

Citterns and Guitars in Colonial America.

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The instrument that is the subject of this paper is the 18th-century cittern, which has also been called the English guitar, spelled either “guitar” or “guittar”. Although David Rutherford calls the instrument “the cittern or guittar” in his tutor¹, there are few other uses of cittern to describe this instrument. Kitara, cetra and cetera are among other terms used, but during the 18th century the term used most often is guitar or guittar². Use of the adjective “English” to distinguish this cittern-type guitar from other types is now being contested, primarily for lack of contemporary use of the term. Rob MacKillop has made a good case for the Scottish guitar, in terms of style and repertoire, but the instrument used in the Scottish tradition is identical to the so-called English guitar, which developed into the Portuguese guitarra during the 19th century. Because there was no consistent terminology used to identify this instrument during the 18th century, the main problem when trying to glean information from original documents like newspapers, letters or diaries is identifying when a guitar is a so-called Spanish guitar and when it is a cittern-type guitar or, as MacKillop calls it, an 18th-century wire-strung guittar.

I would like to address the question of terminology first. We know that Ben Franklin played and taught the guitar or “English Lyre”; Thomas Jefferson’s household held both types of guitar, favoring the standard or Spanish guitar by the 19th century, judging from the surviving music. Advertisements and announcements in colonial American newspapers provide evidence of 18th-century use of national adjectives to distinguish between the varieties of guitar, “English” among them.

In one volume of *Music in Colonial Massachusetts*³, Barbara Lambert notes that “[c]itterns outnumber all other types of instruments” in household inventories of the colony; she found 22. She describes the cittern as “fig-shaped with a flat back and belly, and vertical sides”, strung with wire (460). Among the 4 guitars found, two – one belonging to Comfort Star (1589-1660), the other to John Clarke (d. 1690) – are identified as “gitterns” (both men were surgeons, by the way). Lambert concludes that “it is almost certain that they were guitars” (457), noting that the guitar was a descendant “of the medieval gittern” but, “like the lute” was “double strung in gut and

plucked with the fingers [...] rather than with a plectrum” (455). She does not discuss the “gitterns” further, noting only that “the earlier name persisted into the seventeenth century when no gittern-type instrument is known to have been in use” (457), disregarding the instrument for which Playford published a collection of tunes in the mid 17th century. I have no desire to claim that these two gitterns were actually citterns, although it is a possibility. I cite the example for two reasons: to draw attention to the variety of names and instruments found in colonial records; and to draw attention to the difference in the number of citterns compared to guitars. If the “gitterns” were guitars, citterns would outnumber guitars more than five to one; if the “gitterns” were actually citterns, the difference would be twelve to one.

The only reference to cittern I have been able to find in colonial newspapers appears in a prayer published in 1772:

To thee, incarnate God, I tune the Lyre,
My voice & harp, & cittern all conspire,
To sound the glories of th’ eternal Son,
Plac’d near the Father, on the eternal Throne.⁴

There are, however, several examples of national adjectives being used to distinguish between apparently different varieties of guitar. On 12 November 1764, and again on 3 August 1767, instrument maker Jacob Trippell announced that he “makes and repairs all sorts of Violins, Base [sic] and Tenor Viols, English and Spanish Guittars [sic], Loutens, Mentelines, Mandores and Welsh Harps, at reasonable rates, as neat as in Europe, having work’t at the business nine years, with the best hands in London since I left Germany.”⁵ On 9 May 1774, a certain Mr. Caze announced a concert which included “A French ariette [...] accompany’d with the guitar and violin” and “A sonada on the Spanish guitar.”⁶ Although in the first ad it is clear that two different types of guitar are intended, the latter demonstrates a typical ambiguity: are the two guitars mentioned of different type, or is the use, or lack of use, of the adjective “Spanish” gratuitous?

In June of 1774 Lewis Vidal announced a concert “for the benefit of Signor Sodi” during which Vidal would play “a sonetta on the guittare Italian, with the violin” and “a capriccio on the guittare.”⁷ Vidal, who had played French horn in the court of Portugal, advertised himself in South Carolina throughout the latter part of

1774 as a teacher “on several instruments” including “the mandoline, psaltery, English and French guitars.”⁸ Again, use of the adjectives “French” and “English” indicates two different types of guitar. How exactly a French guitar would differ from “the guittare Italian” is unclear, as is the reason Vidal chooses to perform on one and offer instruction on the other.

