

THE TRANSCRIPTION FOR TWO DOUBLE BASSES OF SELECTIONS FROM
PIÈCES DE VIOLES, QUATRIÈME LIVRE, DEUXIÈME PARTIE:
SUITE D'UN GOÛT ÉTRANGER
BY MARIN MARAIS

A Monograph

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ABSTRACT

Marin Marais (1656-1728) was one of the most celebrated bass viol composer-performers of the French school from the late seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century. The purpose of this project is to introduce some of his music to double bass players through transcriptions.

The monograph starts with an overview on the importance of transcriptions in double bass literature. A historical background of the viol and its relation to the double bass are discussed in the second chapter. The third chapter reviews Marin Marais's biographical sketch and some of his most significant compositions. The transcription process of eight selected bass viol pieces from Marais' *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* is shown in Chapter IV. The complete music score of the double bass transcription is presented in Chapter V. The final chapter discusses the French viol performance practice in the baroque period.

CHAPTER I

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSCRIPTIONS IN DOUBLE BASS MUSIC

There are very few solo double bass compositions available today which were written by famous composers before the twentieth century, though, many prominent composers such as Reinhold Moritzovich Gliere, Paul Hindemith, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Vincent Persichetti, and others, have written music for solo double bass since the beginning of 1900. Performer-composers like Johann Matthias Sperger (1750-1812), Domenico Dragonetti (1763-1846), and Giovanni Bottesini (1812-1889), among others, have contributed immensely to the solo and chamber double bass literature prior to 1900. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Franz Schubert composed well-known chamber music which includes a double bass; however, they never composed for solo double bass.

The reason why double bass as a solo instrument was overlooked by composers for a very long time is probably because of its limited high register, its huge size, thick strings, and technical limitation of players. Moreover, unlike instruments in the violin family, the different set-ups and tuning systems used on double bass were possibly another reason for this phenomenon. Even today, there still exist different set ups for double bass, for example: four-stringed double bass with or without C-extension, five-stringed double bass, and different tuning systems such as orchestra tuning of G D A' E', solo tuning of A E B' F#, five-stringed double bass with the lowest string tuned to C' or B', four-stringed bass with the fourth string tuned down to a low C, and fifth tuning system of A D G' C'. The lost double bass concerto by Franz Josef Haydn (1732-1809) was tuned to A F# D A' F'. This tuning system is referred as "Viennese Tuning" by modern bassists.¹ Furthermore, the different set-ups, tuning systems used

¹ Joëlle Morton, "Haydn's missing Double Bass Concerto," *Bass World: the journal of the International Society of Bassists*, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (1996): 29.

on double bass caused the different performance practices, thus made composing for the instrument more difficult.

Transcriptions have become an essential part in double bass literature because of the lack of first-class compositions by great composers. Lucas Drew, the renowned double bass educator and professor of music at the University of Miami, reveals that most of the Baroque sonatas available for double bass by Antonio Vivaldi (c.1685-1741), Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725), J. S. Bach (1685-1750), Georg Phillip Telemann (1681-1767), George Frederick Handel (1685-1759) and others are transcriptions originally for viola da gamba, violoncello or other stringed instruments.² Historically, the famous ‘performer-composers’ such as Dragonetti Dragonetti, Giovanni Bottesini, Serge Kousseviszky (1874-1951) as well as Franz Simandl (1840-1912) wrote both original double bass compositions and transcribed music. Lucas Drew pointed out: “In fact, for a hundred year (circa 1820-1920) it (transcribed and original double bass compositions by Dragonetti, Bottesini, Koussevisky and Simandl) possibly was the main part of the double bassist’s solo literature.”³

The Italian double bass virtuoso Dragonetti not only re-invented the use of German bow (held with palm angled upwards, as used for instruments of the viol family), but also wrote transcriptions for double bass. Dragonetti’s transcription of Beethoven’s cello sonata Op.5, no. 2 probably changed the role of double bass in Beethoven’s orchestra works. Based on the book *Thayer’s life of Beethoven*, the author vividly describes the famous encounter between Dragonetti and Beethoven:

In the spring of 1799, Dragonetti met with Beethoven in Vienna. Beethoven had been told that his new friend could execute violoncello music upon his huge instrument and one morning, when Dragonetti called at his room, Beethoven expressed the desire

² Samuel and Sada Applebaum, “Lucas Drew,” *The Way They Play*, 14 vols. (Neptune City, N. J.: Paganini Publications, Inc., 1973, II), 313.

³ *Ibid.*, 315.

to hear a sonata. The contrabass was sent for, and the Sonata, no. 2, of Op. 5 was selected. Beethoven played his part, with his eyes immovably fixed upon his companion, and, in the finale, where the arpeggios occur, was so delighted and excited that at the close he sprang up and threw his arms around both player and instrument. The unlucky contrabassists of orchestras had frequent occasions during the next few years to know that this new revelation of the powers and possibilities of their instrument to Beethoven was not forgotten.⁴

Another virtuoso Italian double bassist, Bottesini, often used transcribed arias from operas by Rossini, Bellini, and Verdi in his original double bass compositions. In the twentieth century, several well-known double bassists such as Fred Zimmermann, Oscar G. Zimmerman, Klaus Trumpf, Lucas Drew and Stuart Sankey have transcribed an enormous amount of music for double bass. The list includes Baroque sonatas by J. S. Bach, Handel, Telemann, Vivaldi, and Boccherini, and so on; classical concertos, sonatas by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven; Romantic sonatas, concertos, and small pieces by Brahms, Chopin, Cesar Franck, Mendelssohn, Paganini, Rachmaninoff, Saint-Saens, Schubert, Schumann, and Tchaikovsky, among others. The double bass pedagogue, Stuart Sankey, states the importance of transcriptions:

My own favorite music for solo bass is transcriptions of music originally written for other instruments. This is my thesis — since the double bassist cannot draw upon a standard body of literature to compare with that of violinists or cellists, he must therefore utilize existing compositions which are profitable, in the musical sense, as well as appealing to the ear. Certainly there is more to be learned from the music of Bach, Handel and Schubert than that of Van Hall, Schwabe, Sperger or Dragonetti. I feel that bassists must create a new body of bass literature predicated on the works of the masters.⁵

In the third edition of “Comprehensive Catalog of Available Literature for the Double Bass,” published in 1974, Murray Grodner listed most standard double bass repertoire. It clearly shows that a vast body of solo double bass music is transcriptions. The large number of

⁴ Alexander Wheelock Thayer (1967). *Thayer's life of Beethoven*, Rev. and edited by Elliot Forbes (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), 208.

⁵ Samuel Applebaum and Henry Roth, “Stuart Sankey,” *The Way They Play*, 14 vols. (Neptune City, N. J.: Paganini Publications, Inc., 1978, VI), 82.

transcribed pieces in the catalog confirms the importance of transcriptions for double bass as well as the need of transcriptions for solo bass.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE VIOL AND ITS RELATION TO THE DOUBLE BASS

Terms such as *gamba*, *viola da gamba*, *viol*, *bass viol*, and *violone* are confusing for many musicians because the viols are not widely used today. Also, it is rare to hear viol music in concert halls because the viols were not made for modern concert space. The terms *gamba*, *viola da gamba*, and *viol* are interchangeable. They are a set of bowed string instruments with frets, which are held downward. *Bass viol* and *violone* are two members of the viol family. The term *violone* means large viol in Italian, and is usually considered the direct ancestor of double bass.⁶

The viol can be traced back to Europe in the 12th century. It was the result of adapting the bow to the guitar-shaped instrument of antiquity.⁷ However, the practice of using the bow on the existing plucked instruments started as early as the tenth century. These instruments vary in size and shape based on the regions where they were found.⁸ The term *medieval viol* is used to refer to a large, waist fiddle, popular in 12th and 13th century Europe, which was played with the instrument held downwards and the bow supported above the palm.⁹ But, most contemporary scholars think that the viol was evolved in the fifteenth century, along with four other types of bowed instruments: the *lyra*, the *rebec*, the *crwth* and the *trumpet marine*. Meanwhile, the increasing use of counterpoint and other developments in the texture of polyphonic music created a demand for sets of melodic instruments, which were varied in size but similar in tone

⁶ Tharald Borgir, Stephen Bonta, and Alfred Planyavsky: "Violone," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 23/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

⁷ Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of The Viol* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 2.

⁸ Werner Bachmann, *The Origins of Bowing* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 55.

⁹ Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of The Viol* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 9.

quality. Among the five instruments mentioned above, only the viols and the rebecs were built in sets.¹⁰

It is a misconception that the viol family was the ancestor of the violin family. The viol and the violin family developed independently and co-existed for almost two centuries.¹¹ It is a combination of characteristics of the rebecs and the lyras developed into the violin family. The early Italian name of the violin family was viola da braccio (arm viol) because of the playing position of its direct ancestor, the viola. The Italian name of the viol family is viola da gamba (leg viol) because all the members of this family are held vertically between the knees and are played with an out-curved bow held in the palm-under position.¹² The palm-under position is similar to the holding position of double bass German bow.

The viol was made in many different sizes: pardessus (high treble), treble, alto, small tenor, tenor, bass, great bass (Klein Bass-Viol) and violone (contrabass). But only the treble, tenor and bass viols were regularly used in viol consort (ensemble music). Most viols have six strings. However, the solo bass viol used in the Baroque era often has seven strings and the pardessus has five strings. The standard tuning of the six-string viol from top string to bottom string is a sequence of 4th, 4th, major 3rd, 4th, 4th. The three major types of viols are tuned as: d'-a'-e'-c'-g-d for treble viol; g'-d'-a'-f'-c'-G for tenor viol; and d'-a'-e'-c'-G-D for bass viol. During the Baroque era, English bass viol players sometimes tuned the lowest string down to C. French bass viols of the same period often had a seventh string (low A').¹³

¹⁰ Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), viii-ix.

¹¹ Li Ting Sankey, *The Transcription for Double Bass of Two French Suites for Viola da Gamba by Roland Marais and Joseph de Boismorier* (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Miami, 1993), 9.

¹² Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), viii-ix.

¹³ Ian Woodfield, and Lucy Robinson: "Viol," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 24/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

During the Renaissance and part of the Baroque period, viols were among the noble instruments played by professional musicians and aristocrats in courts throughout Europe. Italy, England, Germany and France among others were the major regions in continental Europe, where viol flourished.

