MUSIKALISCHER PARNASSUS by Johann Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer (1656-1746):

Guitar Transcription and Performance Guide of Suites VI and VIII

by

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ABSTRACT

Guitar repertoire from the Baroque period consists primarily of transcriptions, which suggests that modern performers may explore more sources to identify eligible works to transcribe. The *Musikalischer Parnassus*, a collection of dance suites for harpsichord by Johann Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer (1656-1746), is worthy of such a transcription. This collection has high artistic value and possesses a range and texture that make much of it playable on the guitar.

The purpose of this research paper is to introduce Fischer and his works to the classical guitar community, and also to explore the artistic qualities of *Musikalischer Parnassus* that qualify it for transcription for guitar. This document addresses the transcription process of two selected suites: VI, *Euterpe* and VIII, *Polymnia* by Fischer. The outcome is an edition for guitar and a performance guide, which includes interpretations and stylistic considerations for each movement.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this research paper to my mother and late father, Suling Sun, and to Xuanbing Fang and Professor Frank Koonce with much gratitude and respect.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to the many people who contributed to the undertaking of this paper. Without their support and encouragement, I would not have been able to complete this work. I would like to begin by thanking my committee members, Frank Koonce, Catalin Rotaru, and Benjamin Levy, who have generously given their time and have provided great support and direction.

I am grateful for the huge support of my teachers Frank Koonce, Sergio Assad, Lawrence Ferrara, and Danny Yeh. Without their advice and endless encouragement, I would not have been able to pursue my goal to develop a deeper musical understanding.

I would also like to thank my friend Ryan Picone who not only has helped me refine my transcriptions, but also has encouraged me throughout my music studies.

Lastly, I would like to declare my love and appreciation to my parents, Suling Sun and Xuanbing Fang, who always provided me the best opportunities within their abilities. Even in his last years of his life, my father gave me his most selfless love and support.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the Baroque period, the design, construction, and playing techniques of the guitar were very different than today. As a consequence, most Baroque repertoire that is now played on the modern guitar is transcribed from the lute or other instrumental music. Of all the sources for transcriptions, keyboard repertoire is one of the least common choices for modern classical guitarists because keyboard works characteristically are highly polyphonic, heavily ornamented, and have a wide range of pitches that fall outside of the guitar’s capabilities.

However, because of the influences of lutenists in the late seventeenth century, some keyboard styles changed and began to reflect characteristics of lute music, such as the so-called style brisé, with arpeggios, broken chords, and fewer voice lines. One of the most distinguished German harpsichordists of this time, Johann Kasper Ferdinand Fischer (1656-1746), was one of the pioneers of this new style.1

In his collection of harpsichord works, Musikalischer Parnassus, Op. 7, Fischer wrote nine suites to represent the nine Muses in Greek mythology. In these suites, he abandoned the traditional dance sequence of Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue, in favor of a more free structural organization. Some are very uncommon for the time, such as three movements of battle music, Marche, Combattement, Air des Triomphans that conclude Suite VIII, Polymnia, originally from orchestral suites that were transcribed by Fischer for the harpsichord.

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The goal of this research paper is to focus on the transcription of Suite VI, *Euterpe*, and Suite VIII, *Polyymnia*. The transcription process and technical solutions are provided in order to gather the experiences for future transcription of his other works. A detailed performance guide is also presented to help classical guitarists solve the technique difficulties and to study the styles of each movement.
CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY AND HISTORY OF MUSIKALISCHER PARNASSUS

Fischer’s Life

Johan Kaspar Ferdinand Fischer was best known as the harpsichordist responsible for bringing French influences into German music. He was born into a family of craftsmen around 1656-1670, and later attended the Piarist grammar school, or at least its final class, at Schlackenwerth in the Egerland, the residence of Duke Julius Franz of Saxe-Lauenburg. He must also have received a good basic musical education there as well. The Kapellmeisters and court musicians Johann Honel, Augustin Pfleger, and Georg Bleyer first taught him composition in his early years. Fischer also was sent by Duke Julius Franz to receive further training in the Dresden court where he acquired a high degree of contrapuntal skill from Christoph Bernhard.

