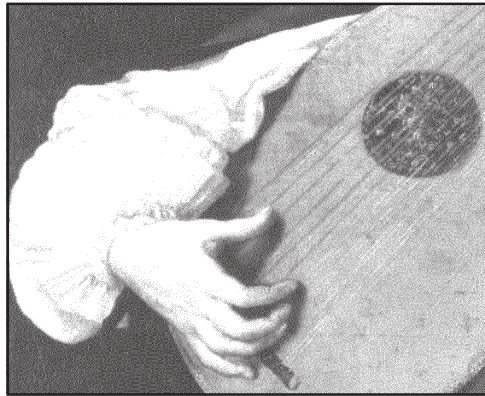


Wilfred Foxe

Technique Building Studies  
for  
Baroque Lutenists



TREE EDITION



Wilfred Foxe

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for Baroque Lutenists

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TREE EDITION

Albert Reyerma



*For Helen, an unforgettable sister*



## Notes on the Exercises

*For to make your hand nimble it will be good to play one houre in the Morneing some passages with the Thumbe and the forefinger[,] Some preludium hard and quicke[,] and some Divisions ...*

Thus the Burwell Lute Tutor outlines the importance of a practice regime which is focused upon developing technical dexterity. The exercises given below are intended to provide such a regime and their purpose is to help players increase technical assurance. As with all technical exercises, accuracy is more important than speed. Hence, it is better to play the exercises slowly and increase the speed very gradually; a metronome may prove helpful. Given below are selected quotations from: *The Burwell Lute Tutor*, facsimile edition ed. Robert Spencer, Boethius Press, Leeds 1974; and Thomas Mace, *Musick's Monument*, London 1676. Although these descriptions give an historical perspective to some of the exercises, for others, the descriptions are derived from modern classical guitar technique.

Mace's 'put the end of your second finger, a very little under the treble string ... forcing the string with a pritty smart twitch, (yet gently too)' to describe the action of sounding notes with the right hand middle finger contrasts with his description of playing with the thumb: 'when ever you strike a bass, be sure, you let your thumb rest itself, upon the next string.' In modern parlance, the thumb plays using the rest stroke whereas the fingers use only free strokes.

In the above description Mace uses the word 'twitch' as an intransitive verb meaning to move the muscles spasmodically. However, because this is qualified by the phrase 'pritty smart' – which can be interpreted to mean that the movement is undertaken in a *clever* fashion - this finger movement is possibly intended to be of a complex nature. Since the movement begins with the fingertip in contact with the string and after completion the finger is clear of the string above, the following is consistent with Mace's description. The joint between the distal and middle phalanxes is stiffened and the finger moves through the string diverting it beneath the fingertip; the other two joints of the finger provide both the power for the stroke and ensure that the finger avoids making contact with the string above. It will be noted that the description given in Mace 3 means that the stroke of the index finger differs from that of the middle since it starts in anticipation of the string rather than in contact; however, the stroke is otherwise identical. From other examples in his book, Mace seems to have favoured keeping the right-hand fingers in contact with the strings wherever possible.

Some exercises, No 7 for example, are founded upon chromatic fragments and their purpose is to isolate potential technical difficulties from a musical context in order to gain dexterity that may be used when the same technique is required within a composition. Thus, in the opening bars of John Dowland's 'fantasie' (Poulton 1a) from the *Varietie of Lute Lessons* (London, 1610) are found the techniques of Example 7.

All the exercises are presented with notes of equal value; when the exercises have been mastered in this configuration, rather than seeking simply to gain greater speed, players should experiment by using other rhythms, *notes inégales*, for example.