Viols were popular in Italy by the late fifteenth century. They were found in paintings in Vatican, Rome, Bologna, Orvieto, and Milan among other places.¹⁴ In the middle of the sixteenth century, Viola Bastarda which was a style of virtuoso solo bass viol playing that was favored in Italy, was first found in the madrigal improvisations of Diego Ortiz (c 1510-c 1570). The Bastarda style reached its heights in compositions by Girolamo Dalla Casa, Riccardo Rognoni, Oratio Bassani, and Vincenzo Bonizzi.¹⁵ In addition to its solo role, the viol remained to be used in ensembles. The viol ensemble playing was widely accepted by both professionals and amateurs.¹⁶ Viol ensembles were used often in vocal accompaniment such as the famous *Stile Rappresentativo* by Vincenzo Galilei (c 1520-1591). Claudio Monteverdi's scoring of *Orfeo* (1607) includes three bassi da gamba. The contrasting instrumental timbres of the three viols have an important symbolic significance in the work. As the seventeenth century progressed, the viols in Italy were gradually driven out by the violin family though it continued to be used in Germany until the middle of the century and in England and France for even longer.¹⁷ By the second quarter of the seventeenth century, Italian string continuo parts increasingly called for the new cello. Nevertheless, the viol family did not die out. In Rome, an

¹⁴ Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of The Viol* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 83-86.

¹⁵ Lucy Robinson: "Viola Bastarda," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 24/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

¹⁶ Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of The Viol* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 182.

¹⁷ Ian Woodfield, and Lucy Robinson: "Viol," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 26/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

interest in the viol was renewed in the early 18th century. Both Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725) and George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) wrote ensemble pieces including a bass viol.

The viol first came to England some time early in the reign of Henry VIII (1491-1574). However, not until 1540, the appointment of Henry VIII's complete consort of string players from Venice, Milan and Cremona, provided a strong movement towards the growth of the viol's popularity in the English and Scottish courts.¹⁸ By the mid-sixteenth century, playing the viol had come to be regarded as a very important element in the education of choirboys. Meanwhile, the children viol players of well-known schools had an especially prominent place in the ceremonial and theatrical activities. As the result of their performances, the viol was introduced to a wider audience than would have encountered the instrument if it had remained in the confines of the court.¹⁹ The long-term influence of the choirboy viol players was considerable. Although it was professional players at the court who were responsible for the initial introduction of the viol, choirboy viol-playing tradition was probably the single most influential factor in the spread of the instruments throughout English society.²⁰ Furthermore, musical genres such as the consort song and the consort anthem which had early association with the choir schools retained a prominent place in the English repertory for the viol.²¹

In the mid-sixteenth century English composers began to write textless polyphony, some of which may have been intended for performance on viols. Later, the polyphonic fantasia and pavan became the popular form of composition for viol consort. William Byrd (c. 1539-1623) and John Jenkins (1592-1678) represented the exceptional English composers for viol consort.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of The Viol* (Cambridge, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 213.

²⁰ Ibid., 227.

²¹ Ian Woodfield, and Lucy Robinson: "Viol," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 26/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

Especially, William Byrd's works for viol consort are diverse and uniformly high quality. His compositions for viol consort possess the transparency of texture, even in the most complex polyphony. Moreover, William Byrd was no doubt the greatest composer of consort songs. It is certain that viols were often used in the performance of vocal music. The English consort song, which dates from the mid-sixteenth century, was written specifically for viols and solo voice or voices, and the genre continued to flourish to the early seventeenth century. By the mid-17th century newer forms such as suite became popular. There were also changes in instrumentation. The pure consort of three to six viols was often replaced by the mix consort of violins, bass viols and organ. Instruction books on both consort and solo viol playing appeared during the 17th century. The existence of a flourishing school of solo viol playing led to some refinements of technique including the slur, the pizzicato, and the col legno. Consorts of viols continued to be popular in England longer than on the Continent. The bass viol lasted the longest among the viol family. The practice of singing to an improvised chordal accompaniment on the bass viol persisted throughout the 17th century. The bass viol remained popular with amateur musicians well into the 18th century, as both a solo and a continuo instrument.²²

The early German-Netherlandish virtuoso viol school was influenced by the English division style probably because many excellent English viol players such as Henry Butler and William Young worked in Germany and other parts of the continent due to the religious persecution brought by the establishment of the Anglican church from the late 16th century to the first half of the 17th century.²³ But, towards the end of the 17th century the German-Netherlandish viol style was influenced by the virtuoso techniques of the Italian-inspired Austro-German violin school. The incorporation of violin techniques to viol playing was because of the

²² Ibid.

²³ Li Ting Sankey, *The Transcription for Double Bass of Two French Suites for Viola da Gamba by Roland Marais and Joseph de Boismorier* (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Miami, 1993), 13.

fact that many 17th-century German-Austrian string players, such as Nicolaus Bleyer and Heinrich Franz von Biber, played both the violin and the viol.

German viol player-composers, notably Johannes Schenck, who was the most creative composer of the German-Netherlandish school introduced elements of the French dance suite and the delicate style *brisé* technique. His four surviving viol publications are the most important compositions of the German and Netherlandish tradition. Carl Friedrich Abel was the last member of the German school. His 27 unaccompanied pieces employ the array of virtuoso string techniques such as resonant arpeggio like passages and large slurs of up to 30 notes.²⁴

Bass viol was frequently used in the new Lutheran church music. The Germans were fond of consorts of low instruments. Multiple bass viols were used in many sacred works, both alongside other instruments and as a consort of their own. Fine examples were the cantatas, chorale preludes by Dieterich Buxtehude and Franz Tunder. With the increasing popularity of the Italian string quartet as the center of the 18th-century ensemble, the viol lost its position in the instrumental ensemble of Protestant church music. However, eighteenth-century composers such as Georg Philipp Telemann and C.P.E. Bach sometimes employed the unique timbre of viol for special effect, particularly in Passions and funeral compositions. J.S. Bach was one of the greatest composers of viol music in the eighteenth-century. Besides his well-know sonatas for viola da gamba, he used viol in cantatas, the Trauer Ode, and Passions.²⁵

²⁴ Ian Woodfield, and Lucy Robinson: "Viol," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 27/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

²⁵ Ian Woodfield, and Lucy Robinson: "Viol," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 27/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

In France, there was a strong late Renaissance tradition of viol playing. At first, the viol joined vocal chamber music as a member of the continuo to accompany voices, but it soon turned into a melodist, and purely instrumental genres became popular.²⁶ André Maugars (c 1580-c 1645), and Nicolas Hotman, who taught Le Sieur De Machy, Jean Rousseau and Sainte Colombe, were the early Great French viol virtuoso. From 1675 to 1760 the French virtuoso bass viol school led the rest of Europe in viol playing. Parisian viol masters like Marin Marais and Antoine Forqueray taught many foreign virtuosos. A large amount of French viol music was popular in England, Germany and the Low Countries. Marin Marais' *Pièces de violes* were particularly widely known. Other important composers were De Machy, Caix d'Hervelois, François Couperin, Roland Marais, and Jean-Baptiste Forqueray – all professional viol players except Couperin. French viol players considered the viol to be the instrument that imitated the human voice most perfectly. Nicloas Hotman's *Pièces d'harmonie* (pieces of harmony) filled with beautiful melodies imitating the voice. Sainte-Colombe was famous for his ability to imitate all the vocal graces. His viol compositions were highly idiomatic, rich with chords and ornamentation. Sainte-Colombe was also responsible for introducing silver-covered strings, and adding the seventh string (low A) to the bass viol.²⁷

There were four important French writings on viol playing published in late 1680s. The first two by De Machy and Marin Marias, are in the form of prefaces of their collections of *Pièces de viole*. The other two writings were treatises by Danoville and Jean Rousseau

²⁶ Julie Anne Sadie, *The Bass Viol in French Baroque Chamber Music* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1980, 1978), 18.

²⁷ Ian Woodfield, and Lucy Robinson: "Viol", *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 28/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

containing comprehensive instruction on playing technique, the instrument and bow, tuning and ornamentation.²⁸

French composers began to write sonatas and cantatas when solo viol playing reached its height in France. This led to the development of a chamber music style that was uniquely French. The trio sonata, which included violin, viol and continuo was a medium used by Charpentier, and François Couperin among other composers. The role of the viol was often similar to the modern day second violin or flute. The viol plays an independent part that lies above the bass line, sometimes even in the same register as the violin. Similarly, in cantatas, the viol was assigned a part which in the setting would have belonged to a treble instrument.²⁹

Both Louis XIV and Louis XV employed a viol player in their court ensembles. It was also considered fashionable for the nobility themselves to play the viol. The Duke of Orleans, Louis XV's daughter-Princess Henriette Anne, and Prince Friedrich Wilhelm all play the viol. In France, the treble viol (small size viol) remained popular long after the fall of the viol consort. The instrument was well-accepted particularly among noble ladies because it was believed to be more appropriate for women to play a small viol on their lap rather than a violin on their shoulder.³⁰

It was the French viol performer-composers, who brought the virtuoso viol playing and writing to the highest level. The phenomenon was certainly related to the aesthetic of French music at the time. French taste was moderate unlike the extreme expression in Italian music. The French style preferred short, lively gestures, with emphasis on tenderness, color, and

²⁸ Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), ix.

²⁹ Julie Anne Sadie, *The Bass Viol in French Baroque Chamber Music* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1980, 1978), 97.

³⁰ Ian Woodfield, and Lucy Robinson: "Viol," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 28/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

elegance. The viol's gentle, subtle tone and not overly big dynamic range well suited to the French music style.³¹

The origin of the double bass is closely related to the deep sounding instruments of the viol family. The name of double bass is from contre-bass, which was a general term for viols that performed the deepest parts in a symphony until the end of the eighteenth century.³² The modern double bass is considered as a part of the string section in an orchestra alongside with violin, viola, and cello of the violin family. Nonetheless, it is completely wrong to include double bass as a member of the violin family. The double bass is a result of modifications and improvements made gradually upon the bass instruments of the viol family though the violin family had a strong influence over the development of the double bass. To compare the general features of the violin and viol family, one can conclude that the violin family has four strings; it is tuned in fifths; its backs and tops are bent; its ribs are shallow; it has f-shaped sound holes, outward curving (violin) corners, high string tension; the bridge is located at center of the f-hole; and the bow is held on top of the stick. The viol family has five to seven strings; it is tuned in fourths except middle strings tuned a major third; it has flat backs, bent tops; low shoulders; it has c-shaped sound holes, inward curving (gamba) corners, low string tension, seven tied frets on the fingerboard; the bridge is located towards bottom of c-holes; and the bow is held under the stick.³³ The double bass has features from both string families: it usually has four strings sometimes five strings for extra low notes; it is tuned in fourths; it does not have frets, and have relatively high string tension; some double basses have bent backs and tops, f-shaped sound holes, violin corners, and high shoulders; others have bent tops, flat backs, c-shaped sound holes,

³¹ Li Ting Sankey, *The Transcription for Double Bass of Two French Suites for Viola da Gamba by Roland Marais and Joseph de Boismorier* (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Miami, 1993), 14.

³² Raymond Elgar, *Introduction to The Double Bass* (St. Leonards On Sea, England: Raymond Elgar, 1960), 13.