Documents show he was first appointed by Duke Julius Franz to succeed Pfleger as Kappellmeister in Schlackenwerth around 1689. At the end of 1690, Duke Julius Franz daughter, Princess Sibylla Augusta, was married to Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm of Baden. During this same time, Fischer was likely appointed Hofkapellmeister to Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm, evidenced by the front page of the orchestral suites, Le journal du printemps (1695), which were dedicated to Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm. This is also the first documented evidence of his employment. In all probability, Fischer then served the court of Baden as Kapellmeister for his rest of life. In the court, his duties

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2 The exact birth date of Fischer is unknown. Scholars like Rudolf Walter, G. C. Mulacek believe his birth date should be in the year of 1656. However, many other scholars like A. H. Plontisky, Michael Curry, and Michael Randel decided to use a year range of 1656-1670 in their publications.
5 Ibid.
included directing, composing, teaching, and performing. As a director, he was required to direct and conduct singers and instrumentalists who performed both music in the court chapel, and daily entertainment events for their royal patrons. Unlike a director of more prestigious courts in Vienna, a director in his type of smaller court was also required to compose and teach music.  

Major Works and Compositional Style

The repertoire of Johann Fischer is considerably large; however, there are only seven published works and a few manuscripts that survive. In the catalog of his works, the following pieces are the ones best known, and the ones with opus numbers given to them by modern scholars (Table II: 1).

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There are also eight surviving manuscripts of Fischer’s Mass that have been discovered by modern scholars. As in his other works, these demonstrate a high degree of counterpoint and other compositional skills. Regarding Fischer’s compositional style, there are two distinct features commonly observed in his works:

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1. He was largely influenced by contemporaneous French music. For instance, the “Symphonia,” after the “Credo,” in his Missa Inventionis sanctae crucis may have been intended as instrumental offertory music in the pattern of the offertoires by French composers such as Nivers, Raison, and Couperin.

In the eight orchestral suites of Le journal du printemps, the influence of French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully is evident. Examples include their scoring for five-part string orchestra (the only bass part being for bass viol), their introductory overtures with trio episodes, the use of two trumpets in Suites I and VIII, their metrically differentiated Minuets, Chaconnes, and Passacaglias, and their programmatic titles, such as Air des combattans, Plainte, and Echo.7

Through Lully’s influence, Fischer also attempted to bring ballet dances into his harpsichord works. In Musikalisches Blumen-Büschlein and Musikalischer Parnassus, few contain the usual movements of the suite (although Suites I and VI of Blumen-Büschlein and Suites I and IX of Musikalischer Parnassus approach that type); most consist of a number of free movements strung together.

2. Some of his works also show his experiments in tonal and homophonic music. His organ preludes and fugues in Ariadne musica Neo-organoedum encompass nineteen different keys. (Bach apparently was influenced by Fischer’s work, and adopted two of Fischer’s themes in his Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1.8) In the Musikalischer Parnassus, Fischer gives different major and minor keys for each suite, using different tone colors to present the supposed characters of nine different Muses from Greek

7 Rudolf Walter, Grove Music Online.
mythology. More specific examples of Fischer’s homophonic music can be seen in a variety of movements from *Musikalischer Parnassus*. For instance, the Chaconne from Suite VI in F Major, *Euterpe*, has a clear and beautiful melody, accompanied by individual harmony, in theme and variations form. Considering the date of the composition, 1738, he may not have been the earliest pioneer dedicated to writing new tonal and homophonic music rather than polyphonic music in Baroque period; however, it is evident that even in his old age, Fischer still kept absorbing and learning new ideas.

**Overview of *Musikalischer Parnassus***

*Musikalischer Parnassus* was first published in 1738, and dedicated to Francisca Elisabeth Augusta, who was one of the most musically talented grandchildren of Princess Francisca Sybilla Augusta, the wife of the Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm of Baden. It is considered to be one of the most outstanding Baroque harpsichord works in existence. It is also a very mature work of Fischer, which presents many of his stylish and unique musical thoughts.

