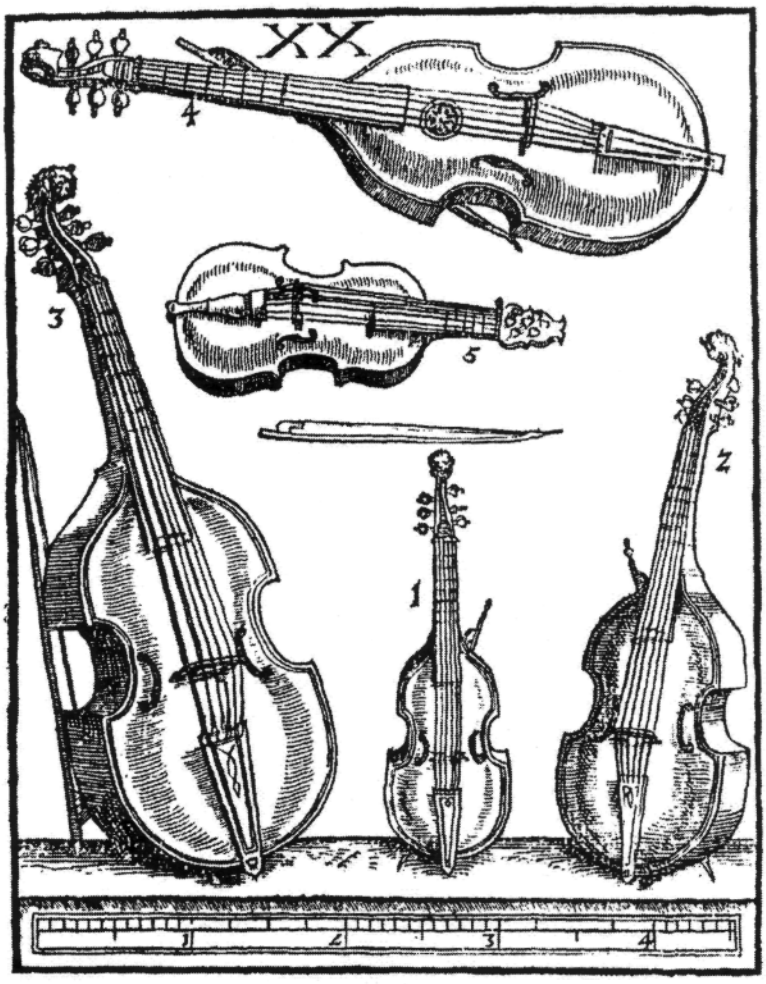
EARLY MUSIC PERFORMER



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EDITORIAL

BRYAN WHITE

I'm writing to you today still wrapped in the warm afterglow of one of my own most eagerly anticipated performances of the year. Not a performance of early music in this case, but a revival at the Royal Opera House of Michael Tippett's opera *Midsummer Marriage*, a work that I find overwhelming in its musical exuberance and intellectual resonances. Tippett and Purcell were the two great revelations of my early post-graduate experiences in the UK. As an undergraduate in the United States, my acquaintance with British music did not reach much beyond a few Elizabethan madrigals, *Dido and Aeneas*, *Enigma Variations* and a smattering of Britten. My first encounter with Tippett, hearing *Midsummer Marriage* on an LP in the listening room of the department of music in Bangor, was one of those formative experiences that re-orient one's world, both musically and intellectually. A similar thing happened with my introduction to the theatre music of Purcell, and it was a great pleasure to find these two interests running together when I began using versions of Purcell's songs realized by Tippett, and finding his name as a member of the Purcell Society in the front matter of volumes of Purcell's collected works. In the centenary year of Tippett's birth, when we find a wealth of performances of his own music, it is well to remember other important aspects of his musical labours, not the least of which were his pioneering performances of early music.

Between 1940 and 1951, Tippett served as musical director of Morley College, where he instigated a regular series of concerts in which early music figured prominently. At the beginning of his tenure, Tippett's enthusiasm for Purcell was charged by his discovery of copies of the old Purcell Society editions in the rubble of the college's bomb-struck grounds. By 22 November 1941 he had organized a performance of Purcell's at that time much neglected 1692 Cecilian ode, 'Hail bright Cecilia'. This work featured regularly in the concert series over the next ten or so years, enhanced from 1944 by the countertenor voice of Alfred Deller, which Tippett had heard at Canterbury Cathedral and immediately recognized as an ideal instrument for performing Purcell's music. Working with Walter Goehr, Tippett organized the first London performance of Monterverdi's 1610 *Vespers* in 1946. The Morley College concerts quickly rose in public and artistic esteem, and many were broadcast on the BBC Third Programme. Tippett saw to it that a wide range of neglected early music was performed, including works by Gibbons, Vivaldi (then little known), Corelli, Bach, Byrd, Handel, Tallis and Teleman (championed by Walter Bergmann) among others. Tippett and the College choir came to be particularly associated with Tallis's *Spem in Alium*, which they recorded together in 1949, and they featured prominently in the Festival of Britain concerts in 1951 at the end of Tippett's directorship. By this time he had raised a range of neglected early music to greater prominence, and imbibed musical inspiration that would find a voice in his own works. We can, therefore, be doubly grateful to him in commemorating the centenary of his birth. (Those seeking chapter and verse on Tippett's work at Morley will find Suzanne Coleman's 'Tippett, Morely and Early Music' in *Michael Tippett: Music and Literature* (Ashgate, 2002) of the greatest interest.)

Turning to this issue of *Early Music Performer* David Milsom's article provides an interesting insight into orchestral performance practice in the early twentieth century. His study reveals approaches to rhythm, tempo, ensemble and vibrato in romantic orchestral literature significantly different from those of today, and which serve to remind one that the idea of a continuous thread of consistency in practice stretching back to the pre-dawn of recorded music is illusory. Although David rightly argues scholarly caution in extrapolating the evidence of early recordings backwards into earlier eras, the editor's chair provides a vantage point from which such prudence might be more lightly cast aside. Recordings such as those examined in his article always leave me wondering how much greater in degree the difference of performance practice of even earlier periods must have been from our own, and by this, I mean even our own ideas of historically informed performance. We must be willing to entertain the idea that Vivaldi's performance of his own concertos would sound even more different to that of a modern historically informed performance, than say, Joachim's performance of Brahms'

The illustration on the front cover is taken from Michael Praetorius's *Syntagma Musicum II* (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), Plate XX. The scale represents Brunswick feet of twelve inches (1 Brunswick inch = 23.78 mm).

Hungarian dances to Nigel Kennedy's interpretation of the same. Only by countenancing such leaps of the imagination will performers find the necessary freedom to examine the possible approaches to earlier literature.

Laypersons within the early music movement have an important duty in this respect. As listeners, and more importantly as consumers (money talks) of the recordings of performers of early music, we may wish to consider our role in encouraging, and embracing experimentation in areas of performance practice. It is well to recall that when the new ideas of the early music movement first bore fruit in recordings, the new approach to received interpretations of the classic Baroque literature sparked controversy and challenged orthodoxy. One might ask to what extent historical performance practice has now imposed a new orthodoxy, and complacency amongst performers and listeners that once again needs challenging. Performers willing to stretch received opinion need support from ears that are open to new approaches, even when at first such ideas may be extreme in comparison to that with which we have become comfortable.

John Catch's article on viols places orthodox opinions on their sizes up against the known facts and finds that the two fit rather uncomfortably. His conclusions have implications for new approaches to performance, and an extension to the accustomed sound world of seventeenth-century viols; here we might hope that enterprising performers, supported by active and interested listeners, will explore the gap that he has revealed.

Finally, those reading the small print of the contents page will find some adjustments to *Early Music Performer*. First we welcome Richard Rastall to the editorial board, and he, along with Clive Brown will be taking on roles as Assistant Editors. Furthermore, two editorial assistants also join the team, John Cunningham and Andrew Woolley, whose news reports and internet activities you will find in this edition. I hope you enjoy them.

Conditional Gifts:

The Acoustic Orchestral Recordings of Edouard Colonne and Karl Muck and their Testament to Late Nineteenth-Century Performing Practices

David Milsom

The study of so-called 'early recordings' has, in recent years, moved from the peripheral sphere of collectors and enthusiasts to the arena of mainstream musicology. That it should do so is much less surprising than the fact that such documents were, for many years, not considered especially interesting. Now, CD re-issue of many acoustic cylinders, disks and, more generally, 78 rpm pressings of the pre- World War II era has become a major industry enabling a surprisingly widespread dissemination of these materials amongst not only scholars but also the wider listening public.

This resurgence in interest seems to be motivated, at least in part, by the movement forward in time of the so-called 'historically-informed performance' movement (hereafter HIP). Performance practice scholars and performers, broadly speaking, have been progressing deeper within issues of style (from organology and scores to style and interpretation) as well as further forward in time. A number of scholars, including the present writer, have concentrated on performance style and practice after 1850 and indeed, into the timescale of acoustic (and some early electric) recordings. Thus, what these recordings can show us has become relevant to our acquisition of knowledge. Robert Philip's seminal text, *Early Recordings and Musical Style – Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance 1900 – 1950* (Cambridge, 1992) seems to have become a symbolic volume, surveying a wide field of old recordings and inspiring many to begin more specific and detailed studies of them. Nothing conveys performance style and attitude more vividly than an aural record of performance itself. Whereas scores, instrumental treatises and other accounts (themselves large in quantity in the nineteenth century) can be interpreted and enacted in a number of different ways, sound recordings give us a much more definite picture of what, for example, a violinist trained in the 1870s actually sounded like.