³³ Joëlle Morton, "A Bass by Any Other Name," *Double Bassists*, Vol. n21 (summer 2002): 35.

gamba corners, and sloping shoulders; some bassists hold the bow over the stick (French style); other bassists hold the bow under the stick (German style). Generally, the Germans developed the double bass along the shape of the viol, continuing the tradition of the sloping shoulders and flat back. Probably, this was a result from converting the older viol instruments to double basses.³⁴ The Italians, however, inspired by the newer violin, built early basses with violin corners and curved backs. Besides two major shaped basses, there are also other shapes of double bass such as the guitar shaped double bass by Italian maker Testore.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the contre-bass was known by the name of *grande viole basse*, *contrabasso de gamba* and *violone* among other names. Modern scholars often use ‘violone’ as the precursor of the double bass. Man-high viols were already mentioned in the late fifteenth century by court reporter Bernardo Prospero, who wrote about Spanish musicians traveling from Rome to Mantua in 1493 with “viols as big as myself.” The earliest appearance of two man-size viols was found on a fresco painted in 1509 in Vienna, Austria.³⁵

The tunings used by modern double bass and viol are more important than the sizes, shapes or names in proving their close relation. Alfred Planyavsky pointed out that it is more important to look for an early double bass tuning rather than for any particular instrument by shape or name. There were two tuning methods existed simultaneously on the violone. One used fourth tuning alone; the other used a combination of third and fourth tuning. Micheal Praetorius (1571-1621) listed several tunings for the violone used in his compositions. The six-string violone tuned to g-d-A-F-C-G’, which was labeled as ‘high tuning’ was popular.³⁶ Until the middle of

³⁴ Raymond Elgar, *Introduction to The Double Bass* (St. Leonards On Sea, England: Raymond Elgar, 1960), 18.

³⁵ Alfred Planyavsky, “Get the picture: what can we learn from the way the double bass was depicted in art in its early history?” *Double Bassists*, Vol. n17 (summer 2001): 50.

³⁶ Rodney Slatford, and Alyn Shipton: “Double bass,” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 29/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

the seventh century, the ‘high tuning’ or the G violone played their parts at the notated pitch. By the end of the same century, the function of the G violone started to change. Some theorists at the time described the instrument as a doubling instrument, playing in the sub-bass register. This is because the cello was gradually replacing the G violone in orchestras. Rather than dismissing the G violone, the composers started writing the viol parts an octave lower to function as a doubling bass.³⁷ The most interesting tuning used by Praetorius was the ‘low tuning’ for the five-string violone. It was tuned (from the top string) as G-D-A-E-D, which was very close to the modern bass tuning of G-D-A-E.³⁸

The ‘Viennese’ tuning violone (sounding an octave below written pitch) was first mentioned in a German manuscript dated in 1677. D major was the favored key for the ‘Viennese’ violone because the tuning of A-F#-D-A’-F’ contained the D major chord. Leopold Mozart judged the five-string double bass violone as follows: “An instrument can bring out the difficult passages more easily: and I have heard uncommonly beautiful interpretations of concertos, trios, and solos, etc.”³⁹

The instrument reached its peak when most of the best Viennese classical composers wrote for it in both solo and chamber compositions. Almost forty concertos as well as chamber music were composed by composers such as Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Wenzel Pichl, Johann Baptist Vanhal, Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Johannes Matthias Sperger, and Joseph Haydn. Haydn wrote violone concertante variations in his symphonies no. 6, 7, 8, 31 and 72.⁴⁰ These violone solos are played on the double bass today. Wolfgang Mozart’s obligato violone part for his concert aria

³⁷ Joëlle Morton, “A Bass by Any Other Name,” *Double Bassists*, Vol. n21 (summer 2002): 38.

³⁸ Rodney Slatford, and Alyn Shipton: “Double bass,” *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 29/8/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

³⁹ Alfred Planyavsky, *The Baroque Double Bass Violone*, trans. James Barket (Lanham, Md., and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1998), 129-130.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 128.

“per questa bella mano” (KV 612) demonstrated the highest point of classical double bass violone playing. The last representative of the Viennese double bass school was Johann Hindle (1792-1862). He gradually changed the instrument from a five-string to a four-string double bass with tuning of G-D-A-F. As a direct result of the demands of the large symphony orchestra, the lowest F note was tuned down to a low E, thus completing the common tuning system of the modern double bass. The desertion of the ‘Viennese’ tuning caused some double bass players to create a solo tuning which raised the strings a whole tone to A-E-B-F# in order to have an A string on the top. With the new solo tuning, however, some adjustments have to be made to play the classical literature of the third-fourth tuning double bass.⁴¹ In fact, the classical literature of the ‘Viennese’ tuning double bass is an important part of the modern double bass literature. There were many other types of tuning systems used throughout the double bass history. Among them, the three-string double bass which tuned to G-D-A, was the favorite of the celebrated double bass virtuoso Domenico Dragonetti (1763-1846), and Giovanni Bottesini (1812-1889); the five-string double bass which tuned to G-D-A-E-C, or G-D-A-E-B were developed because of the increasing demand of the low notes in compositions by nineteenth century composers such as Richard Wagner (1813-1883), Richard Strauss (1864-1949), and Ottorino Respighi (1879-1936) among others. The five-string double bass is similar to the ‘low-tuning’ five-string violone because they share the same tuning on the upper four strings, and the fifth string is created due to the need of low notes.

The bass members of the viol family and double bass share the same ancestry. Although, the modern double bass no longer has frets and has only four strings (common for solo double bass) which are made of steel and have relatively high tension compared to viols, it still has the

⁴¹ Ibid., 131-133.

tone that is closer to the bass viol than that of the cello.⁴² It is important, however, to realize that the modern double bass was developed to provide greater volume in orchestra playing; the bass viol was developed as a solo and chamber instrument, and did not need to compete with the powerful instruments in an orchestra.

This review of the historical background of the viol and its close relation to the double bass unveils the characteristics of both instruments, which is valuable in undertaking the transcription of literature from the viol to the double bass.

⁴² Li Ting Sankey, *The Transcription for Double Bass of Two French Suites for Viola da Gamba by Roland Marais and Joseph de Boismorier* (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Miami, 1993), 19.

CHAPTER III

MARIN MARAIS AND HIS *PIÈCES DE VIOLES*

Marin Marais was one of the most celebrated bass viol composers and performers in France during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Despite the reputation achieved by Marais during his lifetime, his works were forgotten along with the diminishing popularity of the viol instruments.

Marin Marais was born in Paris on May 31, 1656, and died there on August 15, 1728. His father, Vineau Marais, was a Parisian shoemaker, and his mother died early. Marais received his early musical education in a choir school under the direction of François Chaperon. There are contradictory descriptions of the choir school that Marais attended. He either studied in the choir school of the church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, or the choir school of the church of Sainte-Chapelle.⁴³ Marais learned bass viol playing from Nicolas Hotman, and Sainte-Colombe, who were both virtuoso viol players at the time. Marais perfected his playing shortly after studying with Sainte-Colombe. According to Titon Du Tillet, who wrote Marais's biography, Sainte-Colombe dismissed the young pupil after six months of studies when he discovered that Marais had surpassed him.⁴⁴ Marais was recognized as a talented soloist by the age of twenty. In 1676, he was offered a position of "musicqueur du Roy" (King's musician), which he declined, probably because he did not want to be an orchestral player. Marais married Catherine Damicourt in 1676. They had nineteen children, several of whom became important figures in French musical life. In 1685, Marais was appointed as the soloist with the "Ordinaire de la Musique de la Chambre du Roi" (Ordinary of the King's Chamber Music), a position which he

⁴³ Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), vii.

⁴⁴ Clyde H. Thompson, *Marin Marais 1656-1728*, Vol I (PH.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), 98.

held through the reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV, until 1725.⁴⁵ Around the same time, he became a member of the “Académie Royale de Musique” (Royal Academy of Music) under the direction of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687), who was the powerful court music director of Louis XIV. Marais later studied composition with Lully, and sometimes conducted Lully’s operas. Marais worked hard to support his large family. He retired from his court positions three years before his death in 1728. During his retirement, he kept a teaching studio, where he taught lessons two or three times a week.⁴⁶

Marin Marais was recognized as the greatest bass viol player of his era. He was called “an incomparable French violdigambist” by Johann Gottfreid Walther. Hubert le Blanc stated that Marais played the viol “like an angel”. Marais was equally famous as an exceptional composer. In the biography by Titon Du Tillet, Titon wrote: “One recognizes the fecundity and elegance of the genius of this musician by the quantity of works he has composed; One finds everywhere in them good taste and a surprising variety.”⁴⁷ In the period of almost 40 years, Marais composed a book of *Pièces en trio* (1692); four operas: *Alcide* (1693), *Ariadne et Bacchus* (1696), *Alcione* (1703), and *Semélé* (1709); five volumes of *Pièces de Violes* (1686-1725); and lost works, including a *Te Deum* and three groups of instrumental works. Although Marais’ trio sonatas, operas and other compositions were widely performed during his lifetime, his five books of *Pièces de Violes* represented the most significant part of his musical output.

Marin Marais wrote his majority works for the instrument that is commonly known as the viola da gamba today. However, it was the small bass member of the viol family, which

⁴⁵ Clyde H. Thompson, “Marin Marais’s Pièces de Violes,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI, No.4 (October 1960): 482.

⁴⁶ Clyde H. Thompson, *Marin Marais 1656-1728*, Vol I (PH.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), 116.

⁴⁷ Clyde H. Thompson, “Marin Marais’s Pièces de Violes,” *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI, No.4 (October 1960): 484.

included as many as nine different sizes of instruments, as I mentioned in the previous chapter. They were all called by the name of viola da gamba. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Marais's instrument was often referred as bass viol, or bass de viole, which had frets and seven string, tuned to d'-a-e-c-G-D-A₁.⁴⁸

The first book of *Pièces de Violes* was published in 1686, and was dedicated to Lully. It includes two parts. The first part contains four suites in D minor, D major, G minor, and A major; the second part consists of twenty pieces for two bass viols and figured bass divided into two suites in D minor and G major. The first book presents all the traditional dance forms. The basic principles of the dance sequence, which comprise *prelude*, *allemande*, *courante*, *sarabande*, and *gigue*, are maintained but there is no definite order in other dance movements.⁴⁹

The second book of *Pièces de Violes* was published in 1701, and was dedicated to his patron, the Duc d'Orléans. There are 141 pieces grouped into seven suites. The longest suite has forty-one movements, and the shortest suite has thirteen movements. The suites are in the keys of D minor, D major, G major, B minor, E minor, E major, and A major.⁵⁰ Like the first book, each suite of the second book includes one or more of the standard dance movements — *prelude*, *courante*, *sarabande*, and *gigue*, though sometimes they are separated by other pieces. In addition to the standard dance movements, *minuet*, *gavotte*, *rondeau*, and *fantaisie* appear most frequently. The rest of the pieces are other types of dances and character pieces with descriptive titles.⁵¹ The second book has a large number of technically demanding movements. The compositions reflected Marais's interest in exploiting technical aspects of the instrument.

