

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# The Baroque Guitar: Players, Paintings, Patrons, and the Public

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BETWEEN APPROXIMATELY 1600 AND 1730, the guitar emerged as one of the most popular and versatile instruments in Baroque Europe. Although it was criticized by some Baroque writers as being noisy, attracting vulgar listeners (and occasionally players), and having an overall corrupting influence—a commentary that is echoed centuries later in the early reactions to rock guitar—by the mid-seventeenth century the guitar had succeeded in eclipsing the venerable lute, and by the end of the Baroque its considerable influence on style had brought the guitar from the margins of recognition to the center of the musical mainstream.

Similar to the way in which contemporary genres like folk, blues, country, and rock all evolved from simple guitar-based chord patterns, so many important Baroque styles and techniques originated with guitarists. When listening to Bach's monumental *Passacaglia in C Minor* for organ, or the exquisite *Chaconne in D Minor* for solo violin—works regarded as two of the crowning achievements of Baroque instrumental music—it is important to remember that both the *passacaglia* and *chaconne* forms began as simple strummed dances popularized by Spanish and Italian guitarists, with the first written examples appearing in early seventeenth-century Italian guitar tablatures (Hudson 1982).

The use of the guitar across the broad musical and demographic spectrum during the Baroque invites further comparisons with the mass appeal of the acoustic and electric guitar in our own day (Coelho 2003, 1–5). Like the modern guitar, no other instrument during the Baroque Era was as adaptable to different musical traditions and contexts, from boisterous street music to the elegance of courtly performance, or so accessible to new players. The unusually widespread use of the Baroque guitar thus requires from us a different methodology for studying it as compared to other quintessentially “Baroque” instruments like the harpsichord and organ, whose repertoire was conditioned almost exclusively by either courtly tastes or liturgical needs.

Closer to the spirit and training exhibited by modern rock or blues guitarists, Baroque players flocked to the instrument from all levels of social rank or musical background. They were attracted by a dedicated, simplified notation, an easily learned strumming technique (as opposed to the complexity of lute-style plucking), and a repertoire that did not, at least at first, present many technical demands. Consequently, the profile of a “typical” Baroque guitarist runs the gamut of personalities, from court virtuosos, noblemen, kings, princes, queens, and rich dilettantes to children, university students, young women, painters, priests, missionaries, and merchants, all the way to buskers, traveling comedians, gypsies, barbers, sailors, prostitutes, servants (Mozart's *Figaro* was a guitarist), and even indigenous peoples

from the New World, Africa, and Asia, who encountered the instrument through Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch colonialism.

The present chapter does not claim to be either a short history of the Baroque guitar or a detailed examination of its performance conventions—several excellent studies have already contributed to these topics (Tyler and Sparks 2002; Russell 2003; Turnbull et al. 2001, for instance). Instead, the following pages will dissect the culture of the Baroque guitar through slices of case studies to place ourselves “within” the world of the Baroque and observe the guitar from a cultural perspective. We will discuss the life and works of two professional guitarists, Francesco Corbetta and Santiago de Murcia, who were crucial in spreading the guitar’s influence within and beyond the boundaries of Europe. In addition, we will employ the field of musical iconography to analyze an exceptionally detailed group of paintings by seventeenth-century Italian artist Evaristo Baschenis for information about the instrument’s cultural significance, and as a window into the life of a domestic musician. Let us begin, however, by tracing the steps that led to the rapid acceptance of the guitar at the beginning of the Baroque Period and discuss some of the most important characteristics that are unique to the instrument.

### The Renaissance Guitar and Lute

Prior to 1600, the most important plucked-string instrument in Europe was the lute, an instrument of Arabic origins that had been used in European music since around the thirteenth century. In sixteenth-century Spain, the lute was a grim reminder of the Muslim domination of the country, lasting until 1492. It was replaced by the vihuela, a guitar-shaped instrument with six courses, or pairs of strings, that was nevertheless tuned exactly like a lute (Griffiths 1989). The lute, with its strong presence in both courtly and domestic circles and its symbolic association with the ancient Greek lyre, was the very symbol of a humanistic and literate culture. It was of seminal importance in the history of Renaissance instrumental music through the quality and diversity of its enormous solo repertory, and it was the preferred instrument for accompanying voices. In fact, one could say that the practice of singing to the lute was perhaps *the* central musical activity of the Renaissance, crossing all boundaries of professional, amateur, court, and home (see Chapter 1). Lute song represented the perfect union of music and poetry, and it was also immensely practical, for it allowed performers to personalize polyphonic madrigals, chansons, and even entire Masses by arranging them for voice and accompaniment.

Contemporary with the sixteenth-century lute was the Renaissance guitar, a relatively small instrument—it would fit into a modern viola case—of four courses. The earliest (and some of the best) works for this instrument are included in a vihuela book of 1536 by the Spaniard Alonso Mudarra. Overall, its repertory was similar but much smaller than that of the lute. But by the middle of the sixteenth century, French composers had produced a sizeable and attractive body of solo works and arrangements of chansons, some of which was of extremely high quality (Tyler and Sparks 2002, 5–29). The works of Albert de Rippe or Guillaume Morlaye, for instance, stand as outstanding examples of this repertory. From 1550, an especially vigorous commercial culture of guitar music was sustained in Paris for almost three decades through the efforts of enterprising publishers working under royal licenses granted by Henry II, an avid guitar fan who may have been introduced to the instrument during the years he spent as a Spanish hostage.