However, there are problems with early recordings, particularly those made before the invention of the electric microphone in 1925, and still serious limitations before the LP era of the late 1940s. Many of these problems are well known, well rehearsed and in many ways very obvious, but they are worth re-stating here, if only to circumscribe the context of later, more specific remarks. They might be divided into three categories – technological, historiographical and motivational.

Technical limitations of early recordings mean that most made before 1900 are barely audible, given the high ratio of surface noise to intended sound. Some instruments recorded reasonably well (such as the human voice), others quite badly, as Timothy Day writes:

> The sound waves – the acoustical energy – from a solo singing voice could be concentrated crudely be means of a horn, but the sound from the resonating strings of a grand piano, still less the spread-out sound sources of a body of orchestral players, could be caught much less successfully. The human ear can encompass frequencies between 20 and 20,000 cycles per second; the acoustic recording process was limited to a range between 168 and 2,000 cycles, which means that it was unable to reproduce all the frequencies of notes below the E below middle C and of notes higher than the C three octaves

> above middle C. This does not mean that notes whose fundamentals lie outside the range were inaudible, but it does mean that the characteristic timbres were distorted.[1]

Recording in studios of the acoustic era was by all accounts a bizarre and uncomfortable process for musicians with only the experience of 'live' performance to compare it to. Well-known cases of bizarre practicalities include the need to propel the soprano Adelina Patti (1843 – 1919) back and forth in anticipation of high/loud notes[2]; the production of purpose-made instruments (such as the 'Stroh' violin[3]) to project more effectively, as well as interfering with the timbres of others, as in the use of pianofortes adapted by removing outer panels and shaving the thickness of felt on hammer heads. In the orchestral sense, things were much worse, as we will bear in mind throughout this article. Day, for instance, reveals that:

> Gustav Holst found the strain of recording *The Planets* in such cramped conditions more exhausting than anything he had ever done before; the first horn on that occasion was Aubrey Brain, known for his astonishing technical mastery, and yet even he broke down thirteen times at the opening of Venus as a result of the almost unbearable physical discomfort.[4]

Indeed, 'orchestras' often bore relatively little relationship to concert hall ensembles. They were often cut down to very small chamber orchestra size (maybe two string players per part, or less, as in the case of the string quartet accompaniment of the Kriesler/Zimbalist Bach D Minor concerto for 2 violins recording of 1915[5]), and in a number of cases, instruments less capable of projecting their timbre, such as the double bass, were replaced by others.[6] Many ensembles, particularly where they accompanied soloists, were unacknowledged, and probably made up of musicians employed for the purpose by the company.

Exigencies such as these, particularly in the case of orchestral recordings, limit the reliability of what we hear if we try to use the performances as evidence of more normal, lost, live performance. We do not know to what extent the timbre heard in a recording is a reflection of technological limitations, or differences of style and organology. We do not know to what extent, in what ways and even in which cases, the temporal limits of recording 'sides' affected performance tempi and even repertoire – certainly, if Joachim had at his disposal the recording durations of even the most crude of modern methods, it seems likely that we would have larger-scale repertoire on record, rather than the five short fragments from 1903 chosen in part because of their technological possibility.[7] Given that performance style, necessarily split into its constituent parts for study and comment, is in reality an organic and inter-dependant whole, we cannot speak from a position of certainty on any aspect of what we hear in these recordings. Even in the case of recordings which capture more reliably the actual sounds, such as those of vocal performance, our thirst for knowledge of singers' styles steeped in the earliest relevant traditions has to be qualified. For example, our understanding of the recordings of the singer Sir Charles Santley, born in 1834, must be tempered by the knowledge that he was almost 70 years old when he recorded in 1903; the effects of age on the 89-year old Charles Widor in the famous recording of the Toccata from the 5th symphony cannot be quantified nor underestimated![8]

In historical terms, the evidence provided by recordings is highly suspect and the attempt by scholars to 'back date' such evidence to nineteenth-century style might at first glance seem ludicrous, or at best, naïve. If music, like the society it reflects, has changed radically in the last few decades, why should recordings made between 1900 and 1920 reveal anything much about performance in 1870 or 1880, or further back? In spite of this some scholars have subsumed the evidence of early recordings within studies using more direct evidence (such as scores and treatises) in order to flesh out our understanding of nineteenth-century practice.[9] Owing to the problems explored above, on one level at least, the efficacy of such observations are open to doubt, which may in part account for the fact that early recordings have seen comparatively limited use as evidence.

Moreover, there are issues of motivation, as well. In spite of the interest in HIP most musicians do not play, or think, in specifically 'historical' terms, certainly with music written after 1800. The 'front line' of performance practice has moved from Viennese classicism twenty years ago to the stylistic practices of Brahms, Wagner and even Elgar. Nevertheless it is still controversial, perhaps because some of the known traits of late nineteenth-century performance (such as tempo flexibility and pronounced portamenti in singing and string playing) still seem 'old fashioned' and even 'slovenly' to generations steeped in the notational objectivism and post-romanticism of later twentieth-century style and aesthetics. Until recently, the artistic content of early recordings might not have seemed particularly relevant but, inevitably perhaps, it has moved gradually from being 'old' in a pejorative sense to 'historical' in a way that confers higher status.

Nevertheless, even orchestral recordings of the acoustic era can, and *should* be analysed. In order to

do so with any usefulness, the limits of the documentation, as ever, must be acknowledged. This means that remarks upon the content of such disks needs to be assertive but supportable, which restricts analysis mainly to matters of ensemble, tempo and tempo rubato, as well as easily discerned tonal elements such as string and wind vibrato, although this depends upon the quality of the recording and the condition of the surviving pressings, which are often very variable before 1925.

In terms of trying to discern evidence for surviving nineteenth-century practices, one has to be even more careful. In the case of solo recordings, as the present author has already attempted with violin playing, a case can be made on the basis of the age and educational experiences of the players, some of whom are likely, by attitude and age, to retain a substantial quantity of pre-twentieth century characteristics of style. Joachim is the most obvious example but by no means the only one, and as a result, it seemed appropriate to the present writer to have a notional cut-off date of c. 1860 – 1865 for the birth date of violinists whose style is likely to still embody firmly established nineteenth-century traits by the time of the first analysable recordings after 1900.[10]

A parallel criterion for orchestral playing is possible if one considers the age and careers of conductors. Thus, Arthur Nikitsch (1855-1923) was very much a nineteenth-century artist when he recorded his famous performance of Beethoven's 5th symphony with the Berlin Philharmonic in 1913, whereas the 1913 *Parsifal* recordings conducted by Alfred Hertz (1872 – 1942), fascinating and important as they are, reflect, potentially at least, the work of a much younger artist in his prime at the time of the recording and still, perhaps, stylistically impressionable.[11] For this chronological reason, in part, this article will turn shortly to two case studies – Karl Muck's 1917 Boston Symphony Orchestra recordings[12] and Edouard Colonne's 1905-6 Paris recordings.[13]

The evaluation of an orchestral performance presents difficulties, both physical and stylistic, in terms of the authorship of the sound. Leaving aside the enormous technical issues with early recordings, all orchestras necessarily separate the executive part of the process from the director, who has responsibility for corporate artistic production. It is debatable to what extent a conductor's control over technique and aesthetics can be discerned as a separate element of a performance. In the early twentieth century one would expect precise control to be less achievable than today, given lack of rehearsal time. Moreover, in an age before the possibility of comparing 'live' performance with edited studio recordings, expectations of accuracy seem to have been lower.[14] That said, Colonne and Muck are likely to have been obeyed by their ensembles as much as practicality allowed. Both were irascible and sharp-tongued martinets with very strong ideas, steeped in very different yet discernibly pre-twentieth century traditions.

Edouard Colonne (1838 – 1910), along with Pasdeloup and Lamoureux, was one of the key Parisian conductors of the late nineteenth century. He was a noted Berlioz interpreter, having known the composer personally. His performances were praised for their ardent nature, as the American critic Philip Hale recalled:

> As a student in Paris I heard the concerts led by Colonne and Lamoureux. Lamoureux's performances had greater finish; there was a finer sense of proportion in minute details; but they usually left the hearer cold. Colonne's stirred the blood.[15]

Pierre Monteux, who was a viola player in the Colonne orchestra, recalled that 'as a human being he was extremely disagreeable … he could only be civil and affable in order to achieve his goals'; nevertheless Monteux praises his 'refined taste'.[16] Colonne was one of the first to perform Wagner's music in France, although Lamoureux gave the Paris premiere of *Lohengrin* in 1887.

