

A LETTER OF J.-B.-A. FORQUERAY, TRANSLATED AND WITH COMMENTARY

John Rutledge

Between 1767 and 1768 Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Forqueray, son of the famous Antoine Forqueray, responded to an inquiry from Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia in a letter containing some instructions and observations on the viola da gamba. The following is a translation of that letter with some annotations.¹ At least five letters were actually exchanged, but only this one contains information of real use to gambists. The document is interesting from at least two standpoints: first, it gives us an intimate view of the relationship between musician and royalty (from a period near the end of the gamba's popularity); secondly, it offers practical instructions by a noted gamba teacher of the period; so practical, in fact, that the letter can be seen as a small "tutor", since it easily contains as much useful information on gambas as do other early treatises.

Like his father Antoine, J.-B.-A. Forqueray (1699/1700-1782) exhibited talent at the gamba precociously, performing for the king at the age of five. Later it is said that his playing so rivalled that of his father, that young Forqueray *fiils* was sent into exile.² At the time of this letter, Forqueray was 69 years old and suffering from the maladies of old age.

Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia (1744-1797), nephew of the flutist and composer Frederick the Great, later became King of Prussia. He had been introduced to the gamba by his father (Prince August Wilhelm) and at the time of his correspondence with Forqueray he was twenty-three years old. One must note with some irony that only a few years later (as he was divorcing his wife) Friedrich Wilhelm abandoned the gamba in favor of the more fashionable violoncello.³ He continued his musical instruction under Graziani and Du Port, two 'cellists of renown.

Forqueray's letter is lucid and well thought through, even if his prose is somewhat rambling and less tightly constructed than we might wish. Nevertheless, a degree of interpretation proved to be a

¹The letter was discovered Yves Gérard in the History Archives of Merseburg (DDR) and published by him in *Recherches sur la Musique française classique* 11 (1961-62), 165-171. His reading of the manuscript and investigation of its origins and background have been used for this translation. I am grateful to Dr. A. Richard Oliver for his help with some fine points of eighteenth-century French.

²For additional biographical information on J.-B.-A. Forqueray see L. de la Laurencie, "Deux violistes célèbres; les Forqueray," *Bulletin français de la Société internationale de musique* IV (1908, Dec.), 1251ff. and V (Jan., 1909), 48ff.; also J. J. Prodhomme, "Les Forqueray," *Rivista Musicale Italiana* (1903), p. 670.

³Gérard, p. 171.

necessary adjunct to the translation; such interpretive comments or extensions are placed within square brackets. I have further divided some of Forqueray's long paragraphs into shorter ones for ease of reference.

Some of Forqueray's principles may be contrary to beliefs held by modern gambists. It may be assumed that gamba technique varied from one player to another as much in the eighteenth century as it does in the twentieth. Perhaps in the emphasis on the use of the third finger on the hair "to obtain more or less sound" we can see a touch of modernity in Forqueray's instructions. Technique responds to the demands of the times. This "treatise", as well as others that have recently been made available, points to a multiplicity of approaches to gamba technique throughout the historical periods.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS My Lord, the Prince of Prussia

One could not be more moved than I was by the present⁴ which I was honored to receive from Your Royal Majesty. I shall treasure it for the rest of my life and gratitude for His kindnesses and for my precious souvenir can never be erased from my heart; I would be only too happy if in the course of my life I could prove to Your Highness my desire to please Him and to be of some service to His entertainment.

The difficulties, My Lord, which Your Highness has encountered in my music may be alleviated by these few instructions which I am honored to send Him. To these I add twelve trios⁵ which can be played as duets if one eliminates the bass, even though this third part makes them more harmonious; however, they work perfectly well as duets; they are simple and easy and may give Your Highness the means to play more difficult pieces.

I have no recollection, My Lord, of having heard of Monsieur Hes,⁶ neither from my father nor from anyone else, but I am no less persuaded that he is an able man; his principles cannot have been other than excellent and he will certainly have passed on the same to Your Royal Highness.

English viols are the ones which one would choose ordinarily.⁷ As

⁴According to Gérard (p. 166), the present was a golden snuff-box with a portrait in miniature of Friedrich Wilhelm.

⁵It is not known to which trios Forqueray is here referring.

⁶Gérard reports that the spelling is questionable.

⁷That English viols were favored in France is supported by Rousseau, who speaks of "les Anciennes Violes d'Angleterre, dont nous faisons une estime particuliere in France" (old English viols which we in France particularly appreciate), *Traite' de la viole* (Amsterdam: Antigua, 1965), p. 22.

regards those made by Colichon,⁸ I do not know any by that maker. Excellent English viols are very few in number, the reasons being, My Lord, that they have lost their good qualities due to decay, that infestation by worms has caused many instruments to lose their sound from lack of vibration, and that most of them are too encumbered with decorations, which makes them sluggish, and that most of them are made of wood that is too thick. The better viols are of maple which does not attract worms. In general the English makers have all sinned by the thickness which they put in all their instruments; it impedes the sound from leaving and from opening the pores of the wood. Here in France twenty-five years ago we had a man named Barbet⁹ who made a large number of viols from English wood; he was the best maker we have had for shape, for [proper] thickness, for neatness and good dimensions. His instruments improve with each year of age in their velvety softness and brilliant clarity of sound. I have two of them which my father played for twenty-five years of his life. One for solo work, the other for accompaniment.

One thing to notice, My Lord, in your instruments is not to have them strung entirely with large, coarse strings.¹⁰ One should see to it that the two first small strings are Roman and that the last five are from Naples and that the fourth (which is C) be half wound with very fine wire and that the others be entirely wound with the same fine wire; never have them double-wound. Note well the relative size or thickness of all seven strings. The result will be, My Lord, that they will vibrate more, that you will be able to produce a sound more easily and that the strokes will be cleaner, if you remember not to put too much resin on the bow because too much creates a paste on the string which makes the string hiss and grate and dulls it.

