

At Court and at Home with the *Vihuela de mano*: Current Perspectives on the Instrument, its Music, and its World

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THE *VIHUELA DE MANO* WAS THE MOST prominent solo instrument in sixteenth-century Spain. It enjoyed a popularity that extended across a broad social spectrum and—much more than has generally been recognized—was equally familiar to the middle-classes as to royalty and the nobility. For both pleasure and learning, it served court and domestic roles, and generated a substantial repertory of great diversity and character. The present essay does not pretend to summarize all that has been said about the vihuela and its music. It is rather a survey that provides a long-needed reassessment of the vihuela repertory in its social context, and that makes a critical review of its composers and music.

The Instrument

The origins of the vihuela can be traced back at least to the mid-fifteenth century, although no music survives from this period. It was not until the sixteenth century that the instrument reached its zenith; by the early seventeenth century, it had virtually disappeared. Recent research by Ian Woodfield has made significant headway in tracing the origins of the vihuela in Aragon and its subsequent development in the second half of the fifteenth century.¹ Largely through iconographical documents, he has traced the emergence of the instrument in eastern Spain. In their fifteenth-century form, bowed and plucked vihuelas *de arco* and *de mano* are virtually

¹ Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol*, Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs (Cambridge, 1984). A more general study of early plucked instruments in Spain is given in Heinz Nickel, *Beiträge zur Entwicklung der Gitarre in Europa* (Haimhausen, 1972). Many early literary references to the vihuela are reproduced in the introduction to Pujol's edition of Alonso Mudarra, *Tres libros de música en cifra para vihuela*, Monumentos de la Música Española 7 (Barcelona, 1949).

indistinguishable, and it was not until the early years of the sixteenth century that the two species assumed independent forms and construction. The period of change and transmission to Italy appears intimately connected with the ascent of the Aragonese Alexander VI to the papacy in 1492. While the transformation of the vihuela *de arco* into the viola da gamba occurred through the intervention of Italian craftsmen, the specifically plucked version appears to have emerged in Spain around the turn of the century together with an Italian variant, the *viola da mano*. This latter instrument is widely depicted in Italian sources and is principally distinguished from the Spanish model by its sickle-shaped rather than flat pegbox.

The vihuela was tuned to the same intervals as both the lute and viol and was strung with six double courses as the lute, although in unison throughout and normally with a double-strung first course. G or A appear to have been the most common pitches of the outer courses among a number of theoretical possibilities. The instruments depicted in the well-known woodcuts in the two earliest vihuela books are indicative of the variety of instrument sizes that were known. Milán's frequently reproduced depiction of Orpheus playing the vihuela in *El Maestro* (fol. 6v) shows a large instrument in the hands of its mythological patriarch, while the image of Arion in the opening folios of Narváez's *Los seys libros del Delphín* (1538, fol. a iv)—a similar affirmation of the humanist spirit of the Spanish tradition—shows a much smaller instrument, of a size more suited to the technical demands of the music, due to what must have been a much shorter string length.

From both historical and practical points of view, lute and vihuela music are interchangeable. It is increasingly recognized that the Italian *viola da mano* was widely played in the sixteenth century by musicians such as Francesco da Milano, who are primarily known to us as lutenists, and, similarly, that the lute was not as unknown in Spain as the absence of musical sources might suggest.² Some vihuela works also found their way into contemporary

² Attention was first focussed on the *viola da mano* by John Ward in "The Vihuela de mano and its Music: 1536-1576" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1953) and more recently by James Tyler in *The Early Guitar* (London, 1976).

non-Spanish lute anthologies.³ By extension, contemporary lutenists should not feel it inappropriate to explore the Spanish repertory on their instrument.

Sources

The seven books of tablature for the vihuela that were printed between 1536 and 1576 contain a total of 690 works and form the nucleus of the repertory. These books are discussed in detail below but are listed here in chronological order with short titles, using the standard modern spelling of their authors' names:⁴

- Luis Milán, *El Maestro* (Valencia, 1536)
- Luis de Narváez, *Los seys libros del Delphín* (Valladolid, 1538)
- Alonso Mudarra, *Tres Libros de Música* (Seville, 1546)
- Enríquez de Valderrábano, *Silva de sirenas* (Valladolid, 1547)
- Diego Pisador, *Libro de música de Vihuela* (Salamanca, 1552)
- Miguel de Fuenllana, *Orphénica Lyra* (Seville, 1554)
- Esteban Daza, *El Parnasso* (Valladolid, 1576)

To these can be added a small number of manuscript sources and the keyboard books of Cabezón (1578), Venegas de Henestrosa (1557) and Sancta María (1565), whose contents are designated as being for harp, keyboard or vihuela.⁵ The status of these latter books as vihuela sources, however, requires critical reassessment, as the interchangeability of keyboard and vihuela repertories has been accepted too readily in theory and, perhaps, too infrequently in practice. While there is strong stylistic similarity between vihuela music and the Spanish keyboard repertory, the epithet *para harpa, tecla y vihuela* should be understood in a highly specific historical context. The phrase, which is inclusive of all Spanish polyphonic instruments, was coined by Venegas because he included in his anthology keyboard adaptations—made with considerable licence—

³ Some of Narváez's pieces, for example, were reprinted by Phalèse in the anthologies listed in Howard Mayer Brown, *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600: A Bibliography* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) as 1546₁₈ [=1546₁₉], 1568₇ and 1574₇, the latter being a parody. See Ward, "The Vihuela de mano," pp. 383-84.

⁴ The locations of surviving copies and full inventories of each volume are given in Brown, *Instrumental Music*.

⁵ Full titles and inventories of these volumes are also in Brown, *Instrumental Music*.

from three of the published vihuela books.⁶ The very title of the *Libro de cifra nueva* marks the invention of a new and specifically idiomatic keyboard tablature, a form of notation that is inhospitable to the vihuelist.⁷ This tablature could, however, also serve the harp admirably, given that its layout of one-string-per-note is essentially the same as the one-key-per-note of keyboard instruments. While this may account for the inclusion of the harp in Venegas' title, it would appear that the reference to the vihuela is principally to acknowledge the sources of the author's arrangements. It is understandable that Sancta María might have appropriated Venegas' all-inclusive term a few years later in the full title of his *Arte de tañer fantasia*, as the half of it that is devoted to fantasia composition is as relevant to the vihuela as to the keyboard or harp. The use of mensural notation for all his music examples and pieces underscores its universal applicability, free of any commercial or musical limitations that either lute or keyboard tablature may have produced. In the case of Cabezón's *Obras*, however, the case is quite different. The printing contract for this book makes it abundantly clear that in publishing his late father's works, Hernando de Cabezón used Venegas' *Libro de cifra nueva* as his model and point of reference with regard to many details of its production. This is the most likely explanation for the perpetuation of the title derived from Venegas.⁸ In short, it is likely that what has seemed to be a practice of playing the vihuela from keyboard tablature is a distortion of the real situation, and that this distortion is due to the appropriation and misuse by subsequent writers of the wording of Venegas' title, originally conceived by him with different connotations. From a purely musical viewpoint, many of Cabezón's works include passages that are either impossible or enormously difficult on the

⁶ See John Ward, "The Editorial Methods of Venegas de Henestrosa," *Musica Disciplina* 6 (1952), pp. 105-13.

