful instrument. At last I could actually start to learn and play.

That summer I managed to go to Haslemere in hopes of studying with Dolmetsch. But what did he ask me to do? He needed a violist in his orchestra. So I was given a viola with frets (since I had only scratched a bit on the violin years ago in my father's student orchestra). I also was asked to sing in certain groups, pretend to play a rebec, look angelic while I sang in the "family consorts," and even play the kettle drums in a performance of Handel's "Water Music"—a great way to learn the lute!

But I did get two lessons. The first was when he restrung my instrument, all the while giving a running commentary on the uselessness of my wasting time visiting my father as long as he, Dolmetsch, was there. Afterwards I had the great privilege of going up to his sanctum, a small alchemist's room full of shelves and drawers that contained the most improbable things. On his windowsill he placed little pieces of cheese for his favorite birds. He then brought out lute tablatures, some of the *Straloch* pieces, and a beautiful book of lute manuscript pieces. These he said had belonged to a nobleman whose secretary was of Italian background because in

the copying of all the popular lute pieces in French tablature, he would revert at times to Italian script. I was allowed to copy anything I wanted, but only after first scrubbing my hands and showing them for inspection. I could use only pencil. I still cherish the three booklets in which I copied pieces and went over the notes later with ink.

My second lesson was spent on a piece I had copied called "All of Green Willow," which contained chords Dolmetsch insisted should not be plucked, but rather brushed with the index finger and thumb, holding the thumb under the index finger. I could see this being used occasionally, but not on every three-note chord, for it killed the polyphony and rhythm.

When I played pieces Dolmetsch did not know, he was not interested. Instead, he insisted I learn a complete suite from the *Straloch Ms.*, I suspect because of their quaint titles which he rattled off, " 'It's a Wonder to See,' 'A Danse,' 'An Thou wer Myn Own Thing,' 'Hence Me Malie Gray,' 'I Kist Her While She Blusht,' 'I Long for Thy Virginitie' (this said with a sly look at me, probably hoping I would be shocked), and 'I Long for the Wedding' "—truly charming titles, but musically not very exciting pieces. When I spoke of going off to London, he indignantly asserted it was a waste of time.

At this time my salvation came, in the person of Diana Poulton. I had heard about this "other lute player" who had studied with Dolmetsch for about three years but so far had not played at the festivals as a soloist. I was curious and a bit apprehensive, for in those early days we each felt that we were the "only one" truly to revive the lute. But when we met, we had an immediate rapport. At once she righted me about lessons with Dolmetsch, saying that for three years he had kept her on "All of Green Willow" and at times had made her weep. She and her husband Tom had done their own research in London, and Diana had inherited a sheaf of lute tablatures copied by Peter Warlock. They lived in Heyshott in a wonderful little thatched-roof cottage with a garden full of herbs and flowers and a tame magpie named Jack. Diana kept goats that she milked and she made her own cheese. This extraordinary down-to-earth way of living made a great impression on me. It was like a dream, away from the materialistic way of life that threatened to get worse and worse. After a meal, Diana would play her lute, reading fluently from all sorts of tablatures, or accompany Tom who sang in an extremely musical way. At last I heard the lute as it should sound.

As I advanced in my playing, Diana told me of the wonderful duets in *Jane Pickering's lute book.* She had some of them copied, and one good day for the first time in probably three centuries, they

came to life in the little cottage in Heyshott.

We then began to work seriously on some of the duets and played a set of them in an informal performance at the Haslemere Festival, to the delight of everyone and the high praise of Rudolph Dolmetsch, the oldest and most gifted musician of the Dolmetsch family. Our performance had not been known of by Arnold Dolmetsch, who would have vetoed our playing. Rudolph then insisted that we perform duets at the following Haslemere Festival in 1935.

That winter I had many chances to play the lute. My real debut was, of all places, in Carnegie Hall to illustrate the instrument in Ernest Schelling's children's concerts. I was skeptical of an audience being able to hear a lute in so large an auditorium, so Schelling plunked me on the stage, told me to play, and ran to all the different parts of the hall, even upstairs, while I played my "safest" pieces. Every so often I would yell, "Vous m'entendez, Monsieur Schelling?" to which he would shout, "Mais bien sur."