Henri Capron was a well-known musician in colonial and post-colonial Philadelphia. One of his 1787 concerts featured a “Sonata Guittare”. At the end of the “Plan of the Concert”, Capron “respectively” informed “the public that he instructs ladies and gentlemen in the art of singing and of playing on the Spanish and English guitars, recording the most approved method of the first masters in Europe.” He goes on to say that “The guitar, from the late improvement which it has received, being so portable and so easily kept in order, is now considered not only as a desirable but as a fashionable instrument.”⁹ This description would seem to indicate the cittern-type guitar, as it is certainly smaller and so more portable, its wire strings helping it to hold its tuning better, and the fixed frets requiring no adjustment by the player. It may be going too far, though, to conclude that instances of the word “guitar” without an adjective indicate this so-called English variety. At the end of 1790, Capron was involved in another concert, this time in New York, in which a Mr. Luby performed on “the Spanish Guitar.”¹⁰

Staying for a moment longer outside the colonial period, in Charleston, South Carolina, at the end of 1792, a Mr. Le Roy promoted a Grand Concert featuring the music of Haydn, Pleyel and Stamitz, among others. Le Roy performed several pieces “on the Spanish Guitar” between the two halves of the concert.¹¹ An advertisement affixed to George E. Blake’s *Blake’s Preceptor for the Spanish Guitar and Lyre* (ca. 1825) announces “A great variety of Spanish and English guitars, Harp Lutes, Harp Guitars, &c. &c. for sale as above.”¹² At about the same time, Samuel C. Jollie & Co. of New York advertised an “Elegant Assortment of Music, for the Piano-Forte, Flute, Guitar, or Violin” and, among the instruments for sale, “an Elegant Assortment of French and German Guitars, with Plain Patent Heads, of the Latest pattern.”¹³ Again, a clear distinction is made among several types of guitar.

Just to confuse things a bit more, in a 1781 shipment from London, a NY merchant advertised, along with a tutor, pocket book and Lady’s Amusement “to the

guitar” some “12 string guitars [sic].¹⁴ Although such publications are typical of those published for the cittern-type guitar, it is unclear whether these 12-string guitars are of the English or Spanish variety, or even the German or Portuguese.

Moving back into the colonial period, in South Carolina in 1766 and in New York 10 years later are advertised for sale “Guitars with stops” and “a lady’s guitar with stop keys.”¹⁵ These are most likely keyed guitars, using the new forte piano technology to sound the strings.¹⁶ As far as I know, this device was installed only on the cittern-type guitar.

Although the vast majority of mentions of guitars use the noun guitar with one or two “t”s and without descriptive adjective (other than “neat” or “elegant”), we do find in colonial American newspapers use of the adjectives Italian, French, Spanish and English to identify different instruments. In some cases these adjectives could be indicating the music being played rather than the instrument itself, but it seems likely that both types of guitar were current in colonial America, with the cittern-type guitar being the most common. I would like to turn now to advertisements for strings in order to show just how common the cittern-type guitar, or the English guitar, was in colonial America.

Many ads announce “wire” or “wires” for guitars along with the same for harpsichords, spinnets and fortepianos, often distinguishing between wires and strings, as for example, “a large parcel of guitarr and harpsichord wire, violin and violincello strings.”¹⁷ Several also simply announce “strings”, for example, “all sorts of harpsichord and guitarr strings.”¹⁸ Some ads read “Guitar Strings, Harpsichord Wires,”¹⁹ or “guitars, with wire and strings for ditto,”²⁰ or “Compleat sets of strings for guitars, harpsichords, and violins and violincellos; guitarr and harpsichord wire,”²¹ and finally “Strings of all sorts, with Wires for the various instruments.”²² It seems from the evidence of these examples that there was no clear distinction between strings and wires, at least not for instruments normally strung in wire like the harpsichord and forte piano. On the other hand, “strings” might indicate lengths of wire with loops, with “wire” or “wires” indicating unlooped, bulk material.

