Chapter IV

Examples of Cavalier Song Lute Realizations

This chapter presents three songs as musical examples to illustrate some of the accompanimental styles studied in the previous chapters. All three songs were taken from *Select Ayres and Dialogues*, published in 1659 by John Playford.\(^1\) This collection is a good example of music that would have been easily accessible to amateur musicians and includes composers who were active throughout the entire period of the cavalier song’s popularity. Nicholas Lanier, Robert Johnson, and William Lawes flourished during the reign of Charles I (1625-49), whereas John Wilson, Charles Coleman, and Henry Lawes were most active from the interregnum (1649-60) into the reign of Charles II. The songs appear in print with the vocal melody and text scored with a mostly unfigured bass line below it, the most common notated form of the cavalier song. They were intended for accompaniment by theorbo-lute or bass viol, and the player was expected to improvise a realization from the bass line.

The three songs below are realized for three different instruments: in order, the 10-course lute in Renaissance tuning, the 12-course lute in Renaissance tuning, and the 13-course English Theorbo with the first course in re-entrant tuning. The instruments were chosen based on the lutes that are implied by the tablature realizations attributed to each composer in chapter II, but there is not a hard and fast rule for choice of instrument or tuning. It has already been noted that the many ambiguities in the tablature realizations and the statements and illustrations in Thomas Mace’s *Musick’s Monument* leave room for a variety of instruments and tuning configurations. It is also worth emphasizing that

\(^1\) *Select Ayres and Dialogues for One, Two, and Three Voyces, to the Theorbo-Lute or Basse-Viol*, (London: John Playford, 1659), pp. 5, 13, 29.
by the time of the publication of *Select Ayres and Dialogues*, the English theorbo would have been the primary instrument for accompaniment, even though the collection includes composers from an earlier period.

In the following examples, each song is presented in exactly the form of the published print with the first two treble and bass clef staves. Some spelling in the text has been regularized, but any original slur markings, possible note misprints, and partial figuring in the bass have been maintained. The tablature realization below these staves is my creation and includes one correction of the bass line. In *Discontent* by John Wilson, the A natural in measure 15 of the bass line has been corrected to A flat in the realization to better fit the key. A transcription of this realization follows in the two treble and bass clef staves below it. The transcription includes any figures appearing in the original bass line, along with figures that show any additional harmony I have added. While I have tried to present many of the stylistic features illustrated earlier in this paper, I have concentrated on the more sophisticated efforts of John Wilson, Charles Coleman, and Thomas Mace, assuming that the simple student accompaniments warranted less attention. All of the realizations stay within the nearly diatonic harmonic language of the song manuscripts studied in chapter II and outlined by Matthew Locke and Thomas Mace in chapter III.

*A Forlorn Lovers Complaint: As I walk’d forth*

This song by Robert Johnson (c. 1583-1633) was composed at the beginning of the cavalier song period. Written in the style of a folksong with verses using the same repeated music, it is related stylistically to the late Golden Age lute songs of Thomas Campion and his contemporaries. It can also be categorized as a dance song because of its
even phrase structure and because it is strophic rather than through composed. The 10-course lute, still popular in Johnson’s day, was selected as the instrument for the realization.

The sources with tablature accompaniment that provide insight for realization on 10-course lute are NY Public Library Drexel MS 4175 (Ann Twice, Her Book); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Mus. Sch. f.575; and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Don. c.57. Drexel MS 4175 and Bodleian f.575 primarily employ a block chord texture throughout with occasional bass notes added down an octave to sustain the lute’s sound, and that is the basic texture used in the realization below. Bodleian c.56 makes more melodic use of the lower courses, illustrated below in measures two, three, and eighteen. The cadences in measures six, twelve, and eighteen all use a formula present in the aforementioned sources, suspension of 4 resolving to 3 over the dominant, followed by a descent to 7 just before resolution to the tonic chord. Bass notes are occasionally taken down an octave, but for the most part the bass line of the realization mirrors that of the original in Choice Ayres and Dialogues. The broken chords and interludes seen in the accompaniments in Yale University Filmer MS A.14 (c.1640-60) were not incorporated in this realization, even though it was probably also intended for 10-course lute. The date of Filmer makes it a better reference for later songs.

