

The Humour and Graces of Thomas Mace

THE LUTE IS THE RAREST AND MOST EXCELLENT PORTABLE INSTRUMENT IN THE WORLD (Thomas Mace, 1676)¹

Introduction

Thomas Mace (1612 or 1613 – c. 1706) was an Anglican cathedral singer at the Trinity Colleague in Cambridge, a lutenist, viol player, composer and musical theorist of the second half of the 17th century. His life is still little explored. Born in 1612 or 1613, he played the lute from c. 1621, but his teacher if any is unknown. He was a singer in the choir of Trinity College, Cambridge from 1635 until his death. During English Civil War (1642–1649) Mace was in York until 1647, where he apparently had family ties, but returned to Cambridge in 1647. 1675 and in 1676 he had two of his works printed in London probably made a stay in London necessary. Around 1690 he is said to have sold various musical instruments in London because of his increasing deafness he no longer needed them. In 1698 his Riddles appear, in which he propagated the questionable Priest's Powder.² On April 14, 1706, in the choir of the Trinity College the position of Mr. Mace became vacant, causing his date of death assumed to be shortly before.

His printed Work *Musick's Monument; OR, A REMEMBRANCER Of the Best Practical Musick, Both DIVINE, and CIVIL, that has ever been known, to have been in the World. Divided into Three Parts. The First PART, Shews a Necessity of Singing Psalms Well, in Parochial Churches, or not to Sing at all; The Second PART, Treats of the Noble Lute, (the Best of Instruments) now made Easie; In the Third PART, The Generous Viol, in Its Rightest Use, is Treated upon; with some Curious Observations, never before Handled, concerning It, and Musick in General* (London, 1676) provides an extreme and valuable description of 17th century musical practice.³

At time of printing his lute tutor (1676), he had a son, who also played the lute, an instantly loved wife who he called “the Authors Mistress”, and he was giving lectures to his scholars.

Thomas Mace structured his reflection on 17th century music in three parts: *The First Part, Concerning the Church-Psalms, In reference to the POETRY*” (pages 1 to 31) is concerned with singing in church, while the *The Second, and CIVIL Part: OR, The LUTE made Easie* (pages 37 to 230) and *The Third Part: CONCERNING The VIOL, AND MUSICK in General* (pages 231-272) largely bring out the merits of the lute and viol and their music, by comparison with other string instruments. As the author of this manuscript is a baroque lute amateur, this short article is mainly based on the second part of Mace’ compendial work.

¹ T. Mace. *Mufick's Monument* (London, 1676), The Second, and Civil Part, The Lute made Easie, p. 43.

² T. Mace. *Riddles mervels and rarities: or, A new way of health, from an old man's experience*, Cambridge, 1698.

³ T. Mace. *Musick's Monument; OR, A REMEMBRANCER Of the Best Practical Musick*. London, 1676.

The motivation for Mace' compendial work is presented in the preface of the first part⁴:

“But the Chief Sum of the whole Work is: That It shall stand as a Monument, or Remembrancer of the Very Best Performance in Musick, (both Devine, and Civil) which have been known in the World; and (as to the Civil Part) Practiz'd by the Best Masters of These last 50 Years; Better than Which, no Memory of Man, Record, or Author can be produced; which can say, That Ever there was Any that could Equal It; nor certainly Any Ever likely to Exceed It.”

Accordingly, with his work Thomas Mace aims presenting and teaching the aesthetic values of music to the audience. And when he concludes

“the LUTE was a Hard or Difficult Instrument to Play well upon, is confessed. And the Reasons why, shall here be given: But that it is Now Easie, and very Familiar, is as Certainly True”⁵

he intends to make the lute available for every one interested in this music.

The LUTE made Easie

The second part *“The LUTE made Easie”* stretches over a *“Creative Praeludium”* and 43 chapters. Starting from the observation *“That the LUTE was a Hard or Difficult Instrument to Play well upon, is confessed”*, he expands with the optimistic view that with his book *“it is Now Easie, and very Familiar”* to master the lute ⁶. While he discusses the increasing number of strings of the lute instrument, he resumed *“that A Child in half an hour is able to perform the hardest stops upon the Lute”⁷* if followed his instructions.

In the first chapters he teaches how important it is to obtain *“a good and fit fiz'd Lute”* and *“that an old Lute is better than a New one”⁸*. He discusses the lute shape, choices of construction and qualities for the wood from different sources. He himself played a lute with *“Two Heads, the one Turned back, which must carry 16 Strings, (accounting the Treble Peg double) and the Upright Head must carry 8; all which make a 24-Strung-Lute”⁹*. He teaches how to string the lute, how to place the pegs, how to manipulate and polish the nuts and notches.

He describes the mechanical order of the instrument and why it is essential to do easy repairs and how to clean the instrument, and what tools to have by hand for maintenance of the instrument, Mace gives great advise for transportation and storage of the lute and strings for preventing damage to the valuable instrument.