*Musikalischer Parnassus* contains nine suites, each one representing one of the nine Muses in ancient Greek mythology. The word “Parnassus” in the title refers to Mount Parnassus, the home of the Muses. The nine Muses (Clio, Calliope, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, Thalia, and Urania) are said to be the nine daughters of Zeus. They respectively represent History, Epic poetry, Love poetry, Song and Elegiac poetry, Tragedy, Hymns, Dance, Comedy, and Astronomy.

There is no evidence that Fischer wrote this piece as programmatic music.

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However, his selections of keys and dance forms for each suite reveal his intention to make the music relative to each title. For instance, Fischer selected E Minor for Suite V, *Erato*, and A Minor for Suite III, *Melpomene*. The two Muses in the title represent Love poetry, and Tragedy, respectively. The harmonic qualities of the minor key were considered better than major keys to bring out feelings of love or tragedy. Furthermore, for the Muse of “tragedy,” Fischer used a lower pitch in A Minor to evoke heavy, tragic feelings, whereas the higher pitch of E Minor conveys a feeling of softness, for the Muse of “Love poetry.”

Another interesting observation is in the Suite VIII, *Polymnia*. There are three movements with unusual titles: Marche, Combattement, and Air des Triomphans, titles that more commonly were associated with the music used for ceremonies or parades. Fittingly, *Polymnia* is the Muse of Hymns. Additionally, Fischer used Muses’ name as the titles of each suite because he dedicated this collection to Francisca Elisabeth Augusta, the grandchild of Margrave, to compliment her talent and beauty by comparing her to the Muses.

The table II: 2 is the content of each movement in *Musikalisher Parnassus*. As we can observe, Fischer had very diverse choices on dances and many unexpected movement arrangements in this work, which makes *Musikalischer Parnassus* a fusion of French and German styles.
Table II: 2. Movements in nine suites of *Musikalischer Parnassus*

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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>O Ballet anglois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>P A Passepied Ron Ch. Gig B M I&amp;II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>P A C G Gig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>P A C G Gig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>P A Air anglois B M Ch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI I</td>
<td>T A Rigaudon Ron G Gig. M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI II</td>
<td>H A M Marche Combattement Air des Triomphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>T A C S G Gig. Ron &amp; Ron D M I&amp;II Pass.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dances can be grouped into three categories:

1. Dances are from typical German dance suites, including the Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue.

2. Dances adapted from popular French court dances or ballet dances, including the Bourrée, Menuet, Gavote, Chaconne, Rigaudon, Rondeau, Balet, Balet anglois, Air anglois, Passacaglia and Passepied.

3. Dances were adapted from other instrumental suites, orchestral music, including Praeludium harpeggiato, Harppegio, Ouverture, Marche, Combattement, Air des Triomphans.

In *Musikalischer Parnassus*, four basic German dances—Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, and Gigue—only appear in the first and last suite. In Suite I, *Clio*, Balet anglois and Menuet were inserted between the Sarabande and Gigue. In Suite IX, *Uranie*, Fischer put a Gavote between the Sarabande and Gigue, followed by a Rigaudon, Rigaudon double, Menuet I & II, and a long Passacaglia.

For the rest of the suites, Fischer only kept one or both an Allemande and Gigue, and freely picked several popular French dances and some ballet music for the rest of the movements. The most frequent additions were the dances of the court of Louis XIV, such as the Passepied, Rigaudon, Bourrée, Gavotte, Chaconne, Passacaglia, Minuet and Balet (or Balet anglois). These dances became especially popular through their inclusion in the ballets and operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687). Instrumental suites containing these dances were known as “ballet” suites.¹⁰

There are also four other movement titles in Fischer’s collection, which were most

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likely adapted from orchestral music or operatic music. These include the Ouverture in Suite II, and the Marche, Combattement, and Air des Triomphans in Suite VIII. The Ouverture is commonly an introductory movement of an opera or an orchestral suite. The adaptation of orchestral music in *Musikalischer Parnassus* also makes his work unique and distinguished.

