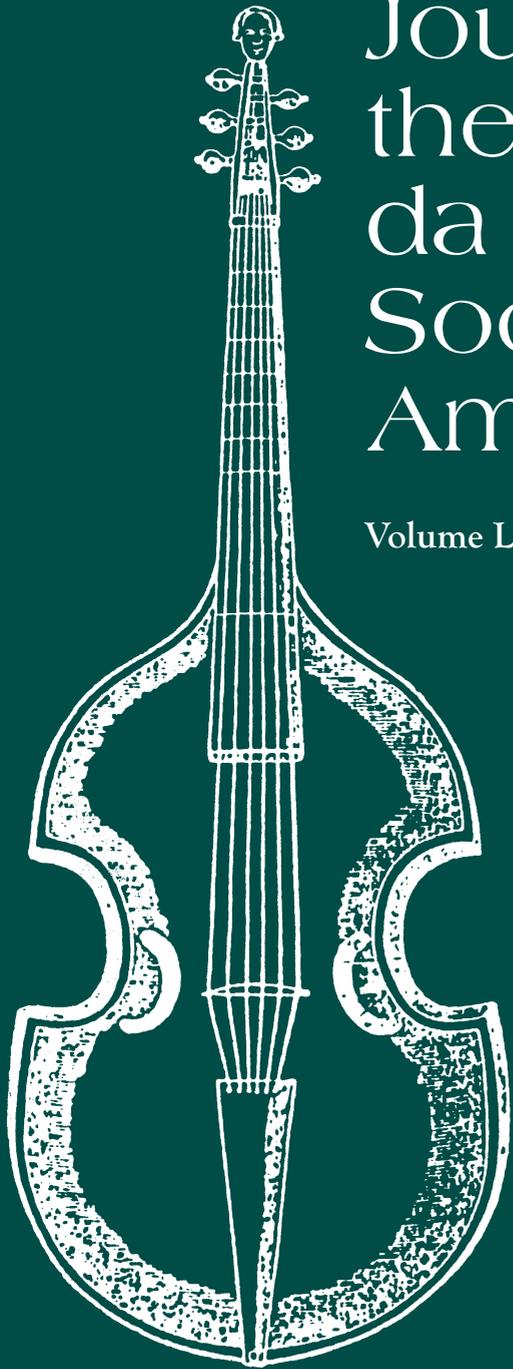


Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America

Volume L

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**JOURNAL OF THE
VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY
OF AMERICA**

Volume 50

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The Journal editors welcome for consideration articles pertaining to the viols and related instruments, their history, manufacture, performers, music, and related topics. Articles, correspondence, and materials for review should be sent to the editor: Robert A. Green, 1339 Sweet Pea Path, Crownsville, MD 21032 or via e-mail to <rgreen1965@aol.com>. Authors should consult the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th Edition, for matters of style. Articles and reviews should be submitted on disk specifying the computer and program used, or sent to the e-mail address above. Figures, diagrams, photographs, and music examples should be submitted separately as publication-ready digital image files or black-and-white glossy prints. Please consult the Editor if there is any question as to appropriate format, size, or resolution.

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VIOLA DA GAMBA SOCIETY OF AMERICA

PO Box 582628, Minneapolis, MN 55458-2628
 post@vdgsa.org
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The Viola da Gamba Society of America is a not-for-profit national organization dedicated to the support of activities relating to the viola da gamba in the United States and abroad. Founded in 1962, the VdGSA is a society of players, builders, publishers, distributors, restorers, and others sharing a serious interest in music for viols and other early bowed string instruments. VdGSA members receive a quarterly newsletter and this periodic journal, and have access to the many activities and valuable resources of the Society. The website provides additional information on the annual Conclave, instrument rentals, the microfilm lending library for researchers, and other offerings.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

This issue is entirely devoted to articles related to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French viol music. It includes a discussion of the life and career of John Hsu, whose lifelong involvement with this repertory laid the groundwork in many ways for the research included here. This article was prepared by Julie Anne Sadie (Ford) and Mary Cyr, both of whom benefited personally from working with John Hsu.

An article by Michael Bane discusses the relationship between Marin Marais and his devoted following and how this relationship influenced his compositional approach. Thomas MacCracken discusses what we can conclude concerning the pardessus and quinton based on the surviving instruments. Eric Tinkerhess explores the relationship between the structure of French poetry and the structure of viol music. It is a facile observation to suggest that music and language are related, but the devil is in the details. Tinkerhess presents one way of exploring this issue in depth.

Finally, Ian Woodfield provides a list of the latest research.

Robert A. Green

JOHN HSU (1931–2018)

Julie Anne Sadie and Mary Cyr

John Hsu belonged to a close circle of performers, composers, musicologists and music librarians attracted to the Cornell University Music Department in the 1950s and 60s by the distinguished music historian Donald Jay Grout, who nurtured an atmosphere of collaboration and mutual support that was visionary for its time.¹ In that charmed environment, Hsu was able to develop as an inspirational performer, colleague and teacher as well as an able administrator, succeeding Grout as the chairman of the department in 1967 and continuing to enlarge its profile in performance practice studies. John's colleagues included the performers fortepianist Malcolm Bilson and Baroque and Classical violinist Sonya Monosoff, and musicologists Neal Zaslaw and Rebecca Harris-Warrick (both French Baroque specialists).

In a personal letter of February 2014, he reflected on his time at Cornell and the remoteness of Ithaca, New York:

... a beautiful place but centrally isolated, so inconveniently located that one does not undertake a trip to the big cities lightly, even for the best of educational or musical purposes. So the only choice was the self-study route of training. What [the musicologist] Howard Mayer Brown years later identified as my maverick personality was actually a pre-ordained nature brought about by necessity.

Part of the magic was the degree to which everyone ultimately pursued their particular musical passions. In John Hsu's case, his

1. A private university founded in 1865, Cornell was the first American university to offer postgraduate degrees (MA and PhD) in musicology commencing in 1932. In 1945, Donald Grout (1902–1987) was appointed chairman of the department succeeding Otto Kinkeldey (1878–1966), whose appointment in 1930 as professor of musicology had also been the first of its kind for an American university. Donald Grout is most widely known for his textbook *A History of Western Music*. He was also an eminent opera historian, President of the American Musicological Society for two terms, and an accomplished organist and choir director. The Sidney Cox Library of Music and Dance at Cornell is a major resource for scholarly research.

mixture of curiosity and self-discipline took him on a journey from the modern to the Classical cello, the viola da gamba, and in particular the French seven-string bass, finally to the baryton, all of which he taught himself from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century editions and related performance practice sources. Roland Hutchinson remembers him having been “fanatic about practicing to the point of absolute technical perfection” and inspiring other viol players, including Brent Wissick and Ken Slowik, to take up the baryton. Though not the first to revive the baryton, John played it with exceptional grace and finesse. Even before arthritis in his left hand made playing the viol and baryton no longer possible, he continued to teach and began channeling his musicianship into conducting, first at Cornell, at the Aston Magna summer early music festival (Great Barrington, MA), as the founder of the Apollo Ensemble (1990) with whom he made several recordings, then as the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra (2005–9) and as a guest conductor with The Vivaldi Project (2007–11).

As early as 1970, the Washington D.C. *Evening Star* critic acknowledged Hsu’s remarkable “technical mastery [of the bass viol], authenticity of style, and . . . the unusual expressiveness of his playing” (6 April). In the UK, the *Hi-Fi News & Record Review* reviewer of Hsu’s 1972 recording of the five Forqueray Suites paid tribute to Hsu’s “profound understanding of Forqueray’s musical language” (July 1973), while a critic from *American Record Guide* pronounced him “a world-class virtuoso on the baryton” (May–June 1996). As the conductor of the Apollo Ensemble, he brought fresh perspectives to Haydn symphonies with “deft touches of accenting,” “wit and grace,” observed a reviewer in *Fanfare* (March–April 1996).

Witnessing John play and speak about French viol playing was always enlightening. He embraced the instrument and absorbed the detail and meaning of its music as few others had at the time. Yet his approach was entirely his own: elegant, articulate, and natural. His studies of the writings of Jean Rousseau and Étienne Loulié and editions of Marin Marais informed his own exceptional bow control and inspired his efforts “to define, reconstruct and

recapture the basic approach of French viol bowing” for others.² John spoke of the impact of “stress” and “release” in the execution of different strokes, and combinations of strokes as rhetorical “gestures,” thereby illuminating fresh and compelling connections between the highly evolved French seventeenth-century poetic language central to Marais’s career at the Académie Royale de Musique and the musical phraseology of his influential jewel-like *pièces de viole*. The concepts of stress and release and rhetorical gestures also characterized his graceful left-hand technique, which was both economical and fluent. John could make music breathe and somehow speak for itself.

* * *

John Hsu was born in 1931 in Swatow (now Shantou), a Chinese seaport. His father had studied in the United States for MA and PhD degrees in the 1920s, so it was always probable that John would follow suit. As a promising eighteen-year-old cellist, he traveled to the U.S. to study first at a small college in Wisconsin and the following year, after spending the summer at Tanglewood playing chamber music and in the Boston Symphony Orchestra, went on to the New England Conservatory to study with Samuel Mayes (principal cellist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra at the time) and Alfred Zighera (who also played the bass viol). During his student years in Boston, he played in the Springfield Symphony Orchestra as the assistant principal and later the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra in Providence as well as the Handel and Haydn Society Orchestra in Boston. In 1955 he was appointed to the music faculty at Cornell, where he taught for 50 years, becoming Old Dominion Foundation Professor in 1976 before retiring in 2005 to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where he died on 24 March 2018.

* * *

2. “The Use of the Bow in French Solo Viol Playing of the 17th and 18th Centuries,” *Early Music* 6, no. 4 (October 1978): 526. For full references to Hsu’s other writings and recordings mentioned herein, see the Bibliography and Discography at the end of this article.

John took up the viol when in 1960 Cornell acquired a chest of viols by the Stuttgart maker Eugen Sprenger, and he gave his first solo recital in 1961. In the early days he gave mixed recitals—the first half on the viol, the second on the cello (the 1711 Tecchler he gifted to the New England Conservatory in 1995), once even performing the Tartini Viola da Gamba Concerto followed by the Fauré *Élégie*, both with orchestra, and on another occasion juxtaposing viol music with the Rachmaninov Sonata for Cello and Piano.³ Today, one might venture to perform on different viols, or perhaps the Baroque cello and bass viol, in a concert, but to perform on both the viol and the modern cello would have required enormous concentration and the finest of ears to navigate. John relished such challenges.

In his 2015 memoir, *It's All About Music*, he tells us how in the early 1960s he became interested in French Baroque music:

While looking in the Cornell Music Library for gamba music, I soon realized that there was a scarcity of published music written for solo viol and also of historical instructional sources for playing it. I had already been carried away by the extraordinary music of Marais and Forqueray, and I was impatient to play it. With my timely promotion to Associate Professor of Music with permanent tenure at Cornell in 1962, I decided to devote my sabbatical leave in the fall of 1964 to investigating the French solo viol repertoire of the 17th and 18th centuries.⁴

John would have been familiar with Clyde Thompson's "Marais" and Thurston Dart's "Forqueray" entries in the 1954 edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Thompson's research on the life and works of Marais,⁵ the many French writings on the Forqueray family dating from the early twentieth century onwards, and the pioneering Archiv recordings of Couperin and Marais by August Wenzinger from the 1950s and early '60s. During that semester sabbatical Hsu collected microfilms of French solo viol music in Paris at the Bibliothèque Nationale, at very much the

3. See the recital program of 3 October 1965.

4. *It's All About Music*, 59–60.

5. Clyde H. Thompson, *The Music of Marin Marais* (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1957), and "Marin Marais's *Pièces de Violes*," *The Musical Quarterly* 46 (October 1960): 482–99.

same time that the young Wieland Kuijken and Jordi Savall were immersing themselves in it.

He returned to Europe in 1966 to perform in London at the Royal College of Music and BBC with the harpsichordist Layton Ring, and again in 1967 and 1968 on concert tours with Peter Williams that also took in Newcastle, Edinburgh, Brussels, Berlin, and Zürich. Hsu performed throughout North America and internationally as a cellist, viola da gambist, and baryton player. John's recollections about many of the concerts can be found in his book, *It's All About Music*, in which he describes many collaborations with other period instrument performers. In a review of the performance of the Bach sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord by John and Peter at St. Cecilia's Hall (University of Edinburgh) in May 1972, Rita McAllister observed that John's "sensitivity for the idiom is almost beyond praise" and recalled the recital as the "high point of the series."⁶

In 1967 John recorded his first LP of French solo viol music with his Cornell colleague, musicologist William Austin (harpsichord), and Barbara Mueser (viol continuo): Forqueray's Suite No. 4 and a D minor suite by Caix d'Hervelois. The acquisition in 1971 of a seven-string viol by the Lübecker Günther Hellwig made possible the first complete recording of the five Forqueray suites, released by the Musical Heritage Society in 1972 to mark the tercentenary of Antoine Forqueray's birth. It was a feat not repeated until 1995, by Paolo Pandolfo, followed by Lorenz Duftschmid (2006) and Atsushi Sakai (2015), though many others have recorded excerpts. Then, with Louis Bagger (harpsichord) and Judith Davidoff (viol continuo), he made a series of recordings, each devoted to excerpts from one of the five books of Marin Marais, that appeared between 1971 and 1976. A further MHS recording released in 1977, of Marais and his pupils Jacques Morel and Charles Dollé, was the first to contextualize Marais's music.

Meanwhile, in 1970 John inaugurated the Cornell Summer Viol Program for the study and performance of French viol music. Among those attending that year were Gian Lyman, Bonney McDowell, Barbara Mueser, and Richard Taruskin, all of

6. Rita McAllister, "Report [from] Edinburgh," *The Musical Times* 113, no. 1554 (August 1972): 793.

whom went on to pursue careers as professional viol players or academics. Central to John's approach were the *avertissements* of Marais, the engraved notation of the French repertoire, Rousseau's 1687 treatise, and Loulié's manuscript "Méthode pour apprendre à jouer de la viole" (c. 1690), which John had encountered in 1964 and first wrote about in the October 1978 issue of *Early Music*.⁷

Teaching others to play inspired him to write a concise yet comprehensive *Handbook of French Baroque Viol Technique* in 1981—the first in modern times—later supplemented by a video (1992)/DVD (2007), supported in part by a grant from the Viola da Gamba Society of America. In the early 1980s he spent spring terms as Artist-in-Residence at the University of California, Davis (1981) and Regents' Lecturer at the University of California, Santa Cruz (1983).

The Musical Heritage Society recordings were similarly entwined with John's decision to compile what became a monumental, seven-volume critical edition of Marais's complete instrumental music for The Broude Trust (New York). He began work on Volume 1 in 1971 and, three decades later, completed Volume 7 (the 1692 trios, 1725 *morceaux de symphonie* and previously unpublished pieces from the Panmure Manuscripts) in 2002. His Marais edition was also notable for being the first to examine in detail the press variants that reflected the composer's own (not inexpensive) changes to the engraved copper plates in advance of subsequent printings. Hsu meticulously collated the variants—over 400 in Book 1 (1686) alone—reporting them in detail in order that future performers might ponder how and why Marais revised his own fingerings, ornaments, and bowings.⁸

7. Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la viole* (Paris: Ballard, 1687), and Étienne Loulié, "Méthode pour apprendre à jouer de la viole" (c. 1690), MS fonds français n.a. 6355, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. For facsimiles of both items, see *Viole de gambe: méthodes et traités, dictionnaires, préfaces des oeuvres, correspondances*, series 1, France 1600–1800, ed. Philippe Lescaat and Jean Saint-Arroman (Courlay, France: Fuzeau, 1997), and for English translations of Loulié's treatise, see Albert Cohen, "An 18th-century treatise on the viol by Étienne Loulié," in *JVdGSA* 3 (1966): 17–23, and Gordon Kinney, "Writings on the Viol by Du Buisson, De Machy, Roland Marais, and Étienne Loulié," *JVdGSA* 13 (1976): 17–55.

8. Further on interpreting the press variants, see Ronald Broude and Mary

Afterwards, he wrote an insightful article on editing a modern edition of Marais in *Fontes Artis Musicae* (2005). The edition has rightly been described as a “tour de force”⁹ in which, as Lucy Robinson observed, Hsu’s “attention to detail and accuracy is remarkable.”¹⁰

Throughout his career as a modern and period cellist, viol and baryton player, John performed extensively but seemed happiest at home in Ithaca with his wife Martha and at work among his colleagues and students at Cornell. In addition to solo recitals he performed with the Cornell University Trio on modern instruments, then from 1976 on period instruments with Monosoff and Bilson in the Amadé Trio. In their period instrument recordings and performances, musicologist Owen Jander found evidence of changing attitudes toward historically informed performance taking place in the 1970s that, in his view, constituted a “revolution” begun by these three exceptional artists,

... who together formed the Amadé Trio, an ensemble specializing in the performance of Classical repertory on period instruments. (High praise is due the Cornell Music Department for bringing together this group of musicians whose artistic excellence and musicological instinct are exemplary. What has been created at Cornell is not just another fine ensemble; the Amadé Trio is a force for change.)¹¹

John was associated with Aston Magna from 1974 to 1990; among the high points were the summer of 1979 devoted to French violin and viol technique and that of 1982 entitled “Music, Art, Theater and Dance in the Age of Louis XIV: 1661–1715.” A distinguished group of scholars, including James Anthony, Robert Isherwood, and Catherine Massip, presented lectures, and

Cyr, “Thoughts on Marais’s Second Thoughts,” in *Early Music* 44, no. 3 (August 2016): 417–26.

9. Brent Wissick, review of Marais editions, *VdGSA News* 52, no. 1 (March 2015): 18.

10. Lucy Robinson, review of Marais, *Pièces à une et à deux violes* (The Collected Instrumental Works, vol. 1), in *The Musical Times* 122, no. 1656 (February 1981): 114.

11. Owen Jander, review of Haydn trios recording (issued in 1976), in *The Musical Quarterly* 65:4 (October 1979): 609 and 610–11.

performers gave demonstrations and masterclasses.¹² From 1985, John served as its director, and it was during this period that the Aston Magna Performance Practice Institute was introduced. As he himself observed, this undertaking was an “unprecedented, intensive, performance-oriented program on specific topics to complement the broad humanistic view of music and its surrounding culture.”¹³ By the 1980s, however, he had also become well known as a baryton player and made two highly regarded recordings of Haydn (1981 and 1982) with violinist David Miller and cellist Fortunato Arico—and, after the latter’s death in 1984, Loretta O’Sullivan—as the Haydn Baryton Trio, the first of its kind to perform entirely on period instruments.

The music of J. S. Bach was also close to his heart. He recorded the three Sonatas BWV 1027–1029 with the harpsichordist Kenneth Gilbert in 1971, and played the bass viol obbligatos in a performance of the St. Matthew Passion with the Chicago Symphony under Sir Georg Solti in 1974. Among the Aston Magna recordings in which he was involved was a 1978 set of the Brandenburg Concertos in which he played both cello and viol. John was fascinated by the origins of the viola da gamba sonatas and the cello suites: in 1984 Broude Brothers published his concerto transcription of Bach’s G minor Sonata (BWV 1029) and in 1987 he toured in the U.S., performing on a five-string cello and lecturing on the sixth Bach Suite. John’s transcription prompted Peter Williams to devote an article to it in the August 1984 issue of *Early Music*, “Bach’s G minor Sonata for viola da gamba and harpsichord BWV 1029. A seventh Brandenburg Concerto?” (pp. 345–54). Fittingly, John’s final public performance on the viol was in 1998, playing the poignant St. John aria. He made his final recording in 2011 conducting The Vivaldi Project in C. P. E. Bach’s *Six sinfonias for string orchestra*, W. 182.

Throughout his long and happy marriage to Martha Russell, John never failed to acknowledge the selfless role she played as his chief proofreader, informed listener, and constant support, writing in his third Marais volume that:

12. See Sigrid Nagle, “Aston Magna,” *Early Music* 11, no. 1 (January 1983): 151.

13. *It’s All About Music*, 89–90.

In addition to her many hours of painstaking proofreading, her keen observation of textual details and penetrating questions regarding the formulation of my thoughts have contributed towards a degree of accuracy and clarity of presentation that I could not have achieved alone.

And in his 2015 memoir he allowed himself to write of Martha as ... my ideal soul mate, my lover, my confidant, my best friend, the most trustworthy critic and loyal supporter of all my musical endeavors. She was always there....

John Hsu was a person who could inspire those qualities in others while remaining charmingly unaffected by success and good fortune.

It was typical of John to be genuinely surprised, if nevertheless delighted, first to be made an Honorary Doctor of Music by his alma mater, The New England Conservatory, in 1971 and awarded an Outstanding Alumni Award in 2003, and then a *Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres* at the French Embassy in New York in 2001. We who share his love of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music and advocacy of the viola da gamba have the opportunity to assimilate and pass on the richly resonating legacy he has left behind.