Karl Muck (1859 – 1940), who made his debut as a pianist at the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 1880, was, like Colonne, largely self-taught as a conductor. This was by no means unusual in an age when most conductors were polymaths who pursued a range musical occupations. He soon established himself as a Wagner specialist and, although not, like Felix Mottl for example,[17] amongst the first generation of Wagner conductors, he was closely linked to the early tradition, and he maintained a close friendship with Cosima Wagner. He gave the St Petersburg and Moscow premieres of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in 1889 and 1891 respectively and in 1899 brought Wagner's music to Covent Garden.[18] He was a specialist in *Parsifal*, which he conducted at Bayreuth between 1901 and 1930, and was from 1892 the Kapellmeister of the Berlin State Opera. In common with many important European musicians, he was encouraged to work in the USA and was invited by the Boston Symphony Orchestra's founder, Henry Lee Higginson, to become the principal conductor, beginning in the 1906-7 season, an appointment ended abruptly in 1918 upon his arrest, on spurious grounds, as an enemy agent.[19]

Helpfully, the recorded outputs of Muck with the Boston orchestra and Colonne's disks contain two items in common for direct comparison – the prelude to Act III of Wagner's *Lohengrin*, and the *Rákóczy*

March from Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*. Muck also recorded the *Lohengrin* prelude again in 1928 with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, which makes a further interesting comparison.[20]

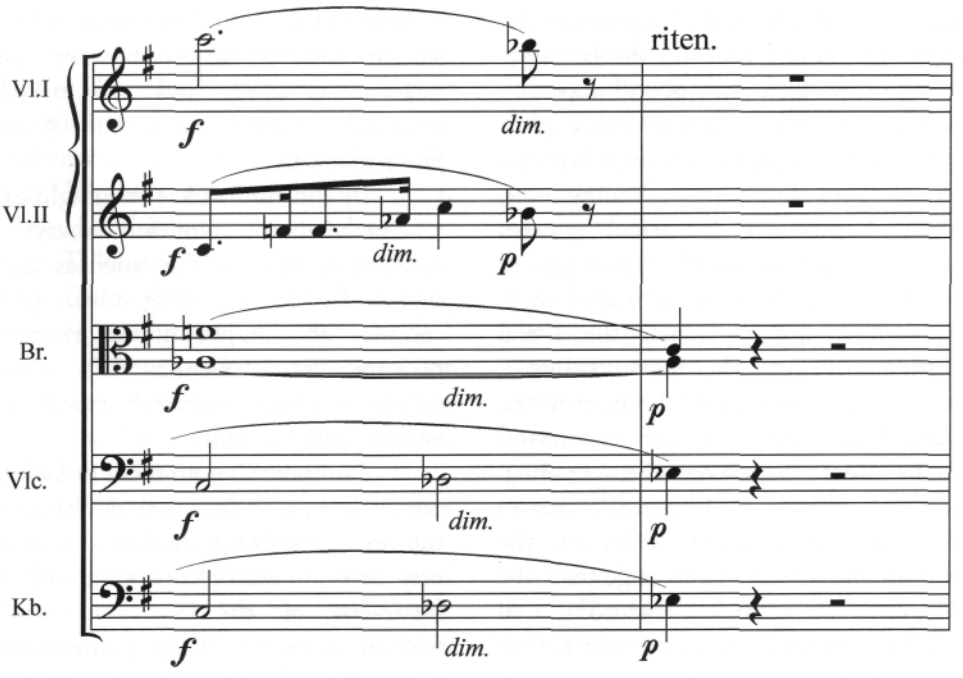
Muck's 1917 *Lohengrin* performance sounds by far the most familiar to modern ears and is, by the standards of the time, remarkably exact. In terms of dynamics and accentuation, Muck marks accents clearly and with an agogic quality.

Dynamic variation cannot be heard very easily, or at least this is not the most striking aspect of the recording. Inevitably the solos in the middle section are much less forceful than the main, opening theme, but the extent to which this is a variation of timbre rather than volume is not easy to discern. In fairness, Wagner does not mark much variation in the main theme, but very little of the crescendo in bar 8 is discernible. Certainly, there is much more dynamic variation evident in Muck's later recording, elucidated via the incomparably superior medium of electric recording. Certainly, the oboe solo at bar 28 of the 1928 recording has much more variety, although it seems as if the 1917 oboist is attempting a similar shape. The two Muck interpretations are remarkably similar overall, and this allows us quite a useful glimpse of what was made achievable by electric processes.

However, in some aspects of style the two Muck recordings show greater divergence. There is very little string vibrato in the earlier recording even in places that might be said to invite it, such as the long note in bar 86:

Much more regular vibrato is found in the later performance, showing that the device had made a rapid advance in Berlin by 1928.[21] Wind vibrato is a more curious issue. The oboe solo in the earlier recording is largely without vibrato, although some traces are evident. In the Berlin recording, no vibrato is to be found. This makes a curious contrast with bar 74, which is delivered lightly and without vibrato by the violins in the earlier recording, but with the slow vibrato so typical of the 1920s in the later performance.

Colonne's performance of this work reveals the rapid pace of change. The recording quality is inferior in all respects, and on this transfer has much more surface noise. It shows us with great clarity that one should not lump together all acoustic recordings as if they reveal a similar level of information, and certainly, a well-practiced ear is needed to hear much in these earlier disks. In this passage, however, there are signs of stylistic modernity: vibrato in the oboe can be heard quite obviously (even though it is slow and diffuse) but very clearly in the flute, showing perhaps the different national characteristics of timbre – the Berlin wind players of Muck's recording adhering to older practices. Certainly, Georges Longy, playing in the Boston recording, used the French oboe, and this was found widely in the USA and Britain, whilst the wide-reed German oboe remained popular in German orchestras until well into the recording era.[22]



Example 1: R. Wagner, *Lohengrin* Act III Prelude, bars 86-7.

By far the most obvious element of interest in Muck's 1917 recording is the treatment of rhythms. Whilst the opening triplet of the brass fanfare figure is rushed and the ensuing dotted rhythms are over-dotted, this rhythmic alteration is actually less prevalent here than on the Berlin recording and is, by the standards of orchestral playing generally before World War II, not unusual. More so is the sense of anticipating climaxes or accents temporally, as already described, or found also at bar 5 in the violins. The strangest passage of all is between 65 and 72 (Appendix I) where the strings anticipate the wind solos, in a potentially interesting passage of tempo dislocation between melody and accompaniment. Certainly, this is not evident on Muck's later recording and indeed, is absent from Colonne's. It seems unlikely that this was simply sloppy ensemble from so draconian a conductor. Is this evidence of an earlier tradition of tempo displacement, or simply the effect of the intrusive circumstances of the recording? It seems clear that many of the other idiosycracies of tempo features are evidence of tempo being used as an expressive element, rather than as a literal one, despite the fact that Muck's work was renowned for its strictness.

Colonne's disk is, sonically, as if from another age, and we can presume that he had only a small band of players at his disposal, and not the full orchestra recorded in the technically ground-breaking (if soon overshadowed) Boston orchestra recordings. Colonne's performance is much more rhythmically volatile. The trumpet entry on the triplet rhythm (presumably added to the texture to increase the sense of rhythmic drive and incorporate the military character) is powerfully drawn by Colonne at bar 32, by the trumpets beginning a little on the fast side. This seems to epitomise Colonne's overall approach and its difference to Muck. Whereas Muck plays rather literally but dutifully (one might even liken his scrupulous strictness to that of a schoolmaster!), Colonne is more flamboyant, his larger gestures allowing much untidiness of detail, but a greater sweep of interpretation. It is as if Colonne is evaluating, constantly, not so much the literal production of the music, but rather how to deliver it in its dramatic context. This attitude of opportunistic (but not indiscriminate) use of expressive characteristics in order to convey the 'meaning' behind the notation seems to have been discussed in far more detailed and concrete terms in the nineteenth century and comprises, in large part, the more subjective 'Romantic' traditions of interpretation all but swept away in the first half of the twentieth century.[23]

Unsurprisingly, dotted rhythms are over-dotted, both in the wind solo passage mentioned in relation to Muck's 1917 recording (bb. 65-72), and in the casually treated quavers in the clarinet in bar 76.

The nature and scope of tempo rubato in the two acoustic performances can be found in graph form in Appendices II and III. These graphs were made by tapping along in time with the music (on a number of occasions, for accuracy) and recording by means of the VISION programme, the inter-onset values.[24] This is quite a simple analysis technique by modern standards but certainly sufficient to reveal some interesting comparisons. The graphs show how Muck's performance is much more strict than Colonne's, but also that the middle section is appreciably slower. Whilst overall tempi are contentious and clearly open to technological influence (it seems likely that Muck had a little more flexibility here in a clearly more sophisticated recording context), tempo rubato can more reliably be said to indicate performance ideals. Unsurprisingly, given Muck's reputation as stylistically more modern (with a progressively objective stance towards scores and interpretation, rather perhaps in the manner of Weingartner[25]) his performance is more metronomic, although this is less well conveyed here than by means of aural impression.

In the Berlioz March the impression is further intensified. Muck was clearly a Wagner specialist, and his discography makes this very clear. By contrast, one might suggest that his Berlioz performance is artistically very much inferior. Muck takes a considered and pedestrian approach with a tiny accelerando to the first repeat. The strings exercise an apparently stylistic sense of 'anticipation' at bar 54, however, whilst groups of four quavers at the A Major section are uneven. Articulation (including wind staccati) is clear, and the overall impression remarkably precise, particularly given the March's Hungarian title.

By contrast, and as one might expect, Colonne is much more colourful, always pushing and accelerating towards the cadences, and producing a slightly frenetic recording. Once again, one might compare the graphs of an excerpt of the two performances (Appendix IV) which show this difference clearly, although much of this is more evident from listening.

