Early Guitar Anthology II

The Early Baroque
c.1580-1630

by
Charles Wolzien

Music Edited by
Frank Bliven

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About the Author

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He has written articles on Renaissance guitar repertoire and proportional notation and is the author of a performance edition of Adrian Le Roy's 1555 *Voix de ville* (Doberman-YPPAN Press). For nineteen years he wrote about early guitar repertoire as a columnist for *Soundboard* magazine and critiqued the music of many contemporary composers as a reviewer for both *Soundboard* and *Guitar Review* magazines. His flute and guitar arrangements are published by Shawnee Press and Southern Music Company.

As a soloist and ensemble performer, Wolzien has presented hundreds of programs throughout the continental United States and Hawaii, including appearances at Carnegie Recital Hall and the Los Angeles Bach Festival. He toured for Columbia Artists Management in Canada and the U.S. and has given concerts in South America, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, North Africa, and at numerous European conservatories, including the American Academy in Rome.

About the Editor

Frank Bliven, following graduation from The San Francisco Conservatory of Music in 1972, moved to Bellingham Washington where he was responsible for creating the first undergraduate Classical Guitar program at Western Washington University. Following completion of a Masters degree in classical guitar performance in 1976, he headed undergraduate and graduate guitar studies at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He immigrated to Canada in 1990 and taught guitar at Trinity Western University: he now teaches privately in his studio in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Professor Bliven specializes in Renaissance guitar, Renaissance lute, Baroque guitar, Baroque lute and early 19th-century classical guitar performance. He has edited music for the London College of Music *Classical Guitar Series*; served as the first North American classical guitar examiner for music examinations in Canada; and is active as an adjudicator for music festivals in both the U.S. and Canada. He is currently developing a web based guitar examination program available at [www.GuitarMusicianship.com](http://www.GuitarMusicianship.com).

As a soloist and early music specialist, Bliven has given numerous master classes, lectures and solo recitals for colleges and universities throughout the U.S. and Canada.

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Introduction

Musicians of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries shared many common practices and traditions, including their experiments in how best to express and convey the meaning of poetic song texts. The dance steps and choreographic sequences used in the latter decades of the Renaissance were largely unchanged in the Early Baroque, thus linking the two periods together again; and the use of many of the same ground bass formulas further demonstrates their close relationship.

Of course there are striking differences as well. For guitarists, the most radical change is found in playing technique as the older plucked, or punteado style, gave way to the new strummed, or rasgueado style around the turn of the seventeenth century. Indeed, this change to a completely chordal texture paralleled the new harmonic thinking of the time which was moving away from the contrapuntal textures that had dominated Renaissance writing.

In preparing this second volume in the Early Guitar Anthology series, I was once again fortunate to have the help of my colleagues Frank Bliven and Ester Zago. Frank took on the laborious task of editing the transcriptions and contributed to the text his many insights into Baroque guitar repertoire: my dear friend Professor Ester Zago provided the text translations for the songs in this volume, sharing with me her insights and ideas regarding these texts.

Charles Wolzien
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Early Baroque Guitar History

General Background

Instrument and Tuning

The Baroque guitar had five courses tuned in a sequence of 4th, 4th, 3rd, and 4th (from the fifth to first course--lowest to highest sounding). The numerous song books of the time make it clear that the standard pitch of the first course was e', while solo publications usually provide only relative pitches in their tuning instruction (except for Benedetto Sanseverino who specified the tuning of d' for the first course).

Made with intricate veneers and elaborate ornamental filigree, early seventeenth-century guitars were larger than their Renaissance ancestors but generally smaller than the instruments that would be produced later in the century. Along with the standard guitar tuned in e' there were chitariglias or ‘piccolo’ guitars often tuned to a' (although the term chitariglia could also refer to the standard model in e' as well) and ‘grande’ guitars tuned to lower pitches. This family of Baroque guitars was used for playing the guitar ensemble music as found in books by Fabrizio Costanzo, Giovanni Colonna and Giovanni Foscarini.

The four course guitar lived on in the Early Baroque as well. Known as the chitarino or chitarra de sette corde, it also varied in size and tuning. Juan Carlos Amat gave its tuning as being identical to the first four courses of the five course Baroque guitar (i.e. in e') while Scipione Cerreto gave instructions for tuning the first course to b'.