### *Alfabeto* and Mixed Notation

As with lute music, Renaissance guitar music used tablature notation. Using a horizontal staff that represents the *strings* of the instrument, tablature shows where the fingers are placed on the strings and frets of the instrument rather than the actual notes themselves. It is a suc-

cessful system that is still very much in use today among folk, rock, and country guitarists, many of whom do not read staff notation. But it would be an exaggeration to say that tablature was originally intended only for lutenists and guitarists who couldn't read music. Any Renaissance player who arranged a vocal work for the instrument naturally had to be able to read musical parts. But tablature made contemporary music accessible to everyone, thus creating a cohesive musical culture. In addition, tablature is also perfectly suited for plucked instruments since it shows idiomatic fingering. Indeed, playing from tablature is an essential part of the technique. This fundamental point was not lost on the Baroque guitarists of the next generation as they further adapted tablature to keep up with newer technical demands.

Although other factors are certainly involved, the Baroque guitar is distinguished from its Renaissance counterpart by its greater number of string courses (five, rather than four) and its increased size (and, therefore, its lower pitch; the shorter Renaissance guitar was tuned higher than the Baroque instrument). The five-course Baroque guitar, whose tuning is identical to that of the modern guitar minus the lowest string, was already familiar in Spain by the middle of the sixteenth century. One of the earliest surviving examples of a five-course instrument is dated to 1581. The earliest music for the Baroque guitar dates from 1591, but it was the very popular treatise published five years later by the Spaniard Juan Carlos Amat, the *Guitarra Española*, that can be considered as the first truly influential source for the Baroque guitar. In addition to giving clear instructions for tuning, Amat addresses the issue of notating strummed chords by assigning letter symbols to designate the playing of individual chords (the letter names bear no relation to the actual harmony of the chord).

This tablature became known as *alfabeto*, or alphabet, and it laid the foundation for the notational system for the Baroque guitar. Since Spanish guitar music of this period was almost completely chordal, the *alfabeto* was essentially a shorthand method of notating chords without the need for actually spelling each note of the chord on a staff, as with lute tablature. In *alfabeto*, the guitarist sees the letter and fingers the chord that is associated with it, occasionally adding doublings (that are common to the chord) or dampening strings, as appropriate. This can be observed in manuals such as Gaspar Sanz's *Instrucción de música sobre la guitarra Española* of 1697, which clearly shows how the *alfabeto* translates into chord fingerings (Figure 8-1).

The early Baroque guitar repertory was based almost entirely on strummed works. By around 1630, however, guitarists began using a plucking technique to compose pieces that used scale passages and other textures in conjunction with strummed chords, requiring the use of lute tablature along with *alfabeto*. This combination of systems is known as "mixed tablature." The letter symbols designate the chord shapes to be strummed, as usual, while the lute tablature now notated the individual notes and scales, which were plucked (Figures 8-2 and 8-3). Other important features of Baroque guitar notation were indications for up and down strums, signs for ornaments and slurs, and, on rare occasion, left-hand fingering. It also became necessary for printed books of guitar music to include a preface that explained the notational systems for the complete beginner, including a chart that showed how the *alfabeto* symbols were played on the instrument (Boye 2005).

The invention of *alfabeto* tells us a great deal about the unique characteristics of Baroque guitar performance at the beginning of the Baroque. Amat's treatise, like most of those that were to follow, seeks to describe and formalize an existing practice. Although earlier French guitarists occasionally used strums for certain aspects of their performance, their music is really not that much different from lute compositions, and thus their notation—lute tablature—could not designate strums. Sixteenth-century Spanish guitarists, however, were clearly forging new stylistic paths on the five-course guitar through improvising composi-

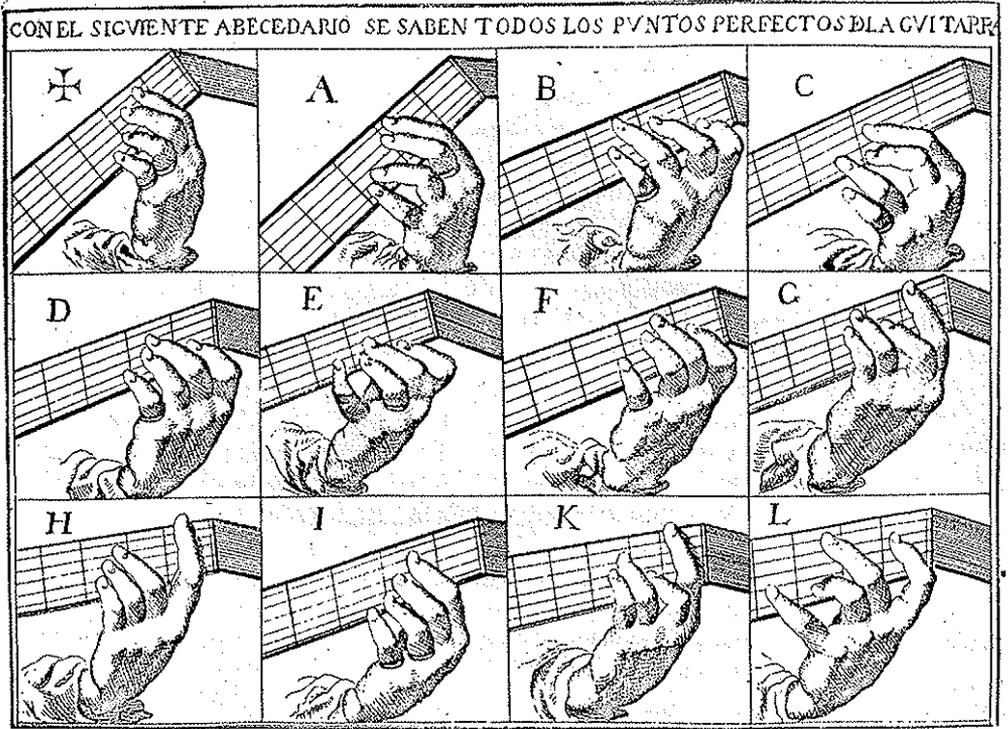


Figure 8-1. “With the following alphabet you will know all the main chords of the guitar,” from Gaspar Sanz, *Instrucción de música sobre la guitarra Española*, Libro Segundo (Zaragoza, 1697).