Some ads specify the material of the wire. Frederick Hoff, who was Organist at the Dutch Church in Timothy S.C., had “a large assortment of wires, both brass

and steel, fit for harpsichords, spinets, and guitars;”²³ others mention “silver, brass and steel,”²⁴ like string maker Theorore Memminger, who had “the best kind of fresh fiddle strings, guittar and spinnet brass and steel wire.” He mentions that he also spins “all sort of bass strings with silver wire.”²⁵ Some ads mention “silver basses and guittar strings”²⁶ or “silver bass guitar and violin strings,”²⁷ which also suggest spun strings. Along these lines, perhaps the most interesting ad comes from the *Rivington’s New York Gazette* of 14 October 1773, which advertises “The best Italian strings for violins, Violincellos, Genuine German wire for Harpsichords, Spinnetts Piano Fortes, Guittars; Also silk strings for guittars”. These silk strings are most likely over-spun strings with a silk core. Over-spun silk-core strings could only be used on guitars with tuning pegs; the Preston watch-key system does not allow enough length for silk-core strings to reach the appropriate pitch, especially when new, so these silk-core strings could be used on cittern-type guitars fitted with tuning pegs.

Once again there is evidence for both types of guitar as the information in the newspapers does not allow for a clear distinction to be made. One could, however, deduce that a distinction did not need to be made because guitarists understood that strings for either type of instrument were available. The number of ads indicating wire, though, does suggest that the cittern-type guitar was the most common.

I would now like to turn to music advertised for sale in colonial American newspapers. In his book-length study *Early American Music Engraving and Printing*, Richard Wolfe notes the “great reliance ... [in the American colonies] placed upon importation, especially from England, for music needed for both sacred and secular performance.”²⁸ We also know that most “guitar music” published in England during the 18th century was for the small, wire-strung, open-tuned cittern-type instrument. Judging from ads placed by large firms such as Rivington’s of New York and Philadelphia, Michael Hillegas of Philadelphia, Robert Wells in Charleston, and smaller importers like Nicholas Brooks, Robert Loosely, and anonymous “Gentlemen” “lately arrived from London”, the majority of music imported into the colonies was for this same instrument.

In addition to the many tutors, instructions, compleat [sic] instructors, favorite collections and songs, pocket books and pocket companions “to the guitar”, imports

feature several old favorites from the cittern-type guitar repertoire: *The Lady's Amusement*, *Thompson's Pocket Companion*, the *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, the *Delightful Pocket Companion*; music from *Artaxerxes*, *The Summer's Tale*, *Daphne and Adminton*, *Love in a Village*, *The Beggar's Opera*, *Midas*, *The Padlock*, *The Maid of the Mill*, *Damon and Phillida* (Dibden), *Ladys Frolick*, *Cymon*, *Golden Pippin*, *Harlequin's Gambols* all set for the guitar, German Flute, clarinet and hautboy; collections of Scots, English, French and Italian songs. James Rivington gives the following list of "Guitar Musick" for sale in the 14 October 1773 issue of *Rivington's New York Gazette*:

Citrallini's six Divertimentos
Thackeray's 44 airs and divertiments
Arnold's 24 lessons, Twelve new songs and a cantata
Milgrove's 40 lessons, for one or two guitars
Hymns and songs sung at the Magdalen
Alcock's divertiments and songs
Bach's sonatas [note plural]
Noferi's six lessons
Haxby's easy airs
Twelve lessons by a lady
Dibden's institution of the garter
[and once again] Bach's sonata [singular]

For the 20 October 1779 issue he lists:

Schuman's 38 Lessons, with six French and Italian Songs
Gerlin's Tunes, French Songs and Sonatas
Meneze's Collection of Italian, French and English Songs and Duets
Thackray's Twelve Divertimentos
Carter's Lessons and Duets
Schuman's English, French and Italian Songs
Citracini's [or Citrallini's] six Divertimentos
Noferi's six Lessons, op. 12
Meneze's Divertimentos, op. 1
Noferi's six Duets
Valentine's twenty-six Duets

We also find instructions and collections by authors such as Rutherford, Johnson, Thompson, Oswald and Bremner, who published for the guitar; Ann Ford's *Lessons*, the *Airs of Glasgow*, *Real's Duets for Two Guitars*, and Miss Stevenson's songs for guitar are also mentioned. In the *Pennsylvania Packet* of 21 October 1779, musician John Ross begged leave "to inform the musical gentry of Philadelphia" that he would "be happy to furnish the ladies and gentlemen [...] with the most favorite Airs, Songs, Marches, Minuets, and Country Dances now performed in the European beau monde, set either for the Guittar, German Flute or Hautboy".