He advises the reader that

“The first and Chief Thing is, to be carfull to get Good Strings, which would be of three sorts, viz. Minikins, Venice-Catlins, and Lyons, (for Basses) There is another sort of Strings,

⁴ T. Mace, p. 4.

⁵ T. Mace, p.39.

⁶ T. Mace, p.39.

⁷ T. Mace, p.41.

⁸ T. Mace, p.48.

⁹ T. Mace, p. 50.

which they call Pistoy Basses, which I conceive are non other than Thick Venice-Catlines, which are commonly Dyed, with a deep dark red colour."¹⁰

Concerning lute-play he explains the posture of the lute, the holding and positions of the left and right hands, as well the position of the right-hand little finger:

"The 2d. thing to be gain'd is, setting down your Little Finger upon the Belly, as aforesaid, close under the Bridge, about the first, 2d, 3d, or 4th. Strings".¹¹

Based on the observation that

*"you strike not your Stings with your Nail, ... , because the Nails cannot draw so sweet a sound from a Lute, as the nibble end of the Flesh can do"*¹²

he sets on to explain *"how to strike a String Clear, and Clean"*¹³ with fingers and the thumb.

With all the preparations are finished, he goes further to explain the lute tablature, the lines and letters written above lines. He discusses the *"Chief Notes and Characters, of Musick's Proportions, ... , you may know of what quantity, any Note or Letter is"*¹⁴. He compares and explains the character of time versus money coins of different value.

He proceeds with instructions to the pupil *"to perform your Time, and by a most Exact, Easie, and Installible Way; which shall be as a Touch-stone"*¹⁵ by using a heavy weight bullet fixed at one end of a string whereas the other end is mounted at the top of the sealing of the room and thus can be used a pendulum *"long enough to reach the Top of the Seiling of the Room, in which you intend to Practice [and] fasten the End of the String ... to the Top of the Seiling, so as the Weight may well-nigh touch the bottom of the Floor."*¹⁶ Such a pendulum allows *"an Exact True Motion of Time, forwards, and backwards, for an Hour or Two together."*^{17, 18}

Mace explains the works of the right and left hand and the tuning he uses, namely *"Flat-French-Tuning; but might more properly go under the Name of Sharp."*¹⁹ Fingering rules and symbols are presented in great detail.

From CHAP. XIV on page 88 he starts giving practical lectures to this lute scholars. Majority of lute pieces, he calls them *"lessons"*, come from the repertoire of dances, such as Sarabands, Corantoes, Ayres, Galliards, Allmaines, Pavines, Praeludes, Tattle de Moy, and Interludes. He uses these lessons to introduce his lute scholars to the spirit and character of music:

¹⁰ T. Mace, p. 65.

¹¹ T. Mace, p 72.

¹² T. Mace, p. 73.

¹³ T. Mace, p. 73.

¹⁴ T. Mace, p. 77.

¹⁵ T. Mace, p. 80.

¹⁶ T. Mace, p.80.

¹⁷ T. Mace, p.81.

¹⁸ The Italian scientist Galileo Galilei was the first to study the properties of pendulums, beginning around 1602. Galileo discovered the crucial property that makes pendulums useful as timekeepers, called isochronism; the period of the pendulum is approximately independent of the amplitude or width of the swing. He also found that the period is independent of the mass of the bob, and proportional to the square root of the length of the pendulum. A string length of approx. 2.5 meters results in an oscillation period (one movement forward and one movement backwards) of 3.17 seconds.

¹⁹ T. Mace, p. 83.

*“No LANGUAGE is of greater Force to me, Than is the Language of LUTE’S Mysterie.”*²⁰

Throughout the *“Musick’s Monument”* he compares the music with the speech:

*“But Thus I do affirm, and shall be ready to Prove, by Demonstration, (to any Person Intelligible) That Musick is as a Language, and has Its Significations, as Words have, (if not more strongly) only most people do not understand that Language (perfectly).”*²¹

And he continues:

*“For I would have It taken Notice of, That Musick is (at least) as a Language, if It will not be allowed a Perfect One; because It is not so well understood, as It might be, (as I have Declar’d in my little Piece of Poetry, which adjoyns to the Dialogue betwixt My Lute and My Self”*²²

Fugue, Form and Humour by Thomas Mace

To realise his high demands on music in comparison to language and speech, a perfect piece, according to Mace, is the result of its Fugue, its Form, and its Humour: The Fugue (or Matter) is the principal theme of the piece, the Form (or Shape) is the structure, and the Humour is the affect. During a discussion of a Coranto he explains:

*“The Fugue is seen, in the 3 First Notes, and perceptible all over the Lesson. The Form is Even, Uniform, and Perfect. The Humour, is a kind of Sorrowing, Pittying, and Bemoaning”*²³

Humour and Passion are central elements of his lute pieces, and Mace’ understanding of music:

*“And as in Language, various Humours, Conceits, and Passions, (of All sorts) may be Exprest; so likewise in Musick, may any Humour, Conceits, or Passion (never so various) be Exprest; and so significantly, as any Rhetorical Words, or Expressions are able to do”*²⁴

The connection between “affective expression” in music, and rhetoric in language, is made explicit by Mace.

