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# FRENCH THOROUGH-BASS METHODS FROM DELAIR TO RAMEAU

by JEAN-YVES HAYMOZ

The appearance in 1660 of a treatise by Fleury begins a tradition of treatises describing the French art of continuo playing.<sup>1</sup> A tentative list<sup>2</sup> of books on accompaniment published in France in the 17th and 18th centuries includes some seventy treatises (see annex I), all surprisingly similar: as tastes changed little, the theorist's chief concern was to simplify the way the subject was taught. Taste and pedagogical concepts are closely associated in French continuo methods, unlike Italian and German treatises which invariably start with a strong grounding in counterpoint.

This paper makes special reference to the books of Denis Delair (1690), Saint Lambert (1707), Jean-François Dandrieu (1719) and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1722). The first part illustrates changes in teaching methods employed in these continuo treatises, and the second presents components of French taste in thorough-bass playing.

## *I. Changes in teaching methods*

Delair says that „accompanying has never been so common as now, almost any player on an instrument trifles with accompaniment but very few accompany properly being content with a certain routine.“<sup>3</sup> Thus we can take it that continuo-playing was well known but at the time there was a lack of method. It is very important to notice that all the French treatises on this matter are written for amateurs as well as professionals. They start at the very beginning, explaining musical intervals, the keyboard and so on and specify how much study will be required by people who have never even heard of music theory: for instance, Fleury thinks it will take about one month!

In fact, French taste in thorough-bass playing is quite different from Italian or German tastes: the highest aim of a very good accompanist is not to find the right chords or to improvise skilfully (French continuo style is rather strict and does not demand great imagination), but to play arpeggios on the instrument with refinement. Now it is impossible to learn how to

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to my wife, Christiane and Mr Graham Hobbs for their help with the English version of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> List based on RISM and Philippe Lescat, *Méthodes et traités musicaux en France 1660-1800*, Paris 1991 (Institut de pédagogie musicale et chorégraphique), not including some eleven anonymous treatises.

<sup>3</sup> Denis Delair, *Traité d'accompagnement*, Paris 1690 (Minkoff Reprint, Genève 1972), préface p. 1: „L'accompagnement n'a jamais été si commun qu'il est, presque tous ceux qui jouent des Instruments se meslent d'Acompagner, mais il y en a très peu qui accompagnent régulièrement, on se contente d'une certaine routine...“



play from a book, it is only possible to learn through contact with a good teacher. Therefore the treatises are devoted to the relatively simple matter of how to find the chords. The theorists progressively simplify until the point where Rameau introduces his new method.

In contrast, the Italian and German continuo style is inherently polyphonic: the continuo-player must be thoroughly versed in the art of composing, and that requires years of study.

### *Fleury*

Nicolas Fleury, in 1660, was the first in France to write a treatise on how to play a thorough-bass. His title is *Méthode pour apprendre facilement à toucher le théorbe sur la basse continue*.<sup>4</sup> He attempts to explain a complex musical practice with a lot of examples. The student has to learn progressions until he can use them in accompanying. For the amateur it is helpful to give models to memorize that can serve in different cases, but this approach means that the exercises must be transposed into many keys.

The explanations of the chords in this treatise are related to Zarlino's concept of counterpoint, but instead of considering the progression of the intervals, Fleury shows the motion of the bass line. For instance, „if the bass moves a tone downwards, one may play a major sixth with a minor third.“ Thus the major sixth can go up to the octave and the minor third down to another third.<sup>5</sup> All bass movements are explained, with many possible harmonisations, the intervals first going up, then down. It is difficult to memorize all these accompaniments, but once they are automatic the player can be guided by bass movement alone. This manner of teaching is already very close to the *règle de l'octave*.

### *Delair*

Etienne Denis Delair published his *Traité d'Acompagnement pour le Théorbe et le Clavessin* in Paris in 1690. He gives approximately the same rules as Fleury and says: „One will perhaps find that these principles have already been written elsewhere, but neither that author nor I claim to be their inventor, as these rules are the foundation of music.“<sup>6</sup> In the first part, Delair explains how to fill the accompaniment of the figures, for instance: „When you play a seventh, add a third and a fifth.“<sup>7</sup> Then, like Fleury, he shows where these chords are to be found, with a long enumeration of all possible bass motions. For each he gives one or two possible harmonisations.

Again, it is difficult to remember all Delair's rules. Delair therefore seeks to present them in various ways, and suggests exercises to gain practice in

<sup>4</sup> The treatise by Fleury is reprinted in the same volume as Delair's (see note 3).

<sup>5</sup> Op. cit. p. 17.

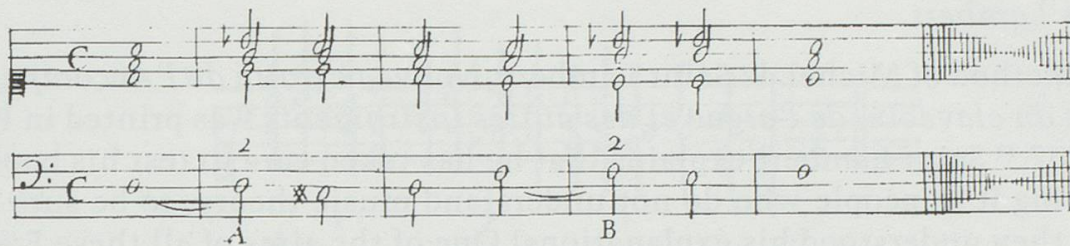
<sup>6</sup> Delair, op. cit. fol. B.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. [12].