tions on repeated, strummed chord patterns, or providing an entirely strummed accompaniment to songs, in the process bringing techniques from the popular milieu into the world of art music. With Amat’s treatise, these improvised techniques received both a theoretical validation and a solid pedagogical method for realization.

### Girolamo Montesardo: A Spanish Guitarist in Baroque Italy

The Spanish *alfabeto* system was adopted in Italy chiefly through the Spanish guitarist, singer, composer, and priest Girolamo Montesardo (fl. 1606–1620), whose activities initiated a period during which Italy became the main center for the development of the guitar (Tyler

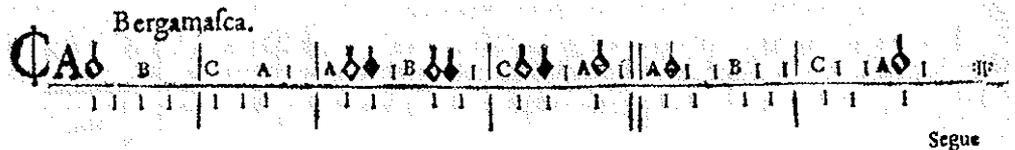


Figure 8-2. *Alfabeto* notation from Antonio Carbonchi, *Le dodici chitarre spostate* (Florence, 1643). Reprinted with the permission of S.P.E.S., Florence.

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*Pasacaly sopra M.*

**Figure 8-3.** “Mixed” tablature, from Giovanni Battista Granata, *Capricci Armonici* (Bologna, 1646). Reprinted with permission of S.P.E.S., Florence.

and Sparks 2002, 52–56). Montesardo’s *Nuova inventione* (New inventions) is the first printed book of music for the five-course guitar, and it was the clearest formulation to date of fingering chords and the up-down strumming technique. The contents of his book illustrate the kinds of pieces that guitarists normally would have improvised. It was like a “standard-rep” of tunes based mostly on well-known, repeated chordal patterns such as the bergamasca, Ruggiero, ballo di Napoli, and so on. The patterns were now presented, however, in *alfabeto*. What the *Nuova inventione* represents, in essence, is the codification of improvised practice. To make a contemporary comparison: an experienced modern guitarist would be completely familiar with such standard chordal schemes as a twelve-bar blues (in any key), the popular early sixties I–vi–IV–V progression, and a shuffle blues, with and without its common I–VI–II–V “turn-around,” from years of playing by ear. But a beginner could also learn these progressions with help from a book in which the examples were notated in tablature. Montesardo was providing this help in his publication.

In both France and Italy, the guitar’s meteoric rise in popularity was in proportion to the now-receding presence of the lute, the instrument that had dominated instrumental music in these countries throughout the sixteenth century. Although one could argue that the guitar is mostly to “blame” for the gradual decrease in Italian and, to some degree, French lute composition after 1650, there are other reasons as well. By the 1620s, Italian lute music was no longer stylistically or technically attractive to a wide public—a far cry from the previous century, when lute music thrived within a large publishing economy and was successfully mar-

keted to a broad commercial audience. The seventeenth century saw a sharp decrease in Italian lute publications, from over a hundred that appeared between 1507 and 1599, to around twenty. And those that did appear circulated among small erudite groups of nobles and patrons, instead of a broad and international public (Coelho 1995, 4). Whereas sixteenth-century lute books were known for their user-friendly arrangements of popular madrigals, chansons, and attractive dance settings, lute publications in the seventeenth century featured the more subjective, virtuosic forms of the toccata and contained many new techniques set within a highly ornamented and adventurous harmonic language that was frankly beyond the reach—technically and aesthetically—of most players (Coelho 1997a).

### Guitar and Voice

In the area of accompanying, lutes continued to flourish after 1600, since they enjoyed a critical role in the new vocal styles of accompanied song and opera (see Chapter 2). The construction of large, extended-neck archlutes (fourteen courses) and theorbos (fourteen to nineteen courses), both with bass strings, reflected the need for more powerful continuo instruments. They were more awkward to play, however, and they opened the door to an increased role—soon to be a frenzy—for the more easily learned guitar. With its fundamentally harmonic orientation, fewer strings, and a notation that was founded on chordal shapes, the guitar seemed born to accompany vocal works, especially rhythmic strophic songs and duets. But this was not an entirely new development. Many of the chordal patterns known by sixteenth-century guitarists, such as the *romanesca*, *Ruggiero*, and *passamezzo*, were also used as accompaniments for simple songs, similar to the way a player today could improvise a three-line blues verse to a twelve-bar, I–IV–I–V progression, where each line of lyric is set to four measures of music.

