



JOURNAL OF
THE VIOLA
DA GAMBA
SOCIETY OF
AMERICA

Volume XII 1975



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

Volume 12

December 1975

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Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America
Vol. 12 1975
Maria Miller
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1975



PLATE I. "Madame La Marquise de Grancey playing the treble viol," engraving by Trouvain. Paris, Conservatoire de musique.

Solo Music for the Treble Viol

Mary Cyr

Although nearly always heard today in combination with other instruments, the treble viol once occupied a prominent position as a solo instrument as well. Its musical and theoretical sources are richest from the early eighteenth century in France, when it reached a height of vogue, but it was also well-known elsewhere. An anonymous set of divisions "for ye treble viol and ye virginals" included in *Jacobean Consort Music* (*Musica Britannica*, vol. 9) certainly testifies to the virtuosity of some seventeenth-century English performers. With a brief account of its history, we shall attempt to introduce some other solo music long neglected by both historians and performers.

In England the consort of from two to six (or more) viols retained prominence during the first half of the seventeenth century as it had earlier. The increasing demand for the treble viol in other ensembles can be seen in the printed collections which specify it as a member of diverse broken consorts, such as Thomas Morley's *The first booke of consort lessons . . . for six instruments to play together, the Treble Lute, the Pandora, the Cittern, the Base-violl, the Flute & Treble-Violl* (London, 1599).

On the continent such ensembles also became popular during the seventeenth century. The Dutch artist, Jacob Duck (1600-1660), portrayed a four-part broken consort in his painting, "A musical entertainment" (PLATE II). Two viols — a treble and a bass — join with a recorder and voice in this informal gathering. In this combination, the treble viol probably assumes a relatively unusual role as one of the inner parts. The lute was also a favorite instrument to accompany the treble viol. Both instruments appear in an engraving of a three-part ensemble by Bonnart dating from around 1675 (PLATE III). To the accompaniment of the lute, a young man plays a treble viol. Behind them a woman beats time while singing, holding music before her. Some details of the two instruments are particularly well-depicted: the eleven courses of the lute and its parchment casing at its edges as well as the shape of the viol and the manner of holding it.

Despite the considerable evidence from iconographical sources for the popularity of the treble viol throughout the seventeenth

century, few descriptions of actual performances survive. Among the earliest is Titon du Tillet's account of concerts of three viols (two basses and one treble) given by Sainte-Colombe with his two daughters.¹ According to Titon du Tillet, these concerts were the first of their kind in France. Among other performers were Louis Couperin,² and a certain "M^r Camus", whose solo playing, according to Jean Rousseau, reached a "beauty and tenderness" unsurpassed by any other performer.³

One of the earliest representations of the treble viol as a solo instrument is found in an allegorical engraving by Abraham Bosse, one of several he executed to illustrate Denis Gaultier's collection for lute, *La rhétorique des dieux* (ca. 1655). Each engraving precedes a group of pieces in a single mode, and is intended to illustrate pictorially the human passions which the mode might excite. Thus, the "amorous and tender" qualities of the *sous-lydien* mode are represented in Bosse's engraving (PLATE IV) by the statues of Diane and Actéon, and in a place of prominence, the treble viol.⁴ Bosse's engraving probably represents the earliest depiction of the "tender" and "delicate" character the treble viol was to retain in France for nearly a century thereafter.

Two more realistic engravings, dating from some twenty years later, testify to the growing fashion of playing the treble viol. That of Madame La Marquise de Grancey (PLATE I), executed by Trouvain, is an elegant tribute to this musician whose talents have remained otherwise unknown. She is seated, playing a rather large treble viol, whose sound holes have an unusual "S" shape. More exact in details of the instrument's proportion and the manner of holding it is another engraving by Bonnart of an unknown female player (PLATE V). It might well serve as a model to players today, for it is one of only a few accurate records of the manner of holding and playing the treble viol.

¹Evrard Titon du Tillet, *Le parnasse françois* (Paris, 1732), p. 624.

²André Pirro, "Louis Couperin," *La Revue Musicale* I (1920) No. 4, p. 146f.

³Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la viole* (Paris, 1687), p. 72. At the death of Louis Couperin in 1661 his post as a musician for Louis XIV was filled by Camus and Hotman "les deux plus habiles à toucher la viole et le tuorbe". See Pirro, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-6.

⁴See A. P. de Mirimonde, *L'iconographie musicale sous les rois bourbons: la musique dans les arts plastiques (XVII^e - XVIII^e siècles)* (Paris, 1975), p. 60.

It is not until the turn of the eighteenth century that we find solo music in France specifying the treble viol. Two volumes were published in 1701 and 1705 by Louis Heudelinne, a player and composer living in Rouen. In a preface to his first volume, he describes these suites as the first of their kind in France. His praise for the "tender and brilliant" quality of the treble viol recalls its earlier associations portrayed in Bosse's engraving. Included among the two or more préludes to each suite are some to be played unaccompanied, followed by an allemande, courante, sarabande, gigue, and as many as seven additional movements such as a gavotte, rigaudon, chaconne, and one entitled "sonata." Some movements also include *doubles*, reminiscent of the English manner of performing divisions upon a melody. One of the unaccompanied movements, *la petite marquise*, is included here (Example 1) for its particular charm. Its combined medodic and chordal style is unique to the unaccompanied music among Heudelinne's works. Another movement, an allemande with bass (Example 2), illustrates the melodic style more typical of this attractive collection. Heudelinne's music is sometimes quite demanding technically, particularly in the chaconnes which close each suite. The composer has added occasional fingerings throughout the volume.

Example 1. "La petite marquise," from *Trois suites de pièces à deux violles* (Paris, 1701), by Louis Heudelinne.



Example 2. An allemande from *Trois suites de pièces à deux violles* (Paris, 1701), by Louis Heudelinne.



From about 1720 and on, the smaller *pardessus de viole* with either five or six strings began to rival the treble viol in importance as a solo instrument. With its top string tuned to g", a fourth above the treble viol's top d", the upper range was considerably increased. According to Michel Corette, author of a treatise on the *pardessus* (*Méthode pour apprendre facilement à jouer du pardessus de viole à 5 et à 6 cordes*, Paris, ca. 1750), its growing popularity was owing in part to its relative ease of learning as compared with the violin.⁵ Among those who excelled on the *pardessus* were Madame Levi, who performed a concerto on the instrument at the *Concert Spirituel*⁶ and whom Corette praised.⁷ Among her many musical talents, Madame Sophie, daughter of Louis XV, also played the *pardessus*. Several composers published collections for the instrument, including Charles Dollé, Thomas Marc, and Jean Barrière, but nearly always the treble viol was specified as an alternate.

The ascendancy of the *pardessus* signalled the simultaneous decline of the treble viol as a solo instrument, but its history leaves many paths for exploration. Many insights into the manner of playing the instrument can be gained from further study, and among its little-known literature much fine music awaits.

⁵Corette also suggests that violin sonatas can be played with facility on the *pardessus* (also called *quinton*).

⁶*Mercur de France*, March, 1745, pp. 163-4.

⁷*Méthode pour apprendre facilement à jouer du pardessus de viole*, Paris, n.d.



PLATE II. "A musical entertainment," oil painting by Jacob Duck. Dresden, Staatlichen, Gemäldegalerie.



PLATE III. "Trio," engraving by H. Bonnart. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.

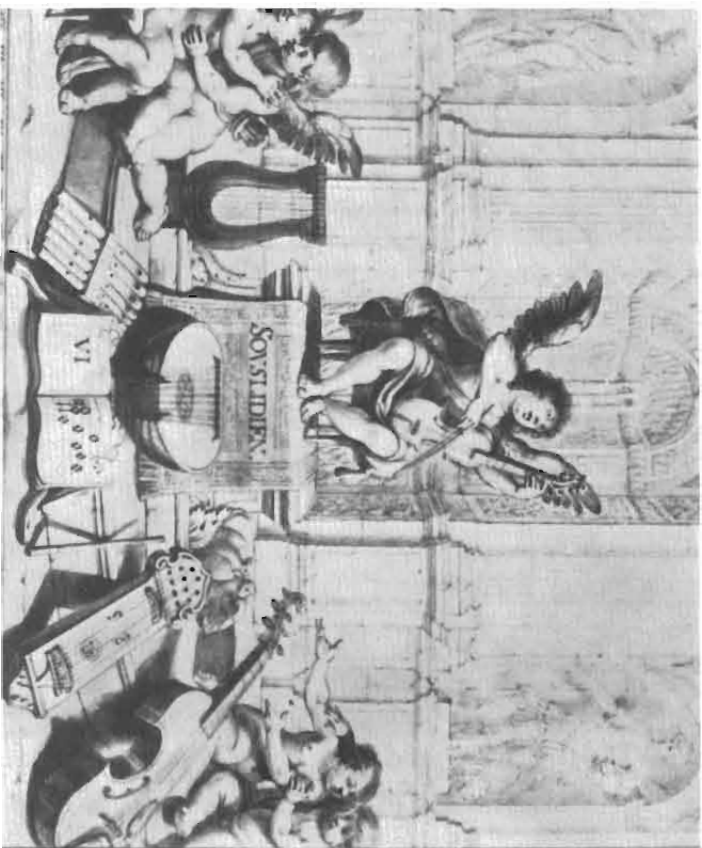


PLATE IV. Engraving by A. Bosse, from Denis Gaultier's *La rhétorique des dieux* (ca. 1655).



PLATE V. "Lady playing a treble viol," engraving by Bonnart. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.

Commentary On Le Blanc's Défense De La Viole

Barbara Garvey Jackson

What little we know about Hubert Le Blanc as a person confirms Fétis's description of an eccentric.¹ Paul Louis Roualle de Boisgelou described him as "an old fool, whom I saw in my youth" but added that "among many extravagances one finds some pleasant ideas."² The style of his little pamphlet is indeed extravagant — stuffed with innumerable allusions and digressions from the main thread (somewhat like the Italian musical ornamentation he decried) — yet among the excesses there is much useful information. Most of it is found in some form elsewhere, although there are several tidbits which we know mainly from Le Blanc. But not many of these other sources are from the eighteenth century. For all its drawbacks and oddities, Le Blanc's little book is still one of the few sources of information about style and technique in eighteenth century French viol playing, since after the late seventeenth century treatises of Rousseau and Danoville, little more appeared in France.³

Our other information must come from the music itself, which is usually copiously marked, but in which many details remain more ambiguous than they might at first appear. Apparently one reason

¹See *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, X (1973), p. 11.

²Boisgelou (1734-1806) made several compilations of musical materials in the Bibliothèque du Roi. Two mention Le Blanc: Table biographique des Auteurs et Compositeurs de Musique dont les ouvrages sont à la Bibliothèque du roi, Bibl. Nat. de Paris: Res. V m8 22 (after 1791 and before 1800), and Division du Catalogue de musique pratique, Bibl. Nat. de Paris: Res. V m8 23 (1803). Quoted in Hans Bol. *La basse de viole du temps de Marin Marais et d'Antoine Forqueray*, Bithoven: A. B. Creyghton, 1973, p. 90.

³The few sources besides Le Blanc include: Étienne Loulié, *Méthode pour apprendre à jouer la Violle*, c. 1700, ms. fol. 210-222, Bibl. Nat. Paris, fonds fr. n. s. 6355 (which appears in Hans Bol, *op. cit.*, Appendix B, p. 282-291)

Roland Marais (?), *Regles d'accompagnement pour la basse de viole de roland marais*, c. 1740, ms. in Département de la musique du Musée Municipal de La Haye (reprinted in Bol, *op. cit.*, Appendix C, p. 292-295)

Jean-Baptiste Forqueray. Letter to Frederick William of Prussia, c. 1767-1768 (reprinted in Yves Gerard, "Notes sur la fabrication de la viole de gambe et la manière d'en jouer, d'après une correspondance inédite de Jean-Baptiste Forqueray au Prince Frédéric-Guillaume de Prusse," *Recherches sur la Musique française classique*, II (1961-62), p. 165-171.

for the paucity of materials about viol performance at this time is that secrecy on the part of the gamba masters which Le Blanc describes.⁴ His complaint sounds exaggerated, but the odd tale Titon du Tillet tells of the efforts of Marin Marais to listen unobserved to the practicing of his teacher Sainte Colombe (in order to learn "some passages and some bow-strokes" which the Masters of the art concealed from their students) indicates that Le Blanc's complaint was not about a recently developed excess but a long standing tradition in French viol playing.⁵ Mace's comments about lutenists indicate that the same problem was found among the French lutenists.⁶

So despite its oddities and incompleteness, Le Blanc's pamphlet is of value as one of the few eighteenth century French sources and as a test of the persistence or change in practices more completely described in late seventeenth century sources.

