

HOW TO PLAY THE VIHUELA ACCORDING TO JUAN BERMUDO

VOCAL POLYPHONY & INSTRUMENTAL TABLATURE

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About the Contents

The following is an English translation of the *Introduction* to **Tañer Vihuela según Juan Bermudo** (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2003). It is intended to assist non-Spanish speaking vihuelists and lutenists in using the book. Following the pedagogical advice given by Juan Bermudo in 1555, the music in the anthology follows the order suggested by the theorist, proceeding from intabulated vocal polyphony in 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 voices, to solo pieces by Narváez, Mudarra, Valderrábano, Fuenllana, and Daza that embody the same compositional techniques and musical language. The first pedagogical work on the vihuela for over four centuries, this book is the product of an experiment that I first tested in my classes at the *XXII Curso Internacional de Música Antigua de Daroca* in 2000. It is a modest tribute to my colleagues who have spent their last twenty-five summers developing the teaching of early music in Daroca, and it is dedicated to my class of 2000: Juan Carlos, Pedro Jesús, Mariluz, Jesús, Juanjo, Guillermo, Paco, Quique, Alex, Pablo and Dani.

Introduction

The starting point for the present anthology is the advice given by Juan Bermudo in his *Declaración de instrumentos musicales* (1555) to aspiring vihuelists. It is a pathway towards learning the instrument based on the development of musical knowledge and good taste. Simply entitled *De tañer vihuela* (“On playing the vihuela”), the fourth book of Bermudo’s treatise is devoted to three main topics: description and tuning of the vihuela and related instruments, fret placement according to scientific principles, and the art of transcribing vocal polyphony into tablature. At the conclusion of the lengthy discussion of these topics, Bermudo proposes a simple and rational method for learning to play the vihuela. As a didactic system, his emphasis differs notably from that which has prevailed in musical pedagogy since at least the nineteenth century inasmuch as it is based on the simultaneous acquisition instrumental technique and musical knowledge. Bermudo’s beginners are guided towards achieving both aims by making arrangements of vocal polyphony. By doing this they will create for themselves a repertory that will help them develop the necessary technique, skill and good taste to go even further and invent their own works. It is therefore clear that vocal music was the basis of Bermudo’s aesthetic ideal and that his method is based on the desire to instil this model in the mind of the aspiring vihuelist. Perhaps for this reason, Bermudo’s didactic comments never refer directly to the mechanics of instrumental technique: he makes no mention of the different ways of right-hand plucking technique, left-hand finger placement, or any other element that we might associate with instrumental technique. He assumes that players will acquire these skills by as the natural by-product of the systematic learning process he proposes.

Players wishing to learn specifics of sixteenth-century technique will not find help in Bermudo's treatise but will instead have to rely on the instructions offered in the prefaces of the vihuela books by Mudarra, Valderrábano and Fuenllana, or in Venegas de Henestrosa's keyboard manual, the *Libro de cifra nueva* (1557), that also provides some technical advice.¹

Bermudo's method consists of seeking out and arranging vocal polyphony of high quality, playing this music with good style, and assimilating its compositional technique with the ultimate aim of eventually being able to create one's own works. He proceeds from the simple to the difficult, starting with music in two voices, moving to homophonic works in three parts, and from there to imitative polyphony in four and more voices, and finally to the original fantasy of his readers. The composers invoked by Bermudo enjoyed a high level of fame and dissemination in Spain during the period: Juan Vásquez (c. 1500-c.1560), Josquin des Prez (c. 1460-1521), Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500-1553), and Nicolás Gombert (c. 1500-c. 1556), plus one other composer of whom no works survive, Baltasar Téllez.² Bermudo affirms Vásquez's fame as a composer of villancicos and praises Téllez for the same ability. He names Josquin as the founder of the imitative polyphonic style that was the dominant aesthetic of the period and his successors Morales, the most renowned Spaniard of the period, and the Franco-Flemish composer Gombert who was in Spain as master of Charles V's Flemish Chapel from 1526 to 1540.

The method elaborated by Bermudo requires the vihuelist to gather polyphonic works and, using the techniques that the theorist explains with great detail, put them into tablature. These pieces, then, serve to learn the procedures employed by master composers in the creation of their works. Given, however, that my intention in this new book is to provide a historical anthology and show the way that Bermudo's advice reflects the practice of his day, his advice needs to be applied somewhat differently. The present collection, therefore, gathers a series of works intabulated by Bermudo's contemporaries – vihuelists Narváez, Mudarra, Valderrábano and Fuenllana– and presents them together with their polyphonic models in order to help the modern player perfect his/her stylistic knowledge of the repertory of the sixteenth century.

The approach I recommend is, therefore, to study the works initially in their polyphonic versions, just in the way that a sixteenth-century vihuelist would have done, playing each voice separately, getting to know it individually as well as understanding it in the context of the whole work. By doing this, the vihuelist will become familiar with the individual shape of each line, the particular places in which it takes a prominent role in the work, as well as those in which it recedes into the background. To make this easier, the imitative entries of each voice are indicated clearly in the scores given in the edition.