I should indeed be happy, My Lord, to have for a year one of the students whom Your Royal Highness supports; I would take great pains and devote my pleasure and attention to teaching him as if he were my own child. Those who love the viol ought to be quite pleased, My Lord, at the preference which you have shown it above the other

⁸Colichon or Collichon (Michel) was active in the second half of the 17th century in Paris. Two gambas by him (dated 1683 and 1693) are known. Barbara Schwendowius reports a third in private hands in Bochum, West Germany (*Die solistische Gambenmusik in Frankreich von 1650 bis 1740*. Regensburg: Bosse Verlag, 1970, p. 14). Jalovec mentions a six-stringed viola da braccia (1695) and a bass viola da braccia (*Enzyklopädie des Geigenbaues*. Prag: Artia, 1965, p. 206). Collichon is also mentioned among the documents published by Sylvette Milliot concerning the Parisian luthiers.

⁹Probably Guillaume Barbey, a Parisian instrument maker. Jalovec cites a 10-stringed gamba by him at the Brussels Conservatory. A 6-stringed bass viol is said to be in the Collection Fétis in Paris (Vannes).

¹⁰Danoville and J. Rousseau also warn against strings of too great a thickness. See also Hans Bol, *La basse de viole* . . . Bilthoven: A. B. Creyghton, 1973, pp. 93-95.

instruments; and the definite taste Your Highness has for the most beautiful of all ought, without doubt, to return its ancient glory to it.

My advanced age, as well as several infirmities, deprives me of that pleasure which would have been the greatest of my life, namely to hasten to the side of Your Highness, if my feeble talents could have been of any use to Him. I do not doubt at all that the person who has the honor of giving Him instructions is capable of conveying the style (*goût*) of my pieces. It is simply a matter, My Lord, of fingering them correctly: that is the main thing. They will thereby become much less difficult. Your Highness must endeavor to become acquainted with the upper fingerboard of His instrument, that is, from the last fret to the middle of the rest of the board. After such study one begins a different one in order to learn the other half, always on the first three strings d', a, e. Many good things will come of this improved acquaintanceship: 1st, the beautiful sound which is the soul of the bowed instruments; 2nd, the facility to play all the more difficult things, even things which the violin, the flute and the harpsichord can do; 3rd, the relaxation of the left hand which becomes less tired on the upper fingerboard than on the lower, which is used only for chords, for passages which descend [to the lower notes], for accompaniment and for all ordinary music which is found in the viol clef and the f-clef.

In order to facilitate the learning of the upper fingerboard, Your Highness should play a few easy pieces. Begin by putting your left hand at the last fret and put your first finger on the three first strings and make a *barré* with the first finger which goes across from string to string. As occasion may present [i.e., if you do not *have* to move this finger] be careful not to move it from its place, that is, it should never leave the first fret. Note also, My Lord, that the highest note (or the note above) ought to be made with the little finger and the lowest note by the first finger. Regarding this last rule, [one must say that] it is sometimes contradicted, in which case the second or third finger takes the place of the first. Those are the principles, in short, My Lord, of the left hand.

The right hand is the bow hand and it ought to express all the emotions; it is the bow which arouses the soul; thus it is the bow which gives character to all kinds of music. I find three things necessary for good bowing. The first is the position of the arm, which from the shoulder to the wrist ought to be extended loosely and without rigidity during both upbow and downbow. The second principle: the bow always cuts a horizontal line across the strings. The tip of the bow should never vary; in other words, it neither rises nor falls but should always be opposite the thumb [on a horizontal plane]. The third principle: the bow is never to leave the line and ought always to be held three fingers from the bridge and fairly perpendicular, and the movement of the wrist should always be to push on the downbow and to

pull on the upbow. In matters of execution, it is the wrist which plays and not the arm, which ought to be suspended and very relaxed at the time of the main movement. To my three principles I could also add a fourth and that is the use of the third finger on the bow [-hair], which is the great force of expression which distinguishes all music. To achieve this, the hair of the bow ought to be placed crosswise [under] the first joint of the third finger and it ought never to leave this position. This finger presses the hairs against the strings to obtain more or less sound from them; by pressing or relaxing imperceptibly, it creates the expression, the soft and the loud. One should make sure, My Lord, that the thumb of the bowing hand is always placed gently on the wood of the bow. If it presses too firmly it gives a harshness to the stroke and pushes the bow against the string, which must be absolutely avoided. Furthermore, it is very important that the bridge of a viol be exactly round and that it be six fingers high from the plate to the strings. If the strings are too high from the fingerboard, one must have the neck "thrown back" by gluing a strip of wood between the bottom of the fingerboard and the top of the block of the viol to create an angle which will place the strings at the level of the frets; that, My Lord, will give your instrument more sound, it will take away some stiffness and will make it easier for you to play.¹¹

I can send Your Royal Highness much music for the viol, duets as well as trios, sonatas and a great number of single pieces, which are the most characteristic of this instrument; it is the only one that can dispense with accompaniment and is actually suitable for everything. It is much like the harpsichord, the flute and the harp; it accompanies all the instruments separately in trios and in violin solos, but one must know how to set it off in each of these roles. I plan soon to send (to Your Royal Highness) a collection of solo pieces which are easy and pleasant and will help Him to learn to play more difficult things; I shall be happy if my ardour and my attentiveness can show

The very great respect with which I am,

My Lord,

Of Your Royal Highness

a very humble, very obedient

and very submissive servant,

[J.-B.-A.] FORQUERAY

¹¹Rousseau (*Traite'*, p. 22) claims that this alteration of the position of the neck is a French invention: ". . . it must be acknowledged that the French instrument makers have brought the viola da gamba to the final stage of perfection, inasmuch as they found the secret of tilting the neck back a little and reducing its weight. By this means the masters of the viol are able to play with greater facility." See also Sibyl Marcuse, *Musical Instruments: A Comprehensive Dictionary*, New York, 1964.

