

RULES OF ACCOMPANIMENT FOR THE BASS VIOL

by
Roland Marais

Roland Marais (ca. 1680-ca. 1750), christened Roland-Pierre, son of Marin Marais and his wife Catherine Damicourt, composed two books of viol solos with thoroughbass, published in score (Paris: respectively in 1735 and 1738), some additional pieces and in a Berlin ms. (Ms. 2630; cf. Eitner, *Quellen-Lexikon*, vol. VI), and some other miscellaneous pieces published in an anthology, *Recueil de Pieces de viole avec la basse tirees des meilleurs auteurs* (Bibl. Nat. de Paris, Vm7.6269). He is also author of the *Nouvelle Méthode de musique pour servir d'introduction aux auteurs modernes* (Paris, 1711). The work presented here is found in a manuscript in the department of music in the Municipal Museum of The Hague, Holland. It was published for the first time as Appendix C in Hans Bol's compendious work *La Basse de Viole du temps de Marin Marais et d'Antoine Forqueray* (Bilthoven: A. B. Creyghton, 1973), pp. 292-295, with the title "Regles D'accompagnement pour la basse De viole/ De roland marais" (cf. facs. on Plate XIII). In the present translation, which endeavors to be as literal as possible, words in brackets are interpolated by the translator to clarify some of the obscurities of the

author's language. The numbers in brackets represent the original pagination of the manuscript, as reproduced by Bol.

[1] In the position of the [left] hand, the thumb — which is under the neck — always follows the middle finger; the low A is always made with the first finger for ease in finding the octave above; the C-sharp and the D-natural on the fourth string are always made with the first and second fingers [respectively]. The same C-sharp and the F-sharp are made with the first finger, placed first on the fourth string to make the C-sharp, and then borne promptly to the third string and the F-sharp, which is to be made only with the first finger.

When there are no notes higher which precede or follow the one you are making, unisons must be used whenever this can be done, and unisons must also be utilised on finals to sustain the sound.

It is good to hold [down] octaves; that is, it is necessary to leave [down] the finger which makes the upper note whilst you are sounding its octave below; this rule is observed when the octave is not interrupted by any [intervening] note, for then, this rule ceases [to hold good].

[2] The syncope is made with a single bow stroke [i.e. the tie joining two notes constituting a syncope is not to be broken],¹ and if several are found in succession they are played naturally [i.e. with regularly alternating upbow and downbow strokes], but the note which follows the syncope is always played downbow. On syncopes, unisons must be used as much as possible [i.e. syncopes of open-string pitches should be reinforced with two-string unisons].

When two notes are connected on one bow-stroke one must not use different strings but so far as possible play the two notes on the same string.

For observing the natural order [of bowing], whatever the meter may be, when the eighth-notes are odd in number the first must be played downbow; if they are even [in number], the first must always be upbow, or if it comes out downbow — two must be taken on the same bow-stroke.

One never plays upbow an eighth-note found alone, in whatever way it may be; likewise, that which is found uncoupled [i.e. not paired with another] must be played downbow, although there may be several others besides.

In order to play *vitesses* [rapid passages], single notes that are not dotted are detached (*s'enlesuent* = lifted away); that is to say, one must not draw (*traisner*) the bow, but detach (*enlesuer*) the note with it. Double notes — such as whole-notes, half-notes and quarter-notes — are drawn.