An interesting moment in Colonne's recording occurs at bars 48-9, where the basses anticipate and the violins hold onto the first note to compensate – a very obvious example of Colonne's impressionistic treatment of the notation, which gives the performance a remarkably spontaneous and free feel, much more in tune, one might argue, with the purpose of the composition (see Appendix V). The possibility, given Colonne's relative closeness to

Berlioz, that this performance might reflect the composer's own interpretation of the work is contentious, but worthy of consideration nonetheless.

It is clear in the Berlioz examples that Muck and Colonne had very different ideals of what the music was about and, indeed, for. Muck is, as elsewhere, autocratically adherent to the score, whereas Colonne is, perhaps, autocratically independent.

In what ways, then, does this brief comparison inform our understanding of late nineteenth-century orchestral practices? We glimpse two very different musical personalities from two divergent nineteenth-century traditions. Colonne, a generation older than Muck, might be expected to sound more antiquated stylistically, and in some respects, these two tracks do support such a conclusion, an impression perhaps strengthened by the primitive nature of the recording technology. That said, the use of some of the tonal embellishments more closely associated with the twentieth century (such as string and wind vibrato) perhaps confirm the status of the wider French and Belgian 'school' as one exercising a great influence on the tonally sensuous new century. The fiery disposition of Colonne as revealed by contemporary accounts seems to accord with his volatile Berlioz interpretation in which, whatever the technical shortcomings of the recording and the ensemble, the orchestra comes across as if as a single, malleable instrument.

Muck's performances, conversely, wear their discipline on the sleeve rather more obviously. The technical precision of the Boston Orchestra is impressive and certainly compares very favourably with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in Nikitsch's recording of Beethoven's fifth symphony. The technical quality of the recording allows us to hear much more, and the experience of an extra decade of technological advance can be heard. Whilst relatively little is known of Colonne's recording circumstances, the Muck recordings are well documented, and took place in the Victor Talking Machine's executive offices in Camden, New Jersey. Here, acoustic shells were constructed to create more direction to the sound of the entire Boston orchestra, whilst solo parts for prominent players were played into individual horns. The result is excellent for its time, although it was soon to be overshadowed by the electric process.[26]

The extent to which Muck's interpretation is a product of his own demanding personality is hard to ascertain. Whilst Colonne's orchestra seems to bend to the will of its *Chef d'orchestre*, Muck palpably holds his ensemble in an iron grip. The apparent elevation of discipline and technique above interpretation might seem to be a prophetic feature of Muck's style, but his later electric recordings make this appear a little misleading. The 1927-8 *Parsifal* recordings reveal a far more flexible musicianship than we find in the Boston recordings, and in the Wagner overture performances recorded with the Berlin State Opera Orchestra in 1927-9 we find a surprising amount of ensemble looseness, variety of execution of dotted rhythms between different solo instruments and so forth, all clearly evident and either encouraged by Muck or at the very least, tolerated. It is possible that this reflected Muck's changing personal circumstances and his increasing age,[27] but this seems relatively unlikely overall, given his vigorous refusal to conduct the 'Good Friday Music' when split into three 78 rpm sides, much to the inconvenience of the recording company who enlisted Siegfried Wagner to conduct this portion, at very short notice![28]

Alternatively, the technology might have had a direct stylistic impact here. Muck's recordings attempted the highest possible standards of technical reproduction, whereas Colonne's possibly did not. This might suggest that Muck's interpretation was compromised by the technical demands. One finds a similar situation when comparing, for example, Joachim's 1903 recordings with Ysaÿe's 1912 disks.[29] The Ysaÿe disks have better sound, but less measurable variety of dynamic than Joachim's, which at times result in distortions. Direct comparison between two violinists a generation apart and from radically different traditions is not possible of course, but assumptions that Ysaÿe and Muck were less 'expressive' in their playing in varying ways than Joachim and Colonne have to be qualified.

Another issue shown up by this comparison relates to the usefulness, or otherwise, of analytical methodology. In this repertoire, the graphic representations of inter-onset values and beat durations reveals less about the differences in tempo rubato between these two recordings than found when listening to them. There are, doubtless, more sophisticated methods of analysis which can be employed, but this case acts as a salutary lesson that, in an aural artistic medium, listening, albeit in an informed way, is the only way of ascertaining an overall view and 'feel' of performance style. It is for this very reason of course that early recordings, however problematical, are also irreplaceable glimpses into lost worlds. It is of course often frustrating that such glimpses are only dim and fleeting given that some of the most potentially fascinating recordings are almost unusable, as in the case of Charles Mapleson's numerous, if largely inaudible, recordings at the Metropolitan Opera between 1900 and 1904.[30] Inevitably then, these acoustic orchestral recordings only reveal a limited amount about nineteenth-century practices, but we would be very much the poorer in their absence. The caution of scholars in

using recordings as a form of evidence is both necessary and inevitable, but it is to be hoped that attempts to study them continue. Colonne's disks in particular speak sufficiently clearly to us of what has been, but perhaps also of what changes in fashion and demand may yet redeem and regain.

1 T. Day, *A Century of Recorded Music – Listening to Musical History* (New Haven and London, 2000), 9.

2 See for example liner notes for Pearl CD (GEMM CD 9312).

3 This was a purpose made instrument for recording studios, rendered obsolete upon the invention of the electric process in c. 1925. It incorporated an amplifying horn in order to magnify the violin tone. See Day,11.

4 I. Holst, 'Recordings of Holst's Music', *Recorded Sound*, 59 (July 1975), 440, in Day, 12.

5 Matrix nos. A 15560-2; HMV DB 587/80, reproduced as PEARL GEMM CDS 9996.

6 The double bass was often replaced by bass brass instruments, as in the orchestral accompaniment to F. Henriques' 1912 performance of Svendsen's *Romance*. Matrix no. 426ac; GCL 087900, reproduced in PEARL BVA 1.

7 Joachim's complete recordings, along with those of Sarasate and a selection of Ysaÿe's 1912 disks are available on OPALCD 9851.

8 Matrix nos. 2W 1569-70, recorded October, 1932.

9 See D. Milsom, *Theory and Practice in Late Nineteenth-Century Violin Performance – An Examination of Style in Performance 1850 – 1900* (Aldershot, 2003). This study brings together paper evidence, primarily in the form of scores and treatises, and early recordings of violinists, singers and speakers in order to attempt as comprehensive a view of performance as available evidence allows.

10 See Milsom, 7 – 8.

11 Arthur Nikitsch, Beethoven Symphony no. 5, Berlin Philharmonic: Matrix nos. 1249, 1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254, 1246, 1257; reissued as SYMPOSIUM 1087. Alfred Hertz, Wagner, Orchestral Suite from *Parsifal*: matrix nos. 1160s, 11611/2s, 1162s, 11631/2s, 11681/2s, 1169s, 1171s, 1172s; first issued on Grammophon 040792/9; reissued as Naxos Historical 8.110049-50.

12 Re-released as BSO CLASSICS 171002.

13 Re-released as Harmonia Mundi - TAHRA COL 001.

14 This, and other cultural matters of the early-recording age are discussed in R. Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (New Haven and London, 2004), particularly 63 – 69.

15 H.C. Schonberg, *The Great Conductors* (London, 1968), 201.

16 Author's translation of liner notes to TAHRA COL 001.

17 Felix Mottl (1856 – 1911) can be heard on some of the Mapleson cylinders of 1900-4, but, sadly, they are not really analysable stylistically.

18 His Moscow and St. Petersburg performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* allegedly had a profound influence upon Rimsky-Korsakov.

19 See B. Bell, liner notes to BSO CLASSICS 171002.

20 R. Wagner, prelude to Act III, *Lohengrin*: K. Muck (1917), matrix no. 64744 (B-20818-2); E. Colonne (c.1906), matrix no. 8937; K. Muck (1929), matrix no. CLR 5806-2A. Also H. Berlioz, Rákóczy March from *Damnation of Faust*: K. Muck (1917), matrix no. 74555 (C-20819-2) and E. Colonne (c. 1906) matrix no. 8933.

21 General stylistic trends in recordings up to 1950 are shown clearly in Philip (1992).

22 Philip (1992), 121.

23 See Milsom, 189 – 209.

24 The 'Vision' program for Macintosh computer was employed to record 'inter-onset' values - that is, the distance in time between the onset of one beat and the next. The analyst listens to the recording a number of times in order to learn the tempo rubato, before tapping along in time with the music. Repeated takes help to minimise inaccuracy. The data can then be converted by the 'Statview' program into graph form. See Milsom, 211-212.

25 Felix Weingartner (1863 - 1942) is widely credited as an important 'moderniser', supplanting the subjectivism of Wagner, Bülow and others with a more exact and objective stance towards the score, which proved influential for the twentieth century. His ideals are laid out in his pamphlet *On Conducting* (1895, English translation E. Neumann, London, 1906).

26 See B. Bell, liner notes to BSO CLASSICS 171002; also C. Lawson (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to the Orchestra* (Cambridge, 2003), 205.

