



Course Objectives and Process outline for the three-year undergraduate studies in Lute Jadran Duncumb

Objectives

At the end of the three years, the student will be acquainted with knowledge of historical sources, performance practice and techniques through a combination of the different modules the school offers. The lute course's primary objective is to give the student the means to express this knowledge and themselves on the lute through practical and technical study of the instrument and interpretation, introduction into lute-specific knowledge of sources and techniques, and exploration of how one can practically apply the knowledge one has acquired over the duration of the course. The student will be introduced to new areas of repertoire relevant to the lute in its many forms (and baroque guitar). By the end of the course, they will know how to approach new repertoire from instrumental, musical and historically informed perspectives. They will also have a clear idea about which areas they would like to explore if they choose to pursue further studies on the lute. They will have a solid and sustainable technical foundation that they can develop further without limiting themselves musically or harming themselves physically.

Basso-continuo should be a core skill for every lutenist that gives access to a hugely varied and rewarding repertoire, and a lot of professional work. Throughout the course, students will also develop their skills in basso continuo on their relevant instruments. This process will include study of historical sources, but primarily focus on developing the ability to choose and create practical and effective realisations of the bass that suit each instrument's strengths and weaknesses, and each instrument's role in different ensemble formations and pieces of music.

Process

Lute Repertoire and Technique

Given the varying individual starting points for lute students, both in terms of technical capabilities and chosen instruments, it is impossible to make a detailed plan that can be applied to each student in the same way. The instruments they own and have experience with, and their technical strengths and weaknesses will therefore have a big say in the repertoire and instruments they study.

However, in keeping with the objectives above, a priority is the development of a strong left and right-hand technique that allows the lutenist to exploit the full nature of the lute, its tuning and its double courses; that allows them to use as many musical parameters as possible, and play softly and loudly with agility and defined, full and varied tones. A defined and full sound is created by the left and right hand in combination, and so it is often beneficial to start with less harmonically and technically complex repertoire where most of the focus can be placed on the quality of sound produced, and how it can be varied to influence the musical result. The resonance, colours and articulation of notes played alone and in combination are after all what set the lute apart from other instruments and full control of them is essential to a good lutenist. To do this, it is necessary to dedicate time to an instrument with double strings: i.e., not a theorbo or single-string archlute, and therefore neither of these two instruments can be the student's main focus during their studies.

Specific pieces will not necessarily be prescribed to the student but chosen together with the goal of helping to develop different aspects of the student's technique, knowledge of different styles and forms, and musicianship. Given that each instrument in the lute-family has its own challenges regarding technique and repertoire, students will also be introduced by their second year to solo repertoire on a second instrument that challenges them technically and musically in a way repertoire on their primary instrument/s may not.

These pieces will be worked on from practical, musical, technical, and historically informed perspectives which often overlap. Working in depth on repertoire will not only entail preparing specific pieces for performance, but also on finding both technical and musical problems and solutions within them *together* that can then be applied to repertoire the student may meet in the future. Throughout, focus will be on how the student can prepare and improve pieces through practice, how they listen to themselves and critically evaluate how they play and practice. This will also be aided by regular performances through student concerts and the many other concert possibilities the institution has to offer, as well as frequent classes with all the lute students present where everyone play pieces that have not yet been prepared to concert standard for each other and can constructively comment on each other's performances.

Basso continuo

Half of the student's lute lessons (30/60 hours per annum) are dedicated to the development of *basso continuo* skills. Students will from the beginning be taught how to harmonise scales (the rule of the octave) in various ways and different keys on their respective instruments.

They will be encouraged early on to bring small scale chamber music where the lute/theorbo has a prominent role, such as Caccini's songs, 17th century instrumental sonatas, suites or monodies - both with and without the other musicians present.

In general, lessons will focus on the continuo realisation and how best it can support the musicians' musical ideas about the piece. The roles and strengths of the respective instruments will be discussed, and how one can take and use patterns and fingerings from solo repertoire.

Indeed, solo repertoire is an integral way of learning how to use each instrument to its full potential and therefore students will be given pieces for their solo lessons that will also help them in their continuo playing. If a theorbo is accessible, students will be encouraged to work on pieces by Kapsberger (including a toccata or canzona) or a suite by de Visée; as both composers explore aspects of the theorbo's peculiar tunings that are extremely useful in basso continuo realisations in their respective styles. Kapsberger's music demonstrates *campanella* fingerings and breaks down chords and various positions on the theorbo over slow-moving bass lines. They provide ideas and a help achieve a more fluent knowledge of the instrument that can be drawn upon in the realisation of 17th century Italian style continuo. De Visée explores the possibilities of the re-entrant tuning too, but also develops a fluidity of technique in the middle, darker register of the theorbo that is beautiful and important in French continuo. Whatever is not studied in one year will be studied in the next. This will also allow students to explore music written in a style that they cannot play on their main solo instrument.

If the student has an archlute, it is also important to take what can be learnt from solo repertoire in terms of voice-leading and chordal realisation in different registers of the instrument. Again, late 16th and early 17th century solo toccatas are interesting for this, but all solo repertoire helps build a more fluent knowledge of the instrument. A study of keyboard realisations of early continuo, such as those of Luzzaschi, is also useful. The lute's often different continuo role to the theorbo will be discussed and explored.

Final exam

As each student's process through the studies is different, there will not be a set list of repertoire to choose from, rather the student in dialogue with the teacher will choose a programme that shows their

achievements and development in accordance with the 'objectives' of the course both in instrumental repertoire and *basso continuo*. This will necessarily be a varied programme that will already begin to be discussed from the end of the second year.