## Passages from The Burwell Lute Tutor

1. For the right hand it must be placed between the Rose and the Bridge but nearest to the bridge[.] your hand must lie upon the belly of the Lute with the little finger onely which must be as it were glued unto it and keepe the Thumbe as much as one can leaning upon the Base[.] It must be before all the rest of the hand marching as the Captaine of the fingers, [and] that hand must be rising in the middle in the form of an Arche that you may not smother the stringes[.] (f.16)
2. When you nippe one string[,], twoo [stringes,] or three stringes with a Base it will be good to strike the Base a little before the small string or stringes and if there be three small stringes together you must not strike them as people did formerly with three severall fingers but with the forefinger onely[,], sliding from the Treble upwards over the Stringes and repeating sometimes the Treble with the middle finger[.] (f.29)
3. The reason why we doe not play with three severall fingers is that [in] strikeing these we misse halfe of the stringes[;] that is [,] of every couple of stringes we can strike but one[.] (f.29)
4. We [never] play twice with one finger[, but play] one time with the forefinger and another time with the middle finger[,], except when wee nipp a Base and a small String [when] we must always use the Thumb and the middle finger[;] Although severall such stroakes should follow one another Soe [? See] that the letter that preceeds such Stroakes must always be stricke with the forefinger[;] as when you use [the] slide [of] the forefinger upon A great stroake the letter that is sett before it must be struck with the middlefinger[.] (f.29)
5. You must keepe the Thumbe allwayes upon the Bases [;] that is [,] take it off from the Base as late as you can [for] that gives a Stay to your hand and makes you find the Bases more easily[.] (f.30v)
6. It is better to render ones selfe capable to play heerafter than to satisfy a present Curiosity[.] (f.39v)
7. For to make your hand nimble it will be good to play one houre in the Morneing some passages with the Thumbe and the forefinger[,], Some preludium hard and quicke, and some Divisions ... (f.40)
8. Of all things that belong to the making upp a Musitian the most necessary and usefull for him is the true knowledge of the Key or Mood or Tone [of a lesson] for all signifye the same thing ... (f.47v)

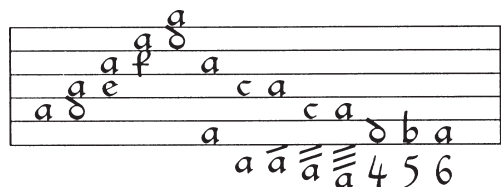


## Passages from Mace's *Musick's Monument*

1. And as to that work [playing bass notes], it is only (first) keeping your thumb straight, and stiff, and gently pressing down that string, (with an ease of strength) so, as your thumb may only slip over it *viz* that pair (for you must know that always the pairs are struck together) and rest itself upon the next ... string, your thumb then standing, ready, to do the like to that [next] string; (p.72)
2. But this you must remember; *viz.* when ever you strike a bass, be sure, you let your thumb rest it self, upon the next string, and let it remain until you have use of it elsewhere. (p.72)
3. ... put the end of your second finger, a very little under the treble string, (about three inches above the bridge) as if you did only intend to feel your string, having your fore-finger (at the same time) close adjoining in readiness, (yet not touching your second finger, or the string), then draw up your second finger, from under the string, forcing the string with a pritty smart twitch, (yet gently too) to cause it to speak strong and loud ... strive to do the like with your fore-finger (your second finger keeping the same posture of closeness and readiness, as your fore-finger kept). (p.73)
4. And that you may learn to strike a string clear and clean, take notice that in your stroke, you strive to draw your finger a little upwards and not slanting for that will endanger the hitting of another string ... (pp.73-4)
5. For fear of ill habit which is; that after you stopped a note (whichever it may be) you are not to take up that finger which you last stopt, until necessity require. (p.85)
6. And when you do remove, (or unstop it) let it be so very little from the string as one can scarce perceive your finger to have unstopt it; (p.85)

Wilfred Foxe  
Wigston Magna  
July 2005

### Tuning



## 1 Bass exercise

Play all the bass notes with the right thumb. Players with swan-necked lutes should maintain an even sound when changing from the courses on the fingerboard to those of the extended neck; normally, the tension of the longer courses is lower than that of the basses on the fingerboard.

References: Burwell 1, Mace 1 & 2

The first staff contains five measures of music. The first measure has a C-clef and a common time signature. The notes are eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Below the notes are various symbols including 'a', 'b', and '4', some with double lines underneath. The second staff continues the pattern with similar note values and symbols. The third staff concludes the exercise with a final measure containing a whole note and a 'o' symbol.

## 2 Octave skips in the bass

After having sounded the first bass note, the thumb should move to anticipate the bass note on the 4<sup>th</sup> course which means that it should move whilst the fingers are playing the other notes. Before the fourth quaver of the first bar has ended, the thumb should be in position to play the 4<sup>th</sup> course.

References: Burwell 5, Mace 2

The first staff contains five measures of music. The first measure has a C-clef and a common time signature. The notes are eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. Below the notes are various symbols including 'a', 'b', 'c', 'e', and '4', some with double lines underneath. The second staff continues the pattern with similar note values and symbols. The second staff ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

### 3 Use of the index finger for chords

This technique is often found in 17<sup>th</sup>-century French music and is perhaps used less frequently today than historical sources would imply. Aim to ensure that the notes of the chords sound as close together as possible.