⁴⁸ Gordon J. Kinney, *A Method for the Viola da Gamba* (Wichita, Kans.: William R. LeVine, 1979), 5.

⁴⁹ Clyde H. Thompson, "Marin Marais's Pièces de Violes," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI, No.4 (October 1960): 487-488.

⁵⁰ Bonney McDowell, *Marais and Forqueray: A Historical and Analytical Study of Their Music for Solo Bass De Viole* (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1974), 24.

⁵¹ Clyde H. Thompson, "Marin Marais's Pièces de Violes," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI, No.4 (October 1960): 491.

The third book of *Pièces de Violes* continues the style of the second book. It was published in 1711, and was dedicated to the general public. The book consists of nine suites for one bass viol and figured bass. Each suite has twelve to nineteen pieces. These are grouped into the key of A minor, A major, F major, D major, B-flat major, G minor, G major, C major, and C minor. The five basic dance movements appear in every suite. The third book also includes several special compositions that imitate other instruments, such as trumpet, guitar, theorbo.⁵²

Among the five books of *Pièces de Violes*, the fourth book is the most diversified. Marais stated in the preface: “An attempt to satisfy the different tastes of the public in respect to the viol...so that each one can find here what suits him best.”

The book is divided into three parts. The first part contains six suites set in D minor, D major, F major, A minor, A major, and E minor. The technical requirement of the six suites is relatively easy. Marais avoided the extensive use of the chords, and eliminated some of the complex dance movements such as the courante. Many dance movements have descriptive titles, and character pieces are popular in the six suites. The second part of the fourth book consists of one set of thirty-three pieces for one bass viol and figured bass. It is titled *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* (Suite in an unfamiliar style). Unlike the majority of Marais's suites, *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* does not include either a prelude or a courante. Only ten of the thirty-three pieces are the standard dance movements. All others are character pieces, intended as programmatic works.⁵³ The suite uses several keys in both major and minor modes. This contrasts the single tonality scheme in all his other suites. *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* was one of the most difficult sets of pieces composed for bass viol in the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. Each piece in the suite has a distinct character and sometimes requires special technique. The third part of

⁵² Ibid., 492.

⁵³ Clyde H. Thompson, *Marin Marais 1656-1728* Vol I (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), 139-140.

the fourth book contains two suites for three viols and figured bass. According to Marais, he was the first person ever to compose suites for three bass viols in France.⁵⁴ The two solo viols present the two upper voices, and the third viol doubles the bass line of the figured bass. Marais always used a bass viol to double the figured bass line. The difference between the two suites in the fourth book and the previous suites for two viols in the first is that the two suites for three viols contain genuine three-part writing. Although the suites for two viols in the first book use a third viol which doubles the figured bass line, there are essentially only two-parts.

Marais's fifth book of *Pièces de Violes* uses the early design of the movements in the second and third books. The fifth book was published in 1725, and was written for one bass viol and figured bass. There are seven suites with 115 pieces. All suites except the fifth contain a prelude. Most dance movements, except the *courante*, appear along with character pieces in the suites. The seventh suite appears to be the most interesting in the fifth book. Among twenty-five pieces, there are only four pieces without descriptive titles. One of the best known and unusual pieces in the seventh suite is *Le Tombeau de l'Operation de la Taille*. In that piece, Marais attempted to describe the horrors of a gall-bladder operation he experienced around 1720. The work is regarded as one of the earliest examples of French instrumental program music.⁵⁵ The five books of *Pièces de Violes* contain two distinct styles of writing: the melodic and the harmonic. The melodic style uses sublimely simple melodic expression combined only with ornamentation and simple cadential chords. The harmonic style is similar to counterpoint through its combination of melody and chords. The music of the harmonic style has complex interwoven textures.

⁵⁴ Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), xii.

⁵⁵ Clyde H. Thompson, "Marin Marais's *Pièces de Violes*," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI, No.4 (October 1960): 498.

Marin Marais's five volumes of *Pièces de Violes* established him as the most creative and original composer of viol music. These books contain more than 550 compositions for one, two, or three viols and figured bass. In sheer numbers, the books surpass the production of any other composer for the bass viol. The immensity of his accomplishment is furthered by the range of variety and artistic expression of the pieces. *Pièces de Violes* is one of the most important documents in the history of French instrumental music.

CHAPTER IV
THE DOUBLE BASS TRANSCRIPTION OF SELECTIONS FROM
SUITE D'UN GOÛT ETRANGER
BY MARIN MARAIS

In the second chapter, I discussed the historical relation between double bass and viols. One reason to transcribe bass viol music for double bass is not only because of the historical origin they share, but also because of the important similar characteristics of both instruments. Compared to the cello, the bass viol sound is a bit nasal, fragile and limited in dynamic range. Although the modern double bass is built for powerful sound in low registers, the sound in higher registers shares more characteristics with the bass viol than with the cello. Both double bass and bass viol use the fourth-interval tuning, which will result in some comparable positions on both instruments. This is another advantage of transcribing bass viol music for the double bass. Furthermore, the prefaces to Marais' five-volume *Pièces de violes* state frequently that his pieces are suitable for instruments other than the bass viol, thus convince me to choose his composition for double bass transcription.

Suite d'un Goût Etranger is written for one solo bass viol and figured bass. There are three possible combinations of continuo instruments which can be used to play the figured bass part. The most typical combination is to use a second bass viol to double the figured bass line while a harpsichord (or a theorbo⁵⁶) completes the chordal realization.⁵⁷ The combination of a second viol and harpsichord can be clearly proven in some of Marais's figured bass parts, in which he labels some lines for the viole and others for the clavecin. However, based on historical and acoustical evidence, it is possible to use only a second viol or a harpsichord to perform the figured bass part. An article entitled *Défense de la basse de viole* appeared in the music journal

⁵⁶ The theorbo belongs to the lute family, and is rarely used today.

⁵⁷ Bonney McDowell, *Marais and Forqueray: A Historical and Analytical Study of Their Music for Solo Bass De Viole* (PH.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1974), 89.

La Revue Musicale in 1928. The author, LeBlanc, vividly described the result of using a single second bass viol for the figured bass as adding a sweetness of harmony. There is also the acoustical reason for omitting one of the continuo instruments in the bass viol and harpsichord combination. The viol is tuned very close to equal-temperament because it is a fretted instrument. During the Baroque period, however, the harpsichord tuning was mean-tone. The bass viol and harpsichord combination would have created definite intonation clashes between the two instruments.⁵⁸ To follow the common practice, I chose a second double bass as the continuo instrument for the transcription of the figured bass part in *Suite d'un Goût Etranger*. The use of the second double bass provides a unified tone quality throughout the pieces. One of the most unique features in *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* is that Marais used multiple keys within the suite in contrast to the singular tonality of all his other suites.⁵⁹ The multiple key changes in the suite created an opportunity to transcribe each piece based on the most suitable key for that particular piece on the double bass. Moreover, Marais did not intend all thirty-three pieces of *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* to be performed in one concert. The performer can choose the pieces which suit him the best. Therefore, I have selected eight pieces: *Marche Tartare*, *Allemande*, *Sarabande*, *La Tartarine*, *Double*, *Feste champêtre*, *Allemande L'Asmatique*, and *Rondeau le Bijou* from *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* by following Marais's combination of dance movements and character pieces. I arranged the sequence of the movements mainly according to the original order except for the last two movements. *Allemande L'Asmatique* is originally the last piece of the eight pieces, but is not very suitable as a final movement because of its short length. Instead, *Rondeau le Bijou* has an extended, relatively complex form. Thus it is more appropriate as the final movement of the selections.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 89-91.

⁵⁹ Clyde H. Thompson, "Marin Marais's Pièces de Violes," *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI, No.4 (October 1960): 494.

Marais wrote *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* in two styles of composition, which are the manners of solo bass viol playing: *le jeu de melodie* (the melodic style) and *le jeu d'harmonie* (the harmonic style).⁶⁰ It is important to have a good understanding of the two styles for the purpose of transcribing Marais' bass viol music for the double bass. The melodic style usually comprises mostly single-part melody with occasional chords and two-part writing in third and sixth intervals. Marais's harmonic style further divides into three separate manners. The first harmonic style combines chords with melodic lines, resulting in a quasi-chordal style. The second manner has a free contrapuntal style, which gives the impression of independent lines without being strictly polyphonic. In the third manner, the harmony is dissolved into broken chords with single notes in two or more octaves. According to Clyde H. Thompson, the majority of Marais's viol composition is written in the melodic style.⁶¹ However, among the eight selected pieces from *Suite d'un Goût Etranger*, several of them, especially long pieces like *Fest champêtre* and *Rondeau le Bijou*, show a mix of the melodic and harmonic styles.

Marais was extremely specific in his notation about how his music should be played. He designed ornamentation symbols, vibrato symbols, and wrote down dynamics, fingerings, and other performance indications. Many of the ornamentation symbols became standard signs for other French viol composers as well. Marais's viol ornamentation symbols represent the specific instrumental style associated with the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century in France. Accordingly I decided to keep most of the original symbols in the transcriptions. Another reason for keeping the original symbols is that Marais leaves the interpretation of the ornaments to the judgment of the performer. The performance of the ornaments can vary significantly among different players; therefore it is unwise to notate the ornaments such as the trills or the mordents.

⁶⁰ Clyde H. Thompson, "Instrumental Style in Marin Marais's Pièces de Violes," *Recherches sur La Musique française classique*, III (1963): 75.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 76-80.

It is crucial to have the necessary knowledge of the symbols in order to transcribe and perform the pieces. The symbols are represented as follows: the *tremblement* (trill or inverted mordent) by a comma (,); the *batement* (mordent) by an x; the *harpègement* (arpeggiation) by a diagonal stroke (/) placed below the lowest note, and the *enfler* (swell) by an italic letter *e* placed above the note.⁶² I replaced two original vibrato symbols with the actual words directly below the notes. *Flatement* is the two-finger vibrato, which represents a distinctive kind of vibrato on the bass viol. It is possible to perform this kind of vibrato on the double bass. *Flatement* can be achieved by putting two fingers closely together, stopping a pitch with the first finger, and vibrating the string.⁶³ The slightly lifted second finger will consequently move with the first finger. The result is that the second finger will stop the string periodically, thus creating a unique vibrato without changing the pitch. It is not mandatory to play the two-finger vibrato in my transcriptions. An individual player can experiment with the *flatement*, and decide if he or she wants to employ it. *Plainte* is the one-finger vibrato, which is performed in the similar way to the modern vibrato on the double bass. Marais only uses two dynamic marks: *doux* (soft) and *fort* (loud). I replace them with Italian musical terms: *p* (*piano*) and *f* (*forte*), which are used more frequently than the French terms today.