Baroque guitars had only one string in the first course, the remaining four being doubled in one of three ways: 1) with low octave bourdons on the fourth and fifth courses--Aa-dd'-gg-bb-e', or matched low bourdons--AA-dd-gg-bb-e', 2) with high octave stringing--aa-d'd'-gg-bb-e', or 3) with a low octave bourdon on the fourth course only--aa-dd'-gg-bb-e'. Only a couple of books specify which doubling to use: Montesardo and Sanseverino both favored bourdon tuning while Briçêño preferred a stringing with matching high octaves.

Bourdon tuning is used for most of the transcriptions in this anthology. When high octave tunings are called for in the music (e.g. in Luis de Briçêño) they are designated by an asterisk (*) placed before the bass notes in question, indicating that these notes sound an octave higher than written. While the placement of the bourdons within the courses is irrelevant when playing in the strummed style that was prevalent during this time, the performer’s choice of octave doubling will have an effect on its role as a continuo instrument (see below in Performance Practice).
Baroque guitars were often fitted with twelve frets, although some feature inlaid frets on their sound boards that reach up to the rose, which would have accommodated the playing of later Baroque pieces that explore the highest regions of fingerboard well above the twelfth fret. Apparently fret placement based on the ratio 18:17 was widespread in the seventeenth century, producing a nearly equal temperament tuning system as documented by writers like Marin Mersenne (see Endnote 1).

Sources and Notation

The following printed sources were used in making the transcriptions in this anthology:

- Juan Carlos Amat Guitarra Española... [1596] 1626
- Girolamo Montesardo Nuova inventione d’intavolatura per sonare li balletti sopra la chitarra spagnuola 1606
- Foriano Pico Nuova scelta di sonate per la chitarra spagnola [1608] 1628
- Anon Il primo libro d’intavolatura della chitarra spagnola 1618
- Benedetto Sanseverino Intavolatura facile per la chitarra alla spagnola 1620
- Giovanni Colonna
  Intavolatura di chitarra alla spagnuola 1620
  Il secundo libro d’intavolatura di chittarra alla spagnuola 1620
  Il terzo libro d’intavolatura di chitarra alla spagnuola 1623
  Intavolatura di chitarra spagnuola del primo, secondo, terzo, quatro libro...Nuovamente Ristampata [1627] 1637
- Carlo Milanuzzi Secondo scherzo delle ariose vaghezze... [1622] 1625
- Luis de Briçeno Metodo muí facilissimo para aprender a tañar la guitarra a lo español 1626
- Pietro Millioni
  Quarta impressione del primo, secondo, et terzo libro d’intavolatura... 1627
  Seconda impressione del quarto libro d’intavolatura di chitarra spagnola... 1627
  Prima impressione del quinto libro d’intavolatura di chitarra spagnola...1627
- Fabrizio Costanzo Fior novello Libro I...1627
- Giovanni Foscarini
  Il primo, secondo, e terzo libro della chitarra spagnola c1630

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Song Books:

• Girolamo Kapsberger  *Libro primo di arie*  1612
• Girolamo Montesardo  *I Lieti giorni di Napoli...con le lettere dell’alfabeto per la chitarra*  1612
• Raffaello Rontani  *Varie musiche*  1618
• Giovanni Pietro Berti  *Cantade et Arie...con le lettere dell’alfabeto per la chitarra Spagnola*  1624
• Alessandro Grandi  *Cantade et Arie...con le lettere dell’alfabeto per la chitarra spagnola*  1626
• Carlo Milanuzzi  
  *Primo scherzo delle arioso vaghezze*  1622
  *Settimo libro delle ariose vaghezze*  1630
• Sigismondo D’India  
  *Le Musiche del cavalier...con l’alfabeto per la chitara alla spagnola libro quarto*  1621
  *Le Musiche del cavalier...con l’alfabeto per la chitara alla spagnola libro quinto*  1623
• Etienne Moulinie  *Airs de cour...troisieme livre*  1629

Tablature in solo guitar publications dating from the early decades of the seventeenth century was new in conception and ever changing in format, its creation allowing composers to notate the strummed or *rasgueado* style of playing rather than the plucked or *punteado* style found in Renaissance tablature.