In the 16th and 17th century, it was well established that the ideal of instrumental music was to imitate the voice, and thus texted works were widely adapted for instrumental practice. At Mace’ time, English vocal music has been adapted for instrumental performance e.g. on the lute thus developing and extending the repertory. Performing such repertoire on the lute was assumed to further enhance the meaning of the text by balanced application of various expressions.

When unrevealing the mystery of music to his pupils, Mace’ main focus was on the colour, expression and spirit of the lute music, which he integrated as *“Humour”*. *Humour* can adopt various forms, depending on the nature of the lute piece, as Mace explains:

²⁰ T. Mace, p. 38.

²¹ T. Mace, p. 118.

²² T. Mace, p. 135.

²³ T. Mace, p. 130.

²⁴ T. Mace, p. 118.

*“The Humour, is a kind of Sorrowing, Pittying, and Bemoaning”*²⁵

*“Humour is Toyish, Joccond, Harmless, and Pleasant; and, as if it were one Playing with, or Tossing a Ball, up and down; yet It seems to have a very Solem Countenance, and like unto one of a Sober, and Innocent Condition, or Disposition; not Antick, Apish, or Wild, etc.”*²⁶

According to Mace and also for many other authors in England the term *Humour* in music had two main implications.

First, *Humour* referred to the concept of the original musical ideas as invented by the composer, which necessarily included such *Humour* from the very beginning. This *Humour* is the result of the basic underlying conception of a piece.

For Mace, the composer should simply be in a good mood:

*Therefore I would give This as a Caviat, or Caution to any who do attempt to Exercise Their Fancies, in such Matters of Invention; That They observe Times, and Seasons, and never Force themselves to any Thing ... but wait for a Fitter, and more Hopeful Season; for what comes most Completely, comes most Familiarly, Naturally, and Easily, without Pumping for; Strive therefore to be in a Good, Chearful, and Pleasant Humour always, when you would Compose, or Invent;*²⁷

Further, according to Mace, a piece does not necessarily contain just one implicit *Humour*, but

*“For you may carry on, and maintain several Humours, and Conceits, in the same Lesson; provided they have some Affinity, or Agreement one to other: But That does require some Experience, and Judgement also and more than some of our Late Composers of These Times shew”*²⁸

and he goes further, and while he discusses a *Praeludium* within CHAP. XXIV he advocates changing the *Humour* in order to avoid monotony:

*“Now, as to the Humour of It, you may observe, That It All Tasts of, or Similizeth with the 1st. Barr, in some small kind; yet not too much of the same Humour; for that is Nautious, and Tiresome, (which has been Anciently, by some, us’d too much; but too little now a days, by others.”*²⁹

Mace also links the *Humour* of a piece, its colour and mood, with the lute’s tuning and the keys:

*“Now I desire, for the better understanding of This Dispute, to have It consider’d upon, How many of the 7 Keys This New Tuning is straightned in; First, as to C-fa-ut-Key, (which is the most Noble, Heroick, and Majestical Key, in the whole Scale”*³⁰

And he continues discussing other keys such as the D-sol-re-key (*Stately, Noble, Majestick*), the Ela-mi-key (principle key of the new lute tuning as being very *Handsom, Free and Pleasant*), the F-fa-ut-key (*Brisk, Lofty, and Sparkling*), and other keys. Thus, the composer’s

²⁵ T. Mace, p. 130.

²⁶ T. Mace, p. 133.

²⁷ T. Mace, p. 124.

²⁸ T. Mace, p. 117.

²⁹ T. Mace, p. 117.

³⁰ T. Mace, p. 196.

mood finds its parallel in the chosen key somehow indicating and influencing the lute player's performance.