I already sensed, however, that this instrument had qualities that were not for a huge hall such as Carnegie. By then the lute had begun to represent something of great spirituality to me. At first I was not aware of it; I just wanted to play. Now, however, I can see that the young generation today feels what I felt so many years ago—that same reaching out for a subtlety, a purity, a simplicity, a delicacy, and a rhythmic vitality. I felt so rich when I could play a short piece perfectly. To own a treasure is to be able to do justice to a piece of lute music. I discovered something else when I joined Carl Dolmetsch on a short American tour. I had to learn the virginals in three days and also play the recorder, but the real thing was to test myself as a lute soloist. Then I discovered the miracle of playing a simple piece well on the lute, of feeling the magic created by the sound of the instrument—this wondrous hush, a spell on the audience. It was as if suddenly the breath of the past were upon us all, making us forget the noises, the tensions of our times.

The next summer when Diana and I began to rehearse the lute duets we were to play at the Festival, we decided to work especially hard and show what the lute really could do. Arnold Dolmetsch had capitulated by then to Rudolph's and Carl's demands that we play the duets. Not to be outdone, he decided to do the four-lute pieces of Nicolas Vallet, and he would play the most difficult part, the treble, on a little lute that he had constructed for the occasion.

Oh, those rehearsals for the four lutes! Dolmetsch had great difficulty with the runs in the Vallet; after all, the man was eighty-two years old, and it was remarkable that he could play as well as he did. He insisted on the use of gut strings, so we would go

over yards of surgical gut, flicking a length the way Mersenne advises to make sure the string would not be false. At rehearsals on those hot July days, Dolmetsch would have us all tune separately, listening to us and directing us—to my disgust, as I knew we all could tune perfectly well. By the time all four had tuned (4 x 19 strings!!), somebody's treble would "pop," and we would have to start all over again. One day, exasperated with the breaking of the strings, I went to London and bought several trebles at the shop of a stringmaker who made silk lute strings. At the next rehearsal, Dolmetsch began to express surprise that my treble stood so well. He had been violently against the use of silk strings, but he was not to be outdone. That night he stayed up, constructing a winding machine for making silk strings, insisting his strings would be better than those I had bought. The next day he came with a string and gave it to Diana, who was obliged to use it, and since it was not as strong as the others, it also went "pop"—and so it went.

The day of the concert when we were to play the duets, Diana and I were very nervous for we had chosen some difficult duets and had worked hard to bring out subtleties of rhythmic expression and some lovely coloring in the "Spanish Pavan." We walked onto the stage, set our music on the stands, checked our tuning, and were ready to start when a voice came from the front row, "Lower your stands so we can see you." This was Dolmetsch, timing his comment perfectly. Diana and I lowered our stands, looked at each other sending a mutual message, "He won't shake us; no, he won't." The duets went off as well as we had hoped. The next day when Gerald Hayes wrote in his review, "At last the lute was given due justice at the Haslemere Festival," we felt that we had accomplished our goal. From then on, Dolmetsch gave in and allowed others to play lute at the festivals. I felt a bit sorry for him that day—he looked beaten—but Diana said, "I am not a bit sorry; after all, he made me cry for three years."

This is not a success story—just the beginning of the long, wondrous, hard road that can never end for any lutenist. Some have gone way beyond what Diana and I have done. But in those early years there was a great magic in pioneering that sometimes I feel has been lost with the recent commercialized interest in the lute, for which playing fast and loud seems to be the one criterion. Yet, there are still many young people who seem to be searching as I did so many years ago for this subtle beauty that is beyond all things to enrich our spirits. A minute of beauty can be a complete universe.

In the summer of 1969, Toyohiko Satoh introduced me to the method of lute stringing discussed in the following article. Toyohiko is a student of Eugen M. Dombois, who with Sandro H. Zanetti is responsible for the practical application of the information in this article to the stringing of the lute.

I have strung some dozen different lutes by this method, and their owners agree with me that they sound more beautiful. I have tested lutes under various conditions, both alone and in ensemble with different instruments, for carrying power, for clarity, and for richness of sound. My ears are more pleased by this method of stringing than by any other I have used.