* * *

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The following list includes John Hsu's published writings but does not include his many program notes and liner notes for his recordings. Cornell University holds a collection of his papers relating to the ensembles with which he performed, his conducting career, and his solo concerts, as well as files relating to his musical instruments and to his preparation of the Marais edition. This collection (John Hsu Papers, #14-20-3695) is held in the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. Articles in dictionaries and reviews are not included; notable examples include Howard Schott's article in *Grove Music Online* and an article in *The Harvard Biographical Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Randel (Harvard U. Press, 1996), p. 397.

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CHRONOLOGICAL DISCOGRAPHY

Key to John Hsu's instrument or role

bary	baryton	Cvc	Classical cello
Bvc	Baroque cello	cond	conductor
bvdg	bass viola da gamba		

The following discography was compiled by Neal Zaslaw, to whom the authors express their sincere gratitude. For a list of items that have been reissued on compact disc, see Appendix 2 in *It's All About Music*, pp. 115–16.

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John preparing for a gamba recital in Barnes Hall, Cornell University, 1985

John Hsu
Viola da gamba
and Cello

William Austin
Harpsichord
and Piano

PROGRAM

Suite No. 2 in A Major for Viola da gamba *F. Couperin*
 (1658-1733)
 Prelude
 Fuguette
 Pompe funèbre
 La chemise blanche

Suite No. 3 in D Minor for Viola da gamba *Louis de Caix d'Herveleis*
 (1680-1760)
 Prelude
 Allemande
 l'Henrietta
 La luthée
 Rodeau
 La villageoise

Louis de Caix d'Herveleis was one of the French viola da gamba virtuosi of the early 18th century. Little is known about his life. He lived in Paris in the service of the Duke of Orleans. He composed five books of solo music for the viola da gamba, comprising 23 suites. The *Suite in D Minor* is No. 3 in Book I.

Except for a few works which have been transcribed for either the viola or the cello, Caix d'Herveleis' compositions have not been published since his lifetime. This is the first public performance of this suite in the United States.

Sonata No. 2 in D Major (BWV 1028) *J. S. Bach*
 (1685-1750)
 Adagio
 Allegro
 Andante
 Allegro

INTERMISSION

Sonata in G Minor, Opus 19, for Cello and Piano *S. Rachmaninoff*
 (1873-1943)
 Lento - Allegro moderato
 Allegro scherzando
 Andante
 Allegro mosso

BARNES HALL AUDITORIUM
 CORNELL UNIVERSITY
 3 OCTOBER 1965

Friday, 8 October, 8:15 p.m. Coro de Cámara. Alice Stabler Auditorium.
Admission free.

Sunday, 10 October, 4:00 p.m. Clavichord recital: Joan Benson. Ives Hall 110.
Admission free.



The Amadé Trio: John Hsu, Malcolm Bilson and Sonya Monosoff, c. 1978



John teaching in the Cornell Summer Viol Program (Rosamund Morley and Brent Wissick on the right), 1995



The Haydn Baryton Trio: John Hsu, David Miller, Loretta O'Sullivan, c. 1987



John conducting in Barnes Hall, Cornell University



Martha and John in Ithaca, NY, 1994



John on being made a Chevalier in 2001

MARIN MARAIS AND HIS PUBLIC

Michael A. Bane

Abstract

This article explores Marin Marais's relationship with the Paris public, specifically the amateur viol players with whom he interacted throughout his long career as performer, teacher, and composer in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Few composers of the era were as invested in the musical public or more willing to accommodate its varied demands, with each of his five publications for bass viol and continuo adopting new strategies for satisfying different segments of his audience. As demonstrated in this article, Marais strove throughout his career to structure individual pieces, suites, and entire publications so that they would simultaneously appeal to both advanced and beginner violists. His oeuvre thus provides important evidence for the influence exerted by the public on the composition and publication of instrumental music at the turn of the century.

From a twenty-first-century perspective, it is surprising how often composers in seventeenth-century Paris invited the public into their homes. It was not uncommon then for composers to include their home address in publications. In his book of guitar music from 1671, Antoine Carré wrote that readers should come see him if they had trouble playing his music; likewise, the violist De Machy wrote in 1685 that he would be honored to receive in his home on Saturdays between the hours of three and six p.m. anyone interested in his music or the viol in general;¹ Bertrand de Bacilly, meanwhile, sold his singing treatise from his apartment on the rue Pastourelle.² In 1692, Abraham

1. See Antoine Carré, *Livre de guitarrre contenant plusieurs pièces composées et mises au jour par le sieur De La Grange, avec la manière de toucher sur la partie ou basse continüe* (Paris: s.n., 1671), "Advis aux lectures"; and De Machy, *Pièces de violle en musique et en tablature, différentes les unes des autres, et sur plusieurs tons. Elles contiennent deux liures et sont les premières qui jusques à present ayent paru au jour* (Paris: Bonneüil, 1685), 11.

2. Bertrand de Bacilly, *L'art de bien chanter de M. de Bacilly. Augmenté d'un*

du Pradel published the second edition of his book of Paris addresses, which provided directions to hundreds of city shops, institutions, and people, including dozens of musicians. He writes, for example, that a certain Mademoiselle Mengey, a professional harpsichordist and viol instructor, lived at the intersection of rue Saint Honoré and rue des Poullies.³ If the reader wished to visit a more famous musician, the composer and violinist Jean François Lalouette lived only a few hundred feet to the southeast.⁴ In a city as compact as Paris, one was rarely more than a thirty-minute walk from a favorite musician. For composers and performers, inviting strangers into the home was good business. Some might become paying students, who in turn might purchase more of the composer's music.

Composers' everyday dealings with customers and amateur musicians did more than inform their business model. Through face-to-face advocacy, critique, and praise, members of the public could influence the type of music composers wrote and published. In a recent article, I show how the demands of an influential segment of the Parisian public, the *honnêtes gens*, helped to shape the final collection of music by Francesco Corbetta, the century's greatest guitar virtuoso. In deference to a need for fashionable music free of technical challenges, Corbetta produced a work of startling simplicity, one whose style better reflected public taste than his own.⁵

In this article, I would like to explore the work of another virtuoso, Marin Marais (1656–1728), and his own relation to the Parisian public. Generations of scholars have approached

discours qui sert de réponse à la critique de ce traité, et d'une plus ample instruction pour ceux qui aspirent à la perfection de cet art (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1679). The title page specifies Bacilly's address as "ruë Pastourelle, au petit S. Jean."

3. Abraham du Pradel, *Le livre commode des adresses de Paris pour 1692*, ed. Édouard Fournier, 2 vols. (Paris: Paul Daffis, 1878), 1:209. "Abraham du Pradel" was the pseudonym of Nicolas de Blégnny.

4. *Ibid.*, 1:213–14.

5. Michael Bane, "Honnêtes gens, Amateur Musicianship, and the 'Easy Air' in France: The Case of Francesco Corbetta's Royal Guitars," *Journal of Seventeenth Century Music* 20, no. 1 (2014; published 2017): <https://sscm-jscm.org/jscm-issues/volume-20-no-1/honnetes-gens-amateur-musicianship-and-the-easy-air-in-france-the-case-of-francesco-corbettas-royal-guitars/>

Marais's works for viol from a number of valuable angles, but generally not from the perspective of the amateur musicians with whom he interacted throughout his career. Few composers of the era, however, were more invested in the city's amateurs or more willing to accommodate them. In 1711, near the height of his fame, he made the unusual decision to dedicate his third book of viol music to the public itself. The opening sentences of the dedication reveal a composer thankful for the public's support and eager to please the casual player:

The honor the public has done me for thirty years by playing my pieces led me to dedicate this third book to it. I hope the public will be good enough to notice that all the cares I have taken in this work have no other goal than to please it.⁶

Here and elsewhere, Marais acknowledged the profound influence the public had had on his music and approach to composition. But what in fact was the nature of this influence? When Marais wrote that he had no other goal than to please the public, what did that mean for his music? There is no one answer to these questions, for Marais attempted to please the public in different ways at different moments over his long career. His five publications for bass viol and continuo adopt different strategies for satisfying different segments of his audience. In what follows, I review these strategies and suggest how they might help us to better understand not only Marais's music but also the ways he conceptualized and interacted with his public around the turn of the century.

Book One

Marais entered the choir school at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois in Paris as a young boy in 1667. It was there that he learned the rudiments of music and, probably, first encountered the bass viol.

6. Marin Marais, *Pièces de viole, Troisième livre* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1711), dedication. "L'honneur que me fait le public depuis près de trente années en exécuttant mes pieces, m'a déterminé à luy consacrer ce troisieme livre. J'espere qu'il aura la bonté de faire attention que tous les soins que j'ay pris dans cet ouvrage, n'ont eû d'autre object que de luy plaire." All translations are my own unless stated otherwise. I have retained original orthography when transcribing the French.

When he left the school in 1672, Marais sought out the instruction of Jean de Sainte-Colombe, then the leading viol player in France. According to Évrard Titon du Tillet, Marais proved a quick study and in six months threatened to surpass his teacher in skill.⁷ News of a prodigious young talent must have traveled quickly, for in 1675 Jean-Baptiste Lully hired Marais, then still a teenager, to play viol in his opera company. Lully took the violist under his wing and it was through his influence that Marais secured a post at court as a chamber musician to the king in 1679.⁸ Although this position afforded relative job security, Marais also taught viol lessons in Paris, presumably to supplement his income and support a growing family.⁹

The community of viol players at this time in Paris was a diverse one. Since the sixteenth century the instrument had attracted the attention of both court denizens and city bourgeoisie.¹⁰ The same held true for the late seventeenth century—in the words of Julie Anne Sadie, “The viol was heard in homes and *châteaux*, and indeed wherever chamber music was appreciated.”¹¹ While the most famous violists were men, women also played the instrument; in 1654 Jean Loret witnessed a viol concert given by a young woman who performed in a “rare and gentle fashion.”¹² A variety

7. Évrard Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse françois* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1732), 625.

8. The biographical information in this paragraph is drawn from Sylvette Milliot and Jérôme de La Gorce, *Marin Marais* (Paris: Fayard, 1991), 13–36. For additional work on Marais’s biography, see François Lesure, “Marin Marais: sa carrière—sa famille,” *Revue belge de musicologie* 7, no. 2/4 (1953): 129–46; Julie Anne Vertrees Sadie, “Marin Marais and his Contemporaries,” *The Musical Times* 119, no. 1626 (August 1978): 672–74; Jérôme de La Gorce, “Biographie de Marin Marais,” in *Marin Marais: violiste à l’Opéra (1656–1728)*, ed. Benoît Dratwicky (Paris: Éditions du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, 2006), 23–42.

9. Milliot and La Gorce, *Marin Marais*, 37. Marais’s son Vincent was born in 1678. Marie-Catherine and Anne-Marc quickly followed in 1678 and 1679.

10. Hans Bol, *La basse de viole du temps de Marin Marais et d’Antoine Forqueray* (Bilthoven: A. B. Creyghton, 1973), 3.

11. Julie Anne Sadie, *The Bass Viol in French Baroque Chamber Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), 1.

12. Yoland de Brossard, “La vie musicale en France d’après Loret et ses continuateurs: 1650–1688,” *Recherches sur la musique française classique* 10

of playing styles flourished among these players as well. Jean Rousseau identified five, but the two main ones were the so-called *jeu de mélodie*, a simple and tender style of unadorned melodies particularly well suited to the treble viol, and the *jeu d'harmonie*, a more technically demanding approach to the instrument that incorporated simultaneous pitches, chords, and *style brisé*.¹³

Little is known of the students taught by Marais during the 1680s and '90s, but they probably included men and women, nobles and the bourgeoisie, beginners and the advanced or professional.¹⁴ The reference in 1711 to “le public,” which according to the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* meant “all the people in general,” suggests a wide constituency of players and students.¹⁵ His first collection of music for bass viol and continuo, published in 1686 and dedicated to Lully, brought together some of the pieces he had composed for his students' use.¹⁶ The preface is brief, but

(1970): 117–93, at p. 157. “D'une façon rare et gentille . . .” As Mademoiselle Mengey shows, women could also teach the viol professionally (see note 3). In the eighteenth century many French ladies turned to the higher-pitched pardessus de viole. On this instrument and its repertoire, see Robert A. Green, “The Pardessus de Viole and Its Literature,” *Early Music* 10, no. 3 (July 1982): 300–307; Richard Sutcliffe, “Re-Examining the Pardessus de Viole and Its Literature, Part I: Introduction and Methods,” *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 37 (2000): 5–30, and “... Part II: Repertoire from 1722 to c. 1790,” *JVdGSA* 38 (2001): 27–77.

13. The other three playing styles are *le jeu de s'accompagner* (playing and singing at the same time), *le jeu de l'accompagnement* (realizing basso continuo), and *le jeu de travailler sur un sujet* (improvising on a given subject). See Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la viole* (Paris: Christophe Ballard, 1687), 56–71. For a thorough contextualization of Rousseau's treatise, as well as an English translation, see Robert A. Green, “Annotated Translation and Commentary of the Works of Jean Rousseau. A Study of Late Seventeenth-Century Musical Thought and Performance Practice” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1979).

14. Students known by name include Boutillier, a musician attached to the Duchess of Guise; Mademoiselle Roland; and Sarrau de Boynet. See Lesure, “Marin Marais,” 133. Additional students are listed in Sadie, “Marin Marais,” 672–73.

15. *Le dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, vol. 2, M-Z (Paris: Veuve de Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1694), s. v. “public.” “Tout le peuple en general.”

16. The continuo part was published separately two and a half years later in 1689. On the nature of accompanied and unaccompanied viol performance in France and Marais's evolving approach to continuo composition, see Mary Cyr,

it reveals a great deal of Marais's early approach to composition, pedagogy, and amateur musicianship:

To accommodate myself to the different abilities of those who play the viol, I have until now given my pieces either more or less filled with chords. But having recognized that this diversity made a bad effect, and that people were not playing the works as I had composed them, I finally decided to give them in the manner I play them, with all the ornaments that must accompany them.¹⁷

Marais here suggests that in the years prior to the book's publication he would compose a piece meant for both his own performance and that of his students. Depending on the ability of the student, he added or subtracted double stops and other technical difficulties from the work. In other words, these early compositions were modular: with a few modifications, the same piece of music could serve the virtuoso as well as the student.¹⁸ There exists possible evidence for this practice in the manuscript collections of Marais's music held by the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. A sarabande in one of the sources (ms. 9467), which dates from the late 1670s or early 1680s and, as

"Marin Marais, the *Basse continue* and a 'Different Manner' of Composing for the Viol," *Musical Times* 147, no. 1936 (Autumn 2016): 49–61.

17. Marin Marais, *Pièces à une et à deux violes* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1686), preface. "Pour m'accommoder a la differente portée des personnes qui jouent de la Viole, Jay jusques icy donné mes pieces plus ou moins chargées d'accords. Mais ayant reconnu que cette diuersité faisoit un mauuais effet, et qu'on ne les jouoit pas telles que ie les ay composées; Je me suis enfin déterminée a les donner de la maniere dont ie les jouë, avec tous les agréments qui les doiuent accompagner."

18. Marais's flexible approach parallels that of Jean Rousseau, who also studied with Sainte-Colombe. In his response (published in 1688) to certain criticisms leveled against him by De Machy, Rousseau wrote that ". . . au regard des écoliers il ne faut point faire comme certains médecins qui ordonnent le mesme remède à tous les maux, je veux dire qu'il les faut traiter suivant leur disposition naturelle, les conduisant autant qu'on le peut à la perfection sans les trop gêner dans les formalitez . . ." (. . . as for students you must not do as certain doctors do, who prescribe the same remedy for every sickness. I mean that you must treat them in accordance with their natural disposition, leading them as much as one is able to perfection without bothering them too much with formalities . . .). See François Lesure, "Une querelle sur le jeu de la viole en 1688: J. Rousseau contre Demachy," *Revue de Musicologie* 46, no. 122 (December 1960): 181–99, at p. 189.

Stuart Cheney has suggested, was likely transcribed by Marais himself, features alternate passages intended to accommodate the differing abilities of lesser and more advanced players.¹⁹ Although an efficient approach to both composition and pedagogy, in 1686 the issue for Marais was that his compositions circulated in multiple versions, some reduced in technical difficulty. His new book would enshrine in print the works as he intended them to be performed, with all the ornaments and chords integral to his compositional style intact.²⁰

The result is probably one of Marais's more difficult collections of viol music. As an introduction to the broader music-buying public, it served to reinforce his growing reputation as the era's leading viol virtuoso.²¹ That said, Marais did not neglect the

19. Stuart Cheney, "Early Autograph Manuscripts of Marin Marais," *Early Music* 38, no. 1 (February 2010): 59–72. For the sarabande, see Marin Marais, *The Instrumental Works*, ed. John Hsu, vol. 7, *La Gamme et autres morceaux de simphonie pour le violon, la viole et le clavecin (1723); Unpublished pieces from the Panmure manuscripts* (New York: Broude, 2002), 125. The *ossia* passages for measures 13–15 and 19–22 offer more difficult versions of the original music (fuller chords in the first passage, greater melodic passagework in the second).

20. Marais was not the only composer to express unease at the thought of his compositions circulating in altered or unauthorized forms. On the possible motives behind composers' decisions to publish music in late-seventeenth-century France, see Ronald Broude, "Chambonnières's *Pieces de claveßin* of 1670 and the Preservation of a Performing Style," in *Perspectives on Early Keyboard Music and Revival in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Rachele Taylor and Hank Knox (London: Routledge, 2018), 173–87. On style and technique in the music of Marais and other French Baroque violists, see Clyde Henderson Thompson, "Marin Marais, 1656–1728" (PhD diss., 2 vols., University of Michigan, 1957); Margaret Urquhart, "Style and Technique in the 'Pièces de viole' of Marin Marais" (PhD diss., 2 vols., University of Edinburgh, 1970); Barbara Schwendowius, *Die solistische Gambenmusik in Frankreich von 1650 bis 1740* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1970); Bol, *La basse de viole*, esp. book 2; Celia Pond, "Ornamental Style and the Virtuoso Solo Bass Viol Music in France c 1680–1740," *Early Music* 6, no. 4 (October 1978): 512–18; Deborah Teplow, *Performance Practice and Technique in Marin Marais' Pièces de viole* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986); Mary Cyr, *Style and Performance for Bowed String Instruments in French Baroque Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), chapter 9.

21. Bonney McDowell, "Marais and Forqueray: A Historical and Analytical Study of Their Music for Solo *Basse de viole*" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1974), 25. McDowell further suggests that Marais, in his first book, "also may have been responding to pressure from the appearance of de Machy's volume of

amateur players in the book. Rather, he developed new strategies for accommodating their reduced technical abilities. As he continues in the preface:

And because simple songs are in style for many people, I have made some pieces with almost no chords, others where you will find I have placed more, and several that are filled with them, intended for those who love harmony and are more advanced.²²

Rather than modify one composition to serve the different needs of both professional and amateur performers, Marais opted instead to compose separate pieces for beginners and more advanced students, solving the problem identified earlier in the book's preface. The collection now contained music suitable for players of all abilities, and none of the works need circulate in adulterated versions.

Marais's decision to include pieces tailored to specific skill levels has interesting ramifications for some of the dance suites.²³ Consider the contents of the book's first suite: four preludes, a fantaisie, two allemandes with *doubles*, a courante with *double*, a sarabande, another courante with *double*, a sarabande, three giges (the first and third with *doubles*), a fantaisie, a rondeau, a minuet, another rondeau, another minuet, and, finally, two gavottes. Marais probably did not intend all twenty-one movements—with four consecutive preludes—to be heard in one sitting.²⁴ Rather,

suites for unaccompanied viol in 1685.”

22. Marais, *Pièces à une et à deux violes*. “Et par ce que les chants simples sont du goût de bien des gens; Jay fait dans cette veüe quelques pieces, ou il n’entre presque point d’accords, on en trouuera d’autres ou j’en ay mis d’auantage, et plusieurs qui en sont toutes remplies, pour les personnes qui aiment l’harmonie, et qui sont plus auancées.”

23. It should be noted that Marais does not use the term “suite” in Book One to describe his collections of pieces, although he does use the term in the book containing the basso continuo part published in 1689 (see his *Basse-continuës des pieces a une et a deux violes* (Paris: chez l’auteur, 1689), preface). It is not until his fourth book, published in 1717, that Marais unambiguously labels his suites as such. Earlier in his career Marais may still have been influenced by an older practice of grouping several movements of the same type together by key. For more on the suite in viol music at the turn of the century, see Boll, *Le basse de viole*, 29–40.