Judging from these ads, it would seem that music for the cittern-type guitar outnumbered that for the guitar proper, although the foregoing evidence does not take into consideration books bought in Europe privately, manuscript collections, or any other music not advertised for sale. It should also be noted, I suppose, that music for the cittern-type guitar in chordal tuning would be playable on the Spanish guitar with few changes.

Turning now to instrument makers, there were several makers and repairmen in colonial America, some of whom made and/or worked on guitars. Jacob Trippell, maker of "English and Spanish Guittars", has already been mentioned. In the 12-19 Feb 1763 issue of the *South Carolina Gazette*, Frederick Fopel announced "that he makes Violins, Basses, Guittars, Harps, &c. and likewise mends all sorts of musical instruments in the neatest manner". Peter Young, "joyner and musical instrument maker," announced to Philadelphians in 1770 that he "makes, mends, and has for sale all sorts of musical string instruments, as spinnets, glassicords, and violins. His "Guittars" were "made in the neatest and newest fashion, the strings toned [sic] with a watch key."²⁹ On 1 April 1773, "Philip Pezant, lately from Cremona, in Italy", informed "all gentlemen and ladies, that he makes and sells, violins, guittars, and base viols, and screw bows, no ways inferior to the best imported."³⁰ Robert Horne, "musical instrument maker, from London", set up shop in New York late in 1771 to make and repair "violins, tennors, violoncellos, guittars, kitts, aeolus harps spinnets, and spinnet jacks, violin bows, tail-pieces, pins, bridges."³¹ That same year, James Juhan advised the public that not only did he carry tickets for performances that included his friend and fellow guitarist David Propert, he also "makes and sells neat violins, bows and cases,

bass viols, guittars, &c. and mends those instruments in the neatest manner.” He taught and performed on the guitar, as well as violin and German flute.³² In 1783, John Speissagger, Organ Builder,

embrace[d] this opportunity to present his humble respects to the public in general, and to his friends, both in this metropolis and also in the country in particular, acquainting them, that he still carries on the business of repairing all manner of musical instruments, viz. organs, harpsichords, spinnets, forte pianos, guittars, &c.³³

At the same time, a Mr. Harrison, from London, was advertising the same skills in Philadelphia.³⁴

Only the ads of Trippell and Young give indications of what type of guitar is intended. Trippell made both types of instrument, while Young seems to have made only the cittern-type, tuned with a watch-key.

Turning now to teachers and performers, the earliest teacher I have been able to locate is Frederick Grunzweig, of South Carolina, who in 1747 “acquaint[ed] all gentlemen, ladies and others, that are desirous to be instructed on the harpsichord, viol, guitar, and German flute, that the subscriber (having a thorough knowledge of those instruments) proposes to teach the same on the most reasonable terms.”³⁵ By 1753 he was announcing “to those gentlemen who already play upon any musical instrument, but are not perfectly acquainted with the time, that he will for a moderate consideration, instruct them so as to enable them to play the most difficult pieces in concert.”³⁶ He moved house in 1762 and emphasized harpsichord and spinnet lessons in his ads.

Alexander Van Dienval is first mentioned in 1759, when he offered himself as a teacher of violin and German flute.³⁷ By 1763 he had added tenor and bass viol and informed the public that “he would apply himself even [to] the Guitar [...] if he was sure of meeting with any encouragement.”³⁸ He apparently did, for in April he noted that he would “continue to teach the violin, German flute, guittar, hautboy, tenor and bass viol, in the shortest and easiest method.”³⁹ Dienval also worked with William Charles Hulett, with whom he opened a music school in Philadelphia in 1759.