There is one other particular style that largely influenced Fischer, often referred to today as *style brisé*, meaning “broken style” in English, which emphasizes the characteristic style of seventeenth-century lute music in which the notes of a chord are not plucked simultaneously but arpeggiated. The style had considerable influence on late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century composers of keyboard music.¹¹ This influence can be seen in many movements in *Musikalischer Parnassus*, especially in the Chaconne, Passacaglia, and some older established dances like the Allemande, Courante, and Sarabande. It is even more obvious in two preludes, Praeludium harpeggiato in Suite I *Clio*, and Harpeggio in Suite VIII, *Polyymnia*.

Summerizing the above observations, Fischer was influenced by three particular styles and was determined to use them in his work *Musikalischer Parnassus*. The first style was the old established German dance style, which stemmed from his solid musical education and which he learnt from his predecessors like Froberger. The second style was adapted from popular French dances, which originally emerged from the ballet opera and music of Jean-Baptiste Lully. The third was the *style brisé*, which Fischer gleaned from lute music composed by his contemporaries.

Drawing from these conclusions, *Musikalischer Parnassus* is a collection of dance

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suites that represents the definitive work of Fischer. He adapted many different styles and several creative and brilliant ideas in this composition. It could be considered to be the highest artistic accomplishment of his life. This work also incorporated the most popular and stylish dances of the early eighteenth century, which makes it essential repertoire for keyboard players to learn and play through the most types of Baroque dances in one work.
CHAPTER 3

TRANSCRIPTION PROCESS OF SUITES VI AND VIII

In this chapter, solutions are introduced for transcribing Suites VI and VIII. These solutions are intended to make the works playable on the guitar while being as faithful as possible to the original. Furthermore, considering idiomatic characteristics of the guitar as compared to the harpsichord—such as more sustain, a darker and fuller tone, and the ability to control dynamics—textural alterations are factored into the transcription process.

**Tessitura**

When transcribing a work for solo guitar, tessitura is one of the most important considerations. One of the reasons why Suites VI and VIII were chosen is because they are playable on the guitar in their original keys: F Major, and D Major.

**Voicing Adjustments to Create Idiomatic Writing for Guitar**

The guitar sounds an octave lower than the pitch of the written notation. This, combined with the narrower range than the harpsichord, makes it necessary to frequently adjust the octave placement of original notes when they go beyond the range of the guitar.

The following examples show different instances of voicing adjustments in order to make the music idiomatic to the guitar and to take advantage of the guitar’s sonic qualities.

1a. Original:

1b. Transcription:

In example III: 1., there are many combinations of voicing adjustments. In measure 9, the upper and middle voices have been raised an octave higher while the bass voice stays in its original octave. With this solution, two notes in the bass, A and D, can be played on open strings. In measure 10, all voices have been adjusted to be an octave higher. In measure 11, the bass voice has been adjusted while the top voice remains in its original octave.

Example III: 2. Chaconne from Suite VI in F Major, *Euterpe*, mm. 52-54

2a. Original:
2b. Transcription:

In Example III: 2, all voices of the guitar transcription have been transposed an octave higher. In measures 53-54, the higher octaves of the top voice when played on first string of guitar make the sound clearer and more expressive, compared to playing them in their original positions on the fourth and third strings.

Example III: 3. Bourrée from Suite VI in F Major, *Euterpe*, mm. 10-16

3a. Original:

3b. Transcription:

Comparing the two frames in Examples III: 3a. and 3b., the upper voice is transposed an octave higher beginning with F sharp. Although this passage is playable...
without the transposition, the original melody, as a middle voice, is unclear in this position on guitar. With the octave change, the voice line continues going to a higher pitch from measure 13. This creates a climax before the cadence to make the music more dynamic, compared to the original voice line.