He treated several matters of importance. Among these were the general changes in the cultural life of the time, such as the use of larger halls for musical performances and the rise of professionals at the expense of gentlemanly dilettantes. The increasing popularity of Italian violin sonatas, which affected him very strongly, led him to seek to make that literature accessible to the viol player as it was to the violinist, especially since he noted a considerable decline in composition for the viol. He also dealt with the character of different musical sounds and with the contrast between music based on melody (which he calls musical poetry) and that based on harmony (which he called the prose of music). But his most

⁴See JVGs, XI (1974), p. 38-39. (Le Blanc, p. 119-120)

⁵Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse François*, 1732, p. 625.

⁶"A Third and very Considerable Reason is, From the Closeness of Masters in the Art, who (all along) have been extreme Shie in revealing the Occult and Hidden Secrets of the Lute.

"The French (who were generally accounted Great Masters) seldom or never would prick their Lessons as They Play'd them, much less Reveal any thing (further than of necessity they must) to the thorough understanding of the Art, or Instrument, which I shall make manifest and very plain.

"The Masters are . . . Very Sparing in their Communications concerning Openness, Plainness, and Freeness; either with Parting with their Lessons, or Imparting much of Their Skill to their Scholars; more than to shew them the Ordinary way how to play such and such Lessons . . . Which when they have done, and with Long Pains, and much Labour obtained, THEY DYE, AND ALL THEIR SKILL AND EXPERIENCE DYES WITH THEM." Thomas Mace, *Musick's Monument*, 1676, p. 40.

interesting material for the modern reader is his discussion of dynamic nuances, articulation, bowing, chord-playing, fingering and tuning.

It is the purpose of the present commentary to sum up his views on these matters and show how they relate to other information we have about performance practices in the eighteenth century.

The change in concert life which concerned him was the shift from private concerts in intimate surroundings to more public concerts in large halls, a shift which favored the instruments of the violin family and resulted in an acoustical environment unsuitable for the more intimate instruments of the viol family. The two halls he mentioned were the *Salle des Suisse* in the Palace of the Tuileries, in which the *concerts spirituel* had taken place since 1725, and the *Temples*, that complex of palatial buildings where Louis-François de Bourbon held his large musical soirées. He also referred to the *Opera* as a site for concerts. He was clearly as concerned about the complete professionalization of such concerts as he was about the increasing dominance of the violin family. Indeed he viewed the violin as an instrument to be played by professionals only. In his many remarks about the joys of making music with Ladies, he says that in the old days the Masters of the viol participated in musical performances with these talented and cultivated amateurs. Interestingly enough, the Masters evidently appropriated the violin literature even in that Golden Age — he describes Forqueray as having played the sonatas of Mascitti.⁷ He also mentions that nowadays the Lady amateurs play the accompaniments to Corelli sonatas, apparently accompanying violinists. But his general view was that professionals were now dominating musical performances.⁸

He admired the Italian violin sonatas very much, particularly those of Corelli and of the Italian *émigré*, Mascitti. So the central point of the third part of his treatise was the attempt to prove that these sonatas could be converted to the use of viol players and that his fingering system would facilitate this. It was too important to have *new* music to play, for he recognized that if the viol played only a museum repertoire it would die. And since he apparently had little regard for the musical works of Marais *films* or Forqueray *films*,

⁷See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 33. (Le Blanc, p. 95-96)

⁸See JVGS, X (1973), pp. 69-70; JVGS, XI (1974), pp. 26-28. (Le Blanc, p. 45, pp. 87-88)

and saw a general decline taking place in production for the viol, the splendid violin repertoire would do for the purpose.

He did not like the Italian ornamentation practice very much, however. He described Corelli's sonatas as having "no affectation . . . of embellished song, through which the author searched to recognize the melody."⁹ Yet he seemed particularly fond of Geminiani's playing of Corelli, and specifically referred to the splendid embellishments.¹⁰ Le Blanc preferred Geminiani's playing to that of Somis, whom he admired for his technical attainments and beautiful bowing, but whose embellishments he found repetitive. We are often accustomed in our own day to stress the *variety* which Baroque performance must have had, so that each performance of a work with improvised embellishments became a new creation, but Le Blanc points out the danger that when stereotyped figurations and embellishment patterns are added to everything, it all begins to sound *alike*.¹¹

Le Blanc's long discussion of the character of musical sounds almost constitutes a digression in the work as a whole. The main point of the digression is simply that the more intimate instruments like the recorder and the viol have their best effects in intimate surroundings, while instruments like those of the violin family make brilliant sounds which have their best effect in large places and are heard well at a distance. Since for Le Blanc loss of musical intimacy is one of the great problems he saw for French cultural life, he even found reason to resent the intimate effects which the violin *can* make, as when the viol complains that the violin makes *diminuendi* to almost imperceptible sounds, in spite of the high tension of the strings.¹²

The conflicts he feels between his attachment for the viol and French viol playing and the dazzling new world of the Italian violin sonata are most eloquently expressed in the first part of his treatise.

⁹See JVGS, X (1973), p. 19. (Le Blanc, p. 15-16.) He and Roger North would have agreed in disapproving of the Roger edition of the Corelli Sonatas. See Roger North on Music, ed. John Wilson, London, 1959, p. 161.

¹⁰Geminiani's ornaments for Corelli survive in two types of arrangement: the embellishments printed by Sir John Hawkins for No. 9 of Corelli's Op. V, to illustrate Geminiani's ornamentation, in *A General History . . . of Music*, London, 1776 (reprint of 1875, Vol II, pp. 904-7), and the *Concerti grossi* he arranged from Corelli's Op. V sonatas and published in London.

¹¹See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 31. (Le Blanc, pp. 96-99.)

¹²See JVGS, X (1974), p. 24. (Le Blanc, pp. 82-83.)

He tries to show that the French style is essentially based on melody, and is thus musical poetry, but his argument leads him to the conclusion that poetry and French *pièces* are based on too much artifice and are unnatural. Harmony, prose, and the music of Corelli he sees as akin, and like a true child of the eighteenth century he finds particular merit in regarding it as a *natural* style which can only be mastered by a complete grasp of underlying principles. In other places he also displays an allegiance to a "natural style" as when he refers to the "simple" tastes of the barbarian Scythians¹³ or when he makes the declamation of the actress Adrienne Le Couvreur a model for musical expression, to be compared to the playing of Forqueray.¹⁴ For it was Le Couvreur who had abandoned "sing-song" in dramatic style and had substituted "noble, natural declamation" (as Le Blanc felt sonatas and musical prose must supplant *pièces*), and Le Couvreur who had carried the natural style even to the point of appearing barefoot on the stage. Le Blanc's interest in the natural style makes clear that though he sought to preserve the viola da gamba and intimate music-making he was not really a conservative. His interest was rather that of continuing the development of the viol literature and technique, employing those qualities which he saw as being more advanced in violin playing than in viol-playing of his day.

Foremost among these properties was the cultivation of expressive nuances in a continuous stream of sound. He draws sharp contrasts between the detached lute-like sound of the playing of Marais, which he describes as having "raised bow-strokes, all in the air,"¹⁵ and the style for playing Italian sonatas which he speaks of as "shaped in motion," like the potter's clay on the wheel or like "the stream of water flowing from a fountain on whose outlet the hand is held, controlling the release of as much or as little water as is wanted." He also speaks of continuous sound, with changes of bow being imperceptible.¹⁶ Although Le Blanc also refers to Marais's "six different kinds of bow-stroke," he sees Forqueray's style as the more natural one, though he later refers to it as "cold."¹⁷ But it is

¹³See JVGS, X (1973), p. 75. (Le Blanc, pp. 55-56.)

¹⁴See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 40. (Le Blanc, p. 124.)

¹⁵See JVGS, X (1973), p. 21. (Le Blanc, p. 23), and JVGS, XI (1974), p. 25. (Le Blanc, p. 83.)

¹⁶See JVGS, X (1973), p. 22. (Le Blanc, p. 23-25.)

¹⁷See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 33. (Le Blanc, pp. 102-103.)

clear that "speaking to the heart," as he feels that Italians do, is Le Blanc's goal and that expressive nuance is an important part of this kind of playing. He points out that the harpsichord, lute, and theorbo are inherently inexpressive, and, claiming that the violin has too much tension, gives the palm for expressive possibilities to the viol.¹⁸ His emphasis on dynamic nuance is not new. Mersenne described a diminuendo in 1637, and Christopher Simpson in 1667 wrote of "gracing . . . by the Bow, as when we play Loud or Soft . . . Again, this Loud or Soft is sometime express'd in one and the same Note."¹⁹ Marin Marais describes and gives a sign for a crescendo on a single bow-stroke, Jean Rousseau speaks of "softening" bow-strokes, and Loulié and Toinon both describe expressive nuance on single notes or bow-strokes.²⁰ And it was in the violin sonatas of Giovanni Antonio Piani, published in Paris in 1712, that the wedge markings for *crescendo*, *diminuendo*, and *mesa di voce* first appeared in published sonatas.²¹ Again, they are applied to single bow-strokes. What is really striking in Le Blanc's discussion of dynamics is not his emphasis on expressive playing, which is common enough in other writings, but his extremely clear description of expressive nuances *not restricted to a single bow-stroke*, but part of a style of playing in which there are "down-bows and up-bows, uniform and connected, without their succession being perceptible."²²

Le Blanc shows the conflict between the pull of the new and his love for the old Masters here again, for after his eloquent and moving description of the wonders of the new Italian style, he

¹⁸See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 34. (Le Blanc, pp. 105-107.)

¹⁹Marin Mersenne, *Harmonie Universelle*, Book II, 1637, p. 195; Christopher Simpson, *The Division-Viol*, 1667, p. 10.

²⁰Marin Marais, "Avertissement," *Pièces de violes*, Liv. III, 1711; Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la viole*, 1687, p. 23; Etienne Loulié, "Methode pour apprendre a jouer la viole," c. 1700, reprinted in Bol, *op. cit.*, p. 287 (ms. fol. 217v); Toinon, *Recueil de Trios nouveaux, pour le violon, haubois, flûte*, 1699, cited in Lionel de La Laurencie, *L'Ecole Française de Violon de Lully à Viotti*, I, 1922, pp. 41-42.

²¹Giovanni Antonio Piani, *Sonate a Violino solo è Violoncello col Cimbalò*, Paris, 1712 (modern edition in *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era XX*, 1975, edited by Barbara Jackson). In the "Avertissement," Piani explains the signs for the benefit of those who are not familiar with them, implying that their use is not new.

²²See JVGS, X (1973), pp. 21-22. (Le Blanc, pp. 22-24.)

reluctantly pulls himself back to Marais as a standard.²³ But *not* permanently, for in his concluding section he states that the goal is "Ease in the manner of playing, which interrupts the thread of musical discourse the least," and that "The work of the right hand consists of using the *modern* bow strokes which reproduce and multiply the expressiveness . . . while the old bow-strokes only have the effect of a single wax-candle without reflection, imitating the plucking of the Lute."²⁴ Though he does not further describe "modern" and "old" bow strokes at this point, the modern sound he seeks is evidently the more continuous, expressively nuanced sound of the Italian violinists, particularly as found in the playing of embellished slow movements.

One bowing problem yet remains to be mentioned. Le Blanc speaks twice of Marais's bow-strokes as being "in the air,"²⁵ a somewhat puzzling description. He compares them with lute sounds, with clock-chimes, and with the sound "tick-tock." He clearly means a detached sound, in which the bow was sometimes actually lifted from the string, but it should in no way be regarded as describing anything like a modern spiccato, which would of course have been impossible with gamba bowing. Bol cites a passage in *La Couperin* by Antoine Forqueray in which successive up-bows each require a whole bow, necessitating the lifting of the bow to begin again with a second up-bow. The passage involves low strings and would have the added advantage of allowing the free vibration of the string after the bow was lifted, which is exactly what Le Blanc describes. This is in a slow movement, marked *Noblement et marqué*.²⁶ There are a number of other situations in which there are detached notes which could have involved a lifted bow. Marais, for example, uses the term *Sec* in his Fifth Book of *pièces*, restricting its use to the note preceding a chord — a context in which he also uses an eighth note rest in other places. Forqueray uses wedges for detached notes, often combined with string crossings which would give the effect of the bow being "in the air." The terms *détaché* and *tapé* (tapped) are

²³See JVGS, XI (1973), p. 22. (Le Blanc, p. 25.)

²⁴See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 41. (Le Blanc, p. 126.) Italics supplied.

²⁵See JVGS, X (1973), pp. 21-22 (Le Blanc, p. 23), and JVGS XI (1974), pp. 24-25 (Le Blanc, p. 83).