References: Burwell 2 & 3. Mace, p101, uses three fingers of the right hand to play chords like that on the second beat of the first bar.

The musical score for Section 3 is in 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system contains 12 measures, and the second system contains 6 measures. The notation includes various chords and single notes, with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-4. Some measures have a '3' above a note, indicating a triplet. The bottom of the staves shows course numbers (e.g., 3, 4, 5, 6) and some have a double bar line with a repeat sign.

### 4 Dampening the bass notes

Although the sequence given sounds perfectly musical without stopping the bass notes, this damping technique is essential for good playing. When playing the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> courses on the third quaver of the first bar, bring the thumb to rest on the 8<sup>th</sup> course as marked by the + sign, thereby stopping the bass from sounding. Note how clear the inner parts sound when the bass notes are shortened.

The musical score for Section 4 is in 3/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system contains 10 measures, and the second system contains 5 measures. The notation includes various chords and single notes, with fingerings indicated by numbers 1-4. Some measures have a '+' sign above a note, indicating a damping technique. The bottom of the staves shows course numbers (e.g., 3, 4, 5, 6) and some have a double bar line with a repeat sign.

These four-part progressions are intended to serve two purposes: first, they are an exercise in playing chords, and second, they help create a sense of key. After sounding the third chord of the first example, bring the thumb to rest on the 8<sup>th</sup> course in order to stop the previous bass note from sounding. Repeat this action whenever adjacent ascending courses are played.

The image displays a series of musical exercises for guitar, organized by mode. Each mode section includes a treble clef staff with notes and fingerings, a bass clef staff with fret numbers, and a label below. The modes shown are C major, A minor, F major, D minor, Bb major, G minor, C minor, G major, E minor, and D Major. The exercises are numbered 1 through 10.

**C major**

**A minor**

**F major**

**D minor**

**Bb major**

**G minor**

**C minor**

**G major**

**E minor**

**D Major**

## 6 Interplay between the fingers and thumb

After playing the first four bars as written repeat by ascending steps until the VII position is reached (the first note will then be 1 on the 4<sup>th</sup> course) and then descend by steps. Use the barré only where necessary, such as for the latter half of the first bar and the start of the second; in the other areas release the barré. This will help prevent the left hand getting tired; should the exercise prove tiring, stop for a rest.

Reference: Mace 3 & 4.

The exercise is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 12/8. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. Barres are shown as horizontal lines across the staff. The exercise is divided into three variations:

- Original:** A sequence of notes starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes.
- Variation 1:** A sequence of eighth notes, starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes.
- Variation 2:** A sequence of eighth notes, starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes.
- Variation 3:** A sequence of eighth notes, starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes.

## 7 Changing the left-hand position

After each pair of quavers it is necessary to move the left hand. In the first two bars the first finger remains in contact with the third course throughout; after playing c on (3) the first finger slides along the 3<sup>rd</sup> course to be placed on c. The line of the left hand knuckles should be parallel to the fingerboard, and the left thumb is held vertically at the back of the neck. As the finger slides along the string to reach the higher (or lower) position, the entire hand should move; this will necessitate some movement of the left wrist and arm.

References: Mace 5 & 6.

The exercise is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The notation includes various note values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes) and rests. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. The exercise is divided into two variations:

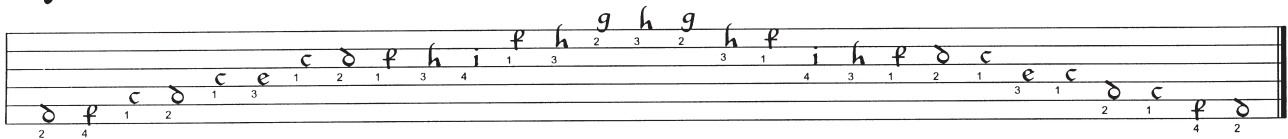
- Original:** A sequence of notes starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes.
- Variation 1:** A sequence of eighth notes, starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth notes, including a triplet of eighth notes.