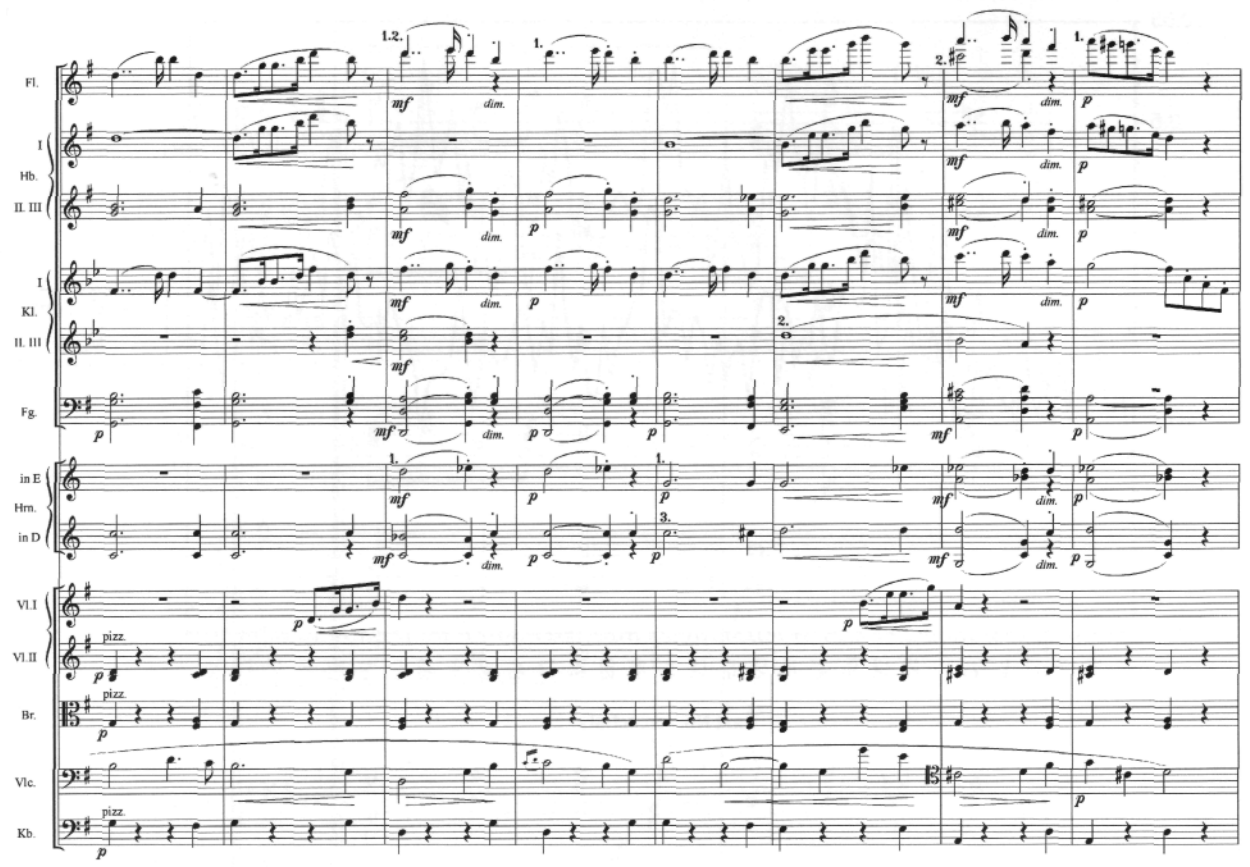
27 Ian Julier (liner notes to Naxos Historical 8.110858, 3) quotes Alexander Kipnis (without reference), as interviewed by B.H. Haggin. Kipnis refers to the effect Muck's internment had upon his personality, thus 'In Bayreuth in 1928, Muck was greatly changed from the dark-haired, vigorous, proudly erect man I had seen walk out onto the stage in 1917. He was grey, shrunken, wrinkled, with a ghost of a smile flickering over his face as he talked pleasantly – not at all the terrifying person one had heard about in his Boston Symphony days.'

28 K. Anderson, liner notes to Naxos Historical 8.110049-50, 7.

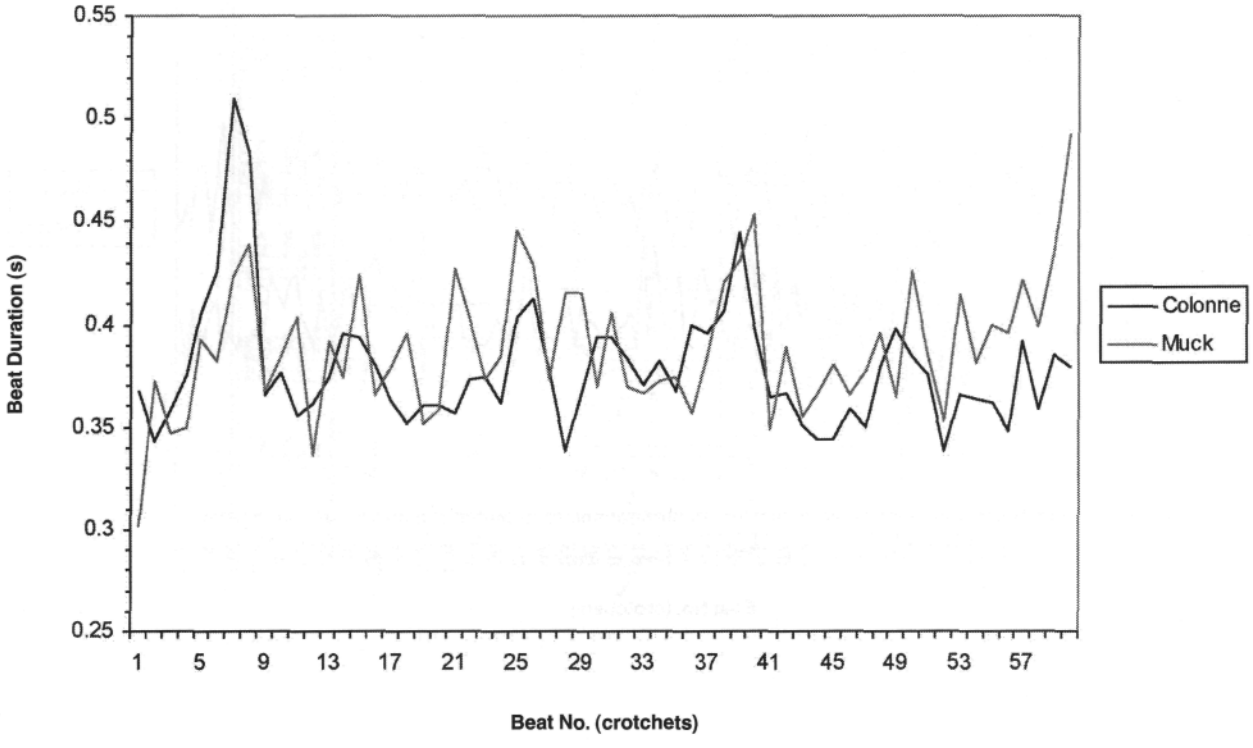
29 See note 7.

30 The complete cylinders of 1900-1904, made live in the Metropolitan Opera House, New York were reissued by Rodgers and Hammerstein (R & H 100) on LP in 1985

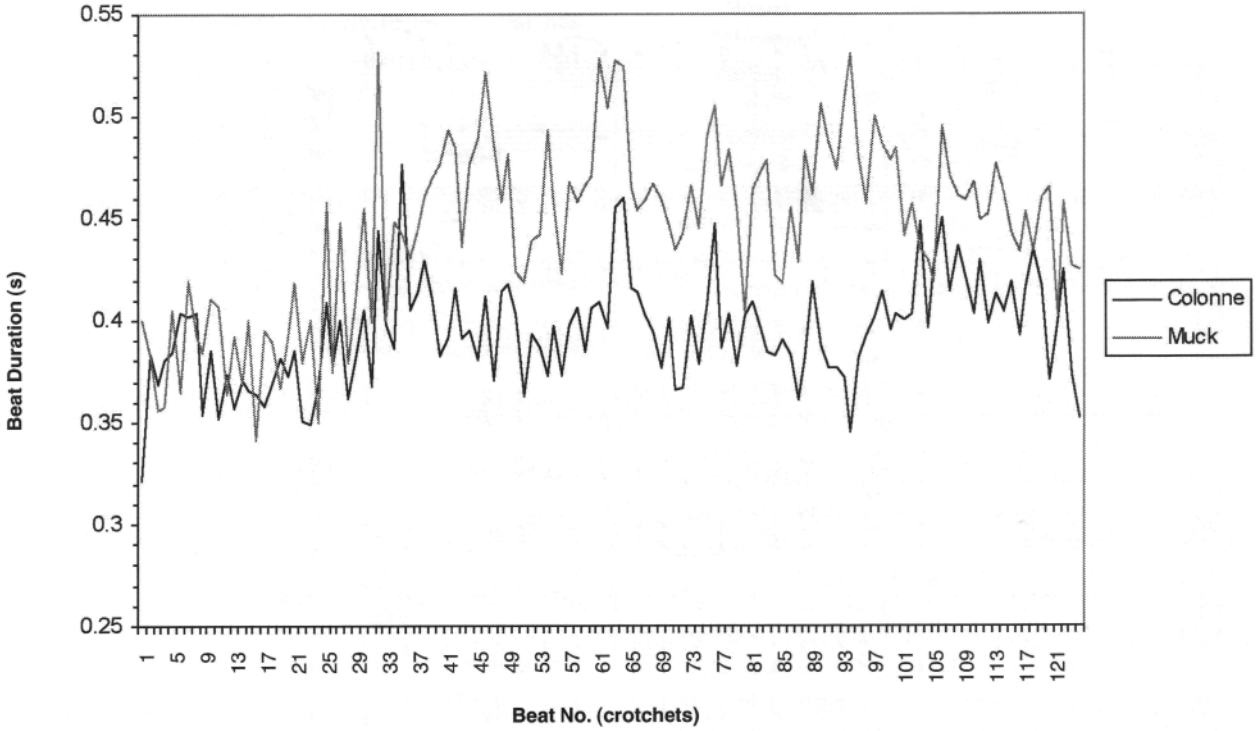
Appendix I
R. Wagner: *Lohengrin* Act III Prelude, bars 65-72