WRITINGS ON THE VIOL
BY DUBUISSON, DE MACHY, ROLAND MARAIS,
AND ÉTIENNE LOULIÉ

Translation and Commentary by Gordon J. Kinney

DUBUISSON

The Library of Congress possesses a manuscript¹ dated 1666 containing a few instructions in viol playing and four suites for unaccompanied viol composed by Du Buisson, a French lutenist and viol player of whom so little is known that not even his first name has come down to us. Bol asks the questions: "Is he the violist who is named in the *Mercurie Galant* of 1680? also, is he the one named in the *Lettre de M. le Gallois* of the same date?" Bol also lists as probably to be attributed to this same composer the following: 13 pieces in tablature in a ms. of 1674 (Paris, Bibliothèque du Conservatoire, Res. 1111, fol. 184v-197); a suite ('Mr. Doubisson' in a ms. of ca. 1760 (Durham, Ms. A 27, pp. 130-139) — all for unaccompanied viol.²

The L. of C. ms., was temporarily mislaid and was relocated and properly catalogued by Dr. Frank Traficante a few years ago when he was employed at the Library as a music researcher. So far as known up to the present, its date of 1666 marks it as the earliest example of viol solo music by a French composer.

The identification on the ms., so far as I have been able to decipher it from a microfilm copy,³ reads as follows:

Dubuisson demeure au milieu de la Rue
du fort [foret?] leu . . .rque proche du quay —
de la vallée de mili.e, a la signe —
de la pie devant un mareschal
ou bien on sauva la derniere a l archet
de la Rue de la harpe chez ,
un faiseur de luyt nommé
monsieur Colichon

[Translation—so far as decipherable:

Dubuisson dwells in the middle of the Street of the
Forest L near the pier —
of the valley of the Mili.e, at the Sign of
the Foot in front of a Farrier's,

¹M2.1/Book.T2 17c, fol. 1-25r and 67v-90r.

²Hans Bol, *La Basse de viole du temps de Marin Marais et d'Antoine Forqueray* (Bilthoven: A. B. Creyghton, 1973), p. 316.

³Kindly loaned to the writer by Dr. Traficante.

or else one will find the latter at the bend [=bow] of the Street of the Harp at [the shop of] a maker of lutes named Monsieur Colichon.

Folio 1 carries the caption "Le premier jour de Septembre 1666" [September 1, 1666] and presents a five-measure prelude (the first barline is missing) in C-meter in D minor, ending with a D-major chord. Preceding the Prelude and the following Allemande the name "Dubuisson" is written in the staff. Subsequent movements have the initials "D.B." similarly located. Following the prelude is a short six-line tablature staff with the letter names d g c e a d (the normal viol tuning) on the staff lines in ascending succession.

The suites may be listed as follows:

Suite I in D minor: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue.

Suite II in D major: Prelude, Allemande, Courante Sarabande, Gigue.

Suite III in A minor: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue.

Suite IV in A major: Prelude, Allemande, Sarabande, Double de la Sarabande, Courante, Gigue.

Translation of the accompanying instructions, as far as they are decipherable from the microfilm copy, is as follows:

1. The first [of] two or four Notes of equal value should always be played upbow. In triple [meter] the First of three equal [notes] should always be played downbow [when] at the beginning of a strain [couplet].

2. If, after a rest, the note is of the same value, it must be played downbow, but if the note is worth more than the rest it must be played upbow. The same is understood for the half and the double rest [*du demy et du double souspir*], as well as for the half [*demi?* or *derni(ere)*—partly illegible] rest [*pause*], which is worth one half-note [*blanche*].* But when the rest [*pause*] is of the value of a whole-note [*note entiere*], the following note must be played upbow.

[*Why DuBuisson uses *souspir* for rest in one phrase and *pause* in another, is not clear; perhaps *pause* here means hold, in which case one could translate: "as well as for the final [i.e. if read as *derniere*] hold, which is worth one half-note. But when the hold is of the value of a whole-note, the following note must be played upbow." The author's term *note intiere* for whole-note, instead of the more conventional term *ronde*, is also worth noting.—GJK]

3. When a half-note occurs upbow followed by two quarters, or whenever a quarter-note occurs upbow followed by two eighth-notes [*crochues simples*, i.e. single hooks], one must be free to play upbow also the first of the latter two, or play them both downbow, which can be done on a single bow-stroke by slurring [*par liaison*] when the notes are on two adjacent [*conjoins*] degrees.

4. After a dotted note the following [one] must always be played downbow even though the dotted [note] is itself a downbow.

5. When a note occurs before the barline at the beginning of a piece it should always be downbow.

The first finger should serve at the first and second frets for all strings, except for the D la re sol [d-natural] or the C[-fret; the C-fret is the 2nd fret in tablature notation], which in this case is played with the second [finger]. The other fingers serve for the succeeding frets. The first finger should be placed on the note that one wants to trill. [This last remark shows the influence of Dubuisson's other instrument, the lute, on which trilling with fingers 2-3, 3-4 or 2-4 was avoided because of the weaker percussion of the upper finger, only the first note of the trill being plucked with the right hand—GJK]

* * *

It is worth noting that all of the foregoing comments by Dubuisson anticipate those subsequently made by Rousseau, Danoville, DeMachy and other French gambists by two full decades. Thus they demonstrate that many of the basic principles of French viol solo playing must have been fully operative around the middle of the 17th century. The music, too, shows many of the same symbols employed much later by Marin Marais: the comma for the *tremblement*, the x for the *pincé*, dots on both sides of a finger number (i.e. 3) to indicate a *doigt couché* or finger-bar, a horizontal line to indicate a held-down finger. One sign, exactly like a modern fermata-sign, occurs frequently over rather short notes in situations which make it evident that it means an upbow stroke. The style of the suites resembles those of DeMachy (1685) but is in general more melodious.