24. Note that in this article I do not count *doubles* as individual movements.

the player was meant to choose from the assembled dances those he or she felt comfortable playing.²⁵ Take, for example, preludes one and two. The first is a true tour de force. Loaded with scalar runs, *style brisé*, chords, counterpoint, and finicky ornaments, its technical demands would have tested the outer limits of most performers' abilities (Example 1).

The image displays a musical score for two instruments: Bass viol and B. C. (Bass Continuo). The score is in 2/2 time and is divided into four systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece, with the Bass viol part starting with a *p* (piano) dynamic and a *t* (trill) marking. The B. C. part has a *6#* fingering. The second system starts at measure 33 and includes a *t* marking. The third system starts at measure 38 and includes a *p* dynamic and a *3 6/4 3* fingering. The fourth system starts at measure 44 and includes a *p* dynamic and a *6 6 6 6 6# 6 6 6#* fingering.

Example 1. Marais, *Pièces à une et à deux violes* (1686), pp. 7–8, Prelude, mm. 28–48.

At nearly 100 measures it makes for a grand introduction, but some would have contemplated its overflowing staves with

25. McDowell, “Marais and Forqueray,” 71. “In preparing his suites for publication, Marais appears to have considered the needs of players of all levels of interest and ability. The performer’s options often involve choosing between a short easy piece and a more difficult or longer one of the same type.”

despair. For these players, the second prelude offered more accessible pleasures. Brief by comparison, the work carefully avoids double stops and other consonances until the last measure, where a single D minor chord brings the miniature prelude to a close (Example 2).

The musical score for Example 2 consists of two staves: Bass viol and B. C. (Bass Continuo). The piece is in 3/4 time and consists of 13 measures. The Bass viol part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The B. C. part is in the bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature. The score includes fingerings and accidentals for both parts.

Measure 1: Bass viol starts with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. B. C. has a half note G3.

Measure 2: Bass viol has eighth notes D5, C5, B4, A4. B. C. has a half note F3.

Measure 3: Bass viol has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. B. C. has a half note E3.

Measure 4: Bass viol has eighth notes D5, C5, B4, A4. B. C. has a half note D3.

Measure 5: Bass viol has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. B. C. has a half note C3.

Measure 6: Bass viol has eighth notes D5, C5, B4, A4. B. C. has a half note B2.

Measure 7: Bass viol has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. B. C. has a half note A2.

Measure 8: Bass viol has eighth notes D5, C5, B4, A4. B. C. has a half note G2.

Measure 9: Bass viol has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. B. C. has a half note F2.

Measure 10: Bass viol has eighth notes D5, C5, B4, A4. B. C. has a half note E2.

Measure 11: Bass viol has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. B. C. has a half note D2.

Measure 12: Bass viol has eighth notes D5, C5, B4, A4. B. C. has a half note C2.

Measure 13: Bass viol has eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5. B. C. has a half note B1.

Example 2. Marais, *Pièces à une et à deux violes* (1686), p. 9, Prelude.

In terms of difficulty, it is worlds away from the first prelude and clearly meant for a different kind of player.

If Marais practiced modular composition earlier in his career, adding to or simplifying individual pieces depending on the needs of a particular student, in Book One it is the suite itself that is modular. Players selected the handful of dances that best matched

their abilities from the pieces contained within the suite. As the violist progressed in his or her studies, he or she could swap out the easier dances for their more difficult counterparts. In this way, the suite's technical difficulty evolved in tandem with a player's skill level or ambition.

It is important to note that only the first two suites for solo viol in Book One adhere to what I am calling modular construction.²⁶ The final two suites for solo viol have eight and nine movements with limited doubling of dance forms.²⁷ Since it is generally not possible in these suites to switch out individual dances for easier or more difficult versions, players must make do with the movements they can play and ignore the ones they cannot. The two suites for two viols that conclude the book are also not modularly constructed. Nevertheless, although Marais chose not to employ it beyond the first two suites, modular construction represents a novel solution to the challenge of composing music accessible to both beginner and advanced students. Its use attests to Marais's early interest in the player's physical and psychological experience of his music. As he realized, difficult music could frustrate casual or inexperienced players, while easier compositions ran the risk of boring more advanced students. By including interchangeable pieces of varying difficulty, and by allowing the player to choose which pieces to play when, Marais increased the likelihood that a typical player would spend more time enjoyably testing the upper limits of his or her abilities and less time bored or frustrated with the music over the course of a suite. The strategy appears to have paid off; in 1688 Jean Rousseau wrote that everyone ("tout le monde") was playing Marais's pieces.²⁸ With the possible

26. The order of movements in the second suite is as follows: prelude, fantasia, prelude, allemande, allemande with *double*, courante, courante with *double*, sarabande, sarabande, gigue, gigue, "la paysane," rondeau, gavotte, menüet [sic], menüet, menüet, chaconne.

27. The penultimate suite for solo viol in G minor is unusual in that the first and final movements are labeled "prelude." Occasionally Marais ended suites with an extra prelude or allemande. According to McDowell, "Marais may have found these pieces later, when the suite in the same key had already been partially or completely engraved, and decided to add them as alternatives." McDowell, "Marais and Forqueray," 70.

28. Quoted in Lesure, "Une querelle," 190. The quotation is from Rousseau's

exception of his second book of viol music, discussed below, each of Marais's subsequent publications wrestles with similar issues of boredom, frustration, and the best way to accommodate players of differing ability.

Books Two, Three, and Four

Marais's second collection of viol music, published in 1701 and dedicated to the Duke of Orléans, offers an interesting comparison to the first. As in the earlier collection, several of the suites contain multiple versions of the same movement. The second suite in D minor is a good example: two preludes, two allemandes, two courantes, two sarabandes, two giges, and three menuets, with additional dances or movements (including a boutade, fantaisie luthée, double rondeau, rondeau champêtre, polonoise, and a work in imitation of bells) interpolated throughout the second half of the suite. Again, the technical difficulty of these movements often contrasts with that of their counterparts; the first prelude and first sarabande, for instance, are much longer and more intricate compositions than the second versions.²⁹ It is possible that players would have chosen the version that best responded to their particular skill set, as I suggest they were meant to in some of the suites in Book One. Setting the second book apart from the first, however, is the relative length and difficulty of the music contained within the collection as a whole. As Margaret Urquhart writes, "The second book is the major contribution to the series both in technique and in overall originality of type and musical style. . . . The book is one of personal expression, without any reduction of the technical difficulties for the amateur or inexperienced player."³⁰ It includes some of Marais's most difficult, idiosyncratic, and longest compositions, including the variations on the Folia theme, the ballet en rondeau, the "Fuge gaye," the opening prelude to the second suite, the "Tombeau pour Mr. de Lully," and several other

Réponse à la lettre d'un de ses amis qui l'avertit d'un libelle diffamatoire que l'on a écrit contre luy, a pamphlet dated 1688 and which Lesure reproduces in full in his article.

29. See Marin Marais, *Pièces de viole, Deuxième livre* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1701), 33–36 and 41–42.

30. Urquhart, "Style and Technique," 1:78.

dances with blistering *doubles*.³¹ Because Marais does not address issues of difficulty in the preface (aside from a brief comment regarding the continuo part³²), it is unclear for whom he intended the collection, but a more advanced audience seems likely. As we will see, it was the length and difficulty of the book that seems to have made the greatest impression on the average viol player in Paris.

The difficulty of Book Two must have disappointed many viol players in Paris, and it is tempting to view Marais's third book of viol music, published in 1711, as a public mea culpa. While Book One and Book Two had been dedicated to titans of French musical culture, Book Three bestows that honor on the amateur music-making public itself. From the opening sentences of the preface, quoted earlier in this article, Marais seeks to reassure his readers that the new book was written with their interests in mind, that all the cares he took in the work "have no other goal than to please [the public]."³³ He then acknowledges the difficulty of his previous volume and explains the changes he has implemented for the current work:

The large number of short and easily performed pieces in this collection is proof that I have wished to satisfy the insistent entreaties that I have heard repeated so many times from everywhere since my second book.³⁴

With his reference to "insistent entreaties," Marais lets slip wherein lay the public's power to influence music publishing circa 1710. For ten years, it seems, since the appearance of his last book in 1701, he had heard the same request over and over: compose shorter and easier pieces. The demands, he writes, came from

31. All three allemandes in the third suite, for example, end with *doubles*.

32. Marais claims that the continuo lines are "assés chantantes," which makes them easy and enjoyable to play on whatever continuo instrument. Marais also boasts in the preface that his works are playable on the organ, harpsichord, theorbo, lute, violin, and German flute.

33. See note 6.

34. Marais, *Pièces de viole, Troisième livre*, dedication. "Le grand nombre de pièces courtes et faciles d'exécution qui le compose, est une preuve que j'ay voulu satisfaire aux pressantes instances qui m'ont été tant de fois réitérées de toute part depuis mon second livre."

everywhere—presumably from all those who had struggled with his earlier publication. Their demands would have likely been made face to face (there were few print media open to the public at this time), but it would have been a simple matter to find Marais and deliver a complaint in person. Since the 1690s he had made his home on the rue Bertin Poirée near the state prison, a fact published at the head of his books of viol music as well as in Abraham du Pradel's book of Paris addresses.³⁵ The pressure campaign worked, apparently, and the new book stands as proof, Marais claims, of his wish to satisfy all players, whatever their skill level.

In truth, Book Three represents only a partial victory for the average viol player. As Marais continues in the preface: "I have believed it necessary to mix in [among the easier pieces] some difficult pieces filled with chords and with several *doubles*, in order to content those who are the most advanced on the viol."³⁶ Like his first book, then, the current collection attempts to satisfy both the casual and advanced player. Unlike the first two suites of the first book, however, whose modular construction encouraged performers to choose the path best suited to their abilities, Book Three is less flexible and less forgiving. It dispenses with the long and redundant suites of the earlier collections in favor of a more regular, streamlined arrangement. Most suites now feature a single prelude, *allemande*, *courante*, *sarabande*, and *gigue*, with a handful of other movement forms rounding out the structure. As a result, it is not possible to switch out difficult movements for easier counterparts, as it was in some of the earlier suites. This would not be a problem if the suites maintained a consistent level of difficulty from their beginning to end, but in fact they often juxtapose accessible movements with formidable showpieces. If a particular dance proves too challenging for the player, he or she must simply skip it and hunt for playable pieces elsewhere in the book.

Consider, for example, the suite in A major. Its *gigue* and, especially, the *courante*, the first half of which is shown in Example 3, are among the simplest in the book.

35. Pradel, *Le livre commode*, 1:209.

36. Marais, *Pièces de viole, Troisième livre*, dedication. "Cependant j'ay crû devoir y mêler quelques pièces fortes et remplies d'accords avec plusieurs doubles, pour contenter ceux qui sont le plus avancez dans la viole."

Example 3. Marais, *Pièces de viole* (Book Three, 1711), p. 19, Courante, mm. 1–6.

Both are relatively brief, and, aside from a handful of cadences, neither features double stops or chords. They clearly belong to the group of pieces that Marais included to satisfy his critics. Preceding these approachable dances, however, are two laden with difficulties. The first, a prelude, calls for double stops or full triadic harmony in seventeen of the movement’s thirty measures. The player must also negotiate vertiginous thirty-second-note runs in five separate measures, a feat of left-hand dexterity. The following allemande, meanwhile, more resembles a lute or harpsichord piece than a work for bowed instrument (Example 4).

Polyphony, both real and implied, dominates the texture, requiring a nimble and sensitive bow arm. Matters escalate in the *double* that follows (Example 5).

Gone are the troublesome chords, replaced with equally troublesome sixteenth- and thirty-second-note runs up and down the instrument’s neck. This is a piece for truly advanced students, those who had mastered the idiomatic challenges of their instrument.

Because Marais “mixed in” challenging pieces among the easier ones seemingly at random, nearly every suite features one or more movements of incongruous difficulty. It is an odd way to structure a book of music, for it means that every suite runs the risk of either boring the advanced player or frustrating the

Bass viol

B. C.

3 6 4 3 6 6 6 6 6 6 6 4

14

6 7 6 4 7 6 8 9 8 7 6 8

Example 4. Marais, *Pièces de viole* (Book Three, 1711), p. 16, Allemande, mm. 11–16.

Bass viol

B. C.

3 6 4 3 6 6 6

13

6 6 6 4 6 7 6

15

4 7 6 8 9 8 7 6 8

Example 5. Marais, *Pièces de viole* (Book Three, 1711), p. 17, *Double to Allemande*, mm. 11–16.

beginner. Marais may have come to this conclusion as well, for his fourth book of viol music, published in 1717, sets about correcting the awkward arrangement of the previous volume. The opening sentences of the book's preface serve as tacit admission that not everyone had approved of Book Three's approach to difficulty, despite his intentions:

To satisfy the differing tastes of the public for the viol, I have decided to divide this fourth book into three parts, and to diversify the pieces so that each can find there that which suits him best. In the first section, I was careful to work for those who, in lieu of difficult pieces, prefer those that are easy, singing, and with few chords. In the second part, those who are advanced on the viol will find pieces that will at first appear very difficult, but with a little attention and practice will become familiar. I have composed them to exercise the skill of those who do not like easy pieces and who often esteem only those that are of difficult execution.³⁷

Here Marais finally hits upon the clear and obvious solution to composing music for different skill levels: instead of mixing together easy and difficult pieces within the same suite, he has composed either wholly accessible or entirely challenging suites and gathered them together in different sections of the book. No longer must players hunt through heterogeneous suites in search of individual dances that complement their particular skill level. They can now flip to the first or second section of the book and find dozens of easy or difficult pieces gathered together in one place. (The third section of book contains pieces for two bass viols and continuo.)

More than the other books, Book Four is the product of a composer in constant dialogue with his public. As we have seen,

37. Marin Marais, *Pièces à une et à trois violes, Quatrième livre* (Paris: chez l'auteur, 1717), preface. "Pour satisfaire aux differens gouts du Public sur la Viole, j'ay jugé à propos de diviser ce quatrieme Livre en trois parties, et d'en diversifier les Pieces, affin que chacun y puisse trouver ce qui luy conviendra le mieux. Dans la premiere partie, j'ay eu atention de travailler pour les personnes qui preferent aux Pieces difficiles, celles qui sont aisées, chantantes, et peu chargées d'accords. Dans la seconde, ceux qui sont avancez sur la Viole, trouveront des Pieces qui leur paroîtront d'abord d'une grande difficulté, mais avec un peu d'atention et de pratique elles leur deviendront familières. Je les ay Composées ainsi pour exercer l'habileté de ceux qui n'ayment pas les Pieces faciles, et qui souvent n'ont d'estime que pour celles qui sont d'une difficile execution."

the division of the work into separate sections responds to the demands of players eager for music calibrated to their unique tastes and abilities. The same desire to honor the requests of amateur musicians prompts Marais to make other changes or additions to the collection. For example, several unnamed players successfully lobbied Marais to include an old piece they especially adored: “I have been unable to refuse the strong entreaties of several people,” Marais writes, “to include the second musette from my third book because of the new counter-melody I added to it after the fact.”³⁸ Public opinion also helped to shape certain aspects of the collection’s musical notation, as Marais explains in the preface.³⁹ Finally, it would seem that some players found Marais’s rondeaux particularly challenging pieces. For these players, he provided a simple solution:

My guiding principle in the rondeaux is to vary the refrains as much as possible. Among them you will perhaps find several that are very difficult. In these cases you can omit [the difficult refrains] and substitute for them those that each player will judge to better match his abilities.⁴⁰

With every choice made in Book Four, Marais shows himself particularly solicitous of public approval and eager to meet the public halfway, whatever the issue. It is the work of a composer thoroughly integrated into a broader community of musicians,

38. Ibid. “Je n’ay pu refuser aux fortes instances de plusieurs personnes d’inserer icy ma seconde Musette du troisieme Livre a Cause de la contre partie que j’y ay fait apres coup.”

39. Ibid. “Comme quelques particuliers m’ont objecté que dans mes precedents Livres on ne faisoit point de difference entre une acolade qui separe la premiere partie d’une piece, de la seconde d’avec une Liaison ordinaire pour le coup d’archet, j’ay trouvé a propos de changer ma maniere d’ecrire et de me servir de celle cy qui anciennement estoit en usage.” (Since several people have complained that in my earlier books they could not tell the difference between a bracket that separated the first and second halves of a piece and the ordinary liaison indicating bow strokes, I have found it appropriate to change my manner of writing and to make use of this mark that was formerly in use.) Marais then provides visual examples of the two symbols.

40. Ibid. “Ma maxime, dans les Rondeaux, est de varier les refrains autant qu’il m’est possible. On en trouvera peut estre quelques unes d’une grande difficulté, on peut en ce cas les obmettre et leur subsituer ceux que chacun jugera estre plus a sa portée.”

students, audience members, and viol enthusiasts quick to voice their desires or disapproval.

Book Five

Book Four is also the work of an older composer transitioning to the final stages of a long and accomplished career. In the years that followed its publication, Marais and his wife, Catherine Damicourt, undertook a number of relocations. By 1718 they had moved across the Seine to the rue de la Harpe, near the Église Saint-Séverin. Their material conditions must have been comfortable, for the following year they paid 32,000 livres for a home on the rue des Mauvais-Garçons. From the previous owner they inherited a tenant, the wine merchant Pierre Beau, who provided the Marais with a steady income of 1,200 livres and a large allotment of wine a year. Six years later, in 1725, the Marais quit central Paris for the faubourg Saint-Marceau.⁴¹ According to Titon du Tillet, Marais spent his final years cultivating flowers in his garden, long retired from his official duties at court and the Opéra. Even the solitary pleasures of the garden, however, could not keep Marais from the public. Titon du Tillet writes that “He rented a room on the rue du Batoir, quartier Saint-André-des-Arcs, where, two or three times a week, he gave lessons to those wishing to perfect their viol playing.”⁴²

Marais continued to compose as well. His *La gamme et autres morceaux de symphonie*, a collection for violin, viol, and harpsichord, appeared in 1723, and he published his fifth and final collection of music for bass viol and basso continuo two years later.⁴³ Despite the convenient and, I would argue, successful layout of his previous collection, Marais yet again experiments with a new organizational plan in Book Five. As he writes in the preface:

41. On the late movements of the Marais family, see Milliot and La Gorce, *Marin Marais*, 67–70.

42. Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse françois*, 627. “Marais trois ou quatre ans avant sa mort s’étoit retiré dans une maison, rue de l’Oursine, faubourg Saint Marceau, où il cultivoit les plantes & les fleurs de son jardin. Il louoit cependant une Salle rue du Batoir, quartier Saint André des Arcs, où il donnoit deux ou trois fois la semaine de leçons aux personnes qui vouloient se perfectionner dans la Virole.”

43. On the bass viol in French chamber music, see Sadie, *The Bass Viol*.

My aim having been to satisfy each [player] . . . I have started all of my suites with melodious and easy pieces. After these you will find some difficult ones more or less laden with chords, adorned with a little decoration [“ornées d’un petit cartouche”] that distinguishes them from the easy ones.⁴⁴

The resulting collection of suites is an odd hybrid of the earlier books. As in the third, Marais mixes together easy and difficult pieces within the same suite. Now, however, the suites begin with the simpler works and progressively grow more difficult—a slightly more logical approach to suites of heterogeneous difficulty. Marais also makes it easy for players to find individual pieces matched to their skill level, as he did in the fourth book. The titles of the difficult compositions are now encircled with cartouches that serve as both promise and warning of the following piece’s technical challenge. Beginner and advanced students will thus experience each suite differently: the former will skip these difficult pieces, while the latter, should they so choose, will concentrate on them.

The suite in D major exemplifies Marais’s new approach in Book Five. The opening movements unfold more or less as one expects: a prelude followed by an allemande, sarabande, and gigue. (This suite, like all those in the fourth and fifth books, lacks courantes.⁴⁵) Because each printed title lacks a cartouche, players can safely assume that these pieces contain only modest technical challenges. Indeed, the dances tend toward brevity and melodious, monophonic textures. As the suite progresses, however, the difficulty level begins to rise. The chaconne marks the suite’s turning point. Its title bears a cartouche, informing the

44. Marin Marais, *Pièces de viole, Cinquième livre* (Paris: chez l’auteur, 1725), preface. “Mon attention ayant eù pour objet de satisfaire un chacun, Et pour y mieux reüssir, j’ay commencé toutes mes suites par des pieces chantantes et faciles, Ensuittes desquelles on en trouvera de difficiles plus ou moins chargées d’accords, ornées d’un petit cartouche, ce qui les distingue d’avec les faciles.”