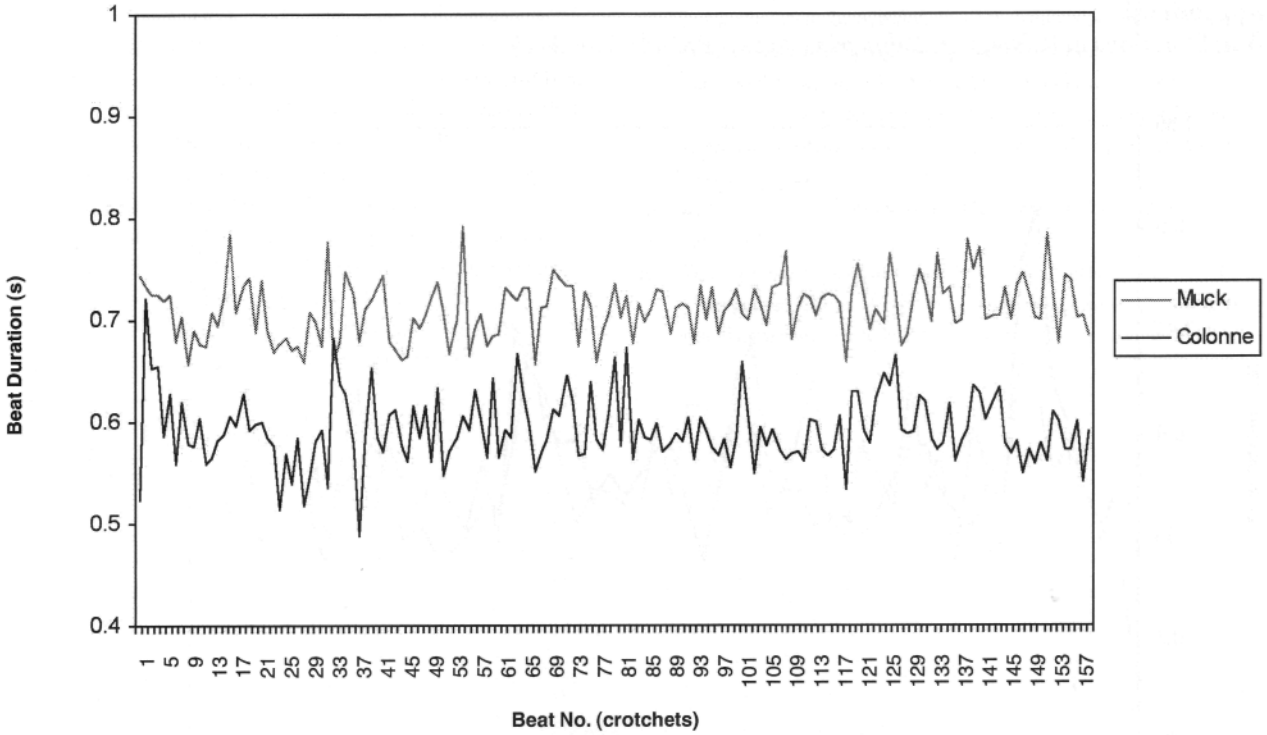
Appendix II
Beat Durations in R. Wagner: *Lohengrin* - Act III Prelude, bars 1-15



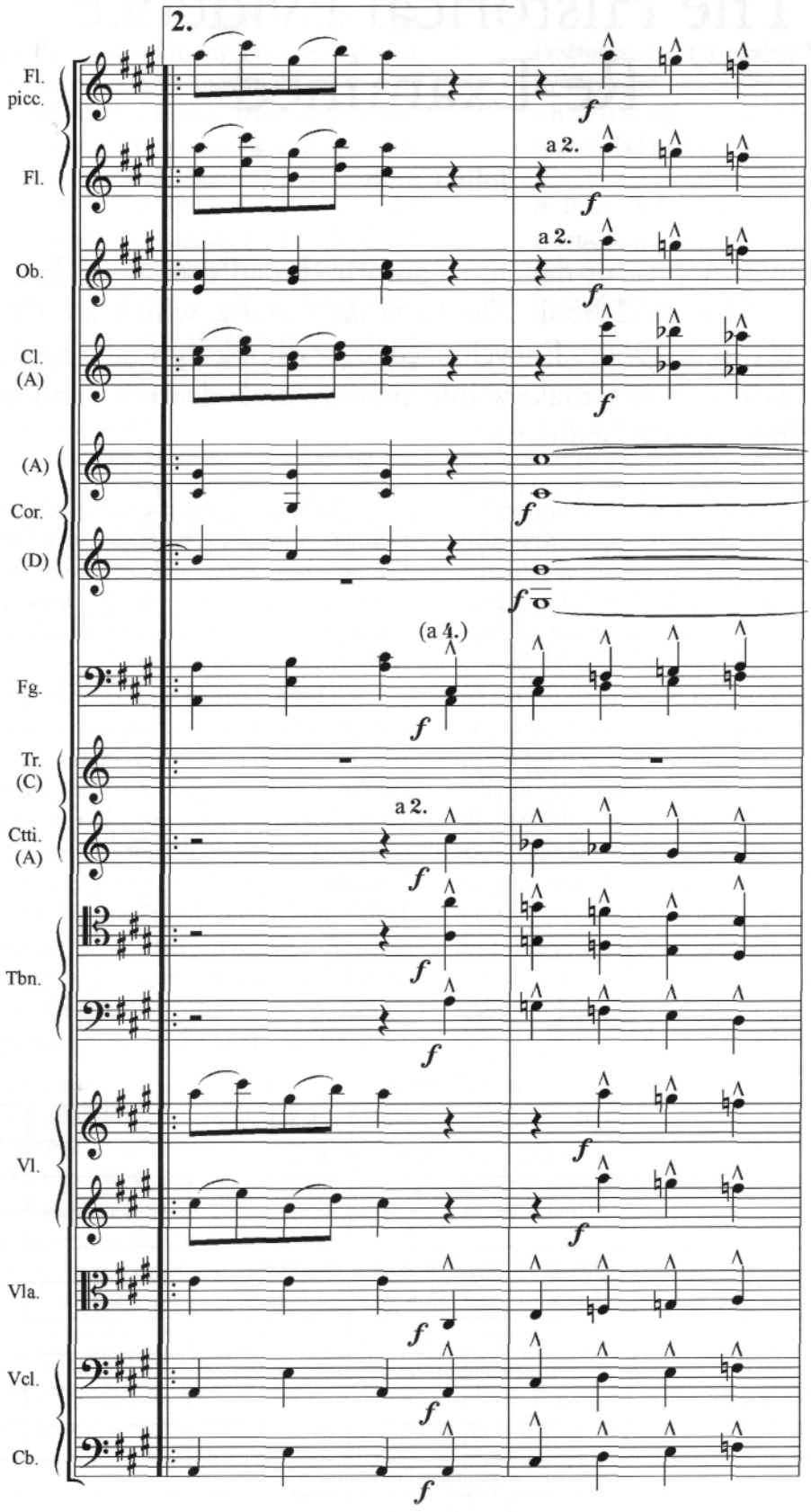
Appendix III
Beat Durations in R. Wagner: *Lohengrin* - Act III Prelude, bars 49-79



Appendix IV
Beat Durations in H. Berlioz: *Ráhóczy March* from *Damnation de Faust*, bar 7 onwards



Appendix V
H. Berlioz: *Ráhóczy March* from *Damnation de Faust*, bars 48-9



Our Orthodox Viol Sizes: The Historical Evidence Re-Examined

John Catch

Virtually all viols in present-day use conform broadly to sizes laid down in Nathalie Dolmetsch's 1962 book *The Viola da Gamba*, which are substantially those given by Hayes in 1930.[1] Encyclopaedias, textbooks, popular texts, museum catalogues and exhibit labels, makers' information, and advertisements of viols for sale, all accept these sizes as 'standard'.

The continuing debate on sizes and pitches has inescapably been coloured by this consensus that these sizes are a standard family, a basis of reference for other hypothetical families. Yet it has always been known that Simpson in his *Division Violist* of 1665 stated that a typical division viol should have a vibrating string length (vsl) of 30 inches – 76 cm by Imperial measure, not the orthodox 65cm or so. In my young days this was comfortably accounted for by supposing that Simpson was using not the English measure established and standard since the Middle Ages, but some such measure as the Brunswick inch of 23.76 mm (0.936 Imperial inches). In retrospect, it would have been more rational to re-examine on the basis of the primary evidence how the consensus on 'standard' sizes had come to be established. Having done so, I conclude that there is no good historical foundation for that consensus.