Second, *Humour* refers to the addition of expression by the performer according to three basic principles, which are ornamentation, contrastive dynamics, as well by varying the tempo. This Humour aims for affect added to the piece in the realisation of the music by the performer, thus adding the lute-player's emotions to the piece. Accordingly, additive expressions to any given piece enhances the life of the music.³¹

*“Then 2dly, Express some kittle Humour, or other, presently after; by which the Auditor may discern some Shape, or Form of Matter, which you intend to follow: Both which, of you can do Well, and Maintain; you will pass for an Able Lutenist, or Master.”*³²

Graces explained by Thomas Mace

Mace uses CHAP. XXI and CHAP. XXIII in *“The Lute made Easie”* to concentrate on the essence of added *Humour*, which he calls the Graces:

*“I will now, in these 2 Chapters following, lay down, all the other Curiosities, and Nicities, in reference to the Adorning of your Play: (for your Foundations being surely Laid, and your Building well Rear'd, you may proceed to the Beautifying, and Painting of your Fabrick) And those, we call the Graces in your Play.”*³³

Graces by Mace are of three sorts: Ornaments, variation in dynamic, and variation in speed.³⁴

³¹ Roger North, a 17th-century English lawyer and biographer capable of playing the lute, developed a similar view in 1695 „*Thus a life and warmth in the colouring of a picture is well resembled to graces in musick, that are not the body but the soul that enlivens it, or as the animall spirits that cannot be seen or felt, but yet make that grand difference between a living and a dead corps.*“ (John Wilson (Editor): Roger North on music. Being a selection from his essays written during the years c. 1695-1728. Novello, London 1959, p. 28.

³² T. Mace, p. 115.

³³ T. Mace, p.102.

³⁴ T. Mace, p. 102.

Table 1. Summary of Ornaments as discussed by Mace

Thomas Mace's Graces				Similar Graces from French Lute Sources
Grace	Symbol	Example	Execution	
Ornaments				
Shake	•	<u>•a</u>	<u>ara</u> or <u>arara</u>	Upper Mordent
Beat		<u>id</u>	<u>ird</u> or <u>irdrd</u>	Lower Mordent
Back-fall)	<u>ir</u>	<u>ir</u> or <u>irdr</u>	Upper Appoggiatura
Half-fall	/	<u>if</u>	<u>ef</u>	Lower Appoggiatura
Whole-fall	+	<u>+d</u>	<u>abd</u>	
Ascending Elevation	⚡	<u>are</u>	<u>arefiere</u>	
Descending Elevation	⚡	<u>era</u>	<u>erefera</u>	
Ascending Relish	••	<u>are</u>	<u>a'rare</u>	
Descending Relish	••	<u>era</u>	<u>e'rarar</u>	
Double Relish	•••	<u>ird</u>	<u>irdfdrfd</u> or <u>irdrdrar</u> or	
Slour	∪	<u>abd</u>	<u>abd</u>	Ascending Coulade
Slide	∩	<u>irda</u>	<u>irda</u>	Descending Coulade
Springer	/	<u>a/</u>	<u>a</u> ^{1 2} <u>stop</u>	Accent
Sting	~	<u>ird</u>	<u>ird</u>	Vibrato
Tut	•	<u>:a</u>	<u>a</u> <u>stop</u>	Staccato
Dynamic Graces				
Soft	so:	<u>so:</u>		Fortement
Loud	lo:	<u>lo:</u>		Douce
Speed				
Pause	⊖	<u>∅</u>	<u>∅</u> or <u>∅</u>	Pause

The Shake:

“The Shake, is 2 ways to be performed, either Hard, or Soft ... If you Shake any String Open, you must first strike it with some Right Hand Finger, and than be ready with the Fore-finger, of the Left hand to pick it up, with the very Tip of your Finger; and so, by often, and quick picking it up in that manner, or (more plainly) Scratching It, in a Smooth, Nimble, and Strong Agitation, you will have performed It. The Soft-Shake, is done, ... like the former, except the Tearing, and Scratching; and only by Beating the String Strogly, and with Quick Motion”³⁵

For illustration, within Chap. XXII of his book he describes how he came to perform the Shake that nicely:

“I, for my own part, have had occasion to break, both my Arms; by reason of which, I cannot make the Nerve-Shake well, nor Strong; yet, by a certain Motion of my Arm, I have gain’d such a Contentive Shake, that sometimes, my Scholars will ask me, How they shall do to get the like? I have than no better Answer for Them, than to tell Them, They must first Break their Arm, as I have done; and so possibly, after that, (by Practice) they may get My manner of Shake.”³⁶

Accordingly, to play the lute the very best way, it requires a fresh or re-start, not to be mixed-up with other techniques.

The Back-fall:

“Let your Note be what it will; It must 1st. partake of the Tone of another Note, or Half Note above it, before it Sound. Suppose I would Back-fall a, upon the Treble String, than I must 1st. stop r, upon the same String, and strike it, as if I did absolutely intend r (only) should Sound; yet so soon as I have so struck r, I must, with the Stopping Finger (only) cause the a, to sound, by taking it off, in a kind of a Twitch, so that the Letter a, may Sound, (by reason of that Twitch, or Falling back) presently after the Letter r, is struck”³⁷

The Back-fall can be played either “plain” or “shaked”.