⁷ See Higinio Anglés, *La música en la corte de Carlos V. Con la transcripción del "Libro de Cifra Nueva para Tecla, Harpa y Vihuela" de Luys Venegas de Henestrosa (Alcalá de Henares, 1557)*, 2 vols, Monumentos de la Música Española 2-3 (Barcelona, 1944). Facsimile examples are found in Willi Apel, *The Notation of Polyphonic Music, 900-1600* (New York, 1949), pp. 47-53.

⁸ The Cabezón contract is reprinted in Cristóbal Pérez Pastor, "Escrituras de concierto para imprimir libros," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* 3^a época 1 (1897), pp. 363-71.

vihuela, but this should not be taken as discouragement to any player wishing to explore music of the highest artistry.⁹

Manuscript sources of vihuela music, mostly small, are held by libraries in Spain, Austria, and Poland. The copy of Mudarra's *Tres Libros* in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid has some pieces added by a Portuguese owner of the book, and some excellent pieces are appended in a similar way to the Vienna copy of Valderrábano's *Silva de Sirenas*.¹⁰ Several works are copied into the anthology of poetry, MS 6001 of the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, known as *Ramillete de flores*, and another small collection has been found in Simancas.¹¹ A single large collection of over 350 pieces for lute and vihuela, probably the work of a Neapolitan Spaniard, is among the former Berlin collection presently located at the Biblioteka Jagiellonska in Cracow.¹²

Editions and Studies

Tablature notation provides performers with the most direct access to the music although competent transcriptions provide vital assistance with decoding its polyphonic intricacy.¹³ The repertory also provides a great richness for singers, for whom modern

⁹ See Antonio de Cabezón, *Obras de música para tecla, harpa y vihuela... Recopiladas y puestas en cifra por Hernando de Cabezón su hijo*, ed. Felipe Pedrell, revised Higinio Anglés, Monumentos de la Música Española 27-29 (Barcelona, 1966); and Antonio de Cabezón, *Glosados del libro "Obras de música para tecla, arpa y vihuela, de Antonio de Cabezón, músico de la Cámara y Capilla del Rey Don Philippe nuestro Señor."* Recopilados y puestas en cifra por Hernando de Cabezón su hijo, ed. Maria A. Ester Sala (Madrid, 1974).

¹⁰ The Mudarra additions are reproduced in the facsimile published by Editions Chanterelle (Monaco, 1980). See Brown, *Instrumental Music*, regarding the Vienna additions to the Valderrábano exemplar.

¹¹ Edited in Juan José Rey, *Ramillete de flores: Colección inédita de piezas para vihuela (1593)* (Madrid, 1975). A facsimile and diplomatic reconstruction is given by Javier Hinojosa and Frederick Cook, *Ramillete de Flores Nuevas* (Zurich, 1981). Antonio Corona-Alcalde has published the Simancas collection in "A Vihuela Manuscript in the Archivo de Simancas," *The Lute* 26 (1986), pp. 3-20.

¹² See John Griffiths "Berlin Mus. MS 40032 y otros nuevos hallazgos en el repertorio para vihuela," in *España en la Música del Occidente*, ed. E. Casares, J. López-Calo and I. Fernández de la Cuesta (Madrid, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 323-24. This manuscript is presently being prepared for edition by Dinko Fabris and John Griffiths.

¹³ Facsimiles of the vihuela books are published by Minkoff and Chanterelle.

editions are more suitable. There exist two scholarly editions of Milán's *El Maestro*. The older one by Leo Schrade was first published in 1927 but is currently available in reprint.¹⁴ Despite its antiquated literal style of transcription, it is remarkably accurate and is accompanied by an excellent diplomatic facsimile of the entire book. This gives it an advantage over Charles Jacobs' 1971 edition, although Jacobs provides a much more useful commentary on the works and English translations of the original text.¹⁵ Emilio Pujol's transcriptions of Narváez, Mudarra and Valderrábano have become the standard critical texts.¹⁶ The single staff transcriptions do not always provide the most satisfactory polyphonic reconstructions and it is always prudent to compare the transcriptions with the originals: in the most extreme case, Pujol's transcription of Valderrábano's *Fantasia 6* is inexplicably nine bars longer than the original.¹⁷ No modern edition of Pisador's music has yet appeared, but one is presently in progress.¹⁸ Charles Jacobs' monumental edition of Fuenllana is informative and provides better transcriptions than his Milán edition.¹⁹ An edition of Daza's fantasias by this writer is available in an accessible volume that also includes a diplomatic facsimile,²⁰ and handsome editions by Rodrigo de Zayas of both Narváez and Daza also include both transcription and a full

¹⁴ Luys Milan, *Libro de Musica de vihuela de mano intitulado El Maestro*, ed. Leo Schrade, Publikationen Älterer Musik 2 (Leipzig, 1927/rpt. Hildesheim, 1967).

¹⁵ Luis de Milan, *El Maestro*, ed. Charles Jacobs (University Park and London, 1971).

¹⁶ Luys de Narváez, *Los seys libros del Delphin de musica de cifra para tañer vihuela*, ed. Emilio Pujol, Monumentos de la Música Española, 3 (Barcelona, 1945); and Enríquez de Valderrábano, *Libro de musica de vihuela intitulado Silva de Sirenas*, ed. Emilio Pujol, Monumentos de la Música Española, pp. 22-23 (Barcelona, 1965). Only the music by Valderrábano assumed to be original is included in the edition, principally his fantasias, songs and sonetos. The Mudarra edition is cited above in note 1.

¹⁷ See John Griffiths, "The Vihuela Fantasia: A Comparative Study of Forms and Styles," (Ph.D. diss., Monash University, 1983), p. 296.

¹⁸ The edition is being undertaken by Prof. W. E. Hultberg of Potsdam College, New York.

¹⁹ Miguel de Fuenllana, *Orphenica Lyra*, ed. Charles Jacobs (Oxford, 1978).

²⁰ Esteban Daza, *The Fantasias for Vihuela*, ed. John Griffiths, Recent Researches in Music of the Renaissance 54 (Madison, 1982).

facsimile.²¹ The recent anthology of vihuela songs by Charles Jacobs complements those already found in his previous publications to provide a wide cross-section.²²

The classic scholarly text on the vihuela is John Ward's dissertation cited above (n. 2). The articles on the vihuela and each of the composers in *The New Grove Dictionary* provide perceptive and more up-to-date accounts of musical style and bibliography. Louis Jambou's *Les origines du Tiento* deals thoroughly with one genre of the repertory,²³ and my detailed study of the fantasia repertory is cited above (n. 17). The bibliographies in these works provide references to numerous related articles and specialized studies.