W. C. Hulett announced his first concert in New York in 1764, which was for the benefit of A. V. Dienval.⁴⁰ Six years later, upon the opening of his own dancing

school, his advertisement began, “The guittar, taught by W. C. Hulett, dancing-master.” He noted later in the ad that he also teaches “the violin, German-flute, and the use of the small-sword [...] for such gentlemen, who may chuse [sic] to attend.” He also offered guitar and dancing lessons to Ladies in the privacy of their own homes.⁴¹ By 1775 his ads began “Music, Fencing and Dancing”, but the guitar is still mentioned.⁴²

Another Philadelphia dancing master, Martin Foy, taught “use of the small sword [...] in the most approved method,” as well as violin and guittar, carrying out these activities in 1768-9. By 1779 he was in New York, where he taught dancing, fencing and music at his new dancing school. He announced in *Rivington’s Gazette* that “Ladies who chuse [sic] to play on the guitar will be duly waited on.”⁴³

James Bremner, a relative of the famous Scottish music publisher and his guitar-playing son, both called Robert, went over to Philadelphia around 1763.⁴⁴ He opened a music school where “young ladies may be taught the harpsecord or guitter” Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10 to 12, while “young gentleman may be taught the violin, German flute, harpsecord or guitter” from 6 to 8 in the evening⁴⁵. Bremner was quite active in the public concert scene, but he seems, like many early American guitarists, not to have performed on the guitar in public.

Thomas Wall was a comedian at both the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane and the Haymarket, London. He went over to Charleston sometime before October 1765, when he put himself forward as a guitar teacher.⁴⁶ He seems to have been successful, for the following April he announced that he intended “to stay some time in this town” teaching ladies and gentleman the guittar”.⁴⁷ By January 1768, though, he was in New York, not only teaching but performing with the American Company At the Theatre in John Street. He played Lurcher in a production of *The Country Lasses*, accompanying the featured actress Miss Wainwright with his guitar in act three.⁴⁸ By 1772, but which time he had moved to Baltimore, he was teacher not only of guitar but of mandolin.

Giovanni or John Gualdo was an Italian wine merchant who came to Philadelphia via London around 1767.⁴⁹ In the following year he was advertising himself as teacher of the violin, German flute, guittar and mandolin; he often performed on mandolin in concert. He taught and played these instruments “with

expedition by an easy method peculiar to himself.”⁵⁰ By 1769 he was also selling instruments, strings, and overseeing repairs.⁵¹

In 1770 in New York, David Propert, “Professor of musick”, was also teaching “organ, harpsichord, forte piano, guittar, German flute, &c” and giving concerts. The following year he was in Boston teaching these same instruments and offering some for sale. Teaming up with James Juhan, he participated in several concerts, performing “some select pieces on the forte piano and guittar.”⁵²

One of the most interesting evening entertainments to which I have found reference took place in Charleston, on 31 March 1773. Sonneck also mentions it,⁵³ but does not quote it in full:

For the Benefit of Mr. Humphreys. On Wednesday the 31st of March instant, The celebrated Mr. Saunders, will, for that night only, exhibit his highest Dexterity and Grand Deception, which have never yet been exhibited in this Province, in Mr. Stotherd's Long Room behind the Beef Market.

Among a number of other surprising performances, Mr. Saunders will let any number of ladies or gentlemen think of as many cards as they please, and the same will be found in a roasted leg of mutton, hot from the fire, which will be placed on the table. He will likewise permit any lady in company to cut a piece entirely out of another lady's ruffle, apron, or gown, and will, in one minute's time, make the same as perfect again as before. He will also let any lady or gentleman cut off a pidgeon's head, and will instantly replace it, and bring the pidgeon to life again, with upwards of fifty more different, surprising, grand deceptions, which would take up too much room to be inserted in an advertisement.

After Act I. An Air to the French Horn, By Mr. Humphreys.

After Act II. Mr. Stotherd will play the French Horn and Guittar in Concert.

After Act III. A Song by Mr. Humphreys.

And after Act IV. A Song by Mr. Stotherd.

The Whole to conclude with a Duette by Mr. Humphreys and Mr. Stotherd, to the Guittar.⁵⁴

The show was apparently a great success as another was announced for 29 April:

By particular desire, and at the request of several ladies and gentlemen, the celebrated Mr. Saunders, will, for one night only, play a benefit for himself and Mr. Stotherd, which will be on Thursday the 29th instant, in Mr. Stotherd's Long-Room, behind the Beef-Market, which is now greatly enlarged, and made proper for the reception of a large company.