²⁶Bol, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-112.

also used by Marais, although *tapé* is not defined.²⁷

Le Blanc has a rather misleading position on chord-playing. His long dissertation on the difference between music based on melody and music based on harmony seems to correspond to Jean Rousseau's first two divisions of methods of playing the viol — playing melodic pieces and playing pieces of harmony or by chords.²⁸ However, French *pièces* themselves clearly belong in both categories, and Le Blanc's classification seems to work only as a way of classifying musical *conceptions* as based on line or based on harmonic ideas rather than techniques of playing. In the first section of his pamphlet he does not actually deal with chord-playing at all. It is in the contest between the Sultan Violin and the Viola da Gamba that this technique is discussed. Here it seems that Le Blanc is opposed to chord-playing, for he describes it as an unfair device, deliberately adopted by the violin because it cannot be imitated by the flute, as well as an encroachment on the preserves of the harpsichord. Yet even here another quite different kind of objection to the chord passages in violin music is raised — they are designed for the four strings of the violin and thus *cannot be adapted easily for the viol*. In the third part of the work, his idea of a harmonic basis for fingering indicates that he sees the lines and passage-work of the sonatas he wishes to play as harmonically derived, and he makes the basis of his fingering system the idea that "what is to be played should be reducible to an *arpeggio*."²⁹ Thus (though Le Blanc does not say so) in fingering the chord-playing techniques which must be used in playing the chords in *pièces* of Marais and Forqueray have application to the passages and melodies based on *broken* chords in Italian sonatas. He makes the further point that the Italians (especially Mascitti) write passages which are much more reducible to arpeggios than the French *pièces* to which he feels such a logical system cannot easily be applied.³⁰

Le Blanc's ideas about fingering turn out to be his main reason

²⁷"Sec," Marin Marais, *Pièces de Virole*, Liv. V, 1725; "Tapé," Marin Marais, "La Poitevine," *Pièces de Virole*, Liv. V.

²⁸Rousseau, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-64.

²⁹See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 42. (Le Blanc, pp. 127-128.) Le Blanc may well have been familiar with Rameau's idea that melody is born of harmony, though he does not express it directly. Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie* had appeared in 1722.

³⁰See JVGS, XI (1974), p. 43. (Le Blanc, p. 131.)

for writing the treatise, for he feels that he has proposed a new system which will arrest the decline of the viol. In addition to his maxim that passages should be fingered on the basis of their arpeggio structure in one position, he states that the old method of fingering was to play everything possible on a single string, shifting back and forth as much as needed, and credits himself with having established the principle that shifting should be done in accordance with the musical phrase, and that, insofar as possible, a phrase should be played in a single position. In fact, Le Blanc was by no means the first to use such fingerings — an example may be found as early as Ganassi.³¹

Despite the fact that Le Blanc was not as original as he claimed to be, the concept that the shift occurs at those points where it would be proper to take a breath and that thus the “phrase is managed without interruption,” is unusually clearly stated here. His remark that this corresponds to the way in which the harpsichord is taught — namely that “each shift of the hand be in accordance with a phrase of music which forms a new sentence” — is also of considerable interest. The technique is not new with Le Blanc, but his formulation of the principle *verbally* does appear to be unique. Again he shows himself in tune with his age in his desire to formulate a simple underlying logical principle rather than “wandering about among singular circumstances.”³² Here he appears as the modern man, contrasted with those practitioners of the secret art — the Masters of the viol — whom he and others pictured as proceeding on the basis of rote memory rather than scientific principles, logically applied.

He objected to playing by memory and teaching by rote — the phrase “par coeur” he uses in both contexts. Le Blanc is not alone in his observation that French gambists play from memory — Mattheson had also taken note of this unusual practice.³³

Finally, Le Blanc dealt with tuning problems. He is concerned with problems of temperament, and recommends tuning with slightly small fifths.³⁴ He seems to suggest a mean-tone temperament at one point, and specifically rejects split keys on the

³¹Silvestro Ganassi, *Regola Rubertina*, 1542-1543, cited in Bol, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

³²See JVGs, XI (1974), p. 38. (Le Blanc, pp. 116-117.)

³³Johann Mattheson, *Das New-Eröffnete Orchestre*, 1713, p. 226.

³⁴JVGs, XI (1974), p. 47. (Le Blanc, p. 142.)

harpsichord.³⁵ But his clearest point is that everything is out of tune anyway on keyboard instruments and that they cannot be adjusted for the key of the piece in which they will play as can the instruments with moveable pegs.³⁶ He considers this adjustment paramount in good playing. He particularly praises the beautiful intonation of Le Clair and of Blavet, who tempers the intonation of his flute with control of the breath. He is also concerned with pitch problems caused by false strings and by the individual differences between two players. Here he feels the fretted instruments have a definite advantage in the playing of duets — that it is impossible for two cellists to play in tune with each other but that two gambists, so long as the strings are not false, can play beautifully in tune.

Hubert Le Blanc has thus left us a useful little book, the work of a man who deplores the passing of the old days of gentlemanly cultivated intimate music making on the aristocratic, sensitive viol, and who seeks to remedy this by adopting what he sees as the best new techniques and repertoire. Conservative in his love for the viola da gamba and the days of private concerts, he is nonetheless much drawn to the modern violin music — though less to that of Le Clair than to the Italian sonatas of Corelli and Mascitti. Wherever possible he wishes to set up a general principle to provide the basis for solving technical problems, even though he sometimes falls short of his aim. His attempt to “rehabilitate the Viol in its rights” did not succeed, however; in the end not only did the sonata defeat the *pièce* but the viola da gamba fell to the victorious violin; and tension, brilliance, and large concert halls grew ever greater.

³⁵JVGs, XI (1974), p. 45. (Le Blanc, pp. 135-137.)

³⁶JVGs, XI (1974), pp. 44, 47. (Le Blanc, pp. 134, 141-142.)

Indices To Le Blanc's *Défense De La Viole*
(Original and English translations)

In the indices which follow, the first numbers which appear refer to the English translation. The Roman numeral I refers to the portion in JVGS X (1973) and II to that in JVGS XI (1974). The Arabic numbers which follow refer to the page numbers in those issues. The page numbers of the original appear in the parentheses which follow. Le Blanc's own, rather incomplete, table of contents appears in JVGS XI (1974), pp. 50-58.

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ERRATA

I 19, after line 14, the following sentence has been omitted.
 "The powerful efforts of his Music bore everything in this direction."
 I 21, line 5. "Emporor" should be "Emperor"
 I 74, line 21. "There is no capacity for returning during a concert . . ." should read "There is no capacity for retuning during a concert . . ."
 II 40, line 21. "king of slur" should read "kind of slur."
 II 42. Last line of text omitted. The sentence should read:
 "The old method thought it would risk everything on its infatuation with *pièces*, based on the advantage that those who were steeped in *pièces* (like hard-crusted candied fruit) sought to plot the same old course in their murky tavern, rather than risk playing a part in the work of others."

An Essay In Consort Interpretation John Ward — Six-Part *In Nomine*, VdGS(Meyer) 1¹

Gordon Dodd

Aim

This is one of the finest *In Nomines* in the repertoire. It makes fewer demands on instrumental technique than does Ward's other 6-part *In Nomine*.² But many of its features tend to escape the domestic player's notice on first or second reading, and the aim of this article is to elucidate some of them and to draw practical conclusions. This is not a technical analysis of the score: it is a discussion on phenomena which come — or should come — to the ear in consort.

The Canto Fermo

The c. f. is in Tr 1, pitched in *g*², and gives the impression of G-minor with a touch of B-flat.³ It reaches one climax at its 15th note (*f*²) and another at its 30th (*g*²), soon after which comes a significant element of musical language, the anguished '6-5 minor'⁴, often made much of by *In Nomine* composers and richly exploited here by Ward. The c.f. has shape and symmetry, and takes the nature of a gentle outward and return journey, with only the one disturbing incident *en route*. Its influence on the form and tonality of the piece will be noticed.

¹VdGS (Gt B) Supplementary Publication No 64 (Dodd). This is a précis of a demonstration which I gave during Mrs. Skeaping's consort weekend at Bedales, Surrey in 1971, with the expert assistance of the following, some of whom are known to VdGSA members: —

Nicola Cleminson	Tr 1
Roderick Skeaping	Tr 2
Joseph Skeaping	A
Kenneth Skeaping	T
Margaret Urquhart	B1
Elizabeth Hart	B2

²VdGS(Meyer) No 2: *Musica Britannica* Vol 9 No 86 (Dart and Coates)

³For the present purpose it is convenient to talk in terms of key. The Department of Utter Scribal Confusion as to the modernising of the key signature can be inspected in the top two lines of the critical commentary to our SP 64.

⁴Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music*, Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 146.

Section I (1 - 23)

Ex. 1

A delivers the first subject, whose climax, like that of the c.f., embodies a '6-5 minor', here accentuated by an upward declamatory leap of a minor 6th. As the texture unfolds, the players experience interrelated contrapuntal, harmonic and rhythmic feelings.

Now when Purcell introduces a similar subject⁵ he does so by a regular scheme of entries: *g'* (tonic), *d'* (dominant), *g* (tonic), the first two notes of each entry dropping tonally by a 4th, 5th, 4th respectively. Ward begins in the same way, but his third part to enter (B1) drops not by a 4th to *d* but by a 5th to *c*, the harmony above him moving into C-minor. By preserving the essential leap of a minor 6th in his next interval, B1 lights upon the strong and vital *a*-flat in 4: this is a rare note to be hearing so soon in an apparently G-minor *In Nomine* whose c.f. has not yet entered! The *a*-flat and the suspension above it make a fine magic carpet for Tr 2's entry (unexpectedly in C-minor) which in turn disturbs Tr 1's expectation of beginning the c.f. in his apparent tonic key. Hearing all this, A and his followers foresee a deep, unsettled movement.

As to the rhythm, Purcell gets well beyond his dotted minim *b'*-flat before letting in the next voice. Ward places each successive entry under the previous player's dot or tie, thus helping to pull the timekeeping into shape. Also, as each minor 6th is suspended, the new entry of the keynote defines the interval explicitly and gives the suspending part a firm harmonic and rhythmic base against which to lean.

The players thus do each other mutual service: A divides his measure accurately so that T may enter punctually, and sets a good example by giving shape to his phrase. T couples firmness with precision in supporting A's suspension. In such ways the counterpoint, harmony and rhythm interact.

⁵3-part fantasy, No. 3 in the Purcell Society Edition (Dart).

So it goes on, most tellingly in 4, where there is a vociferous major $\frac{7}{5}$ suspension over the vital *a*-flat. Here and elsewhere the effect of the suspension is heightened by a swell and perhaps a touch of vibrato in the part concerned (in this case A and T together). All depends, of course, on B1 actually finding that *a*-flat⁶!

Tr 1's feelings, as he waits, have been touched on. B2 may be listening with only half an ear, since he runs three risks — misplacing his entry, halving his breve in 6, and fluffing a low *C* still to come in 8: some of his energy is diverted into the mechanical act of counting.

Once all six parts are safely gathered in, they are allowed to enjoy — as in any good fugue — a period of rich, peaceful sonority before complications ensue. In the episode 6 - 14, less is heard of the subject, and there are chains of rising and falling pentachords which pass through the harmony as if to simulate the serenity and decoration of one of Alfonso Ferrabosco II's delightful pavans. The next main event for the players is the close at 15-16: —

Ex. 2

To be heard in this close are: —

- The stridently-discordant major $\frac{7}{5}$ suspension in Tr 2/A, precipitated by B2's sudden drop to *B*-flat.
- The subsidiary nuance of flat 6th and sharp 3rd (a favourite chord of Lawes's)⁷ set up by the *b*-flats in T and B1 against the *f'*-sharp in A.
- The mild cadential $\frac{5}{4-3}$ discord and resolution in 16.

⁶Lawes's B1 player, in the 6-part G-minor fantasy — VdGS(Gt B) SP 97 (Pinto) — drives an equally-important A-flat through his companions' ears most tellingly at the end (measure 61). Ward seems content to have made his point at the start.

⁷E.g. the coda at the end of the 5-part G-minor fantasy [*Musica Britannica* Vol 21 No 1 (Lefkowitz)].

The principal discords and resolutions are all in A's part, so control of the consort's expression throughout 14-16 falls to him. T and B1 aid and abet him. B1, with B2 at the octave, brings the surprising B-flat with precision to all ears. Tr 1, with rising dynamic, has taken two steps up to his *d'* in 15, through which, as Tr 2's *e''*-flat tries to shake him off his perch, he firmly holds his tone.

In the continuation from 16, still in G-minor, A restates the first subject, and finds himself supported in 17 at the 10th below by B2: a paired answer is given by T and B1 in 18. The origin of these pairings can be found in Ex. 1. Tr 1's arrival at his first climax in 19, over A's augmentation of the subject and Tr 2's major version of it, is the signal for a temporary visit into B-flat major.

Ex. 3



The consort tries for a close in G in 21-22 but is taken on by the c.f. to a more important one in B-flat in 23. The contriving of the interrupted cadence in 21-22 is entrusted to B1 (assisted by T) who might have arrived on G but takes a more dramatic turn. The consort approaches the new and higher close with enhanced emphasis.

Section II (23-28)

This short section, starting in B-flat, is active and light-hearted. The sound of these shapely arched phrases, rising and falling independently and in pairs, is an attractive feature of it which the players do their best to capture. If the rhythmic groups are mishandled, the tempo quickens in a Gadarene manner through the rushing of quavers and/or the clipping of dots. A therefore sets a good example (a virtuous player, this) by playing an accurate and evenly-divided measure; this makes it easy for B1 to fit his echoes in and for Tr 2 to follow. As the c.f. rises in 23 - 25 through *b'*-flat, *c'*, *d'*, the harmony is drawn up through these keys, and a close in G-minor eventuates at 28.