Lexington, Kentucky; 17 May 1975

Gordon J. Kinney

THE PREFACE TO DE MACHY'S SOLOS FOR THE VIOL

The French viol player and composer known to us only as the *Sieur De Machy* was born in Abbeville in the second half of the 17th century. His birth and death dates are unknown but one French writer, Abraham Du Pradel mentions him as being still living in 1692. According to Hans Bol,¹ he was a pupil of the celebrated Nicolas Hotman (also called Hautman, Hautemant and Hotmann), whose viol playing was praised by Mersenne. DeMachy's great rival was Sainte Colombe, also a pupil of Hotman. DeMachy was a proponent of the chordal style of viol playing, whereas Sainte Colombe favored the emphasis of the viol's character as a melodic instrument, as did his pupils: Danoville, Marin Marais, Méliton (for whose memory Marias composed a *tombeau*), and Jean Rousseau.

De Machy's *Pieces de Violle* was published in Paris in 1685, and his claim on the title page, that they constitute the first viol solos to be published, has so far not been refuted (provided we do not include in this category the eight ricercars by Silvestro Ganassi, four published in 1542 and the other four in 1543, in Venice, which their author intended primarily as studies). The short *avertissement* (advisement or preface) which precedes the solos gives the author's views on what he deems to be the proper function of the instrument, how to play it, and how to notate for it, together with a table of graces, both in staff notation and in tablature. The music consists of four suites in the former and four in the latter, all for solo viol without accompaniment.

Two years after its publication De Machy's preface² was attacked in some of its technical details by Jean Rousseau, in his *Traité de la Violle* (Paris, 1687, p. 30), especially as regards De Machy's claim that

¹Hans Bol, *La Basse de Violle du temps de Marin Marais et d' Antoine Forqueray* (Bilthoven: A. B. Creyghton, 1973), p. 315. Bol publishes De Machy's preface in Appendice D, pp. 296-299.

²Natalie Dolmetsch, *The Viola da Gamba* (London, Hinrichsen, 1962), p. 44, says that "Rousseau . . . attacks Danoville . . ."; but it is clear from a perusal of both Danoville and De Machy that it must be De Machy that Rousseau had in mind when he says (op. cit., p. 30): ". . . Some time ago an *Avertissement* was given to the public in which an attempt is made to make it believed that there are two Bearings of the hand necessary for the perfection of Viol Playing, and that all the Masters, by a general abuse, sin against this Rule except the Author of the *Avertissement* . . . Thus it is inopportune that the Author of this *Avertissement* should try to embarrass the Public with two pretended Bearings of the hand . . ." Rousseau never mentions this "Author" by name. Another clue to the latter's identity is Rousseau's expression "some time ago" (*depuis quelque temps*), which also eliminates Danoville since the viol treatises of both Danoville and Rousseau were published the same year, in 1687.

viol playing calls for two left hand positions: one with the thumb opposite the first finger, the other with it opposite the second finger. The former would be used for the chromatic disposition of the hand, the latter for extensions only. Rousseau and Danoville would keep the thumb opposite the second finger for both and extend the first finger backward to obtain the wider hand-span.

Translation of the DeMachy follows.

SOLOS FOR THE VIOL

in Music and in Tablature, different from each other and in several keys. They comprise two Books and are the first that up until the present have been published. Composed by Monsieur De Machy. Engraved by H. Bonneuil.

IN PARIS

[Available] from:

The Author, Rue Neuve des Fossez Faubourg St. Germain, at The Grand Monarch opposite The Little Moor between the Bussy portal and that of St. Germain.

Bonneuil, Rue au Lard, opposite the Halle aux Cuirs [=The Leather Mart] facing The Holy Innocents.

With Privilege

[1685]

[1] Very necessary advice for becoming familiar with the principle rules which teach how to play the Viol properly and for avoiding the abuses on that Instrument that have for some time been creeping in. Together with what must be observed in composing Solos for it, in addition to the ordinary Rules.

Several persons of merit have asked me why up to now no one has published any Book of Solos for the Viol [*Pieces de Violle*], as has been done for the other Instruments, particularly those which make harmony by themselves. The main reason, in my opinion, is that some want Solos in Music and others in Tablature, which would necessitate a double expenditure, whereas for the other Instruments one suffices.

To satisfy also the curiosity of some who are in doubt whether Tablature should be preferred to [2] Music in order to learn to play this Instrument, I say that, just as well as the Theorbo and the Harp-

sichord, one can play the Viol in three manners. Likewise, one can pluck it: which might pass for a fourth [way]. But the first and most usual is that of playing Solos with chords [*pieces d'harmonie*] which is the one characteristic of all the Instruments that are to be played alone. And since the latter has always passed as the true way to play the Viol, I shall begin by expressing my sentiments on this point, and then we shall speak of the others.

I say, therefore, that it is quite certain that one can learn to play in this manner very much better by Tablature than by Music, especially persons not familiar with the latter. As proof of this, it is known that Music is subject to many changes of clef; that in it one must observe the sharps and flats; [and] in addition, the unisons, not only of the open strings but also of those [notes] which are not; besides which, it is quite often necessary to double those that are [on] open [strings]. And encountered rather commonly are also tunings of one and the same string, that must be made into others, which causes a great embarrassment, especially to persons who are beginning, [and] which repels them.³ And it is on this account that Tablature is used for Solos for the Lute, the Theorbo, the Guitar, and for other fingerboard Instruments which make harmony by themselves, the more so in that all these difficulties are not encountered therein [i.e. these complications, encountered in notation in music, are not encountered in tablature.]

This Method puts a person into a position to train himself from the very first lesson, since Tablature can be learned in a moment [!]; but it is not the same with Music. The shortest road is always the best. The Italians, the Germans, the Poles, the Swedes, the Danes and the English have always followed this maxim; and the illustrious Monsier Hautemant [=Hotman] also used it in teaching, as can be confirmed by several Solos of his hand,⁴ which are found in Paris and elsewhere. [3]

After all, is not Tablature also Music, which contains two essential things: *pitch* and *measure*? The Letters of Tablature are for the first, and the values above the letters are for the second. I have always, without prejudice, given the one or the other, following the inclination of the persons whom I had the honor of teaching.

³This is the only reference I have so far encountered to the use of scordatura in French viol music. A thorough investigation, so far not undertaken, to my knowledge, into French viol music in tablature sources, might disclose others—GJK

⁴This ambiguous wording may refer to solos by Hotman, which seems the more probable meaning, or to copies in his handwriting of music by other composers.—GJK.