Thus there was an unbroken tradition of guitar-accompanied song from the Renaissance through the Baroque. Capitalizing on the popularity of the guitar, the most important composers of songs soon began including guitar *alfabeto* in their songbooks to allow for guitar accompaniment, in addition to the conventional bass line in staff notation (Figure 8-4). Nor was the guitar limited to accompanying solo voices. Some of the most high-profile musical events from the first part of the seventeenth century called for guitars to participate along with lutes in continuo ensembles, such as the lavishly staged Florentine *intermedi* of 1597 and 1608, celebrating the marriages of Ferdinando and Cosimo II Medici, respectively. Guitar accompaniment is specified in the music for the Roman, Venetian, and French operas as well. Many guitarists, including Giovanni Paolo Foscari, Francesco Corbetta, Santiago de Murcia, Nicola Matteis, and Sanz wrote important instructions for playing figured bass on the guitar.

Having traced the development and prosperity of the guitar in seventeenth-century Italy, we can now turn to the questions of who, exactly, were the consumers of this music? To which public was guitar music marketed, and how was this music used? Indeed, what fundamental cultural values were embodied by the guitar? To answer these questions we need to enter the cultural world of the amateur domestic musician. Evaristo Baschenis's fascinating triptych offers us one view of the rich Italian guitar culture of the seventeenth century.

### The Guitar and Courtly Life: The Agliardi Triptych

Analogies, metaphors, hidden and conflicting meanings, obsessive attention to detail mixed with tricks of the eye, reality and symbolism, sound and silence, and love and death—these qualities and contradictions abound in the exquisite still-life paintings by the painter, musi-

Figure 8-4. *Alfabeto* guitar accompaniment to a song, from Giovanni Girolamo Kapsperger, *Libro secondo di villanelle* (Rome, 1619). Reprinted with permission of S.P.E.S., Florence.

cian, and priest Evaristo Baschenis (1617–1677). One could say that Baschenis the priest influenced the conviction, precision, faithfulness, and the sanctity of the simple objects found in these works, while Baschenis the musician sought fantasy, passion, and even self-gratification. These two extremes find their common ground in Baschenis the artist.

Of the many hundreds of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century paintings that depict guitars and lutes, the musical portraits by Baschenis are of special importance because of their unusual detail and rich musical symbolism. Let us examine the three panels of Baschenis's largest and most famous work, the Agliardi Triptych, painted around 1665 and named for the family that commissioned the piece and is depicted in it. The paintings allow us to more fully understand the guitar's position within domestic settings as well as the qualities that were attached to the instrument by its owners. In addition, Baschenis's accuracy in representing such minute (but important) details as the guitar maker's label allows us to gauge the lasting value that was placed on these instruments, both as objects of sound and as *objets d'art* (Bayer 2001).

Although Baschenis is a household name in his native town of Bergamo, an important city for art north of Milan, he remains relatively unknown to the general public. He was not a prolific artist, and very few of his paintings are found outside private collections in Italy. His works are limited almost exclusively to still-life representations of instruments and food. Baschenis was never employed as a court artist, and therefore we do not find in his work the grandiose political and dynastic themes drawing on mythological or classical subjects that are typical of seventeenth-century courtly painting. On the contrary, in his portraits Baschenis concentrated on things that he owned—especially the instruments that he played, which were of such value to him that they become humanized through the art of portraiture. Baschenis captured the instruments as they aged, like a living person, with the passing of time. Today, his paintings are studied as a rich source of information about lute and guitar construction, instrumentation, and musical aesthetics.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artists were aware of the rich symbolism that was attached to musical instruments, and this is why lutes, and occasionally guitars, are prominent

in the genre known as the *natura morta*, or still life. With its usual representations of ripe and rotting fruit, wilting flowers, half-filled wine glasses, cobwebs, and absence of humans, the still-life genre was dedicated to exploring symbols. Common themes attached to lutes were death and Eros (the god of love), but also, in particular, *vanitas*—the transitory nature of life and the evanescence of vanity. This was most often represented by a broken string, by the lute strings facing down, or by the appearance of an old score lying unused. The symbolism of guitars is less complex. Like the lute, it was commonly associated with love. But its presence in a Baroque allegorical painting (and in opera) usually signified lust and licentiousness (once again a common connection with the modern electric guitar!). And for some conservative authors the guitar signified just that. The writer Pierre Trichet wondered in 1640 whether the guitar was so popular in France because “it has a certain something which is feminine and pleasing to women, flattering their hearts and making them inclined to voluptuousness?” (Trichet c. 1640, I: 94).

Metaphysical and sexual metaphors notwithstanding, in the end what makes the Agliardi Triptych so “musical” is Baschenis’s experience as a practicing musician. The artist owned several lutes and guitars, among other instruments, and in the first panel of the triptych (Plate 18; Figure 8-5), he reveals himself autobiographically, not as a painter or even priest (though he is dressed like one), but as a competent keyboard player, perhaps playing an accompaniment. To the painter’s left and playing the archlute is the twenty-year-old Ottavio Agliardi (b. 1645), the youngest son of Camillo Agliardi (1604–1674), commissioner of the portrait. The Agliardi family was of the oldest and most noble clans in Bergamo, and they had considerable influence in the city during the seventeenth century. As is typical of his approach, Baschenis provided an accurate and persuasive musical scene: Ottavio holds the lute correctly, with his right hand in a position that is recommended by all writers on lute technique.

Being a noble family, the Agliardi cultivated music as an important part of their education as well as their cultural identity. The other instruments lying on the table—a guitar, bass viol, and small mandola—suggest that Ottavio is skilled on these as well, and that these expensive instruments are owned by the family. Their inanimate position suggests the passing of time, in which the music is slowly being silenced as players leave the room. The music scores, with their folded edges and worn appearance, clearly indicating signs of use, also underscore this theme, as if the pieces have been played for the last time. Finally, the Anatolian rug covering the table adds an exotic flavor to the scene and represents yet another of the prized possessions owned by the Agliardi.