Section III (28 - 35)

The episode 28 - 32 is something of a waiting period (measure 33 being the expectation). Over $\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow$ syncopations and $\uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow$ rhythms the c.f. reaches its main climax (*g'* in 30, over C-minor harmony). Then at 33 and 34 comes the '6-5 minor' in the c.f.: —

Ex. 4



Against this the other five parts organise a sonorous close in G-minor. Perhaps the *d'* of T and the *d* of B1 in 33 could be counted as passing notes, but their clash with the c.f.'s *e''*-flat (which Tr 1 is pushing) is noticeable, lends extra richness to an already opulent texture, and is given due weight by T and B1.

The main business is in the hands of Tr 2 and B2. Tr 2's contribution is the chain of suspended discords and resolutions 7-6, 7-6, 4-3. The mildly discordant 4ths put by B1 under the first two resolutions help to maintain tension and increase sonority. B2 is once more the solid foundation on which the discordant parts lean. Here, more than anywhere else, the consort tries to deliver its most golden tone.

Section IV (35 - 40)

In 35, with the key of G-minor established, another quaver movement begins, accompanied by an awkward syncopation in A. As in the B-flat passage at 23, those with the quavers keep control of the tempo, but here it is a task for successive pairs of instruments. In 36 - 40, as the c.f. twice alternates between *d''* and *c''*, the key alternates between G-minor and F in a question-and-answer manner; there must be several ways of exploiting this effect, and Tr 2/A and B1/B2 are the pairs best placed to find them. At 41 we come upon a difficult passage with parts on and off the beat: —

Ex. 5a

At first it might be more easily understood if played in plain notes —

Ex. 5b

— as though reading from Lawes's *Sunrise* fantasy.⁸ From this, players might more easily appreciate the changing harmony and pairings. By this means, attention would be drawn to the importance of the main notes (originally dotted crotchets) and away from the subsidiary quavers. On returning to the original version, the free and generous $\overset{\vee}{\text{c}} \overset{\vee}{\text{c}} \overset{\vee}{\text{c}} \overset{\vee}{\text{c}}$ bowings might advantageously be converted into brackets $\overset{\vee}{\text{c}} \overset{\vee}{\text{c}} \overset{\vee}{\text{c}} \overset{\vee}{\text{c}}$ &c. to attain that same aim.

The crotchet up-beat at the beginning of each sequence is important, as in a similar passage from Bach's *St Matthew Passion*: —

'If thou be the Son of God, *come down* — — from the Cross'
From each string player it needs a perceptible articulation.

Influenced by the c.f., the movement closes at 46 in G-minor (under *d*'') and once again there is an immediate answering close in F (under *c*'') at 47, but this time the series continues one step further on to E flat.

Section V (46 - 59)

Ex. 6

In 46 - 47, B2 introduces a lively new subject which is much imitated in 48 - 52, under c.f.'s four *b*'-flats. Only eight bars from the end, and here we are happily at rest in E-flat major: where will it all finish?

Now is the time to mention the long, vigorous but sometimes unnoticed dialogue between the two basses. They, like other equal-voiced pairs in the consort, ought to be playing to one another from opposite seats. As can be seen in Ex. 5a and 6, they come especially into their own between 38 and 52.

In 52 - 55 the c.f. descends by five steps to *f*'; underneath, the consort — in search of a conclusion — is obliged to visit a variety of keys. At last the c.f. settles on *g*'': is this the tonic or not? Noticing the bias towards C-minor at several points, we might not be surprised to be ending in this manner: —

Ex. 7a

But Ward has other ideas: —

Ex. 7b

⁸First fantasy from the 6-part Consort Suite No 5 in F, VdGS(GtB) SP 52 (Ring).

— with an ornamented plagal cadence on G, but is that the tonic, or have we merely finished in the dominant of C-minor? Not unexpectedly, the question is left open, as in some of the 5-part fantasies.

This ending is inclined to collapse in ruins if all are not alert, especially if the basses, hard to hear as they rumble along in low thirds, put on their brakes during their final quaver group and are late in meeting the two suspending parts at the bar-line. It is necessary that all the players should be aware of the whole extent of the quaver movement in A, T, B1/B2, Tr2/T. Until that happy state is reached, it is probably better to keep the tempo until the last bar-line has been crossed, and leave it to Tr 2 and T to bring the mighty machine to a plaintive (note the final '6 - 5 minor') halt.

The Organist

The organ part is of the conventional type, with *soprano* and *basso continuo* and a selection of the inner parts. There is no independent organ material. The string texture is so closely woven that the organist will be best employed in 'Evenly, Very Softly and Sweetly Acchording'. In this work, one satisfying way of doing that is to team up with Tr 1 and mainly support the c.f.

Conclusion

In this discussion, an attempt has been made to answer such questions-in-consort as "What was meant to be happening at measure 33?" And the interpretative points which have arisen may be quickly summed up by grouping them all under the one heading 'Communication across the Consort'. We take for granted that Communication implies Transmission. But the true art of the consort-room is that of the other branch of Communication — Reception.

Danoville's Treatise on Viol Playing

Gordon J. Kinney

In recent years, Minkoff Reprint, of Geneva, Switzerland, has been rendering musicology a valuable service by reprinting, in clear, easily read facsimiles, reprints of musical documents originating in France in the 17th and 18th centuries. One of the more recent is Danoville's treatise on playing the treble and bass viol (Paris, 1787).¹ Because of its instructiveness for viol players of today who do not happen to have a reading skill in 17th-century French, it has seemed worth while to present an English translation of this little work here.

The *Sieur Danoville*, like his contemporaries *Etienne Loulié*,² *Jean Rousseau*³ — who also wrote viol methods at about the same time — and the great composer-violist *Marin Marais*,⁴ were all pupils of the same teacher, the revered *Sieur de Sainte Colombe*, who revolutionized French viol playing by teaching a left-hand posture in which the thumb was placed opposite the second finger, thus facilitating a smoother kind of melody playing. The opposing school of playing, derived directly from lute technique, and with the *Sieur De Machy* as its spokesman, argued that the viol was primarily a chordal instrument, that melody playing was too simplistic and should be left to the violin and wind instruments like the flute and the recorder, and that for this harmonic style of playing the thumb should be kept opposite the first

¹Danoville, *L'Art de toucher le Dessus et Basse de Violle* (Geneva: Minkoff Reprint, 1972).

²See, in this *Journal* (Vol. III, 1966, 17ff): Albert Cohen, "An 18th-Century Treatise on the Viol by Étienne Loulié."

³Jean Rousseau, *Traité de la viole* (Paris: Christophe Ballard, 1687), facsimile edition (Amsterdam: Antiqua, 1965).

⁴For the comments of *Marin Marais*, see the present writer's articles in this *Journal*: "Marin Marais as Editor of His Own Compositions" (Vol. III, 1966, 5ff.), which includes translations of all of *Marais*' prefaces; "Problems of Ornamentation in French Viol Music" (Vol. V, 1968, 34ff.). Additional information will appear shortly in a two-volume edition by the present writer of six of *Marais*' suites in the series "Recent Researches in the History of Baroque Music", published by A-R Editions, Inc.

finger.⁵ Significantly, De Machy's work, published in 1685 — two years before those of Rousseau and Danoville — consists mostly of suites for unaccompanied viol, with a profusion of chords, some in ordinary notation and others in French lute tablature. De Machy presents his arguments in his preface. These were two years later bitterly attacked by Rousseau, who does not mention De Machy by name but merely refers to him as "the author of the preface" (Rousseau, p. 30f.: "l'Autheur de l'Avertissement").

The present writer, on examining Danoville's treatise, was at the outset struck by the fact that its preface and the main body of the book seem to be by two different authors. The flowery literary style of the former reflect that of a professional writer; the clumsy constructions and often grammatically incorrect phraseology of the latter bespeak a practical performer who knows his trade well but is insufficiently schooled in literary graces to couch his explanations in elegant language. Such situations were common at the time, not only in France but also in other countries, and led to the practice in which authors, to get the necessary aristocratic patronage, hired literary hacks to compose the effusive dedications to important personages that would ensure their endorsement of the authors' works. Very likely this is what happened in the present instance.

THE ART OF PLAYING THE TREBLE AND BASS VIOLS,

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⁵For a fuller discussion of this controversy, with all the relevant citations, see: Hans Bol, *La Basse de Viole du temps Marin Marais et d'Antoine Forqueray* (Bilthoven, Holland: A. B. Creyghton, 1973), unquestionably the most compendious and authoritative work on French viol technique that has appeared to date.

[3]* **PREFACE**

Music has always been the passion of the Great; it is easy to prove this, since it reigns today in the Courts of all the Princes of Europe, and above all in that of LOUIS THE GREAT, the most powerful of the Kings of earth; the merit of this fair Science can be carried all the way to Heaven, since it is the language of the Angels, and they use its charming harmonies in praising the infinite Majesty of the Divinity. The *Metamorphoses* [i.e. of Ovid] (as one can with justice call the Mythology of the Ancient Idol-Worshippers) represent for us an Orpheus who plays his Lyre with so much sweetness that he causes trees and rocks to move and entices the most ferocious beasts [to follow] after him: These Ancients endeavored to conceal, in the form of this Lyre, the name Viol, or rather, the passing of centuries has changed the name Lyre into that of Viol. It is at present recognized as first of the Instruments by its divine harmony, its sweetness and its continuous sound, such that it cannot be doubted that it be the same which, in the hands of Orpheus, caused the center of the earth to open, transporting this divine Symphonist into the Palace of Pluto, [and] who, after having put Cerberus to sleep, arrested the course of the [4] infernal Furies and completely charmed this God of the Underworld, [and] persuaded him to return to him his wife Euridice. But it is not necessary to seek so far for the eulogy of the Viol: one can cast one's eyes upon Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, whom one can with justice call the Orpheus of our time; his merit and his Science have made him sufficiently well known, and if he has developed a few Pupils who have surpassed the common, they are under obligation for it to his singular goodness and for the pains he has taken in teaching them, and they must frankly avow that it is from him that they have this beautiful posture of the hand, these fine trills, and finally, this way of drawing forth a tone so tender, so brilliant, which agreeably surprises the ear. As for myself, I shall glory all my life in subscribing to his precepts, as to a Master from whom I have [gained] all the Science for the Viol that I possess, being much persuaded that I shall be able to produce in this little Work a faithful copy of the rarest Genius on this Instrument who has ever appeared, which, without him, would be as though buried in the shadows of ignorance.

*The numbers in brackets give the pagination in the original.

[5] **ADVICE TO THE READER**

The Art of playing the Viol is a Science the mastery of which one can acquire only by knowing the principles of it. So, my dear Reader, if you desire to know it well, the order I have prescribed for myself in this little work must be followed point by point, and by perusing these Rules often, you will form for yourself an idea of it which will ever dwell in your mind, and by this means you will acquire in six months a Science for which others employ whole years.

[6] **DIVISION OF THIS WORK.**

I divide the *Art of Playing the Viol* into four Parts:

In Part I, I explain and I make evident the manner in which the hand is to be borne and the position in which it is to be held.

In Part II, I give an explanation of the Scale.

In Part III, the explanation of the fingerboard, both in Notes and in Letters.

In Part IV, I give the explanation of all the graces that can be practised.

[7] **THE ART OF PLAYING THE VIOL.**

The first order that I prescribe for myself, and the Rule which I counsel to be observed by all those who are inquiring about this Art, is to abstain from making any grimaces — such as bobbing the head, opening the mouth, agitating the body — which are posturings that in general displease everybody, and which so bring it about that he who performs the most difficult solos under [their] constraint does not please as much as he who, with good grace, only plays a Minuet. It is said of the former that he has a good hand but makes contortions and posturings when playing, and of the latter, that he only plays little Airs, but the turn he gives them is engaging, and his good grace attracts to him the admiration of everyone.

[8] **PART ONE**
CHAPTER I

The manner in which the Viol must be held.

A tall man should take a seat proportioned to his height: one

neither too high nor too low, and then seat himself on the edge of it and not on the flat, because he would [then] be unable to grasp the Viol well; next, support it with the calves of the legs without squeezing the knees [together], and always turn the tip of the left foot outward. Thus, the Viol will be found in its proper position.

CHAPTER II

Of the position of the hand

When the viol is supported and put at a correct and necessary height, the left hand must be placed. This positioning of the hand is of no [9] small consequence: it is through its fine carriage that one executes chords and that the holds are observed which preserve the harmony and clarity of the tone; and this is impossible for those who have contracted the habit of clutching the viol: they can never execute anything properly because they are obliged to stop [*toucher*] with the flats of their fingers, and their hands run from top to bottom of the fingerboard by a continual agitation. Therefore, this bad habit must be avoided, and the one acquired that is explained in the Rule which follows:

First of all, the neck of the Viol must be distanced from the left eye by the space of a half-foot, drawing [it] forward a little, and then placing the [left] hand [on it].