The World of the Vihuela

Art in sixteenth-century Spain existed in a climate dominated by severity, intellectual rigor and emotional austerity. These are the predominant moods of a culture fired by Catholic fervor, with an advanced humanistic consciousness, but humored by the freshness of a courtly-popular tradition. The sobriety that darkens the canvas of a Velázquez or Murillo, the absolute architectural symmetry of Herrera's El Escorial, and the clear cold light that is the promise of mystic revelation in an El Greco are visual responses to the same impulses. They are the solemnity of faith, the might of empire and the excitement of discovery that nourished Spain in its *siglo de oro*. In music, these currents gave rise to a great intensity of musical expression. The humanistic spirit of the vihuelists illuminated in the prefatory pages of their books and aptly discussed by Isabel Pope is also translated directly into their music.²⁴ Both humanist and classical poetry are found in vihuela intabulations and original songs alike, and the musical settings reflect a consciousness of the emotive power of rhetorical textual interpretation. The popular counter-

²¹ Rodrigo de Zayas, *Luys de Narvaez* (Madrid, 1981) and *Esteban Daça* (Madrid, 1983). The latter is reviewed by Gerardo Arriaga in *Revista de Musicología* 7 (1984), pp. 476-79.

²² Charles Jacobs (ed.), *A Spanish Renaissance Songbook* (University Park, 1988).

²³ Louis Jambou, *Les origines du Tiento* (Paris, 1982).

²⁴ Isabel Pope, "La vihuela y su música en el ambiente humanístico," *Nueva Revista de Filología Española* 15 (1961), pp. 364-76.

current, however, lightens this sombre scenario. Court culture in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries had sought to emulate the exuberant and rustic charm of popular art, adopting its spirit and much of its artifice. Song was one of the principal genres affected by this trend; it is abundantly evident in the repertory that dominates the polyphonic *cancioneros* of the period. Many such *villancicos* and *romances* found their way into the vihuela literature to inject a warm life force into many areas of the vihuela's otherwise severe polyphony.

The repertory contained in the seven vihuela books invites even broader generalizations concerning music and society because, within its own limits, it offers a valuable cross-section of sixteenth-century Spanish musical taste in all genres. The music appears also to have been destined for a wide market. Both the affordable retail prices of the books and large print runs suggest that the printed literature circulated far beyond the enclosed world of a noble elite. Compared to other areas of the Spanish publishing trade, editions of 1000 and 1500 copies of vihuela books were indeed large.²⁵ While some liturgical books were published in similar numbers, the figures cited are approximately double the general publication norm, and many books in more specialized areas—medicine and law, for example—frequently appeared in small editions of less than three hundred copies. Considering that we are dealing with a living tradition of composer-performers, these numbers suggest a widespread practice, for it may be assumed that many players would also have compiled anthologies that have not survived, and possessed repertories of their own invention that were never written down. The

²⁵ Known contracts show that 1000 copies of *Orphénica Lyra* and 1500 copies of *el Parnasso* were published, together with 1500 copies of Santa María's *Arte de tañer fantasía* and 1225 copies of Cabezón's *Obras de música*. The Cabezón contract is reprinted in Cristóbal Pérez Pastor, *op. cit.*; the *Orphénica Lyra* contract is reprinted in Klaus Wagner, *Martín de Montedoca y su prensa: Contribución al estudio de la imprenta y de la bibliografía sevillana del siglo XVI* (Seville, 1982), pp. 110-11. The Daza contract is discussed in John Griffiths, "The Printing of Instrumental Music in Sixteenth-Century Spain," to be published in the Proceedings of the 15th Congress of the International Musicological Society (Madrid, 1992); the Santa María contract is reprinted in his *The Art of Playing Fantasia*, trans. Almonte C. Howell and W. E. Hultberg (Pittsburgh, 1991) and discussed in J. Griffiths and W. E. Hultberg, "Santa María and the Printing of Instrumental Music in Sixteenth-Century Spain," in the Festschrift for Marcario Santiago Kastner (Lisbon, in press).

manuscript collections described above are the fragmentary residue of such a tradition. In addition to the seven published vihuelists, references survive concerning only another sixty or so players, and numerous citations of instruments also appear in sixteenth-century Castilian inventories of deceased estates.²⁶ The printed repertory, therefore, probably provides a representative sample of a larger repertory that no longer exists, although the manuscript collections give clues about an improvisatory performance practice that was more widespread than initially might be suspected. It is particularly noteworthy that the small manuscript collections are rich in variation sets, and the manuscript *Cracow 40032* also includes many dances that are not well represented in the printed anthologies. I have suggested elsewhere that the distinction between the printed and manuscript collections may be the product of an innate characteristic of the Spanish temperament in which the formality of public ceremony—represented by publication—frequently obscures a deep-seated love of the improvised and spontaneous that is perhaps alluded to in these manuscript fragments.²⁷

The evidence presented above concerning printing, documentary references to performers and instruments, and the intimations of manuscript sources paints a social portrait of the vihuela that is significantly different from the one that has prevailed in scholarly writings. With a broader information base than the scant biographies of the published vihuelists, it can no longer be asserted that the vihuela was fundamentally a court instrument. All the evidence points to a much broader social context, to an instrument equally integrated into the households of the middle-class bourgeoisie as well as those of the nobility. It was thus an instrument widely played by amateur musicians, and not predominantly by an exclusive professional minority. In addition to its role at court, its function was equally for the education and edification of a substantial urban class, and through the intabulations of the many vocal works that form the largest genre of the printed repertory, its role in the transmission of mainstream vocal music and compositional

²⁶ Some of these musicians' names are listed by Ward in Chapter IV of "The Vihuela de mano."

²⁷ John Griffiths, "La música renacentista para instrumentos solistas y el gusto musical español," *Nassarre: Revista Aragonesa de Musicología* 4 (1988), pp. 59-78.

technique cannot be underestimated. It is quite possible that many Spaniards in the sixteenth century became familiar with Josquin, Morales, Guerrero, and other composers primarily through the ciphers of vihuela tablature.

The case for regarding the published vihuelists as a musical microcosm rather than a school of composers is confirmed by the surviving biographical patchwork of their lives. There is virtually no evidence to establish any contact between them that would be grounds for considering them a school. It is clear, for example, that Narváez was unaware of the existence of Milán's 1536 tablature when his own was published two years later, although it can be confirmed that Daza modelled the prefatory text of his book on that of Narváez. Luis Milán was a courtier at the court of Germaine de Foix in Valencia, author of a book of courtly pastimes, his *Libro de motes* (1535), and of *El Cortesano* (1561), a book in the tradition of Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, and his own account of Valencian court life. Narváez was employed by the house of Castile where he trained and looked after the choirboys. He accompanied Philip II, while still crown prince, on his first journey abroad in 1548. Of all the vihuelists, his music appears to have been the best known outside Spain (see n. 3). Mudarra spent the last thirty-four years of his life as a canon at the cathedral of Seville after having been raised by the third and fourth Dukes of the Infantado. Little is known of the life of Enríquez de Valderrábano. He is mentioned by the theorist Bermudo as a musician of the Conde de Miranda at Peñaranda del Duero in the vicinity of Burgos, but this could well have been an assumption made from the dedication printed in *Silva de Sirenas* and is possibly incorrect.²⁸ Diego Pisador was an amateur vihuelist whose passion for the instrument and money from an inheritance caused him to publish his own book at home. He lived in Salamanca where he managed his family's affairs during the long absence of his father in Galicia, and he was employed by the municipal authorities as a *mayordomo* of the city. The blind Fuenllana was employed as a