The guitar is painted with great care, with part of its vaulted back lying off of the table. Upon closer inspection one can notice other important details about the instrument’s construction: the back is multiribbed (made up of many thin ribs), and the bridge has its two characteristic “moustaches” on either side. We also see the strings and the silk strap dangling listlessly. On the sheet of music protruding from the folder between the guitar and viol, a few lines of manuscript tablature are visible, perhaps indicating that these are original compositions. Even the music books are accurately painted with regard to format, proportion, and notation (Italian tablature, but not *alfabeto*).

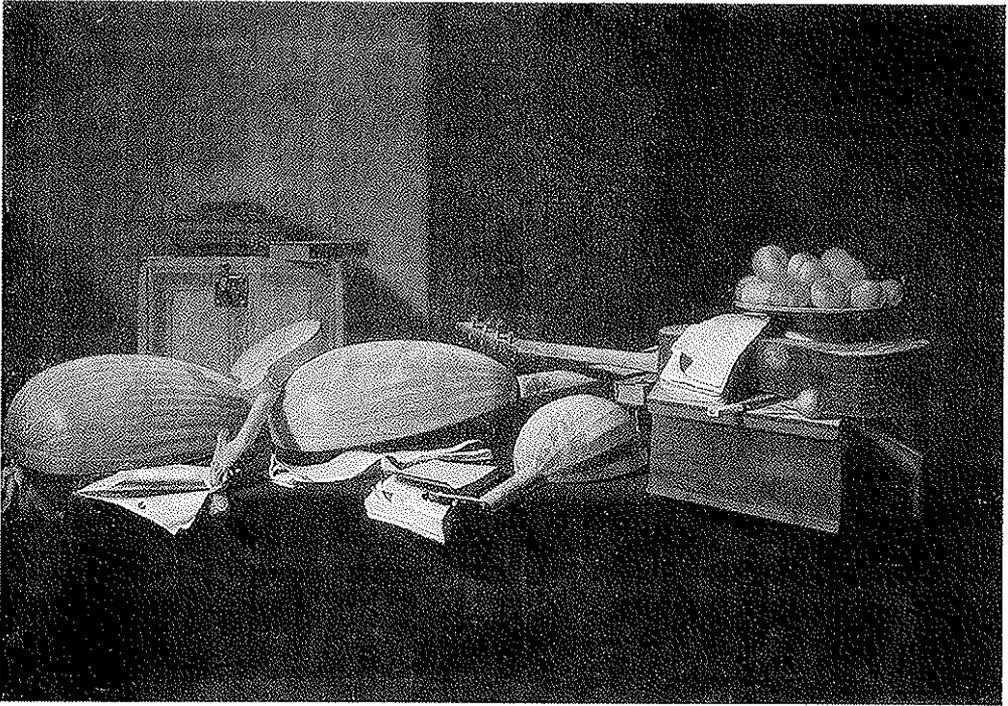
Moving to the middle panel of the triptych (Figure 8-6), we encounter an especially haunting depiction of “silence.” The instruments, including two lutes, a cittern, mandola, spinet, and guitar, all appear dead. They lie face down, the traces of their beautiful harmony memorialized by the distant echo of a few visible fragments of music. The piece of fruit on the spinet is beginning to spoil, and there is a fly (*mosca* in Italian, which is very similar to *musica*, music) on the music under the lute on the left. The fly’s short lifespan may be another contribution to the *vanitas* conceit. This guitar, with its flat back without ribs, is differ-



Figure 8-5. Evaristo Baschenis, *Agliardi Triptych* (c. 1665), Panel I. Fotografia: Da Re Italy.

ent from the one on the first panel and may be a French model. Baschenis also provides a good view of the guitar's tied frets along the neck. One of the most brilliant effects the artist uses to convey the passing of time is the thin layer of dust that appears on the backs of each of the instruments. This dust includes visible tracks left from fingers streaking through it. On one level, this is a clear reference to the scriptural passage of "dust to dust." But on another level, the streaks also suggest the sensual caress of fingers against a lute's back, combining a tactile element to the senses of taste and smell, represented by the apples and flower stacked on top of the guitar.

The most elegant panel of the triptych is the third (Plate 19; Figure 8-7), which shows the remaining two Agliardi brothers, Alessandro (b. 1636) with the guitar, and the eldest, Bonifacio (b. 1635), "looking somewhat haughtily towards the painter and his brother" (Bayer 2001, 100). This scene offers a window into the cultured milieu shared by the two brothers, in which the guitar plays a central role in their pastimes and creative moments. Alessandro plays yet another type of guitar, an exquisitely made instrument with a thin neck, a style of early seventeenth-century guitar that was used more for strummed playing rather than for plucking. Indeed, Baschenis has captured Alessandro in the midst of executing an index-finger strum while forming a C-major chord with his left hand. The partly drawn curtains convey an atmosphere of intimacy, appropriate for a solo guitar. The gorgeous inlay on the guitar neck and elsewhere is itself a work of art, and, most importantly, Baschenis even reproduces the guitar maker's inscription, "Giorgio *Sellas* a la Stela in Venezia." This identifies the instrument as one built by the great seventeenth-century lute and guitar maker Giorgio Sellas, whose workshop was found "under the sign with a star" in Venice.