The Beat:

“The Beat, is your Letter struck; (be it what it will) and so soon as it is struck, that Sound must be Falsified, always into a Half Note beneath, by taking up your Finger, (as if you would Back-fall the False Note, from that stop’d Letter) and strongly, so shaked, to and again; yet, at last, the same Finger, must rest down, in the 1st. True Note. If I would make a Beat upon d, on the 4th. String, I must at the same time, (together with that d) stop r, on the same String; ; and, so soon as I have struck the d, I must Twith it up, and by the Twitch, cause the r to Sound, and so continue in that Quick Motion, as if I did only intend to Shake the r; yet so strongly knocking down my Finger into d, that at every Knock, or Motion, d may be Equally heard with r; and when I have thus continued Beating, so long as my Time will allow me, I must then give the last Knock into d, with all the strength I can; so that the d must be Eminently heard at that very last”³⁸

³⁵ T. Mace, p. 103.

³⁶ T. Mace, p. 103.

³⁷ T. Mace, p. 104.

³⁸ T. Mace, p. 105.

The Half-fall:

“The Half-fall, is ever from a Half Note beneath, (as is the Beat) and is performed, by sticking that Half Note first; but so soon, as that is so struck, you must readily Clap down the True Note, (with the proper Finger, standing ready) without any further striking. Suppose I would make a Half-fall to f, upon the Treble, (or any other String) I must place a Finger in e upon the same String, and absolutely strike e, as if nothing else were intended; but so soon as e has given its perfect Sound, my next Finger, must fall smart into f; so that f may Sound strongly, only by That Fall; which will cause a Pritty, Neat, and Soft Sound, without any other striking, and this is the Half-fall”³⁹

The Whole-fall:

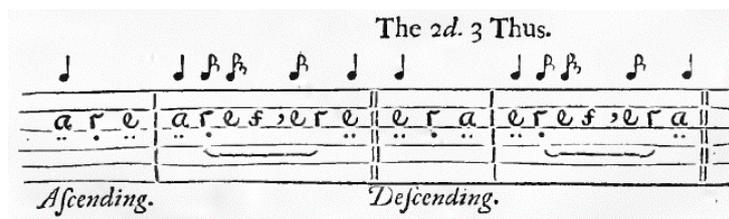
“The Whole-fall, is a Grace, much out of use, in These our Days; yet because, in some Cafes it is very Good, and Handsome, and may give Delight, and Contentto many, who think fit to use It; know, it is Thus Performed; viz. It gives Two False Letters, before the True intended Letter comes in. Suppose I would give a Whole-fall, to the Letter d, upon the 5th. String: Then I must first strike a, upon that String; and then fall my Fore-finger hard, upon b, on the same String, and so closely after, (holding b still stopt) fall my 3rd. or Little Finger, as hard into the True intended Letter d”⁴⁰

The Elevation:

“The Elevation, the Single Relish, and the Double Relish, will take up too much Trouble to Explain Them, by Words only; and will better be done, by Notes, or Letters”⁴¹.

“The Elevation, is generally to be made in the Ascension, or Descension of a 3d. and always upon the Middle Note”⁴²

Fig. 2: The Ascending and Descending Elevation



The Single Relish:

“The Single Relish, (after This, is understood) will be very Easy, as being but a piece, or part of the Elevation; and is likewise generally done upon the Ascension, or Descension of a 3rd. Thus”⁴³

³⁹ T. Mace, p. 105.

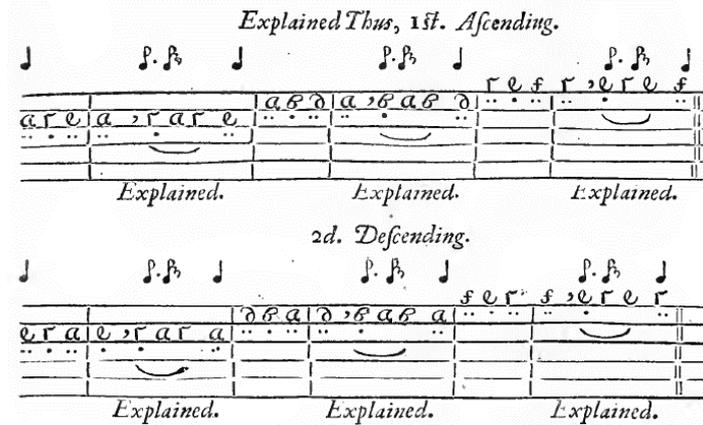
⁴⁰ T. Mace, p. 105.

⁴¹ T. Mace, p. 106.

⁴² T. Mace, p. 106.

⁴³ T. Mace, p. 107.