Aside from sources such as Juan Carlos Amat’s *Guitarra Española...*[1596], Luis de Bričeño’s 1626 *Metodo muy facilíssimo para aprender a tañar la guitarra a lo español*, or Etienne Moulinie’s *Airs de cour...troisieme livre*, early seventeenth-century books were notated in Italian *alfabeto* tablature where chords are represented by letters of the alphabet. While slight variations in the correspondence of letters to chords do occur between certain books, there is no doubt as to the exact pitches of the chord forms to be played. The notation of rhythm, on the other hand, was inconsistent and often quite ambiguous.

With the publication of Sanseverino’s 1620 *Intavolatura facile per la chitarra alla spagnuola* an exacting system of *alfabeto* notation emerged that included time signatures, note values, and bar lines (in addition to chords and strumming patterns). This tablature synthesized all of the various early seventeenth-century formats and is different from its Renaissance predecessors not only in the way it indicates pitches and texture, but also in its presentation of rhythm. Whereas bar lines in Renaissance tablature usually guided the eye by serving as a visual manifestation of the beat, or *tactus* (a steady and undifferenti-
GROUNDS and SUNG DANCES

Overview of Genre and Composers

The romanesca and passamezzo of the Renaissance continued to flourish in the early Baroque where they were joined by a variety of forms that were new to the guitar repertoire at this time. Like the passamezzo, which functioned as a ground as well as a dance, some of these new grounds also doubled as dances, and were related to specific melodies as well (*i.e.* sung dances), thus expanding on the Renaissance practice of intertwining dances rhythms, ground formulas and popular song tunes. While only a few grounds were written for solo guitar during the Renaissance, they became an extremely popular genre in the Baroque. Grounds and sung dances like the passacaglia, bergamasca, ruggiero, tenor di Napoli, spagnoletta, villano, monica, aria di Fiorenza, folia, sarabande and chaconne fill every major guitar publication of the early seventeenth century.

Characteristics

Early seventeenth-century grounds were rudimentary in comparison to their Renaissance predecessors. Many hold no interest as pieces *per se*, but rather served as exercises for learning chord forms or progressions, or as didactic studies for learning song accompaniments. As time passed, these simple chord schemes became longer and more complex through: 1) the addition of extra chords inserted between the primary chords of the row (a technique seen in various Renaissance grounds and dances), 2) the employment of bar chord forms that could be shifted around the entire fingerboard, 3) the addition of ornamental strumming patterns, and 4) by the creation of new "dissonant" chords referred to variously as *alfabeto falso* or *lettere tagliata*. These ‘false’ or ‘cut’ chords contained unprepared dissonances which, in the case of dominant seventh chords or suspended 4(-3) chords, were typical of the period’s harmonic vocabulary: however, other chords were simply dissonant and unusual, like the L chord which consisted of a C minor sonority with an added D-natural (see Endnote 5).

Harmonic Patterns

Coming from the Spanish *pasar* (to walk) and *calle* (street), the *pasacalle* originated in Spain where it was used to accompanying strolling or promenading. Montesardo referred to his *Passacaglias* (exs. 1 and 2) as ritornellos, their I-IV-V-I chord progression being typical of the genre. Guitar tutors typically began with passacaglias that would often cover many of the twenty-four pitch centers. Once learned, these chord progressions would allow guitarists to accompany a wide variety of songs, as Briñano tells us in his “Rule for knowing all the theater entrances, which are called passacaglie; which are necessary in order to sing every kind of *letrilla* and serious *romance*, whether Spanish or

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4. Passacallo passeggiato

Giovanni Colonna

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DANCES

Overview of Genre and Composers

Many of the formal court dances of the late Renaissance which were described in tutors by Arbeau, Caroso, and Negri continued to be popular during the Early Baroque (they are cited above). Published around the turn of the seventeenth century, these tutors not only provided instructions and descriptions of late sixteenth-century dances; they also influenced dancing styles well into the seventeenth century. Caroso’s Nobilità di dama of 1600 was reissued in 1630 and Negri’s Le Gratie d’Amore was translated into Spanish in the same year: further, the steps described by the Spaniard Esquivel Navarro in his Discur sos... of 1642 are similar to those found in Negri and Caroso, thus documenting the continuing popularity of these Italian dance manuals.