**Figure 8-6.** Evaristo Baschenis, Agliardi Triptych (c. 1665), Panel 2. Fotografia: Da Re Italy.

Along with the musical performance by Alessandro, Baschenis includes a still life setting on the table that includes yet another guitar, an archlute, and various books whose titles are visible. These demonstrate the range of possessions owned by the Agliardi brothers, and the things that were especially dear to them. With the titles of the books, one can further extrapolate the educational background of the Agliardi brothers and their extra-musical interests, giving us valuable information on the type of person who took up the guitar in the Baroque. Three of the books are poems by the seventeenth-century Roman Aurelio Orsi, the brother of the painter and acquaintance of Caravaggio, Prospero Orsi. Another book is a treatise on nobility by the author Andrea Tiraquellos, and a final volume is a legal tract by the authors Ubaldis and Canus (Bayer 2001, 98).

### Guitar Music in France

By the time of Baschenis's triptych, the guitar had been fully in the mainstream of Italian music for over thirty years. The diversity of musical textures and the fluidity of the repertory were made possible by mixed tablature, which, as we have seen, combined the shorthand symbols of *alfabeto* with the longhand specificity of Italian tablature, resulting in a notation that was flexible enough to accommodate the various nuances of new compositional styles. The period 1630 to 1660 witnessed the publication of a great deal of outstanding guitar music, including impressive works by Foscarini (who was the first to use mixed tablature), Corbetta, Angelo Michele Bartolotti, Antonio Carbonchi (particularly his second guitar book of 1640), and Francesco Valdambri. Over the last third of the seventeenth century, Italian guitarists continued their cultivation of the instrument. But aside from an extraordi-

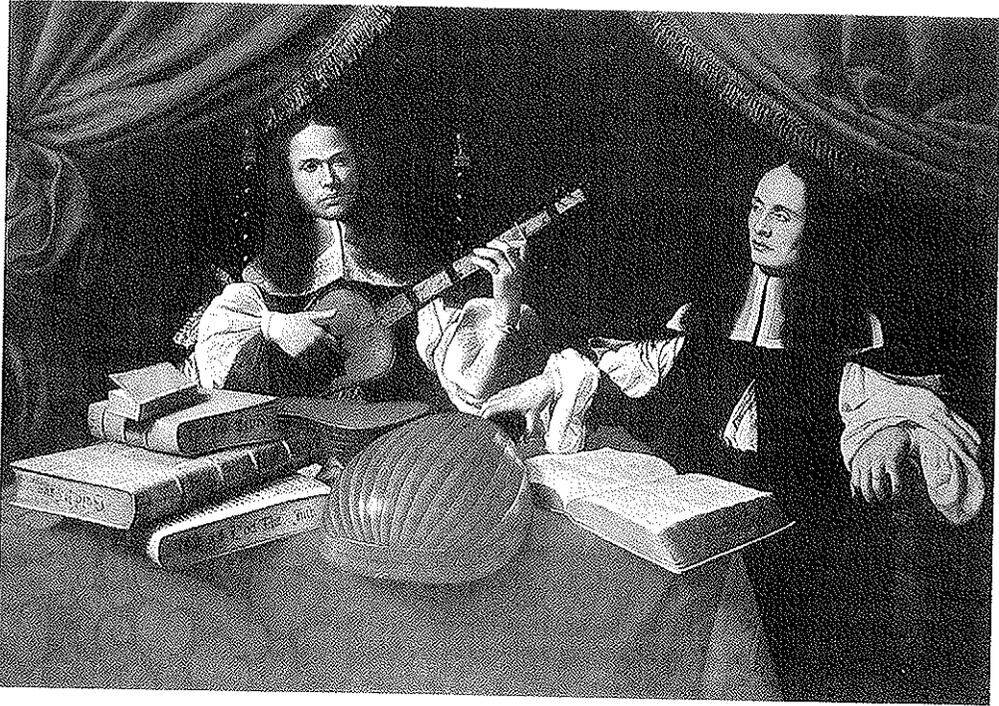


Figure 8-7. Evaristo Baschenis, Agliardi Triptych (c. 1665), Panel 3. Fotografia: Da Re Italy.

nary collection of guitar solos published by Ludovico Roncalli in 1692, Italian guitar books of this period are marked by an increasing decline in originality. Indeed, in the last half of the century the focal point for guitar music shifted to France, through the endeavors of the Italian Francesco Corbetta.

### Corbetta in France

Born in northern Italy around 1615, Francesco Corbetta had already made a career for himself as a guitarist and teacher in Bologna, a dignified university town that was an important center for the guitar (Pinnell 1976). Corbetta's fame landed him a position at the court in Mantua (a city whose days as an artistic center were by that time numbered), followed by a sojourn in Brussels. He began his association with the French court in the late 1640s, traveling there with other Italian musicians following the financially disastrous but artistically brilliant reign of Pope Urban VIII in 1644. Soon after his arrival, Corbetta was already instructing the young Louis XIV, thus planting the seeds for the golden age of the guitar at the French court that occurred when the Dauphin ascended to the throne as a fifteen-year-old in 1654 (see Chapter 5). After an interlude as court guitarist in Hanover from 1652 to 1653, Corbetta returned to France, where he became a fixture at the court and helped nourish what would soon be the most important guitar culture outside of Italy.