Those who have been playing on high tension strings may find that their facility is not as great at first with this new stringing. However, if a few days are taken to orient the hands to the new tension and the different touch required, facility will be as great as ever. The strings are by no means "slack," but rather at low tension. You may prefer another sound even after giving a fair test to this method but, after all, it is differences in taste and approach that keep a field alive and growing.

—Donna Curry

A METHOD FOR STRINGING LUTES

By Toyohiko Satoh

The lutenist has two major problems: procuring a good lute; and appropriate stringing for his lute. Many of the very old, very good lutes were of very light construction, and many have been

broken by incorrect stringing with too great an overall tension.

On the guitar, the tension of each string is about 7 kilograms (kg.), giving an overall tension for the six strings of about 42 kg. The top (soundboard) is made about 2.0-2.5 millimeters (mm.) thick. The top of a good lute is 1.5 mm. or thinner. If 7 kg. tension per string were used, as for the guitar, the total tension would be 105 kg. for an eight-course lute and even greater for a nine- or ten-course instrument. For a beautiful, lightly-built instrument, this would be great cruelty—the neck could come up, the bridge could tear off, or the top could break.

Many people think a thick (high-tension) string will produce a louder sound than a thin one. This is not always so. On a thin soundboard, a thin string sounds louder. The thicker string sounds heavy and dark, while the thinner one sounds clear and bright. The question is: How thin should the strings be?

Eugen M. Dombois,[1] with the help of Sandro H. Zanetti,[2] has learned that the best tension for the lute is about 3.5-4.0 kg. for the first string (treble), about 6 kg. total for each pair of the second to fourth courses, and about 4.5-5.0 kg. per course for the basses. The total tension on a ten-course lute would be about 45.0-50.0 kg.

The diameter for the individual sttings can be found with two formulas—one for gut strings and one for nylon.[3]

(1) $f \cdot l \cdot d = 49 \cdot \sqrt{K}$ ----gut string
(2) $f \cdot l \cdot d = 54 \cdot \sqrt{K}$ ----nylon string[4]

f = frequency (ex. a' = 440 Hertz (Hz.)
l = vibrating string length in m.
d = diameter of string in mm.
K = tension of string in kg.

[1]Eugen M. Dombois, Professor of Lute, Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Basel, Switzerland; recording and concert artist.

[2]Sandro H. Zanetti, Luthier, Pontresina, Switzerland.

[3]Dr. Helmut Herminghaus, Mainz.
Franz Jahnel, in "Die Gitarre und ihr Bau," Verlag *Das Musikinstrument* (Frankfurt am Main), pp. 236-237, gives a more involved formula by Taylor that is basically the same formula as Dr. Herminghaus' in this article.

[4]The derivation of the constants 49 and 54 has been rechecked by Howard Hyatt, physicist, McDonnell Douglas Corp., Santa Monica, California.

Example:

You have a good, light lute with 60 cm. (0.60 m.) string length. ($l = 0.60$)

You would like to use 4 kg. on the first string with nylon. ($K = 4$)

You would like to tune it to g' = 392 Hz. ($f = 392$)

Then: $f \cdot l \cdot d = 54 \cdot \sqrt{K}$

$392 \cdot 0.60 \cdot d = 54 \cdot \sqrt{4}$

$$d = \frac{54 \cdot \sqrt{4}}{392 \cdot 0.60} \doteqdot 0.455\,mm. = \emptyset$$

The tension of wire-covered strings for basses can also be calculated, but strings from different manufacturers are made with different materials, so these calculations will not be discussed here.

Good bass strings are very difficult to find. If strings designed for the guitar are used, they vibrate correctly and sound beautiful when the tension is 6-7 kg. A tension of less than 4 kg. with this type of string gives an inferior tone, since the string no longer vibrates correctly. However, Sandro H. Zanetti has developed a bass string with a core of nylon monofilament covered with fine nylon and then covered with metal. This vibrates correctly at low tension and sounds beautiful.