## 8 Scales in all major and minor keys

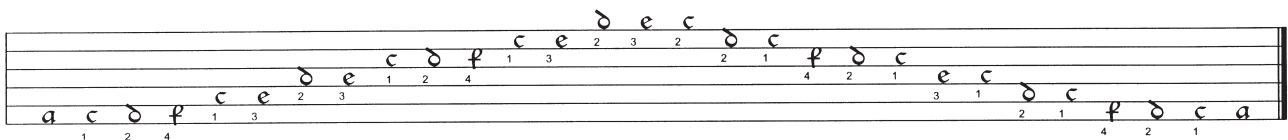
For the left hand, use the techniques of Exercise 7 and, when the fingers move from one course to another, ensure that the left thumb slides down (or up) the back of the neck. The tip of the middle finger should be more or less pointing toward the last joint of the left thumb.

Use the middle and index fingers of the right hand to pluck all notes from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> courses ensuring that those notes falling on the beat are plucked with the middle finger. For notes falling on the 6<sup>th</sup> and lower courses, use either the thumb only or the thumb and index finger. This will help maintain the posture of the right hand.

References: Burwell 4 & 8.



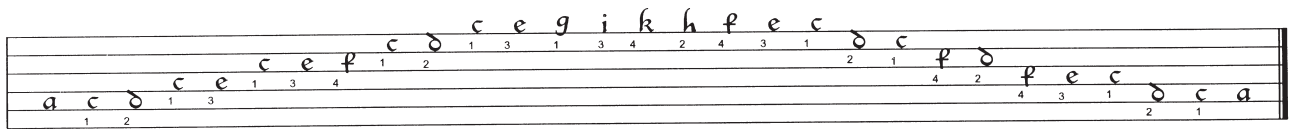
C Major



A minor



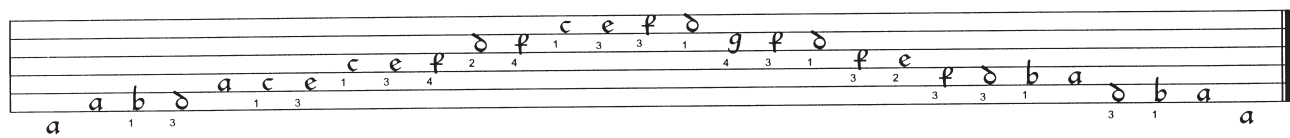