²⁸ In the course of archival research in Valladolid, I have become aware of a well-established family in the provinces of Valladolid and Palencia named Enríquez de Valderrábano, and although no firm evidence has come to light to establish a connection with the vihuelist, the possibility that he may not have lived as a professional musician now appears stronger.

musician by the Marquesa de Tarifa and later to Isabel de Valois, the third wife of Philip II. Even though Jacobs has cast doubt on the degree of his blindness based on his musical prowess and statements in the preface of *Orphénica Lyra*, his condition was certainly severe enough for him to have been unable to sign the contract for the publication of his book, and to have required a servant to track down the fraudulent copies already in circulation.²⁹ A petition from his daughter for a pension cites his total service to Philip II and Philip III as more than forty-six years.³⁰ It is also apparent that Fuenllana spent some time in Portugal. Esteban Daza, a university graduate, was the first of fourteen children born to a prominent Valladolid family. He was sustained by depleting rents from family land and property holdings and appears not to have sought a musical career nor practiced any other profession. He was in his late thirties at the time of publishing *el Parnasso* and died in impoverished circumstances. We have then, among this group, a sample that includes professional musicians, a courtier, a cleric, a civil servant, and a person of independent means, who operated in relative independence in Castile, Andalusia, and Aragon.

The Music

The emphasis given to certain musical genres is the primary feature that distinguishes the vihuela repertory from other European lute music. Intabulations and songs account for the largest proportion of the Spanish repertory.³¹ Fantasias form the second largest group, and together with the intabulations account for almost ninety percent of the surviving works. Smaller groups of variation sets, dances, and miscellaneous works make up the remaining portion of the literature. The absence of a greater amount of dance music is not typical of any other country, and is more likely due to the combination of austerity in publication with a strong improvised tradition rather than any Spanish dislike for dancing and dance music. The

²⁹ See Klaus Wagner, *op. cit.*, p.112.

³⁰ See Jacobs, *Orphenica Lyra*, pp. xix-xxv.

³¹ Original lute songs and intabulations have been grouped together as both are generally intended for performance with vihuela and voice. It is not always possible to distinguish songs from intabulations with complete certainty.

inclusion of variation sets from as early as 1538 is a distinctively Spanish feature. The number of compositions by each vihuelist in each genre is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Compositional Genres in the Vihuela Repertory

Composer	I	F	V	D	T	M	total works
Milán	22	44	-	6	-	-	72
Narváez	12	14	6	1	-	-	33
Mudarra	28	27	3	4	8	5	75
Valderrábano	111	33	8	-	-	19	171
Pisador	66	26	3	-	-	-	95
Fuenllana	121	51	-	-	8	2	182
Daza	40	22	-	-	-	-	62
total	400	217	20	11	16	26	690
% of repertory	58	31	3	2	2	4	

I = intabulations and songs F = fantasias T = *tientos* V = variations
D = dances M = miscellaneous works (*sonetos, duos, fugas, glosas*)

Intabulations and Songs

Intabulations by the vihuelists show a preference for making plain short-score arrangements. The importance of intabulations is paramount, but they are often unfairly discarded in an era that prizes originality in favor of works of a composer's own creation. Josquin's chanson *Mille regretz*, in the version intabulated by Narváez as the *Canción del Emperador*, is the only Spanish intabulation heard today with any frequency, due as much to its beauty as to its allusion to Charles V.

Intabulations served a twofold function for the sixteenth-century musician. On the one hand they provided entertainment and a means of enjoying one's favorite ensemble pieces performed on a

solo instrument; on the other hand, they were didactic. Making intabulations formed the most important part of the sixteenth-century instrumentalist's musical education. To intabulate vocal music was the best way to absorb the compositional procedures of the leading composers of the age. The greater part of Bermudo's discussion of the vihuela is based on the process of intabulation and its problems, particularly regarding the adjustment of frets to ensure true intonation. He offers vihuelists a scheme for how to proceed from simple to complex music, implying that intabulations teach counterpoint and are the necessary preliminary step to composing one's own works or "playing fantasia." In fact, he ventures further into the area of style and criticizes those who might wish to circumvent their apprenticeship as intabulators, saying that "even though they might know counterpoint (unless it were as good as that of the above-mentioned composers [Morales, Gombert, Vásquez and Tellez]) they should not play fantasia [*i.e.* invent music] so soon, so as not to take on bad style."³²

The performance of intabulations in Spain was undoubtedly a very flexible affair. They could be played as solo pieces, or with one or more of the voices sung, or together with other solo instruments. The intabulation is the point of departure for the tradition of the accompanied solo song, while in ensemble music it is the origin of the *basso continuo*. Considerable discussion has centered on the issue of whether or not sung vocal lines should be doubled by the vihuela. Apart from specific cases where separate mensural notation and tablature precisely declare the composer's intentions, sixteenth-century sources do not address the problem.³³ There is no evidence that it was a crucial issue for the sixteenth-century musician and no suggestion that a particular practice existed. Performers today should feel free to make their own decisions according to the desired density of texture of the accompaniment, and their own capacity to achieve an appropriate performance tempo. The only specific

³² Fray Juan Bermudo, *Libro llamado Declaración de instrumentos musicales* (Ossuna, 1549/rpt. Kassel, 1958), Cap.71, fol. 99v: "Aunque supiesse contrapunto (sino fuesse tan bueno como el de los sobredichos músicos) no auían de tañer tan presto fantasía: por no tomar mal ayre."

³³ See Jesús Bal y Gay, "Fuenllana and the Transcription of Spanish Lute Music," *Acta Musicologica* 2 (1939), pp. 16-27.

indication offered by the vihuelists concerns the preferred line of an intabulated work to be sung in performance for voice and vihuela. One voice is usually singled out in the tablature with red figures, or *puntillos* (apostrophes), and underlaid with text. No particular voice type is preferred; there are intabulations that provide solo songs for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.

Spanish musical taste is reflected in the works that the vihuelists chose to intabulate. All musical genres are represented, with almost equal emphasis given to sacred and secular works. The intabulations show a balanced mixture of national and international styles. Fifty-five composers are either identified in the vihuela books themselves or have been subsequently identified through concordances. Arranged in order of the number of works intabulated (indicated in parenthesis), Table 2 shows the ten most favored composers in the vihuela literature.

TABLE 2
Composers Favored by Vihuelists as Models for Intabulations

1	Morales	(28)		6	F. Guerrero	(13)
2	Josquin	(22)		7	Willaert	(10)
3	Gombert	(20)		8	Arcadelt	(9)
4	Vásquez	(19)		9	P. Guerrero	(8)
5	Verdelot	(17)		10	Flecha	(7)

Five of the composers are Spanish and five are Franco-Flemish, although all the northerners listed had considerable contact with southern Europe. Given the close cultural, linguistic, and literary relationship of Spain and Italy, the small number of Italian works and composers among those intabulated is surprising. It is only the intabulations of Italian madrigal texts set by *oltremontani*, especially Verdelot and Arcadelt, that provide the principal exceptions.

Seventy-five compositions are based on polyphonic settings of the Mass Ordinary, including eight entire Josquin Masses intabulated by Pisador (each counting in the statistics above as a single work). Morales is the only Spanish composer whose Masses were used; Franco-Flemish works provided the vihuelists with the vast majority of their models. Some of the shorter internal sections of Mass movements make the most successful settings, such as

those in the *libro sexto* of *Silva de Sirenas*, or the haunting intabulation of the three-voiced *Pleni sunt* from Josquin's *Missa Faysant Regrets* in Mudarra's *Tres libros* (No. 11 in Pujol's edition).