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A Forlorn Lovers Complaint.

Robert Johnson
Bower I es-pide standing fast by a
river side; and in't a Maiden I heard cry.
II.
Then round the meadow she did walk,
Catching each flower by the stalk;
Such flowers as in the meadow grew,
The Dead-man’s Thumb, an Hearb all blew.
And as she pull’d them, still cry’d she,
Alas! Alas! none e’re loy’d like me.

III.
The Flowers of the sweetest sorts
She bound about with knotty Bents,
And as she bound them up in Bands.
She wept, she sigh’d and wrung her hands,
Alas! Alas! Alas! cry’d she,
Alas! none was e’er loy’d like me.

IV.
When she had filled her Apron full
Of such green things as she could cull,
The green leaves serv’d her for a Bed,
The flowers were the Pillow for her head: Then down she laid, ne’er more did speak,
Alas! Alas! with Love her heart did break.
**Discontent: I prethee turn that face away**

This song by John Wilson (1595-1673) is best described as *arioso*, with a tuneful melody supported by a rhythmic bass, but lacking the regular phrase structure of a strophic dance song. While freer in conception than a dance song, its bass line does not provide the elasticity characterizing a song in the recitative style. The 12-course lute was selected as the instrument for the realization since that instrument was probably used by John Wilson in Bodleian Library MS Mus. b.1; however, as was pointed out in chapter II, the tuning of the first course in the high octave of Renaissance pattern, the lower octave as for the English theorbo, or a course of two strings with both octaves, are all possibilities, because the tablature makes inconsistent use of this first course.

Two manuscripts with intabulated accompaniments for 12-course lute were studied in chapter II, Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Mus. b.1 (John Wilson manuscript) and London, British Library MS Egerton 2013. Egerton 2013 uses a style of block chord realization similar to that of the 10-course song manuscripts mentioned earlier, so for purposes of illustration, the John Wilson manuscript is the primary source for the realization provided below.

The intabulated accompaniments in the John Wilson manuscript are extremely sophisticated and varied. They cover a wide range on the instrument, with some very rich chord shapes in the extreme low range, contrasting with lighter two-voice textures. Complex, carefully worked out counterpoint is present, as well as simple block chords. In general, the texture of the lute realization favors the low range, with the bass usually sounding an octave below the mensural bass line provided by Wilson. While bass notes of a whole note or greater duration are sometimes realized simply with long chords, there

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are many instances of a rhythmic division with counterpoint, broken chords, or octaves restruck in the bass. In addition to octave transposition, Wilson also treats the original bass in myriad ways: 1) adding shorter values to fill intervallic leaps (measures three, twenty-two), 2) recomposing the bass, 3) or using the mensural bass as an upper voice and adding a new voice below. His inner voices sometimes run in parallel intervals to the vocal melody (measure twenty-four), and in other places mirror the bass (measure twenty-three). Finally, Wilson has a personal cliché of rhythmically spreading final chords by placing the bass note on the first beat of the measure in a low octave and raking up with the index finger the rest of the chord on the second quarter note of the measure (measure twenty-six).
Example 4.2, *Discontent*, John Wilson, *Select Ayres and Dialogues*, p.29:

Discontent.

1 Pre-thee turn that Face a-way, whose splen-dor but be-nights the day;
dursts;
Un-wel-come is the Sun that prays in-to those Shades where sor-row
lies: Go shine on hap-py things, to me, that bless-ing is a mi-ser-
i.e., whom thy fierce Sun not warms but burns, like that the soot-y In-dian turns; Fle

serve the night, and there con-fin'd; with thee less fair or else more kind.
Venus Lamenting Her Lost Adonis: Wake my Adonis

This song by Charles Coleman is in recitative style and is the most substantial work in the *Select Ayres and Dialogues* collection. The gravity and emotional range of the text are well suited to the recitative style, which in this song is characterized by a wide vocal range, vocal coloratura, and expressive, dissonant intervals, all supported by a relatively slow moving bass. The song has more original figures than any other in the collection. These figures indicate expressive contrapuntal coloring (measures two, twenty), unusual dissonance at cadences (measures sixteen, twenty-eight, twenty-nine), and an alto voice set note-for-note in parallel thirds against the vocal melody after the manner of John Wilson (measures forty-three to forty-six).  