**Increasing and Reducing the Texture**

In some places, the textures of original score are too dense for the guitar. They cause the music either to be unplayable or to have imperfect sonorities. In other places, chords in the original score have thin textures that do not sound rich on guitar. In these cases, it was felt necessary to alter the textures to make the transcription more idiomatic and expressive on the guitar. The following examples illustrate the types of solutions applied to the guitar transcription.


4a. Original:

4b. Transcription:
In the first beat of measures 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8, octave doublings of chord tones have been added to each chord to add sonority on the guitar.

Example III: 5. Allemande from Suite VI in F Major, *Euterpe*, mm. 1-4

5a. Original:

![Original Score](image)

5b. Transcription:

![Transcription Score](image)

As example III: 5b shows, the middle voice has been removed in the transcription, with the exception of those notes in the first beat of measure one and the second beat of measure three, because those notes in the middle voice are not playable on guitar.
CHAPTER 4

PERFORMANCE GUIDE FOR SUITES VI AND VIII

Suite VI in F Major, Euterpe

Praeludium

Praeludium, the Latin word for “prelude” in English, is an introductory movement of a Baroque instrumental suite. Preludes with an improvisational character were at first favored mostly by lutenists, who played them before the dance movements in order to test their tuning, warm up the fingers, and to prepare the listener for the tonality of the piece. The texture of a lute prelude consists of mostly arpeggios, broken chords, and scales with free rhythms. The Praeludium of Fischer’s Suite VI has this lute-like arpeggiated texture and may, in fact, have been designed to imitate the lute.

For this transcription, the parts of middle voice are reduced to make it playable on guitar. The upper voice has been mostly kept in the original position. The recommended tempo on guitar for this prelude is around 56-60 per minute against a quarter note. It is a comfortable performance tempo to allow a guitarist to pay attention to sustaining the value of the notes longer and to let them overlap. Additionally, the left hand should hold the full values of chords and remain their position solidly while the right hand is playing the arpeggios.

Allemande

The Allemande, a dignified court dance from Germany, spread through Europe during the fourteenth century. The origins of the Allemande are at best obscure; possibly

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beginning as a French or German variant of the basse danse Hotfanz.\textsuperscript{13} The earliest known literary use of the title “Allemande” occurs in a short dancing manual devoted to the basse danse published in London in 1521 (“Here followeth the Manner of Dancing Bace dances after the Use of France and Other Places translated out of French in English by Robert Coplande”).\textsuperscript{14} Later, The style of the dance was known as smooth and dignified, and then it became very popular during the reign of Elizabeth I in England.\textsuperscript{15} It also became one of the core movements in the instrumental solo dance suites during the mature Baroque period (ca. 1660-1750), and was frequently found in arrangements for solo instruments such as the harpsichord, lute, and viol.

The Allemande in Suite VI is in a binary form, like most dance pieces, with the first half in F Major and the second half modulating to its related minor key in D. Its texture is permeated with imitation and style brisé figures that obscure a sense of clear-cut melodic phrases. Its mood is serious and it is moderately slow,\textsuperscript{16} with 70-76 being a comfortable and recommended tempo.

Air anglois

The Air anglois is originally a ballet genre, which Fischer adapted from the ballet operas of Lully. In Musikalischer Parnassus, three dance titles are given the appendage “anglois,” meaning “English.” There are two examples of the Balet anglois in Suites I and II, and one Air anglois in Suite VI.

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\textsuperscript{13} Michael Curry, 1980. 56.
\textsuperscript{15} Michael Curry, 1980. 56.
All three are in quadruple meter with repeated eight-notes and \(\overline{\text{8}}\) as a prominent rhythmic figure. In the original scores, Fischer marked 4/8 meter presumably to indicate a fast and lively tempo. In the present transcription, the meter is changed to 2/4 for the modern notation. The recommended tempo is around 80-88 for the quarter note.