the fingers; but he emphasizes that „reflection is better than reflex“!<sup>8</sup> Here too we are very near, in spirit, to the *règle de l'octave*. But Delair's rules are still very complicated. Delair himself remarks: „It is very difficult to give rules for an art based on the caprice or the will of the composer.“<sup>9</sup>

Today it is a real historical problem to choose the right harmonies. Delair's „harmonic sense“ has absolutely nothing to do with the common tonal harmony of today! After a modern course in harmony, you will be able to analyze Delair's chords but not to find the same way of harmonizing and so you will not obtain the „French flavour“ of his continuo. That is to say that a careful reading of all Delair's harmonic progressions is indispensable to the modern continuo-player. Delair often gives two possibilities. For instance, „the second is commonly accompanied with the fourth and the sixth ...“<sup>10</sup>



In addition to his general rules he gives some other possibilities that he calls *acompagnemens extraordinaires*.<sup>11</sup>

### *Exemple des accompagnemens extraordinaires.*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. préface, V°.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. préface.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. fol. D V°.

<sup>11</sup> Delair, op. cit. fol. F V°.



This example illustrates certain typically French progressions and refinements. Among them:

- the chords are on the first and on the second beat, even if the bass changes on the fourth crotchet (see in mm. 22 and 24),
- in the suspension of the fourth, the seventh is played with the fourth (m. 4),
- in the 7–6 suspension, one plays a fifth with the seventh, and a fourth with the sixth (m. 6),
- the octave may be doubled in the diminished triad (mm. 11 and 13),
- the right hand normally plays three voices, sometimes four,
- one typical flavour of the French style is the augmented chord, *Quinte superflue*, played with or without ninth (mm. 15 and 18).<sup>12</sup>

### *Saint Lambert*

The Method of Michel de Saint Lambert: *Nouveau traité de l'Accompagnement du clavecin, de l'orgue et des autres instruments* was printed in Paris in 1707.<sup>13</sup> Saint Lambert explains that he has taken care to test his book by showing it to people who do not understand music theory, to be sure that even they understood his explanations! One of the aims of all these French treatises was to be understandable to anyone. Like Delair's, Saint Lambert's method is based on bass progressions. He also explains how to add notes to a simple chord: here, too, careful study is indispensable. A few examples suffice to show that his theory is mainly pragmatic.

- with a second and a fourth, one may add the sixth, but the fifth is better.<sup>14</sup>



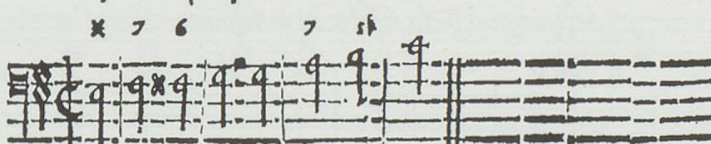
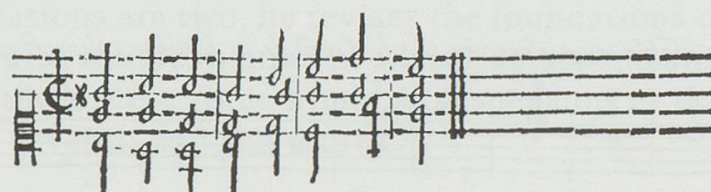
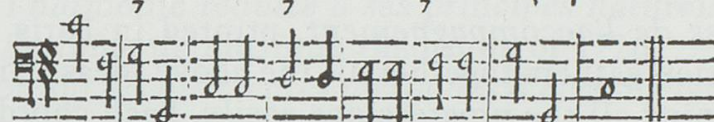
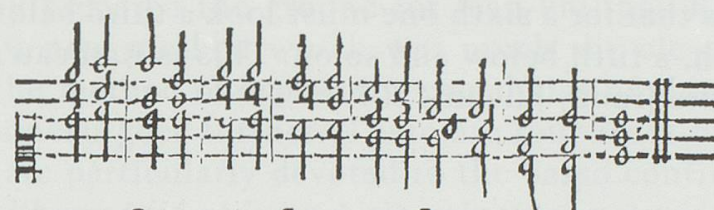
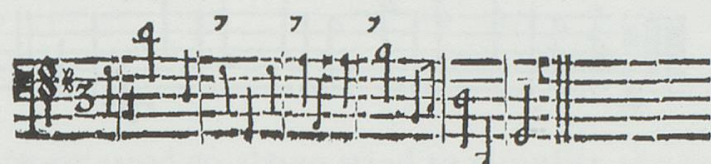
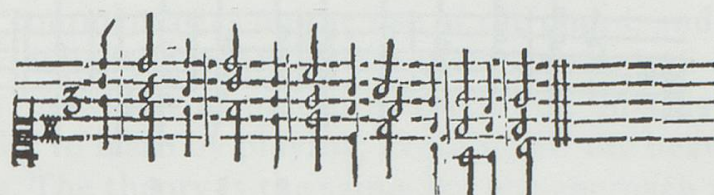
<sup>12</sup> As regards sonority, Delair's explanations of which notes to double must also be considered (op. cit. pp. [xii–xiii]). For example, Delair will double leading-tones, as does Georg Muffat in the same period (see his *Regulae concentuum partiturae*, ed. in: Hellmut Federhofer, *An essay on thoroughbass*, Tübingen 1961 (Musicological Studies and Documents 4).

<sup>13</sup> Facsimile reprint in the same volume as Michel Saint Lambert, *Les principes du Clavecin*, Paris 1702, Minkoff, Genève 1974.