Marche Tartare, *Allemande*, *Sarabande*, *La tartarine* and *Double* are the first five pieces from “*Suite d’un Goût Etranger*”. The order of first five pieces in my selections follows exactly as the original suite. Moreover, they all share the same key of E-flat major. It is essential to choose a suitably common key for the double bass transcriptions. The bass viol has a thinner, more delicate sound, and a range about an octave higher than the double bass. The bass viol also has frets, so every note sounds like an open string. The key of B-flat major is chosen

⁶² Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), x & xiii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, xviii.

for the first five pieces after experimenting with several different keys on double bass. B-flat major is a fifth above the original E-flat major, therefore five pieces will be performed in higher registers on the double bass to achieve a more delicate, and thinner sound than the lower registers. B-flat major also utilizes open strings and natural harmonics frequently; as a result, a player can perform double stops, arpeggio chords, and other technical passages more easily. It is very important not only to achieve the relatively authentic characteristics of the bass viol in the transcriptions for the double bass but also to keep the true characteristic sound of the double bass. B-flat major is not the key that reaches the highest note on the double bass, but it employs most of the strings. It is not uncommon to encounter the double bass transcriptions that are written for the G string (the highest string on the double bass); consequently the G-string transcriptions lose the lower registers, which give the characteristic sound of the double bass. The choice of the keys for the rest three pieces follows the same concepts and experimentation. *Feste champêtre* is transcribed from E minor to A minor. *Allemande L'Asmatique* is transcribed from G major to B-flat major. *Rondeau le Bijou* is transcribed from E minor to G minor. In conclusion, the choice of the keys follows the scheme of B-flat major (first five pieces), A minor, B-flat major, and G minor.

The indicated measure numbers in this chapter correspond to the measure numbers of the specific piece of transcriptions in Chapter V. Please see Chapter V when I refer to measure numbers without given examples.

Marche Tartare is among the distinct types of pieces that have been transformed into character pieces by Marais. The piece is divided into two parts: A and B. A is the first eight measures. The B part starts in m. 9, and has three endings. Each ending consists of four measures (see mm. 21-24, 25-28, 29-32 of *Marche Tartare* in Chapter V), and each is a variation

based on the previous ending. I eliminate the last repetition after the second ending in m. 28 to keep the piece interesting and fresh to listeners. Instead of going back to the beginning of B, one should keep playing to the end after m. 28.

The original solo bass viol part starts with two-part writing in thirds with occasional chords. The basso continuo part shares many of the same notes with the lower voice of the solo viol, and the lowest note of the chords (see Example 1 below).

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of 'Marche Tartare'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Solo Bass Viol' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Basso Continuo'. Both staves are in a bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). The Solo Bass Viol part begins with a two-part writing in thirds, followed by chords. The Basso Continuo part shares many of the same notes with the lower voice of the solo viol, and the lowest note of the chords.

Example 1. *Marche Tartare*, mm. 1-4

It would be awkward to play every double stop, and the chord with tied running notes on the double bass, therefore I eliminated the lower voice and the chord of the solo bass viol in the transcription. This will produce a much cleaner texture between two double basses because the basso continuo part is not doubling the lower voice of the solo part anymore. Then, I assign the root note, E-flat, of the chord to the basso continuo part. In the transcription key of B-flat major, the third of the B-flat chord is D, which is an open string on the double bass. The strings vibrate a lot better when one of the double stop notes is an open string. The arrangement also frees the player of the first double bass part to perform the running notes accurately while still keeping the chord. Thus, the transcription of the first four measures of *Marche Tartare* for two double basses is completed (see Example 2).

Example 2. Transcription of *Marche Tartare*, mm. 1-4

The small running notes before the chord in Example 2 are not grace notes. They are to make the smooth connection between the note F and the previous note D. Marais's grace note is called *port de voix*, which is a single small written-out grace note. It should not be confused with the runs (*coulades* in French).⁶⁴ The transcription for the rest of the piece follows the same process. The lower two notes of the chords in mm. 5-6 and 9-13 are given to the second double bass. An open string or a natural harmonic is applied in either the lower note or the upper note of most double notes, and sometimes both an open string and a natural harmonic are used (see mm. 5 and 10-13 in Chapter 5, *Marche Tartare*). For example: the lower note D in m. 10 and upper note G in m. 11 are natural harmonics; both an open string G and a natural harmonic note D are employed in m. 5. Two four-note chords appear in *Marche Tartare*. The first one is a dominant chord with G suspension in m. 15. I re-assign the bottom two notes of the chord: D and A to the second double bass, thus achieving an open D string for the second double bass, and a harmonic G for the first double bass. The second four-note chord is the E-flat major chord with the doubled root in m. 20. The notes are re-assigned in the same fashion as the previous four-note chord. Although neither an open string nor a harmonic note is used in the second double bass part, the double notes can be executed effortlessly because of the easy hand position. The final chord of the piece is a B-flat, F, B-flat chord. To attain an open and serene ending, I eliminate the note F from the chord, so the final measure is a B-flat octave in the two double bass parts.

⁶⁴ Ibid., x.

Generally, I keep the original spacing between two parts, but the occasional modifications at the octave in both double bass parts are necessary due to the range and certain technical problems. For example, the first double bass part has been raised an octave in mm. 27-28 to shorten the distance of the interval leap to the first note in m. 29.

The origin of the *allemande* is from Germany. It first appeared in the middle of the sixteenth century as a dance in moderate duple time. In the seventeenth century, the *allemande* was developed to a slow composition in duple or quadruple meter. *Allemande* is the initial dance movement in all of Marais' suites including *Suite d'un Goût Etranger*.⁶⁵ Here, the *Allemande* appears as the initial dance movement after the first character piece, *Marche Tartare*. There are two types of *allemande* in Marais' compositions. This *Allemande* belongs to the first type, which has a grave character, and is close to the characteristics of the original dance.⁶⁶ It is in a slow quadruple meter. The mood is majestic and serious, and the performer must not rush though the thirty-second notes in the piece (see mm. 2-4 of *Allemande* in Chapter V). The second type of *allemande* has a light character. I will further discuss the second type in the *Allemande L'Asmatique* movement.

Allemande comprises the typical binary form of A - B structure, and the A section is repeated. Marais wrote the *Allemande* mostly in broken-chord style, which consists of scale patterns, chord figures, or a mixture of the two. The style is also known as "breaking the ground" in seventeenth-century England, and often associated with playing divisions.⁶⁷

Generally, the first note of the solo viol part in most measures shares the same bass note of the

⁶⁵ Clyde H. Thompson, *Marin Marais 1656-1728* Vol I (PH.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), 310.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 310-311.

⁶⁷ Clyde H. Thompson, "Instrumental Style in Marin Marais's Pièces de Violes," *Recherches sur La Musique française classique*, III (1963): 82.

figured bass part. The occasional chord is written in either the beginning of a phrase or the end of a phrase (see Example 3 below).

Example 3. *Allemande*, mm. 7-8

Allemande is not a difficult piece to transcribe for two double basses because the broken-chord style is easily adaptable on the double bass. However, alterations to occasional chords and two-part writings are needed. In mm. 12 and 18, I eliminated the lower voice of the two-part writing for the first double bass because of the clumsy fingerings on the double bass. Four chords are written in mm. 4, 5, 8, and 19. The re-writing of the chords follows the same concept as in *Marche Tartare*. I completely remove the F major chord from the third beat in m. 8 and, replace it with a single note F for the first double bass. This is because the F major chord is extremely awkward to play within the register. The original chord in m. 19 is a non-arpeggio six-note major chord, built on tonic. It is not possible to play on the double bass. I re-write the chord as an arpeggio three-note chord consisting of two roots in an octave and a third above the bass root (see Example 4 below).

Example 4. *Allemande*, mm. 19

The new chord gives the impression of a full B flat major chord because the resonant natural harmonic D is embedded as the third of the chord. Some minor changes in octaves are made in

the second double bass part. For example, from the sixteen notes in m. 7 to m. 8, the bass line is raised an octave to achieve the clean texture.

The *sarabande* was originally a happy, fast dance from Spain. It was introduced to France in the middle of the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, the fast tempo slowed down, and mood of the dance changed to somewhat melancholy.⁶⁸ The *Sarabande* from *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* is characterized by the same mood of tender sadness. It represents the purest manifestation of *le jeu de melodie* (the melodic style) composition. It is in slow triple meter, and A-B binary form. The melody consists of mostly stepwise single line with periodical, wider intervals and leaps; therefore, it is not too difficult to be transcribed for the double bass. From m. 10 to m. 12, originally, there is two-part writing in thirds for the solo bass viol. However, the figured bass has the unison notes of the lower voice in the two-part writing. In the transcription, I simply removed the lower voice from the two-part writing to ease the technical difficulties for the first double bass and to lighten the sonority between two double basses. The second double bass keeps the original figured bass line to complete the lower voice of the first double bass part (see mm. 10-12 of *Sarabande* in Chapter 5). Two melodic phrases with chordal realization for the solo bass viol appear in *Sarabande*. The first phrase is shown in Example 5.

The image shows a musical score for two instruments: Solo Bass Viol and Basso Continuo. The Solo Bass Viol part is written in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of three measures of chords. The first measure has a chord of F4, B-flat4, and D5. The second measure has a chord of F4, B-flat4, and D5. The third measure has a chord of F4, B-flat4, and D5. The Basso Continuo part is written in a bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It consists of three measures of notes: F3, B-flat3, and D4 in the first measure; F3, B-flat3, and D4 in the second measure; and F3, B-flat3, and D4 in the third measure.

Example 5. *Sarabande*, mm. 5-7

The bass line of the continuo has the same note as the lowest note of each chord in the solo bass viol part. I eliminated the bass note from the most chords except the first inversion of E-flat

⁶⁸ Clyde H. Thompson, *Marin Marais 1656-1728*, Vol I (PH.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), 313.

major chord in m. 6, and the E-flat major chord in m. 7. I removed the B-flat from the inverted E-flat chord, and the E-flat and B-flat from the final E-flat chord, to utilize the natural D harmonic in the transcription key of B-flat major. The chord reduction is shown in Example 6.

The image shows a musical score for two solo bass parts, labeled 'Solo Bass I' and 'Solo Bass II'. The music is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. Solo Bass I (treble clef) plays chords in measures 5, 6, and 7. Solo Bass II (bass clef) plays a single note in each measure. The notes for Solo Bass II are: F2 in m. 5, F2 in m. 6, and F2 in m. 7.

Example 6. Transcription of *Sarabande*, mm. 5-7

The second melodic phrase with chordal realization is from m. 13 to m. 15. I re-assign some of the chordal notes in the first double bass part to the second double bass in order to complete the chordal realization on the double bass.

