

Some simple suggestions to follow to start studying the French baroque lute in a serious way, so avoiding most problems I had and mistakes I made in this field.

by Lucia Domenegati

- In my opinion maximum strings length for a French baroque lute is cm 68/69. Longer length does not make sense to study the XVII^o cent. French repertoire: it would be too a difficult task for your left hand.
- Use always a strap with your baroque lute. An old belt works great. So you can use the foot-rest when lacing your shoes up (it is better).
- Unfortunately almost all modern methods for the baroque lute are very useful to study modern guitars and similar and not the baroque lute. Ancient methods are excellent but it is not easy to find them (e.g. the method written by GIESBERT in the XIX^o cent. – available at some libraries).
- The right hand technique must be focused to play double strings. No escape available. In my opinion a good reference is the painting by F. de Troy – Charles Mouton (playing a lute) – Louvre Museum – Paris.
- If fingers are not strong enough, I have used successfully a small “grip” for fingers (medium tension) available from many music shops. Useful exercises are usually enclosed.
- Do not expect to study this music with a score and a metronome (if only it were true!); the majority part of this repertoire has to be played “avec l’inégal”. What is it? Some good ancient and modern books can be used as a reference.
- Do not study on photocopies. Use only original books. Into the bargain instructions and matching sources are essential for good results.
- Play slow first, right speed will follow. No “businessman’s bounce” here, please.
- Too difficult? It is not true. Remember what Joh. Seb. Bach said about music “Genius does not exist. Only hard study and long study are requested. Nothing else.”

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