45. According to Thompson, “The omission seems accounted for by the characteristic polyphonic construction of most of the courantes in the preceding collections. Marais, apparently, avoided the type in order to minimize the amount of harmonic playing in these easy suites.” See his “Marin Marais,” 1:138. The relative accessibility of some of the courantes in Book Three, however, suggests that Marais was perfectly capable of writing simple examples of this dance form.

player that this dance will demand more than did the preceding ones (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Marais, *Pièces de viole* (Book Five, 1725), p. 47, Chaconne title with cartouche.

It is longer, filled with chords, double stops, sixteenth- and thirty-second-note runs. For the beginner, the chaconne designates the end of the suite, the point beyond which his or her abilities will prove inadequate. For advanced players, who might have thought the earlier dances too easy, this and the following five pieces offer new and interesting challenges as well as opportunities to show off their hard-won skill.

Although the cartouches neatly segregate the easy pieces from the challenging ones, there is one composition in Book Five that straddles the line between accessible and daunting. It is the final piece, “Le Tact” or “The Touch,” so named because it requires the player to sound certain pitches by percussively hitting the fretboard with the left hand. The difficult technique demands strength and accuracy to convincingly pull off, especially at faster tempos. Little wonder, then, that Marais singled this piece out in the book’s introduction as “very difficult” and “very fatiguing.” It would have been a shame, however, if only a few talented

players mastered its idiosyncratic challenges. So Marais followed “Le Tact” with “La mesme pièce rendüe facile”: the same piece made easy. This version replaces the extended left-hand technique with standard bowing throughout. Less-advanced players could now perform a variant of the piece and even use it as practice in preparation for tackling the original version. It seems fitting that the final work in Marais’s final publication should encapsulate the imperative guiding his compositional approach since the 1680s: to accommodate a heterogeneous public as best he could.

Conclusions

The forty years separating Marais’s first book of viol music from the fifth were active ones for the musical public in France. Partisans vigorously debated the merits of national styles or competing schools in cafés and through the printing press. The rise of ticketed concerts in Paris in the 1720s and ’30s further stoked the public’s interest in shaping the music performed for their amusement. As James Johnson has shown, audiences grew quieter and more attentive over the course of the century, and composers responded by writing music that rewarded careful listening.⁴⁶ These attentive concert-goers also engaged with music as players themselves. Music-making remained a socially valued skill for most people at the turn of the century in France, with several writers recommending music as the ideal recreation to fill solitary hours.⁴⁷ The number of amateur musicians grew in

46. James Johnson, *Listening in Paris: A Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

47. Jean Laurent Le Cerf de la Viéville, for example, wrote in 1705: “Un grand homme [Aristotle] a dit que la Musique est utile pour trois choses. Pour instruire, pour purger des passions, et pour donner une recreation agréable et digne d’un honnête homme, pour amuser innocemment dans les temps de repos et de loisir, et cette dernière pensée me paroît assez juste et assez raisonnable pour mériter d’être louée, même dans un homme qui pense toujours admirablement.” [“A great man said that music is useful for three things. To instruct, to purge the passions, and to give an *honnête homme* an agreeable and worthy recreation, to innocently amuse in times of rest and leisure; and this last thought appears to me accurate and reasonable enough to merit being praised, even for a man whose thoughts are always admirable.”] See his *Comparaison de la musique italienne, et de la musique française* (Brussels: Foppens, 1705; repr., Geneva: Minkoff, 1972), 110.

tandem with the city itself and supported an adjunct community of music instructors, who gave lessons and wrote music tailored to an amateur audience.⁴⁸ It was as students that members of the public likely formed their most intimate relationships with professional musicians. They met face-to-face, often in the home, over extended periods of time. Friendships developed as students and teachers conferred together, performed together, and learned from one another.

The brief review of the *pièces de viole* undertaken in this article suggests the extent to which Marais recognized and, indeed, welcomed the growing prominence of the public in musical affairs. More than most, he seems to have respected the diversity of players he encounter among his audience. Some violists valued only difficult compositions while avoiding the easier ones. Others preferred the graceful melodies of simpler songs to the flashy wonders of virtuosic showpieces. Still more simply had to settle for pieces that matched their limited technical abilities. It could not have been easy to accommodate such a diverse audience, but the differing and often innovative tacks adopted by Marais throughout his career suggest that he was deeply interested in the question of how best to provide for these players.⁴⁹ As we have seen, most of his books of viol music are structured in such a way that, whatever the particular biases or abilities of the player, he or she is sure to find something enjoyable to play. For Marais, before one could please the public one had to first understand the public, their

48. On the growth of amateurism at the turn of the century, see Michel Brenet [Marie Bobiller], *Les concerts en France sous l'ancien régime* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1900; repr., New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), 110–12. Brenet quotes from an article in the May 1688 edition of the *Mercure galant*: “Rien n’est si à la mode que la musique, et c’est aujourd’hui la passion de la pluspart des honneste gens, et des personnes de qualité.” [“Nothing is so in style as music, and it is today the passion of most *honnêtes gens* and people of quality.”]

49. It is difficult to know the relative sizes of the different viol demographics. A sizable group of advanced viol players must have existed since Marais included difficult compositions in each of his books, but it seems likely that most amateur players enjoyed the easier compositions, which are often lyrical and musically interesting if not virtuosic. This, in any event, appears to have been the case with Couperin’s harpsichord music; see Byron Sartain, “The Manuscript Dissemination of François Couperin’s Harpsichord Music,” *Early Music* 41, no. 3 (August 2013): 377–91.

preferences as well as their limitations.⁵⁰ Compare this inquisitive approach to that of his younger, brasher contemporaries Antoine and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray, whose virtuosic compositions make few if any concessions to the amateur player. Whether or not the difficulty of their music hastened the viol's ultimate demise as a popular instrument by the 1750s as some have suggested,⁵¹ the high technical ability required to play many of their pieces "almost insured that there would be a very small market for them," as Margaret McDowell has noted.⁵²

For composers who cared to listen, it was easy to learn the preferences and limitations of the average violists. Marais's publications show how confident members of the public had become in demanding from composers the kind of music they enjoyed performing. Marais admits several times to yielding to the persistent entreaties of his audience, which they presumably made during lessons, after recitals, or perhaps at church or the neighborhood market. The content and layout of his books reflect an unusual openness to compromise and even collaboration. While the melody and harmony of individual pieces of course belong to Marais, elements of texture, perceived or intended difficulty, and ordering within suites and books exist because members of the public demanded they be a certain way. Marais even left the ordering of refrains in his *rondeaux* to the player's discretion. His works for bass viol represent the richest repertoire for that instrument in France as well as an important body of evidence for

50. Marais's eagerness to please his audience has not always won him plaudits. Of his fifth book, Urquhart writes, "The last book is disappointing on the whole as he is writing to please even more than ever; the large designs are rare, he makes no new ventures of any significance but continues to write accomplished, diverting pieces and uphold the French instrumental style in a musical scene largely taken over by Italian sonatas." Urquhart, "Style and Technique," 1:79.

51. Richard Sutcliffe, "L'École française de viole," in *Marin Marais: violiste à l'Opéra (1656–1728)*, ed. Benoît Dratwicky (Paris: Éditions du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, 2006), 53–61, at p. 56. See pages 57–60 of the same work for more information on the instrument's declining influence on French musical life. For a brief review of the viol and its players in the decades following Marais's death, see Pia Pircher, "Le basse de viole après la mort de Marin Marais (1728)," *The Viola da Gamba Society Journal* 8 (2014): 118–27.

52. McDowell, "Marais and Forqueray," 44.

public leverage over music and music-making at the turn of the century, when older forms of patronage had begun to give way to the market and to a public eager for music enjoyable to play as well as to hear.

While Marais seems to have been particularly responsive to his public, he was far from alone in his quest to please. Indeed, most composers had to reckon with the public in some way or another, whether they coddled their audiences or challenged them. Continued research into composer-public interactions ought to reveal much of how average people engaged with music and print culture around the turn of the century—and how in turn composers accommodated themselves to those who bought and performed their music.

SMALL FRENCH VIOLS¹

Thomas G. MacCracken

Abstract

Of the more than 400 extant viols made in France prior to the twentieth century and currently listed in the Online Database of Historical Viols (<https://www.vdgsa.org/pgs/viols/viols.html>), three-quarters are small instruments, including trebles, pardessus, and quintons. Within the latter group, five-string pardessus predominate with some 132 examples, fully half of them made by Louis Guersan. There are also 90 quintons, 55 six-string pardessus, and 33 trebles. This article offers an illustrated survey of this body of surviving instruments, focusing on the work of eight makers active during the century from the 1680s to the 1770s: Michel Collichon, Nicolas Bertrand, Guillaume Barbey, Jean Ouvrard, François Gaviniès, Guersan, Jean-Baptiste Salomon, and the Chappuy family. In addition, it discusses the overlapping transitions from treble to pardessus, and from six-string to five-string versions of the pardessus, as well as the mid-eighteenth-century emergence of the quinton, here defined as an alternative type of five-string pardessus, tuned and played the same way but with a primarily violin-style body. Information is also given about where these instruments are today, both geographically and whether in public collections or private ownership.

As some readers of this article may be aware, for the past twenty-five years or so I have been continuing Peter Tourin's pioneering work, begun in the late 1970s, toward compiling a comprehensive list of extant antique viols. The goal is to include all instruments made before the twentieth century—of all sizes (although excluding barytons and violas d'amore), and from all countries of Europe—that are still in existence today. My database presently contains records for more than 1600 instruments, a total that is still growing, albeit slowly, as additional examples come to my attention. An online version, the Database of Historical Viols, can be consulted at the website of the Viola da Gamba Society of America (<https://www.vdgsa.org/pgs/viols/viols.html>), where visitors can query, sort, and

1. An earlier version of this essay was presented as a paper at the symposium on "Aristocratic Women Amateurs and the Politics of Virtuosity: Placing the 18th-century Pardessus de Virole in its Social and Cultural Context," organized by Tina Chancey and held in conjunction with the Boston Early Music Festival on June 14, 2017.

otherwise manipulate the data records in whatever ways their own interests may suggest.

Of the more than four hundred viols currently in the database that were made in France, fully three-quarters are small ones, including trebles, *pardessus de viole*, and quintons.² Only about a hundred are basses, and there are no known French tenors or violones. As shown in Table 1, among the smaller sizes five-string *pardessus* predominate with 132 examples. In addition, there are 90 quintons, 58 six-string *pardessus*, and 33 trebles, for a total of 313 small French viols.³

Table 1. Extant instruments by size name

Trebles	33
Pardessus with 6 strings	58
Pardessus with 5 strings	132
Quintons	<u>90</u>
	313

2. The *pardessus de viole* is a kind of super-treble or sopranino viol (“*pardessus*” in French means “above”) that came into being in late seventeenth-century France. Initially it had six strings, tuned g–c’–e’–a’–d”–g”, or an octave above the tenor except with the fourth string as an E rather than an F. Later, a five-string version was introduced, tuned g–d’–a’–d”–g”, which came to exist in two different types. At the time either version could be called a quinton, because of its five strings, but modern parlance mostly reserves this term for the type whose body closely resembles that of a violin (with pointed corners, an arched back, shallow ribs with overhanging edges, and *f*-shaped soundholes) except for having the sloping shoulders typical of most viols. Recent research confirms that, despite differences in body characteristics, the quinton should be considered a member of the viol family: see Myrna Herzog, “Is the *quinton* a viol? A puzzle unravelled,” *Early Music* 28 (2000): 8–31, reprinted in this *Journal* 40 (2003): 5–35.

3. These and all other statistics mentioned below represent the status quo at the time I gave the original symposium paper, but have changed only insignificantly since then.

No fewer than 66 of the 132 five-string pardessus, exactly half of this category, were made by Louis Guersan, a total far exceeding the extant output of any other French maker of viols (of any size). No other luthier is represented by more than half a dozen trebles or pardessus (counting the two types separately), and only in the category of quintons are there as many as ten surviving examples from any one workshop. Conversely, 53 small viols, about 17% of the total, are the only such instruments by their makers. A further 66, or 21%, are anonymous, while the remainder were made by artisans from whom we have fewer than ten examples (and often only two or three) of any given type.

In the following pages I offer an illustrated introduction to this body of surviving instruments, focusing on the work of eight comparatively well-known makers. In approximately chronological order these are Michel Collichon, Nicolas Bertrand, Guillaume Barbey, Jean Ouvrard, Pierre Gaviniès, Louis Guersan, Jean-Baptiste Dehaye *dit* Salomon, and the Chappuy family.⁴

Collichon and Bertrand are the earliest French makers from whom we have more than a single surviving viol. Both appear to have begun their careers in the 1680s, and in fact there are only a handful of French viols bearing dates before this decade, all but one of them basses.⁵ There must surely have been treble viols made in France during the first half of the seventeenth century—after all, Louis Couperin, though better known as a keyboard player, at the time of his death in 1661 held a position as *Dessus de viole de la Chambre du roi* at the court of Louis XIV—but no such instruments appear to be extant today.

After Guersan, **Nicolas Bertrand** is the most prolific French

4. For summaries of biographical information on these and other French makers, see the References section of the online Database of Historical Viols.

5. In addition to basses by Antoine Despont (Lyon, 1617), Pierre Prévost (Paris, 1634), Barthélémy Vaillan (Marseille, 1662), and a maker known only by the surname Valler (Aix-en-Provence, 1679), there is an enigmatic five-string instrument with a treble-sized body but an unusually short neck (Brussels, Musée des instruments de musique, no. 1393), which is signed “Antoine Médard / A Paris 1667” even though his whole family is known to have worked in the provincial city of Nancy. Its present state may represent a reworking to allow it to be used as a pardessus during the mid-eighteenth century.

maker of viols, at least in terms of surviving instruments. He is also one of the best known in our time, both because a significant number of original examples of his work still exist—many of which are being actively played in public—and because many modern makers have chosen one or another of them as a model for their own production. As shown in Table 2, in all there are fifteen basses, far more than survive from any other French maker, together with three trebles and four pardessus, all made between the years 1685 and 1721. (Bertrand died in 1725.) All of the pardessus are six-string models, the only kind in use during his lifetime; as explained below, five-string models do not start to appear until the 1730s.

Table 2. Eight French viol makers and their surviving instruments

<i>Name</i>	<i>Dates of Instruments</i>	<i>6-string</i>		<i>5-string</i>		<i>Basses</i>
		<i>Trebles</i>	<i>Pardessus</i>	<i>Pardessus</i>	<i>Quintons</i>	
Collichon	1683–1693	1	2	–	–	6
Bertrand	1685–1721	3	4	–	–	15
Barbey	1717–1745	–	3	–	–	3
Ouvrard	1726–1750	1	5	4	–	1
Gaviniès	1728–1758	2	4	3	1	1
Guersan	1740–1770	–	3	66	7	–
Salomon	1741–1755*	–	1	2	11	1
Chappuy	1753–1775*†	–	1	4	16	–

* *Most instruments by Salomon and Chappuy are undated. Salomon died in 1767, at the relatively young age of 54, but his widow kept the shop in operation for more than two decades thereafter, until shortly before the Revolution.*

† *Totals for Chappuy combine instruments attributed to both Nicolas and his brother Nicolas Augustin.*

The Musée de la musique in Paris owns an example of each type made by Bertrand, and has published a photo (reproduced here as Figure 1) showing all three of them side-by-side, which is useful to give a sense of their relative size. Since a treble viol is



Figure 1. Three viols by Nicolas Bertrand (Paris, Musée de la musique, E.0690, E.1005, E.986.9.1; photo by Jean-Claude Billing, © Musée de la musique, Paris).

tuned an octave above the bass, this treble is, as one would expect, almost exactly half as large as the bass, with a body length of about 36 cm, compared to just under 72 cm for the bass. However, the pardessus is only slightly smaller than the treble: although tuned a fourth higher, in both body length and string length it is only about 12% smaller, instead of the 25% reduction that would correspond to this difference in pitch.⁶

Michel Collichon was born in 1641, the son of a Parisian lute maker named Nicolas Collichon. While there is fairly extensive documentation about Nicolas's life, very little exists for Michel, but we do know that by the time his mother's estate was being settled in 1682 he was a *maitre faiseur d'instruments* like his father. We also know that his viols were owned by some of the leading players of his day, including the Sieur de Machy, Jean Rousseau (who for a time was a lodger in the house of Collichon's father), and Rousseau's teacher Jean de Sainte-Colombe.

Table 2 shows that there are nine extant viols by Collichon, namely two six-string pardessus, one treble, and six basses. Eight of them contain dated labels revealing that they were made in the course of a single decade, from 1683 to 1693, which suggests that he may have died soon thereafter. Collichon is of special interest to viol players and luthiers because it appears he was not only the first maker to produce seven-string bass viols but was also the inventor of the *pardessus de viole*, with an instrument made by him in 1686 being the oldest dated specimen of this type known today.⁷

Collichon's body lengths and string lengths are comparable to those of Bertrand, although the basses are overall a little

6. Although most players think in terms of string length, for research purposes I usually prefer to compare body lengths, because an instrument's string length can vary considerably, depending on bridge placement and also whether the neck is original or not. As a general rule, unless it has been inappropriately renecked in modern times, the string length of a viol (of any size) will normally be within about 5% of its body length—sometimes longer, sometimes shorter.

7. Eight of Collichon's nine extant viols (all except the 1686 pardessus) are described in detail and illustrated in Tilman Muthesius, "Michel Collichon, facteur de violes parisien," *Musique-Images-Instruments* 2 (1996): 41–52, which is followed by Corinne Vaast's summary of available biographical information on the family, "Michel Collichon: pères biographiques," *ibid.*, 53–57.

smaller, and one of Collichon's pardessus is larger than the other. The smaller one, now in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, still has its original neck, resulting in nearly identical body and string lengths of 31.5 and 31.6 cm. For the treble these numbers are 34.6 and 36.0 cm respectively, meaning that—as the American viol maker Thomas Mace pointed out in a recent article⁸—the pardessus is only 9% smaller than the treble in body size, and its string length is shorter by only about 12%, comparable to the relationship of these two sizes as built by Bertrand.

Among the next generation of luthiers (the second group in Table 2), **Guillaume Barbey** may be best known in our time for having made two bass viols owned by the virtuoso gambist Antoine Forqueray and inherited by his son Jean-Baptiste Forqueray, who called Barbey “the greatest builder we have had” in France; Marin Marais also owned a viol made by Barbey.⁹ Although no trebles by him are known today, we do have three pardessus and three basses. All of the pardessus were made in the early 1740s and still have the full complement of six strings, even though by this time five-string models had begun to appear from other makers. One is in the Musée de la musique in Paris and the other two are privately owned, both in the United States; Figure 2 juxtaposes photos of all three. Two of them have identical body lengths of 32.5 cm and string lengths of 32.0 cm.

Of the eight makers in this survey, **Jean Ouvrard** (c. 1700–1748) is the first from whom we have five-string as well as six-string pardessus (see Table 2 and Figure 3). His surviving output is almost evenly divided between the two types, which have overlapping sets of dates ranging from 1735 to 1750: the earliest of the five-string examples was made in 1742, while the latest

8. Thomas Fitz-Hugh Mace, “Michel Collichon and the Origins of the Pardessus de Viole,” this *Journal* 47 (2012): 42–83. On p. 49 he writes that “The outline of the Nuremberg pardessus reproduces with accuracy but on a smaller scale the outline of Collichon’s only surviving treble viol.... Expressed in proportional terms, the pardessus is 10/11ths of the size of the dessus in all major dimensions, within an accuracy of a millimeter....”

9. See Mary Cyr, “Barbey, Guillaume,” *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (2nd ed., London: Macmillan, 2001), 2:698. Barbey’s birth and death dates are unknown, but the dates found in his instruments range from 1717 to 1745.



Figure 2. Three *pardessus de viole* by Guillaume Barbey: from left to right, 1742 (Paris, Musée de la musique, E.979.2.65; photo by Jean-Claude Billling, © Musée de la musique, Paris), 1744 (USA, Private collection), 1745 (USA, Private collection).



Figure 3. Three small viols by Jean Ouvrard: from left to right, treble, 1726 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 89.4.946), six-string pardessus, 1745 (Paris, Musée de la musique, E.2042; photo by Jean-Claude Billig, © Musée de la musique, Paris), five-string pardessus, 1750 (Paris, private collection).

with six strings dates from 1745. Ouvrard's only treble is earlier than any of these, made in 1726, while his unique bass is dated 1743, making it one of the latest French basses from the historical period.¹⁰

François Gaviniès (1683–1772) began his career in his native Bordeaux before relocating to Paris sometime between 1728 and 1734. Two pardessus made prior to this move have six strings, while three of the four later examples, with dates ranging from 1749 to 1758, have only five. Either way, their body lengths fall within a fairly narrow range, from 33.3 to 34.7 cm, with string lengths mostly between 31 and 32 cm. Two more instruments are only slightly larger, but sufficiently so to merit being classified as trebles rather than six-string pardessus, with body lengths between 35 and 36 cm and string lengths between 33 and 34 cm. All three types are illustrated in Figure 4, and there is also a single, undated quinton. Gaviniès is thus the only maker in the present sample with surviving examples of all four types of small viols, and together with Ouvrard represents the mid-century period when both kinds of pardessus were being made in approximately equal numbers.