As regards those who have learned through Music and who have contracted the habit of it, it does not matter in which manner they learn Solos; although one sometimes finds himself somewhat embarrassed in them, particularly in connection with the unclefted ones [*celles qui sont déclavées*], which only the Author can understand properly. But by Tablature everything is revealed.

For the rest, in order to give full satisfaction to all the lovers of this instrument, I have had some Solos engraved in Music and others in Tablature, which are contained in two Books, each different from the other, and in several keys. I have chosen for the Music those which can be set down in it without causing any trouble; There are some that are filled [with chords] in the two ways, and others that are less so and which do not permit of making harmony [4] from beginning to end. [They are provided] with large and small Solos, to please everybody. The Preludes can be played slow or fast, as one likes; they are neither difficult nor very long — a few excepted, so as not to reduce the number of Solos, having no intention of enlarging my Books any further.

If I had tried to follow my inclination I would have published only one Book of Solos, in all sorts of modes — both transposed⁵ and natural, minor and major, even with different tunings,⁶ and some Solos to be plucked; but it would have been necessary to have recourse to Tablature. So as not to risk anything, I have chosen the middle way, waiting until time would enable making the rest known.

As for the second manner of playing the Viol, which consists in accompanying oneself, or in singing one Part while playing the other, this must be learned by Music, inasmuch as this is the usage for it. As for the third: this is to play in Consort, or from one's part, either on the bass or on the treble viol, and I have never taught them otherwise [i.e. otherwise than by musical notation, not tablature]. What I have said concerning the advantage of Tablature is only in respect to Solos that must be played alone. That is why it does not matter by which method one learns them. I do not claim to innovate anything; I am [only] freely uttering my thoughts.

I now pass on to the rules which are necessary for playing the Instrument properly [*bien*], because there are few who are familiar with them. To speak of them in general [i.e. to discuss them in full] would require a whole Volume. It suffices to be acquainted merely with those one is [5] inescapably obliged not to ignore. It must be noticed, therefore, that there are two bearings of the hand [*ports de main*] on the Viol, just as on the Lute, the Theorbo and the Guitar. The first is

⁵"Mode" here means *key*; transposed keys are those in which the keynote bears an accidental.

⁶See note 3, above.

to place the thumb against the middle of the neck and the first finger, always curved except when one is obliged to bar with it, opposite the thumb. The wrist should also be rounded and the elbow slightly raised. This one [i.e. this hand position] is practised whenever one is not obliged to extend the hand.

As for the second, which is that in which has to extend, the thumb must be placed more toward the edge of the neck, the second finger opposite the thumb, the first finger more straightened out unless some chord requires it to be kept curved. In this position, the wrist need not be as rounded as in the first. As for the elbow, it is necessary that it be against the hip [*contre la hanche*] in such a way that what one cannot do in the one should be observed in the other; and by this means one can play all things without trouble.

Furthermore, one must be careful to use the fingering required, observing also the *holds*, which are very important for three reasons. The first consists in holding out the tones in order to sustain the harmony. The second serves for avoiding cacaphony, or wrong notes [*le mauvais son*]. And the third, in order to have the full reach of the hand [*avoir la main toute portée*] [available] wherever it has to be, and likewise with the fingers.

As for the *holds*, they are very punctiliously [*ponctuellement*] observed on the Lute and on the [other] fingerboard Instruments which make harmony, as well as on the Harpsichord.

[6] It is certain that by putting all these rules into practice exactly, one cannot fail to play properly. But it is one of my astonishments to have noticed that, except for a few persons who are skilled on the Viol, there are few — even of those who make a profession of it — who are heard to speak of these rules, which are so essential for the Instrument. On the contrary, they disdain them, as the great majority commonly do who are ignorant of them. What in all times has contributed to the perfection [i.e. mastery] of this Instrument is for them a fault, even though the most illustrious have always so recommended them that they have never made Solos that were not according to these rules. One must not condemn the first ones [i.e. the earliest composers for the viol], because ordinarily one is not successful when just beginning, but [one should condemn] many of those of very recent times, and written by their hands.

If one examines, as regards *holds*, the Solos of the foreign Authors who have been famous, it will be seen that they are well marked, and consequently this should not be taken as a novelty.

Others hardly are reasoning correctly when they say that everyone has his own method. It is true that every Author can differ from another in his productions and can even have a different character for touching [i.e. a different set of symbols to indicate fingering—GJK], for everybody differs in handwriting as in almost everything else. But as far as rules for them are concerned, these should be general and

founded upon the same principles. Anyone who maintains the contrary would be training himself by principles that roll along at random and by caprice: which becomes apparent [*paroistroit*] the moment he falls into the hands of skilled persons.

[7] Finally, to respond to those who want to argue that Solos of a single melody are preferable to those that are harmonized [*harmonieux*]: I say that they are more wrong than they think, since by this they reveal that they are ignorant in this matter. And when they cite pieces with a single melody by some skilled man in order to authorize themselves by his example, they do not notice that these are made for several Viols — which is easy to recognize. A person can have a hand for playing melodies that are beautiful but single; but this must be compared to a man who might play perfectly on the Harpsichord or the Organ with one hand alone. This single playing might be very pleasant, but one would hardly call it playing the Harpsichord [or] the Organ.

It is the same with those who would confine playing on the Viol to simple [i.e. chordless] Solos, which has never been the custom for this Instrument played alone. He who knows how to do the most can do the least when he wants to. They believe they are giving good reasons for it [i.e. for playing melodies without chords] by saying that chords hamper one from making beautiful melodies and graces, and in consequence one cannot play so expressively. Thus, the Treble Viol and other Instruments of that nature would be preferred to all those that I have mentioned for harmony. Of course they are mistaken. When a man knows his profession well, chords ought not to embarrass him in writing beautiful melodies with all the graces necessary for expressive playing. And it is only those who use but one position of the hand, and who quite often have none at all, who are of this way of thinking [*ce sentiment*].