The use of octave strings in the bass courses allows for a lower total tension per course, as well as giving more carrying power to the bass courses and a richer tone. My opinion is that some English lute music does sound better in unison tuning. However, octave strings sound better on German, French, Italian, and much Spanish and English lute music. Many people complain that if octave strings are used on the fifth course, the tone will suddenly become an octave lower when playing from the fifth to the fourth course. This is true if the same tension has been used on the octave string as on the lower string. But when the octave string is only one-fourth to one-fifth the tension of the other (under 1.0 kg.),[5] it does not sound an octave lower when the fourth course is played following the fifth course.

Unison strings present another problem. To the ear of the player it seems that two strings tuned in unison sound twice as loud as only one string; but actually only the tension is twice as strong, not the sound. It is almost impossible to tune two strings perfectly to

[5]Giesbert in *Schule für die Barock Laute* (Schott, 1938) says octave strings should be between 0.5-0.7 kg.

the same pitch. As a result, the unisons are noisy if heard nearby. However, heard from a little distance, for example in a concert hall, the sound is not louder. A tone with many overtones can be heard very clearly in a concert hall, for the overtones give great carrying power. My opinion is that the main function of octave strings is to give many overtones. They can be used on the bass courses from the fifth downward, sometimes even from the fourth.[6]

Regarding the above, the unison strings from the second to the fourth courses can also be changed to make their tones clearer. The use of two different thicknesses of strings for the unisons accomplishes this: for example, 2 kg. on the right side and 4 kg. on the left. The thinner string sounds smaller, but coupled with the thicker string, gives a much richer tone color. Also, if the thinner string is used on the right and the thicker on the left, it is very easy to play the two strings together. I find this method of stringing the most satisfying for both playing and listening.

[6]C.f. pieces by Neusidler from the recording "Lauten Musik der Renaissance" played by Eugen M. Dombois (Electrola SME 81033).

REVIEWS

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON RECENT EDITIONS OF LUTE MUSIC

By PETER DANNER

In the last two or three years there has been a heartening increase in the amount of lute music published in modern editions. At the same time, a considerable difference of opinion exists as to the best method of presenting the music. In this article, we will not attempt a detailed discussion of the relative merits and demerits of the various types of transcriptions possible. This has already been done.[1]

However, a comparison of some of the more recent editions of lute music gives rise to a number of implicit questions that deserve consideration. These questions relate primarily to format and transcription. I would like to answer some of these questions from a lutenist's point of view and then attempt to evaluate a number of the more interesting recent publications.

In looking over some dozen editions that I felt would be of interest to lute players, one overriding question seemed to present itself: For whom was the edition intended? There are today two conflicting markets for modern editions of lute music: the performing lutenist and guitarist, and the non-performing musicologist. The former is primarily interested in the easiest way of translating the printed page to live music, while the latter is more interested in deciphering the intention of the composer. Ordinarly this would be solely a question of the difference between a "practical edition" and a "scholarly edition." With lute music, however, this question immediately becomes tied to the problem of notation. The conflict lies in the different objectives inherent in tablature and

[1] A good discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of different types of transcriptions (with to this writer's mind unfortunate conclusions) is Michel Podolski's, "A la Recherche D'une Methode de Transcription Formelle de Tablatures de Luth" in *Le Luth et sa Musique* (Paris, 1958).

mensural notation—objectives that Willi Apel has conveniently labeled "finger notation" and "pitch notation."[2] The lutenist is undoubtedly more interested in tablature, which is basically a "how-to-do-it" or "finger" notation. The non-player is more interested in mensural notation, which is a "what-is-done," "pitch" notation.

Even if an editor admits that there are advantages to each system and prepares an edition with both "finger" and "pitch" notations, his problems are far from over. First, he must decide what kind of tablature to use. Lutenists today are used to reading French tablature. Every player is aware of the difficulties involved in reading Italian tablature, to say nothing of that fantastic system devised by the Germans! The only conceivable advantage in using these latter two is their graphic verisimilitude; they are no closer to the intentions of the composer. For this reason, there seems little advantage in their continued use in any but facsimile editions.