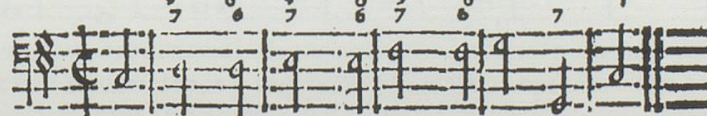
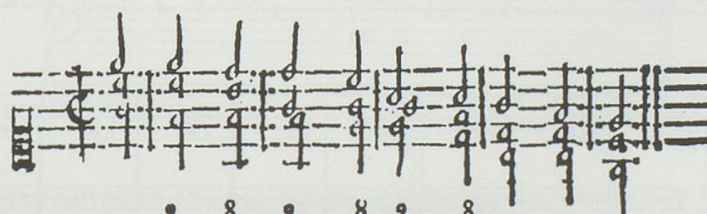
<sup>14</sup> Op. cit. pp. 17–18.



– with the seventh it is better to add the third and the fifth than the third and the octave; but if the preceding chord is major and one step lower, it is best to add the doubled third.<sup>15</sup>



– with the ninth and the fourth, add the seventh or the fifth.<sup>16</sup>

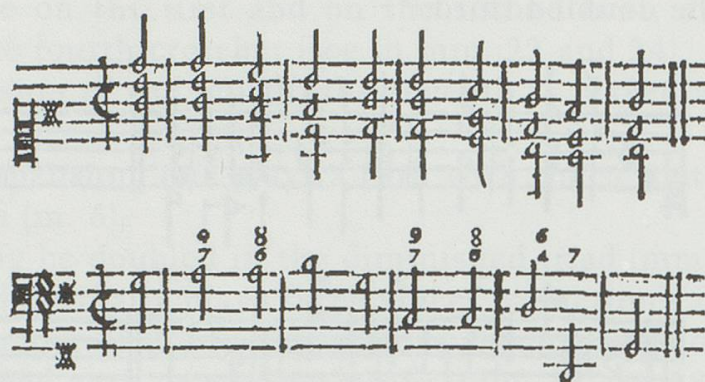


<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 19.



– with the ninth and the seventh add the third, or „keep the former chord because it is easier to play and the sound is nicer.“<sup>17</sup>



Saint Lambert's great innovation is to explain how to find a chord from the figures. He says that for a sixth one must look a third below the bass, with a fifth and sixth, a fifth below and so on. This is Rameau's concept of the fundamental bass (root), but in 1707.<sup>18</sup>

### Dandrieu

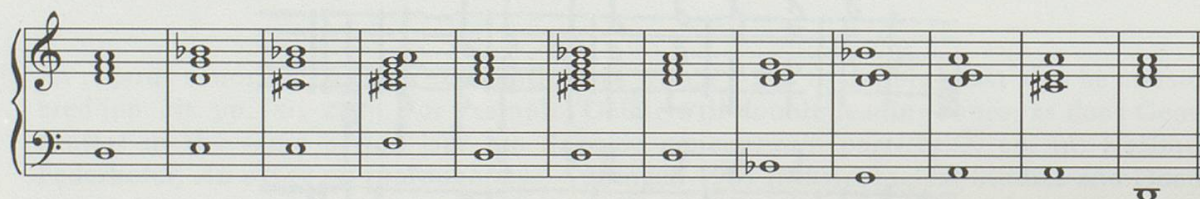
In his *Principes de l'accompagnement*, printed in Paris in 1719,<sup>19</sup> Jean-François Dandrieu gathers together all the above ideas. His is a pragmatic method of learning all the progressions easily. Each chord is incorporated into an exercise repeated three times:<sup>20</sup>

XVIII.

*Table pour s'exercer sur l'Accord de la Quinte Superflue.*

*1. Repetition de la Table de la Quinte Superflue*

*2. Repetition de la Table de la Quinte Superflue*



<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Facsimile Minkoff, Genève, 1972.

<sup>20</sup> Op. cit. fol. XVIII.



- the first time, all the voices are represented by figures,
- the second time, the figures are simplified to those commonly written,
- the third time, the bass is printed without figures.

There are short commentaries on the use of the chord, and exercises upon what is already called the *règle de l'octave*. At the end Dandrieu gives some *brunettes* in which to practise the chords. In this way Dandrieu enables his reader to learn by playing, avoiding all the heavy discourses of his predecessors. The theory is the same, but the approach to teaching it is quite new.

### Rameau

All the musicians referred to above tried to simplify the teaching process. In this way they prepared the ground for Jean-Philippe Rameau who, in 1722, proposed a new method which was much the clearest. There is a progression in the method of explaining the choice of chords from Delair to Dandrieu; Rameau goes further. There are four texts by Jean-Philippe Rameau which are particularly devoted to the basso continuo:

- the *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* of 1722,
- the *Nouveau Système de musique théorique* of 1726,
- the *Dissertation sur les différentes méthodes d'accompagnement* of 1732,
- the *Code de musique pratique* of 1760.<sup>21</sup>

Rameau's innovations are two: he revises the foundations of harmony; and he describes a quite simple manner of adding an accompaniment to a bass. Until Rameau, there were three kinds of suspension in the counterpoint: the second, the seventh and the fourth.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> These texts are reprinted in the collection of E.R. Jacobi, Rome 1967–72, in Vols. I, II, V, IV respectively.

<sup>22</sup> As the examples show, traditional dissonances in counterpoint are reinterpreted as chords – less out of a desire to construct a logically consistent system than out of a wish to codify current practice. Consider the suspended fourth which becomes superposed fourths – not thirds as his theory otherwise dictates. The *basse fondamentale* (B.F.) of this chord is D; the *basse continue* (B.C.) is G.