Corbetta's music was heard and praised by Jean-Baptiste Lully (an expatriate Italian who also played the guitar), and he published two excellent guitar books, in 1671 and 1674. In these publications, Corbetta disposed of both *alfabeto* and mixed tablature in favor of French lute tablature, a clear example of cultural "translation" as French music itself began to exhibit strong signs of nationalism. Sometime in the early 1660s, Corbetta settled in England in the

entourage of the exiled Charles II, whose acquaintance with Corbetta in France had resulted in a deep appreciation for the guitar. Corbetta's arrival in England boosted an already active guitar culture, resulting in a vibrant musical scene in which he played a central role as player, teacher, and bon vivant gamester. The rise of the guitar in England was not embraced by everyone. By 1666, the composer and publisher John Playford lamented the decline of the English lute in the face of an instrument that had succeeded in capturing the spirits of the younger (and in Playford's view, unworthy) generation. And in a highly telling passage, the famous diarist Samuel Pepys, after hearing a performance by Corbetta on August 5, 1667, wrote: "After done, with the Duke of York; and coming out through his dressing room, I there espied Signor Francisco tuning his Guitar, and Monsieur du Puy with him, who did make him play to me; which he did most admirably, so well as I was mightily troubled that all that pains should have been taken on so bad an instrument" (quoted in Spring 2001, 413).

Corbetta's last printed guitar book, the *Guitarre royale* of 1674 (not to be confused with his other book of the same name of 1671, dedicated to Charles II), was dedicated to Louis XIV. Interestingly, in terms of style it returns to mostly strummed textures that were meant to be accessible, it seems, to the amateur courtier musicians of the French court.

### The Global Travels of Santiago de Murcia

By Corbetta's death in 1681, the transmission of guitar styles from Italy to France and from France to England and the Low Countries had been set in motion. A few decades later, Santiago de Murcia carried the guitar full circle back to Spain as well as set it on a transatlantic itinerary to the New World—a journey whose impact continues to have ramifications to this day. In many ways, Murcia's career brings together many of the perspectives about the guitar we have mentioned above: the influence of Spain, the use of French courtly idioms, and, most of all, the fusion of styles—in this case, a fascinating assimilation of European and New World influences. Like bookends to the history of the guitar in the Baroque, we end where we began: with Spain.

The early eighteenth century witnessed a flowering of guitar music in Spain, spurred by composers whose works represent some of the most beautiful, melodic, and challenging pieces ever written for the instrument. Like other guitar composers before them, Gaspar Sanz, Francisco Gueraú, Santiago de Murcia, and others amalgamated popular tunes, national dances, and international courtly idioms, both French and Italian, to forge a new, eclectic style. The influence their publications had on the subsequent development of the guitar may be debatable, but the technical and stylistic models they provided strengthened the foundation for the emergence of the modern six-string guitar in Spain at the end of the century. Moreover, these works, especially those of Sanz, were virtually the only Baroque guitar music that was known by modern classical guitarists before the lute and early guitar revival that began in the 1970s.

The Spanish guitarist Santiago de Murcia (c. 1682–c. 1740) has been studied extensively in recent years because of the enormous breadth of his music—stylistically, technically, and culturally (Russell 1981). Born into a family of composers and instrument makers in Madrid, Murcia benefited from close ties to high-level patronage. His parents' connections to the Royal Chapel in Madrid may have provided him with the opportunity to study with the virtuoso guitarist and choir director Francisco Gueraú, whose only guitar book, the *Poema Harmónico* of 1694, contains works of astonishing invention and complexity. In his own treatise on guitar playing, *Resumen de acompañar* (Summary of Accompanying, 1714), Murcia has many words of praise for Gueraú. Moreover, there are stylistic connections between the two composers as well. By the early eighteenth century Murcia was engaged as the guitar teacher

for the queen of Spain, María Luisa Gabriela, and this employment was followed by a string of valuable friendships with other noble patrons who served as the dedicatees of his guitar publications. Murcia's travels to France, Italy, Belgium, and Holland cannot be confirmed, but they are very likely, given the international traits, especially French, that appear in his compositions (Russell 1982; 1995, I: 131–133).

One trip that we are certain of ranks among the most important in the history of the guitar. Sometime after 1718, Murcia journeyed to Mexico, probably under the protection of one of his patrons in Spain, Joseph Alvarez de Saavedra, the dedicatee of the composer's *Passacalles y obras*. Murcia appears to have remained in Mexico until his death, and it was there that he composed the bulk of his output. His oeuvre consists of two separate manuscripts, written in Mexico, that were designed as a pair and presented to his patron Saavedra in 1732: the *Códice Saldívar*, No. 4, which is preserved in Mexico, and the *Passacalles y obras*, now owned by the British Library in London. These manuscripts contain many of the finest guitar works of the late Baroque Era and constitute the last great flowering of the Baroque guitar. Indeed, they provide a grand summary of Baroque guitar and the international styles it came to embrace.

Let us look at three works from the *Códice Saldívar* that demonstrate three different stylistic flavors: *La Jota*, *La Allemanda*, and *Marionas*. Of the sixty-nine pieces in the *Códice*, the majority are dances with variations, which fall into two categories. The first is the courtly and mannered *danzas*, which, when danced, used restrained hand motions. Most of the movement took place with the feet. The second is the vigorous *bailes*, which were enlivened with castanets and featured expressive hand and arm gestures together with fast movements of the feet. Murcia's *danzas* and *bailes* are both progressive and retrospective, revealing their writer's keen sense of history. Some of his pieces, such as the *españolita*, reach back to sixteenth-century forms. Others, such as the *fandango* and *seguidilla*, became popular only in the nineteenth century. Another group of works in the manuscript represent French courtly dances, including several minuets which were part of the international instrumental language during this period. Italian influence can be observed as well, in the presence of a sonata in the fast-slow-fast Italian style.