[8] I agree that these difficulties are encountered in things that are not made expressly for this Instrument — such as Opera Airs and other Pieces, and that on such occasions it is better to prefer the melody and the graces than the chords which would prevent one from making them; but in Solos composed for the Viol one should avoid, as far as possible, interrupting the harmony in them. It is not that I would want one to make profusions of chords that serve for nothing when they are not according to the rules prescribed for them by the Instrument — however good [they may be] as Music.

Here I am speaking to those who are not careful in putting down on paper everything that occurs to their imaginations without looking to see if what they have made conforms to the hand, the Bow, and the rest, and who shelter themselves from all the reproaches that might be

made to them merely by saying that, provided what they make gives pleasure [*plaise*], for them that is enough. Which is a response without any foundation, inasmuch as it can be said that in all times the evil has been loved more than the good.

I return to chords. One can leave them out; but this should be done with prudence. They are very pleasing in numerous situations when one knows how to take them properly. And one should avoid [them in] all the places where holds and graces are required if they cannot be [made] there.

I thought it would be appropriate to explain here how one should make the graces [*agremens*] and the rest.

It is necessary that the *tremblement* [shake] should be leaned on [*appuyer*] according to the value of the note, and made evenly. The *petit tremblement* [short trill], [9] which on the Lute is called a “pull” [*tiret*], is made the same way except that it is not continued. The *tremblement sans appuyer* [trill without leaning], is [made] by pressing one finger against another while pressing [*appuyer*] on the string only very slightly.⁷ The *martellement* [mordent] is [done] by lifting the finger from the note or letter as soon as it has been played and putting it back down on the same beat [*temps*]. The *double martellement* [double mordent] is made the same way, only doubled [i.e. made twice].

The *port de voix* [appoggiatura], which on the Lute and other instruments is called *cheutte* [*chute*, fall — so called because the finger falls on the main note after the right hand has plucked the appoggiatura], is made by the anticipation of one note or letter by another.

⁷Thus De Machy uses the term which usually means “trill without appoggiatura” but describes, on the contrary, the “close shake” (Simpson) or two-finger vibrato, the only kind possible for the fourth finger. Most writers on the viol use *aspiration* to mean an interpolated escape tone. His sly “allusion” to the vibrato as sounding like “miaullement” is another example of his opposition to the melody school of viol playing, since in chord-playing—which he favors—vibrato is seldom possible. Rousseau, on the contrary favored using the vibrato wherever possible. His expression “There are some people” [*Il y a des gens*] is ambiguous. If taken literally it may mean that he disagreed with their jibe; but if it is merely a device to hide himself behind, it may signify not only that the jibe is his own but that it expresses a personal opinion not generally shared by his contemporaries—especially those of the “melody” school.

The *aspiration*, which is also named *plainte*, is made by varying the finger on the fret.⁸ There are some people who claim that this should be called “meowing” [miaullement], by [way of] allusion.

When the *martellement* is [combined] with the *tremblement*, the *petit tremblement*, or the *port de voix*, one should always make it the last. [Thus, in combination with a mordent, the trill acquires a termination, the short trill becomes a turn, and the ascending appoggiatura is followed by mordented main note—GJK.]

The ordinary, or single *unison* is the same sound as an open string or some other [stopped note]. When it is doubled, there are two strings together. [That is: a single unison is defined as a stopped note having the same pitch as an open string; a double unison is the sounding of the two together.—GJK]

The *tenuë* [hold] is usually indicated by a line to show that one should not lift the finger from a note or letter until all those [notes] included in it are finished. The *tenuë de notes* [finger-hold expressed by a long note against a moving part] is indicated by the notes themselves, as on the Harpsichord, by holding down the fingers on the longest [note] of them in value and not lifting them until all those [other notes] contained within it are finished.

The *liaison de notes* [tie of notes of the same pitch] is for supposing that two quarter-notes make up the value of a half, and so on with the others.

[10] The *coulé d'Archet* [bowing slur] is [done] by making several notes or letters with a single stroke, either upbow or downbow. And the one that is *coupé* [cut off or interrupted] is made by half-lifting the Bow [*en levant l'Archet d moitié*] to carry it over to the other strings, avoiding those that are in between. The same thing is done on those which are adjacent whenever one is obliged to do so, particularly when the notes or letters are dotted, and when it is necessary to enliven [*d'animer*] those which come after the dots — either upbow or downbow — and without “recovering” [*repandre*] the arm. The wrist should always be coordinated [*accorder*] with the arm; for he who

⁸De Machy obviously is referring here to the one-finger vibrato, the only kind possible for the fourth finger. Most writers on the viol use *aspiration* to mean an interpolated escape tone. His sly “allusion” to the vibrato as sounding like “miaullement” is another example of his opposition to the melody school of viol playing, since in chord-playing—which he favors—vibrato is seldom possible. Rousseau, on the contrary favored using the vibrato wherever possible. His expression “There are some people” [*Il y a des gens*] is ambiguous. If taken literally it may mean that he disagreed with their jibe; but if it is merely a device to hide himself behind, it may signify not only that the jibe is his own but that it expresses a personal opinion not generally shared by his contemporaries — especially those of the “melody” school.

plays with only one or the other, as many do, will never accomplish anything worth while.

I claim to instruct only persons who, without knowing these rules, want to compose Solos; for nowadays everybody prides himself on that. And in order to succeed well in this, I [shall] explain the difference existing between harmony and melody. Melody is a tune [*chant*] alone; the latter, on being accompanied by one or several Parts, by voices or Instruments, is called harmony. To understand this it is necessary to distinguish [between] two sorts of instruments: one kind, alone, ordinarily makes melody, such as the Flute, the Violin, the Treble Viol, etc., to which — to make them harmonious — Parts are added. This is not necessary for the others which make harmony by themselves, such as the Harpsichord, the Lute, the Theorbo, the Guitar, and the Viol when played alone.