But since Fleury and Delair, these dissonances have been accompanied by additional notes. It is therefore quite logical for Rameau to give a new explanation of the chords. In his new treatise of harmony, there are only two chords: the consonant and the dissonant. The dissonant can only be a seventh chord, in which the seventh and the fifth must be resolved in the step below. Therefore, a suspension can only imply a seventh.<sup>23</sup>

To make continuo-playing easier, Rameau devises a new method where the chords are analyzed only with the fingers. In a consonant chord one plays three notes with the second, the fourth and the fifth fingers. (Rameau uses the thumb only on special occasions.) One can also play this chord with the second, the third and the fifth according to the position of the chord: for example an interval of a fourth below the little finger.<sup>24</sup>

In a dissonant chord there are four notes, so all four fingers are used.<sup>25</sup> According to the position of the chord, the fingers may all be separated by a third. In this case the seventh is in the upper part and must go a step down in the next chord; likewise the ring finger. Otherwise there are always two fingers close together: the lower plays the seventh and must go to the step below in the next chord. This is very simple. Rameau says that „after six months one is able to accompany with pleasure and quickly, to prelude or to compose. With the old method one is only a poor pupil after four years, and remains for ever ignorant of prelude and composition.“<sup>26</sup> „In case of hesitation, the fingers themselves correct the errors before they touch the keys.“<sup>27</sup>

In his *Dissertation* he says also that „before studying composition one must practise accompaniment to develop the fingers and the ear.“<sup>28</sup> In his *Code de Musique*, he says: „All is suggested without thinking and the fingers work as if by themselves.“<sup>29</sup>

In the old system there were twenty-two chords and forty figures. In the Rameau's new system there are only two chords and 6 figures.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> That is clear with the suspension of the second, but the suspended fourth is still an irregularity! It must be noted that the system called *à la Rameau* in modern courses of harmony is not exactly what Rameau had in mind. It seems that theories of Jazz are nearest, for example in that the harmonic progressions are more important than the movement of the melodic parts, particularly the bass. It would be interesting to study the importance of continuo in the „revolution“ of Rameau and the misreading of it in the early 20th century.

<sup>24</sup> Rameau notes that each chord shares a note with the next. Then after the tonic there are six possibilities. *Dissertation*, op. cit. p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> He plays generally without the thumb.

<sup>26</sup> *Nouveau système*, op. cit. p. 94.

<sup>27</sup> *Traité*, op. cit. pp. 363–432.

<sup>28</sup> *Dissertation*, op. cit. p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Code de musique*, op. cit. pp. 34–35.

<sup>30</sup> These examples assume the tonality of C major. As the bass no longer matters in Rameau's system, sixth and six-four chords are no longer material.



2 accord de la seconde (c-d-f-a)  
 x accord sensible (g-b-d-f)  
 7 accord de la 7e (c-e-g-b)  
 aj accord de la sixte ajoutée (c-e-g-a)  
 43 accord de la tierce et quarte (d-e-f-a)  
 4 accord de la quarte (d-g-c)

Having simplified matters to this point, Rameau invents a new tabulature for continuo-players in which he indicates consonant chords with letters, seventh chords with figures, and the numbers of the fingers which move down from one chord to the next with dots. The uppermost dot is the little finger when the notes are arranged by thirds.<sup>31</sup> „It is the little finger which thinks for the other fingers.“<sup>32</sup>

Rameau arrived via logic at a very important principle of his: since the harmony is entirely in the right hand, the bass is arbitrary.<sup>33</sup> He transcribed Corelli's entire Op. V, but only the first movement of the third sonata still exists (see annex II<sup>34</sup> and III<sup>35</sup>).

As Rameau says: „It is so simple that each day many amateurs practise with success.“<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless he says that a continuo-player needs a long time to learn the details of good taste: *le bon goût*.

## II Good taste in French continuo-playing

Let us now look at some points of performance, with a few remarks on French taste in continuo-playing and some quotations about a limited range of topics.

### Instruments

For the continuo, the higher voices of the instruments must be softer than the bass. Therefore the lute and guitar were not used, but theorbo and cembalo were. Voice-leading on a keyboard instrument is stricter than on the theorbo, where chords are more difficult to play.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Dissertation*, op. cit. p. 43–44. The uppermost dot denotes the seventh; the leading-tone is marked with a cross.

<sup>32</sup> *Dissertation*, op. cit. pp. 59–60.

<sup>33</sup> *Dissertation*, op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> *Dissertation*, op. cit. p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> In our transcription care has been taken not to avoid parallel octaves, since Rameau says he goes to no great lengths to avoid them.

<sup>36</sup> *Code*, op. cit. p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> Delair, op. cit. p. 5. „Il ne faut pas que les dessus dominant les basses parce qu'il ne faut pas faire briller l'instrument mais soutenir ce qu'on accompagne. Les basses doivent donc être plus fortes c'est pour cela qu'on emploie pas le luth ou la guitare mais le théorbe ou le clavecin. Les accords sont plus réguliers sur le clavecin que sur le théorbe car le manche de celui ci est plus difficile.“



For the organ, Corrette gives the following registrations:<sup>38</sup>

- the left hand on the *Grand Clavier* with 16', 8' and 4' registers,
- the right hand on the *Positif* with the bourdon 8',
- it is possible to double the notes written on the beat with the *pedalles de flûtes*.

