

Legato

In baroque repertoire for plucked stringed instruments legato is extremely common, so it is necessary to master this technique on the theorbo when playing at every speed and dynamic.

Legato in rising lines

Between two rising adjacent notes legato is achieved by plucking only the first one, and then striking the required finger of the left hand on the fret with force.

This exercise is to be played using both of the fingerings indicated, and should also be repeated on all of the other frets, at least on the first six strings.

Legato in falling lines

Legato is obtained between two falling adjacent notes by plucking the first of these, and then pulling on the string with the finger of the left hand. The movement of this finger must be well judged, and not excessive, so that it doesn't come into contact with the string below.

Play this exercise also on the other frets, using the fingerings indicated in the previous exercise.

The following exercise combines both types of legato so as to broaden the capacity and increase the stability of the left hand.

Play this exercise on all of the frets of at least the first six strings.

Two-Octave Scales

After having presented some of the scales most commonly played over one octave, we now present all of the major and minor scales that can be played over two octaves (in some cases, only one octave can be played). We have included them in the legato version, as this practice is extremely idiomatic on the theorbo, and widely required by the repertoire. As discussed above, legato can be created on one string by using the left hand, or over two strings through the *campanella* effect; both of these techniques are used in playing these scales.

Scales can be played in many differing positions and with various fingerings on the theorbo, as a result of its very particular tuning. We have notated them in combinations that produce a pleasing result without too much difficulty. Once students have mastered the scales in the forms presented here, they can go on to experiment with other fingerings and positions, so as to gain familiarity with the finger-board and to have alternative fingerings for playing continuo parts and repertoire that is written in standard notation. These scales are presented with a C major tuning of the bordoni in mind.

Major Scales

C

D

E

F

Ostinato Bass-Lines

A large number of compositions from the baroque era are constructed upon ostinato bass lines, many of which were already present in instrumental music in the 1500s. It is vital to get to know these bass lines, and learn to realise them as basso continuo basses, because you will come across them again and again in solo repertoire and also in continuo playing. Here we present them in their simplest, most structural forms; in compositions these bass lines may be more elaborate. We have also included a second version of the *Romanesca*, so that you can practise on a more articulated version than the first. Be aware that the bass line *Monaca* is also called *La jeune fillette* or even *Nonnette*, and that the *Aria di Fiorenza* is also known as the *Aria del Granduca*.

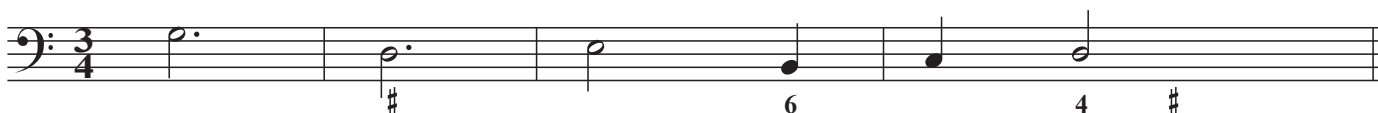
Bergamasca



Passacaglia



Ciaccona



Romanesca (basic version)



Passamezzo antico



Passamezzo moderno



Follia (1500's and early 1600's)