Charles Coleman (1605-64) was active while the English theorbo was the most popular instrument for vocal accompaniment. The intabulated accompaniments with his autograph in Lambeth Palace Library Ms 1041 (*Lady Ann Blount Song Book*) and Oxford, Bodleian Library Ms Broxbourne 84.9 imply the use of a 13-course theorbo with the first course tuned at the lower octave, and that tuning is used for the realization provided below. The intabulated songs in Lambeth Palace and Broxbourne and some of the instructions given by Thomas Mace in *Musick’s Monument*, as well as several of the characteristics seen in the John Wilson manuscript, have formed the basis for the style of my realization.

Like the John Wilson manuscript, the Lambeth Palace and Broxbourne Mss. are very sophisticated collections written out by professional musicians. Both incorporate a wide variety of techniques, many of which are geared specifically to the tonal characteristics of the theorbo. Unlike the John Wilson manuscript or any other source in this study, they

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5 This passage is treated in detail on page 27 of chapter II. *Wake my Adonis* also appears on page 26 of *Select Musicall Ayres and Dialgues, In Three Bookes*, published in 1653 by John Playford.
place textual accentuation as the first consideration, using the resonance of the instrument to illustrate the relative weight of the words. To this end, my accompaniment below has, for the most part, placed the fullest chords on the words that would receive the greatest accent in a dramatic reading (for example, under the words “Wake my Adonis, do not die” in measures one to four). I have tried to be sensitive to this consideration throughout the realization.

The resonant characteristics of the theorbo allow a two-part texture to be sufficient, especially when the bass moves by step (measures four, eight). The diapasons can even be played *tasto solo* for special effect (measures thirty-one, thirty-two). At the other dynamic extreme, the theorbo can produce its greatest volume by playing the bass on a diapason and simultaneously raking up strongly with the index finger over five or more courses. This effect is used below in measures twenty-one to twenty-three that depict “thundring Jove.” A more gentle and rhythmic raking with the index finger is seen in the final section of the song. In this dance-like section in 3/2 time, the diapason on beat one is followed by light upstrokes with the index finger on chords placed on beats two and three. This technique, explored in detail in chapter II, is borrowed from the French school of the *air de cour*.

Lambeth Place MS 1041 and Broxbourne use some very specific techniques for coloring important moments in the text, some of which have been incorporated into the realization below. The occasional doubling of the vocal melody by the highest voice of the accompaniment can underscore significant words if used sparingly (measures thirty-five and thirty-six) and was possibly employed to give the singer his pitch. In the same vein, stepwise parallel motion that emphasizes multiple parallel fifths and octaves can produce a jarring effect useful for strong emotions (measure fifty-four, “grieve”). Finally,
Thomas Mace’s instructions for realizing a descending stepwise bass apply well to the long descending stepwise bass line in measures thirty-eight to forty-one. On each half note of the descending bass, the theorbo plays the bass note on beat one followed by a light chord on beat two, ending the sequence with a broken chord flourish in eighth notes. This rhythmic treatment of the descending passage provides it with its own special character, making it stand out from the surrounding phrases.
Example 4.3, *Venus lamenting her lost Adonis*, Charles Coleman, *Select Ayres and Dialogues*, pp. 4-5:

Venus lamenting her lost Adonis.