The piece has a flowing melody with a spirited mood, and the phrases are well defined. For performance, it is recommended that the two eighth notes at the end of each phrase should be played as short-long.

Bourrée

The Bourrée (the most traditional spelling) is originally a country-dance that comes from the region of central France. It is a lively dance with moderately fast tempo in triple meter. Later, in the province of Languedoc, Bourrées were set in 4/8 or 4/4 time instead of in triple time, with the different figures and a different style of dancing—being smoother and slower.\(^{17}\) This quiet and elegant Bourrée later became very popular at the French court in the seventeenth century during the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

The “Bouree” of Suite VI is written in binary form, and modulates from major to minor in the second half like in the previous movements. For performance, the recommended tempo is 88-96 against a quarter note. In order to keep the melody flowing with the intervals of the bass line, a player is encouraged to use the technique of “guide”

\(^{17}\) Michael Curry, 1980. 66.
fingers as much as possible to shift the left hand into different positions. The note values should be carefully maintained to prevent gaps during the shifts.

Menuet

The Menuet is a French country-dance that was introduced into the French court in the mid-seventeenth century. Later, it became one of the popular Baroque dances that were often included in court events and as part of instrumental dance suites.

The name Menuet may be from the French menu, which refers to the “short” steps of the dance. It is a very lively dance in 3/8 or 3/4 time. The Menuet in 3/4 is the most common and is often arranged into two sections of four or eight measures, each repeated. It also has different forms such as “Trio” and “Da capo.” For example, in Suite VIII, the Menuet is presented as Menuet I and Menuet II. The Menuet I is a binary form, and Menuet II has the indication “Menuet I da Capo” at the end of the piece, meaning that the player should repeat the first Menuet.

The tempo of the Menuet is usually moderate, rather than fast. The tempo recommendation for the Menuet of Suite VI is 104-108 against a quarter note. The player will encounter a large stretch that encompasses five frets in measure 10. If this reach is not possible for some guitarists, another option that is easier to play is provided.

18 “Guide finger” is a term to refer to a left-hand technique for the guitar in which the same finger is used to shift from one note to another without lifting off of the string.
Example IV: 6. Menuet from Suite VI, Euterpe, m. 10

Transcription:  

Ossia:

In the *Ossia*, the note C in the middle voice on beat three has been removed, and the F in the bass is raised an octave.

Chaconne

The Chaconne, which originated from Spain or a Spanish colony, became an important dance at the court of Louis XIV. It also became one of the favorite movements of a dance suite for Baroque composers in the seventeenth century. It is often a final movement, because most Chaconnes are typically much longer than other movements in a dance suite.

The most significant feature of Chaconne is the ostinato.\(^{19}\) A repeated bass melody, called *basso ostinato*, is found in some Chaconnes, while in others the recurrent element is a succession of chords, producing a harmonic ostinato.\(^{20}\)

In the Chaconne of Suite VI, *Euterpe*, Fischer applies many different ostinato patterns in C and F Major, such as descending and ascending tetrachords, and versions in sixteenth-note ornamented figures.


Example IV: 7. Ostinato, F Major descending tetrachords, F-C, m.1

Example IV: 8. Ostinato, C Major descending tetrachords, C-G, mm. 61-62

Example IV: 9. Ascending Ostinato G-C, with sixteenth notes ornamented, mm. 46-48

Example IV: 10. Descending Ostinato F-C, with sixteenth notes ornamented, mm. 117-120
These ostinatos control the chord progressions to push the music dynamically forward and to connect the theme with fourteen variations. The variations in this Chaconne require many different guitar techniques, which make this piece considerably difficult.

The most difficult variation is in intervals of a sixth, in measures 73-80. This is a fast sixteenth-note value sequence that requires fast left-hand changes.

Example IV: 11. Sixth intervals, mm. 73-74

As example IV: 11 shows, the guide finger technique should be applied during the performance to increase the accuracy of changing to different interval positions. The bass notes are dotted half notes in the original score. Some, such as the C in measure 73, however, cannot be held for their full value; therefore, the player should hold them as long as possible.