At this point it is worth pausing to consider more closely the chronology of the transition from the treble viol to first the six-string and then the five-string pardessus, with their overlapping periods of popularity. As shown in Table 3, the earliest surviving and dated French treble is one made by Bertrand in 1685, a relatively new discovery in a French private collection that is

10. A five-string pardessus by Ouvrard in the London 1904 Loan Exhibition was described in the published catalogue as having been made in 1740, but in the following year the owner's estate auction catalogue gave its date as 1745: see *An Illustrated Catalogue of the Music Loan Exhibition at Fishmonger's Hall, June and July, 1904* (London: Novello and Company, 1909), 148, and *Catalogue of the Collection of Musical Instruments of the late T. W. Taphouse, Esq. M.A. ... which will be sold by auction, by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge ... on Wednesday, the 7th day of June, 1905* (London: J. Davy & Sons, 1905), 3. The discrepancy cannot presently be resolved, because the instrument's location and ownership are unknown. The only basses later than Ouvrard's are one by Andrea Castagneri made in 1744 and the unique eight-string example by Benoist Fleury in the Musée de la musique in Paris, whose date has been read variously as 1755, 1759, or 1769.



Figure 4. Three small viols by François Gaviniès: from left to right, treble, 1744 (Paris, Musée de la musique, E.1435; photo by Jean-Claude Billing, © Musée de la musique, Paris), six-string pardessus, 1756 (Philadelphia, American Society of Ancient Instruments), five-string pardessus, 1753 (France, private collection).

completely original in all its parts except the bridge.¹¹ And while the total number of surviving French trebles is quite small (only 33), there are enough of them to support the conclusion that they continued to be made throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, with an instrument by Gaviniès from 1748 being the latest example.

Table 3. Earliest and latest extant and dated instruments of each type

	<i>Earliest</i>	<i>Latest</i>
Trebles	Bertrand 1685	Gaviniès 1748
Pardessus 6	Collichon 1686	Gaviniès 1756
Pardessus 5	Guersan 1740	Saint Paul 1774
Quintons	Castagneri 1733	Chappuy 1775

On the other hand, the earliest tangible evidence of a small viol intended to be tuned higher than the treble is Collichon's (six-string) pardessus made in 1686, only a year after Bertrand's treble (see Figure 5). This is another recent addition to the database that came to light in a European auction about a decade ago. At that time it had an eighteenth-century replacement neck for only five strings, but it has since been restored to a six-string setup. Like their larger treble-viol siblings, six-string pardessus continued to be made until the middle of the eighteenth century, with Gaviniès again being responsible for the latest known example, in 1756 (shown in Figure 4).

The question of who made the earliest extant five-string pardessus, and when, is not especially easy to answer. A few instruments with unusually early dates (including Collichon's of 1686, just mentioned, plus others dated 1697, 1701, and 1709) have come down to us in this configuration, but almost certainly started out with six strings before being modernized, or updated,

11. This is now the earliest known instrument of any kind by Bertrand, made two years before his first extant bass, which is dated 1687 and now in the Musée des instruments de musique in Brussels.

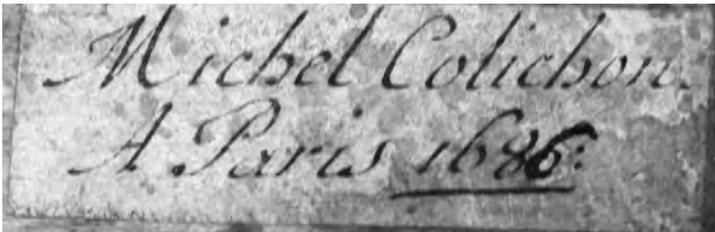


Figure 5. Six-string pardessus by Michel Colichon (USA, private collection).

during the historical period. Three other candidates may have been made during the 1730s, though in no case is their maker's claim to primacy entirely straightforward.

- Harvard University owns a five-string pardessus whose label states that it was made by “Simon Gilbert, / Musicien de la Cathédrale / & Facteur d’Instrumens. / A Metz 1730.” However, that date is problematic because, according to the latest research, Gilbert was not born until 1718; even considering he was the son of a luthier, it is difficult to believe he made this instrument at the age of only twelve.¹²
- At the Musée de la musique in Paris there is a five-string pardessus (inv. no. E.980.2.486) whose label is so badly damaged that the maker's name cannot be read, but the date of 1731 is still quite clear.¹³
- Until World War II the museum of musical instruments in Berlin owned a five-string pardessus by Nicolas Desrousseaux of Verdun (inv. no. 2465), whose date was variously given as either 1735 or 1755. If the former reading was correct, this could be the earliest example by a known maker, but it has not been seen since the war and probably no longer exists.¹⁴

Leaving aside the instruments just discussed, the earliest convincingly dated and still extant five-string pardessus originally constructed as such appears to be one made in 1740 by Louis Guersan—appropriately so, since (as mentioned earlier) he is single-handedly responsible for fully half of all surviving instruments of this type. His last known example, from 1770 (the year of his death), was acquired early in the present century by

12. His other known pardessus was made in 1752, and a quinton formerly in the Leipzig museum was dated 1758; all three have (or had) arched backs and flame-shaped soundholes. The latter feature is extremely rare in French viols generally and suggests the possibility of stylistic influence from nearby Germany on Gilbert's work in the eastern French city of Metz.

13. The museum's website offers a tentative attribution to Salomon, but none of his other viols is dated earlier than 1741. However, much of the Salomon shop's output is undated, being identified only by the words “Salomon a Paris” stamped at the top of the instrument's back.

14. An earlier pardessus by this maker, dated 1731, has six strings, while five later examples all have five strings.

the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; both are shown in Figure 6. The latest of all dated five-string pardessus was made by Antoine Saint Paul, Guersan's stepson and successor, in 1774.

This brings us to the quinton, an instrument that proliferated rapidly during the second half of the eighteenth century as a variant kind of five-string pardessus, tuned and held in the same way but having a violin-like body (with pointed corners, shallow ribs with overhanging edges, arched back, and *f*-shaped soundholes) combined with the sloping shoulders characteristic of most viols. Fully half of the 90 quintons currently in the database are undated, with most of the others having been made during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The latest dated survivor was made by Chappuy in 1775, while the earliest—disregarding an instrument auctioned in 2008 with an apparently fake Guersan label dated 1732—is one made in 1733 by the Italian immigrant Andrea Castagneri, followed more than a decade later by Salomon and Claude Boivin, both in 1744. Interestingly, there are extant examples by all three of these makers of bass viols with features borrowed from the violin family, including pointed body corners, overhanging edges, arched backs, and *f*-holes.

Returning to our group of eight representative makers of small French viols, we have already seen that **Louis Guersan** (c. 1700–1770) is the pre-eminent figure in this field, active during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. In addition to an extraordinary number of five-string pardessus, nearly all with striped backs and ribs of alternating light and dark woods, there are three with six strings, plus seven quintons—but no trebles or basses, though we know from a shop inventory taken at the time of his second marriage that he did at least sell viols of those sizes made by other makers.¹⁵

The last two makers on our list are represented today mainly by quintons, along with a few pardessus of both types. **Salomon** was the trade name used by Jean-Baptiste Dehaye, who came to Paris from his native Reims in the mid-1730s, and in 1748

15. The inventory is transcribed in Sylvette Milliot, *Histoire de la lutherie parisienne du XVIIIe siècle à 1960. Tome II: Les luthiers du XVIIIe siècle* (Spa, Belgium: Les Amis de la Musique, 1997), 329–31.



Figure 6. Earliest and latest dated pardessus by Louis Guersan: from left to right, 1740 (Geneva, Fondation La Ménéstrandie, M.022.01), 1770 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001.588).



Figure 7. Three small viols by the Salomon workshop (all undated): from left to right, six-string pardessus (Oberlin, Caldwell Collection), five-string pardessus (Paris, Musée de la musique, E.2039; photo by Jean-Claude Billing, © Musée de la musique, Paris), quinton (Brussels, Musical Instruments Museum, 1398; photo © Musical Instruments Museum, Brussels).

married the widow of Jean Ouvrard, thereby combining their two shops. After her death only four years later, Salomon continued the workshop alone, eventually marrying again; his second wife was Marie Cousineau, a niece of Ouvrard's who continued to run the business for more than two decades after Salomon's own death in 1767. Surviving viols from the Salomon shop include three pardessus (one with six strings and two with five) and eleven quintons; Figure 7 shows a representative example of each type.

Finally, like Salomon, the **Chappuy** family is known today for only a few pardessus but as many as sixteen quintons, though no trebles or basses (see Figure 8). These are the work of two brothers with confusingly similar names, Nicolas and Nicolas Augustin. Both were born in Mirecourt, in northeastern France, but while Nicolas seems to have remained there throughout his career, Augustin spent time in Paris during the 1750s and '60s and signed at least some of his instruments accordingly, using interior labels and/or by branding them "Chappuy à Paris" on the back. In contrast, Nicolas is said to have normally identified his work only with the stamp "N. Chappuy" at the top of the back. Their combined output of small viols includes four pardessus with five strings, plus another that has been reported to have six, all probably by Nicolas.¹⁶ Among their quintons, at least five can be identified as the work of Nicolas Augustin (with label dates ranging from 1753 to 1775), leaving the others to be provisionally classified as by Nicolas.¹⁷

16. In an article published more than fifty years ago, Cécile Dolmetsch mentioned that she owned "a fine six-stringed pardessus by Chappuy" (Cécile Dolmetsch, "The pardessus de viole or chanterelle," this *Journal* 3 [1966]: 56–59, reprinted from *The Strad* 76 [July 1965]: 99f). The current location of this instrument is unknown, so it is not possible to determine if its setup is original; it may be the result of an educated but ultimately incorrect guess by her father, Arnold Dolmetsch, as part of a restoration done early in the twentieth century. Jordi Savall, on his two recent recordings entitled *The Celtic Viol*, plays a pair of Chappuy instruments, credited respectively as "5 Strings Treble Viol by Nicolas Chappuy (ca. 1730)" and "6 Strings Treble Viol by Nicolas Chappuy (ca. 1750)"; however, an accompanying photo reveals that the body of the latter is unmistakably that of a quinton, on which a six-string setup has been mounted (whether in the eighteenth or the twentieth century is unknown).

17. This conclusion is based on the explanation of the family's members and their activities found in standard reference books of the twentieth century, which



Figure 8. Three small viols by the Chappuy family: from left to right, pardessus, branded “N. CHAPPUY” (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006.504), quinton, branded “N. CHAPPUY” (New Haven, Yale Collection of Musical Instruments, 4678), quinton, labeled “Augustinus Chappuy ... 1763” (Paris: Musée de la musique, E.2363; photo by Albert Giordan, © Musée de la musique, Paris).

This discussion of the Chappuy brothers provides a good opportunity to point out that while the majority of small French viols were made in Paris, a significant minority came from provincial workshops. For Mirecourt, these include instruments (mainly quintons) by half a dozen other makers besides the Chappuys, as well as a number of anonymous examples whose overall style suggests they originated in that important center of string-instrument making. Other cities represented in the database by multiple examples of small viols include Bordeaux, Caen, Lille, Metz, Rouen, and Verdun, for a total of two dozen instruments. In addition, there are one-of-a-kind instruments by makers located in ten other cities, ranging from Dunkirk, Douai, Troyes, and Valenciennes in the north to Marseilles and Toulouse in the south, along with Lunéville, Reims, Strassbourg, and Voges in the east. Altogether, about a quarter of extant small French viols with a known place of origin were made somewhere other than Paris, with the fraction being closer to a third for trebles and quintons and somewhat less than a fifth for pardessus.

To conclude, it may be of interest to note where these instruments are located today. For each size category a plurality (comprising more than a fifth of the total) remains in France, with the United States, perhaps surprisingly, in second place overall with about 15%. Considering pardessus separately, but counting both kinds together, there are half a dozen or more examples in Switzerland (20), England (13), Belgium (13), Germany (9), and Sweden (6), largely due to the presence of important museum collections in those countries. Lesser numbers may be found in most of the remaining countries of Europe (including Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Russia), with a few additional examples as far afield as Israel and Japan.

The comparatively small number of trebles is widely dispersed

give no birth dates for either man and only a death date of 1784 for Nicolas Augustin, together with a suggestion that he was born about 1730. Although solid biographical information is scarce, it seems reasonably certain there were indeed two different makers with similar given names, because Albert Jacquot (in his *La Lutherie Lorraine et Française depuis ses origines jusqu'à nos jours, d'après les archives locales* [Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1912]) states that in 1764 Nicolas Augustin was godfather to Nicolas's son Augustin Nicolas, while in 1773 Nicolas in turn stood godfather to Nicolas Augustin's son, Nicolas Augustin II.

over a dozen countries, with multiple instruments found only in Belgium, France, Germany, and the United States, again mostly in museums. Quintons fall into three roughly equal-sized groups: those still in France, those in other countries (more in the United States than anywhere else), and those whose current whereabouts is unknown. In fact, the present-day location of nearly a fifth of all small French viols is unknown to me, often because the only source of information about them is either a recent auction catalogue (which of course does not include the purchaser's name, having been printed before the sale) or else the decades-old catalogue of a loan exhibition.

As shown in Table 4, more than two thirds of the remaining 80% (that is, those instruments whose current ownership *is* known) belong to museums or other institutions, leaving only 77 in private hands. In most cases this means professional gambists, either currently active or now retired; other kinds of owners include dealers, luthiers, collectors, researchers, and amateur performers. Interestingly, more than a quarter of these privately-owned small French viols currently reside here in the United States.

Table 4. Public vs. private ownership

	<i>Private</i>	<i>Museums</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Private in USA</i>
Trebles	10	22	1	33	2
Pardessus 6	14	39	5	58	6
Pardessus 5	29	81	22	132	7
Quintons	<u>24</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>6</u>
Totals	77	175	61	313	21

Finally, for those wishing to hear what such instruments sound like, nearly two dozen recordings have been released, most of them within the past twenty-five years. One group features French solo works of the eighteenth century as performed on multiple discs by Simone Eckert and Tina Chancey, and on single issues by Wieland Kuijken, Catharina Meints, Mienke van der Velden,

and Mélisande Corriveau, among others. A second group presents English consort repertoire ranging chronologically from Byrd to Lawes and beyond, including no fewer than five different renditions of the Purcell fantasias, beginning in the 1950s and '60s with groups led by August Wenzinger and Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

To sum up, we have seen that approximately three-quarters of all extant French viols made before the twentieth century are small instruments. More than 40% of these are five-string pardessus, fully half of which were made in the shop of Louis Guersan during the three decades between 1740 and 1770. Therefore, without wishing to discount either the musical or the historical importance of the many fine surviving French basses, on strictly numerical grounds it would be reasonable to regard Guersan's five dozen pardessus—most of them with a back and ribs made of alternating light and dark strips of wood, a feature seldom used by other makers that seems to have been a kind of trademark for him—as the quintessential type of French viol.

The earliest dated small French viols come from the mid-1680s and include both a treble and a six-string pardessus; although trebles must have been made earlier, this decade is likely to have seen the invention of the pardessus, probably by Michel Collichon. The five-string pardessus and the identically-tuned quinton both began to appear in the 1730s and by the middle of the eighteenth century had displaced the earlier types with six strings. To judge from surviving instruments, pardessus and quintons were made almost exclusively in France, with only a few scattered (and sometimes questionable) examples from other countries. Treble viols were certainly made elsewhere, notably in England, a country from which we have nearly twice as many examples as survive from France. However, viols of this size were seemingly almost non-existent in Italy,¹⁸ while a significant proportion of

18. Contemporary treatises support the notion that in Italy, during the period when viols were played in consorts, the three sizes in common use were those we would now call tenors, basses, and (small) violones. However, the pitches to which they were tuned, while typically identified in written sources as d", g' or a', and d' for the top strings, may have differed significantly from our modern-day expectations for those note names.

similarly-sized instruments made in the eastern and northern parts of Europe (including most areas of German cultural influence) display characteristics implying that they may have been intended for playing on the shoulder rather than on the legs.¹⁹

Many small French viols remain in Europe, especially in their country of origin, though a significant number are now in the United States. Although the current location of some remains unknown, the majority of the rest now reside in museums, which means they are rarely if ever played. However, about a quarter of the total are still privately owned, largely by active professional and amateur musicians who continue to enjoy—and to share with others through their concerts and recordings—the distinctive sounds of this particular group of viols.

19. One feature suggesting that these instruments were played *da braccio* rather than *da gamba* is shallow ribs (assuming these are original), especially if found in conjunction with a violin-style neck profile. Another is the presence of only five strings, because recent research strongly suggests that such instruments were made as violas d'amore of the earlier type with five metallic bowed strings (or four metal and one gut) but no sympathetic strings: see, for example, Kai Köpp, "Love Without Sympathy," *The Strad* 112, no. 1333 (May 2001): 526–30. Violas d'amore typically had flame-shaped soundholes, and it is noteworthy that whereas only about 15% of German bass viols currently in the database have this feature, it is found on more than two-thirds of so-called trebles made in German-speaking areas.

THE IMPACT OF FRENCH BAROQUE POETRY ON THE FRENCH BAROQUE VIOLA DA GAMBA 1685–1750¹

Eric Tinkerhess

Abstract

The music of Marin Marais, François Couperin, and Antoine Forqueray is compared to French Baroque poetry to see if there are any overlapping principles in the form and performance of these two art forms. Rhythm, rhyme, the difference between poetry and prose, accentuation, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century definitions of declaim and recite, and the concept of imitation are examined to understand how French Baroque viola da gamba music incorporates contemporary literary practices, especially salon poetry recitation, in both the compositional structures and performance practices of the time period.

Music and poetry have in common their form, written by a composer or a poet, and their performance, by a musician or a reader. Concerning the performance, music can be played by a musician other than the composer who wrote it, in the same way that poetry can be read silently or declaimed out loud by someone other than the writer. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, music and poetry were clearly interconnected when a composer set lyrics to music, but there was also a connection between untexted instrumental music and the forms and performance of poetry. In this vein, Hubert Le Blanc, lawyer and amateur viola da gambist, wrote in 1740: “The character of musical poetry is the song. It is found in all the

1. This article consists of excerpts from a thesis written for a Master’s in Interpretation of Early Music – Research and Practice at the Université Paris-Sorbonne from 2015 to 2017. The citations have been translated into English from French by the author, while the original titles of sources have been left in French. Many thanks to Théodora Psychoyou, who guided the research process, and to Richard d’Ari, who read and corrected this work with care.

French pieces for viol and for harpsichord.”² When the forms of instrumental music imitate linguistic models, we ask ourselves: Can a gambist find clues to interpretation by researching the practice of declamation? Are there connections between the practice of the viola da gamba in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the poetic declamation of the same time period? If so, what is their nature?

Concentrating on the music of Marin Marais (1656–1728), François Couperin (1668–1733), and Antoine Forqueray (1671–1745), we will search for the elements of form and performance shared with poetry, with the eventual goal of reading music through the prism of poetic terms and techniques. Multiple treatises of the time period draw comparisons between music and poetry, which show that these two art forms were consciously connected in musicians’ minds. But we might find linguistic elements of which the composers themselves were not conscious or, in any case, had not discussed in the instrumental methods or other theoretical and pedagogical works. So we have two perspectives on the style of these composers that we would like to examine and shed light on: firstly a perspective that we can call “of the time period,” meaning the *emic* thinking that the musicians themselves formulated and expressed, and secondly an *etic*, contemporary perspective, at once inductive and deductive, that is the result of accumulated research since the eighteenth century.

Feminine and Masculine Rhymes

In French Baroque music and poetry, composers and poets employed repetition of sound, which we call rhyme. Defined by the linguist Maurice Grammont (1866–1946), rhyme in poetry is “homophony not only of the last accentuated vowel, but at the same time of all that follows this vowel.”³ It is defined even more

2. Hubert Le Blanc, *Défense de la Basse de Viole contre les Entreprises du Violon et les Prétentions du Violoncelle* (Amsterdam: Mortier, 1740), 9. “Le caractere de la Poésie Musicale est le Chant. Il se trouve dans toutes les Pièces Françoises de Viole & de Clavecin.”

3. Maurice Grammont, *Petit traité de versification française* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1908; reissue 1989), 31. “... l’homophonie non seulement de la dernière voyelle accentuée, mais en même temps de tout ce qui suivait cette voyelle.”

simply by the poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524–1585): “Rhyme is none other than a consonance and cadence of syllables, falling at the end of lines.”⁴ If rhyme is one of the elements of poetry, could there be poetic rhymes in musical writing? Once identified, how could we show the rhyme’s presence to the listener?