The passage in which Bermudo elaborates his didactic method comes at the end of his detailed instructions on the art of intabulating polyphonic music (*Declaración*, fol. 99v), the final part of chapter 71 entitled "Some advice to conclude the [discussion of] ciphering" (*De ciertos avisos para la conclusión del cifrar*). Without needing to discuss here of the process of translating mensural notation into tablature, it should be noted that the works included in this new anthology match the musical genres and styles indicated by

¹ The sources are given below. On instrumental technique, see John Griffiths, "The Vihuela: Performance Practice, Style, and Context", en Victor Coelho (ed.), *Lute, Guitar, and Vihuela: Historical Performance and Modern Interpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 158-79

² Apart for being mentioned by Bermuda, the only other reference to Téllez links him with the University of Coimbra in 1549. See Joaquim Vasconcellos, *Os músicos Portuguezes*, Oporto: Imprensa Portugueza, 1860-76, vol. II, p. 199.

Bermudo. The correlation between his treatise and the sixteenth-century vihuela books thus confirm Bermudo's method to be a realistic reflection of contemporary instrumental practice.

As a point of departure, Bermudo advises the novice vihuelist to begin with simple music in two voices:

The music you should use to commence ciphering should be *villancicos* (firstly in two, and later in three voices) of homophonic music in which the notes in each voice sound together. Intabulating these pieces requires hardly any effort because (as the notes in each of the voices are of the same duration [at any given point]) the number of notes in each bar will be the same. For whoever might like to follow my advice: these intabulations are not worth playing, because it is not music of value and these pieces will not help you develop your ear. Homophonic *villancicos* do not have a sufficiently strong musical basis upon which to build and achieve good taste in invention [of your own music].

In this passage Bermudo recommends the use of simple *villancicos* as the way to start playing, first in two voices, then in three. He uses the term *música golpeada*, literally “struck music” for what we call homophony, in which all the voices move simultaneously with the same rhythmic values. His comments indicate that he did not consider this music to be of high quality, but that it had an important didactic purpose and was essential in the training of musicians, a first stepping-stone along the pathway to independence as instrumentalists and composers. Apart from the control that is acquired in plucking and fingering, and from aiming to achieve musical fluidity and a clean attack, the principal musical function of these pieces seems to be for learning the rudiments of intervals and counterpoint.

Consistent with Bermudo's circumspection about this music, no two-voiced homophonic *villancicos* are included in the vihuela books of the period. The closest thing is the piece that opens our anthology, *Si de amores me han de matar*, a two-voiced *villancico* that is more polyphonic than homophonic. Included by Fuenllana among the simple pieces for beginners in the opening folios of *Orphénica lyra* and attributed by him to Mateo Flecha, the piece is identical to the tenor and bass voices of a five-voice setting of the popular text published in Venice in 1556 in the famous collection of *villancicos* commonly called the Cancionero de Uppsala. The only other two-part music that is found in vihuela books are fragments of polyphonic masses, those parts that were customarily composed with fewer voices than the sections that surround them. In order to provide two-voiced music along the lines that Bermudo recommends, this collection includes fragments of Josquin's *Missa Ave Maris stella* and *Missa Pange lingua* intabulated by Valderrábano and Fuenllana. Despite also being imitative rather than homophonic, these fragments are useful in helping, as Bermudo recommends, in assimilating the rudiments of counterpoint.

The second step in Bermudo's method concerns homophonic *villancicos* in three parts, especially those by Vásquez and Téllez. Apart from the musical beauty of these graceful works, and even though he does not say so specifically, they serve to teach harmony, the hand positions of common chords, and the chord progressions that are the basis of diatonic harmony:

After the player has absorbed what these [two-voiced] *villancicos* can teach, he should seek out the *villancicos* of Juan Vásquez which is music of quality, and pieces by an outstanding musician named Baltasar Téllez. The works of this learned and erudite composer possess four qualities that make them worthy of comment here. The first is their graceful beauty that allows each [voice] to be sung in its own right and with such sonority that it seems as though it was composed to be sung alone. This point infers the second, that each [voice] is easy to sing and play, given their beauty. The third point is that they have many well-placed dissonances, and these sound well on the

vihuela. Their final quality is that this music is restrained and has neither an extreme range, nor are the voices spaced widely apart when they sound together as chords.

The surviving vihuela books contain a good number of pieces that correspond to the works described by Bermudo. Using the example of Téllez, he enumerates the qualities that are desirable in instrumental arrangements through combining technical facility with simplicity and musical beauty. They are works of little difficulty that give pleasing musical results to an instrumentalist still in the first phases of learning. In place of works by Téllez –none survive– this anthology presents the anonymous villancico *Dame acogida en tu hato* from Esteban Daza's *El Parnasso*, and Fuenllana's intabulations of Vásquez's *Duélete de mí, señora* and *¿Con qué la lavaré?* to demonstrate the qualities that Bermudo extols. Even though Bermudo does not specify it, I have also complemented these villancicos as before with two three-voiced mass sections by two of Bermudo's preferred composers: the "Pleni sunt coeli" from Josquin's *Missa Faysan regretz* and the "Agnus Dei" from Morales' *Missa Vulnerasti cor meum*, arranged respectively by Mudarra and Valderrábano. This group of works offers a logical progression for the vihuelist: the first two pieces are principally homophonic, while the two Mass sections are completely based on imitative counterpoint.