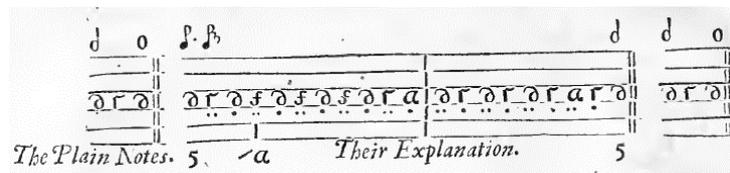
Fig. 3: The Ascending and Descending Relish



The Double Relish:

“The Double Relish, is a Grace, very profitable to practice, for the making the Hand Nimble, Quick, and Even; But upon the Lute is not us’d to be performed, by any Sliding, or Falling of Notes, as Others are; because It consists of too many Notes, to be performed, without some other Help, than by the Left Hand”⁴⁴

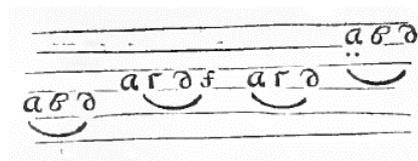
Fig. 4: The Double Relish



The Slur:

“The Slur, and is no more than the Falling of so many Letters, (ascending) as you can, upon Any one String; only by hitting the 1st. as you did the Whole-fall”⁴⁵

Fig. 5: The Slur



The Slide:

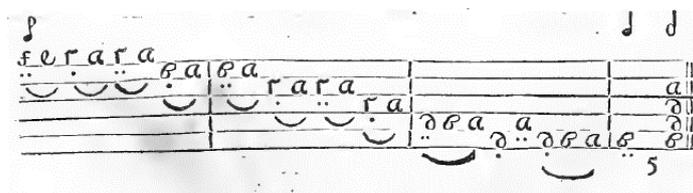
“The Slide, is near of Kin to the Slur, and differs only Thus; your Notes are always Descending, and Mark’d with a Hoop, or Slide, as your Slur”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ T. Mace, p. 107.

⁴⁵ T. Mace, p. 108.

⁴⁶ T. Mace, p. 108.

Fig. 6: The Slide



“The doing of This, is no more, than 1st. to make all the Stopt Letters Ready, (that is, have Them all Stopt together;) Then hit the 1st. and Twich the rest, with your Stopt Fingers, one from another, as you take Them off, and Remember to do them All equally, for Distance, and Loudness, according to former Directions”⁴⁷

The Springer:

“The Springer, is a Grace, very Neat, and Curious, for some sort of Notes; and is done Thus, viz. After you have Hit your Note, which you intend to make the Grace upon, you must (just as you intend to part with your Note) Dab one of your next Fingers lightly upon the same String, a Fret, or 2 Fretts below, (according to the Ayre) as if you did intend to stop the String, in that Place; yet so Gently, that you do not cause the String to Sound, in That stop, (so dab’d;) but only so, that it may suddenly take away That Sound, which you last struck: yet give some small Tincture of a New Note; but not Distinctly to be hears, as a Note; which Grace (if Well done, and Properly) is very Taking, and Pleasant”⁴⁸

The Sting:

“The Sting, is another very Neat, and Pritty Grace; (But not Modish in These Days) yet, for some sorts of Humours, very Excellent; And is This done, (upon a Long Note, and a Single String) first strike your Note, and so soon as It is struck, hold your Finger (but not too Hard) stop upon the Place, (letting your Thumb loose) and wave your Hand (Exactly) downwards, and upwards, several Times, from the Nut, to the Bridge; by which Motion, your Finger will draw, or stretch the String a little upwards, and downwards, so as to make the Sound seem to Swell with pritty unexpected Humour, and gives much Contentment upon Cases”⁴⁹

The Tut:

“The Tut, as a Grace, always performed with the Right Hand, and is a sudden taking away the Sound of any Note, and in such a manner, as it will seem to cry Tut; and is very Pritty, and Easily don, Thus. When you would perform This Grace, it is but to strike your Letter, (which you intend shall be so Grac’d) with one of your Finges, and immediately clap on your striking Finger, upon the String which you struck; in which doing, you suddenly take away the Sound of the Letter, which is that, we call the Tut; and if you do it clearly, it will seem to speak to word Tut, so plainly, as if it where a Living Creature, Speakable”⁵⁰

Several ornaments used by Mace have their equivalent in French tablatures. Mace’s „Shake“ corresponds to the „Upper Mordent“ (Martèlement). Various signs, such as a little cross or

⁴⁷ T. Mace, p. 109.

⁴⁸ T. Mace, p. 109.

⁴⁹ T. Mace, p. 109.