La Tartarine is a character piece (*pièce de caractère*) that follows the binary form of the dance movements. It is in compound duple meter of moderate tempo. The mood of the piece is light and joyful. *Double* is one of the special movements of the French suite in the seventeenth century. It is a repetition piece of the previous movement in either diminished or ornamented form. Marais uses *doubles* for *allemandes*, *courantes*, *gigues*, and sometimes character pieces.⁶⁹ In this case, the *Double* is a repetition movement of a character piece, *La Tartarine*. It is a highly ornamented and virtuoso piece, which maintains the same meter, tempo and form as in *La Tartarine*. According to Marais' instruction, *Double* can be performed in conjunction with *La Tartarine*. Therefore, after the completion of performing *La Tartarine*, the order of mixed *Double* will be: repetition of *La Tartarine*, A section; *Double*, A section; repetition of *La Tartarine*, B section; and *Double*, B section. To avoid the confusion, I write out the actual order of each section of both movements as shown in Chapter V.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 318-319.

Both *La Tartarine* and *Double* consist of melodies mostly based on chord outlines with occasional two-part writing. This type of melodic writing style shows a strong influence from the harmonic writing style (*le deu d'harmonie*). In both pieces, the harmony plays a crucial role in the thematic formation. The writing style represents more of a specific instrumental style. In *La Tartarine*, the lower voice of the two-part writing in the solo bass viol has the same notes with the figured bass (see Example 7).

Example 7. *La Tartarine*, mm. 1-3

In the double bass transcription, I have to get rid of the octave writing, and change the dotted quarter note to three eighth notes in m. 3 for the second double bass in order to accommodate the lower voice of the two-part writing of the first double bass (see Example 8 below).

Example 8. Transcription of *La Tartarine*, mm. 1-3

The elimination of the low octave notes in the second double bass keeps the melodic flow smooth and less hectic. The rest of the transcription of *La Tartarine* follows the similar idea.

Double contains mostly single-line melodies established by running sixteenth notes in chord figures and patterns (see mm. 23-27 and 41 to the end of *La Tartarine et Double* in Chapter 5).

It is not difficult to adapt single-line melodies on the double bass. Generally, the figured bass in

Double repeats the same notes as in *La Tartarine*. But, I kept the octave writing for the second double bass in *Double* to make the bass line interesting. The octave writing of the eighth notes also achieves a more active bass line to accompany the sixteenth-note virtuoso passages for the first double bass. There are only five chords in both pieces. I remove all the chord notes, except the melodic notes, because chordal playing is not well suitable in relatively fast tempo pieces.

Feste champêtre is the most complex movement among the eight pieces. It consists of four sections: a dance-like *rondeau*, followed by a *Muzette*, then a *Tambourin*, and finishing with the recurring theme of the *rondeau*. *Feste champêtre* is a very interesting character piece because it includes three types of dances and two keys within the movement. The *rondeau* is a type of dances with extended forms (see mm. 1-86 of *Feste champêtre* in Chapter V). It contains a repeated theme with contrasting sections; and ends with the theme.⁷⁰ The *muzette* is a dance that was associated with bagpipe instruments in the early eighteenth century. Marais' *Muzette* (mm. 87-102) is easily recognized by a drone bass persisting throughout the entire dance.⁷¹

Tambourin (mm. 103-138) is a piece of music based on a French folkdance accompanied by pipe and tabor (a type of drum).⁷² *Tambourin* is from the French word *Tambourine* which is an old type of drum. The *tambourin* became a dance movement in the eighteenth century; and is usually in duple meter. The dance consists of a single accented bass note in tonic emphasizing the rhythm on the down beat to simulate the drum.

Feste champêtre is a very difficult piece to transcribe for the double bass because Marais uses many large interval leaps resulting in extended ranges (mm. 26-28); and he employs the chordal writing in the entire *Muzette*. Therefore, a suitable key for the double bass transcription

⁷⁰ Ibid., 320-321.

⁷¹ Ibid., 320.

⁷² Meredith Ellis Little: "Tambourin," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed 25/9/2006), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>.

is crucial particularly in this movement. After extensive experimentation on different keys, A minor is chosen for the transcription from the original key of E minor because it utilizes most of the open strings and natural harmonics to keep the large leaps and chordal writing in the original music. Example 9 demonstrates the mixed use of open strings and natural harmonics for the large interval leaps.

Example 9. Transcription of *Feste champêtre*, mm. 26-28

The open strings are marked with the abbreviated letters O.S.; and the natural harmonics are marked with a circle directly above or below the notes. In m. 28, I have to transcribe the first D an octave higher from the original music for the first double bass because the original note is below the lowest note E on a four-string double bass. Example 9 also displays the broken-chord writing style, which I have discussed previously in the transcription of *Allemande*. *Feste champêtre* consists of both melodic style and harmonic style writings. The *rondeau* is mostly comprised of single-line melodies in either melodic style or broken-chord style. The rest of the broken-chord style melodies do not include the extreme wide-leaping intervals as shown in Example 9; thus they are easier to transcribe.

In the *Muzette*, the solo bass viol plays step-wise melodies in thirds with a drone bass line underneath, while the figured bass shares the same sustained bass line (see Example 10). It is in E major, which is the parallel key of the original E minor.

Example 10. *Muzette* from *Feste champêtre*, mm. 87-102

In the transcription key of A major, I completely remove the sustained whole notes from the figured bass, and substitute it with the lower-voice of the two-part melody and the drone bass line of the first double bass part (see Example 11).

Example 11. Transcription of *Muzette* from *Feste champêtre*, mm. 87-102

I transposed the drone bass note A one octave below the original register to take advantage of the open A string. The open-string note sustains much longer than fingered notes; therefore the bass note A will continue to sound after each arpeggio double notes in the second double bass part.

After the *Muzette*, *Tambourin* returns to the original minor key. It contains single-line melodies with occasional two-part writings for the solo bass viol. There is also a chord built on the same bass note on the down beat of each measure through the entire section. The figured bass simply has the same bass note of the chord on each down beat (see Example 12).

Example 12. *Tambourin* from *Feste champêtre*, mm. 111-114

I moved the lower two chord notes, and the lower voice of the two-part writing to the second double bass part. However, I have to change the inner note C of the two-part writing to note A in m. 114 to remain the same bass note of the chord (see Example 13 below).

Example 13. Transcription of *Tambourin* from *Feste champêtre*, mm. 111-114

The last section is the return of the original *rondeau* theme from the first section. Although it is ornamented, the section is not problematic to transcribe for the double bass.

Allemande L'Asmatique belongs to the second type of *allemandes* as I mentioned earlier in this chapter. The characteristics of this type of *allemande* are light, fluid, but not hurried.⁷³ Like the more serious type of *allemandes*, *Allemande L'Asmatique* is in quadruple meter and binary form. The mood of the piece however is happier, and the tempo is faster than the serious type of *allemandes*. Marais employs some of the more interesting rhythms in the piece. For example, there are off-beat rhythms, dotted rhythms, syncopations and so on. Unlike the rest of the pieces in the selection, *Allemande L'Asmatique* has a very solo-like figured bass line. It imitates the solo bass viol part both melodically and rhythmically, and sometimes plays contrasting rhythms. The writing style of the piece is typically melodic. It consists of largely single melodic lines, with very little two-part writing, and occasional chords. Once the suitable key of B-flat major is chosen for the double bass, the rest of the transcription process is simply. I remove the two-part writing and most chords from the first double bass because double-stops and chords are very

⁷³ Clyde H. Thompson, *Marin Marais 1656-1728*, Vol I (PH.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), 311.

awkward to perform on the double bass in a fast tempo. The final chord for the ending is remained in the first double bass part. I made minor modifications to the chord (see Example 14 below).

Example 14. *Allemande L'Asmatique*, final measure

I change the fifth of the final major chord to the third in the transcription to utilize the open D string on the double bass. And, I add a *harpègement* sign to indicate the *arpeggiation* of the B flat chord because three strings are used to perform the chord on the double bass. In the second double bass part, I have to raise an octave in few passages because some of the notes are below the four-string double bass range. For example, the notes in m.10 was originally suppose to be one octave lower than the transcribed part, but the low C is below the lowest register. The raised passages also reduce the deep sonority in the low registers to cope with the light, happy mood of the piece.

Rondeau le bijou is an extended dance movement that includes a descriptive title. The form structure is the same as the rondeau in *Feste champêtre*. The main theme always returns after each new section; consequently the piece ends with the theme. There are four sections after the initial theme (mm. 1-5) in *Rondeau le bijou*. Each section can be easily identified as I write out every return of the main theme. The piece generally consists of single-line melodies in both melodic and broken-chord writing styles. There are seven different chords (mm. 5, 27-28, 43-44) in the movement. The double bass transcription of the chords follows the identical concepts, which I have thoroughly discussed earlier in this chapter. I re-assign some of the chord notes from the first double bass to the second double bass, and make use of the open strings and

natural harmonics as much as possible. Marais occasionally employs very low range of the bass viol in *Rondeau le bijou*. These ranges are below the lowest range on a four-string double bass even in the transcription key of B-flat major. Therefore, few passages and notes are raised an octave higher. For example, the note D is raised an octave in m. 64 for the second double bass. Sometimes, the simple re-writing in a higher octave may solve the out of range problem, but musically the maneuver destroys the continuity of a melodic line. For example, if I simply raise the same D an octave in m. 64 for the first double bass, the action will disrupt the downward musical direction from the previous established sequences. Example 15 demonstrates the original sequences from mm. 60-64.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Solo Bass Viol and Basso Continuo. The Solo Bass Viol part is written in a high register, starting with a series of eighth notes and ending with a quarter note. The Basso Continuo part is written in a lower register, starting with a series of quarter notes and ending with a quarter note. Both parts are in the key of B-flat major and 4/4 time.

Example 15. *Rondeau le bijou*, mm. 60-64

After carefully studying the above passage, I re-write the raised octave starting from m. 61 because the first note E provides the resolution to the previous D sharp note. In the transcription key of B-flat major, the change not only resolves the out of range problem produced by the final note, but also reserves the musical shape of the phrase (see Example 16).

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Solo Bass 1 and Solo Bass 2. The Solo Bass 1 part is written in a high register, starting with a series of eighth notes and ending with a quarter note. The Solo Bass 2 part is written in a lower register, starting with a series of quarter notes and ending with a quarter note. Both parts are in the key of B-flat major and 4/4 time.

Example 16. Transcription of *Rondeau le bijou*, mm. 60-64

The change of octaves in the final four measures also avoids the muddy sound in the low register of the first double bass; as a result it preserves the light characteristic of the dance movement.

Rondeau le bijou concludes the transcription process of the eight selected pieces from *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* by Marin Marais. In Chapter V, I present the complete double bass transcription of these pieces.

CHAPTER V

SELECTIONS FROM *SUITE D'UN GOÛT ETRANGER* BY MARIN MARAIS
TRANSCRIBED AND EDITED BY YONG HAO PAN

Marche Tartare

$\text{♩} = 45$

Solo Bass I

Solo Bass II

S.Cb I

S.Cb II

5

10

15

p *f* *p* *f* *p*

plainte

20

S.Cb I

plainte

S.Cb II

1.