Charles Coleman
smiles? Alas, in vain I call, one death has snatched them all; yet death's not
deadly in that face, death in those looks it self hath grace;
'twas this, 'twas this I fear'd, when thy pale ghost appear'd, this I pre-sag'd, when

thun-dering love tore the best Mistle in my grove, when my sick
rose buds lost their smell, and
from my temples un - touched
tfell, and 'twas for some such thing, my

Dove first hung her wing.
Whither art thou my De - i - ty gone?
Venus in Venus there is none: in vain a goddess now

am I, only to grieve and not to die: but I will love my grief, make
tears my tears relief, and sorrow shall to me a new A-don is be:

And this the fates shan't rob me of whilst I a god-ess
am to grieve and not to die.
While these three song realizations have incorporated many of the stylistic characteristics that could have been used by lutenists in accompanying the cavalier songs, further research will be necessary to exhaust the almost endless combinations of possibilities suggested by the intabulated accompaniments in chapter II. More research must address the very important question of what other styles of accompaniment might have existed beyond those included in the eight surviving intabulated song manuscripts. Apart from a few very specific and possibly highly individualistic instructions in Thomas Mace’s *Musick’s Monument*, the English writings on continuo practice do not shed much light on lute continuo style. The extreme popularity of continuo practice in the seventeenth century has worked against its own documentation, since the goal was to create a spontaneous improvised accompaniment, and not to intabulate and fossilize a finished product. While a set of instructions can tell a player which notes to play to realize an accompaniment, the elements of style were, as they are now, passed down from master to student.

Until fairly recently, the cavalier song repertory has been neglected and even underrated by some scholars and performers. It has been described as a period of transition toward Henry Purcell’s accomplishments, its own development arrested by the political turmoil of English politics. More likely, one reason that the cavalier songs are only partially understood is because important elements of their lute accompaniment have not been explored. It is hoped that this paper will help fuel the current interest in this rich but neglected repertory, and inspire singers and accompanists to devote their efforts to its performance.

*Gus Denhard, Seattle, WA, April 2006*
Example 4.4, Facsimile title page and songs from John Playford,

*Select Ayres and Dialogues*:
A Forsaken Lover's Complaint.

[Music notation]

I.
S I walk'd forth one Summers day, to view the Meadows green and gay,
A pleasant Bower I espied standing tall by a river side; and in's a Maiden I heard cry,
Alas! Alas! there's none e'er lov'd as I.

Mr. Robert Johnson.

II.
Then round the meadow did the walk,
Catching each flower by the stalk;
Such flowers as in the meadow grew,
The Dead man's Thumb, and Herb all blew,
And as she pull'd them, still cry'd she,
Alas! Alas! none e'er lov'd like me.

III.
The Flowers of the sweetest scene
She bound about with knotty Bows,
And as she bound them up in Bows she wept, she figh'ted and wrong'd her hands,
Alas! Alas! Alas! cry'd she,
Alas! none was e'er lov'd like me.

IV.
When she had fill'd her Apron full
Of such green things as she could call,
The green leaves for'd her for a Bed
The Flowers were the Pillow for her head:
Then down she laid, no more did speak,
Alas! Alas! with Love her heart did break.
Discontent:

Faint is the Sun that shines on those who are not content.

Faint are the Eyes of the wretched, the Heart of the sorrowful.

Welcome is the Sun that shines on those who are happy.

To me, that blessing is a misfortune; whom thou enfeebles, that Sun, that burns, like that Sun.

Sooty Indian turns: I serve the night, and there confound: with thee less fair or else more kind.

Dr. John Wilson,
Venus lamenting her lost Adonis.

Ah my Adonis, do not die, one life's enough for thee and I, where are thy

Lo, art thou in thy grave, my soul's delight, in vain I call, one death hath struck thee down,

Sighs, when thy soul appeared, this I sighed, when thou didst leave me,

farewell, Musick in my grave, when my sick soul bade me useless from my temples amove thee;

fell and 'tis for to me that thing, my Dove fell hung her wing, Whither are they my DaicI gone?
Venus lamenting her lost Adonis, p. 2

From in Fenns there is none: in vain a goddes now am I; only to grieve and not to die: but I will love my grief, make tears my tears relief, and sorrow shall to me a new Adonis: And this the face that took us of what! A goddes am to grieve and not to die. Dr. Celman.