The elbow should be slightly elevated, and the fingers always rounded; they should never be raised above the frets by more than the thickness of an *écu* [five-franc piece]. The tip of the first finger should always be turned toward the pegs, and all the others separated by an equal distance. The thumb should always maintain its location under the second finger and follow it everywhere it has to go for the execution of the piece; this thumb should always be flat. Notice that one must avoid letting the hand cave in, and that the wrist must be held somewhat high; and at those times when the thick strings must be stopped it is then necessary that the elbow and wrist be elevated more, and [10] also distanced more than usual from the neck of the Viol for the Convenience of him who is playing.

It is necessary to explain and make evident the reasons for which the fingers must not be raised above the frets of the fingerboard more than the thickness of an *écu*, and here is the consequence of doing so: When they are raised too far they fall before or after the bow strikes the string so that, on account of the distancing, one never stops accurately, and the strokes of the

fingers, not being given at the same time as those of the bow, produce an insupportable cacaphony, but when they correspond well together, they are united by habit and exercise in a manner so agreeable that they always draw forth a true and harmonious tone.

CHAPTER III

[The] Method with which the Bow must be held.

The Bow is grasped by the right hand at two fingers' [breadth] from the frog. Next, the second finger must pass between the hair and the wood to keep it tighter [*plus étendu*], and since the first [finger] lies along the wood, the thumb should lean upon and press [against] the inner side [*dedans*] of the wood. For Bows, white hair [11] is the sweetest. It is necessary that the wood be from China and that it be not too heavy nor too light — because [then] it would not draw out enough harmony [=tone] — but of a weight proportioned to the hand. This is why I leave that to the choice of him who plays the Viol.

The Bow should always be pushed in one same line [i.e. in a straight line], and it is necessary that the tip go neither too high nor too low, and that the strokes should always be carried at three fingers' [breadth] from the bridge; because if one plays any closer one will draw forth only a whistling, and on the other hand, farther away there would be only a dull tone which would be insupportable to the ear.

For fine execution it is necessary to have flexibility in the wrist and for the aim to move to help it. This flexibility is acquired only by considerable practice.

CHAPTER IV

*Rules for the upbow [*poussé*] and the downbow [*tiré*].*

When the Bow is pushed [i.e. played upbow] it is necessary that the wrist be ready in advance and that the hand and the fingers be drawn back [while] the arm remains advanced to favor the wrist. When one draws [i.e. plays downbow], it is necessary by a contrary movement, that the wrist [12] and the arm draw back; thus, the hand and the fingers remain advanced. It is by this means that one is enabled [*trouve lieu*] to execute solos of all sorts and to practise the most farfetched [*recherchez*] movements existing in Music.

The wood of the Bow should be turned on the strings a little backward, inclining toward the bridge. This Rule should be observed in both the upbow and the downbow.

For playing on the thin strings the wrist and the arm must be raised, and for the thick ones, both must be lowered; and the Bow must always be turned backward a little and, whether playing upbow or downbow, always be extended on one same line [i.e. moved in a straight line].

It would not be proper to pass over this [i.e. the following] remark about the thick strings: that the Viol must be in an upright position, moving the neck a little farther away than usual; it is this which gives room for the Bow to be extended; and without this action [*moyen*] it will often encounter the clothing and the knees, which will halt it in the midst of its motion.

These general Rules that I prescribe for myself are of a great consequence in practising, and whoever does not observe them will never be able to draw forth a beautiful tone, or to execute solos [*pièces*] properly. These constitute all of the reasoning and observations I have been able to make regarding the position of the Viol, good carriage of the hand, and for the [13] manner of holding the Bow.

These principles and observations should serve for the Treble just as well as for the Bass except for the distancing from the stopping to the bridge, which should be proportioned to the smallness of the Instrument. The position of the [left] hand should be like that for the Bass. Its location and the manner of holding [the Treble] is different, because the Instrument is small; and, so that it may not cause too much awkwardness or trouble, one places it on the knees, letting it slide [down] a little in order to clutch it better. The neck should be away from the stomach [and] inclined a little to the left at a distance always proportioned to its smallness.

CHAPTER V

Of the different disposition of the fingers, as regards the Treble and the Bass.

The spacing of the frets of the Bass results in that the same fingers which serve for it do not serve for the Treble. This difference is recognized in the solos filled with chords composed by various Authors, for the execution of which they are obliged to

figure for the fingers [i.e. to mark the fingerings]; that is to say, when it is the first [14] finger, they mark a figure 1 over the note it must stop and over the others, similarly, a 2, a 3, or a 4. These are practised also for the sake of the holds. Through the explanation of the graces I shall give later on, I shall make evident what a hold is.

In this respect the Treble is contrary [to the Bass], because [on it] one uses all the fingers; and what makes the trueness of the pitches [*la justesse des sons*] difficult to acquire is that the distance between the frets is too small and too cramped, which causes the fingers to have as much trouble squeezing together for it as they do in being spread apart for the Bass.

These two Instruments should be furnished with thin strings capable of responding to the sweetness of their harmony; and one will find nothing (in my opinion) which shocks the ear more than to hear a Bass Viol fitted with thick strings more suited for playing Serenades and for the Ball than in private Recitals [*Concerts de ruelle*: i.e. the narrow alley between bed and wall at *levées* of noble personages]. It can be said that to use it in this way is to profane its merit, for there is no gainsaying that this is not in the spirit of the Recitals, since by its sweetness it mollifies [*attendrit*] the sound of steel strings, joining together with its continuous tone the disconnected tones [*le son divisé*] of the other Instruments, such as Harpsichords, Lutes, etc.

It is necessary now to pass on to the explanation of the Scale, with which it is an absolute necessity to be familiar; [15] it is useful for all those who wish to learn by way of Music [i.e. music written in notes], since the latter is the foundation and basis for all Instruments. However, those who learn by Letters [i.e. by tablature] have no need of this Science; but it can also be said that they never know anything other than routine. The majority of those who would like to apply themselves to this Art make a thousand difficulties for themselves where none exist by imagining that it is impossible to play the Viol without knowing [how to read] Music. I shall say to these Gentlemen, that if they do know it, this will be a great deal of trouble spared both to them and to their Teacher; but that without knowing it, they can nevertheless easily learn it, because one teaches them to play the Viol and the Scale at the same time — a Master skilled in his Art being unable to demonstrate it otherwise; and the Scholar, far from finding difficulty in it certainly will, on the contrary, after some practice

time, master Music and the playing of the Viol, upon which he will form his voice, which will become true through joining it to the sound of his Instrument when he plays upon it.

The Viol is also a great help in the understanding of the transposed keys [i.e. those in which the keynote bears an accidental], because it facilitates in them the intonation that is difficult to practise.

PART TWO CHAPTER I

Demonstration of the Scale

E	si	mi	[E-natural]
D	la	ré	[D-natural]
C	sol	ut	[C-natural]
B	fa	si	[B-flat and B-natural]
A	mi	la	[A-natural]
G	ré	sol	[G-natural]
F	ut	fa	[F-natural]

[Except for the syllable *si*, which came into use for B-natural during the 17th century, the older name for B-natural being B-mi, this follows the ancient hexachord system. The two or more syllables for a pitch-letter indicate the available choices needed to make singing semitones with *mi-fa* possible in a given mode — GJK]

It is necessary that this Scale be known by heart, both ascending and descending. Pronunciations [i.e. syllables] of this kind may seem a little barbarous to those who do not know Music, but they will appear clearer and more intelligible after I have given the explanation of the Clefs. The lines and spaces upon which these figures [i.e. symbols] are placed are those which borrow their names from the pronunciation of the Scale [i.e. its recitation in pitch syllables].

There are only three Clefs in Music, which are used both for voices and for Instruments.

[17] The first is that of G re sol [the G-clef], which serves for the Treble Viol.

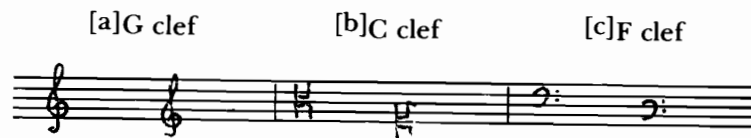
The second is that of C sol ut [the C-clef].

The third is that of F ut fa [the F-clef].

The latter two Clefs serve for the Bass [Viol], and they are

intermingled alternatively to obviate leger lines [*lignes d'augmentation*] and also to favor the execution of solos in chords.

Symbols and locations of the Clefs



The G Clef is represented in this figure [a]; it is located sometimes on the first line ["French violin clef"], sometimes on the second [treble clef], from the bottom.

The C Clef is represented by this different figure [b]; it is placed sometimes on the third [alto clef], sometimes on the first [line; soprano clef]. When it is located on the third, it is for Contraltos [*Haute-Contres*], and for Viol solos [*pieces de Violle*].

The F clef [c] can be placed on the third [baritone clef] or on the fourth line, and expedients of this kind are only for the avoiding of leger lines. Thus each of these three Clefs can be placed on all of the lines, according to the whim of the composer.

[18] CHAPTER II

The names of the Figures or Characters met with on both lines and spaces, and which are differentiated from each other as Rondes [whole-notes], Blanches [half-notes], Noires [quarter-notes], Croches [eighth-notes], doubles Croches [sixteenth-notes], etc. and in addition the Points [dots] which augment their values.

These Notes are located on lines or in spaces at the will of the Composer; and to present a perfect knowledge of them and to instruct a Scholar who has never learned [of them] it must be made known what a Clef is.

The Clef is a sign placed at the beginning of the staff and which is, so to speak, like the secret and opening [*clef*, in French, also means a key for a lock] for finding the intonation of the Notes which are placed above and below its location. [19] Let us begin with that of G: one always says "sol" on the line upon which this Clef is placed, provided it is with b-natural [*b-quarre*, "square B"], and when it is with b-flat [*b mol*] one says "re".

The syllable [voix] with b-natural exists when there is no b-flat marked at the beginning of the staff, and that with b-flat exists when there is a flat. This, however, is meant for the intonation of the syllables and does not change the fret [touche], and one will always say "ut," "sol" or "fa" on the lines upon which these Clefs are placed, and from that one proceeds for the stopping of the Note which is above or below these Clefs, putting the Scale to use, stopping the "sol" on the line of the Clef, then "la" in the space encountered above the latter, and on the line, "si", etc., never changing the frets.

Ronde. Blanche. Noire. Croche. Double Croche.



Ronde Blanche Noire Croche
pointée. pointée. pointée. pointée.



Ronde	= Semibreve	= Whole-note
Blanche	= Minim	= Half-note
Noire	= Crotchet	= Quarter-note
Croche	= Quaver	= Eighth-note
Double Croche	= Semiquaver	= Sixteenth-note
Pointée	= Dotted	

Although one may not see any Notes written on the line upon which the Clef is placed, it is nevertheless necessary to pretend that one is there in order to facilitate the discovery [i.e. identification] of the others that are written. For example, one says "sol" on the line, then "la", after which one says "si", etc. until one has found the name of the one that is sought for. It is the same in descending: one plays "sol", and then "fa", next "mi" etc., until the discovery of that which is marked down. It is by this means that both vocal and instrumental Music is learned, and long usage and great exercise result in that one sounds instantly [sur le champ] all the Notes [20] in whatever Interval they may be situated, and that one applies them the same on Instruments.

Practice in the Clef of G re sol



sol la si ut re mi fa sol la. la sol fa mi re ut si la sol.

In this Example I mark under each Note the name of it, in order that one will be able to have a prompter and easier intelligence of it. It must be read and re-read often, both in ascending and descending, in order to become familiar with their intonation more exactly and on the instant [à point].

You will notice, if you please, that the Notes which are located in the C clef, and in that of F, although they may be with b-flat, in no way change fret on the Viol and that this C is always taken in its ordinary location — which is at the third fret [traverse] on the third string when the C clef is marked on the third line; and for the F clef, one takes it [i.e. the F of the clef] at the first fret on the third, without the b-flat being capable of changing anything.

These Rules for changing the name of the Note on the b-flat [i.e. the use of the new seventh syllable si] have been given to us to facilitate the intonation of the syllables [voix] and to obviate mutations [nuances]. [21] The only difference there is in playing on the Viol is this: when one plays the syllable with the flat [par la voix de b mol] one takes the b [b-flat] one fret lower than that of the "si" [b-natural]; and when there is no flat, it signifies that the b [b-natural] must be fingered [toucher] in its ordinary place.

Having explained the manner of executing the b-flat and the b-natural [le b mol & le b quarre] on the Viol, it is necessary now to give to the interested [aux curieux] the explanation of the Fingerboard, in the course [par l'étendue] of which one will become familiar with what open strings, upon which frets one takes the flats and the sharps and, in general, with all the Notes that exist in the range [l'étendue] of Music. And I shall illustrate [feray voir] the first demonstration of them with Notes and the second with Letters, for the convenience of those who do not want to learn by Note [par Musique].