From music in three voices, Bermudo's natural progression leads to music in four parts, more sophisticated works that combine together the harmonic and contrapuntal concepts of the preceding pieces. Although Bermudo exclusively recommends the works of Morales, Josquin and Gombert, further works by Claudin de Sermisy (c. 1490-1562) and Juan Vásquez have also been included. In the same way that Narváez's intabulation adorns Josquin's emotive *Mille regretz*, Fuenllana's version of Claudin's *Tant que vivray* further demonstrates another facet of the performance practice of the period, melodic ornamentation of the original voices with *glosas*. Fuenllana provides us with a plain, unadorned version of the chanson followed by another embellished setting. The transcriptions of both pieces present the music in its original unadorned form so that the player can become acquainted with the piece in its natural state and work towards an interpretation more in line with the spirit of the age. In the passage from Bermudo's instructions that relates to music in four voices, the theorist also emphasises the relationship between the music and its text. By being attentive to the meaning of the text, its accentuation and its poetry, the instrumental performer can also aim to reflect the rhetoric of the original work and capture the emotional dimension that lies beneath its polyphonic artifice. As Bermudo insinuates, the musician who discovers this dimension of the music will play with insight and produce performances of great human and spiritual merit:

In the masses by the celebrated musician Cristóbal de Morales you will find much music to intabulate, of so many and such good qualities that I am incapable of explaining. He who devotes himself to this music will not only gain wisdom but also become devoutly contemplative. You will find few composers who cherish the qualities and differences in the texts they set. And among the few, the aforementioned composer is one of the few. Among the foreign music that you will find good for intabulating, do not forget the great musician Josquin who is the father of all music. The last that you should attempt to intabulate is the music of the excellent Gombert. Due to the difficulty that it presents in intabulating it for the vihuela, because it is so overflowing [in its counterpoint], I put it in last place.

The last pieces included here in four, five and six voices exemplify the style and the difficulty of many of the works included in the sixteenth-century vihuela books. The villancico by Vásquez, *De los Alamos vengo, madre*, shows a more complex contrapuntal style than his simpler three-part pieces, and the motet by Morales, *Nonne dissimulavi*, arranged by Valderrábano calls for exactly the attention that Bermudo recommends with regard to the relationship between music and text in order to achieve the maximum effect

from its transformation into a solo instrumental work. This group of vocal works concludes with two arrangements for two vihuelas by Valderrábano, arrangements that Bermudo praises in another part of his discussion of the art of intabulation.³ His version of *Assiste parata*, the second part of Nicholas Gombert's motet *O beata Maria*, is a faithful adaptation of the model that distributes the five voices between two vihuelas tuned in unison. Valderrábano adopts the same approach in his version of the second part of the Credo, *Et in spiritum sanctum*, of Morales' *Missa Mille regretz*, a parody of Josquin's chanson.

The concluding comments in Bermudo's exposition of the art of intabulation are aimed at vihuelists wishing to create their own original instrumental works, the pinnacle of sixteenth-century instrumental art. The theorist warns them of the difficulty if not the impossibility of achieving equally high quality and good style in one's own works unless first going through the apprenticeship offered by intabulating:

A great mistake is committed by those players who, having just started to play, wish to burst forth with their own inventions [*fantasia*]. Even if they had learned counterpoint (unless they be as good as the composers mentioned above) they should not be in a hurry to make their own *fantasias* so as not to do it in poor taste.

To see clearly the extent to which vihuela composers assimilated the technique and aesthetic of vocal polyphony in accordance with Bermudo's explanations, I have incorporated a selection of original instrumental compositions into this anthology. They are easy pieces that serve to help establish the nexus between the two repertoires and to enhance players' understanding and interpretation of the abstract works of sixteenth-century composers, especially the *fantasia*. The group comprises the one *Dúo* by Fuenllana –in effect, a two-voice *fantasia*, a three-voice *fantasia* by Daza, examples of four-voice *fantasias* by Narváez, Mudarra and Fuenllana, and finally the contrapuntal setting for two vihuelas by Valderrábano of *Conde Claros*. To tackle the interpretative challenges that these works present, it is recommended that the works be studied in order to identify their themes, recognise the polyphonic textures hidden in the tablature, and locate the cadences that separate the phrases and principal sections of the works. This type of analysis will serve to gain a preliminary understanding of the structure of each work. To achieve a deeper level of interpretation and in accordance with Bermudo's advice concerning the musical aesthetics of the period, the student should also seek to uncover the rhetorical and poetic dimensions of the music, the flavour of each theme and passage, and the narrative thread that is the implicit link between the interwoven sections. In essence, the *fantasia* is a type of motet without words, an abstract work that obeys the same rules as the motet in the way it behaves, but lacking a text that might serve to guide the performer. In developing good taste, it is vocal polyphony that offers the key to understanding the relationship between the sound of the music and its internal poetry. The deepening of one's knowledge of the *fantasia* is achieved through understanding the various musical and rhetorical analogies that link vocal polyphony and instrumental music: this is Bermudo's clear message.