Motets form the largest group of intabulated sacred music. Of the 132 works intabulated, nearly two-thirds are by Franco-Flemish composers while, of the remainder, the majority are by Spaniards. Even though many of these motets require considerable effort to bring them to life on a solo instrument, they are highly rewarding. In addition to their inherent qualities, they also demonstrate the music that the vihuelists most chose to emulate in their own compositions. Valderrábano's motet intabulations for two vihuelas also offer excellent recompense.

The intabulations of secular music provide performers with a goldmine of little-explored music of varied style and character. Daza's *el Parnasso* is one of the richest repositories. A work such as the potent setting by Pedro Ordoñez of an anonymous sonnet "¡Ay, mudo soy hablar no puedo!" is transformed through intabulation into an accompanied song as strong as any autonomously composed lute song. The anonymous *romance*, "Enfermo estaba Antioco," is as charming as the better-known "De Antequera salió el moro," intabulated by Fuenllana and attributed by him to Morales. It is the narrative dimension of the long strophic *romance* that enables it to escape the monotony inherent in many repetitions of a simple musical framework. Its very simplicity provides the greatest latitude for musical flexibility. Effective performance of *romances* demands a strong dramatic sense, where the text narrative can develop freely, not only through the declamatory nuances of the singer, but also through the invention and responsiveness of the accompanist. In the early phase of the vihuela's development, the vitality of the *romance* tradition served as a crucible for the development of other areas of its repertory, variation writing in particular. While Daza gives the complete poem of "Enfermo estaba Antioco," many *romances* in the vihuela books only include one or two stanzas. Complete texts of several of the poems set by the vihuelists are preserved in a number of the sixteenth-century literary *cancioneros* and many of these are available in modern editions. Daza's collection also includes lighter *villancicos* from the courtly-popular tradition, such as "¿Quién te hizo Juan, pastor?" and "Gritos daba la morenica," that are

described as *villancicos viejos*, affectionately preserved remnants of an older tradition. Valderrábano's setting of "¿De dónde venís, amore?" and "¿Dónde son estas serranas?" are in the same vein, while his intabulations of Italian pieces, such as Verdelot's "Dormendo un giorno" and others in Pisador's *Libro de música*, represent the embryonic madrigal style. The Spanish songs by Vásquez in the *Libro segundo* of Pisador's book and the intabulated *villancicos* and Italian madrigals in the fifth book of *Orphénica Lyra* also merit attention.

Milán, Narváez, Mudarra, and Valderrábano are among the earliest composers of autonomous solo songs where melody and accompaniment are conceived as separate entities. Milán's *El Maestro* includes twenty-two songs with Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese texts. Nine of them are given in two versions, the second providing a highly embellished, virtuosic accompaniment. The *romances* "Durandarte" and "Sospirastes Baldovinos" are famous within their literary tradition and together with the *villancico* "Toda la vida os amé" are among the most attractive. In *Silva de sirenas* it is not always easy to distinguish Valderrábano's intabulations from his solo songs. It is difficult to determine whether his attractive *proverbios de nueva manera* (proverbs in the new style), such as "De hazer lo que juré," are of his own composition, but in other cases such as the dashing "Argimina, nombre le dió," his authorship is unequivocal. Mudarra is the song writer *par excellence* among the vihuelists. The most masterly of his miniatures are the *romance* "Triste estaba el rey David," the devastatingly simple setting of Jorge Manrique's poem "Recuerde el alma dormida," Sannazaro's sonnet "O gelosia d'amanti," a sonnet lamenting the death of Philip II's second wife "¿Qué llantos son aquestos?" and the popular *villancicos* "Si me llaman" and "Isabel, perdiste tú la faja." In all of these songs Mudarra's lyricism dominates, and the accompaniments both enhance the text setting and fall graciously under the hand.

Abstract Works

A large repertory of 217 fantasias, sixteen *tientos* and a few miscellaneous works make up the second large grouping within the vihuela repertory, and the main body of original music for the instrument. Works of vastly varying length, difficulty, and character

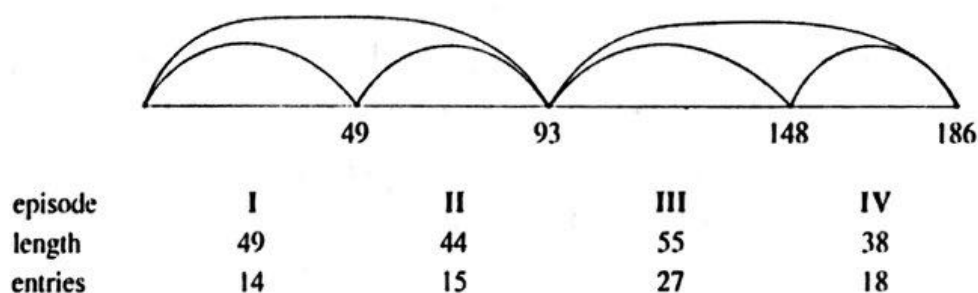
are to be found. The fantasias provide a clear view of the direction in which vihuela music developed over the forty years spanned by the published works. The fantasia was born in the world of improvisation but gradually came to assimilate more and more of the technique and aesthetic of Franco-Flemish vocal polyphony. It came to be scarcely separable from vocal music in its concept, although the text that generated the ideas of the vocal composer and that determined the shape of the musical entity was absent. Text as a form determinant was necessarily replaced by a more abstract image, and it is within this abstraction that the fantasy of the fantasia resides. The Spanish fantasia achieved its perfection by the last quarter of the century and then subsided into obsolescence. It was ousted largely by the simple strummed music of the five-course guitar that reflected the social mood and superficial nostalgia of a great empire on the wane. Because the instrument was inseparable from the style of its music, the vihuela fell victim to cultural change.

I prefer to use the loose associative term "instrumental motet" rather than any more complex definition to describe the fantasia. Fantasia resists definition because it is essentially a process and not a form: an expansive process of invention within definable stylistic limits. Imitation is the chief contrapuntal technique of the style, and structure may be seen as the product of polyphonic voice-complexes built into episodes, each usually based on a single theme. It is precisely the same process used in the point-of-imitation style of vocal construction. Within each episode, imitation is the main technique of thematic exposition. Once the theme is introduced, the episode may be continued as free polyphony or by devices such as sequence that extend the music to a cadence or cadential passage that signifies its conclusion. Complete works constitute an assemblage of episodes into larger paragraphs or sections or, in some cases, into a single paragraph.