PART THREE
CHAPTER I

Demonstration of the Fingerboard by Notes, represented in its full extent; wherein will be seen all the tones and semitones, major and minor, together with the unisons.

Open strings							
re	b	mi	fa	X	sol	X	la
la	b	si	ut	X	unis.		
mi	fa	X	sol	X	unis.		
ut	X	re	b	unis.			
sol	X	la	b	si	unis.		
re	b	mi	fa	X	unis.		
la	b	si	ut	X	unis.		

[In this chart: b = flat; X = sharp; unis. = stopped note of the same pitch as the next higher open string — GJK]

In this illustration of the Fingerboard all the Notes you see that are not at the first transverse [fret] are strings which are played open, that is, without putting any finger down; they are called by the same name that you see written at the beginning of each line; but for a fuller knowledge [*une plus grande intelligence*] it is appropriate to give a complete explanation of these lines and transverses, and of all the tones and semitones that are encountered on each of them.

[23] First of all, these seven lines represent for us the seven Strings of the Viol, and the transverses, the Frets.

The first line represents for us the *Chanterelle* [melody string,] or first String; it is named open Re [d].

At the first Fret, the flat of Mi [e-flat] or the Sharp of Re [d-sharp] is taken.

At the second, the Mi [e].

At the third, the Fa [f].

At the fourth, the sharp of Fa [f-sharp].

At the fifth, the Sol [g].

At the sixth, the sharp of Sol [g-sharp].

And at the seventh, the La [a], and above [it], where there are no frets, b-flat, b, c, c-sharp, d, etc. It is only [by] the trueness of the ear that the execution of them can be practised, because the

more the Notes ascend toward the Bridge, the more, also, the fingers are obliged to squeeze closer together.

On the second line, open, which represents the second string, the La [a] is sounded.

At the first transverse is sounded the b-flat or the a-sharp.

At the second, the b [natural] is taken.

At the third is taken the Ut [c], [from] which the C clef is named.

At the fourth, the c-sharp is taken.

At the fifth, the unison of the c is taken.

[24] Unison: this is two strings sounded together, one [with] the finger pressed against the Fret, the other open, which produce but one and the same pitch.

On the open third String is taken the e which is the octave of that e which is stopped at the first transverse on the first string.

At the first Fret of this third [string] is taken the Fa [f], [from] which the F clef is named [i.e. the f of the clef].

At the second, f-sharp.

At the third, g, which is [that of] the G clef, of which one avails himself for the Treble Viol.

At the fourth, g-sharp.

At the fifth transverse, the unison of a is taken.

The fourth line represents for us the fourth String, which, sounded open, is named c, which is the octave of the c on which the Clef is located.

At the first Fret, c-sharp is sounded.

At the second, d.

At the third, e-flat or d-sharp.

At the fourth, the unison of e.

The fifth line, which represents for us the fifth string, sounded open, is named G.

At the first transverse, G-sharp.

At the second, A.

At the third, B-flat or A-sharp.

[25] At the fourth, b.

At the fifth, the unison of c.

The sixth line represents for us the sixth string, which, sounded open, is named D.

At the first transverse is sounded E-flat or D-sharp.

At the second, E.

At the third, F.
At the fourth, F-sharp.
At the fifth, the unison of G.
The seventh line represents for us the seventh String, which, sounded open, is named A [A₁].
At the first Fret is sounded B-flat.
At the second, B.
At the third, C.
At the fourth, C-sharp.
At the fifth, the unison of D.

CHAPTER II

Explanation of the Unisons, making evident which fingers should stop them.

The Unison of the d sounded on the first string, open, calls for the fourth finger at the fifth transverse on the second String; and sounding this second String together with the first, you will perceive [*distinguez*] that they render the same pitch.

[26] The Unison of a also calls for the fourth finger at the fifth Fret on the third String, and then sounding this third and second together so that they produce the same pitch.

The Unison of e calls for the third finger at the fourth transverse on the fourth String, and the sounding together of this fourth and third.

The Unison of c is taken by the fourth finger at the fifth Fret on the fifth String, sounding [together] at the same time the fifth and fourth [strings].

The Unison of G is encountered at the fifth transverse on the sixth String by sounding the two together.

The Unison of D is taken similarly at the fifth Fret on the seventh String, sounding both of them at the same time.

CHAPTER III

Explanation of the Sharp, the Flat, of Tones and Semitones.

The Sharp — marked on the Fingerboard [Chart] with two little strokes drawn in an indirect [i.e. oblique] line and crossed by two others — always precedes the Note which is to be sounded by its voice [syllable], and raises its intonation [= pitch] by a semitone.

[27] The Flat, contrary to the Sharp, lowers [diminuë] the note it precedes by one semitone.

Explanation of the Tones and Semitones.

From the c sounded on the open fourth String to its Sharp, which is the first Fret of this same String, there is one semitone.

From this Sharp to the d which is at the second transverse, there is another semitone, so one can count from this open c to the d one whole-tone.

From the d to the third Fret of that String, on which one plays e-flat, there is a semitone.

From this flat to the fourth transverse, which is called the unison of the e, there is a semitone.

Consequently, from this d to the e there will be found one [whole]-tone.

From the e of the open third String to the f there is one semitone.

From this f to its Sharp, which is at the second transverse of this third, there is a semitone.

From this Sharp to the third-transverse g on the third String there is a semitone; thus from the e to the g there is one semi-tone and one tone.

From this g to its Sharp, which is at the fourth transverse, there is a semitone.

From this Sharp to the unison a which is taken at the [28] fifth Fret, there is a semitone; hence from the g to the a one will find one whole-tone.

From the a played open to the b-flat, first transverse, of the second String, there is a semitone.

From this flat to the b there is a semitone.

From this b to the c there is a semitone.

By this means one tone and one semitone will be counted from the a to the c.

The rest of the extent of the Fingerboard, both in ascending and in descending, merely consists [*n'est*] of replicas of these Flat and Sharp tones and semitones that I have just explained.

Since I do not want to forget anything (insofar as it is possible for me) about the explanation of the tones, semitones, and unisons found in the extent of the Fingerboard that I have prescribed for myself, I believe that it is fitting to tell the names of the transverses which are beyond the unisons.

Properly called unisons also are those which serve only to favor the execution of chords, and also, sometimes, for easily observing the hold: I shall give a complete knowledge of them through the examples which follow.

Following the unison of the first d of the [open] chanterelle [i.e. at the fifth fret on the second string] the first [i.e. the next, or sixth] transverse represents e-flat, or the unison of the e-flat played at the first Fret on the first String. [29] The Notes found at this transverse [i.e. the seventh fret] include [the author says incorrectly "c'est" — it is!] the e-unison of the e of the first String.

And where there is no more Fret [sic!] it is the f, together with its sharp, g, etc. And it is the ear alone which can regulate their trueness.

The unison of the b-flat taken at the second transverse on the second String is found at the sixth [fret] on the third String, and the seventh [fret] is the unison of the b.

The fifth transverse of the fourth String represents the unison of the f on which the Clef is taken.

The sixth [fret] represents its sharp.
the seventh, the unison of the g upon which the Clef is taken. [This is of course wrong; this is the g an octave lower than the g¹ of the G-clef — GJK.]

The sixth Fret of the fifth String sounds the same c-sharp that is situated at the first transverse on that fourth String.

At the seventh fret is found the Unison of the d which is played at the second Fret on the fourth String.

At the sixth Fret on the sixth String is found the G-sharp which is played at the first transverse on the fifth String.

At the seventh Fret is taken the unison of the A which is played at the second transverse on the fifth String. This unison is often sought for solos and Thoroughbasses, because [30] it is the octave of the seventh [string] played open.

The sixth transverse of the seventh String represents the E-flat situated at the first Fret on the sixth String.

The seventh Fret of this seventh String sounds the same E that is encountered at the second transverse of that sixth String.

CHAPTER III [IV]

Demonstration of the Fingerboard by letters.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i

You will notice in this Example that the lines are the Strings and the [vertical] bars the Frets of the Viol.

The a's are open for all the Strings.

The b's are for the first Fret.

The c's are for the second.

The d's are for the third.

The e's are for the fourth.

The f's are for the fifth.

[31] The g's, for the sixth.

The h's, for the seventh, etc.

These two Fingerboards, both by Notes and by Letters, serve for the Treble as well as for the Bass.

Let us now pass on to tuning, for the knowledge of which I shall give first the explanation [of tuning] by unisons, second by fourths, third by fifths, fourth by octaves, and lastly, by Letter.

CHAPTER IV [V]

Explanation of Tuning by Unisons.

Practice.

I have been obliged, for the understanding of this [way of] Tuning, to represent again the lines and transverses of the Fingerboard.

re [d']					
la [a]				4th unis.	
mi [e]				4th unis.	
ut [c]			3rd unis.		
sol [G]				4th unis.	
re [D]				4th unis.	
la [A ₁]				4th unis.	

In order to tune a Viol on which all the Strings are slack, one will begin [32] raising it with the fourth [string] until the latter is at a proportionate pitch and height to which the thin Strings can be accommodated without forcing, because the ear, by nature [*naturellement*], cannot suffer whistlings nor shrillness; nor may it be at a pitch so low that one cannot draw any tone out of the thick Strings. To meet this requirement [*dans ce rencontre*] one can govern himself according to the Opera pitch, or, as the curious do, have a little Flute made at this same pitch.

After having raised this fourth String, one places the third finger at the fourth transverse and plays [i.e. tunes] the third [string] until it produces the same pitch.

Next, one places the fourth finger at the unison of the a and plays [tunes] the open second string until it produces the same pitch.

The “3rd” and “4th”, which you see marked at the unisons on the Fingerboard [Chart], make it known that it is the third and fourth finger of which one makes use alternatively.

After the Strings are in tune, one places the fourth finger on the second String at the fifth Fret, as it is marked in the demonstration [= illustration] of the Fingerboard, and one raises or lowers the first String until it produces the same pitch.

When the thin strings have been tuned, one must [33] come to the Basses, which are tuned in a manner quite the contrary; for in tuning the Trebles one places the finger on the String which is in tune, and for the thick ones one must of necessity place the finger on the one which is not in tune and sound it until it produces the same pitch [as the open string]. After the Trebles are in tune, you pass on to the fifth [string] and, placing the fourth finger at the fifth transverse, you play it together with the fourth [string] until it is in tune. There is a little trouble, because from time to time one is obliged to raise this fourth finger in order to turn the peg until one has found the unison of these two Strings.

This same method is practised on the sixth String; one places the fourth finger at the fifth Fret and sounds the fifth String with it until it renders the same pitch.

A like method is employed on the seventh String.

Those are all the circumstances and trials [*recherches*] that I have been able to find for the tuning made by unisons; it is only the fourth [string] with the third which in their tuning are different from the others.

CHAPTER V [VI]

Example of the Tuning by fourths.



The tuning by fourths [original says “unissons” — an obvious misprint — GJK] is suitable for Musicians who, by the trueness of their ear, tune all their Strings open, and by this means arrange the Frets in the places where they ought to be. You will become familiar, through the explanation which follows, with the manner and method of practising it.

One always begins with the fourth [string], which, being raised to Opera pitch, you will sound with the third [string] until they produce the tuning [i.e. the interval] of the third.

Next, you sound the second [string] with the third until they produce the [interval of the] fourth.

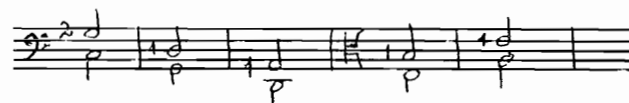
You are to practise the same method for the chanterelle with the second [string].

From these thin Strings you pass on to the basses, and you are to begin with the fifth [string], which you must raise to a fourth with the fourth [string].

[35] Practise this same tuning in fourths for the sixth and seventh [strings], there being no difference among all these strings other than the fourth [string] with the third, which are tuned in a third.

CHAPTER VI [VII]

Tuning by fifths.



The figure 2 that you see located after the F-clef indicates that the second finger must be placed on the g and the fourth [string] sounded until the ear perceives the accord of the fifth.

The fourth [string] being in tune, place the first finger on the d and play the fifth [string] until it produces the [interval of a] fifth.

Next, put the first finger on the A of this fifth String and sound the sixth [string] until the fifth is heard.

Tuning by Octaves.



[36] Tuning by letters

a					
a				f	
a				f	
a			e		
a				f	
a				f	
				f	

This tuning is practised in the same manner as the one I illustrated for [tuning by] unisons.

One begins with the fourth [string] and, putting the third finger on the e[-fret], one sounds the third [string] with this fourth [string] until they [both] produce the same pitch; next, one stops [*touche*] the f[-fret] of the third [string] with the [open] a of the second, and then the f of the second with the a of the first until the unison is heard, the low strings being tuned to the f and the a.