In measures 54-61, the transcription is played in a very high position of the guitar fingerboard. While a player needs to be careful to articulate the top voice, he or she also should bring out the middle and bass voices clearly and try to keep full values for these notes.
Suite VIII, in D Major, Polymnia

Harpeggio

Similar to the “Praeludium Harpeggiato,” first movement of Suite I, the music is in an arpeggiated style. As previously mentioned, arpeggiation is one of the most common techniques used in preludes by lutenists and clavecinists of the seventeenth century.

The transcription of this movement is considerably difficult to play on the guitar because of the frequent position shifts and left-hand barrés in the middle section. To play this piece well, it should be practiced at a very slow tempo. Because of the difficulty on the guitar, a comfortable tempo is 88-100 against the quarter note, which is slower than what one might play it on the keyboard. A slower tempo, however, could lose the intensity of the music.

Example IV: 12. “Harpeggio” from Suite VIII, Polymnia, mm. 10-15

Notice that in example IV: 12, the last sixteenth-note, F, of measure 12 is played by the fourth finger of the left hand; it then requires a quick position shift to the E in the bass. The time for the shift is too short to connect these two notes without having a gap;

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21 The Suite VIII is in D Major, which is one of the “friendliest” keys for guitar, in which the sixth string is tuned to D instead of the customary E.
however, a solution is to use *rubato*. Similarly, in measures 13 and 14 where the left hand needs to make a large stretch to sustain all the chord tones, *rubato* can be applied to make the section easier to play.

Example IV: 13. “Harpeggio” from Suite VIII, *Polymnia*, mm. 16-17

Also, as we can see in example IV: 13 in measures 16 and 17, there are no guide fingers or open strings to help make the shift easier. Here, the player should prepare the third finger beneath the fifth string while, at the same time, lifting the second finger to prepare on third string for the last sixteenth-note E in measure 16.

Allemande

Compared to the Allemande of Suite VI, *Euterpe*, the number of measures between two halves in the Allemande of Suite VIII, *Polymnia*, is uneven. The first half of the movement has five measures while the second half has six measures.

The Allemande of Suite VIII, *Polymnia*, is in binary form, with the first half in D Major, and the second half modulating to its relative minor key in B. It also shares many commonalities with the Allemande of Suite VI, *Euterpe*. One common feature that is most interesting is that at the beginning of these two allemandes, they all have the broken-chord passage starting before the melody in upper voice (Example IV: 14).
Example IV: 14. Allemande from Suite VIII, *Polymnia*, m. 1

Example IV: 15. Allemande from Suite VI, *Euterpe*, m. 1

Menuet I and Menuet II

The Menuet I and II in Suite VIII is a “Menuet da capo.” The paired Menuets are in the same key of D Major, where the second half of the Menuet I modulates to its dominant major key in A before ending back in D.

In some places of Menuet I, there are some big shifts from high position to first position on the guitar. As shown in Example III: 16a, the first chord of measure 7 requires a shift from the seventh fret to second fret. To facilitate this, *rubato* phrasing can be applied. Also, the chord at the beginning of measure 7 can be arpeggiated. Similar technical challenges are found in measures 10-11 (Example IV: 16b), and thus the player can apply the same solutions.
Additionally, a player should also pay attention to the running eighth-note bass line in Menuet II to keep the bass voice legato, without unwanted gaps between notes.

Marche, Combattement, and Air des Triomphants

The Suite VIII, *Polymnia*, concludes with three unusual movements: “Marche,” “Combattement,” and “Air des Triomphants.” For this reason, Suite VIII is unique among all instrumental Baroque dance suites. Marche and Air des Combattans are arrangements for harpsichord that were made by Fischer from his first orchestral suite, *Le journal du printemps*. These battle movements reflect the influence of Lully, and may have been written to honor Fischer’s employer, the Margrave of Baden in celebrating the victories of the Margrave’s army over the French and the Turks.\(^\text{22}\)

The Marche, Combattement, and Air des Triomphans are all in binary form. The performance tempos are moderately fast, which make them very energetic and exciting. Each also has very distinctive characteristics.