I do not explain this just to prove the necessity that exists for making harmony when one plays alone, since it is agreed that the latter [*qu'elle*] is the soul of Music. Whenever some schoolboys want to play Solos with a single melody for their own satisfaction it is good to give them some, especially when they are not capable of anything else, and even to play some for those who like them this way.

It seems to me [that I] have sufficiently expressed my sentiments touching upon [11] the rules which are the least familiar and the most necessary. There should remain for me [now] only to sing the praises [*faire le Panegyrique*] of the Viol. But since this does not beseem me as well as [it does] a person who does not make a profession of it, I shall say nothing about it other than that the voice is the model for all Instruments and this is the one that imitates it best.

Finally, I declare to all the persons who have my Books, and even to those who do not have them, that they will do me honor if they would like to consult with me about my Solos, and about what I have set forth [here]. I shall be ready to receive them at my home every Saturday from three to six, when I shall make evident [i.e. demonstrate] the practicality of all the rules of which I have spoken and the necessity that exists for observing them on the Viol, which is no less than on the other Instruments upon which they are in use.

My chief wish in this sketch [*dessein*] has not been to set myself up as a critic — although I have made a rather long discourse, which I believed to be necessary, being the first to have caused [something] on this subject to be printed — but solely to provide [something] for emulation to those who are skilled, for the following of the path I have traced for them, and for making the public privy to their labor. I shall deem myself most happy and well recompensed for my little essay when I see the results that I expect from it, and this will again encourage me to pass on farther.

[12]

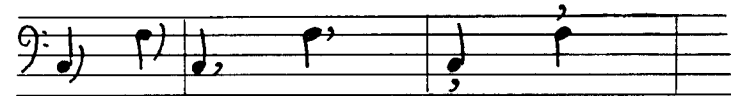
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[The dating of De Machy's work is given in the royal printing privilege, dated 11 October 1685, granted to both the Sieur de Machy and H. Bonneuil. The completion of the printing is given as 15th October 1685. A copy of the original edition is preserved in the Bibliothèque National, Paris, filed as: Vm. 7 6264 — GJK]

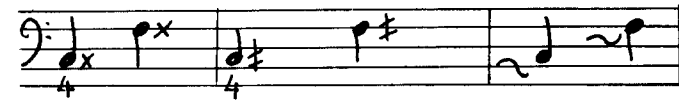
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Demonstrations des Agréments, vnissons, tenues, liaisons, Coulés d'archet, et autres.

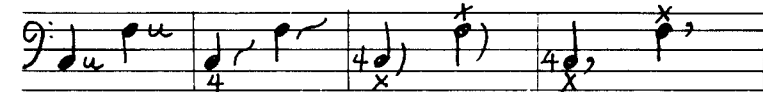
1)Tremblement 2)Petit Tremblement 3)Tremblement sans appuier



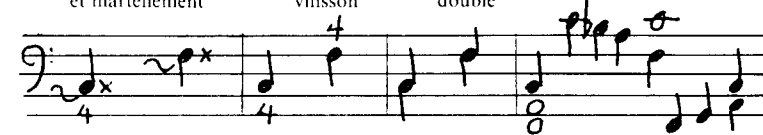
4)martellement 5)double martellement 6)Port de voix



7)battements 8)aspiration 9)Tremblement et martellement 10) petit tremblement et martellement



11) port de voix et martellement 12) Simple vnisson 13) vnisson double 14) tenues de Nottes



15) tenues Ordinaires 16) liaison 17) Coulé d'archet 18)Coulé Coupé



Le p. Signifie poussé, et le t Tiré au Commencement de la premiere et Seconde partie de chaque piece, puis on n'a qu'a poursuivre.
 [Translation of the above chart follows on next page—GJK]

Illustrations of the Graces [*Agréments*], unisons, holds, ties, Bowing slurs and others.

1. *Tremblement* (trill or shake)
2. *Petit tremblement* (short trill)
3. *Tremblement sans appuyer* (close shake or two-finger vibrato)
4. *Martellement* (mordent)
5. *Double martellement* (double mordent)
6. *Port de voix* (ascending appoggiatura)
7. *Battements* (not explained by De Machy; explained by Bol, *op.cit.*, p. 227f., as a trill starting with the main note.)
8. *Aspiration* (one-finger vibrato, usually with the 4th finger; De Machy makes *aspiration* synonymous with *plainte*)
9. *Tremblement et Martellement* (trill with termination in the form of a mordent)
10. *Petit tremblement et Martellement* (a four-note turn if begun with the upper accessory; a five-note turn if begun with the main note)
11. *Port de voix et martellement* (ascending appoggiatura resolving to a mordented main note)
12. *Simple unisson* (a fingered note having the same pitch as an open string, or — sometimes — of a stopped note in a lower position)
13. *Unisson double* (a two-string unison of a stopped note and an open string)
14. *Tenuës de Nottes* (finger-holds represented by note durations)
15. *Tenuës ordinaires* (common finger-holds, indicated by a horizontal line from the finger number or numbers, to show their duration)
16. *Liaison* (tie of two notes of the same pitch; in practice they are usually different values, or separated by a barline, or both)
17. *Coulé d'Archet* (bowing slur)
18. *Coulé coupé* (interrupted slur; a connection of detached notes on the same bow-stroke).

The *p* means *poussé* (pushed; upbow stroke) and the *t*, *tiré* (pulled; downbow stroke) at the beginning of the first and second parts of each Solo, after which one has only to follow through (i.e. take the upbow and downbow strokes as they come).

Explanation of the Lines and of Value for the Tablature

The Lines represent the Strings; to wit: the first [*counting*] from the

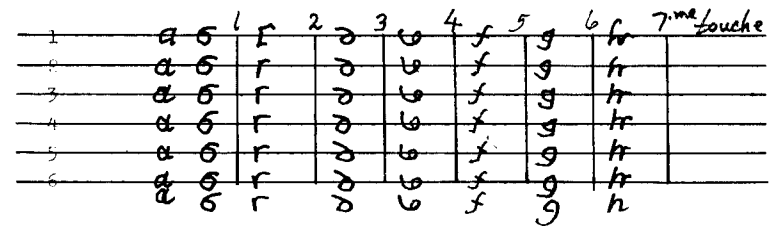
top indicates the *chanterelle* [melody or 1st string], and so on with the others in descending order, and the Letters which are below the Sixth line represent the Seventh String.