Arbeau’s choreography was cited exclusively in volume one of this anthology due to the fact that essentially all Renaissance guitar dances are French; the Italian and Spanish dances that dominate this second volume are illuminated by the choreographic descriptions provided by Caroso, Negri, and Esquivel Navarro. The 1623 publication in England of F. de Lauze’s Apologie de la Danse (translation Joan Wildeblood) contains rather vague choreographic descriptions without any accompanying musical examples for guidance, but nonetheless points toward what has been called a smoother and more ‘gliding’ style of French dancing at this time. Some of the more athletic leaps described by Arbeau, like the caprioles, (as well as the spinning figure of the pirouette) were largely ignored by de Lauze and grouped under “steps which look like those of a juggler.” Preference was given to “sedate,” “elegant,” and smooth “connecting steps” (liasons).

Characteristics

Dance Types

The pavan, passamezzo, allemande, gaillard, tourdion, and branle all survived the turn of the seventeenth century. While a variety of branles can be found in the French Renaissance guitar books, the branle of Malta is not one of them. Adrian Le Roy created some for the lute however, and the dance is described by Arbeau as well: “Some of the Knights of Malta devised a ballet for a Court masquerade in which an equal number of men and damsels, dressed in Turkish costume, danced a round branle, comprising certain gestures and twisting movements of the body, which they called the Maltese branle.” The Brando di Malta and Brando di Malta con repicchi (ex. 9a and b) in this volume are descended from that lineage. Whereas Arbeau gives an example of the Maltese branle moving in three measure groupings that are typical of the branle simple, Millioni’s dances feature two-measure groupings in the first 4+4 phrase with a concluding five bar phrase divided by articulations into three single measures and a final two measure unit to end the dance.

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9b. Brando di Malta con repicchi

[Each repicchi ornament of four sixteenth notes is fingered as shown in the first beat below as *agogi*. Millioni explained that the last up stroke on the fourth sixteenth involved striking only the melody note and not the entire chord. See page 16 above.]

Pietro Millioni

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SONGS

Overview of Genre and Composers

Parisian presses issued only a few books during the early years of the Baroque period, the most important being the 1629 *Airs de Cour avec tablature de luth et de guitare...Troisieme livre* by Moulinie. The air de cour was a direct descendant of the voix de ville (Le Roy himself noted that the term air de cour had replaced that of voix de ville as early as 1571 in the preface of his *Livre d’airs de cour mis sur le luth*). They share the same humanist concern for textural expression and employ the same strophic forms, simple melodies, and underpinning dance rhythms and/or ground progressions (see *Early Guitar Anthology I: The Renaissance c1540-1580*).

The *Metodo mui facilissimo para aprender a tañar la guitarra* of Luis de Briçeno was also published in Paris, however the songs in this book are devoid of melodies and have only texts with accompanying chord symbols for strumming (improvising strummed guitar accompaniments for songs is a tradition that dates back to the early years of the sixteenth century, according to Juan Bermudo’s *Declaracion e instrumentos musicales*, 1555).

Italy, on the other hand, witnessed the production of some one hundred volumes of songs with guitar alfabeto. Known today under the title of monody, these collections feature strophic songs (related to the air) and through composed pieces (descended from the madrigal). As mentioned in the section on Notation above, this repertoire was written with a single vocal line (rarely with two vocal lines), an accompanying basso continuo line, and guitar alfabeto letters placed over either the basso or the melodic line. Some books include songs that appear only as texts with accompanying chord symbols (like those in Briçeno), leaving it to the performer to supply a tune that was tailored to fit the scansion of the poetry, be it terza rima, sonetti, etc. Since the realization of the basso part was not limited to specific instruments but invited the use of any ‘appropriate’ instruments, the guitar can be used for accompanying music in several hundred other books as well, including the vocal works of leading composers such as Caccini, Monteverdi, and Peri, to name a few. This vast repertoire attests to the guitar’s role as an important, and indeed often a preferred continuo instrument of the time, especially for accompanying ‘lighter’ songs.

Characteristics

Text Settings

Renaissance composers borrowed ideas, terminology, and figures from the art of rhetoric in their pursuit of finding the best way to express the meaning of their song texts. Early Baroque composers continued in this quest, becoming increasingly obsessed with linking words and music that led eventually to the development of a new declamatory
9. Sprezzami

Sigismondo d'India

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