In Suite VIII, the distinctive feature of the Marche is the dotted rhythm. The frames in Example IV: 17 show that the first phrase is divided into two parts.

Example IV: 17. Marche from Suite VIII, Polymnia, mm. 1-2

The first part contains two quarter notes plus a dotted quarter note, which should be played strongly, lively, and with staccato articulation; whereas the second part has running eighth-notes and two quarter notes that should be played gently and with legato articulation. Except for the cadence phrases, all phrases have same structure. It is essential to play the music with appropriate articulations to capture the militaristic effects (Figure IV: 1).

Figure IV: 1. Articulations, Marche from Suite VIII, Polymnia

There is another interpretation to consider in performing this piece, one that is adopted from the version of the Marche that is found in Le journal du printemps, where
Fischer provided additional dotted eight-notes (see Figure IV: 2). Performed this way, the Marche becomes more exciting and “victorious.”

Figure IV: 2. Marche from Suite I, *Le journal du printemps*

Because of the repetitions found in the Marche of Suite VIII, a player can interpret the music with both dotted quarter notes and dotted eighth notes the first time; and then use only dotted quarter notes when the music repeats.

As battle music, the Combattement in Suite VIII is more tense and energetic than the Marche. It is dominated by fast sixteenth-note arpeggios. As an ideal guitar transcription, the fast arpeggios can be played with a full and rich sonority. The guitar can also make add dynamics, which the harpsichord is not able to do.

As can be seen in the next example, there are two voices that move together in quarter notes during the sixteenth-note arpeggios, The performer should be careful to maintain the full values of these notes (Example IV: 18).

The transcription of the Combattement is considerably difficult to play on guitar, which is a challenge for a guitarist who wants to play this piece as fast as the original. The recommended tempo for performance is around 68-80 against a quarter note.
Example IV: 18, “Combattement,” from Suite VIII, Polymnia, mm. 1-6

The Suite VIII ends with the Air des Triomphants, which means “Air of the Triumphant” in English. The title of this movement does not indicate the forms of dances like Menuet, or Allemande. However, the actual form of this movement resembles a Passepied. A tempo of 112-120 against an eight note is recommended. During the performance, a player must be aware that the accents are on first and third beats of every measure except for a hemiola pattern at the final cadence. The following table shows the accents and articulations of the movement (Table IV: 3).

Table IV: 3. Accents and Articulations, “Air des Triomphants,” from Suite VIII, Polymnia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pick-up</th>
<th>measure 1</th>
<th>measure 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accents:</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulations:</td>
<td>short long short long short long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The accents of the final cadence are different to previous passage because of the hemiola pattern. Example IV:19 shows that the accent shifts to the second beat in measure 24, reinforced by the addition of a trill.

Example IV: 19, “Air des Triomphans” from Suite VIII, Polymnia, mm. 20-26

Conclusion

The collection of Baroque harpsichord dance suites Musikalischer Parnassus is the most significant work of Fischer. It not only contains all of the most popular dance forms of the early eighteenth century, but also includes many stylish and unique dances from ballet and battle music. In all nine suites of Musikalischer Parnassus, Fischer applies many unusual dance sequences to show his personal musical tastes and creative ideas. It also makes the Musikalischer Parnassus a unique and stylish work for anyone who would like to learn and play Baroque dances of the early eighteenth century.

For the present research paper, two of the most exciting suites by Fischer have been transcribed for guitar, Suite VI, Euterpe and Suite VIII, Polymnia. The complete guitar transcription is included in the Appendix.
REFERENCES


(http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6525), accessed on October 1, 2013.


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APPENDIX

THE TRANSCRIPTIONS OF
SUITE VI, *EUTERPE*, AND SUITE VIII, *POLYMNIA*,
FROM *MUSIKALISCHER PARNASSUS*