The transcriptions

The versions of vocal polyphony in mensural notation are based on original sources, although they do not attempt to be critical transcriptions. In the few cases in which the tablature and the original vocal polyphony do not correspond exactly, I have

³ *Declaración*, fol. 98.

modified the polyphonic transcription to provide a version of the polyphony work that hypothetically resembles the versions used by the vihuelists, based on the assumption that they often worked from variant versions. Based on the intabulation practices of sixteenth-century vihuelists, there are small discrepancies between the vocal versions and the tablatures in most of the works. Most commonly, breves were broken into two semibreves, dotted notes were divided into two separate notes, passing notes or short diminutions were added, and cadences were ornamented. It has not been my intention here to provide transcriptions that reflect these modifications, except for *musica ficta*. The chromatic alterations made by the vihuelists in their tablatures are thus indicated above the respective notes in the transcriptions. In all the transcriptions, the rhythmic values of the original notation have been halved, and each two bars of the tablature make a single bar of the mensural transcriptions.

The transcriptions of the fantasias and other instrumental works are made as scores, with each voice on a separate staff, in order to facilitate study and analysis. In the same way as the vocal works, the principal themes of imitative episodes are enclosed in boxes, and thick vertical lines across the score indicate the principal section divisions of each work.

All the transcriptions are made for a vihuela in G, to serve the practical needs of contemporary vihuelists rather than accord with Bermudo's teaching. In point of fact, the theorist recognises two ways of conceptualising the relationship between the original pitch of the polyphony and the fingerboard of the vihuela preferring –as he explains at the beginning of the *Libro Quarto* of the *Declaración*– to “change the instrument to suit the music” rather to “change the music to suit the instrument”. These phrases encapsulate the two different ways of accommodating vocal polyphony onto the vihuela, both conceptually and in practice. The principal practical difference that results from employing one way rather than the other has to do with the placement of vihuela's frets as required by the various sixteenth-century systems of unequal temperament. Given that the present collection is based on intabulations made by vihuelists in the sixteenth century rather than newly intabulated works, the principal disadvantage of the system employed here is that the modern transcriptions do not always present the works in their original pitch and tonality. Even though the transcriptions here have been made with the modern player in mind, it is worth understanding Bermudo's reasoning:

That which I have sought to achieve in all my books is firstly to set down and systematise that which practical musicians do, and afterwards if there is anything new, explain it for those who may wish to go further: this is what I shall do in the matter of the vihuela. Inquisitive players of the vihuela choose one of two practices in this respect: either they change the music to suit the instrument, or they change the instrument to suit the music. Let it be clear: it is a single instrument and its notes are fixed, and should the music be out of key when responding to a choir, or for some other reason that vihuelists might have, they change the music. Thus, there are some vihuela players who always think of the vihuela as being in a fixed tuning, and if the music should not agree with their conception of the instrument, because it goes beyond the range of the frets, they transpose the music so that it can be comfortably played. This way of playing the vihuela used to be more common than it is now and there were players with great facility even if they were not as wise as those who these days use many vihuelas. I deal with this subject following this present overview in chapter eighty-two. Those who did not know how to shift their frets used this way of intabulating on the vihuela and for their needs it was good. These days there are musicians who, not content with changing the music to suit the vihuela prefer to leave it as they find it and change the vihuela by not always imagining the sixth course to be one pitch, but pretend to raise or lower it according to the music. They imagine, then, the lowest note of the vihuela sometimes to be G, other times A, and thus on all of the seven different notes, and even sometimes even on chromatic semitones. This is what good players do, and you will encounter it in both Spanish and foreign tablatures.⁴

⁴ *Declaración*, fol. 90v.

Leaving aside the implications regarding temperament, the main point for preferring to change either the instrument or the music has to do with finding the best way of fitting polyphonic works onto the vihuela. In the explanations that follow the cited passage, Bermudo advises that this depends first of all on the range of the work. In order to move the instrument rather than the music, he gives some general rules to follow in order that the music fits between the open sixth course and the seventh fret on the first, at the same time trying to get maximum use of the open strings. If in starting to make an intabulation, the vihuelist accustomed to thinking on *vihuela común* in G, realising that a work will not fit comfortably on his instrument, has the option of transposing the music or imagining the vihuela to be tuned to different notes. Bermudo's preference is to imagine the vihuela in a different tuning rather than to transpose the music, vihuelas imagined in the player's mind as tuned in A, B, C, D, E or F.

Study

Musicians of Bermudo's time intabulated vocal polyphony for two principal reasons: in order to be able to play works already known to them for their own enjoyment, or in order to get to know music that was new or unknown. Whether for pleasure or for didactic reasons, it was through the process of intabulating that they became aware of the compositional techniques of the most renowned composers of their age. For the majority of modern vihuelists, the situation is the reverse. The printed vihuela books of the sixteenth century contain some almost 700 works already in tablature and almost 60% of them are arrangements of vocal polyphony. The proposal here is that vihuelists today enter further into the world of vocal polyphony and the musical style of the period—represented by the works presented here— firstly through a detailed study of the original polyphony, and then by applying this enhanced understanding to the solo intabulations, profiling each of the voices, emphasising imitative thematic entries, allowing less important voices to recede into the background, and shaping each voice according to its implicit expressiveness.

