



Francesco Corbetta

# Suite in D

from 'La Guitarre Royale' 1671

for Guitar solo

Transcribed from the tablature by  
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PREVIEW  
Low Resolution

## PREFACE

The 4 course and 6 course guitar was already popular in Spain and France in the 16th century. In Spain the 6 course instrument was known as the vihuela, but the vihuelist composer Fuenllana says that 'there are two sorts of vihuela, one with six strings and the other with four only, which is called the guitarra'. Both Mudarra and Fuenllana wrote compositions for the 4 course as well as for the 6 course instrument and clearly the guitarra was only a simplified version of the vihuela.

In France the unidentified author of 'Le maniere d'entoucher Luths et guiternes' (Poitiers 1556) records the popularity of both 4 and 6 string guitars, and between 1550 and 1555 appeared A. Le Roy's five books of tablature and also Guillaume Morley's 'Tablature de Guitare ou Sont Chansons Gaillardes' as well as that of Simon Gorlier in 1560. The music was for the 4 course guitar and much of the music is of great interest, though the music is which the composers obtained from a comparatively restricted instrument.

About the year 1600 the 5 course guitar is credited by Gaspar Sanz who wrote the 5th course to the guitar because Espinel was a Spaniard. The guitar then became known as the guitarra. In the previous century it was designated as vihuela. In Spain the 5 course instrument was different from the 4 course one in that it had a fifth string and a fifth course. It is for this instrument that the tablature books of tablature appeared in the 17th and 18th centuries. Some of these are still in use, the chords indicated by means of letters of the alphabet for each chord and a horizontal line with projections upwards and downwards for the direction of the right hand stroke and the time. Many others are, however, of considerable musical value and are clearly the earlier tablature, which was like that

for the lute, so as to indicate both the fingered individual notes and the whole chord. Until well into the 18th century the 'rasgueado' and 'pincer' were incorporated in the technique of playing as well as a considerable simplified version of the lute.

The more complex compositions of Corbetta, de la Cruz, Roncal, Sanz, etc., need careful transcription. The music is to be put on a four course guitar, the present day guitar as it was in the 17th century, until early in the 18th century when the bottom courses tuned in octaves. The composers also left out notes on the 5th and 6th strings which would inevitably be sounded by the 'rasgueado' stroke, and the numerous ornaments of embellishments and appoggiature were not written out. The tablature and are largely a matter of musical taste and conjecture.

In playing the music it should be remembered that most of the chords in accentuated positions were played with a stroke of the thumb or forefinger and with a rasgueado 'roll'. Players must use their own taste in how to render such chords but in these transcriptions the more important are marked with an upward or downward arrow according to whether the arpeggio effect is from bass to treble or the opposite. That there was, even in the 17th century, some difference of taste on this subject is clear from what F. Corbetta says of his compositions in 'La Guitarre Royale' '... et pour contenter un chacun, l'on en verra pour battre simplement, d'autres a pincer seulement, et d'autres a pincer et a battre tout ensemble.'

### Ornamentation

Appoggiature have been written out. 'Tremblements' and 'Martellements', i.e., shakes and mordents are both marked *w*. Whether they are above or below the note is generally clear from the left hand fingering. Long shakes at cadences are marked 'tr'.

D.K.

*for guitar solo*

## 1. Prelude

Moderato