25

S.Cb I

S.Cb II

2.

29

S.Cb I

S.Cb II

Allemande

♩ = 54

Solo Bass 1

Solo Bass 2

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

14

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f p f p f p f

18

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

e x

Sarabande

♩ = 50

Solo Bass 1

flatement

Solo Bass 2

S.Cb. 1

flatement

plainte

S.Cb. 2

p

S.Cb. 1

f

flatement

plainte

S.Cb. 2

S.Cb. 1

1.

2.

S.Cb. 2

1.

2.

La Tartarine et Double

♩. = 63

Solo Bass 1

Solo Bass 2

La Tartarine

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

19

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

23 Double

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

27

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

La Tartarine

31

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

35

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

39

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Double

43

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

47

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

51

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Repeat at will, fade to the end

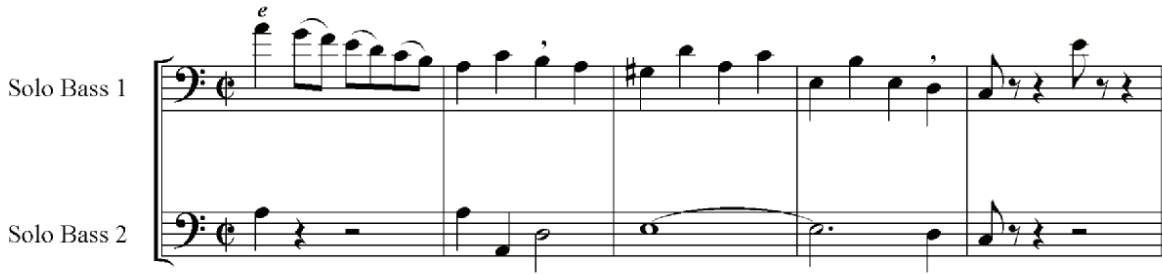
Fine

Feste champêtre

$\text{♩} = 70$

Solo Bass 1

Solo Bass 2



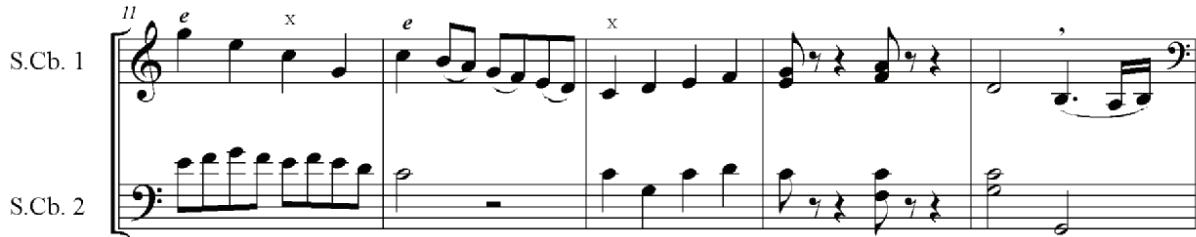
S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2



S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2



S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2



21

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

26

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

31

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

36

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

41

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

46

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Measures 46-50. S.Cb. 1 (treble clef) plays a melodic line with dynamics *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, and *p*. S.Cb. 2 (bass clef) provides accompaniment with dynamics *p* and *p*. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

51

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Measures 51-55. S.Cb. 1 (treble clef) plays a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *e*. S.Cb. 2 (bass clef) provides accompaniment with dynamics *p* and *e*. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

56

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Measures 56-60. S.Cb. 1 (treble clef) plays a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *e*. S.Cb. 2 (bass clef) provides accompaniment with dynamics *p* and *e*. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

61

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Measures 61-65. S.Cb. 1 (treble clef) plays a melodic line with dynamics *p* and *e*. S.Cb. 2 (bass clef) provides accompaniment with dynamics *p* and *e*. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

66

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

p

70

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f *p* *f* *p* *f*

74

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f *p*

79

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f *p*

83

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Muzette

p

88

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

plainte

95

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

101

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

plainte

Tambourin

106

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

111

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

117

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

123

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

127

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Measures 127-130. S.Cb. 1: Measure 127 starts with a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 128 has a quarter rest, followed by another slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 129 has a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 130 has a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run with an accent 'e' above it. S.Cb. 2: Measure 127 has a quarter rest. Measure 128 has a quarter rest. Measure 129 has a quarter note. Measure 130 has a quarter note.

131

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Measures 131-134. S.Cb. 1: Measure 131 starts with a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run with an accent 'e' above it. Measure 132 has a slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 133 has a slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 134 has a quarter note. S.Cb. 2: Measure 131 has a quarter rest. Measure 132 has a quarter note. Measure 133 has a half note. Measure 134 has a quarter note.

135

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

Measures 135-138. S.Cb. 1: Measure 135 starts with a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 136 has a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 137 has a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run. Measure 138 has a quarter rest, followed by a slur over a sixteenth-note run with an accent 'e' above it. S.Cb. 2: Measure 135 has a quarter rest. Measure 136 has a quarter rest. Measure 137 has a quarter rest. Measure 138 has a quarter note.

Allemande L'Asmatique

♩ = 116

Tres gay

Solo Bass 1

Solo Bass 2

plainte

plainte

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

plainte flatement flatement

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

p

p

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f

flatement 3

f

16

S.Cb. 1

e *e* *e*

plainte flatement plainte flatement

S.Cb. 2

19

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

22

S.Cb. 1

1. 2.

S.Cb. 2

1. 2.

Rondeau le Bijou

$\text{♩} = 40$

Solo Bass 1

Solo Bass 2

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

6

11

3

3

14

19

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

24

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

29

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

34

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

plainte *p* plainte *f*

p

37

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

p *f*

f *p* *f*

39

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

p

p

41

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f

p

p

45

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f

plainte

f

49

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f

54

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f *p* *f* *p*

58

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f *p*

62

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

f *p*

flatement

x

67

S.Cb. 1

S.Cb. 2

x

x

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Style and performance in baroque music present certain problems because of the neglect and misguided interpretation at different periods in the past. Modern string players usually are familiar with the performance style in the romantic and classical periods, but less familiar with the performance style in the baroque period. Marin Marais' *Pièces de viole* was written for the bass viol – a baroque instrument, which is not widely played today. This double bass transcription of selections from his *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* is strongly associated with the viol performance practice in the seventeenth and the early eighteenth century in France. A tasteful performance of these transcription pieces requires the careful study of the viol performance practice in that period.

Jean Rousseau, in his *Traité de la Viole*, states that bowing is the soul of viol playing.⁷⁴ In general, the bow produces the sound that is unique to the viol. And, the sound gives the distinct characteristic apart from the instruments of the violin family. In comparison to the “French” double bass bow, the bass viol bow is constructed with outward curve, lighter weight, lighter frog, and greater flexibility. These features, in combination with the palm-under bow hold, partially contribute to the special bass viol sound. The palm-under grip should not be confused with the palm-under bow hold used by many double bassists when using the “German” type of bow with a wide frog. The modern double bass “German” bow has an inward curved stick much like the double bass “French” bow. The “German” bow is held with the fingers behind the frog in a way that the hair faces the bridge. The bass viol bow is held with the fingers either on the

⁷⁴ John Hsu, “The Use of the bow in French Solo Viol Playing of the 17th And 18th Centuries,” *Early Music*, Vol. 6 (1978): 526.

side of the frog or slightly before the frog in a way that the hair faces the player.⁷⁵ Although the construction of the bass viol bow and the palm-under bow grip make some contribution to the special viol sound, the essence of French solo bass viol playing depends on the appropriate use of the bow. According to Marin Mersenne's *Harmonie Universelle* (1636), the viols have a percussive and resonant sound like the spinet (a smaller type of harpsichord) or the harpsichord. In comparison with the basic Italian violin bow stroke, Hubert Le Blanc describes the bow stroke of the viol in his *Défense de la basse de viole* (1740):

These bow strokes are simple, with bow striking the viol string as the jacks pluck the harpsichord strings, and not complex like those of the Italians, where the bow, by the use of smooth and well-connected up- and down-bows whose changes are imperceptible, produces endless chains of notes that appear as a continuous flow such as those emanating from the throats of Cossoni and Faustina.⁷⁶

The description clearly shows that French viol players in the baroque period used a basic bow stroke that was similar in character to the plucking of the harpsichord rather than the smooth bow stroke produced by the violin. LeBlanc further describes that all six different kinds of Marais's bow strokes were an outgrowth of the plucking bow stroke. Moreover, the sound that Marais had in mind for his pieces resembles not only the plucking of the harpsichord but also the plucking of the lute and guitar. However, LeBlanc does not discuss how Marais classifies the six types of bow strokes. It is certain that different types of viol bow strokes are used during the French baroque period. Jean Rousseau states that the various bow strokes can express all the passions that are associated with singing. The singing that Jean Rousseau refers to is the French singing of the baroque period, not the Italian manner of singing of that period.

⁷⁵ Gordon J. Kinney, *A Method for the Viola da Gamba* (Wichita, Kans.: William R. LeVine, 1979), 1-2.

⁷⁶ John Hsu: "The Use of the bow in French Solo Viol Playing of the 17th And 18th Centuries," *Early Music*, Vol. 6 (1978): 526, quoting Hubert Le Blanc, "Défense de la basse de viole," (1740).

To simulate the plucking characteristic of the viol bow stroke on the double bass, the player should understand the basics of the viol bow stroke. John Hsu, who is a leading viola da gamba virtuoso and pedagogue, describes the viol up-bow and down-bow strokes as follows:

Press the string with the hair of the bow very near the hand by leaning the middle finger rather heavily on the hair as though you want to scratch the string. As soon as the string begins to sound, relieve the tension on the hair, that is to say, do not press [the middle finger] as heavily...; the varying amount of pressure exerted on the hair of the bow and the varying speed with which that pressure is released will result in different kinds of plucking.⁷⁷

On the double bass, one can produce the similar plucking effect by following the above instruction. Jean-Baptiste Forqueray stresses that a viol player should use the gentle pressing of the thumb on the stick; if the thumb presses the bow too hard, it makes for harsh articulation and overburdens the bow on the string, which one must absolutely avoid.⁷⁸ For the same reason, it is important for double bass players to avoid the excessive arm weight on the bow.

Short bow strokes are frequently used in fast tempo pieces such as *La Tartarine*, *Double*, and *Allemande L'Asmatique* of the double bass transcriptions. The player should employ the same initial bow stroke movement as described before, and should not use the off-string spiccato or any other types of bouncing bow strokes. The off-string bow strokes are commonly associated with the instrumental performance practice of the violin family. However, the bouncing bow strokes are not practical on the viol with the palm-under bow grip because the viol bow is too light to produce an effective sonority when bounced. Fast detached notes are played in the upper part of the viol bow with the hair on the string.⁷⁹ In conclusion, the baroque viol music does not call for off-string bow strokes.