Second, the editor must decide on the best kind of transcription to use. The one major drawback to tablature is its inability to clearly project the rhythm of the music or its contrapuntal possibilities. A transcription can be of great assistance in helping the performer visualize the implicit counterpoint in the music of such composers as Francesco da Milano or Valentin Bakfark. Transcriptions, if they are good, serve as interpretations of the music and, by showing it in a different form, can throw new light onto motivic development and texture often difficult to see from the tablature alone.

Lute editions are most usable when they are presented in French tablature with a transcription showing the rhythm and linear aspects of the music. The drawback to using mensural notation alone is that it is often very difficult to read on the lute. For example, the French composer Dufaut made use of as many as nine different tunings. The poor lutenist would be hard pressed if he had to remember where the actual notes were on his instrument in each of these tunings. With "finger notation" his problems are reduced to retuning his lute. That can often be problem enough! Even playing from an edition like David Lumsden's highly acclaimed anthology *English Lute Music* can lead to difficulties, as anyone who has attempted to reconstruct the tablature of "Dowland's Farewell" can testify. Even with Lumsden's fingerings, there remain just too many ambiguities.

The argument usually brought forward against including tablature is that it adds to space and cost. This argument was used not long ago by Brian Jeffery in his review of *The Complete Works*

[2]Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music*, 4th ed. (1953), p. 54.

of Anthony Holborne.[3] His statement that Lumsden's book is inexpensive is true enough; whether or not it is also practical to the lutenist is something else again.

In this discussion of transcriptions *vis-à-vis* tablature, we have so far overlooked the guitar player who is anxious to play lute music on his own instrument. Although the guitar is no lute, it is certainly a better substitute than the piano; yet keyboard transcriptions seem to be the rule rather than the exception. Although transcriptions of Baroque lute pieces require considerable arrangement if they are to be played on the guitar, Renaissance lute transcriptions are quite satisfactory and can be of benefit to lutenists for their clarification of rhythm.

Granting that no single solution to the problem exists, let us turn to a number of contemporary editions and see how they handle the problem. Oxford University Press has recently published two volumes of lute music. The first is *Elizabethan Popular Music* edited by Brian Jeffery. The second is *Francis Cutting: Selected Works for Lute* edited by Martin Long. Both are extremely handsome and both, I might add, are extremely expensive. The relationship between transcription and tablature is treated in a particularly attractive manner: keyboard transcriptions of great neatness with a separate insert of facsimiles of the pieces. Where the original sources are difficult to read (this refers particularly to the Cutting book), modern reconstructions of the tablatures have been used. The transcriptions appear to be all one could want in a keyboard version, and the quality of the music is high. Of particular interest in the first volume are pairs of versions of the same piece. Included are two versions of "Lord Willoughby's welcome home," one by Francis Cutting and the other an extremely elaborate setting by William Byrd. Also there are two versions each of "Greensleeves" and "Sweet Robin." The Cutting volume consists primarily of Pavans and Galliards. The music in both volumes ranges from easy to very difficult, but it is almost without exception rewarding.

A slightly different approach to a facsimile edition is the Breitkopf and Härtel edition of Baron's "Fantasie für die Laute" together with twelve minutes by Ferdinand Seidel. This is a reprint of a slim volume of music originally printed in 1757 and now reissued to commemorate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of this venerable publishing firm. The book has a modest role in the history of music publishing, since in it Brietkopf introduced a new form of moveable type for lute tablature. In the modern edition, the

[3] *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. XXII, No. 1 (Spring, 1969), pp. 125-26.

facsimile is published in hard cover with an insert containing a guitar transcription by Adalbert Quadt. There is also a short introduction to the music. These pieces were written for a thirteen-course Baroque lute, performers of which will be acquainted with Ernst Baron if only for his *Historisch-theoretische und praktische Untersuchung.* Ferdinand Seidel's name is much less known. He was primarily a violinist, and these minuets are his only known lute pieces as well as his only pieces to have been published. They prove to be delightful music, not too difficult to play, and as such would make a good introduction to anyone embarking on a study of the Baroque lute. Each of the twelve minuets is in a different key. In his transcription, Quadt first transcribes the pieces in their original key and then transposes them to more satisfactory keys for the guitar, complete with fingerings. He wisely does not try a guitar version of the Baron "Fantasie" as it is quite unidiomatic for that instrument. Altogether this is a book in which Breitkopf and Härtel can take real pride—and at $4.50 it is a bargain.