French poets in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries almost always put rhymes at the last or penultimate syllable of every line, pronounced with an accent of more, or less, volume and/or length.⁵ A rhyme of the last syllable is called “masculine,” and that of the second-to-last “feminine.”⁶ In Grammont’s words: “[Masculine] rhymes ended with the same syllable that contained the accentuated vowel; [feminine] rhymes had after this vowel another syllable containing an unaccentuated *e*.”⁷ Ronsard gave examples: Masculine rhymes consist of vowels in words such as “surmonter, monter, douter, sauter, Jupiter”; feminine rhymes are found in words that end with an *e*, such as “France, Esperace, despece, [...] familiere, [...] premiere, chere, mere.”⁸ Contrary to today’s practice, the last-syllable *e* was pronounced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, creating a brief diminuendo.⁹

4. Pierre de Ronsard, *Art poetique francoys* (Paris: Guillaume Linocier, 1585), 35. “La ryme n’est autre chose qu’une consonance & cadance de syllables, tombant sur la fin des vers.”

5. Grammont, *Petit traité*, 1–3, 49; Patricia Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator: The Phrasing and Rhetoric of the Melody in French Baroque Airs* (Baltimore: Pendragon Press, 2001), 99; Jean-Claude Milner and François Regnault, *Dire le vers* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 2008), 145–51; Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de Grimarest, *Traité du Recitatif Dans la Lecture, Dans l’Action Publique, Dans la Declamation, et Dans le Chant* (Paris: Jaques le Fevre/Pierre Ribou, 1708), 4–25. Grimarest adds that an accent can also be a syllable pronounced at a higher or lower pitch.

6. Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Traité de l’harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* (Paris: J.B.C. Ballard, 1722), 161–62.

7. Grammont, *Petit traité*, 32. “Les [rimes masculines] se terminaient avec la syllabe même qui contenait la voyelle accentuée; les [rimes féminines] avaient après cette syllabe une autre syllabe contenant un *e* inaccentué.”

8. Ronsard, *Art poetique francoys*, 35.

9. “One must make heard the silent syllable of feminine verses; however it is ridiculous to pronounce it so strongly, as do some actors. This makes the verse lose its quality, and renders long the shortest of our syllables.” (“[L]’on doit faire entendre la silabe muette des vers féminins; cependant il est ridicule

In French Baroque music we see the musical equivalent of masculine and feminine rhymes, for example in the operas by Marais. A typical example in *Sémélé* is the setting of the word “charmes” in measure 25 of “Goutons icy les plus doux charmes” (Here let us taste the sweetest charms): the feminine rhyme is written with the penultimate syllable “*char-*” accentuated, on the first beat of the measure, followed by a quarter note for the last unaccentuated consonant and syllable, “*-mes*” (Example 1).

d’y appuyer aussi fortement, que le font quelques Acteurs: C’est faire perdre au vers sa qualité, & rendre longue la plus breve de nos syllabes.”) Grimarest, *Traité du Recitatif*, 134. Bertrand de Bacilly gives an opposite description of the silent *e*, saying we must pronounce it strongly and long: “... this *e* is so barely silent, that often we must support it, as much to give strength to the expression, as to make it heard distinctly by the listeners; and in singing, often the silent *e* being longer than the others, demands even more exactitude and regularity in the pronunciation than the other vowels, and I do not see anything more widespread than its mispronunciation, if one does not carefully observe the remedy that I believe to have found, which is to pronounce it almost like the composed vowel *eu*, that is to say in assembling the lips almost as much as we do for this diphthong, to which this sort of *e* is very similar.” (“... cet *e* est si peu muet, que bien souvent on est contraint de l’appuyer, tant pour donner de la force à l’expression, que pour se faire entendre distinctement des Auditeurs; & pour ce qui est du Chant, souvent l’*e* muet estant bien plus long que les autres, demande bien plus d’exactitude & de regularité pour la Prononciation que les autres Voyelles, & je ne voy rien de si general, que de le mal prononcer, à moins que d’observer soigneusement le remede que je croy avoir trouvé, qui est de le prononcer à peu pres comme la Voyelle composée eu, c’est à dire en assemblant les levres presque autant comme on fait à cette dyphthongue, avec laquelle ces sortes d’*e* ont un grand rapport.”) Bertrand de Bacilly, *Remarques curieuses sur l’art de bien Chanter. Et particulierement pour ce qui Regarde le Chant François* (Paris: C. Blageart, 1668), 265–66.

Example 1. Marin Marais and Antoine de la Motte, *Sémélé* (Paris, 1709), Prologue: Air, “Goutons icy les plus doux charmes,” mm. 22–30 (p. 30).

If we sing this example accordingly, there is a soft diminuendo at the end of the phrase.¹⁰ Harmonically, the resolution of the last syllable “-mes” on the E creates a fifth with the bass, which is restful and charming in its sweetness. Rhymes almost always occur at cadences, at the ends of phrases, as the composer and theorist Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1784) describes in his *Traité de l’harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* in 1722.¹¹ Thus the repetition of tonic and dominant notes imitates the repetition of vowels that we find in poetic rhymes. Deceptive cadences can also serve for more unexpected rhymes. These are different ways of ending phrases that the listener can hear and feel; the use of repeated notes among an assortment of other notes creates an alternation between order and variety and evokes

10. For more on strong and weak beats, see Ewald Demeyere, *Johann Sebastian Bach’s Art of the Fugue: Performance Practice Based on German Eighteenth-Century Theory* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2013), 88. See also Théodora Psychoyou, “Les règles de composition par monsieur Charpentier: statut des sources,” in *Les manuscrits autographes de Marc-Antoine Charpentier*, ed. Catherine Cessac (Wavre: Mardaga, 2007), 96.

11. Rameau, *Traité de l’harmonie*, 161–62. In Rameau’s terms, a half cadence is called a “cadence irregulier.” Ibid., 64. For more on the definitions of cadences, see *ibid.*, 54–73.

various sensations in the listener.¹²

If we can identify rhymes in musical writing, how do we highlight them in our musical interpretation? Observing the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century styles of poetic declamation, we can place an accent of dynamic and/or length on the penultimate syllable “*char-*,” which is naturally one of the outermost notes of the musical phrase, being almost at the summit of the melodic contour. An accent is not always necessarily loud and long; it can include soft dynamics and short length-value.¹³ It is interesting to note that the poet Michel Mourges (1650–1713) wrote that the masculine rhyme consisting of a closed *e*, as in *beauté, aimez, or toucher*, “creates an extremely weak sound.”¹⁴

As opposed to the feminine rhyme, masculine rhymes are found on the last syllable of a line. When put to music, they often fall on the first beat of a measure. Is an accent at the end of a phrase considered traditionally “masculine,” as a resolute and courageous expression? Civility treatises from the sixteenth century on often attributed such characteristics to the male sex, and inverse characteristics to the female sex,¹⁵ begging the question: even if these stereotypes are today considered archaic, must one see gendered thinking at work in the seventeenth century to play feminine and masculine rhymes with a certain difference between the two? Let us consider another phrase from the same Air in *Sémélé*: “Amour, Amour rassemble tes attraits.” If we imagine this phrase with the traits traditionally considered “masculine,” the melodic contour appears to us as an order, which descends from the heavens to the earth: “Love, Love assemble your charms.” In contrast, the phrase from Example 1 would be a seducing suggestion. In a musical interpretation, if the last syllable

12. For more on masculine and feminine musical cadences, see Bernard Direx, *Musique*, in Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert, *L’Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris: Le Breton, 1751), supplement, following pl. 13.

13. See note 5.

14. Michel Mourges, *Traité de la poésie française* (Paris: Jacques Vincent, 1724), 35–36. “... rend un son extrêmement foible”

15. See Jeanice Brooks, *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* (Chicago: Chicago University, 2000).

of the masculine rhyme is accentuated, the bass of Example 2 can cadence strongly on the modulation in B minor, giving a grave, stern character, contrasting with the end of the feminine rhyme where we imagine an innocent and happy woman who tastes the charms.

Example 2. Marin Marais, *Sémélé*, Prologue: Air, “Goutons icy les plus doux charmes,” mm. 34–38 (p. 31).

In certain lines, we can accentuate the rhyme and also another syllable inside the phrase. In Example 1 we see the feminine rhyme in a hemiola during the seventh and eighth measures. Put to music, the rhymes often fall on the first beats, but this is not always the case. Here the accent of the rhyme “*char-*” falls on the second beat of the penultimate measure in Example 1. The accent falls on the half cadence A major before making a diminuendo while arriving in D major. According to Grammont, lines of ten syllables contain an accent on the last syllable of the phrase,¹⁶ but also a variable accent at the interior of the phrase.¹⁷ Where do we put this variable accent? Maybe on “*plus*” in the seventh measure, to underline the sweetness of the charms, or on “*-tons*,” the strong beat of the sixth measure, where the note is higher in pitch than the rest of the phrase. So the singer has the liberty to choose how she wants to phrase the melody.

For French Baroque poets, rhyme was one of the more important aspects of poetry. It was the function that gives order and balance at the end of the lines, and that ties together the meaning of the lyrics which are almost identical in their homophony. It is not by

16. This line contains ten syllables, as the last syllable of a feminine rhyme, called the *silent e*, is not counted in the syllabic count. Grammont, *Petit traité*, 2.

17. *Ibid.*, 1–3.

chance that Baroque musicians also developed a system of writing that reflected the poetic rhymes in their cadences at the ends of phrases. The musical cadences, which create a repetition of tonic and dominant pitches, are the equivalents of poetic rhymes and enliven the music with a certain charm.

Now that we have examined the feminine and masculine musical rhymes, we will explore in more detail the question of accentuation, and how it permits us to distinguish poetry from prose.

Poetry or Prose? Accent and Rhythm

If, as Hubert Le Blanc describes, French Baroque music is nearer to poetry and Italian to prose,¹⁸ how does this relate to the accents of poetry and prose? To this point, Grammont gives us an interpretation of three lines by Jean Racine (1639–1699), from the play *Iphigénie*. Every line is cut into four parts, with accents of long length on the last or second-to-last syllable of each part. In addition, Grammont proposes the proportional rhythmic value of each syllable:

Heureux | qui satisfait | de son hum|ble fortune, |
2 3.5 1 1 1 3 1 1 3 1 1 3

Li|bre du joug superbe | où je suis | attaché, |
4 1 1 1 1 2.5 1 1 3 1 1 3

Vit dans l'état | obscur | où les dieux | l'ont caché |
1 1 1 3 2 3.5 1 1 3 1 1 3¹⁹

(Happy [is he] who, satisfied by his humble fortune,
Free of the superb yoke where I am attached,
Lives in the obscure place where the gods have hidden him)

We notice again that in terms of rhythm, the accentuated words are held longer. Grammont's rhythms are more or less the following rhythmic notations, made by the author (Example 3):

18. Le Blanc, *Défense de la Basse de Viole*, 9.

19. Grammont, *Petit traité*, 117.

Heu reux qui sat is fait de son hum blefor tune,
Lj bredu jous superbe où je suis att. a ché, Vit dans l'é tat ob scure où les dieux l'ont ca ché

Example 3

In the poetic rhythm of the lines, a truly musical meter is created that gives a regular pulsation to the lyrics. But if these lines are declaimed as if they were prose, there would be less accentuation, and so less rhythm:²⁰

In prose the word “humble” would not be accentuated except in very oratorical language: in everyday spoken language it would not be accentuated, because “humble fortune” expresses a simple idea, nearly the equivalent of “mediocrity.” The second line accentuates “libre, superbe, suis, attaché”: the prose would accentuate in addition “joug” because the adjective follows the substantive that it qualifies, but it would never accentuate “suis” in the compound time “je suis attaché.” Finally in the third line “vit” is not accentuated, although it would be in prose.

Where the lines have a fixed rhythmic group, prose would have any given number. In prose, this phrase would have neither balance nor symmetry. Verse is a flexible mold, but its capacity is strictly limited. When a sentence of prose brings a rhythm that coincides with the demands of verse rhythm, the verse adopts it. Otherwise, it imposes its own. That is to say that it can occasionally make an accent where prose would not admit one; the word “suis” provides a striking example; we have seen others on page 62. It can also erase an accent that prose demands; the total suppression is then not necessary; it is enough that it weakens it by not using it for its rhythm. Such here is the word “vit” in the third line.²¹

20. Grammont defines rhythm as: “The return at sensibly equal intervals of marked time or rhythmic accents” (“Le retour à intervalles sensiblement égaux des temps marqués ou accents rythmiques”). *Ibid.*, 49.

21. Grammont, *Petit traité*, 118. “En prose le mot ‘humble’ ne serait accentué que dans une langue très oratoire; dans le parler courant il resterait sans accent, parce que ‘humble fortune’ exprime une idée simple, à peu près l’équivalent de ‘médiocrité.’ Le second vers accentue ‘libre, superbe, suis, attaché’; la prose accentuerait en outre ‘joug’ parce que l’adjectif suit le substantif qu’il qualifie,

If we interpret these lines as if they were prose, there would be fewer accents. The declaimer of prose would give a more uniform rhythmic sense. If we imagine a verse as a line drawn from left to right, the stressed words could be represented by detours of the pencil above or below, its movement towards the right momentarily suspended while it lingers on a bit of space, as an orator takes more time on certain accentuated words. Such a way of drawing would create round and curved forms, while prose would be a straight line more flat and horizontal, with fewer stressed words.

To return to the idea that a regular repetition of stressed lyrics creates a rhythm that we do not find in prose, let us consider the idea of prose in the preludes by Couperin. He writes:

It is necessary that whoever plays these methodical Preludes, plays them in an easy manner without attaching too much precision to the tempo, unless I have marked them with the word Mesuré [measured]: thus, we can dare to say, that in many things, Music (by comparison to Poetry) has its prose, and its verses.²²

The unmeasured preludes contain a rhythmic irregularity typical of prose.²³ In this case, we can imagine someone who speaks prose

mais elle n'accentuerait jamais 'suis' dans le temps composé 'je suis attaché.' Enfin dans le troisième vers 'vit' n'est pas accentué alors qu'il le serait en prose. Là où les vers ont un nombre fixe de groupes rythmiques, la prose en aurait un nombre quelconque. Il n'y aurait dans cette phrase en prose ni équilibre ni symétrie. Le vers est un moule souple, mais de capacité strictement limitée. Quand la phrase de prose apporte un rythme qui coïncide avec ses exigences, il l'adopte; sinon, il lui impose le sien. C'est-à-dire qu'il peut à l'occasion faire surgir un accent là où la prose n'en admettrait pas; le mot 'suis' en fournit un exemple frappant; on en a vu d'autres à la page 62. Il peut tout aussi bien supprimer un accent que la prose exige; la suppression totale n'est d'ailleurs pas nécessaire; il suffit qu'il l'affaiblisse en ne l'utilisant pas pour son rythme. Tel ici le mot 'vit' au troisième vers."

22. François Couperin, *L'art de toucher le Clavecin* (Paris: The author/Boivin, 1717), 60. "Il faut que ceux qui auront recours à ces Preludes-réglés, les jouent d'une manier aisée sans trop s'attacher à la précision des mouvemens, à moins que je ne l'aÿe marqué expres par le mot de, Mesuré : ainsi, on peut hasarder de dire, que dans beaucoup de choses, la Musique (par comparaison à la Poésie) a sa prose, et ses Vers."

23. According to Eugène Green, "in declamation, the *tempo* does not have the apparent regularity of musical beats" ("dans la déclamation, le *tempo* n'a pas

while we play the unmeasured preludes. Can we apply this same concept to the preludes for viola da gamba? Maybe one must find a common ground between the dance movements, which are certainly very rhythmic and thus poetic, and the unmeasured preludes, where we hear someone who, for example, begins a speech without having found the rhythm, stressed words, or dynamic accents. Perhaps this modest affect can serve as the character one must assume when playing the preludes by Marais and Couperin.²⁴ In this case maybe we can consider that Forqueray, who begins his suites more often with dance movements, skips this stage and starts with a lively character right away.

Seventeenth-century French theater also articulates the difference between poetry and prose. *Le malade imaginaire* by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (1622–1673), known as Molière, is written almost entirely in prose, but in the second act we see how a recitative by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704) is conceived of between poetry and prose. The character Cléante introduces the recitative in the following way:

Properly speaking this is a little impromptu Opera, and you will hear sung only cadenced prose, or free Verse, as the passion and necessity can be found in two people, who say things, and improvise a discussion.²⁵

The passage is defined as a mix of prose and poetry, so maybe the singers could perform it taking the rhythms less literally than in

la régularité apparente du temps musical”). Eugène Green, *La parole baroque* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2001), 123. He cites the unmeasured preludes as musical equivalents of this principal. We propose a distinction between the declamation of prose and that of poetry, of which the latter would have apparent and regular musical rhythm.

24. Grimarest specifies that exordiums of a piece or a speech are normally “without passion” (“destituées de passions”), and “only demand clarity, and nobility in the pronunciation” (“ne demande que de la netteté, & la noblesse dans la prononciation”). Grimarest, *Traité du Recitatif*, 135.

25. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin (Molière), *Le malade imaginaire* (Paris: editor unknown, 1684), act 2, scene 5, line 64. “C’est proprement icy un petit Opera impromptu, & vous n’aliez entendre chanter, que de la Prose cadencé, ou des manieres de Vers libres, tels que la passion & la nécessité peuvent faire trouver à deux personnes, qui disent les choses, & parlent sur le champ.”

an air.²⁶ Even if there are rhymes, we can render them more like prose by making less accentuation. The variable accents we could eventually erase completely.²⁷

Variable Accents—Lyrics and Music

If poetry is identified by recurring accents that create rhythm, how do we identify the accents in verses or musical phrases where the number of syllables varies? According to linguists Jean-Claude Milner and François Regnault, an octosyllabic line (eight syllables), decasyllabic (ten syllables), or alexandrine (twelve syllables), contains an accent at the end of the phrase and a variable accent inside the phrase.²⁸

Octosyllabic Verse

Let us examine a musical phrase of eight syllables, and the possibilities of accentuation: the first *couplet* of *La Eynaud* by Antoine Forqueray (Example 4, mm. 1–19). We consider the first eight notes as a “line” of octosyllabic verse. If we follow the thinking of Milner and Regnault, there would be an accent on the eighth and last “syllable” of the line, which is also the summit of the melodic contour, the first beat of measure 3. The gambist could lean more or less dynamically on this beat, longer and sustained or shorter. We experiment with the placement of the variable accent: maybe on the fourth “syllable,” in this case the first beat of the second measure, or the sixth “syllable,” which would be the third beat of the second measure, on the trill.

26. For more on the difference between a recitative and an air, see Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator*, 28, 33, and also Rameau, *Traité de l'harmonie*, 161–62.

27. To watch a recording of Les Arts Florissants playing *Le malade imaginaire*, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtl7KkcrhNQ> (accessed October 16, 2016).

28. Milner and Regnault, *Dire le vers*, 146.



Example 4. Antoine Forqueray, “La Eynaud,” from A. and J.-B. Forqueray, *Pièces de viole* (Paris, 1747), 19, mm. 1–28.

Perhaps if we imagine lyrics of an octosyllabic verse, this will help us find the right place for the variable accent. Let us apply a line from “La Solitude” by Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant (1594–1661). “Quand Jupiter ouvrit les Cieux”²⁹ (When Jupiter opened the heavens) is a majestic line that merits a dynamic accent on the last syllable, as if the heavens are opened with a divine generosity. The variable accent falls well on “ouvr - *it*” to again give the idea of a generous opening, or on “Jupi - *ter*” to underline the image of the god. Plus, the syllable “-*ter*” resembles the word “terre” (earth), and emphasizing this sound could render the image of the earth, as if we climb the scale until reaching the heavens. This image goes well with the tonality D major, described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) as “for gay things and which mark grandeur,” and by Marc-Antoine Charpentier as “joyous and very martial.”³⁰

Another line of the same poem that we can apply to this phrase of music is “Dont le Printemps est amoureux”³¹ (With which the springtime is in love). In this case, we could have a soft and long accent on the last syllable to emphasize the sweetness of love.

29. Marc-Antoine Girard Saint-Amant, *Les oeuvres du sieur de Saint-Amant, Première Partie* (Paris: Toussaint Quinet, 1642), 7.

30. Quoted in Rafael Palacios Quiroz, *La Pronuntiatio musicale: une interprétation rhétorique au service de Händel, Montéclair, C. P. E. Bach et Telemann* (Paris: Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2012), annex 8.5, 78.

31. Saint-Amant, *Les oeuvres*, 7.

Maybe a louder accent on “Prin - *temps*” would create the image of a luscious, flourishing springtime, a kind of garden of Eden where love comes from. This illustrates the variety of possibilities of phrasing when we imagine lyrics put to music.