Table 1 sets out the sizes laid down by Arnold Dolmetsch in 1915, by Hayes in 1930, by Nathalie Dolmetsch in 1962, and by Praetorius in 1619 (see front cover illustration) for his lower-pitched viols. The figures in square brackets are vsl's relative to that of the treble viols of each set.[2]

The first two of these conform exactly with the precept of Mace that the relative vsl's should be 1- 1.5 – 2 for treble in d–tenor in G–bass in D. That conformity is suggestive. The authors had no *measurements* to guide them in this other than those of Praetorius, which do not conform to Mace's rule.[3] Nathalie Dolmetsch's figures are more arbitrary but follow substantially the 1:2 rule for treble and bass.

Arnold Dolmetsch merely stated his sizes *ex cathedra* without comment. The absence of an alto tuning is noteworthy, since there is no historical evidence of more than three consort tunings –

Table 1

Consort bass	Division	Lyra	'True' tenor	'Small' tenor	Alto	Treble
Sizes (vsl's) according to A. Dolmetsch (cm) 1915						
76.2	-	-	57.8	-	-	38.1
[2.0]			[1.50]			[1.0]
Sizes (vsl's) according to Hayes (cm) 1930						
71.1	63.5-66	58.4-63.5	53.3	48.3	39.4	35.6
[2.0]			[1.50]			[1.0]
Sizes (vsl's) according to N. Dolmetsch (cm) 1962						
68-70.5	65-66	53.5-60	45-52		35-40.5	35-35.5
[1.92-2.01]		[1.51-1.71]	[1.27-1.49]			[1.0]
Sizes (vsl's) according to Praetorius (cm) 1619						
[GG tuning]			[Alt:tenor, D tuning]			[adj. for G tuning]
74.7			62.5			46.4
[1.81]			[1.35]			[1.0]

treble/tenor/bass – other than in France; Praetorius, Mace, Simpson and Playford all show no knowledge of an alto tuning. Old viols consistent with his sizes are common enough. But in 1930 Dolmetsch unreservedly endorsed Hayes' work.[4] Hayes had much reduced the sizes, affirming (incorrectly) that no bass viols of such size were known, introduced an alto tuning, and distinguished 'true' and 'small' tenors.[5] Old viols of his bass, treble and alto sizes were, again, not uncommon; but his tenor sizes are rare. The one or two of which I know (e.g. the cornerless instrument illustrated in Nathalie Dolmetsch's book, p. 18, date 'ca. 1500') look suspiciously like forgeries. Having examined something like a hundred old pictures of viols up to about 1750, I have never seen one of a cornerless viol, but, significantly, that was supposed a century ago to be the earliest form.[6]

Hayes went to much trouble to weigh up the evidence of bigger-than-'standard' viols and was clearly not wholly happy with his conclusions, which resorted ultimately to the unsafe guidance of 'common sense';

> Yet this is one of those cases which we meet in all walks of life, where the dictates of common sense must override a mass of apparently unimpeachable evidence'.[7]

The two tenor sizes, and the alto tuning for England, which has lingered in some use to the present day, appear to be the result of 'creative thinking', that siren of the perplexed scholar. Hayes I suppose justified his assumptions by taking Mace's 'so many *Equal and Truly-Scized viols*' to mean 'of sizes closely proportional to their pitch'. That is no doubt a possible interpretation, but improbable remembering the complete lack of documentary evidence in England. Viols of about Hayes' 'alto' size are not uncommon, and according to Mace's rule on proportions would be trebles for Simpson-sized basses. But, as I have observed, viols of Hayes' tenor sizes are rare and of doubtful genuineness. Old viols are never labelled by their function, and there are not to my knowledge any documents before about 1690 which relate measurements and functions, other than those considered in this paper.

There is a school of thought today which holds that before overspun strings came into use (they are not clearly described before 1659) and when strings were (hypothetically) entirely of gut, sizes and pitches were indeed closely related. Ian Harwood expounded this belief in a lecture to the Viola da Gamba Society in 2002.[8] It has however been disputed by the present writer, on the grounds (briefly) that –

> Dimensioned pictures and tuning table in *Syntagma Musicum* show two viols of the same vsl tuned no less than a fifth apart;
>
> Praetorius gives a tuning FCGda for a five-stringed bass violin wholly in fifths which is in effect a cello Cgda and a sub-bass FCGd in one;
>
> If Praetorius is right, the problem of reconciling Simpson's 30-inch division viol with the high organ pitches in use in England in his time is solved.[9]

Nathalie Dolmetsch, who further reduced the sizes of consort bass and lyra viols, gives an even smaller range of tenor sizes, and retains the alto, again without offering any comment or evidence for her conclusions.[10] Note that the bass has now closely approached the vsl of a modern cello, and the treble that of the violin.

It is possible to offer an explanation of these changes. Before Dolmetsch came on the scene it was generally held that viols were the direct ancestors of the violin family, so that bass viol and cello and treble viol and violin were seen as closely related in function and in size (the tenor viol was supposed in those days to have been a *braccio* fiddle with five or six strings – as indeed was the treble viol also).[11] The fallacious ancestry was discredited, but that did not imply rejection of the affinities of function and size. We must remember also that playing the bass viol persisted in a modest way throughout the nineteenth century, and that those players used bass viols of cello size. It must have seemed common sense that a bass viol would have been of that size. Mace's rule would then determine the sizes of treble and tenor, what could seem more likely? There was, again, a naïve general supposition in those days that viols throughout the ages would have been essentially the same in general character and presumably in sizes.

Hayes' conclusions, endorsed by Dolmetsch, were generally accepted as authoritative. A decade later the American scholar Bessaraboff made a commendably painstaking study of the problem, taking into account what was then known of organ pitches, but (rather surprisingly) without examining critically the basis for the Hayes-Dolmetsch sizes.[12] His long and involved argument arrived at a tidy and plausible conclusion; the English, about 1600, moved up a step from the big Continental sizes. His conclusion is best summarised in his Table VII of p. 372 (note that he compares body lengths, not vsl's):

TABLE VII

COMPARATIVE NAMES, SIZES, AND TUNINGS OF GERMAN AND ENGLISH VIOLS

GERMAN NOMENCLATURE (PRAETORIUS)	BODY LENGTH, CM.		ENGLISH NOMENCLATURE	TUNINGS: 'ORDINARY' FOR ENGLISH VIOLS 'FIFTH LOWER' FOR GERMAN VIOLS
	Praetorius	English		
		36	The Treble	d g c′ e′ a′ d″
Cantus	40.5	40	The Alto	A d g b e′ a′
		48	The Tenor	A d g b e′ a
Alt	56.7	57	The Lyra-Viol	D G c e a d′
Tenor	68.5	68.5	The Consort Bass	D G c e a d′
Kleine Bass-Viola	78.5			GG C F A d g

There are some flaws in his argument. The 40.5 cm given for the *Cantus* is misleading; the drawing in Praetorius's Plate XX does not allow of accurate measurement of the body length. If Bessaraboff had worked with vsl's, which are what we are properly concerned with and which can be measured quite accurately from Plate XX, he would have got a larger figure. In calculating relative vsl's we must remember that Praetorius's tuning for his *Cantus* was an octave and a tone higher than his *Kleinbass*; a treble a tone lower in G would in principle be about 11% longer in vsl. If these corrections are made we get the relative string lengths already given in the earlier Table.

Bessaraboff also assumed, as had Kinsky before him, that Praetorius's consort must have included a tenor of vsl 68.5 cm tuned in D, for which he gave no illustration or tuning. That is possible, in the sense that it is consistent with the laws of Nature, but a hypothesis which depends on such an unsupported assumption is necessarily somewhat suspect. The *Alt:Tenor* of Praetorius has this same D tuning and pitch in his *Tabella* but his picture shows only one smaller size, vsl 62.5 cm.

Bessaraboff was aware of the vsl (75 cm) and tuning (D-G-c-e-a-d') of the Viol Bastarda of Praetorius's Plate XX, but failed to draw the inference that two viols of the same vsl might differ in pitch by a fifth. He was to be sure handicapped by lack of information on contemporary English organ pitches. He noted that Simpson's 30-inch viol did not agree with his conclusion, but supposed that some old-fashioned players may have continued to use the older bigger viols at the lower pitch. As with so many students of this subject, he does not take notice of the total absence from the primary evidence of any explicit statement of high- and low-pitched families.

Taking all this into account his solution of the problem is no longer tidy and plausible.

Conclusion

The reader is not to suppose that I disparage the work of the pioneers of the early music movement; anyone who studies their work must be impressed by their industry and achievement, working in circumstances which would discourage many of us nowadays. I am attempting to get nearer to the historical truth of this matter in the light of more than half-a-century of later evidence and study.