The light, gallant texture of Seidel's music proves very satisfactory for guitar transcriptions. The problem of transcriptions, however, proves much more difficult in the more recent publications of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. Under the series title *Corpus des Luthistes Français,* the seventh, eighth and ninth books in the series are: first, a volume combining the music of a number of minor composers including Chancy, Bouvier, Belleville, Dubisson, and Chevalier; second, an edition of the music of le vieux Gautier; and last, works for the lute by Jean-Baptiste Besard. As students of French Baroque music are well aware, this music had a great influence on the French clavecin school, particularly on Chambonnières and his successors. From this point of view, keyboard transcriptions, such as we find in these modern lute editions, are not out of place. The composers in the first volume are slight historically and their music is also slight. Most of these lutenists were connected with the French court. Francois, Sieur de Chancy, who died in 1656, was "maitre de la musique de la chambre du roi." Jacques, Sieur de Belleville, was a dancer and choreographer as well as a lutenist to the royal court. Chevalier was also a court musician. Their music was collected by Pierre Ballard and published in 1631 under the title *Tablature de luth de differens autheurs sur les accords nouveaux.* The only word to describe this music is "precious." Original ideas are conspicuously absent.

Of much greater interest is the music of le vieux Gautier; i.e., Ennemond Gautier, dit le vieux, Sieur de Neves (c. 1575-1651). The older Gautier proves himself to be a worthy predecessor to his more famous cousin Denis. Although he confined himself to lute music, he

is a master in his field. The lute for which he wrote was the Baroque lute with its D minor tuning with four diapasons. His use of rhythm and texture shows great inventiveness. Special attention should be called to a duet, "Canaries et Contrepartie," with its delightful cross rhythms and motivic interplay.

Besard is better known as an anthologist than as a composer. The third CNRS volume gathers together a number of his own compositions from his anthologies and from a number of manuscript sources. As these are written for the Renaissance lute, the pieces will probably be of interest to a greater number of lutenists than the other two books. Not all of Besard's music is good. Among his most attractive pieces are a number of short preludes, pieces of great charm. Some of the others, for example the long Passemezi, are often very dull "formula" music. Much of this music is very difficult with wide position leaps and fast passage work. Among the fifty-three pieces contained in this edition are two rather unusual versions of Dowland's "Lachrimae Pavane." The Allemandes are also nice, making use of the very highest notes on the lute.

All three of the CNRS volumes are under the editorship of Andre Souris. The layouts are good and the rhythmic clarity of the keyboard transcriptions is exemplary.

Similar in approach to the CNRS editions is the latest volume in the series *Monumenta Musicae Belgicae* which is devoted to the music of Emanuel Adriansen. Edited by Godelieve Spiessens, this volume includes seventeen lute solos, fifteen pieces for lute and from two to four singers, and two pieces for lute quartet drawn from Adriansen's three books for lute (1584, 1592, 1600). Again the layout is very clean and readable and the keyboard transcriptions very good. The major drawback to this edition is price—$26.00 is just too steep a price for such a limited amount of music. This is a pity, for Dr. Spiessens' choice of pieces is uniformly good. She has chosen the cream of Adriansen's very attractive output. The texture of much of this music is quite thick and often difficult to play but very rewarding. It is a shame that this music cannot find a wider audience in print. The edition is primarily a scholarly one; hopefully someone will take the clue and produce a practical edition at a lower price.

Another series of great interest to lutenists is published under the general editorship of Helmut Mönkemeyer, who must be one of the busiest music editors around. Twelve volumes have been published to date. Some of this material duplicates music already in print, such as Attaingnant's *Dixhuit basses dances*[4] and the music of

[4]C.f. Daniel Heartz, ed., *Preludes, Chansons and Dances for Lute* (Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1964).