One of the most striking features of these structures is the degree to which they reflect a renaissance concern with balance and proportion. Excluding only the fantasias of Milán, which are essentially more improvisatory, the fantasias of the vihuelists show a deeply entrenched sense of architecture analogous to that which guided painters and architects. Several scholars, notably Gombosi, Slim, and Vaccaro, have demonstrated the architectonic tendencies

of Italian lute fantasias and ricercars, and it is certain that Spanish composers responded to their age in precisely the same way.³⁴ A characteristic example may be quoted from Fuenllana, *Fantasia 21* in Jacobs' edition.³⁵ It is a work of 186 *compases* of tablature, double his norm, and is constructed as four episodes with a greater number of thematic entries than usual on account of its length. The four episodes are paired into two periods, dividing precisely at the work's mid-point as illustrated schematically in Figure 1. The first period comprises episodes of almost equal length, while the second period is less proportionate, with episodes in a ratio of approximately 3:2. The protraction of the third episode is best explained as arising from dynamic necessity, the need for the musical discourse to evolve dramatically as it proceeds through time. The temporal dimension merely creates a slight distortion of the otherwise classical symmetry, and reflects the ever present tension between static and dynamic conceptions of the music. The division of the music at the precise mid-point is, however, a phenomenon that is not uncommon in vihuela fantasias.

FIGURE 1: Fuenllana, *Fantasia 21*, structural model



With virtually all works structured according to similar principles, the repertory can be divided into nine categories according to

³⁴ Otto Gombosi, "A la recherche de la Forme dans la Musique de la Renaissance: Francesco da Milano," in *La Musique Instrumentale de la Renaissance*, ed. Jean Jacquot (Paris, 1955), pp. 165-76; H. Colin Slim, "The Keyboard Ricercar and Fantasia in Italy, c. 1500-1550, with Reference to Parallel Forms in European Lute Music of the Same Period" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1960); Albert de Rippe, *Fantaisies*, vol. I of his *Œuvres*, ed. Jean-Michel Vaccaro, Corpus des Luthistes Français (Paris, 1972).

³⁵ Fuenllana, *Orphénica Lyra*, fol. 51v, *Fantasia del Author*, transcribed in Jacobs, pp. 244-48.

the predominant constructive technique of each work. Table 3 tabulates into these categories all the fantasias for vihuela including the two found in the *Ramillete de flores* manuscript, and also shows the stylistic orientation of each composer.

TABLE 3: Fantasia Categories

	Mi	Na	Mu	Va	Pi	Fu	Da	Ra	Total	%
ImP	30	10	15	4	7	43	18	2	129	59
ImM	-	2	-	-	10	3	-	-	15	7
Ost	-	-	2	-	4	1	-	-	7	3
Par	1	1	-	19	-	2	-	-	23	11
nIm	-	1	-	4	3	1	-	-	9	4
nIm+Im	-	-	3	6	2	-	-	-	11	5
Id	9	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	13	6
Id+Im	3	-	1	-	-	1	4	-	9	4
Id+nIm	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1
total	44	14	27	33	26	51	22	2	219	
%	20	7	12	15	12	23	10	1		100

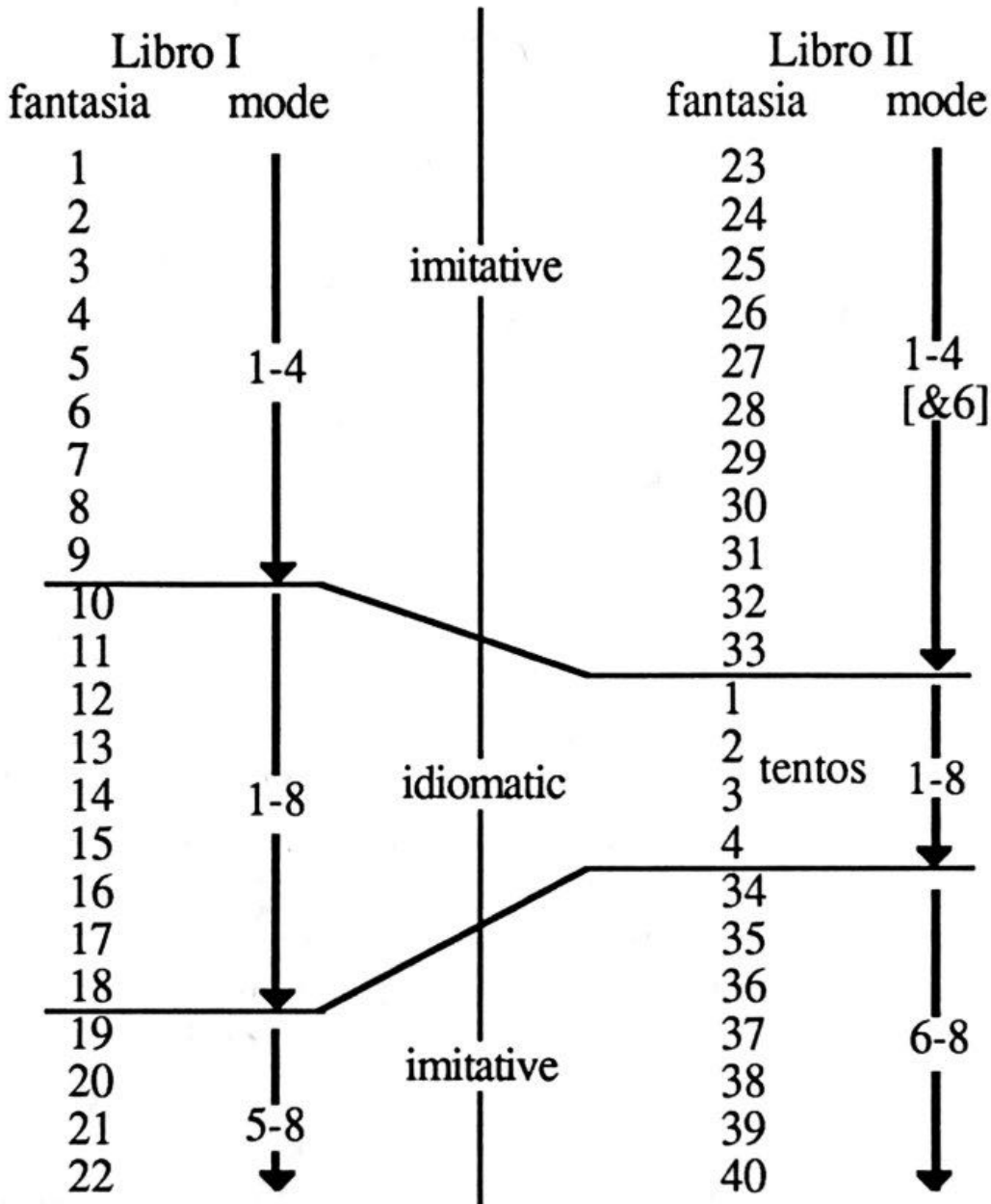
Almost sixty percent of the fantasias are of the imitative polythematic style of the motet (ImP) and are based on models similar to the one described above. The majority of the imitative monothematic fantasias (ImM) share many of the same characteristics but deal only with a single theme throughout the entire work. The fantasias based on an ostinato theme (Ost) also handle a single theme, but in a different manner where thematic repetition rather than imitation is the compositional technique. Parody fantasias (Par) are those based on material from vocal or instrumental works by other authors, in which imitative techniques usually predominate. A small number of the works are written in the style of free non-imitative polyphony (nIm) and there are also works that alternate free polyphony with imitative episodes (nIm + Im). Compositions of a predominantly

idiomatic orientation (Id) are based on scales, chords, sequences and other devices. Other works are built from passages in two main styles: idiomatic and imitative (Id + Im), idiomatic and non-imitative (Id + nIm). Composers' names in the vertical columns of the table are abbreviated to the first two letters of their names, and are shown in chronological order from left to right.