### *Harpsichord*

„The chords are arpeggiated [quickly] from the forefinger to the little finger. The hand has to be extremely supple, and the wrist always flexible, so that the fingers can fall by their own movement, dying, so to say, on the keys. Release the keys only to repeat them or to go instantly to the next, with the same movement and without interruption. The fingers fall with their own weight. Only with long work and long experience can one remedy the few imperfections that remain after one year.“<sup>39</sup> „The fingers must never lift all together.“<sup>40</sup>

### *Organ*

„On the organ the notes are tied or slurred, and chords are not arpeggiated.“<sup>41</sup> Rameau adds: „If a key will serve in the following chords, the finger must not release it.“<sup>42</sup> And further: „Don't leave a key that you play in the next chord.“<sup>43</sup>

Rousseau's opinions are also interesting although, in certain cases, they must be understood as statements of his opposition to a certain French taste. For the organ he says: „Although the accompaniment at the organ be the same as at the cembalo, it has a very different feeling. Because the sound of the organ is sustained, the accompaniment must be more bound and less hopping: one must lift the whole hand as little as possible, and slide the fingers from one key to the next without lifting those which may serve again in the following chord ...“<sup>44</sup> And Boyvin: „On the organ one must slur the dissonances, just as on the harpsichord all must be separate.“<sup>45</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Michel Corrette, *Prototypes contenant des leçons d'accompagnement*, Paris 1775, reprinted with Michel Corrette, *Le maître de clavecin pour l'accompagnement*, Paris 1753, Minkoff Genève 1976, p.15. Corrette mixes the *règle de l'octave* with the ideas of Rameau. His method is intended to ease the task of the beginner and promises results in 6 months! His book is dedicated to *l'éducation des demoiselles de condition*.

<sup>39</sup> Rameau, *Code*, pp. 27–29.

<sup>40</sup> Rameau, *Traité*, pp. 363–422.

<sup>41</sup> Saint Lambert, *Nouveau traité*, p. 63.

<sup>42</sup> Rameau, *Code*, p. 27–29.

<sup>43</sup> Rameau, *Traité*, pp. 363–432.

<sup>44</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in: *Dictionnaire de Musique*, Paris 1768, reprint Art et Culture, Paris 1977, tome I, pp 47–48, s. v. *Accompagnement*.

<sup>45</sup> Jacques Boyvin, *Traité abrégé de l'accompagnement*, Paris 1705, publ. by A. Guilmant (Archives des maîtres de l'orgue) 1904, p. 83.



Explication.

### Dynamics

It is important for the continuo to match the soloists. If the voices are powerful, the chords must be struck vigorously but without straining the instrument, and played in the bass with the two hands. „If the voice be weak, remove a register or two, play with three voices in the right hand removing the octave of the bass, or *draw a softer sound with a more delicate touch.*“<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Saint Lambert, *Nouveau traité*, p. 61. (Emphasis added.)

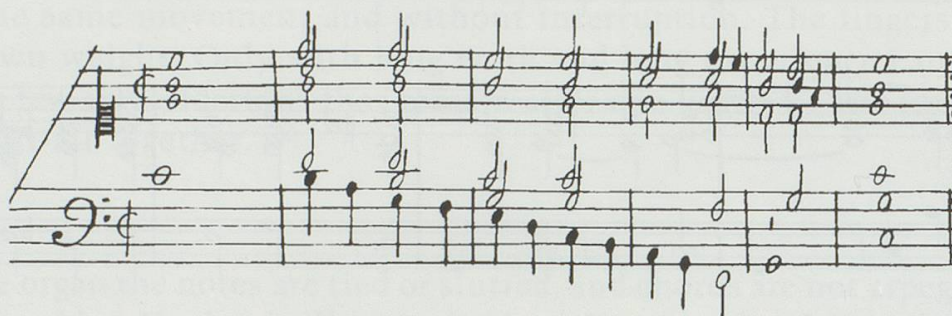


### *Range of the voices*

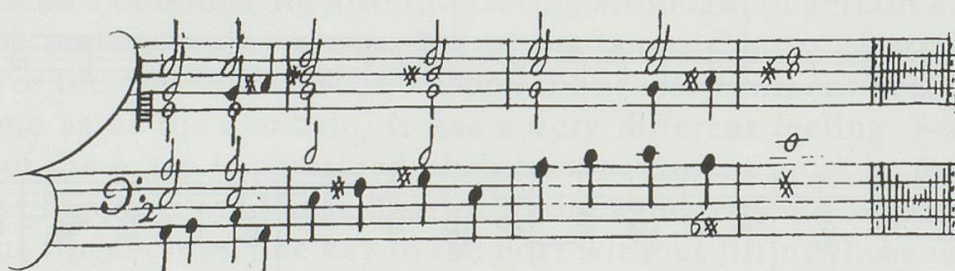
In general the highest notes are  $e''$  or  $f''$ , and the lowest,  $c'$  or  $b$ . It is possible to go higher when the bass line goes up.<sup>47</sup> The general motion of the chords being usually downward, it is very important to find a good position at the beginning of each phrase. The position of the chords bears no relation to the soloist's part, as can be seen in the realization of Correttes's *Prototypes* (see annex IV).<sup>48</sup>

### *Number of voices*

In Delair's examples, there are up to six voices.<sup>49</sup>



In quick passages chords appear only in the right hand; in slow pieces they may appear in both hands. All or a part of the right hand may be doubled.<sup>50</sup>



„With the thumb it is possible to double the note of the little finger except when it is the third of the fundamental bass or the dissonance.“<sup>51</sup>

### *Playing chords on the beat*

As early as Delair one reads that a chord must be played on each beat; in triple time, only on the first beat except when there is a dissonance in the bass.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. pp. 34–35.

<sup>48</sup> Corrette, *Prototypes*, p. 19.

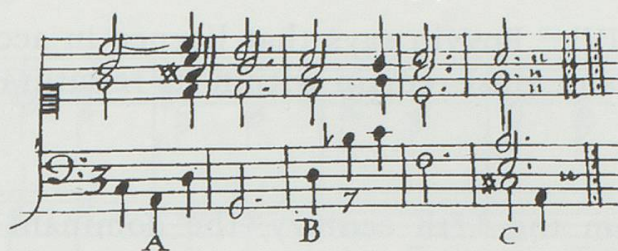
<sup>49</sup> Delair, op. cit. fol. F V°.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. pp. 59–60.