Luys de Narvaez[5] and Alonso Mudarra.[6] This series includes copies of the original tablature together with both keyboard and guitar transcriptions. This is a procedure with considerable merit. As this series includes volumes of music by Hans Neusidler, Dalza, Attaingnant, and Joachim van den Hove among others, examples of all three types of tablature are included. For what is meant to be a "practical" edition, this is a rather pointless and impractical solution. Modern editions of German tablature would seem to be a useful as Victorian buttonhooks. If all the tablature had been presented in French tablature, the music would have been more accessible to lutenists. The differences between the three systems, as has been pointed out already, are purely mechanical, not musical. Therefore, little is to be gained by using all of them. In the volumes of German tablature, Mönkemeyer bases his keyboard transcription of a lute tuned in A rather than G, so lutenists will find difficulties in reading from it. If they are used to playing the guitar, they would do best reading from the guitar transcription. On the whole, it is a pity that a series of such obvious practical intention is not more practical in actual practice.

Still another approach to the problem of transcription and tablature is found in two publications from the massive series *Antiquae Musicae Italicae*, a series that as yet appears to be little known in this country. In the series is found both Alexandri Piccinini's *Intavolatura di Liuto e di Chitarrone* (1623) and Giovanni Terzi's *Intavolatura di Liuto, Libro Primo* (1593). In these editions, each title consists of two volumes, one containing a facsimile and the other a transcription of a portion of the music designed for the guitar. Both titles are edited by Mirko Caffagni, who also contributes extensive introductions in Italian.

Piccinini is rather a curiosity in lute history. His music was published when the lute had practically died out as a solo instrument in Italy, and it is significant that much of his music is written for the archlute.[7] He wrote for a lute of thirteen courses tuned in *vieux accord* and for a chitarrone of fourteen courses. The texture is extremely thick and very difficult to play. For all practical purposes, it is unplayable on the guitar due to the texture and the need for great number of diapasons. For this reason, the major value of transposing the music down a minor third to make it suitable for the guitar is lost. The nature of the music would have made a keyboard

[5]C.f. Emilio Pujol, ed., *Monumentos de la Musica Española*, III. This includes a single staff transcription for an instrument in G only.

[6]C.f. Emilio Pujol, ed., *MME*, VII.

[7]See Stanley Buetens, "The Instructions of Alessandro Piccinini," in this journal issue.

transcription more valuable. Players should be cautioned that the original (and therefore the facsimile) contains a great many errors.

Of more interest to the average lutenist, if not the historian, is the *Intavolatura* of Terzi. This includes motets, madrigals, canzoni, and dances, the latter of particular interest. Written for an instrument with only one diapason, this music is more readily playable on the guitar.

The last edition to be commented on here, although this does not exhaust the list of lute publications in the past two or three years, is an edition of the music of Silvius Leopold Weiss published by Edizioni Suvini Zerboni. This edition contains no tablature (except one facsimile page). Rather it is a treble-clef transcription of the British Museum manuscript Add. 30387 in two volumes. The first book contains sixteen suites and the second book twelve suites and forty-one individual pieces transcribed by Ruggero Chiesa. The lute parts to the two flute concertos in the original are not included. There is an introduction in both Italian and English in which lute performers are consistently referred to as "lutists." Chiesa claims that the pieces in this edition were designed to be played directly on the lute but that they may also be played on the guitar if the guitarist plays the bass notes up an octave and is willing to transpose some of the pieces. (What guitarist would be willing to play the "Tombeau sur la Mort Comte d'Logy" in the key of b-flat minor?) These claims should be taken with a grain of salt. As the music has not been transposed, the notes on the lute *can* be found in most cases. However, the format is often ambiguous and the player is advised to have a copy of the original manuscript at his elbow. The fact of the matter is that an edition such as this hinders rather than helps the performer of any instrument. In any event, it is pleasing that this very valuable Bach-like music is at last accessible in a modern edition.

In the editions discussed above are many different attempts to solve the problem of tablature *vis-à-vis* mensural notation: facsimile and keyboard transcription, facsimile and guitar transcription, modern tablature and keyboard transcription, modern tablature and keyboard plus guitar transcription, and single staff notation. Nor does this exhaust the possibilities. For example, we have not discussed transcriptions of lute music for solo guitar.