The *a* equals *a vide* [open string], the *b* indicates the first Fret, the *c* the second, and so on with the others in consecutive order.

And when other letters beyond *h* are encountered — which call for an [imaginary] eighth or ninth Fret and more, these must be treated just as though these [frets] were present, as happens in Music whenever the Notes go beyond the Seventh Fret.

Value in Music is the same for Tablature, and those Letters not indicated with any retain that of the last [preceding] Letter which has one.

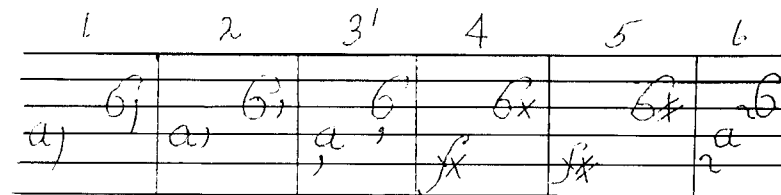
The *c* and the *e* are formed differently for Tablature than the ordinary way. [This means that in tablature, to avoid confusing them with other letters of similar shape, the *c* and the *e* are given special shapes, as shown in the illustrative example below—GJK]



The Graces, Ties and Bowing Slurs of the Solos in Music are the same for those in Tablature; the Letters, of course, indicate the Unisons and the Holds of Notes.

[The following "Example" in tablature duplicates, in the same numerical order, those in the "Demonstration" given previously—GJK]

Example



When it is necessary to play at the first fret, if the tones follow each other [i.e. ascend stepwise], the whole hand must go up whenever (*si*) there are no unisons to be made — and this is in order to render the hand more agile; but if any note be encountered for making unisons such that one could not reach them by shifting back (*remonter*) the hand, [3] one must not in that case (*pour lors*) change the position of the hand but only stretch the first finger backward to the fret from above, the fourth string excepted, on which — to make the C-sharp — one shifts the position of the hand back, in order to make it more agile: all the more since one can make the unison on E [i.e. with the fourth finger] without changing it [i.e. without shifting out of the half-position].

One must not put the second finger alone down on a string, nor the following ones, but the first finger must always accompany them to support them, and one should put it down even though it may not be otherwise necessary.

In *batteries* [arpeggiations of chords], even though the notes may not ascend higher than the unisons [i.e. above the fifth fret], one is not obligated to employ them; and one can use the open strings everywhere; moreover, if the notes do not go beyond the unisons one is obliged to use them [i.e. in chords in the lower positions one should use open strings so much as possible].

On the final penultimate [i.e. in a cadence, the note before the last one], if the notes are half- or quarter-notes, one must trill (*il faut trembler*), and whenever (*si*) they are successive [i.e. move stepwise] for [the sake of] the key (*pour le ton*), and without any interval of time [without an intervening rest]. [4] In the meter of two or four beats, after a half-note or a quarter-note played upbow: if the notes which follow in the same measure are even in number the bow must again move upbow (*il faut encor repousser l'archet*) to restore the natural order. Likewise, if this half- or quarter-note be at the end of the same measure and also [occurs] upbow, one must play upbow again to begin the following [measure].

Quadruple meter (*la mesure de quatre temps*) is beaten twice in the measure, and it is like two-four meter. In this latter meter one observes the same rules as in quadruple meter. Duple meter [with a signature of 2] is beaten naturally, with two quarter-notes on each beat (*temps*).

[5] [The] Manner of Playing Minuets on the Bass Viol

One must make only two bow-strokes in each measure: two quarter-notes upbow and the third downbow. However, if the notes in the measure are of the same pitch or widely distant from one another,

one must then play only the first upbow and play the other two on two different downbows (*par deux tirez d'archet differens*).

The rule of making only two bow-strokes in [each of] the measures is general:

Thus, if the measure begins with a dotted quarter-note and an eighth-note, they must be joined by playing them upbow, and the following quarter-note must be downbow.

If the measure begins with one quarter-note and two eighth-notes, they must be combined by playing them [all] upbow on the same bow-stroke. Likewise: if the two eighth-notes precede the quarter-note, they must be played upbow together with the quarter-note, and the following quarter-note played downbow; but if there be a trill (*tremblement*) on the quarter-note, or afterward, a dotted eighth-note; for then one slurs only the two eighth-notes upbow, and the quarter and the dotted eighth downbow. [Evidently, what is meant here is that it is the quarter, not the eighth, that is dotted in the succession dotted-quarter, eighth, in which both are to be played downbow.—GJK].

If after a quarter-notes [sic!] one finds in the [rest of the] measure all eighth-notes, one must then play only the quarter-note upbow and play the four eighth-notes on the same downbow-stroke; similarly, if the eighth-notes begin the measure, play four upbow and play the following quarter-note or, if in this measure they are all eighth-notes, the following two eighth-notes downbow.

If in a measure there be a dotted quarter-note and then three eighth-notes, one must combine the quarter-note with the first eighth-note on an upbow and play the other two eighth-notes downbow.

Batteries [arpeggiated chords] are played [with] one bow-stroke on each note, or — if the notes can be played on the same string — by slurring them, and this naturally; to wit: four eighth-notes upbow and two downbow.

The bass of these minuets should so far as possible conform to the treble, so notes must be combined or made with separate bow-strokes (*par chaque coup d'archet*) in imitation of the treble.

[7] [Blank]

[8] In triple meter, when it [i.e. the measure] is made up of quarter-notes only, even though they are odd [in number], they are played as they come, with as many bow-strokes as there are notes, without the measures interrupting them.

But if this same meter is then found made up of a dotted quarter-note and an odd number of eighth-notes, the quarter-note being downbow, a second bow-stroke would be needed to play the first