Decasyllabic Verse

For lines of ten syllables, we take a musical example by François Couperin, and add two other lines by Saint-Amant: “Que sous sa robe en mon ame je baise, / De trop d’amour j’expire en soupirant”³² (That underneath her dress in my soul I kiss, / From too much love I expire in sighing) (Example 5).

In the second line, we take the liberty of repeating “de trop d’amour” twice. The amorous and melancholic lyrics suggest the tonality G minor, described by Rousseau as “for the sad” and by Charpentier as “serious and magnificent.”³³ The feminine rhyme of the first line ends on a weak beat—a half cadence; and the perfect cadence in B flat major falls on the masculine rhyme of the second line, as described by Rameau.³⁴ The line of ten syllables ordinarily contains a variable accent on the fourth or sixth syllable,³⁵ so we can experiment with accents on “*robe*” or “*mon*,” and “a - *mour*” or “j’ex - *pire*.” The latter might go well with the descent of a minor seventh between the G natural and the A natural, which creates a sad exhalation, “a little frightening,” as described by Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721–1783).³⁶

The Alexandrine

Now we will compare the alexandrine, a form of twelve syllables per line, with a musical phrase of twelve syllables. In the modern treatise by Grammont, we learn that before Pierre Corneille (1606–1684) there were only two accents in a line of alexandrine, and that Mathurin Régnier (1573–1613) and Corneille developed it to eventually have four accents per line:

32. Ibid., 137.

33. Quoted in Palacios Quiroz, *La Pronuntiatio*, annex 8.5, 78.

34. Rameau, *Traité de l’harmonie*, 162.

35. Milner and Regnault, *Dire le vers*, 146.

36. Quoted in Palacios Quiroz, *La Pronuntiatio musicale*, 267.

Sarabande

Que sous sa robe en mon a - me je bai - - se

De trop d'a - mour de trop d'a-mour j'ex-pi-re en sou - pi - rant.

Example 5. François Couperin, “Sarabande” from Premier Concert, *Concerts Royaux* (Paris, 1722), 3, mm. 1–8.

Before the classical era, the alexandrine did not, properly speaking, have rhythm. It was a syllabic verse, composed of two members or hemistichs. At first these two members were neatly separated one from the other by a pause or caesura. But when the caesura, by successive weakening, became ... a simple break, the verses could therefore have other breaks just as clear and other accents of intensity as strong as or sometimes even stronger than that of the sixth syllable.

Before Corneille, no one, besides maybe Regnier, worried about placing the accents of intensity inside the hemistichs. But when the hemistich's break was not distinguished more than others except because it was fixed, the good poets felt the importance of accents situated inside the hemistichs and no longer left their placement to chance. So little by little, without anyone realizing it and all the while keeping two hemistichs per line, the classical alexandrine became a line of four measures, that is, containing four rhythmic elements, each one finishing with an accent of intensity; the second and fourth accents are fixed on the sixth and twelfth syllables, and the two others are variable inside the same hemistich.³⁷

Grammont theorizes that the style of declamation developed around 1600 to vary the dynamics of each line, similar to the descriptions of accents and strong and weak beats that we find in seventeenth-century treatises.³⁸ But the variation was not

37. Grammont, *Petit traité*, 49–50. “Avant l'époque classique, l'alexandrin n'avait pas à proprement parler de rythme. C'était un vers *syllabique*, composée de deux membres ou hemistiches. A l'origine ces deux membres étaient nettement séparés l'un de l'autre par une pause ou césure. Mais quand la césure, par des affaiblissements successifs, fut devenue ... une simple coupe, il put y avoir dans le vers d'autres coupes aussi nettes que celle-là et d'autres accents d'intensité aussi forts ou même quelquefois plus forts que celui de la sixième syllabe. Avant Corneille, personne, à part peut-être Régnier, ne se souciait de la place des accents d'intensité dans l'intérieur des hemistiches. Mais quand la coupe de l'hémistiche ne se distingua plus des autres que parce qu'elle était fixe, les bons poètes sentirent l'importance des accents situés à l'intérieur des hemistiches et n'abandonnèrent plus leur place au hasard. Si bien que petit à petit, sans que personne s'en rendit exactement compte et tout en restant un vers à deux hemistiches, l'alexandrin classique devint un vers à quatre éléments rythmiques, terminés chacun par un accent d'intensité; le deuxième et le quatrième accents sont fixes sur la sixième et la douzième syllabes, et les deux autres sont variables dans l'intérieur d'un même hémistiche.” See also Ronsard, *Art poétique francoys*, 45, for another explication of the caesurae between hemistichs.

38. See footnotes 5 and 10.

always fixed, and in the same way that the second or fourth beat in a measure could be stronger than the first or third, the variable accents could also be stronger than the tonic accents at the ends of the phrases. With Corneille and Regnier, the awareness of the variable accent became more important, and the poets were more advised to consider them in their writing.

Were the gambists also aware of fixed and variable accents in their writing when imitating the syllabic quantity of the alexandrine? Let us examine Marais's writing, for example. At the beginning of his first book, published in 1686, we find this arrangement of four musical hemistichs, or two alexandrine lines. The fixed accents are marked every sixth note with mordents (*pincés*) and trills (*tremblements*):



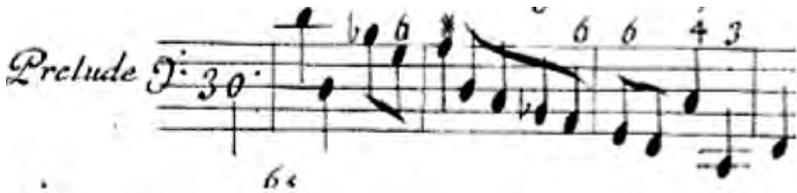
Example 6. Marin Marais, “Prelude,” *Pièces à une et à deux violes* (Paris, 1686), 9, mm. 1–5.

For the variable accents, we can perhaps gain a clearer comprehension by adding lyrics of the first two alexandrines of “La Metamorphose” by Saint-Amant: “Qu’au doux Art qu’Apollon enseigne aux bons Esprits, / Sur tous les plus diserts il emportoit le prix”³⁹ (That in the sweet art which Apollo teaches to the good spirits, / Over all of the most eloquent he took the prize). The places that seem logical to us, according to the musical line, are on “Qu’au *doux*,” “en - *seigne*,” “Sur *tous*,” and “il *em* - por - toit.” This results in a regular rhythm of accentuation on the second beat of every measure.

Looking at the continuo accompaniment of the same phrase, we might think a little differently. We see how the first rhyme falls on the half cadence of the first beat of the third measure, and the

39. Saint-Amant, *Les oeuvres*, 73.

second rhyme on the perfect cadence on the first beat of the fifth measure:



Example 7. Marin Marais, “Prelude,” *Basse-continuës des pièces a une et a deux violes* (Paris, 1689), 5, mm. 1–5.

The jump of a minor sixth on the third beat of the second measure, described by Kimberger as “painful, begging, or also flattering,”⁴⁰ could indicate accents in the melody at the same place, on the word “*bons*” of the alexandrine. Marais imitates the same jump of a minor sixth in the melody, the measure after the bass, displaying his clever and audacious writing. Thus we have multiple choices about where to place the variable accent, based on different sources and tools. In any case, the affect of the line corresponds to the tonality D minor, defined by Rousseau as “serious,” and by Charpentier as “grave and devoted,”⁴¹ like an artist devoted to the god Apollo.

Sing, Declaim, or Recite?

Music and poetry are forms of expression that can be written, but essentially subsist upon their performance by, respectively, a musician or reader-actor. A piece of music can be played by a musician without the support of the composer, in the same way that poetry can be read or declaimed out loud without the support of its author. Can a contemporary musician find clues concerning the interpretation of instrumental early music by studying the practice of Baroque declamation?

In consulting the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century

40. Quoted in Palacios Quiroz, *La Pronuntiatio musicale*, 267.

41. Quoted in *ibid.*, annex 8.5, 78.

dictionaries and encyclopedias, we note that the definitions of terms pertaining to the lexical field of poetic interpretation—*declaim*, *recite*, and *accent*—rarely deal with the interpretation of music. In the dictionary by Furetière published in 1690, four years after Marais’s first book, there is no musical notion in the definitions of *declaim*. Only one definition could approach something close:

DECLAIM.... Recite in public or in a theater some speech, some verses as an Actor, or as an Orator. This Actor *declaims* verses well, but he is not inspired by the passions. This preacher knows how to *declaim* well, but he does not know how to stir [the emotions].⁴²

In the modern sense, declaiming would be the act of making oneself heard in public by reading a speech or playing in a theater, whether it is prose or poetry. For Furetière, the interest in moving the public emotionally seems to be a priority. Can we say the same for a musician?

It is interesting to note that Furetière does not mention poets in his definition of *declaim*, yet he does in the definition of *recite*, which seems linked to declamation:

RECITE also signifies, to make a reading of some work. The poets are inclined to go *recite*, to read their pieces in the company of women, in order to court approval, and to favorably impress the public. There are few who would be exempt from the vice of reciting their verses to all comers.

RECITE also signifies, Declaim. This actor *recites* well, he has a beautiful gesture, a beautiful voice, he understands well that which he says.⁴³

It seems that to *recite* would resemble a declamation, but in

42. Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, 3 vols. (The Hague and Rotterdam: A. and R. Leers, 1690), vol. 1, s.v. declamer. “DECLAMER. V. act. & n. Reciter en public, ou sur un theatre quelque discours, quelques vers en Comedien, ou en Orateur. Cet Acteur *declame* bien les vers, mais il n’entre pas dans les passions. Ce predicateur sçait bien *declamer*, mais ne sçait pas émouvoir.”

43. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, vol. 3, s.v. reciter. “RECITER, signifie aussi, Faire une lecture de quelque ouvrage. Les Poètes sont sujets à aller reciter, lire leurs pieces dans des compagnies de femmes, pour briguer de l’approbation, & prevenir le jugement du public. Il y en a peu qui soient exempts du vice de reciter leurs vers à tous venants. RECITER, signifie aussi, Declamer. Ce Comedien *recite* bien, il a le geste beau, la voix belle, il entend bien ce qu’il dit.”

a private space, smaller and more intimate than in a theater. We know, to this effect, that the gambists such as Marais and Forqueray often played in chambers or private apartments, such as that of King Louis XIV (1638–1715).⁴⁴ We can imagine that their instrumental technique, in such circumstances, would be more comparable to a recitation by a poet than to a declamation by an actor at the theater or a lawyer at court. It is interesting to note that the first definition here describes a poet reading his or her own work, while the second one is about an actor declaiming someone else's work. Perhaps a poet or musician performing his own work would be more reserved and modest, while an actor would be more animated while defending someone else's writing.

The definition of *accent* by Furetière is very eloquent for a musician. According to him, a grammatical accent is the changing of volume on a syllable:

ACCENT signifies in Grammar a certain mark that we put on syllables to pronounce them with a stronger tone, or weaker....

The Cardinal du Perron says that the Hebrews called the accents *gustus*, as it is the flavor and sauce of pronunciation.⁴⁵

If spoken French at the end of the seventeenth century did not necessarily involve dynamic accents, can we say that French Baroque music was accentuated, that is to say that certain notes had more or less volume than others? Patricia Ranum rather suggests accents of length for sung airs:⁴⁶ we elongate certain syllables. Do we do the same with instrumental music?

A second definition of *accent* indicates that it can also simply mean *voice*:

Poets and Lovers sometimes use the word *accent* in the plural to mean voice. The plaintive *accents*, last *accents*. He explained his

44. Marin Marais, *Pièces à une et à deux violes* (Paris: the author and Hurel, 1686), title page; Forqueray and Forqueray, *Pièces de viole*, title page.

45. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, vol. 1, s.v. *accent*. "ACCENT, signifie en Grammaire certaine marque qu'on met sur les syllabes pour les faire prononcer d'un ton plus fort, ou plus foible.... Le Cardinal du Perron dit que les Hebreux appelloient les accens, gustus, dautant que c'est comme le goust & la sauce de la prononciation."

46. Ranum, *The Harmonic Orator*, 99.

passion by these sad *accents*.⁴⁷

In this case, we imagine that dynamic accents would have existed. To create an emotion in an instrumental piece, would we play with dynamics specific to those of an actor's voice?

If, for Furetière, accents were so uncommon in spoken language, they were, however, common in recitation or declamation, in particular when one wished to paint the most passionate emotions. Consider the *enflés* that Marais indicated with an “e” in his pieces and defined the following way:

e ... signifie que one must express or swell the bow stroke by pressing more or less on the string according as the piece demands it and this is sometimes at the beginning of the beat or on the value of the dot as the mark designates. In this way one gives soul to the pieces without which they would be too uniform.⁴⁸

It is curious to note that Marais waited until his third book to add this sign (“e”) of interpretation and expression. Should the *enflé* be applied to the pieces of his first two books? Maybe the music of the young Marais was intentionally played without too many nuances. Maybe the expression was more restrained, even austere. But this begs the question especially for his fourth and fifth books: is the *enflé* a dynamic accent or a gradual swell? Is it a held note comparable to rubato, in that it augments the rhythm to delay the accented note? Furetière's definitions suggest—at least concerning spoken language—that an accent of volume is reserved for the most passionate passages of a theater piece, while an accent of duration is much more common.

A last definition of *accent* by Furetière interests us:

There are three kinds of accents, the acute, the grave, and the

47. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, vol. 1, s.v. *accent*. “Les Poètes & les Amoureux se servent quelquefois du mot d'*accent* au plur. pour signifier la voix. Les *accens* plaintifs, derniers *accens*. Il expliqua sa passion par ces tristes *accens*.”

48. Marin Marais, *Pièces de violes, Troisième livre* (Paris: the author and Hurel, 1711), *avertissement*. “e ... Signifie qu'il faut exprimer ou enfler le coup d'archet en appuyant plus ou moins sur la corde Selon que la piece le demande et cela quelque fois sur le commencement. du tems ou sur la valeur du point comme la marque le désigne. De cette maniere l'on donne de l'ame aux pièces sans cela Seroient trop uniformes.”

circumflex. The Hebrews have the grammatical, rhetorical, and musical *accent*. The *accent* in music is an inflection or modification of the voice, or the lyric, to express the passions and the affections, be it naturally, be it artificially.”⁴⁹

This being said, in Furetière’s example it is question of a musical accent in Hebrew, and we cannot be sure if it also applies to French music.

Sung or Spoken?

In the eighteenth century, the definitions of terms related to music and spoken language seem more closely related. The 1751 encyclopedia by Denis Diderot (1713–1784) and Jean le Rond d’Alembert (1717–1783) contains a quite long entry for *theatrical declamation*. According to the entry’s author, Jean-François Marmontel (1723–1799), declamation is between the sung and spoken lyric.⁵⁰ It can contain fixed tones as in song⁵¹ “without running through the interval that separates them,”⁵² but it can also contain glissandi between the tones. Without this, we don’t differentiate it from a speech-like recitative.⁵³ The question of fixed tones versus glissandi is essential for a gambist. Hubert Le Blanc writes: “in music, as in a discourse, one can distinguish between poetry and prose.... The Italians seek above all [prose], and the French sacrifice all for [poetry].”⁵⁴ If musical prose consists in imitating the glissandi that exist in the spoken word, we can say that the recording by Italian gambist Vittorio Ghielmi

49. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, vol. 1, s.v. *accent*. “Il y a trois sortes d’*accens*, l’aigu, le grave, & le circonflexe. Les Hebreux ont l’*accent* de Grammaire, de Rhétorique, & de Musique. L’*accent* en Musique est une inflexion ou modification de la voix, ou de la parole, pour exprimer les passions & les affections, soit naturellement, soit par artifice.”

50. Jean-François Marmontel, “Déclamation théâtrale,” in Diderot and d’Alembert, *L’Encyclopédie*, 4:680.

51. *Ibid.*, 4:690.

52. *Ibid.*, 4:688. “... sans parcourir l’intervalle qui les sépare.”

53. *Ibid.*

54. Le Blanc, *Défense de la Basse de Virole*, 9. “... dans la Musique, de même que dans le Discours, il y a à distinguer Poésie & Prose.... Les Italiens recherchent par dessus [la Prose.] & les François sacrifient tout à [la Poésie].”

of *La Du Vaucel* by Jean-Baptiste Forqueray resembles prose.⁵⁵ Even though the French treatises contain explanations of how to execute glissandi on the gamba,⁵⁶ the instrument, with its frets, is rather better conceived to imitate fixed tones of the singing voice.

Shortly after the encyclopedia by Diderot and D'Alembert, Rousseau published his *Musical Dictionary*. His definition of *declamation*⁵⁷ redirects us towards those of *accent* and *recitative*. In the entry for *accent*, Rousseau described three types: grammatical accent (pitch and length of sound), logical or rational accent (connections of notes by articulation and punctuation), and emotional or oratorical accent (volume and speed).⁵⁸ These detailed and varied definitions are far from those of Furetière at the end of the seventeenth century, who did not seem to specify the relationship between accents of the French language and those of French music. Did rhetorical nuances become more important for a musician in the eighteenth century? The emotional accent, especially, is very expressive. To find the place of this accent, Rafael Palacios is inspired by Patricia Ranum, who “indicates that it is easy to identify the emotional accents in music; the accentuated syllable generally occupies a ‘weak’ (bad) note and is higher than the syllable on the ‘strong’ beat.”⁵⁹ We find *enflés* on accents of emotional aspect in the late works of Marais, for example on the second note of “Le Badinage”:



Example 8. Marin Marais, “Le Badinage,” *Pièces à une et à trois violes, Quatrième livre* (Paris, 1717), 91, mm. 1–3.

55. Vittorio Ghielmi and Luca Pianca, *Bagpipes from Hell*, Winter & Winter CD 910 050-2 (2000), track 17. Also online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LB2muvuAHVQ>, viewed 1/24/2016.

56. Michel Pignolet de Montéclair, *Principes de Musique* (Paris: l’auteur, 1736), 89.

57. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Dictionnaire de Musique* (Paris: Duchesne, 1768), 140.

58. *Ibid.*, 2.

59. Palacios Quiroz, *La Pronuntiatio musicale*, 96.

This leads us to ask: do the first two books of Marais contain emotional accents, identifiable by the melodic contour of the writing without recourse to an *enflé* written above?

The question of declaiming or singing also existed in the music treatises of the time period. The difference was underlined by Rameau, who wrote in his *Treatise of Harmony* published in 1722 that recitatives were more spoken, and airs more sung.⁶⁰ Around the same time, Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670–1742) wrote that the French were known by the Italians for having a very singing style of declamation.⁶¹ However, towards the end of the eighteenth century Michel Paul Guy de Chabanon (1730–1792) observed that actors learned to not sing in their declamation: “in France, we excel in declamation, in the opinion of foreigners; and the first lesson that we give to our Actors in declamation, is to not sing.”⁶² Maybe at the end of the century the theater pieces resembled prose more than poetry? And at the beginning of the century poetic declamation and singing were not, in fact, very far apart?

A source beside the dictionaries and music treatises that explains the terms *declaim* and *accent* is the 1708 treatise on recitative by Jean-Léonor Le Gallois de Grimarest (1659–1713). Even though he explains in terms of verbal pronunciation, there are elements that we can apply to viola da gamba technique. For example, in the chapter “The Accents” Grimarest suggests that the *accent aigu* sign (´) would be pronounced with a higher and more closed sound, as in the word “bonté,” and the *grave* (˘) would be pronounced with a lower, muted, and open sound, as in the word

60. Rameau, *Traité de l'harmonie*, 162.

61. Jean-Baptiste Dubos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture, parties I et II*, (Paris: J. Mariette, 1719), 399. Dubos notes that there are exceptions, where the actors only declaim, “whereas the chorus sings, such as *Esther* and *Athalie* by Monsieur Racine, and *Psyché*, the tragedy composed by the great Corneille and Molière” (quoique les chœurs y chantent. Telles sont l’*Esther* & l’*Athalie* de Monsieur Racine. Telle est *Psyché*, Tragedie composée par le grand Corneille & par Moliere). *Ibid.*, 442.

62. Michel Paul Guy de Chabanon, *De la musique considérée en elle-même et dans ses rapports avec la parole, les langues, la poésie et le théâtre* (Paris: Pissot, 1785), 76. “En France, nous excellons dans la declamation, de l’aveu meme des Étrangers; & la première leçon que nous donnons a nos Acteurs, c’est de ne pas chanter.”

“succès.”⁶³ In music, if Marais writes an accent on a certain note we cannot change the melodic pitch of the note, but maybe by the weight, speed, and placement of the bow, the timbre of the sound can be modified to render the accents on the higher note more closed, and the lower more open.