I cannot excuse myself from writing down all these reasonings, being persuaded that not all Scholars hate them, and that, anyway, when one undertakes a labor one cannot bring too much information and illumination to bear upon it, the science of Music and of the Fingering [*Touché*] of Instruments always appearing very difficult to all those who have never applied themselves to it. This is why I have given myself room to enlarge upon the explanation of the Fingerboard, which is the Foundation and Principle of the Fingering of any Instrument whatsoever; [37] combined with this, the only inclination I have is a zeal which carries me to love the interest of the Public, such that — let the critic censure this work as much as he likes! — I shall be found convinced when some day he shall have produced someone who has worked with more perfection. I would have liked to

write about the Fingerboard in six lines were it not that its extensiveness, its Tones and Semitones along with their Replicas, would have made it impossible for me to execute my plan, besides which it was an absolute necessity to illustrate the different methods of tuning, there being many Scholars who sometimes finger quite properly without knowing how to tune. Thus it is a great inconvenience for one to have to continually see the Teacher or some Luthier [maker of stringed instruments] to put a Viol in tune, instead of which, by examining well this Method which I prescribe for myself, they will be relieved of this embarrassment. The easiest and the most convenient to practise is the one by unisons; the others must be left to Musicians. However, those who play by ear and who are devoted to [*s'attacheront à*] Tablature will acquire it to perfection by dint of working and exercising, because they will gradually form in themselves a notion of all the most far-fetched tunings and will in the end be impressed by them in such a manner that they may become learned Musicians without solfaing [*solfier*], because — just as I made it evident in Part I of my Book — the Fret [38] of their Viol regulates their Voice and gives them,⁶ despite their possessing trueness of Intonation and the ear for making perfect discrimination of all the Tones and Semitones, Major as well as Minor, that are met with in the whole range of Music, I still believed myself to be obliged to call all of the Strings by their Names and to make it evident at which Fret every Note is taken — the sharps, the flats, the unisons, etc. — as well as, also, the demonstration of the Fingerboard by Letters, to favor those whimsicals who imagine they are hearing Arabic or Hebrew spoken when one speaks to them of Music — these Gentlemen who do not want to trouble themselves in any manner whatever. But let us be quit of all these arguments in order to pass on to other Explanations.⁷

⁶Explanation of the *Tremblement* [Shake or Trill], of the *Supposition* [appoggiatura?], of the *Battement* [2-finger vibrato], of the *Pincé* [modent], of the *Port de Voix* [ascending appoggiatura], of the *Coulé du doigt* [slide of the finger], of the *Balancement de main* [1-finger vibrato], of the *Tenuë* [hold], *Couche du doigt* [barring of the finger over two or more strings], *Poussé* [push-stroke or upbow] and *Tiré* [draw-stroke or downbow], etc.

⁷Error of syntax in the original, which omits the object of the verb "give".

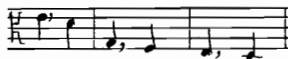
[39] FINAL PART

CHAPTER I

Explanation of the Tremblement

The *Tremblement* [Shake] is the most beautiful ornament that exists in the whole of Music, vocal as well as instrumental. It takes its extent over the Semitone and the Whole-Tone. It is practised by the means of *Supposition*. *Supposition* is anticipating upon the Note which precedes that upon which one is to make the *Tremblement*. For Example: if there is a Shake marked upon the E, you shall anticipate on the F, placing the first finger on the E, the second on the F — which is the “supposed” Note — and, continuing to hold the first, you are to let the Bow flow on a moment, then you must agitate the second finger with an even agitation, and at the end you must hurry it more [*le presserez davantage*], I mean: execute it with a more precipitated beating. But, in order to observe a more assured Method and to draw forth a more beautiful Tone, the Fret must be squeezed with the finger and the String pressed with the Bow — avoiding touching two of them at once, and drawing [it] from the wrist [i.e. the frog] to the tip, and pushing [it] from the tip to [40] the wrist: this is the most certain Method for acquiring it to perfection, because it is reduced according to the value of the Note; and I will say in passing that a Master forces himself in vain to cry, “Draw out a good Tone!”: the Scholar cannot do it if only that reasoning is represented to him [in which] choice and far-fetched terms are deemed more necessary in teaching than demonstrating [*faire paroistre*] his own fine execution before his Scholar, which must serve only to present the final perfection. It [the *tremblement*] is marked with a little comma [,] located upon [i.e. right after] the Note which is to be shaken.

Practice of the Tremblement



These Shakes are practised ordinarily on the Mi's the Si's, the Sharps [i.e. on the major Thirds of chords], [in] perfect, imperfect and medial Cadences [on the] finals of all the Modes.

CHAPTER II

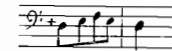
Explanation of the Pincé.

The *Pincé* [mordent] is made with abrupt agitation, putting the finger back on the Fret; the number [41] of its blows should be governed by the value of the Notes. It is marked with a little Cross [+ or ×].

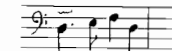
Explanation of the Battement.

The *Battement* [close Shake, two-finger vibrato] is indicated by a prolonged circumflex [i.e. a wavy horizontal line] located upon [i.e. above] the Note upon which it is to be practised. It possesses tenderness and fills the ear with a sad and languishing sweetness. It is ordinarily practised on the first Note of a Solo when it begins with an even number, likewise for the beginning of the second Part [i.e. the imitating voice], and throughout where the good taste of him who is playing would like to apply it.

Example of the Pincé



Example of the Battement



By these two Examples you see the different Signs with which the *Pincé* [mordent] [42] and the *Battement* [vibrato] are marked. I made known in what manner the former is practised; it is now necessary to give the Method for practising the latter.

The *Battement* is made by squeezing one's finger against the one placed on the Fret, letting the bow flow on for a moment, meanwhile causing this finger to move with an even agitation, and it is lifted before the bow finishes its motion.

Explanation of the Port de Voix

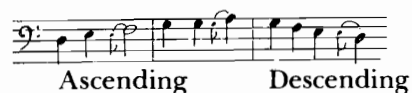
The *Port de Voix* [appoggiatura⁸] makes a great connection

⁸Clearly, Danoville's *port de voix* is not a true appoggiatura as it is with Couperin and Marais since the latter falls on the beat or, as Couperin puts it, “is struck with the harmony”. With Danoville its time is taken from the *previous* note. — GJK

[legato] in Song, and without its help it is impossible to sing or to play with propriety.

It is made by cutting in half the note which precedes that upon which one is about to Carry the Voice [*porter la Voix*], and taking the last half one slurs it with that [note] which follows it.

Example



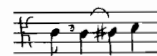
You will notice from these Examples that it is written with a grace-note [*Note perdue*] in order to allow the Note that is divided up [*partagée*] [to appear] in its entirety. The famous Authors do not employ any other Method.

[43] *Explanation of the Coulé du doigt.*

The *Coulé du doigt* [finger-slide, glissando] is a grace which agreeably surprises the ear, because at the start one hears falseness, the finger being unable to project [*déborder*] over the Fret without making the beginning of a False Pitch [*Faux Ton*] heard; however, by sliding imperceptibly toward the Semitone where it is supposed to go, it makes complete amends for having produced falseness. The Viol is the only Instrument upon which its beauty can be practised, the Strings of the Violin being too tight, and the Lute, the Theorbo and the Harpsichord, not having a continuous sound, cannot produce the sweetness of it; consequently, with them it is incompatible, and it is only the Flute that would be able to express it agreeably. Its extent — as I said previously — being only a Semitone, one makes it with the third finger, which — being pressed upon the necessary Note to be sounded — slides gently to the next Fret without leaving the String. It is marked with the Stroke that is [seen] in the following Example. It is never practised descending.⁹

⁹This is true in the music of Marais. Rousseau, on the contrary, who calls this grace "la Plainte", refers to it only as played descending (op. cit., p. 101). — GJK

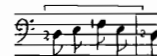
Example



[44] *Explanation of the Tenuë*

[This grace] is called *Tenuë* [i.e. finger-hold] because one holds the finger down on the String one has just sounded until one has played [all] those [Notes] that are enclosed in its Circle [actually a bracket]. It is by this means that the Sound and Harmony are prolonged [*se tire*] on all the Bowed as well as the Plucked Instruments; and a proper execution means that, through it, trueness of Pitches and Chords is perceived and without which one would never hear anything but confusion, because, by happening to lift the finger before the Strings requiring that Hold have been sounded, there would be heard a little Plucking [*Pincé*] that the finger is obliged to make in releasing the String which would produce discord with the others that are played afterward. The Hold is marked in the following manner.

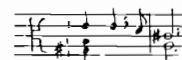
Example



Explanation of the Couché du doigt.

The *Couché du doigt* [finger-bar] is made when there are several Strings to be sounded, the execution of which cannot be practised by other fingers on account of [45] the interval of the Chords, which would call for having six or seven fingers on the hand. In this case one makes use of the *Couché* [Bar], which is ordinarily done with the first finger. It is marked with a 1 placed in front of each Note that is to be sounded by means of this Bar.

*Example*¹⁰

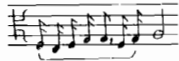


¹⁰The g# in this example should not have been included in the bar with the other notes since it is two frets away and must be played with the third finger. Besides this mistake the printer has also resorted to the cheap expedient of combining the augmentation dot and the trill comma into one sign by using a semicolon. Marais indicates the Bar by this sign — GJK

*Explanation of the Balancement de main*¹¹

The *Balancement de main* [literally: “rocking of the hand”] is very closely related to the *Battement* [two-finger vibrato; see above]. It is ordinarily practised on the Note which forms the conclusion of a *double Cadence en coulade* [cadential trill preceded and followed by turns] and in several other Places, according to the good taste of the one who is playing. It is made with the fourth finger, which remains pressed down at the fret necessary for sounding, without leaving it; while slightly relaxing the Thumb, which presses the underside of the Neck, one agitates the hand with a small rocking motion [*un petit Balancement*]. Note that the Bow must not be halted — any more than in the *Tremblement*. It is ordinarily marked with the following Sign.¹²

Example



Explanation of the Poussé and of the Tiré

The *Poussé* [“push” or upbow stroke] is indicated by a P marked under the Note which must be “pushed”, and the *Tiré* [“pull” or downbow stroke] by a t located under the one which must be “pulled”. There are general Rules for these “pushes” and “pulls”: even number, push [i.e. first note upbow], and odd number, pull [i.e. first note downbow]. By way of further information: the first of four Crotchets [quarter-notes] is upbow, and the first of three is downbow. It is the same for Quavers and Semiquavers [eights and sixteenths].

Notice that in this Odd number, if the first two Crotchets or Quavers are linked with a little Circle [i.e. connected by a slur], of necessity these first two must be pushed.

If in the course of a Solo one arrives at a downbow on a Dotted Crotchet, one will be obliged to play the following Quaver downbow again.

One is exempted from following Rules of this kind in the performance of Giges, because [in them] one must go as the Bow is encountered [i.e. take it as it comes out].

If in the course of a Solo, or of a Thoroughbass, [47] one happens to fall on a downbow for the first of an Even number [of notes], one must necessarily play downbow again [*retirer*] on the second [note] which follows.

Example



¹¹This is a one-finger vibrato.

¹²The printer has failed to include the sign referred to in the text, which should be applied to the half-note. Marais symbolizes this grace with a vertical wavy line in front of the note to be vibrated. — GJK

Abraham Prescott And His Bass Viols

Samuel R. Ogden

Abraham Prescott was born in Deerfield, New Hampshire, on July 5, 1789, and died in nearby Concord on May 6, 1858. He was the son of a farmer whose ancestor, James Prescott, came to Hampton Falls, New Hampshire from Lincolnshire, England, in 1665. Abraham started out farming the ancestral lands in Deerfield, but boyhood ambitions and inclinations led in other directions. Studying at the bench of his uncle who was a cabinet maker, he embarked on the making of a bass viol prior to 1809. In the meanwhile we learn from the diary of the headmaster of Atkinson Academy, where he was a student, that he became an expert at performing on these "bass viols" and on other stringed instruments as well.

In 1816 he married Sally Prescott who was a distant cousin. The marriage seems to have been a happy one. After Sally died in 1838 at the age of 48, Prescott married Mrs. Abigail C. Brackett of Rochester, New York in 1843.

The major portion of Prescott's career as an instrument maker began after 1833, the year the Prescotts moved to Concord. The Deerfield years were illuminated by an account book or journal which he diligently kept in his meticulous handwriting. The items written during these years described in detail his activities as well as giving a vivid picture of rural life in New England at the beginning of the 19th century.¹

Prescott was primarily a maker of musical instruments, and he employed in his shop apprentices among whom were the Dearborn brothers, David and Andrew. The Dearborn brothers were later to become well-known instrument makers in their own right. Prescott also ran the farm, taught in the local district schools, gave instruction in music, ran a notions store, served as a selectman, and was probably overseer of the poor as well. Unfortunately no record covering the years in Concord is available. All we know is that he became an influential citizen of that town, and was interested in music and in the making of musical instruments. In 1848 he sold his stringed instrument

¹Prescott's account book is presently housed in the archives of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

business to his former apprentices, the Dearborn brothers. At this time he turned to the making of organ-type instruments, the mechanism of which used wind to blow over brass reeds to produce the sounds. During this period he also made and sold melodians and serephines. He later began to make parlor and church organs, and eventually he turned to the manufacture of upright pianos, which he continued to make until 1912. But let us return to the subject of his double basses for which he is best known.