⁵⁰ T. Mace, p. 109.

accent sign behind the note were in use in French sources. The „Lower Mordent“ (*Pincé*) corresponds to Mace’s „Beat“. In French tablature the *pincé* is frequently indicated with a cross or accent sign in front of the main note. Mace’s „Back-Fall“ has its counterpart in the „Upper Appoggiatura“ (also known as *Coulé* or *Roulade*). In French tablatures the upper appoggiatura is often indicated by a comma after the main note. Mace’s „Shaked Back-Fall“ corresponds to the „Trill“ (*Tremblement*). Various signs have been used in French sources, such as a comma or little cross after the main note. Philipp Franz Lesage de Richee describes a trill as follow: “wobey zu beachten, daß er nicht muß gerissen, sondern anfänglich langsam, hernach aber allezeit immer geschwinder geschlagen werden” (English translation “should not be snapped, but rather begun slowly and afterward gradually accelerated”).⁵¹ Ernst Gottlieb Baron commented on the trill „Ehe man aber das Trillo macht, so setze man allezeit über den Thon was höher auf, nach dem die Piece dur oder moll ist, alsdenn kann die Bewegung, nachdem man vorhero angeschlagen gar füglich gemacht werden“ (English translation “Before making the trill, a higher tone must be played, according to whether the piece is in the major or minor mode, then the movement can be suitable made after the player has struck a tone”).⁵² After the tremblement, the „Lower Appoggiatura“ (*port de voix*, or *chute*) is the next most common grace for the left hand in French tablatures. Mace names this grace „Half-Fall“. In French music, the lower appoggiatura is marked with a half-circle under the main note. The „Slure“ and „Slide“ can be identified as „Ascending Coulade“ (also known as „Double Fall“) and „Descending Coularde“ (also known as „double roulade“), respectively. Mace’s „Sting“ is clearly a „Vibrato“ (*Miaulement*) in French tablatures, and „Tut“ has its equivalent in the „Staccato“. Pierre Gaultier (1638) used an asterisk to indicate a vibrato, Baron (1727) used a double-cross after the main note.⁵³

Dynamic contrast: Loud and Soft explained by Thomas Mace

Mace advocates that dynamic contrast is an important element of expression in Music:

*“The next, (which I (my self) only call a Grace; because no Master ever yet (as I can find) directed it, as a Grace, but my self) is to Play some part of the Lesson Loud, and some part Soft, which gives much more Grace, and Lustre to Play, than any other Grace, whatsoever: Therefore I commend It, as a Principal, and Chief-Ornamental-Grace (in its Proper Place)”*⁵⁴

He further elaborates on this as a general observation how to find out the *Humour* of a Lesson:

“And as to the General Humour of any Lesson, take this as a Constant Observation; viz. observe It, in Its Form, or Shape; and if you find It Uniform, and Reportive, either in Its Barrs, or Strains, and that It expresseth Short Sentences, (as you may observe in All These last Four Lessons, that they have done;) Then you will find it very Easie, to Humour a Lesson, by Playing some Sentences Loud, and others again Soft, according as they best

⁵¹ Phillipp Franz Lesage de Richee. *Cabinet der Lauten*. Breslau, 1695. Introduction no. 7.

⁵² Ernst Gottlieb Baron, *Historisch-Theoretisch und Practische Untersucung des Instruments der Lauten*. Nürnberg, 1727. p. 167-168.

⁵³ Ernst Gottlieb Baron, *Historisch-Theoretisch und Practische Untersucung des Instruments der Lauten*. Nürnberg, 1727. p. 168.

⁵⁴ T. Mace, p. 109.

please your own Fancy, some very Briskly, and Couragiously, and some again Gently, Lovingly, Tenderly, and Smoothly”⁵⁵

First of all, Mace believes that good time-keeping is an extremely important part of good interpretation:

*“Observe the Slides, and Slurs, and you cannot fail to know my Mistress’ Humour, provided you keep True Time, which you must be extremely careful to do, in All Lessons; For Time is the One half of Musick.”*⁵⁶

*“By This Practice, you will be brought to have an exact Motion, of True Time-keeping; which is one of the most Necessary, and Main Things, in Musick; especially for a Beginner to know, and Endeavour after”*⁵⁷

Mace also observed that many players think that above all one must play all the notes correctly, and play the piece up to speed, the faster the better. However, he also admittes that a certain freedom in interpretation is quite helpful to enhance the character of a piece.⁵⁸

*“When in Playing of Divisions, they come to Sub-divide, (upon a Plain Song, or a Ground) They (Generally) are subject to Break Time, and (most what) to Play too Fast”*⁵⁹

The balance between exact time keeping and dynamic modulation marks the qualification and experience of the lute master.

*“But now again, you must know, That, although in our First Undertakings we ought to strive, for the most Exact Habit, of Time-keeping, that possibly we can attain unto, (and for several good Reasons) yet, when we come to be Masters, so that we can command all manner of Time, at our own Pleasures; we Then take Liberty, (and very often, for Humour, and good Adornment-sake, in certain Places) to Break Time; sometimes Faster, and sometimes Slower, as we perceive, the Nature of the Thing Requires, which often adds much Grace and Lustre to the Performance.”*⁶⁰

Finally, he highlights the great importance of pauses in the play:

“The last of All, is the Pause; which although it be not a Grace, of any performance, nor likewise Numbered amongst the Graces, by others, yet the performance of It, (in proper Places) adds much Grace: And the thing to be done, is but only to make a kind of Cessation, or standing still, sometimes Longer, and sometimes Shorter, according to the Nature, or

⁵⁵ T. Mace, p. 130.