<sup>51</sup> Rameau, *Code*, p. 74.

<sup>52</sup> Delair, op. cit. p. 51.





Corrette is more specific: a chord is played on each beat except when a dissonance has to be resolved on the second part of the beat.<sup>53</sup> He uses a horizontal line to indicate when it is unnecessary to play the chord twice,<sup>54</sup> as when, after a cadence, the bass line moves to create a link with the beginning of the next phrase.

Rameau says that it is possible not to repeat chords within the resolutions: taste dictates.<sup>55</sup> Chords are repeated to keep the instrumental sound full and interesting. In certain cases it is difficult to find the right notes in the bass.<sup>56</sup>



### Parallel octaves and fifths

In the 17th century these are strictly forbidden.<sup>57</sup> With Rameau's technique, the fingers move so much less that it is nearly impossible to make errors of voice-leading, but errors might appear between the bass and the upper voices. Rameau says: „One cannot be hampered by parallel octaves, but if one wishes one can change position in certain cases to avoid them.“<sup>58</sup>

No mention is ever made of voice-leading between the harpsichord and the soloist, but in examples it can be seen that the upper part frequently doubles the soloist. The accompanist is chiefly concerned with playing his chords in a certain region of the instrument and cares little whether the soloist goes up or down. This can be seen in the *Prototypes* of Michel

<sup>53</sup> Corrette, *Prototypes*, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> Corrette, *Le maître*, p. 50.

<sup>55</sup> Rameau, *Code*, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> Delair, op. cit. p. 61. The French theory of *supposition*. See Rameau, *Traité*, pp. 363–432 and particularly 429–431.

<sup>57</sup> Delair, op. cit. pp. 43–45. Instances do, however, occur, as in the example on the sixth: see op. cit. p. [xii].

<sup>58</sup> Rameau, *Dissertation*, p. 61.



Corette (see annex IV).<sup>59</sup> Boyvin says that licence in accompanying may occur because the hand must remain within its tessitura.<sup>60</sup>

### Chords

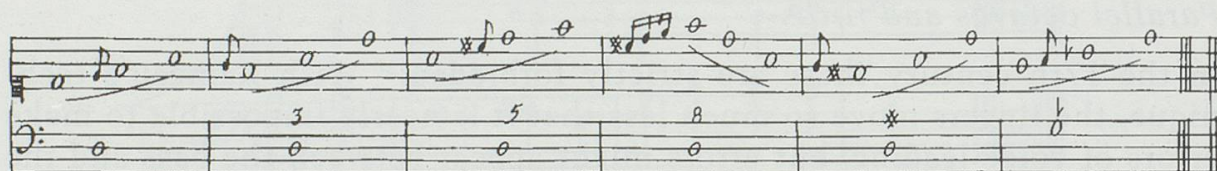
In the treatises from the 17th century, the dominant in the five-one cadence has normally only the four-three suspension. By Rameau's time the subdominant has always *l'accord ajouté*, even in a plagal cadence,<sup>61</sup> and the dominant has always the seventh. Many aspects of these harmonic effects have to be studied. In French music the figuration is in most cases very complete, the aim being to obtain the smoothest effect with the fullest chords.

### Rhetoric

Saint Lambert is alone in saying anything about words: „To be in accordance with the voice: on the words „weakness, languor“, don't enliven the accompaniment: conversely, at the words „anger, vengeance, rage,“ play with animation.“<sup>62</sup>

### Ornamentation

„On the organ as on the harpsichord it is possible to add ornaments, to a note in the bass which bears a doubled third, or on the half-cadence.“<sup>63</sup> In the 17th century it is also possible to add some passing tones.<sup>64</sup>



Rameau: „When playing the triad with the third under the little finger, it is possible to touch the semitone under the tonic to make a *coulé*.“<sup>65</sup> Corrette recommends *pincés* on the leading tone and on the subdominant when it goes to the dominant.<sup>66</sup> At cadences, a note an octave lower may be added.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>59</sup> See note 48.

<sup>60</sup> Boyvin, op. cit. p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> See explanations on the *double-emploi* in: Rameau, *Code*, op. cit. pp. 38 and 49.

<sup>62</sup> Saint Lambert, *Nouveau traité*, p. 63.

<sup>63</sup> Saint Lambert, op. cit. p. 63.

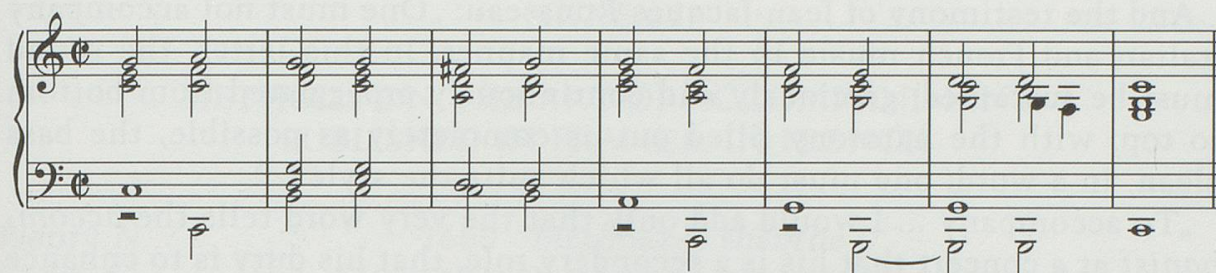
<sup>64</sup> Delair, op. cit. p [10]. See Jean-Henry D'Anglebert, *Pièces de clavecin*, ed. by Kenneth Gilbert, (Le pupitre 54) Paris 1975, p. 144.