⁷⁷ John Hsu, *A Handbook of French Baroque Viol Technique* (New York, N.Y.: Broude Brothers Limited, 1981), 3.

⁷⁸ John Hsu, "The Use of the bow in French Solo Viol Playing of the 17th And 18th Centuries," *Early Music*, Vol. 6 (1978): 527.

⁷⁹ Gordon J. Kinney, *A Method for the Viola da Gamba* (Wichita, Kans.: William R. LeVine, 1979), 2.

In Chapter IV, I have briefly explained Marin Marais' ornamentation signs in modern terminology. I eliminate some of the ornamentation signs such as *tenüe* (hold), *coulé de doigt* (finger slide), *doigt chouché* (finger bar for making several notes at the same fret, and upon several strings) and all viol fingerings from the transcriptions of the fifth chapter because they are not suitable for the double bass. I also remove *poussé d'archet* (up-bow), and *tirer d'archet* (down-bow) signs because the power stroke of the viol bow is the up-bow, contrary to that of the double bass bow. Marin Marais is extraordinary for the quantity and the variety of *agréments* (ornaments) he indicates. In general, much of a successful performance of Marais' music depends on the refined and skilled performance of *agréments*. The tasteful performance of the ornaments is as important as the proper use of the bow. Jean Rousseau's depiction on ornaments clearly reflects the attitude toward ornamentation and the aesthetic sense of this style in the baroque period.

Agréments are to the voice and to the instruments as the ornaments are to a building. Ornaments are not necessary for the structure of the building, but serve only to make it more agreeable to the eye. Likewise, an air for the voice and a piece for instruments can be fundamentally correct; nevertheless, it will not satisfy the ear... It can be said then, that the *agréments* are a melodic salt which seasons the melody and which give it its taste without which it would be flat and insipid. And as salt must be employed with discretion so that there is not too little or too much, and as there is more needed in the seasoning of certain meats and less in others, so is it necessary to apply the *agréments* with moderation and to know how to discern when to add more or less.⁸⁰

Although Marais provides a table of ornaments and some explanation in his separate *avertissements* (preface) to the five-volume *Pieces de Violes*, he does not explain the interpretation of some ornaments such as *tremblement* (trill), and *batement* (mordent) among others. Marais avoids the question of the interpretation of his music with the intention of pleasing all players of different levels. Nevertheless, studies on French viol ornamentation of the

⁸⁰ Deborah A. Teplow, *Performance Practice and Technique in Marin Marais' Pièces de viole* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1976), 7.

baroque period can be found in method books such as Danoville's *L'Art de toucher le Dessus et Basse de Violle* (1687), Jean Rousseau's *Traité de la Violle* (1687), Etienne Loulié's *Méthode pour appredre a jouer la Violle* (c. 1700), and modern research articles, books by Robert Donington, Arnold Dolmetsch, Frederick Neumann, Gordon J. Kinney, Celia Pond and others.

I will discuss some of the most frequently used ornaments by Marais in his eight pieces from *Suite d'un Goût Etranger*. The *tremblement* (trill) consists of the rapid alternation between a principal note and an auxiliary note a whole-tone or a semitone above it.⁸¹ Marais employs both long and short *tremblement* (indicated by a comma above the notes) and approaches them from the unison as well as from above or below by step or by leap; but he leaves the speed and number of repeated notes, and the choice of whether the main note or the auxiliary note comes first, to the judgment of the performer. The long *tremblements* (extended trills) are found in three situations.⁸² In the first situation, the position of the extended trills is on the terminal notes of the first sections of dance movements such as the terminal note in m. 5 of *La Tartarine et Double*. In the second situation, the extended trills are found on long notes in slow tempo pieces such as the note A in the fourth measure of *Sarabande*. In the last situation, the extended trills are identified as cadential trills, which the trill note usually appears in the measure before the ending, for example, the cadential trill in m. 23 of *Sarabande*.

It is incorrect to assume that all baroque trills begin with the upper note though extended trills usually start with the upper note. The extended trills can start in several ways: starting with the upper note and trilling immediately, accenting the upper note; starting with the upper note as a short anticipation of the trill, then accenting the main note (lower note) of the trill; starting with

⁸¹ Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1969), 155.

⁸² Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), xiv.

the upper note as an appoggiatura, accenting either the lower note or the upper note; finally starting by sustaining the lower note for a brief duration before beginning the trill repetition.⁸³ In the last case, the trilled note is often tied from the previous note, which has the same pitch.

The starting notes and accent placements of short *tremblement* in Marais's music are as varied in nature as those of the long *tremblement*. Rhythmically, the short trills in slow pieces such as *Marche Tartare*, *Sarabande*, and *Rondeau Le Bijou* are free in respect to the numbers and speed of the repeated notes. In fast pieces such as *La Tartarine et Double*, and *Allemande L'Asmatique*, measured trills in sixteenth or thirty-second notes usually produce a better effect than the unmeasured trills. Short trills, which are described in Jean Rousseau's *Traité de la Viole*, usually start on the main note (lower note).⁸⁴ We will never know if Marais begins majority of his short trills on the main note. But, in every case the number of repeated notes decreases as the tempo of the music increases. Many trills on short notes in Marais' *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* are inverted mordents, which consist of just one alternation between the main note and the upper auxiliary note. The inverted mordent always starts on the main note (lower note), for example, the note A in measure 11 of *Allemande L'Asmatique*. In Marais's music the inverted mordents are treated as a special kind of short trill, thus he uses the same symbol (a comma) as the regular trill.

The mordent is a rapid and unmeasured alternation between a principle note and a lower auxiliary a tone or a semitone below. The standard mordent has mainly a rhythmic function and is therefore an on-the-beat ornament, starting, more or less accented, on the main note.⁸⁵ Marais uses the symbol, x to indicated the mordents. In viol music, more than one alternation between

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., xvi.

⁸⁵ Robert Donington, *A Performer's Guide to Baroque Musics* (London, Great Britain: Faber And Faber Limited, 1973), 203.

the main note and the lower auxiliary note is rare, but the “doubled” mordent can be effective in a slow piece if it starts with a long note played with a mordent.⁸⁶ For example, the “doubled” mordent can be employed in the fourth measure of *Marche Tartare*. Although the mordent usually starts on the accent, strict following of this rule sometimes interrupts a smooth legato phrase, and creates a rhythmic accent at the wrong time (see Example 17 below).



Example 17. Transcription of *Sarabande*, mm. 19-20

In the above example, the mordented note D occurs on the relatively weak beat in a legato phrase of slow tempo. In order to keep the long smooth phrasing in the music, the first two notes of the mordent can be played before the third beat as illustrated in Example 18.



Example 18. Actual notation of the mordent as shown in Example 17

Vibrato is considered as one of the technical aspects in modern string performance practice. However, vibrato is treated as an ornament in baroque viol music. In Chapter IV, I have discussed in depth two types of vibratos used by Marais. They are: the two-finger vibrato known as *flatement*, and the one-finger vibrato known as *plainte*. The *plainte* is used only with the fourth finger. It is employed on the bass viol when the fingering prohibits the two-finger vibrato.⁸⁷ Whether a double bass player should use the two-finger vibrato in Marais’ *Pièces de Violes* depends on his or her own preference. Most importantly, the vibrato (two-finger vibrato)

⁸⁶ Marin Marais, *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass*, with a preface by G. J. Kinney (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), xvii.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, xviii.

should imitate a certain sweet agitation of the voice, and it must last as long as the note.⁸⁸

Marais uses both types of vibratos not only to imitate the voice but also to emphasize certain rhythms. For example, he employs both *plainte* and *flatement* to accentuate the off-beat rhythm in m. 6 and 7 of *Allemande L'Asmatique*.

Marais first introduced the *enfler* (swell) in his book three of *Pièces de Violes*. The ornament is indicated by a small letter “e” above notes. Marais explains the symbol as follows in the preface to book three:

“e” signifies that it is necessary to squeeze out (*exprimer*) or swell (*enfler*) the bow stroke by pressing more or less upon the string, according as the piece demands it; and this is to be done sometimes at the start of the beat or on the value of the dot, just as the mark indicates it. In this manner one gives soul to the pieces, which, without this, would be too monotonous (uniformes).⁸⁹

The above description of *enfler* does not at all imply that the swell (increase and decrease of the volume) has to be done on a single note. One must put this expressive ornament into music context. *Enfler* can imply either the swell of a particular note or the starting position of the swell throughout a phrase. Based on Deborah Teplow’s study, there are several components of the *enfler*, which must be considered in making a sensitive musical interpretation and application of the ornament.

1. Context: Does the *enfler* occur on a long or short note or figure? Is the figure stressed or unstressed? Is it isolated or does it appear within the context of a compound ornament? Is its purpose to stress a point in the harmonic structure, or to highlight a particularly lyric point in the phrase?
2. Beginning dynamic level: At what dynamic level should the *enfler* begin? Should it be softer, louder or the same as the preceding note?
3. Rate of swell and highest dynamic level: How fast should the volume of the *enfler* increase? Is it an abrupt swell, or a gradual crescendo? What is the highest dynamic level reached?

⁸⁸ Arnold Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1969), 205.

⁸⁹ Marin Marais, “Preface to Book III, Pièces de Violes,” (1711), trans. Gordon J. Kinney: preface to *Six Suites for Viol and Thoroughbass* (Madison, Wisc.: A-R Editions, Inc., 1976), xii.

4. Decrease of dynamic level and ending dynamic level: How quickly does the volume drop after the highest dynamic level is reached? Is it sudden or gradual and to what level does it diminish?
5. General shape: The player should establish a clear concept of the ornament's shape and effect within its musical context.⁹⁰

On the double bass, the *enfler* is played by increasing either the speed of the bow or the arm weight on the bow. The player should also experiment with different points of the bow placement on strings to achieve various subtle tone color of an *enfler*. For example, one can place the bow closer to the bridge while increasing the weight at the peak of the swell to obtain the intense, penetrating sound.

Ornamentation is more than simple decoration of melodies in Marais' bass viol compositions. It is an important factor in both melodic and harmonic construction.⁹¹ However, Marais does not provide the exact interpretation of some ornaments, which poses many problems for modern performers. I hope that the discussion on ornaments in this chapter will provide some insights to french baroque viol performance practices.

The purpose of the transcription project has two principle goals. The first is to provide the double bass literature with the original transcription of bass viol pieces from *Suite d'un Goût Etranger* by Marin Marais, whose compositions I have become familiar with and enjoyed for a long time. The second is to point out that a tasteful and effective modern performance of baroque music, specially period-instrumental music requires the careful study of the performance practice in that period. Because Marin Marais is considered one of the finest bass viol composer-performers of the French school, it is unfortunate that his music is not widely known today.

⁹⁰ Deborah A. Teplow, *Performance Practice and Technique in Marin Marais' Pièces de viole* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1976), 15.

⁹¹ Clyde H. Thompson, *Marin Marais 1656-1728 Vol I* (PH.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1956), 210-211.

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