*La Jota* (Sampler CD 2, track 7) is a Spanish folk dance from Aragon that was of recent vintage in the eighteenth century. It is related to both the *fandango* and perhaps even the *malagueña*. Through Spanish colonialism it became very popular in Mexico during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The dance has been described as a mock combat between pairs of men and women playing castanets (which are, unfortunately, not scored) and challenging each other with aggressive advances and retreats (Russell 1995, 49). Murcia's setting portrays this scene by starting with a martial strumming section over tonic and dominant seventh chords, notated in the original with *alfabeto*. The hemiola rhythm produced by alternating 6/8 and 3/4 reflects a gesture found in other Spanish dances of the day, such as the *canario* (an exotic dance imported from the Canary Islands). Though the piece begins with strumming, a clear melody appears in the top voice, and this tune achieves full independence beginning with the arrival of a plucked section. Variations ensue. First the melody switches to the bass, followed by a passage of running notes and then a much quicker imitation between treble and bass, as the music gains speed. The final variations achieve an exciting conclusion through passages of parallel tenths and thirds combined with fast ascending and descending runs (Example 8-1).

By contrast, *La Allemanda* (Sampler CD 2, track 8) reflects the courtly French taste that is so integrated into Murcia's compositional style. In fact, the work is an arrangement of a French piece, André Campra's "L'Allemande" from the French court ballet *Ballet des frag-*

**Example 8-1.** Murcia: *La Jota*, mm. 45–50.

*ments de Mr. De Lully*. Of German origin, the allemande was perhaps the most popular dance in eighteenth-century France, where it had long shed its popular Teutonic roots. In duple meter, it called for a moderately fast tempo and often began with an upbeat. The allemande appears to have been a popular dance in Mexico as well. Classic late-Baroque instrumental settings of the allemande, such as those of Bach, are normally in binary form and tend to have a thick, contrapuntal texture. Murcia's *La Allemanda* displays the binary form but little else. Beginning with the characteristic upbeat, the work evokes instead a country dance, with simple harmonies, droned bass notes, and strum-accented downbeats. The two-voice guitar texture is almost all in plucked style and demonstrates how the simplest work can be elaborated through the many textural possibilities offered by the guitar.

*Marionas* (Sampler CD 2, track 9), a triple-time dance that was popular in the Spanish theatre, was the second piece that Murcia entered into the *Código Saldivar*. As a dance type, it appears in the guitar books of Sanz and Gueráu as well. It is one of the most rhythmically attractive *bailes*, with a halting accent on the second beat of every other measure. Like *La Jota*, *Marionas* begins with strummed chords over the repeated progression I–V–vi–(iv)–V–I, with some melodic movement in the upper note of the chords (Example 8-2). As the plucked variations begin, short four-note runs are interspersed with chords, so that the second-beat syncopations are retained. With the middle variations, however, the chords are replaced by repeated notes, scales, and a climactic section of rising sequences. In the concluding variations, a shift occurs from 3/4 to 6/8, which is followed by a few bursts of downward scales in the penultimate section. The work ends as it began, with a strummed statement of the *Marionas* progression.

Also of great interest in the collection are two works that draw on indigenous Afro-Mexican influences, *Cumbées* and *Zarambeques*. In the swinging, syncopated *Cumbées*, a work that was banned by the Inquisition as being lewd, lascivious, and indecent, Murcia asks the player to strike the guitar top with his hand for percussive effect (Example 8-3). The presence of *Cumbées* and *Zarambeques* within the context of the entire manuscript underlines

**Example 8-2.** Murcia: *Marionas*, mm. 1–8.

**Example 8-3.** Murcia: *Cumbées*, mm. 1–7.

once again Murcia's sense of history, a sense that even seems to accommodate a *postmodern* view. In the *Códice* he assembles works from different styles, eras, and cultures without apology or hierarchy and without giving priority to any single tradition. Works from Europe appear outside of their courtly context, while new, local influences contribute to a vibrant sense of fusion and synthesis.

### Conclusion: The Living Baroque Guitar

The thousands of pieces that survive for the Baroque guitar (which nevertheless probably represent only a fraction of the original repertory) reflect the musical contributions and tastes of a broad range of personalities. From short strummed dances on simple chord changes to complex, grandiose variations, this vast body of works reveals that Baroque guitarists, like their modern counterparts in popular music today, absorbed influences of many kinds. In so doing, they produced compositions that are much more inclusive in their stylistic and cultural mix than the music of other instrumental repertoires. Guitarists' assimilation of fashionable courtly idioms as well as popular and even "world" music, as we have seen in the works of Santiago de Murcia, anticipates the fusion that has become the stylistic norm in music today (Russell 2003).

The study of popular music has now been validated as an academic pursuit. As a consequence, rock and rap are studied at universities together with Bach and Beethoven. Music by popular artists, from the Beatles and Stones, to Hendrix, Pink Floyd, and Radiohead has entered the repertoire of classical performers, and the once-impenetrable walls that used to separate "high" and "low" culture have all but crumbled. The Baroque guitar was not only a cultural equalizer in its own time. It also set an historical precedent for the stylistic reconciliation that has taken place in the music of today. With the revival of the Baroque guitar as a concert instrument over the past thirty years in the hands of such masterful players as Hopkinson Smith, James Tyler, Paul O'Dette, and Richard Savino (the performer on our CD), we are privileged to witness a fascinating reunion between two distant but very close cultural relatives.

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