The quality of the transcriptions in all the books mentioned is very high. This is not the issue. The issue is the lack of consistency between various editions that often hinders performance of the music. In a way, this inconsistency is perhaps unavoidable considering not only the differences between tablature and mensural notation, but the variety of styles, tunings, and stringings

encountered in an instrument with a history of over two hundred and fifty years. But what are we to do with a book such as Chiesa's Weiss? Do we struggle to find the notes on our Baroque lutes when a tablature would show us at once where they are? Are we to become guitar transcribers and attempt to find a musical way of performing the music on a guitar? Isn't this rather an example of an edition in which the music has been divorced from its instrument and is now drifting around as an abstract, intellectually comprehensible but musically unplayable?

For flexibility of use, perhaps those editions that include both a literal keyboard transcription plus a guitar version together with the tablature are the best answer. In no event should tablature be abandoned. The validity of its use becomes ever greater as more and more people take up the lute. Tablature has been found by the test of time to be the most practical notation for lute music. Cost is often cited as a reason against including tablature or more than one transcription; but it can be pointed out that the series *Die Tablature* and the Seidel minuets are among the least expensive items cited and both use tablature and two transcriptions. The question of layout in itself is not overly important. There is no reason why all versions need to be placed together in the same volume on parallel staffs. The use of separate books of transcriptions or of inserts works as well as having them together on the same page. The only concern should be the avoidance of page turns and, since most lute pieces are relatively short, this can usually be done.

Finally, we should be concerned about the actual music that editors choose to publish. Here we have editions of such relatively minor composers as Chancy, Belleville, Piccinini, and Seidel, as well as new editions of music published elsewhere. With all this music in print, why is it that we have had to wait so long for the music of Spinacino, da Milano, Dowland, and other acknowledged masters of the lute to find their way into print?

METHOD FOR THE RENAISSANCE LUTE, by *Stanley Buetens* (Instrumenta Antiqua Publications, Menlo Park, California, 1969)

Here, at long last, is a book many have been waiting for, a lute method that starts at the very beginning and does not presuppose historical knowledge or prior technique.

In the introduction to his *Method for the Renaissance Lute* Stanley Buetens discusses the tablature system in which the method is written—the universally accepted French tablature that eventually replaced the German and Italian-Spanish types. He also discusses tuning and gives valuable pictures to illustrate the playing position.

The main part of the method begins with the development of single-line technique. Much of the material was developed by the author although, commendably, he has borrowed from historical books, including the *Thesaurus Harmonicus* (1603) by J. B. Besard, which was reprinted in Robert Dowland's *Varietie of Lute Lessons* (1610), and which may be consulted if more detailed information is desired.

The author progresses to two-part counterpoint by way of open-string basses and then fingered basses, with an appropriate warning to avoid dissonances between courses in runs to ensure careful and clear voice leading.

After the section on two-part playing, there are exercises to develop chord-playing technique, from three-note chords to the full *barre*. Adrian LeRoy (*A Brief and Plaine Instruction*, 1574) is quoted on directions for playing chords.

The final section of the work deals with cadential formulas, ornamented scale passages, playing from a score and lute ornamentation. After presenting detailed explanations of the meaning or meanings of the various Renaissance lute ornament signs by way of charts and written out examples, Mr. Buetens takes the common-sense position that "each lutenist was free to interpret the sign to his liking," given specific alternatives. He also adopts the policy that the player should interpret a sign according to the character of the piece and to the extent of his taste and talent.

Throughout the *Method* carefully selected pieces from masters of the period are given to illustrate the problem under consideration. Using this *Method*, an interested student should be able to work up a technique adequate enough to play much of the Renaissance literature without the services of a teacher; and a teacher should find it invaluable since it relieves him of the job of preparing suitable material for his students.

—Joseph N. Garton

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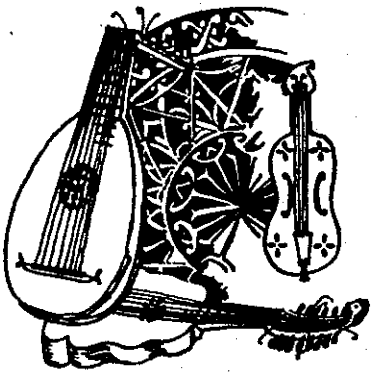

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