The chapter “Declamation” contains information useful for actors, which we can also apply to our musical technique. To have exaggerated gestures, a voice that projects strongly and varies the accents but does not crack, and to have one’s attention on the actor who is speaking⁶⁴—these are some principles that actors and musicians alike can apply onstage. The rest of the chapter proceeds with indications of comportment according to which passion the actor wishes to communicate, such as pleasure, suffering, hatred, desire, or joy, among others.

Among Furetière, d’Alembert, Rousseau, and Grimarest, we note that the terms *declaim*, *recite*, and *accent* have much in common with the act of singing, but also display an evolution over a span of time that could have consequences for the interpretation of French Baroque music. It seems that there was a distinction between the *recitation* of a poet on the one hand, and the *declamation* of an actor at the theater,⁶⁵ which would be more exaggerated and passionate. In this sense, at the end of the seventeenth century the viola da gamba was probably closer to a recitation of poetry in a calm, private, and intimate context. In the eighteenth century, however, we imagine that the French gambists varied their writing and interpretation to compete with the new Italian style, which resembled a prose directly linked to declamation.⁶⁶ This could explain the longer and more detailed

63. Grimarest, *Traité du Recitatif*, 6–7.

64. *Ibid.*, 119–35.

65. “[Declamation] is fitting only in the theater” ([La déclamation] ne convient décevement qu’au théâtre). Marmontel, *Déclamation théâtrale*, 4:680. Bacilly also distinguishes between reciting and declaiming: “... if it is question of agreeably reciting verses, singing them, even declaiming them, it is certain that there are short and long [quantities] to observe” (... s’il est question de reciter agreablement des Vers, les Chanter, mesme les declamer, il est certain qu’il y a des [quantités] longues & des brèves à observer). Bacilly, *Remarques curieuses*, 327–28.

66. See Eric Tinkerhess, *Un instrument de mélodie ou d’harmonie? La viole*

definitions in the dictionaries and encyclopedias in the middle of the eighteenth century, which were far from those of the beginning of the century.⁶⁷

Today, gambists are asked to play in theaters or large halls, which are too big and where their “speeches” lose all clarity for the majority of listeners. In the author’s own experience as an instrumentalist, we are confronted with the public’s observation that seems incontrovertible: “Why doesn’t the viola da gamba sound like it does in our films and recordings?” Gambists can adapt, as much as possible, to play like cellists, in a style more “declaimed,” louder, more mannered. But the best acoustic and interpretive circumstances for a concert of this kind would be in a small room, where the gamba can be played as one would recite poetry.

Imitation—Character Pieces

In the French Baroque pieces for viola da gamba we find character pieces, which express the nature of a character, a scene, or an atmosphere. The titles and indications written at the beginning of the pieces signal a specific idea that the music attempts to imitate, to render in the imagination. This art of imitation has been practiced in music and poetry since antiquity in Greece. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) wrote: “The epic, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry, most music on the flute and on the lyre—all these are, in principle, imitations.”⁶⁸ Poetry and music have in common that they imitate things imagined by the artist and transmit them to the listener by means of sound. In France, since the Renaissance at least, artists are conscious of the

française, 1685–1750 (Paris: the author, 2015), Master’s thesis, Conservatoire National Supérieure de Musique et de Danse de Paris, for a complementary study on the impact of Italian music on the musical writing of Marais and Forqueray. Digital version available: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/429025_b9f01b175751438ba5e089df81b1b2af.pdf, (accessed December 28, 2017).

67. Brossard’s dictionary contains no definition of *déclamation*, *accent*, or *réciter*. Sébastien Brossard, *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris: Ballard, 1703; reprint with supplementary definitions, 1705).

68. Aristotle, *The Poetics*; modern edition *On Poetry and Style*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis/New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958), 3. Dithyrambic poetry is choral song, often in veneration of Dionysus, with a prelude of variable length.

principle of imitation of concepts by means of the imagination.⁶⁹

In the viola da gamba pieces by Marais, Couperin, and Forqueray, we find imitation in the character pieces. This is different from contrapuntal imitation, where melodies imitate one another; the character pieces imitate atmospheres, affects, or characters. With the descriptive indications at the beginning of each piece, or implied by the title, the composer suggests an imagined feeling. As Couperin explains, the descriptive words are written to communicate the character:

[A]ll our violin airs, our harpsichord and gamba Pieces etc., designate and seem to want to express some feeling: thus, not having devised signs or symbols to communicate our particular ideas, we try to remedy this by marking at the beginning of our pieces with a few words, like tenderly, lively, etc., what we would like to make audible. I wish that someone would find it worthwhile to translate these, for the benefit of foreigners, and could furnish them with the means of judging the excellence of our instrumental music.⁷⁰

The pieces not only for viola da gamba, but also for harpsichord or violin, imitate and evoke a feeling, explains Couperin in the first sentence. His next phrase is ironic—of course composers have invented signs and symbols for musical writing to communicate the particular ideas. But the words are essential in the interpretation, to the point that foreigners cannot play the music without a translation. One has thus an idea represented by the writing of the words and also by the musical writing. Would

69. Ronsard describes an idea not far from that of Aristotle's in his definition of *invention*: "Invention is nothing other than the good natural gift of the imagination, conceiving Ideas and forms of all things that can be imagined" (*L'invention n'est autre chose que le bon naturel d'une imagination, concevant les Idées & formes de toutes choses qui se peuvent imaginer*). Ronsard, *Art poetique francoys*, 24.

70. Couperin, *L'art de toucher le Clavecin*, 39–41. "[T]ous nos airs de violons, nos Pièces de clavecin, de violes &c. désignent, et semblent vouloir exprimer quelque sentiment: ainsi, n'ayant point imaginés de signes, ou caractères pour communiquer nos idées particulières, nous tâchons d'y remédier en marquant au commencement de nos pièces par quelques mots, comme, tendrement, vivement, &c, à peu-près, ce que nous voudrions faire entendre. Je souhaite que quelqu'un se donne la peine de nous traduire, pour l'utilité des étrangers; Et puisse leur procurer les moyens de juger de l'excellence de notre Musique instrumentale."

these two arts resemble each other if they imitate the same idea? Let us rethink our viola da gamba technique in imitating the poets and actors who recite and declaim poetry.

Legato or Detached?

In language, ideas are expressed with a combination of consonants and vowels. When multiple syllables together express one idea, they form a single phonologic word,⁷¹ such as “Source de multitude!”⁷² By pronouncing the *e* of “source” to connect the consonants *c* and *d*, we create a concatenation that contains the idea in six syllables, while alternating consonants and vowel sounds except between the *l* and *t* of “multitude.” We pronounce the last “silent *e*” briefly and softly, as was the practice in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷³ In pronouncing this phonologic word with a continuous sound—the equivalent of legato or slurred bow strokes—the idea imitates the fluidity of a stream of water, flowing with animation.

Another tool in Baroque declamation, to imitate a more palpitating movement, is to stop the sound for a certain amount of time. For example, we see that a separation between the fifth and sixth syllables can strongly animate lines from Corneille’s *Le Cid* (1636) and Racine’s *Athalie* (1691):

We know that in one hemistich, the accents called mobile or variable fall on one of the syllables 1 to 5, and 7 to 11. To be exact, one must add to the rest two accents that cannot be neighbors without being separated by a pause.

This constraint, explained by the general principles of rhythm,... has the following consequence: the caesura being normally obligatory, and determining a pause in the classical verse, it will normally be possible, without complications, to have a fixed accent on the sixth syllable and a mobile accent on the seventh:

Les Maures et la **mer/montent** jusques au port
(*Le Cid*, IV, 3)

71. Milner and Regnault, *Dire le vers*, 29–38.

72. Jean de Labadie, “Élévation Générale d’Esprit a Dieu, en Veue de son Unité Divine,” in Jean Rousset, *Anthologie de la poésie baroque française*, vol. 2 (Mayenne: José Corti, 1988), 263.

73. See footnote 9.

On the other hand, [accents on] the consecutive [syllables] 5–6 or 11–12 will be rare and demand a pause justifiable by the syntax and the semantics:

Je rendrai mon **sang/pur**, comme je l'ai reçu
(*Le Cid*, I, 7)

... In this example, the pause is justified: it is a question of a major syntactic break and the meaning requires a pause. In the following example, a basic analysis would not be able to justify the required pause:

Le sang de vos **rois/crie** et n'est point écouté
(*Athalie*, I, 1)

But it suffices to make this pause so that the diction would show a latent dimension of the line: that the verb *crier* is understood in the proper sense and that it produces, by the clattering of consecutive accents on 5 and 6, a truly discordant onomatopoeia. Recalling *Genesis* IV, 10 (“The voice of the blood of your brother cries to me from the earth”), Racine here dares more than a metaphor.

The combination of the consecutiveness, normal in itself, of 6 to 7 and the deviant consecutiveness of 5 to 6 produces a consecutiveness of three accents, extremely deviant.⁷⁴

If one of the variable accents falls on syllable 5 or 11, it must be pronounced with a pause afterwards, followed by an accentuated syllable. In the first example, an accent of higher pitch, dynamic, or held tension on “*mon-*” raises the dynamic curve towards the center of the phrase, like a wave that mounts in the air before arriving on land. In the second example, the short space between “*sang*” and “*pur*” separates the noun from the adjective, which modifies the sense of the phrase. The audible pause breaks the poet from his blood, but victoriously, because the hemistich finishes with the strongest accent on the last syllable,⁷⁵ “*pur.*”

Musically, we find an example of this accentuated fifth syllable in a manuscript of Marais’s second book, where an anonymous eighteenth-century musician⁷⁶ wrote an accent on the fifth syllable

74. Milner and Regnault, *Dire le vers*, 157–59.

75. Grammont, *Petit traité*, 2.

76. Sarah Cunningham, “Lessons from an Eighteenth-Century Master of the Viol: Some Markings in a Copy of Marais’ Book II,” in Johannes Boer and Guido van Oorschot, eds., *A Viola da Gamba Miscellany: Proceedings of the International Viola da Gamba Symposium, Utrecht 1991* (Utrecht: STIMU Foundation for Historical Performance, 1994), 85–101.

of this musical hemistich:



Example 9. Marin Marais, *Pièces de viole, Deuxième livre* (Paris, 1701), with notations by an anonymous musician, p. 38.⁷⁷

If we consider the three slurred notes as one syllable, the *e* signifying an *enflé* falls on the fifth musical syllable. According to Milner and Regnault, to imitate the way of declaiming the lyrics “sang pur,” we can play the second-to-last note staccato. It is interesting that a musician notated these ideas, whether they are his or her own or someone else’s. Why did he add these written indications? Because he felt them intuitively, or because his teachers advised him to play that way? Maybe today’s gambists should not hesitate to write their own interpretive signs in their music.

Exclamations of surprise or astonishment can also be created musically with short notes. Let us take, for example, the beginning of the second *couplet* of “La Eynaud” by Antoine Forqueray, which starts at the pickup to measure 10, halfway through the first system (Example 10; for full *couplet* see Example 4 above). It starts with a leap of a fourth, and we can easily add the lyrics of an octosyllabic line by Saint-Amant: “Mon dieu!” for the jump A–D, followed by “que mes yeux sont contents”⁷⁸ for the lower line D–E–F–G–A–G:

77. Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York. Digital version online: <https://urresearch.rochester.edu/institutionalPublicationPublicView.action?institutionalItemId=11950&versionNumber=1> (accessed January 15, 2016).

78. Saint-Amant, *Les oeuvres*, 6.



Example 10. Antoine Forqueray, “La Eynaud,” mm. 9–11.

The two first notes rise toward the sky like the eyes of the poet, who exclaims, “Mon dieu!” The D on the downbeat has a mordent that embellishes it and attracts the attention of the listener. The flowing line afterwards evokes the image of the poet who, from the earth, looks upward with content eyes, like a melodic line in D major. Grimarest, in explaining the way in which an actor can represent the passion of exclamation, writes:

Exclamation ... is almost always accompanied by an Interjection, like *Ah! Oh! Quoi! Ciel! Dieux!*, and the sound for it ought to be strongly raised but nonetheless proportionate to what precedes it, and what follows it, and the situation of the person who is surprised. For it would be wrong to yelp, after having pronounced terms with a soft and low tone The exclamation of admiration is less forceful than that which is marked by fear.⁷⁹

In this case, the exclamation falls in the category of admiration, as the poet feels thankful to God for his solitude, so it is less exaggerated than an exclamation of fear.

Conclusion

In this article we have attempted a poetic exploration of the

79. Grimarest, *Traité du Recitatif*, 169–70. “L’Exclamation ... est presque toujours accompagnée d’une Interjection, comme *Ah! Oh! Quoi! Ciel! Dieux!* & le ton qui lui est propre doit être fort élevé, mais neanmoins proportionné à ce qui précède, & ce qui suit, & à la situation de la personne qui est surprise. Car ce seroit mettre sa voix dans le faux, que de glapir, après avoir prononcé des termes d’un ton doux & bas L’Exclamation faite par admiration est moins poussée, que celle qui marque de la crainte.”

French Baroque viola da gamba between 1685 and 1750, seeking the means to understand the music of Marin Marais, François Couperin, and Antoine Forqueray as a poem. While the tools of interpretation serve especially to help musicologists and gambists, we hope that other instrumentalists, singers, and even poets and music amateurs find inspiration and information to guide the practice of their arts. We have analyzed music and poetry according to the following categories: 1. Feminine and masculine rhymes. 2. Poetry or prose? Accent and rhythm. 3. Sing, declaim, or recite? 4. Imitation—character pieces. These are four ways to think of the form and interpretation of viola da gamba music, which help us imagine the music as a poem.

Masculine and feminine rhymes are one of the essential elements of French Baroque poetry, which alternate at the ends of lines and, with their repeated sounds, create a rhythm that helps us identify the ends of phrases. We have found the instrumental music equivalents that imitate the way of singing or declaiming rhymes. Knowledge of the musical writing of rhymes lets us vary the way to play them on the gamba, according to the context. The fact that rhymes often fall on half and perfect cadences helps us mark the ends of phrases.

By dividing viola da gamba pieces into rhymed verses, we gain a means of again dividing each line into a certain number of syllables, which permits us to identify where to place the agogic accents while playing. A regular rhythm is one of the elements that define the recitation of poetry, this being in addition written with a syllabic quantity that easily lends itself to ordered, rhythmic divisions. This regularity of rhythm can be marked by a gambist, especially with accents of length and dynamic on the rhymes, and on a variable location inside the lines. The variable accent is determined by multiple factors, such as the syllabic quantity of the line, the interpretive articulation indicated, and sometimes even the intuition of the gambist.

According to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century treatises, there are numerous opinions on the viola da gamba and declamation. Some believe that music and poetry should resemble song, and others are sure that they are more apt to resemble the spoken word. Finally, the gambist can never be

content to always play like a singer, or a declaimer, but can choose nuances between the two according to the context. In comparing Marais's and Forqueray's writing we see that Marais would have poetic writing and a declamatory technique to imitate plucked instruments, while Forqueray's writing resembles prose, paired with a singing technique.⁸⁰ Thus we can always research this subject in more depth, to specify what we mean by the terms *spoken* and *sung*, and their relationship with poetry and the viola da gamba.

We discussed the art of imitation and the way in which poetry evokes other things in life: elements such as water, earth, air, or fire; an affect or passion; a reverie of the imagination. We examined how music imitates the forms and feelings that we find in poetry. Thus, if we imagine an image or poetic concept while we play, if we are ourselves moved by our own imagination, the listeners may hear something more subtle and less obvious than just the notes on the page. In a similar vein, listeners who are familiar with the principles of French Baroque poetry could imagine such things as they listen attentively to French Baroque music, even if the musician playing is unaware of these concepts.

Music and poetry being different arts, we can always go further and find ways to think of music as a poem, and vice versa. Inversely, it is the distance between these two forms that gains us an appreciation of instrumental music by itself, and poetry by itself. Let us return to the beginning of *The Poetics* by Aristotle:

The epic, tragedy, comedy, dithyrambic poetry, most music on the flute and on the lyre—all these are, in principle, imitations. They differ in three ways: they imitate different things, or imitate them by different means, or in a different manner.⁸¹

Aristotle says that music and poetry can imitate the same thing, but with different means and manner. Without a doubt the two arts can magnify a single idea, to multiply the intensity of a detail as an artist or listener. But we have also identified how these two arts can imitate the same thing with the *same* means and manner. By finding the elements of form and delivery that link music

80. See note 66.

81. See note 68.

and poetry, we can read a score as a poem; thus our powers of perception are enriched, and our music performances and poetry recitations are even more moving than before.

RECENT RESEARCH ON THE VIOL

Ian Woodfield

This bibliography is intended as a concise guide to recent research related to the viol. It lists books, articles, dissertations, selected reviews, published papers, and major scholarly editions of music. Research on any aspect of the viol (and related instruments such as the baryton) will qualify for inclusion. A sign of the changing times, this list incorporates an increasing number of on-line citations. Suggestions for additional entries in any language would be most welcome. They should be sent to Ian Woodfield, School of Creative Arts, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland, or e-mailed to <i.woodfield@qub.ac.uk>.

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CONTRIBUTOR PROFILES

Michael A. Bane is a musicologist specializing in the music of early-modern France. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* and *Oxford Bibliographies in Music*. He received his Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University in 2016 and was a postdoctoral resident scholar and visiting assistant professor of musicology at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music from 2016 to 2018. He currently resides in Bloomington, Indiana.

Mary Cyr is a musicologist and professor emerita at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, and in 1983 was co-winner of the Noah Greenberg Award from the American Musicological Society for excellence in early music performance. Her recent articles on viol music, accompanied keyboard music, Marais, Rameau, and the artist Carmontelle have appeared in *Early Music* and *The Musical Times*. She is the author of *Performing Baroque Music* (1992) and *Style and Performance in French Baroque Music for Bowed String Instruments* (2012) and has edited works by Jacquet de La Guerre, the Forquerays, and Louis Couperin's music for string and wind instruments.

Thomas G. MacCracken is an independent scholar and freelance performer of early music based in the Washington, D.C., area. Since 1991 he has been involved in documenting all surviving antique viols, a project that continues the pioneering work of Peter Tourin's *Violist* (1979) and was initially supported by a research fellowship at the Smithsonian Institution. He also studies and edits the music of French Renaissance composer Jean Mouton, and from 1996 to 2006 was editor of the *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*. As an occasional gambist he enjoys playing English consort music on tenor viol, mostly at home with friends rather than in public.

Julie Anne Sadie studied cello with Robert Hladky at the University of Oregon and viol with John Hsu at Cornell University, where

she completed her Ph.D. in 1978. Later that year she moved to London and married music lexicographer Stanley Sadie (d. 2005). While she has devoted much of her career to playing, teaching, and writing about French Baroque music and musicians, she has also produced a *Companion to Baroque Music* (1990) and co-edited with composer Rhian Samuel *The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (1994). Meanwhile, she earned an M.A. in Museum and Gallery Management to assist Stanley in saving Handel's London townhouse of 36 years from redevelopment and create a museum there; the book they co-authored, *Calling on the Composer* (2005), is a guide to European composer houses and museums. She continues to play and write for pleasure. Her most recent article, "The Enigma of Hubert Le Blanc," appeared in the June 2018 issue of *The Consort*. Having just retired as a *Gramophone* critic after 31 years, she is now busy researching aristocratic amateur viol players and the musical portraits of the eighteenth-century French artist Marie-Anne Loir.

Eric Tinkerhess is a viola da gambist, cellist, composer, and musicologist born in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He has a B.A. from the Oberlin Conservatory, where he studied cello with Amir Eldan and viola da gamba with Catharina Meints; a Master's in Viola da Gamba in the class of Christophe Coin from the Paris Conservatory (CNSM); and a Master's in Interpretation of Early Music—Research and Practice from the Sorbonne. He regularly performs with ensembles *Flame*, *Les contre-sujets*, *Ensemble Consonance*, and the *Shanghai Camerata*, among others. He has also studied with Abby Alwin, Richard Aaron, Ron Leonard, Jérôme Pernoo, and Guido Balestracci.

Ian Woodfield received his bachelor's degree from Nottingham University and his master's and doctorate from King's College, University of London. He was Herschel Fellow at Bath University in 1976–77. In 1978 he was appointed to the music faculty of Queen's University Belfast, where he is now Director of the School of Music. His first book, *The Celebrated Quarrel Between Thomas Linley (Senior) and William Herschel: An Episode in the Musical Life of 18th-Century Bath*, was published by the

University of Bath in 1977. He has also contributed articles and reviews to *Early Music* and the *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association*. His book *The Early History of the Viol* (published by Cambridge University Press in 1984) is now a classic on the subject. He delivered two lectures at the 1994 VdGSA Conclave. He has recently published two books: *Music of the Raj* (Oxford University Press, 2000) and *Opera and Drama in Eighteenth-Century London* (OUP, 2001).