This anthology has been conceived to permit its use in several different situations. The transcriptions allow the study of each voice at a time, phrase by phrase, or imitation by imitation. They should help the vihuelist to develop a capacity to unravel the polyphonic texture of any work notated in tablature, whether an intabulation or an original composition. The transcriptions are also designed so that they can be used in ensemble, with each voice played on a separate instrument. Playing in ensemble is a learning experience that gives musicians the opportunity to get to know each voice of the works in their polyphonic context and permits them to refine their appreciation of the subtleties of the music, and the role of each voice at any given moment within each work.

Sources of the tablatures

- Daza, Esteban. *Libro de Musica en cifras para Vihuela intitulado el Parnasso*. Valladolid: Diego Fernández de Córdoba, 1576.
- Enríquez de Valderrábano. *Libro de Musica de Vihuela , intitulado Silva de sirenas*. Valladolid: Francisco Fernández de Córdoba, 1547.
- Fuenllana, Miguel de. *Libro de Musica de Vihuela, intitulado Orphenica lyra*. Sevilla: Martin de Montedoca, 1554.
- Mudarra, Alonso. *Tres libros de Musica en Cifras para Vihuela*. Sevilla: Juan de León, 1546.
- Narváez, Luis de. *Los seys libros del Delphín de musica de cifras para tañer Vihuela*. Valladolid: Diego Fernández de Córdoba, 1538.

The Works

1. Si amores me han de matar — Mateo Flecha

Among the hundred or so villancicos in vihuela sources, this is the one that comes closest to what Bermudo recommends to those beginning to learn the art of intabulation. Entitled simply “Duo de Flecha” in Fuenllana’s book, the music corresponds to the tenor and bass voices of the anonymous setting of *Si amores me han de matar* published in the so-called Cancionero de Uppsala. It is unknown if the five-voice setting is by Vásquez, whether Fuenllana simply extracted two voices from a larger piece, or if the additional voices in the Uppsala setting have been added above the pre-existing framework that Fuenllana gives us. In his two-part version, Fuenllana transposes both voices an octave higher.

Tablature: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fols 2-2v. Vihuela in A.

Vocal source: *Villancicos de diuersos Autores* (Venecia: Scotto, 1556) [= Cancionero de Uppsala]

Critical Edition: *Cancionero de Uppsala*, ed Rafael Mitjana, (Madrid: Instituto de España, 1980), no 51.

Transposition for vihuela in G: a whole tone lower than the original.

2. Benedictus de la *Missa Ave maris stella* — Josquin des Prez

As is the case here, it was customary for sixteenth-century polyphonists to set the verse “Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini” of the Sanctus movement for a reduced number of voices, two or three, instead of the four or five used predominantly throughout such settings. Passages of this type provide ideal study material for vihuelists to learn how master polyphonists composed simple two-part counterpoint. Alternating a single theme between the voices, this fragment of Josquin’s music is highly evocative despite its economy and extreme simplicity.

Tablature: Valderrábano, *Silva de sirenas*, fol. 86v. Vihuela in D.

Vocal source: *Missarum Josquin liber secundus* (Venecia: Petrucci, 1505)

Critical Edition: Josquin des Pres e vari, *Messe, Magnificat, Mottetto e Inno*, ed. Amerigo Bordon. Archivium Musicae Metropolitanum Mediolanense 15, (Milan: Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano, 1969), p. 29.

Transposition for vihuela in G: a fifth lower than the original.

3. *Benedictus de la Missa Pange lingua* — Josquin des Prez

In the same way as the previous piece, this “Benedictus” is drawn from Josquin’s four-voiced mass based on the hymn *Pange lingua*, highly popular in Spain because of its association with Corpus Christi. Josquin’s setting was disseminated widely in the sixteenth century through both printed and manuscript sources. It is a model of two-voiced imitative counterpoint that develops from the themes constructed by Josquin for each of the two phrases of the text. Fuenllana’s instrumental arrangement is a literal transcription apart from his omission of the first eight bars, probably a deliberate and judicious decision given the nature of the opening musical texture.

Tablature: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fol. 1v. Vihuela in D.

Vocal source: *Missae tredicim quatuor vocum* (Nuremburg: Grapheus, 1539).

Critical edition: Josquin, *Werken*, ed. A. Smijers, Missen, Deel IV, (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1952), pp. 21-22.

Transposition for vihuela in G: a fourth higher

4. *Dame acogida en tu ható* — Anónimo

Appearing as an anonymous work in Esteban Daza’s vihuela book, this villancico combines the four qualities that Bermudo praised in his description of Baltasar Téllez’s works: an attractive melody, a homophonic texture, well-employed dissonances at the cadences, and a reduced melodic range. This is the type of model that Bermudo recommends to beginner vihuelists, and although he never explicitly states it, it seems likely that he saw these largely homophonic works as an ideal way to learn harmony, both in terms of chord progressions as well as in terms of the logic of the fingerboard. Given that Daza’s intabulation is the only surviving source for the work, the transcription here presents the music in a form that is closer to how it must originally have been, without the modest glosses that adorn the vihuela arrangement.

Tablature: Daza, *El Parnasso*, fols. 96v-97. [Vihuela in G.]