This general formulation of categories, combined with some brief observations on the orientation of each vihuelist, provides a cursory means of describing the basic trend of the stylistic evolution of the fantasia. The flexible and improvisatory tendencies of the earlier composers manifest themselves through the variety of techniques employed. Later composers show an increasing preference for imitative polythematicism. Within this chronological frame, personal idiosyncrasies are revealed, particularly in the case of Valderrábano. In the following discussion, the vihuela composers are examined according to the chronology of their publications.

Milán's fantasias represent the mature closing stage of a tradition based on improvisation. His fantasias are loose assemblages of material drawn from an improviser's reservoir. They utilize a type of quasi-imitation that is a clever instrumental derivative of polyphonic voice-pairing that produces much of their immediacy. His spontaneously generated structures are cohesive, yet flexible enough to permit manipulation by the performer into many shapes. The forty fantasias are arranged in the two *libros* of *El Maestro* both in order of difficulty and systematically according to mode. The works of the second *libro* are substantially longer and more demanding than the earlier works. Milán's music has long been noted for the use of verbal tempo indications and the nine *Fantasias de consonancias y redobles*, Nos. 10-18, and the four *tentos* (always given Portuguese spelling) that alternate fast sections of passage work with slow sections of homophony. But texture is not the only feature that indicates the stylistic relationship between the two categories and the distance between Milán's *tentos* and the *tientos* of Mudarra and Fuenllana. The two *libros* of *El Maestro* follow a parallel format both in the grouping of the works into imitative and idiomatic types as well as in the systematic treatment of mode as shown in Figure 2. In both function and musical content, Milán's *tentos* are inseparable from the *fantasias de consonancias y redobles*.

FIGURE 2: Organization of the Fantasias in *El Maestro*



It is a pity that Narváez's legacy is only the fourteen wonderful, transparent fantasias that represent the beginning of the rational and architectonic style of composition in Spain. In the preface of *Los seys libros del Delphín* he declared his intention that the book was only to be an introduction to his music, and that works of greater art would follow in subsequent publications. The six shorter fantasias of his *libro segundo* are the most concise introduction to his style. They are preceded by eight more complex works in the *libro primero* that are a greater challenge to both the intellect and the hand. Of all the vihuelists, it is Narváez and Mudarra whose fantasias are most similar. They have the same lightness and clarity in their textures.

The greatest difference is that while Narváez reveals himself as a consummate polyphonist in the sections that extend his ideas, Mudarra usually reverts to free polyphony embodying the beautiful lyricism that characterizes his songs. Mudarra's most complex fantasias are those in the second of his *Tres libros* where fantasias are matched with *tientos* and *glosas* in a suite-like arrangement in each of the eight modes. The *glosas* imperceptibly alternate passages of freely-composed imitative counterpoint with intabulated passages from Masses by Josquin and Fevin. Mudarra also wrote some beautifully decorative idiomatic works under the didactic guise *para desenvolver las manos* (to develop the hands), and the well-known *Fantasia que contrahace el arpa en la manera de Ludovico* (which imitates the harp in the style of Ludovico) that uses exceptional dissonances and textures to create the effect of harp sonority. It is set in the mold of variations on the *folia* as a homage to a legendary fifteenth-century harpist.³⁶

Enríquez de Valderrábano belongs to the same period of fantasia development as the previous two composers, but achieves individuality through the broad melodic sweep of his music, the large proportion of free counterpoint he used in place of imitation, the avoidance of cadences in order to create long uninterrupted sections, and the large number of fantasias that parody vocal and instrumental models. The two fantasias that commence the *libro quinto* of *Silva de sirenas* are set in the polyphonic imitative mold and demonstrate Valderrábano's ability to manipulate musical materials with great skill in the mainstream tradition of his contemporaries. The parodies and non-imitative fantasias reveal other facets of his unique style. The parody fantasias vary greatly in the amount of borrowed material they appropriate. *Fantasia 15*, for example, modelled on Gombert's motet *Inviolata, integra et casta* makes only a few obtuse allusions to its model, whereas over half of *Fantasia 19* utilizes material from the second Kyrie from Josquin's *Missa de Beata Virgine*. In the latter work it is also evident that Valderrábano was conscious of preserving many of the formal elements of

³⁶ For a more detailed study of this work and its relationship to the *folia*, see John Griffiths, "La 'Fantasia que contrahace la harpa' de Alonso Mudarra: estudio histórico-analítico," *Revista de Musicología* 9 (1986), pp. 29-40.

Josquin's structure.³⁷ In the predominantly non-imitative fantasias, Valderrábano frequently uses short passages of imitation to commence and conclude what are essentially essays in free counterpoint. Of the works in this style, *Fantasia 6* is the one which has greatest recourse to imitative procedures, but it is a work that displays beyond doubt the height of Valderrábano's art.³⁸ It is music which is deserving of far more careful attention.

Despite certain attractive qualities in his music, it is difficult to deal with Pisador's fantasias with equal enthusiasm, for they are works that reflect their composer's amateurism. With only a few exceptions, Pisador's structural conceptions demonstrate a strong intellectual capacity, and there is a certain underlying exuberance in his inspiration. However, these virtues are counterbalanced by grave deficiencies in his technical skills of musical craftsmanship. While he could manipulate contrapuntal themes with ingenious dexterity, he had trouble writing simple cadences or maintaining clarity and integrity within the polyphony, and he was unable to exercise sufficient control of harmonic direction. Thirteen of his twenty-six fantasias are monothematic with solmisation syllables underlaid throughout the tablature. The other thirteen are polythematic. His second fantasia (*Libro de música*, fol. 8) is the first of this latter type and differs from his normal style of dense polyphony, showing a clear awareness of the distinctive style of Luis Milán. A highly developed sense of formal architecture is evident in a number of works. The exact proportional distribution of the *Fantasia a tres bozes sobre Mi la sol mi fa mi* (fol. 23) is remarkable.³⁹ Combined with a well-contoured theme set with careful attention to its rhythm and the constraint of a three-voiced texture, the formal aspect makes this work stand out as one of Pisador's finest achievements. Despite its external appearance as a book of similar quality to the other published sources, it must be remembered that the *Libro de música* was produced by an inexperienced author-publisher, and it contains many typographical errors that add a further layer of complication for anyone wishing to pursue the music.

³⁷ See Griffiths, "The Vihuela Fantasia," pp. 266-73.

³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 296-99.

³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 327-33.

Fuenllana and Daza's fantasias are of a different category. Fuenllana's music reflects the same aesthetic aspirations as Narváez's, but he extends his musical prowess in every dimension: the fantasias are longer, polyphonic interplay is denser, and the works are shaped with a more acute sense of architecture. They are expansive and masterly works that present the instrumentalist with a substantial technical and intellectual challenge. His bold use of dissonance may be seen at its finest in *Fantasia 13*, a work that is also crafted with typical architectonic finesse, while *Fantasia 21*, discussed above, is a characteristic example of Fuenllana's longer works that exude mastery and grandeur.⁴⁰ Daza's twenty-two fantasias, by comparison, are miniature forms when compared to Fuenllana's, but they deal with dense imitative textures in a rational and thoroughly approachable way. Their quality is remarkably consistent as is their polyphonic style, except for the four last *fantasias para desenvolver las manos* that alternate contrapuntal with highly-idiomatic episodes. Even though their spirit is less grandiose than Fuenllana's large constructions, they are demanding and satisfying works to play.