<sup>65</sup> Rameau, *Code*, p. 73.

<sup>66</sup> Corrette, *Prototypes*, p. 11.

<sup>67</sup> Saint Lambert, *Nouveau traité*, p. 59. This example is taken from Jean-Henry D'Anglebert, op. cit. p. 144.





### *Imitation*

There is no imitation of the singer's line except when accompanying a solo voice in an Italian aria, when it is possible to imitate the subject on the harpsichord,<sup>68</sup> or to double the soloist.<sup>69</sup>

### *Recitative*

It can be effective in recitatives to interrupt the repetition of the chords.<sup>70</sup> The accompanist is recommended to play arpeggios in recitative. Saint Lambert says it is impossible to describe this in writing, but one can learn it by seeing!<sup>71</sup>

### *Tasteful accompaniment*

This point will serve as a conclusion. First, a beautiful text from the *Code de musique pratique* of Rameau: „The harmony in such an accompaniment arrives at the ear, so to say, like smoke; we must hear it without knowing, without paying attention, without thinking of it: it must be always regular and complete in its succession as in its fullness, lest the irregularity be distracting and thus spoil the best of the effect. Thinning the harmony because the instrument is too loud is the reflex of a Midas, when there are several means of diminishing the sound whereby the harmony will not suffer.“<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Saint Lambert, op. cit. p. 63.

<sup>69</sup> Corrette, *Prototypes*, p. 16.

<sup>70</sup> Saint Lambert, op. cit. p. 62.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 62. Arpeggios as played in recitative are quite unlike those found elsewhere. Ordinary arpeggios are executed briskly; in recitative they tend to be slow and even. See also Saint Lambert, op. cit. p. 63.

<sup>72</sup> Rameau, op. cit. p. 73. „L'harmonie d'un pareil accompagnement ne se porte à l'oreille, pour ainsi dire, qu'en fumée; il faut qu'on la sente sans le savoir, sans s'en occuper, sans y penser: aussi doit-elle être toujours complète et régulière, dans sa succession comme dans sa plénitude, sinon l'irrégularité sur ce point serait capable de distraire et de faire perdre le plus heureux moment de l'effet. Tronquer l'harmonie parce que l'instrument fait trop de bruit, c'est bien là le sentiment d'un Midas, lorsqu'il y a plusieurs moyens de diminuer ce bruit sans que l'harmonie en souffre.“



And the testimony of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: „One must not accompany Italian and French music in the same manner. In this latter, the sound must be sustained, graciously and continuously arpeggiated from bottom to top, with the harmony filled out as completely as possible, the bass clean, in a word: one must do all which suits the style.“<sup>73</sup>

„To accompany ... I would add only that the very word tells the *accompanist* at a concert that his is a secondary role, that his duty is to enhance others, and at the least drawing of attention to himself, he ruins the performance, annoying performers and listeners alike. The more he thinks he inspires admiration, the more he ridicules himself: an excess of sound or misplaced ornamentation attracts to himself the attention due the soloist, and all his talent and skill of execution merely demonstrates his vanity and poor taste. To *accompany* with intelligence and with sensitivity, one must strive to support and flatter the essential parts, and it is a very skilful accompanist who does this without drawing attention to it.“<sup>74</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Rousseau, *Dictionnaire*, op. cit. s. v. „Accompagnement“ T. I, p. 46. „On ne doit pas accompagner de la même manière la musique italienne et la française. Dans celle-ci, il faut soutenir les sons, les arpéger gracieusement et continuellement de bas en haut, remplir toujours l'harmonie autant qu'il se peut, jouer proprement la basse, en un mot se prêter à tout ce qu'exige le genre.“

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. 48, s. v. „Accompagner“. „Accompagner... J'ajouterai seulement que ce mot même avertit celui qui *accompagne* dans un concert qu'il n'est chargé que d'une partie accessoire, qu'il ne doit s'attacher qu'à en faire valoir d'autres, que sitôt qu'il a la moindre prétention pour lui-même, il gâte l'exécution, et impatiente à-la-fois les concertants et les auditeurs; plus il croit se faire admirer, plus il se rend ridicule; et sitôt qu'à force de bruit ou d'ornements déplacés il détourne à soi l'attention due à la partie principale, tout ce qu'il montre de talent et d'exécution montre à-la-fois sa vanité et son mauvais goût. Pour *accompagner* avec intelligence et avec applaudissement, il ne faut songer qu'à soutenir et faire valoir les parties essentielles, et c'est exécuter fort habilement la sienne que d'en faire sentir l'effet sans la laisser remarquer.“