5. *Duélete de mí, señora* — Juan Vásquez

Also in accord with the same qualities listed by Bermudo that are applicable to the previous work, this villancico by Vásquez distinguishes itself from the former one through the use of different music for each verse of its *vuelta*, and the use of brief imitative gestures to draw attention to the beginning of most new phrases. Fuenllana’s version is a literal transcription of Vásquez’s model.

Tablature: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fols. 135v-136. Vihuela in C.

Vocal source: *Villancicos i canciones de Juan Vásquez a tres y a cuatro* (Osuna, 1551).

Critical Edition: Juan Vásquez, *Villancicos i canciones*, ed E. Russell, Recent Researches in Music of the Renaissance, 104, (Madison: A-R Editions, 1995), pp. 1-4.

Transposition for vihuela in G: a fourth lower than the original.

6. *¿Con qué la lavaré?* — Juan Vásquez

Evidently composed much earlier than its publication date of 1560 –given its inclusion in Fuenllana’s 1554 anthology– this villancico by Vásquez maintains many of the characteristics of the simple villancico despite its greater use of imitative counterpoint and the addition of a fourth voice. Of supposedly popular origin, the melody on which this setting is based is cut into phrase-length segments and used to begin each line of the poetry with imitations, but within a texture that maintains the impression of being simple homophonic music. Regarding the different versions of the same popular melody that survive from the period, including those found in the vihuela books of Narváez,

Valderrábano and Pisador, see Eduardo Sohns' article "Seis versiones del villancico *Con qué la lavaré* en los cancioneros españoles del siglo XVI", *Revista de Musicología*, 10 (1987), pp. 173-220.

Tablature: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fol. 138. Vihuela in C.

Vocal source: *Recopilación de sonetos y villancicos a quatro y a cinco* (Sevilla, 1560).

Critical edition: Juan Vásquez, *Recopilación de sonetos y villancicos a quatro y a cinco*, (Sevilla, 1560), ed. H. Anglés, (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Español de Musicología, 1946), p. 209.

Transposition for vihuela in G: a fourth lower than the original.

7. *Pleni sunt de la Missa Faysan regretz* — Josquin des Prez

The verse "Pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria tua" from the Sanctus of the Mass is another section that renaissance polyphonists customarily set with a reduced number of voices. This three-part section of Josquin's four-voiced *Missa faysan regretz* shows once again the reason for which musicians such as Bermudo regarded him as "he who began music". This piece exemplifies the composer's ability to mould his imitative counterpoint in order to achieve profound expressiveness. All the melodic material is derived from the opening motive, even though Josquin elaborates it differently to give each new phrase of the text exactly the shape it requires. Mudarra's version agrees in large part with the first published Venetian edition although the duration of the opening chord in bar 27 of the transcription is halved in comparison to the vocal model. Also noteworthy are the exquisite dissonances that result from the *musica ficta* that Mudarra applies to the final cadence.

Tablature: Mudarra, *Tres libros de Música*, lib. I, fols. 12-13. Vihuela in G.

Vocal source: *Missarum Josquin Liber tertius* (Venice: Petrucci, 1514)

Critical edition: Josquin, *Werken*, ed. A. Smijers, Missen, Deel III, (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1951), pp. 47-48.

8. *Agnus Dei II de la Missa Vulnerasti cor meum* — Cristóbal de Morales

One of the other mass sections that often provided high quality material but that was not too difficult to play was the second of the three "Agnus Dei" settings. In this section from one of the masses published by Morales in his first book of masses that was published in Rome during his years in the Sistine Chapel, the stylistic influence of Josquin is clearly evident. What is equally notable is the rapidity with which Valderrábano incorporated the work into *Silva de sirenas* only three years after the first edition appeared, an indication of the desire of vihuelists to be up-to-date with the latest and most advanced works of master polyphonists.

Tablature: Valderrábano, *Silva de sirenas*, fols. 83v-84. Vihuela in D.

Vocal source: *Christophori Moralis Hispalensis Missarum Liber primus* (Roma: Dorico, 1544).

Critical Edition: Morales, *Opera Omnia*, ed. H. Anglés, vol. I (Roma: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1952), pp. 99-100.

Transposition for a vihuela in G: a fifth lower

9. *Tant que vivray y glosa sobre la misma canción* — Claudin de Sermisy/ Miguel de Fuenllana

The most noteworthy feature of this chanson by Claudin de Sermisy is its simplicity and naturalness, ingredients that converted it into one of the best known works of the sixteenth century. Equally idealistic, its text by Clément Marot exhorts that "As long as I live in a flowering age, I shall serve the powerful god Love, in deeds, words, songs and harmony." The discrepancies between Fuenllana's version and the original polyphony suggest that the

vihuelist may have known the piece through oral transmission. To permit easy comparison of both versions, I have attempted to reconstruct Fuenllana's model and present it alongside Claudin's original. Equally noteworthy is the inclusion of a second, ornamented version in Fuenllana's book. It is the only such example that he provides of embellishing vocal works. Although, in the prologue of *Orphénica lyra* (fol. v), he admonishes the use of excessive embellishment in intabulations, he also clearly acknowledges the existence of the practice that is evident in the music of contemporaries such as Diego Ortiz and Antonio de Cabezón. These composers utilised French chansons as a vehicle for showing their art of embellishment, a practice that in Italy converted the *chanson* in one of the new instrumental forms of the later sixteenth century, the *canzona*.⁵

Tablature: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fols. 118-119. Vihuela in G.