The *tientos* in the vihuela literature, excluding Milán's *tentos*, are quite different from their counterparts in Spanish keyboard music. They are short essays in the application of modal theory to practical music.⁴¹ Cabezón and other keyboard composers used the term *tiento* to denote what the vihuelist understood as fantasia. More than practical exercises in modal theory—the essence of Fuenllana's *tientos*—Mudarra's *tientos* use toccata-like devices and introduce each of the modally-based "suites" in his *libro segundo*. The comparison with the toccata is particularly apt in Mudarra's case. The *tientos* are similar to those in *Cracow 40032* where, at some time after its initial compilation, the expatriate Spanish owner of the manuscript added the subtitle "overo toccata" beneath the original titles of the works.

Other miscellaneous abstract pieces are two three-voiced canons by Valderrábano that he calls *fuga*, and a pair of *duos* by Fuenllana

⁴⁰ *Orphénica Lyra*, fols. 34 and 54, respectively, transcribed in Jacobs' edition pp. 143-45 and 244-48. *Fantasia 13* is discussed in Griffiths, "The Vihuela Fantasia," pp. 415-21.

⁴¹ See Jambou, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-127.

that are nothing less than two-voiced fantasias. The sixteen *sonetos* of Valderrábano are also included among the miscellaneous works even though they are not abstract pieces in the purest sense. There is, however, no apparent connection between the music and the literary sonnet. The term occurs in no other sixteenth-century Spanish musical source except in reference to the literary form. Ward has shown in a number of cases that the *son* or melody of these pieces is borrowed from well-known music and given a new setting by Valderrábano.⁴² Several of the *sonetos* remain enigmatic, while the *soneto lombardo* that “goes in the manner of a dance” is Valderrábano’s version of a pavane that was apparently widely known throughout Europe. It appears in other versions for lute and instrumental ensemble in publications by Attaignant and Newsidler.⁴³ The Spanish version is excellent music, seldom heard today.

Variations and Dances

The variations and dances that form the remaining component of the repertory are the most immediate and extroverted of all, and it is for this reason that they are more widely known today. The six *pavanas* in *El Maestro* and Narváez’s *Diferencias sobre Guárdame las vacas* are the most renowned. The relative absence of dance music has already been noted. Variation sets occur in the books of Narváez, Mudarra and Valderrábano, those published in the dozen years prior to the middle of the century. They are based on a variety of material: plainsong was used by Narváez, *villancico* tunes provided a basis for both Narváez and Valderrábano, and the harmonic scheme of the *pavana*—in fact, the embryonic *folia*—was used by

⁴² See Ward, “The Vihuela de mano,” pp. 189-93.

⁴³ *Silva de sirenas*, fols. 89v-90, edited by Pujol in his Valderrábano edition, vol. 2, pp. 44-46. Other versions appear in Attaignant, *Dixhuit basses dances* (Paris, 1530) =Brown 1530₃ no. 45, *Paduana*; Attaignant, *Neuf basses dances deux branles vingt et cinq Pavennes avec quinze Gaillardes* (Paris, 1530) =Brown 1530₅ no. 48, *Pavanne* 22; Hans Newsidler, *Ein Newgeordent Künstlich Lautenbuch* (Nuremberg, 1536) =Brown 1536₆ n^o 67, *Ein guter welscher tantz*. The last work is transcribed in Helmut Mönkemeyer, *Hans Neusidler “Ein Newgeordent Lautenbuch,” Die Tablatur, Heft 1* (Hofheim am Taunus, n.d.), p. 24. For further details, see Daniel Hertz, *Preludes, chansons and dances for the lute; published by Pierre Attaignant, Paris (1529-30)* (Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1964), p. lxxx.

Valderrábano. However, it was the harmonic schemes associated with *romances*, particularly *Guárdame las vacas* and *Conde Claros*, that were set with deftness and individuality by all three. While Trend was correct in emphasizing the nexus between *romance* and *diferencia*, his assertion that “the variation form seems to have arisen, in Spain, through the necessity of relieving the lute-accompaniment during the recitation of a long *romance*” appears an unduly negative reason for the generation of a new and vital area of compositional enterprise.⁴⁴ It can only be speculated that it was the dramatic declamation of the simple *romance* tunes that sparked Spanish interest in variation writing earlier than elsewhere. The nexus is also strengthened by Woodfield’s convincing hypothesis that the late fifteenth-century flat-bridged *vihuela de arco* served, among other functions, to accompany chordally the declamation of *romances*.⁴⁵ The use of fixed harmonic schemes as the basis for solo instrumental improvisation in at least the half-century preceding Narváez’s publication is also supported by my observations regarding the *folia* structure of Mudarra’s *Fantasia que contrahaze la harpa* (see note 36).

* * *

By the early seventeenth century, new creative urges pushed the *vihuela* to one side. Its decline was lamented by an educated and conservative minority that included the dictionary writer Sebastian Covarrubias. In the final part of his definition of the *vihuela*, he sums up its changed status:

This instrument has been highly esteemed until the present time, and it has had excellent players: but since the invention of the guitar, only very few people give themselves to the study of the *vihuela*. It has been a great loss, because on it one could put all kinds of notated music, and now, the guitar is nothing more than a harness bell, so easy to play, especially in the strummed style that there isn’t a stable boy who isn’t a guitarist.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ J. B. Trend, *The Music of Spanish History to 1600*, Hispanic Notes and Monographs 10 (New York, 1926/ rpt. 1965), p. 105.

⁴⁵ Woodfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁶ Sebastian Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua Castellana o Española* (Madrid, 1611): “Este instrumento ha sido hasta nuestros tiempos muy estimado, y ha avido

Covarrubias' description of the guitar is far from the renaissance neo-classicism that was the spiritual guiding star of the vihuelists. There is no inkling in the guitar repertory of the renaissance spirit that is reflected in the titles of the vihuela books. It is the antithesis: the vihuela was swallowed up by a countercurrent that asserted itself in Spain with considerable urgency. This current was a short-lived impulse that sought and brought change, that made the vihuela and its music a cultural irrelevance, and that cast it into three centuries of eclipse.

The University of Melbourne

In the next issue of the
Journal of the Lute Society of America...

*Compositional Process in the
Renaissance Fantasia*

(Guest Editor: John Griffiths)

with articles by Victor Coelho, Dinko Fabris, John Griffiths, Robert Judd, Stefano Mengozzi, Piotr Pozniak, and Jean-Michel Vaccaro

excelentísimos músicos; pero después que se inventaron las guitarras, son muy pocos los que se dan al estudio de la vigüela. Ha sido una gran pérdida, porque en ella se ponía todo género de música puntada, y aora la guitarra no es más que un cencerro, tan fácil de tañer, especialmente en lo rasgado, que no ay moço de cavallos que no sea músico de guitarra.”

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