I originally became interested in Abraham Prescott when the cellist George Finckel showed me one of Prescott's bass viols. The label on the instrument identified him as a maker of parasols and umbrellas. This instrument appeared to be a cello because it has four strings and a floor-peg. It differed from the cello in that it was larger and it possessed a tuning head consisting of a brass device similar to those in use for tuning double basses. Preliminary investigation revealed that these instruments were sometimes called church basses, presumably because they had been used in back-country church choirs to supply the continuo part. Of the 22 instruments I examined, only one was specifically designated "church bass." Obviously these instruments were not cellos, for while some of the smaller examples approached the dimensions of the standard cello none of them could be played as cellos because of their short necks. The instrument could be played comfortably only in the first position. Yet I did find three of these instruments were being played as cellos. These instruments had had their necks lengthened by about two inches. It was apparent, however, that the ordinary bass viol could not be changed into a cello by splicing the neck because the greater body length required a string length that was proportional for the production of a characteristic tone.

Of the 22 instruments I examined, the body lengths ranged between 29 and 36 inches. The distance from nut to rib (that is the fingering space) was consistently two inches shorter than that of the standard cello. Of the upper bouts, the widest measured 16 inches and the lower bouts ran up to 21 inches. The cello measures approximately 13 inches for the upper bout and 17 for the lower. The body length of the cello averages under 30 inches. Obviously to call these instruments cellos is to mis-name them in spite of the fact that William Henly, in his *Dictionary of Violin and Bow Makers*, refers to the Prescott

instruments as "very large-sized cellos."

The half dozen early accounts available to me of Prescott and his work all report that without any previous instruction, and using only a violin as a model, Prescott produced his first bass viol. This hardly seems possible since none of the bass viol measurements are multiples of those of a violin. The measurements of Prescott's first bass viol correspond with uncanny exactitude to those instruments produced in Europe two centuries earlier. These earlier instruments were never referred to as bass viols, but rather were known as viols da gamba or violoncellos. It was only after I referred again to *Antonio Stradivari, His Life and Work* (published by the Hill brothers in London in 1902) that I realized the dimensions of the so-called Aylsford Strad, made in Cremona in 1696, correspond almost exactly to those of a Prescott church bass.² This fact provided a precedent for the dimensions of the instruments by Prescott. Previous commentators had attributed the dimensions to his own invention.

According to the Hill brothers, Amati and Stradivari made these large instruments at the insistence of the Church. Furthermore I found that in some of the American instruments there was a hole in the back just under where the neck joins the body, obviously for the insertion of a peg. I was told that a thong was attached to this peg by which the viol could be suspended around the neck of the player, thus permitting him to play while marching in processions. The Hills wrote:

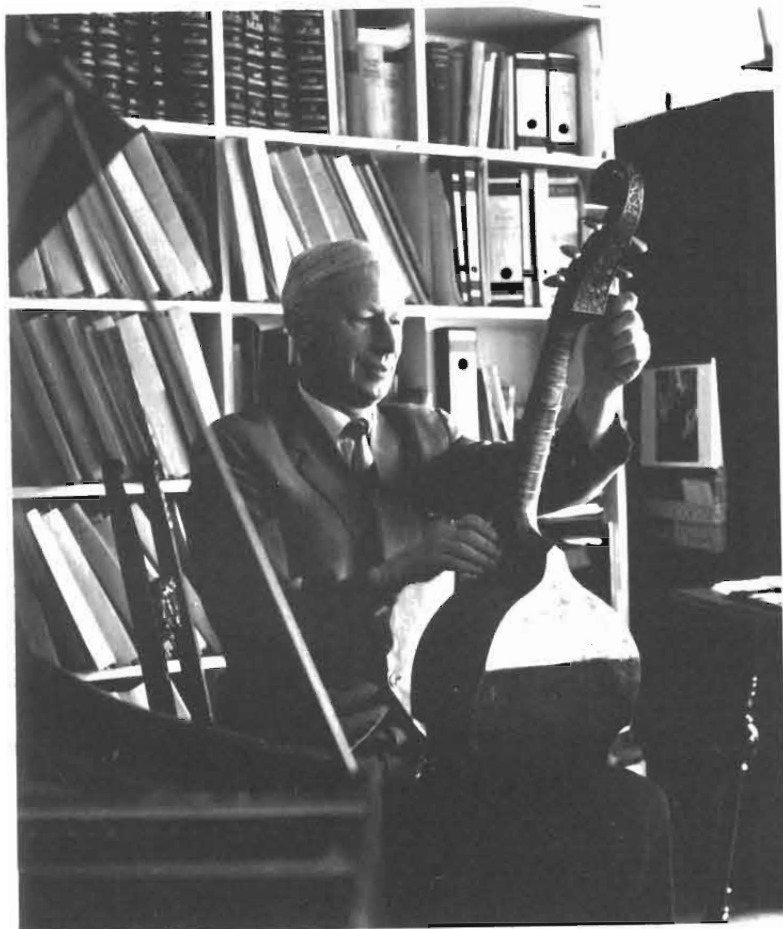
Thus we find that the change from the earliest type of true violoncello made about 1600, to that of a smaller form, which originated between 1660 and 1700, took close upon a century to effect . . . The Church, slow to move — and her influence in the matter was paramount — apparently still preferred the larger size, and thereby materially retarded the change.

Of the twenty-five extant cellos made by Stradivari between 1680 and 1700, all were of the larger size, and had to be cut down for modern use.

Prescott never made a true violoncello that I know of,

²This instrument is now in the possession of Mrs. Mildred Tunis, a great-granddaughter of Abraham.

although, according to his list of instruments appearing on the very last pages of the *Deerfield Journal*, which covers the period from April 1809 to December 1829, some are listed as cellos. Prescott's significance as a manufacturer of bowed strings is due actually to his double basses. In time these church basses were to become little more than a curiosity.



August Wenzinger

An Interview With August Wenzinger

Marjorie Bram

An interchange between participants in a movement becomes a proclamation of faith in the viability of the efforts of the individuals involved. With this interview the Viola da Gamba Society of America pays tribute to its honorary member August Wenzinger, a performer and scholar who needs no introduction to the readers of this Journal, and to whom this tribute has been long overdue. Professor Wenzinger, in turn, acknowledges colleagues and predecessors who have contributed to his development and to the development of performance on the viol here and abroad.

M.B. What in your background stimulated your musical interest as a child?

A.W. In our family three elder sisters played violin and piano. The younger brother had to play cello to complete the trio or quartet. I began my studies at nine, liked the instrument and practising, had no great difficulties, and was soon able to participate in the family *Hausmusik*. After finishing the humanistic *Gymnasium* I began a study of philosophy and ancient languages at Basle University. After two years I realized that I wouldn't be happy without music as the main content of my life so I transferred to the Basle Conservatory to get my degree as a cellist. In 1927 I went to the *Hochschule für Musik* in Cologne to study with Paul Grümmer. At that time I especially liked romantic and contemporary music.

M.B. When did you begin to play the viola da gamba and undertake the research you have done?

A.W. In 1924 Albert Nef, musicologist, asked me to show his students the viola da gamba from the musical instrument collection of the museum. One of the students in his class was the organist in a small town near Basle. He engaged me to play Buxtehude's Trio in D Major in a concert in his church. My introduction to the viola da gamba was rather unexpected. When I came to Cologne, Paul Grümmer was delighted to have a student familiar with this instrument which he himself played. He encouraged me to continue my studies

and to buy a viol. I found an instrument by Paul Altsee. As at that time very little viol music was published, Grümmer encouraged me to make copies of music in archives. I first went to the *Hofbibliothek* at Darmstadt with its large collection of manuscripts by Telemann, Graun, Graupner, and others, and learned of the high standard of viol playing in the 18th century. I was thrilled. In the succeeding years I visited most of the important European libraries to study and copy the repertoire of our instrument.

Most of the performers at that time played the viol with a cello bow, a peg, and with an altered, thinner neck and fingerboard. Only Dolmetsch in England and some amateurs of the *Deutsche Jugendbewegung* under Peter Harlan tried to revive an authentic technique. When, in 1929, I was asked by *Bärenreiter Verlag* to teach the viol in a special course, I realized I had to study early sources and treatises to try to reconstruct an authentic technique of playing the instrument.

M.B. What can you tell us of your early organizational activities?

A.W. When in 1933 we founded the *Schola Cantorum Basiliensis*, the first institute for research, performance, and teaching of early music in Basle, we cultivated viol performance in its three aspects — consort, continuo, and solo playing. Due to our still limited knowledge of the sources and the repertoire, we played in a very pure way — without vibrato, shifting, slurring, etc. Several years afterward I began to study what one could call the history of musical expression. I learned from treatises by Ganassi, Mersenne, Mace, North, Rousseau, Hubert le Blanc, and from the authors of the doctrine of musical rhetoric, how far this idea of primitive playing is from the character of baroque music; that it is not adequate to duplicate individual technical details without considering its overall expressive character.

During the first decades of the revival of early instruments, there were very few students of our instrument — some in Basle, some in Germany. After the war the number increased slowly. Some young

musicians from Basle and abroad came to the *Schola* to study early music on original instruments — Jan Craford, Hannelore Mueller, Gustav Leonhardt, and others.

M.B. When did you begin to tour?

A.W. In the late thirties I enjoyed the collaboration of Gustav Scheck and Fritz Neumeyer as trio colleagues. With the addition of the members of the *Kammermusik-kreis Gustav Scheck/August Wenzinger*, we formed the first touring chamber group with early instruments. During World War II our musical activity was limited, but in 1947 the musicologist Ernst Hermann Meyer, who at that time lived in London, brought our consort of viols to England and the BBC. This was the beginning of greater activity for our group beyond Switzerland. We performed in almost all European countries and also in the Near East. In 1948 *Deutsche Gramophon Gesellschaft* began the *Archiv* series and asked us to record viol music by Scheidt, Schein, Marais, Couperin, Bach, and orchestral concertos and suites by Bach, Handel, Telemann, and others. I later had to exchange the bow more and more for the baton. In 1953 I conducted the first recorded performance of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* using original instruments.

Also in 1953 Otto Gombosi, musicologist at Harvard University, whose wife was a former member of the *Schola*, suggested the University invite me for a term of lecturing and instruction in viol playing and performance practices. I also played several concerts with Erwin Bodky, harpsichordist, at Cambridge, Boston, Hartford, New York, and Washington. The following year I returned for some lectures and concerts at Brandeis University with Erwin Bodky. At that time the idea of the professional study of early instruments, especially viols, was not very popular in the United States in spite of the activities of Paul Hindemith and others. Whereas excellent harpsichord and recorder players found enthusiastic audiences, viol playing and its important and fascinating literature remained unknown.

M.B. Would you tell us of the events that led to the

current renaissance of viol playing in the United States and elsewhere?

A.W. Through my old friend Fritz Rikko, with whom I had played Baroque music in the early thirties, I was invited to hold a master class at Juilliard School in 1970. I then taught that summer at Aspen, Colorado. In Saratoga I met Cathy and James Caldwell who are certainly among the most effective and enthusiastic promoters of viol playing and performing early music on authentic instruments. Their excellent ensemble at Oberlin and the summer courses of their *Baroque Performance Institute* encourage the promotion of the movement to a professional level of high standard. Since students from almost all European countries and even Japan come to study in Basle, there now are performing and teaching gamba players in many countries.

The promotion of viol playing is difficult. The viol is a soft and intimate instrument. It is very difficult to play, much more difficult, for example, than the recorder, and it requires long and intensive work. It is troublesome to assemble a repertoire because not enough viol music is yet published. There are not enough good recordings available to acquaint people with the viol literature and to encourage the study of the instrument.

M.B. What thoughts do you have concerning the role of viol playing in the future development of our musical culture?

A.W. For me, Western music (and Western art on the whole) as a human testimony of Western culture, forms a unified expression evident in differing national and historical styles. I am impressed by the unity of these manifestations and am delighted to rediscover this presence in different settings. I therefore play music of all periods as authentically as possible. I don't play early music because it is old or because I detest music of the 19th and 20th centuries, but because it is part of the cultural world I live in. I like the original instruments because they reflect the authentic spirit of the period in a purer, more adequate manner than

the instruments of another period. The viol is one of the most typical, intimate, and highly cultivated instruments of the Renaissance and Baroque eras. Its tone color is an essential quality of its musical world. Its literature is an important part of the musical production of these periods. It makes no sense to perform early music without including the art of the viol, but only in its most perfect form! The viol is a unique instrument, able to express a variety of musical ideas if you think of the wide range of expressions between Dowland's *Lachrimae* and Marais' *Charivari* or his *Gall Bladder Operation*. It provides the modern composer with many attractive technical and sonorous possibilities. That it is able to play a role in contemporary music is shown by some fine compositions of recent years.