Vocal source: *Chansons musicales a quatre parties...* (Paris: Attaignant, 1535)

Critical Edition: Claudin de Sermisy, *Opera Omnia*, ed. G. Allaire and I. Cazeaux, vol. 4, Corpus Mensurabilis Música 52 (n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1974), pp. 99-100.

10. *Mille regretz, la canción del Emperador* — Josquin des Prez

Another of the secular songs that achieved immense popularity throughout Europe during the sixteenth century, Narváez's intabulation of Josquin's *Mille regretz*, with its discreet embellishment of the original polyphony, is one of the best-known works for vihuela. Narváez's title "Song of the emperor" possibly reflects Charles V's fondness of the song, and is possibly related to the cycle of "regretz" songs included in the chansonniers of Margaret of Austria, the aunt in whose household he was raised prior to ascending the Spanish throne in 1516. This song may possibly have been one of the *chansons nouvelles* that Josquin presented to Charles when they met in 1520. It is also conjectured that the mass that Morales based on the same chanson (see no. 14) might similarly have been composed to be sung in the king's presence during one of his visits to Italy, and another acknowledgement of the monarch's fondness of Josquin's chanson.

Tablature: Narváez, *Los seys libros del Delphin*, fols. 40v-42. Vihuela in A.

Vocal source: *L'Unziesme livre, contenant Vingt et Neuf Chansons Amoreuses a quatre parties* (Antwerp: Susato, 1549)

Critical edition: Josquin, *Werken*, ed. A. Smijers, *Weltliche Werke, Deel 1*, (Amsterdam: Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1969), p. 63.

Transposition for vihuela in G: one tone lower.

11. *De los álamos vengo, madre* — Juan Vásquez

Based on a popular melody that is heard in its entirety in the tenor voice, this *villancico* develops through imitatively using fragments of the melody in all the other voices. The rapid movement of the original polyphony presents a considerable challenge to any solo instrumentalist wishing to transmit the playful lightness of the music. Although Fuenllana's version precedes the publication of Vásquez's polyphony, the two versions coincide exactly.

Tablature: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fols. 142-143. Vihuela in C.

Vocal source: *Recopilación de sonetos y villancicos a quatro y a cinco* (Sevilla, 1560).

⁵ *Orphénica lyra*, fol. v: I do not add glosses at every opportunity in composed works, because I am not of the opinion that embellishments and ornaments should be used to hide the truth of the compositions, as we see when some players, content with their own opinion alone, compose all over again works that very good composers have crafted with excellent artifice and good spirit, but when left to them become enshrouded with all kinds of embellishments, governed entirely by their own caprice.

Critical edition: Juan Vásquez, *Recopilación de sonetos y villancicos a quatro y a cinco*, (Sevilla, 1560), ed. H. Anglés, (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Español de Musicología, 1946).

Transposition for vihuela in G: a fourth lower.

12. *Nonne dissimulavi* — Cristóbal de Morales

The second part of Morales' motet *Antequam comedam, Nonne dissimulavi* was first published in 1541 in an anthology principally devoted to works by his contemporary Gombert, and also survives in numerous sixteenth-century Spanish manuscripts, notably in Toledo and Tarazona. It is a classic example of Morales' imitative style with its fine balance between expressiveness and polyphonic artifice. The music for each verse of text develops around an individual theme that reflects both its meaning and its accentuation. Valderrábano's arrangement is a literal transcription of the model.

Tablature: Valderrábano, *Silva de sirenas*, fols. 15-15v. Vihuela in A.

Vocal source: *Nicolai Gomberti musici excellentissimi pentaphtongos harmonia... Liber primus* (Venecia: Scotto, 1541).

Critical edition: Morales, *Opera Omnia*, ed Anglés, vol. II (Roma: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1952), pp. 45-47.

Transposition for vihuela in G: a tone lower.

13. *Assiste parata* — Nicolás Gombert

The second part of Gombert's renowned motet *O beata Maria*, this work exemplifies the dense imitation that was fashionable around the middle of the sixteenth century and for which Gombert, as Bermudo acknowledges, was particularly famous. The only vihuelist to publish arrangements for two vihuelas, Valderrábano gives the cantus, altus and tenor voices to the first vihuela, and the quintus (effectively a second altus) and the bass to the second instrument.

Tablature: Valderrábano, *Silva de sirenas*, fols. 45v-47. Two vihuelas in G.

Vocal source: *Musica Excellentissimi Nicolai Gomberti Vulgo Motecta Quinque vocum... Liber primus* (Venice, 1539).

Critical edition: Nicholas Gombert, *Opera Omnia*, Ed. J. Schmidt-Görg, Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae 6, (n.p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1951-75), vol. VII, pp. 113-116.