⁵⁶ T. Mace, p. 124.

⁵⁷ T. Mace, p. 81.

⁵⁸ The famous German lutenist Ernst Gottlieb Baron writes in 1727 *“Bald muß er sein Instrument dem Klange nach moderieren, bald forciren, doch so, daß es nicht über die Natur des Instruments sey, weil man davon so sricte keine Regul geben kann; sondern es ist nöthig, daß ein jeder selbst judicire was er vor einen affect durch diese oder jene Tour exprimiren will.”* (English translation *“He [the player] must alternately moderate or force the sound of his lute in such a way that it does not exceed the nature of the instrument, because no strict rule can be given for this. Each player must judge what sort of affect he wishes to express with this or that ornament”*. (Ernst Gottlieb Baron, *Historisch-Theoretisch und Practische Untersucung des Instruments der Lauten*. Nürnberg, 1727, p. 170.

⁵⁹ T. Mace, p. 81.

⁶⁰ T. Mace, p. 81.

*Requiring of the Humour of the Musick; which if in Its due Place be made, is a very Excellent Grace.*⁶¹

Mace is even more precise and suggested that pauses should be introduced at the ends of musical phrases:

*“And forget not especially, in such Humours, to make your Pauses, at Proper Places, (which are commonly at the End of such Sentences, where there is a Long Note, as easily you will know how to do, if you give your mind to regard such Things, which give the Greatest Lustre in Play, as I have already told you”*⁶²

Conclusion

Next to the Burwell Lute Tutor (1660-1672)⁶³, “*The Lute made Easie*” by Thomas Mace (1676) is a complete A to Z and compendial lute tutor how to play the lute in the second half of the 17th century. Throughout the book, Thomas Mace presents us the aesthetic values of music with the idea to make the lute and music available for every one of us. The entire “*The Lute made Easie*” by Thomas Mace advocates the application of *Humour* and *Graces* to bring passion, vitality and speech into the music. Ornamentation, dynamic contrast and speed are essential elements of his lute music.

*“Many Drudge, and take much Pains to Play their Lessons very Perfectly, (as they call It (that is, Fast) which when they can do, you will perceive Little Life, or Spirit in Them, meerly for want of the Knowledge of This last Thing, I now mention, viz. They do not labour to find out the Humour, Life, or Spirit of their Lessons: Therefore I am Earnest about It, than many (It may be) think Needful: But Experience will confirm what I say”*⁶⁴

Finally, he confronts us with the reality of music performance practice, which possibly did not change since then:

*“To enable you, to Manage the Lute, as a Master: That is, To be able, ... so to follow such a Touch, or such a Humour, as on the sudden, you either accidentally Hit upon; or else shall Design unto your self, to follow like a Master; the which shall be done, by the Expressions of sundry and various Humours, and Conceits, in the Nature of Ex tempore, or Voluntary Play, proceeding from One Key to Another, Orderly, and Naturally; which is a Thing very few know how to do, and fewer put in Practice.”*⁶⁵

In the baroque era, by far majority of lute music composers played this instrument by themselves. They did know about the secrets of the instrument, such as construction, proportions, resonance; they did know about the written und unwritten rules how to make the strings sound, which fingers of the right and left hand to use for their play (and which not at all) and how to use the thumb, where to place the right hand little finger on the belly; they did know about speed of performance and character of dances; etc.

⁶¹ T. Mace, p. 109.

⁶² T. Mace, p. 130.

⁶³ The Burwell Lute Tutor. Library of the Royal Academy of Music, London, GB-Lam Ms. 604.

⁶⁴ T. Mace, p. 147.

⁶⁵ T. Mace, p. 115.

Having all this in mind, the old masters put their inspirations on paper by using the tablature system. By doing so, they merged their concept of sound, aesthetic value, musical taste with all sorts of technical originalities of the lute instrument and playing rules, such as fingering rules, because for them it was not all the same e.g. on which string to play a certain note even if many options may exist, and e.g. at which exact position to bring the string to vibrate, and what type of expressive ornament and grace to add to the piece.

Today, if we really want to discover this emotional and sometimes intimate music, at a minimum we need to understand and realise all these written and unwritten rules, as well baroque mindset and music aesthetics.

And now, as the much-valued reader and lutenists of our days have taken notice either for the first time, or have been reminded about the essence of the 17th century baroque lute music as exceptionally detailed spread out to us by Thomas Mace, we all can improve our performance, both *Debutants* and *Masters*, to reach a next higher level of authenticity while playing the baroque lute.

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