This time the music featured consisted of:

After Act I. Mr. Stotherd will sing the Dust-Cart - a favourite cantata, accompanied with the Guittar.

Act the 2d. He will play the French Horn and Guittar in Concert.

After the 3d. A Song by Mr. Humphreys.

After the 4th. The Lark Shrill Notes, accompanied with the Guittar, by Mr. Stotherd.

The Whole to conclude with a Hunting Song, called Away to the Fields, by Mr. Stotherd.⁵⁵

The evenings described above are not typical of concerts that included guitar performances, at least according to the evidence of colonial newspapers. The guitar was featured in other, more musically oriented concerts, but it must be said that its appearance is rare.

William Selby arrived in Newport, Rhode Island from London in 1773.⁵⁶ In addition to serving as organist at Trinity Church, he also taught violin, flute, harpsichord, guitar, “and other instruments now in use” to “young gentlemen and ladies.”⁵⁷ Having moved on to Boston some time later, he proposed a monthly subscription music scheme, as he did in London, “each number to consist of at least one composition for the harpsichord, piano forte or spinnett, one for the guittar, and one for the German flute; also one song in French and two songs in the English language.”⁵⁸

Lewis Vidal has already been mentioned for his performance on the “guittare Italian.” He also performed on “mandolino” and “psaltery”, by which I assume he meant salterio or hammered dulcimer. He too was associated with W. C. Hulett while he was in Philadelphia, but in 1774 Vidal moved to Charleston, where he set up shop at a Dr. Budd’s, on the corner of Tradd and Church streets, selling guitars, mandolines, flutes, fifes, ruled books for music, music books of different authors, harpsichord keys and other items. He continued to emphasize his Portuguese connection, describing himself as having “had the honour of being for a considerable time first player on the French Horn in the Court of Portugal.” In addition to singing lessons, he offered lessons “on several instruments in the Italian taste, such as mandoline, psaltery, English and French guitars, instruments well adapted for the use of the ladies.” Vidal taught his students to “accompany the guitar with the voice after the method of M. Merchi, a method that is perfectly harmonious.”⁵⁹

At the same time that Lewis Vidal was using Merchi’s method for French guitar, John Abercromby was proposing to open a dancing school in Charleston.⁶⁰ He also taught guitar, and by the following year, 1775, was “acknowledging his gratitude for the kindness of the publick to him hitherto in his profession of musick and

dancing,” having now “taken a convenient house [...] for the better accommodation of his pupils.” He “entered into partnership with Mr. Sodi, who for many years had the sole conduct of the dancers at the Italian opera, London.”⁶¹ In addition to teaching a wide variety of dances, Abercromby added violin and German flute while continuing to teach the guitar. By 1777 the dance school had become a boarding school, where he continued to teach dancing, violin and guitar. He announced at this time that “As he is greatly in want of guitar for the accommodation of his scholars, he would gladly give a good price for those instruments to such persons as may have them to dispose of.”⁶²

Another successful entrepreneurial guitar teacher was Mrs. Ann Neill. She took out an ad in the 1 April 1775 edition of the *Virginia Gazette* in Williamsburg that read, “Ladies who are inclined to learn the Guittar may be instructed on that instrument by a lady lately arrived.”⁶³ The following year she proposed opening a boarding school in Williamsburg “on the same plan of the English schools” in which she would instruct students “in reading, tambour and other kinds of needlework, find them board and lodging, washing, etc.” having “the best masters [...] attend to teach dancing and writing” while she herself would “also teach the guittar.”⁶⁴ She proposed taking boys as well as girls, but the school seems not to have opened for on 4 July 1777 she took out another as stating that “Mrs. Neill is now in Williamsburg, where she proposes teaching the guitar at one guinea entrance and one guinea for eight lessons.”⁶⁵ By November of that year she had opened a store “where she proposes to sell all kinds of European goods on commission,” including German flutes and guitars.⁶⁶