14. *Et in spiritum sanctum de la Missa Mille regretz* — Cristóbal de Morales

This work is Valderrábano's arrangement for two vihuelas of the second part of the "Credo" of Morales' six-voiced mass based on Josquin's chanson (see no 10). In arranging the work, Valderrábano distributed the voices equally between the two instruments. The first vihuela plays the Cantus 1, Altus 1 and Bassus parts while the second instrument is given Cantus 2, Altus 2 and the Tenor. It is a literal arrangement although Valderrábano omits the tenor part in bars 25-27 in the second vihuela part. The soprano voice of Josquin's chanson is given in the first Cantus part as a *cantus firmus*, and makes the relationship between the chanson and the motet patently obvious. The remaining voices take a secondary position. The music is also noteworthy for its continuity and the lack of internal cadences.

Tablature: Valderrábano, *Silva de sirenas*, fols. 46v-48. Two vihuelas in A.

Vocal source: *Christophori Moralis Hispalensis Missarum Liber primus* (Roma: Dorico, 1544).

Critical edition: Morales, *Opera Omnia*, ed. H. Anglés, vol. I (Roma: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1952), pp. 257-61.

Transposition for vihuela in G: a tone lower.

15. Dúo — Miguel de Fuenllana

An abstract work in two voices, this duo that Fuenllana included among the easy pieces at the beginning of *Orphénica lyra* is the only two-voiced fantasia that is preserved in the extant repertory for vihuela. It shows a clear relationship to the polyphonic duos from villancicos and masses presented at the beginning of this collection, but it also is identifiable with the instrumental fantasia genre due to its construction from various imitative sections separated by cadences.

Tablature: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fols. 4-5. [Vihuela in G].

16. Fantasía a tres por el octavo tono — Esteban Daza

Among the twenty-two fantasias in *El Parnasso* that comprise Daza's known original works, he includes four easy fantasias in three voices. The close agreement between these works and the rules provided by Tomás de Santa María in his *Arte de tañer fantasia* (Valladolid, 1565) suggests that Daza might have learnt composition from this treatise. They are rigorously polyphonic fantasias that require the performer take care in shaping the themes and making the most of the imitative interplay. The cadential ornaments help to articulate the structure of the work.

Tablature: Daza, *El Parnasso*, fols. 16v-18. Vihuela in G.

17. Fantasía del primer tono por gesolreut — Luis de Narváez

According to his own statements, Narváez was the first vihuelist to introduce the new Italian lute style into Spain. His fantasias show features that link them closely to those of Francesco da Milano, whom he probably met in Italy. The style Narváez introduced came to predominate in Spain during the following half century. The structure of this short work is typical of the formal architecture of the genre: two imitative episodes of 13 bars (subdivided 8 + 5), plus a "final" or brief coda. In the first part, the themes are typical of vocal music, while in the second they are derived more from idiomatic scale figures. The coda is possibly one of those *finales* that vihuelists used to memorise in order for them to be at their immediate disposal for concluding fantasia improvisations. A miniature of transparent texture, this fantasia unfolds with ease and clear artistic direction.

Tablature: Narváez, *Los seys libros del Delphin*, fols. 35-36. Vihuela in G.

18. Fantasía fácil — Alonso Mudarra

Of similar proportions to the previous two pieces and one of the easy fantasias that Mudarra places at the beginning of his book, this is another polythematic imitative fantasia. Typical of the works of its creator, however, this piece contains a greater percentage of free counterpoint. After beginning with voice pairs with a brief imitative extension, it proceeds as free counterpoint until the central cadence at bar 19, exactly the midpoint of the fantasia. The second phase of the work is based on multiple imitations of themes derived from the opening gesture, but with varied endings, until the cadential passage commencing at bar 24. The architectonic design and style of the counterpoint are clearly inspired by vocal polyphony.

Tablature: Mudarra, *Tres libros de Música*, lib. I, fols. 5-6. [Vihuela in G.]

19. Fantasía — Miguel de Fuenllana

The dense texture of this work is characteristic of the 51 fantasias that Fuenllana includes in *Orphénica lyra*, and is built of polyphony that demands considerable effort to decipher and interpret. The structure of the work establishes clearly the appropriation of the technique and aesthetics of vocal music and its adaptation to the instrumental medium. This is one of those fantasias that can easily be understood as a type of “instrumental motet” built from independent sections separated by cadences and based on a variety of imitative techniques. The interpretation of this type of work requires the instrumentalist to seek out the identity of each theme and musical paragraph, albeit very abstract given the absence of a sung text.

Tablatura: Fuenllana, *Orphénica lyra*, fols. 51v-52v. [Vihuela en la.]

20. Conde Claros — Valderrábano

In this version of *Conde Claros* for two vihuelas, Valderrábano displays a denser and more complex style than is often found in other Spanish variations settings. While the higher vihuela [*vihuela menor*] reiterates the simple melodic pattern of the romance formula with its characteristic 3/2 + 6/4 rhythm as an ostinato in the highest voice, the other voices weave a fluid counterpoint characterised by syncopations and cross rhythms. It recalls the works for instrumental ensemble by Italian composers such as Vincenzo Ruffo more readily than other solo instrumental works. For those who do not have vihuelas of different sizes tuned a third apart, this work can be played on equal instruments by placing a capo at the third fret on the *vihuela menor*, or by using a modern classical guitar (with the third string lowered to f#) together with a vihuela in G.

Tablature: Valderrábano, *Silva de sirenas*, fols. 48v-50. Vihuela mayor in E; vihuela menor in G.