F Major



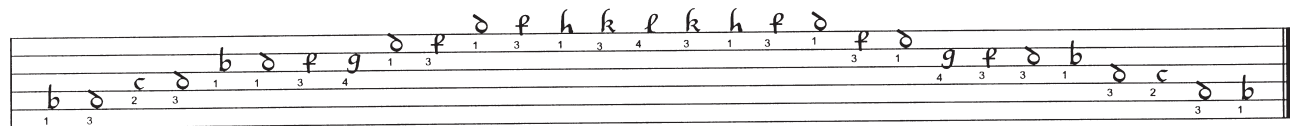
D minor



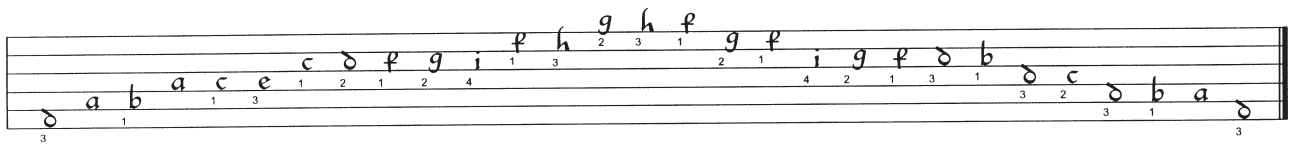
Bb major



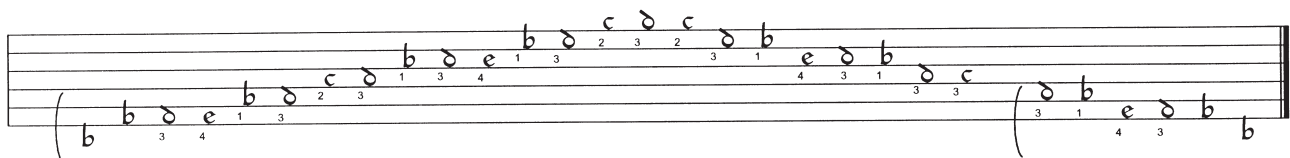
G minor



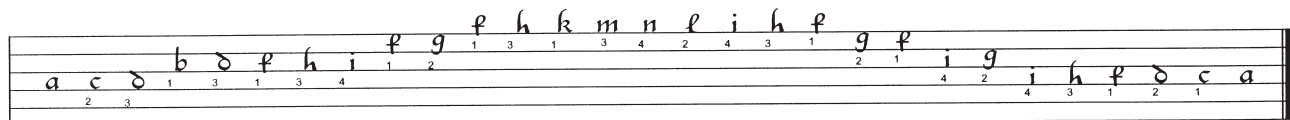
Eb major



C minor



Ab major



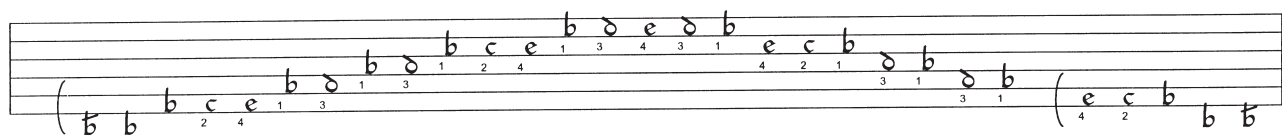
F minor



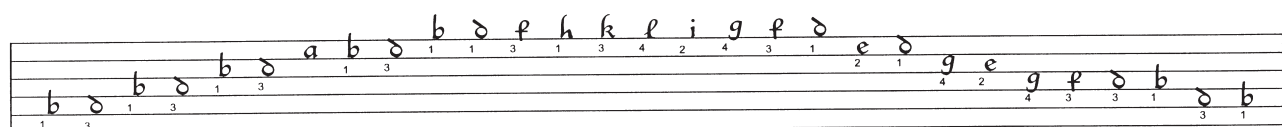
Db major



Bb minor



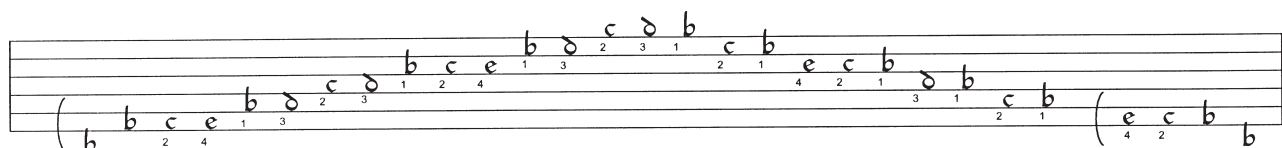
Gb major



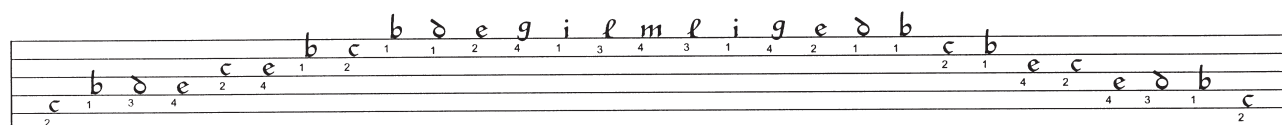
Eb minor



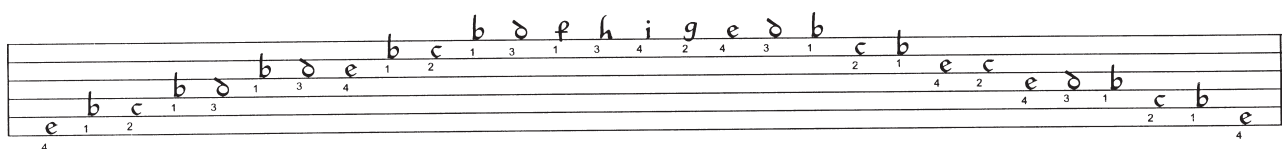
B major



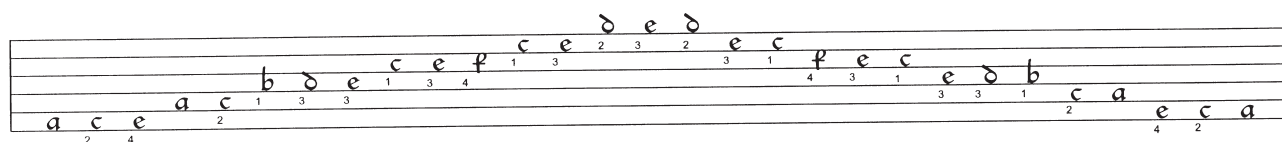
G# minor



E major



C# minor



A major



F# minor

D major

B minor

G major

## E minor

## 9 Contrary motion and scales in sixths

Although contrary motion between two parts is a time-honoured tradition in contrapuntal music, this exercise requires considerable concentration given the irregular pattern of the right hand.