Finally, we come to H. B. Victor, a German who emigrated to London in 1759, and to Philadelphia in the 1770s. He announced in October 1774 his intention to give a concert in which he would “perform on his new musical instruments.” One was the “Cymbaline d’amour, which resembles the musical glasses played by harpsichord keys, never subject to come out of tune;” the other “he calls Tromba doppio con tympana, on which he plays the first and second trumpet and a pair of annexed kettle drums with the feet, all at once.” Unfortunately, he was “obliged to postpone [the concert] for want of able hands”!⁶⁷ In 1777, Victor, who had been an organist in London, had moved house “farther up in Carters Alley,

between Second and Third-street near Chesnut-street, where he continues to give instruction in Music, viz. on the harpsichord, violin, German flute, guittar and singing.”⁶⁸ The following year he announced that he was

Now publishing by subscription A New Composition of Music. Consisting of four separate books, viz. The Compleat Instruction for the Violin, Flute, Guitar and Harpsichord. Containing the easiest and best method for learners to obtain a proficiency: with some useful directions, lessons, graces, etc.⁶⁹

The foregoing is not a complete list of guitar teachers/performers in colonial America, but it does give an indication of just how dispersed the guitar was at that time.

Although few concerts included the guitar, it was certainly a popular domestic instrument. The music available and the number of ads specifying wire strings indicate that the guitar in colonial America was most often the cittern-type guitar, known also as the English guitar. Few actual Englishmen contributed to the published output for this instrument, but there were English makers among the many working in London and the American colonies. More to the point, I feel, is the position of London as a center for music and for export. With so many instruments and accessories, music and instruction books pouring out of London into the colonies, as well as the number of makers, teachers and players who came to the colonies through England, it is no wonder that this new, portable, easily maintained and easily played instrument became known as the English guitar in the American colonies. Rob MacKillop is certainly justified in speaking of the Scottish guitar in terms of style and repertoire if not instrument. It is not so easy to speak of an American guitar, at least not in the colonial period. What is clear is that the guitar – whether Spanish, French, Italian, German or English – was a popular instrument in colonial America, showing a virtually unbroken line of guitar playing from the 17th century to the present.

¹ David Rutherford, *The Ladies Pocket Guide or The compleat Tutor for the Guittar*, London, (nd), p. 3.

² One must keep in mind that 18th-century spelling was not standardized, with printing practice often determining the spelling of a particular word according to the total number of letters and spaces in a line.

³ Barbara Lambert (ed), *Music in Colonial Massachusetts 1630-1820 II: Music in Homes and in Churches (Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Vol 54)*

⁴ *Connecticut Courant*, 7-14 April 1772, p. 4.

⁵ *New York Gazette* 12 November 1764, p. 3, and 3-10 August 1767, p. 2.

⁶ *New York Mercury* 9 May 1774, p. 3.

⁷ *Pennsylvania Journal* 15 June 1774, p. 3.

⁸ *South Carolina & American Gentleman's Gazette* 23-30 September 1774, p. 3.

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- ⁹ O.G. Sonneck, *Early Concert-Life in America (1731-1800)*, New York: Musurgia, 1949, p. 130
- ¹⁰ Sonneck 188.
- ¹¹ Sonneck 32.
- ¹² Richard J. Wolfe, *Early American Music Engraving and Printing*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980, p. 70.
- ¹³ Handbill for Samuel C. Jollie & Co, New York. n.d.
- ¹⁴ *New York Mercury* 28 October 1781, p. 3.
- ¹⁵ *South Carolina American Gentleman's Gazette* 13-20 June 1766, p. 3 and *New York Mercury* 23 December 1776, p. 3.
- ¹⁶ Paul Sparks suggested to me that these may be references to a *capo tasto*, but I feel that referring to them as "stop keys" indicates the keyboard device.
- ¹⁷ *South Carolina Gazette* 11-18 December 1764, p. 1.
- ¹⁸ *South Carolina American Gentleman's Gazette* 5-12 June 1767, p. 3.
- ¹⁹ *Pennsylvania Evening Post* 22 September 1783, p. 20.
- ²⁰ *New York Mercury* 12 September 1774, p. 2.
- ²¹ *South Carolina American Gentleman's Gazette* 6-13 May 1774, p. 3
- ²² *Rivington's New York Gazette* 11 September 1782, p. 3.
- ²³ *South Carolina Gazette* 19-31 October 1765, p. 1.
- ²⁴ *South Carolina American Gentleman's Gazette* 20-27 November 1767, p. 3.
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