# ANNEX I

## METHODS ON THE ART OF ACCOMPANIMENT PUBLISHED IN FRANCE, IN FRENCH

<i>Fleury N.</i>	1660	<i>Méthode... théorbe</i>
Carré A.	1671	Livre de guitare ... basse continue
Grenerin H.	1680	Livre de guitare ... basse continue
Perrine	1680	Livre de musique pour le luth
Nivers G.G.	1689	Motets ... avec l'art d'accompagner
<i>Delair D.</i>	1690	<i>Traité d'accompagnement</i>
Chaumont L.	1695	Petit traité d'accompagnement
d'Anglebert J. H.	1702	principes d'accompagnement (1er livre)
Bartoloti A.M.	1702	Table pour apprendre ... le théorbe sur la basse
Boyvin J.	1705	Traité abrégé de l'accompagnement
<i>Saint Lambert M. de</i>	1707	<i>Traité de l'accompagnement</i>
Campion F.	1716	Traité d'accompagnement et de composition
Clérambault C.N.	1716	Règles d'accompagnement
<i>Dandrieu J.F.</i>	1719	<i>Principes de l'accompagnement</i>
<i>Rameau J.-P.</i>	1722	<i>Traité de l'harmonie</i>
<i>Rameau J.-P.</i>	1726	<i>Nouveau Sytème de musique théorique</i>
<i>Rameau J.-P.</i>	1732	<i>Dissertation sur les différentes méthodes d'accompagnement</i>
Dornel A.	1735	Le tour du clavier
Gervais L.	1735	Méthode d'accompagnement
d'Alembert J. le Rond	1752	Elements de musique
Buterne C.	1752	Petites règles pour l'accompagnement (ms)
Corrette M.	1753	Le maître de clavecin
Laporte C. de	1753	Traité historique et pratique ...
<i>Corrette M.</i>	1754	<i>Prototypes</i>
Dubugarre J.F.	1754	Méthode plus courte ... dédiée aux dames
Geminiani F.	1754	Art de bien accompagner
Tapray J.F.	1755	Abrégé de l'accompagnement
A.J. abbé de Morembert	1756	Nouvelle méthode de chiffrer
Clément C.F.	1758	Essai sur l'accompagnement
Boutmy J.B.J.	1760	Traité abrégé sur la basse continue
<i>Rameau J.-P.</i>	1760	<i>Code de musique pratique</i>
Bertheau	1762	Méthode ou principes ... acc. clavecin
Gianotti P.	1764	Méthode qui abrège les règles
Roussier abbé P.J.	1764	Traité des accords
Duphly J.	1765	Méthode d'accompagnement (ms)
Le Dran N.J.	1765	7 traités sur l'accompagnement
Le Boeuf	1766	Traité d'harmonie et règles ...



Dubreuil J.J.	1767	Manuel harmonique
Garnier H.	1767	Nouvelle méthode pour l'accompagnement
Rousseau J.J.	1768	Dictionnaire de musique s. v. „basse fondamentale“
Gibert P.C.	1769	Solfèges ... apprendre l'accompagnement au clavecin
Biferi J.	1770	Traité de musique
Bemetzrieder A.	1771	Leçons et principes d'harmonie
Gougelet Mme	1771	Méthode abrégée
Clément C.F.	1774	Essai sur la basse fondamentale
de Visme	1777	Abrégé des règles de composition
du Valgay A.P.J.		
Baillon P.J.	1781	Nouvelle méthode de guitare
Dellain C.H.	1781	Nouveau manuel musical
Gournay B.C.	1785	Lettre à l'abbé Roussier
Rodolphe J.J.	1788	Théorie de l'accompagnement
Langlé H.F.M.	1798	Traité de la basse
Tomeoni F.	1800	Traité d'harmonie et d'accompagnement
Bourgeois Père	s.d.	Principes d'accompagnement (ms)
Charpentier M.A.	s.d.	Règles de composition (ms)
Couperin F.	s.d.	Règles pour l'accompagnement (ms)
Diderot D.	s.d.	Projet d'une méthode de clavecin (ms)
Grenerin H.	s.d.	Livre de théorbe
Petrini F.	s.d.	Règles d'harmonie
Simon S.	s.d.	Traité pratique de l'accompagnement (ms)



## SONATA III. DE CORELLI.



Adagio.

C C A G | 2 4 x C x | C x C ay x |  
 1 2 3 4 | 1 2.3 4 | 1 2 3 4.

G G E G | 2 4 x G x | G x G ay x |  
 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2.3 4 | 1 2 3 4.

D G ay : | x G 2 G 4 x | G C 4 : : : : : |  
 1 2 3 4 | 1 2.3 4. | 1 2 3.4. | 1 2 3 4 |

: x A 2 4 x | A C ay x | G ay A ay x | x E 4 x E C |  
 1 2 3.4. | 1 2.3 4. | 1 2.3 4. | 1.2.3 4 |

ay : C ay : C | 2 C x C 4 x C | ay : x 4 C 2 | x C 4 x C G |  
 1 2.3 4. | 1.2.3.4 | 1 2.3.4 | 1.2.3 4 |

2 x C ay : C 2 | x C 4 x C ay : | x C 4 x C  
 1.2.3.4. | 1.2.3 4. | 1.2.3 4 ||



# ANNEX III

## A. Corelli, Op. V, No. 3 (Continuo by J.Ph. Rameau)

1 2 3

Corelli's figuring

Rameau's tabulature

C 1 C A C 2 4 x C x C x C aj x  
C 1 2 3 4 1 2 • 3 4 1 2 3 4 •

4 5 6 7

G 1 2 3 4 1 G 2 E G 2 4 x G x G x G aj x  
1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 • 3 4 1 2 3 4 •

8 9 10

D# G aj : x G 2 G 4 x G C 4 : :  
1 2 3 4 1 2 • 3 4 • 1 2 3 • 4 •



11 12 13

5 6 5 7 6 5 4 3#

1 2 3 4 1 2 A 2 4 x A 1 2 C aj 4

14 15 16

G 1 2 G# aj A 4 aj# x 1 E 4 x E C 4 aj 1 2 C aj 4

17 18 19

2 C x C 4 x C 1 2 3 4 aj 1 2 x 4 C 2 x C 4 x C G 1 2 3 4

20 21 22

2 x C aj 1 2 3 4 x C 4 x C 1 2 3 4 aj 1 2 x C 4 x C 1 2 3 4



# ANNEX IV

19

*Adagio* *Sonata 1<sup>o</sup>*

*Violino* *Piano*

*Accomp.* *Organo*

*Forte*

*Piano* *Forte*