

De Visée1682
Advis

So many people have taken up the guitar and have presented their pieces to the public, that I do not know whether by publishing mine I can offer something new for the enjoyment of those who may be interested. However, I have worked only towards this end, and in order to succeed I have given as much attention to the melody as I could so as to render my works at least natural, knowing all too well that I could not pretend to distinguish myself by the strength of my composition.

I have tried to match them to the taste of skilled players, giving my pieces as far as my weakness allows me the same form as those of the inimitable Mr. Lully; I am persuaded that it is only by following him from afar that my pieces have had the good fortune to be listened to favourably by his Majesty and all his court.

Their approval which honours me thus makes me hope that my book will find many patrons. Since my friends have found the melody of my pieces to their liking, they pressed me to include a section in staff notation for the satisfaction of those who wished to play them on the keyboard, violin and other instruments. These will be found at the end of the book written out for bass and treble.

I beg those who understand the art of composition but who are unfamiliar with the guitar not to be shocked if they find that sometimes I have strayed from the rules. The instrument demands it, and above all it is necessary to satisfy the ear.

I have found a new tuning in which I have composed a suite of pieces. I hope that the novelty will make them successful. The other [pieces] will not be distinguished by personal names in the way that others have done (like Corbetta for example!). They are only indicated by the titles or the movements ["par suite"]. Nor will you find any "Folies d'Espagne", for in short, there are so many variations on these resounding at every concert that I would only be repeating the folly of others.

Quand on trouvera un accord marqué de cette maniere (i.e. the curved line is on the stave below the note value) il faut faire couler les doigts de la main droite en descendant, et finir par le poulce, en doucissant, et les touchant l'une apres l'autre, selon que la mesure le permettra;

When you find a chord marked in this manner (i.e. by the curved line on the stave below the note value as in first tablature example - see ex. a below) it is necessary to run the fingers of the right hand downwards and to finish softly with the thumb, and to touch them [the strings] one after the other according to the value of the note;

Si c'est une noire, ou un croche, qui ne permette pas de demeurer beaucoup, et que cette mesure marque soit au dessus de la batterie, (i.e. the curved line is below the stave) il faut battre du poulce seulement;

If it is a crotchet or a quaver which does not allow for much delay and this same mark (i.e. the curved line under the stave below the note value as in second tablature example - see ex. b below) is below the *batterie*, it is necessary to strike with the thumb only.

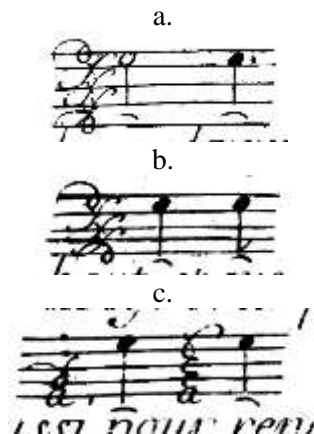
Si c'est un coup en haut, et que ce soit une blanche ou une noire pointée il faut relever du premier et du second doigt en touchant de mesme qu'en descendant les cordes l'une apres l'autres, et si c'est une noire ou une croche, relever du premier doigt brusquement.

If there is an upward stroke and there is a minim or a dotted crotchet it is necessary to rise upwards with the first and second fingers touching the strings one after the other in the same way as when descending, and if it is crotchet or quaver to strike upwards briskly with the first finger.

When there are dots on some of the lines as you may see here (third tablature example – ex.c below) you should not strike the strings which they indicate so as to avoid dissonances and to render the melody more distinct.

It is necessary that the thumb should fall downwards [i.e.towards the floor?] and that on rising the first finger should make the same effect as the thumb.

I believe that it is appropriate to observe these little rules so that *batteries* are rendered more delicately and so that those who play my pieces may not encounter the inconvenience which I have found myself many times when playing the works of others. Here, more or less is all that I believe it is necessary to explain.



If I have left out anything, I beg those who are skilful to make good the deficiency. I will always accept their criticism with much deference.

I have been obliged to transpose the pieces of music because the compass of the guitar extends only to high D la re [at the tenth fret]. One should not forget to put an octave on the fourth course because it is very necessary.