Reference: Burwell 4.

The musical score for Exercise 9 is written for two staves, C and F, in common time. It consists of two systems. The first system has four measures, and the second system has four measures. The right hand (treble clef) plays a complex melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. The left hand (bass clef) plays a simpler line, often in sixths with the right hand. Fingerings and articulations are indicated throughout.

## 10 Chromatic scale with bass

Play the chromatic scales with the middle and index finger, ensuring that the left hand follows the techniques of Example 7.

Reference: Burwell 4.

The musical score for Exercise 10 is written for two staves, C and F, in common time. It consists of two systems. The first system has four measures, and the second system has four measures. The right hand (treble clef) plays a chromatic scale from C to B and back down. The left hand (bass clef) plays a chromatic scale from C to B and back down. Fingerings and articulations are indicated throughout.

## 11 Sequences and arpeggios

The sequences and arpeggios reproduce patterns common in the late seventeenth and early-eighteenth century. These are most often found in the works of the later Baroque period.

Reference: Burwell 6.

The image displays six musical examples of sequences and arpeggios, each on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The notation includes various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes), accidentals, and fingerings. Below the staves, the corresponding arpeggiated patterns are written as letter sequences (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, a) with numbers indicating fingerings.

**Example 1 (Top):** A sequence of 12 measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the rest are in 4/4. The arpeggiated patterns below are:  $\bar{a} \bar{a} 5$ ,  $\bar{a} 4 6$ ,  $\bar{a} 5 a$ ,  $2 \bar{a}$ ,  $3 \bar{a} a \bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a} \bar{a}$ ,  $a \bar{a} 4$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a} \bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a} 4$ ,  $\bar{a} 5$ .

**Example 2 (Second):** A sequence of 12 measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the rest are in 4/4. The arpeggiated patterns below are:  $4 6$ ,  $5 5$ ,  $4 4$ ,  $\bar{a} \bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a} \bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a} 5$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $5$ .

**Example 3 (Third):** A sequence of 12 measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the rest are in 4/4. The arpeggiated patterns below are:  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ .

**Example 4 (Fourth):** A sequence of 12 measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the rest are in 4/4. The arpeggiated patterns below are:  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $5$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ .

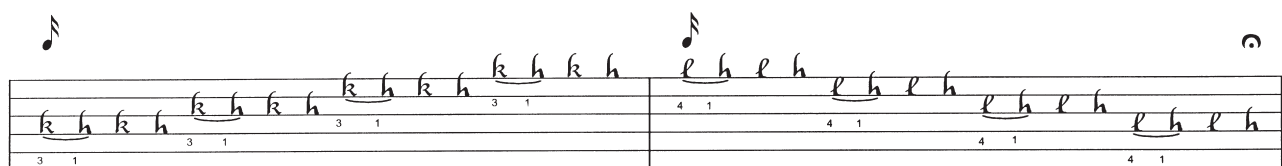
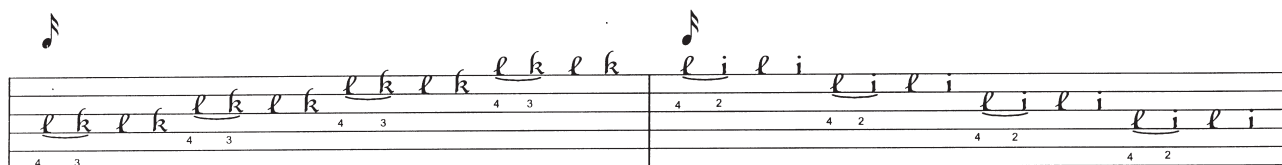
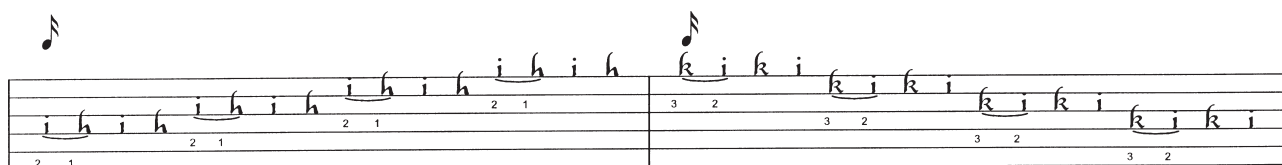
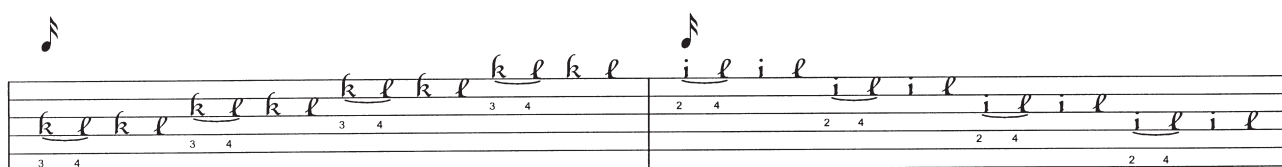
**Example 5 (Fifth):** A sequence of 12 measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the rest are in 4/4. The arpeggiated patterns below are:  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $5$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ .

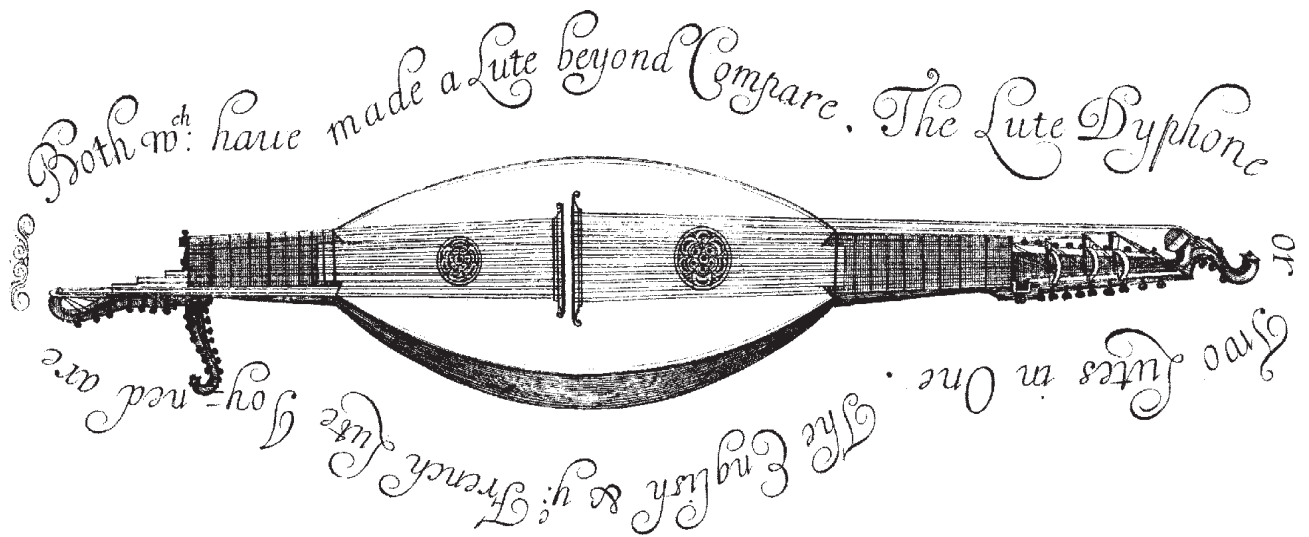
**Example 6 (Sixth):** A sequence of 12 measures. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the rest are in 4/4. The arpeggiated patterns below are:  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $5$ ,  $\bar{a}$ ,  $\bar{a}$ .

## 12 Slurs

For the ascending slurs, ensure that the finger on the lower note remains in contact with the string until the finger for the higher note has been brought down onto the string with sufficient vigour that the higher note sounds clearly. For descending slurs, both fingers must be in position before that on the higher note is removed, plucking the course with the fingertip as it leaves.

Reference: Burwell 6.





The Lute Dyphone, or Two Lutes in One  
Engraving by W. Faithorne, from  
Thomas Mace: Musick's Monument, 1676  
(from a copy in a private collection)



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