The evidence is still frustratingly meagre, but there is enough to suggest strongly that our present-day 'standard family' of orthodox 'Dolmetsch' sizes is an early twentieth-century concept unsupported by historical evidence, and that the supposition that sizes before the mid-seventeenth century must have been closely proportional to pitch is, again, not supported by the evidence. A reading of Mace without preconceived ideas tells us that sizes were not standardised: odd viols assembled to form a 'chest' are to be chosen 'especially for Scize'; 'Let your Bass be Large; 'Full-Scized Lyro-Viols'. There were 'small' basses; some lyra-viols were not 'full-sized'. I suggest that the Hayes-Dolmetsch sizes were based on the apparent correspondence of pitch and function of bass viol and cello and treble viol and violin, the sizes of bass viols still in use at the end of the nineteenth century, and the assumption that the Mace ratios were universally applicable. There was also a measure of the creative thinking which so insidiously takes over at the point when factual information is deficient.

So what were consort sizes and pitches in the English 'Golden Age'? I suspect that sizes were generally large, but that they varied a good deal; and for pitch, I find the evidence of a generally high pitch, particularly that from study of chamber organs of the period, convincing. If this is so, we need to revise assumptions currently common about the sound of viols in the seventeenth century.

This paper is a study of the historical evidence, not advocacy of any particular practice for our own time. Historical or not, the orthodox sizes are versatile and effective general-purpose instruments for the present day, and many players will no doubt continue to use them rather than attempt to re-create historical practices which are, one must recognise, still in some measure conjectural. Most people who play baroque bass viol music as well as consort music will find a vsl greater than about 70cm awkward. It would however be instructive to hear 'big' consorts played, not just at the low pitches which are so commonly believed to be appropriate, but at the highest pitch that good modern gut will bear.

1 Nathalie Dolmetsch, *The Viola da Gamba* (Hinrichsen, 1962), 31; G. Hayes *Musical Instruments*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1930), 37.

2 A. Dolmetsch, *The Interpretation of Music of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (Novello, n.d. but 1915), 449; M. Praetorius, *Syntagma Musicum II* (Wolfenbüttel, 1619, facsimile reprint, Bärenreiter, 1996), pl. XX and 'Tabella Universaslis 20', 25.

3 The ratio 1:1.35 for Praetorius's treble (calculated for g instead of a) and tenor in D is very close to the Mace rule, which would be 1.33. The bass size is 'foreshortened', as is the violin family. Mace's rule would make the vsl of the debateable 'tenor violin' G/d/a'/e' as long as the cello, and that of the cello three times that of the violin, i.e. nearly 100cm. This does not rule out the possibility that Mace was right for English consorts of his own time. Surviving viols from about 1620 which have every appearance of being genuine have vsl's ranging from about 32 to 85 cm. There is no evidence to suggest that (in our period) the smallest carried any other than the standard treble tuning. The largest might have been basses or quint sub-basses.

4 Hayes, *Musical Instruments*, ix.

5 Examples of bass viols can be found in the catalogues of the Heyer Collection (1912, vol. 2) and the Musikhistorisches Museum Kopenhagen (1911, p. 33; Stainer 1652).

6 There are at least two small four-cornered (?)tenor viols made by Hintz of London in the mid-eighteenth century, a problem in themselves, but not relevant to this discussion.

7 Hayes, *Musical Instruments*, 41. Caution is needed in rejecting a mass of apparently unimpeachable evidence in favour of common sense. Common sense tells us that the heavenly bodies rotate about the earth as centre.

8 This lecture is reported briefly in Newsletter 120 of the Viola da Gamba Society (January, 2003), 5-7. My criticisms used the full text of the lecture, which was helpfully made available by Ian Harwood.

9 J. Catch, *Chelys*, 32 (2004), 61-65.

10 The book makes no reference to Simpson's or Preatorius's measurements.

11 See the article 'Violin', *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1st ed. (London, 1890).

12 N. Besseraboff, *Ancient European Musical Instruments* (Harvard University Press, 1941), *passim*.

eBay and Early Music

Andrew Woolley

The online auction website, eBay (www.ebay.com), was established in the United States in 1995. In 1999 its operations expanded to the United Kingdom (www.ebay.co.uk) and are today used internationally as a forum for the sale and purchase of almost anything. eBay is both an auction house and a car-boot sale on a grand scale and has become considerably popular in recent years. The website itself states that there are 157 million users worldwide, 75 million coming from the US and 82 million from elsewhere. Its cultural presence in Britain can be felt in many places, perhaps best illustrated by the Radio 4 Today show, which now, in addition to politics, sport and new dietary health warnings, covers the latest remarkable auctions (the illicit selling of 2005 'Live Aid' concert tickets, or the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's recent sale of a conducting day come to mind).

The format of the auction is simple. An item for sale is left open to bidding for a certain amount of time (usually 5 days or a week) upon which bids are placed above a seller's minimum amount or the previous bid. The item is then won by the highest bidder when the time of the auction is completed. Though this seems straightforward, the buying process can be very competitive, particularly when an item is highly sought after. Speed of mouse clicking and internet connection can often determine the winner of an auction. A buyer may also place a bid far in excess of a current bidding total, often in the final seconds of an auction, thus excluding the possibility that this total may be surmounted by other bidders within the remaining time (when two bidders are intent on this, an item may sell far in excess of its value; I once saw a CD of Coprario go for over £100 because of this!).

The sale of items is open to anyone who feels they have something worth selling. An initial fee is charged to the seller for the auction and eBay takes a small cut of the final sale price. Each item sold is given a description and is often accompanied by a picture or pictures. A seller's repute may be seen by the reports of sales given by previous buyers. For some sellers it appears that eBay forms a business operation of sorts in which a large quantity of items or a particular type of item is sold. Some of these sellers have the privilege of their own eBay 'shop' in which buyers may browse their stock. According to the site, in the United States alone there are more than 724,000 professional sellers who use eBay as a primary or secondary source of income. The sale of copied CDs and other illegitimate or faulty items seems to an extent controlled by the system of feedback and eBay's prerogative for excluding sellers of such items (though this is dependant on the complicity of buyers).

From the perspective of the musician, eBay is a useful port-of-call in searching for rare or out-of-print books and recordings, and even instruments. A search engine on the site enables the typing of a key-word or phrase within particular categories which include 'Music' (sheet music and CDs) and 'Musical Instruments'. Within the category of 'Music' is the category of 'Classical', which has its uses. For example, typing 'Byrd' would otherwise mostly give results relating to the 'The Byrds' (a plural-sensitive search engine sometimes has its disadvantages it seems). A particular author may be searched through a general 'Books and magazines' category. The descriptions of items are also word-searchable, which is useful for identifying items that relate to a more obscure composer or a particular publisher's series.

The sale of recordings on eBay is extensive and buying records and CDs is perhaps the safest form of transaction on the site for the musician. Many sellers of CDs appear to be reputable and some specialise in early music (though it is perhaps the more occasional sellers that tend to offer the real bargains). Given that eBay has an international base it is possible to buy CDs not ordinarily available in this country, and often

at a more reasonable price than can found from standard international retailers of CDs on the internet. Second-hand CDs on eBay can sometimes be rare or out-of-print and are thus an opportunity for specialist interest. The cheaper CD labels are usually even cheaper on eBay; you can often obtain someone's unwanted Naxos CD for £1. LP records are also sold and appear to be less in demand than CDs. These can often be fine LP collections also sold extremely cheaply; I noticed once that Christopher Hogwood's LP recording of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book went for about ten pounds. LPs in particular may of course be recordings now out-of-print. If you don't own a record player for LPs, there is usually someone selling a second-hand one, though new ones seem to be in short supply (and if a part-time seller is offering a large quantity of new electrical equipment, suspicion as to its origins may be aroused!).

Sheet music and academic books can be found, however, older and less-scholarly editions of sheet music are the norm; you will not often find *Musica Britannica* on eBay. Though 'popular' editions are common, there can also be older scholarly editions that were originally made to be cheap and accessible to the general public (such as the Stainer and Bell Early Keyboard Series, for example). For the same reasons it seems, Dover reprints are often for sale as well. Those academic books available tend to be earlier editions of books that are well-known or those that are classics. A fine early edition of *The Bach Reader* might be found, for example. Unlike the sale of recordings though, there appear to be few organised dealers of academic books, and these tend to be geared towards general historical interests. Some success can be had however; I myself purchased a 1940s replica facsimile of *Parthenia* for £7 once; a second-hand bookshop on the internet at that time was selling a copy for £40.

A major search category on eBay is devoted to musical instruments, and with a large number of sales in this area alongside the sale of accessory items (bows, metronomes, tuning devices etc.), this seems merited. Instruments for early music are to be found; I have seen lutes, viols, clavichords and numerous harpsichords sold. There are, however, few organised sellers and many instruments appear to have been acquired through an accident of circumstance. Particularly with early instruments, the seller may not actually know what the instrument is (though it may be identified from available pictures), or know of its state of repair. Nevertheless, instruments are often sold for convenient disposal, and with due caution, some considerable bargains may be had. This was the case with my own purchase of a harpsichord on eBay, sold by a gentleman in Hove who had made up a John Storrs kit about fifteen years ago. Upon viewing the instrument, it was evident his expertise as a cabinet and boat maker came through in the instrument's casing, but not with the mechanics, which were probably never made correctly. Despite this, I went through with the purchase and made a long journey from Leeds to Hove to pick it up, convincing a friend to drive the van. To my relief I found it was possible for the instrument to be repaired, and it has turned out much more economical to buy a cheaper instrument on eBay than to buy a second-hand instrument from a dealer (such as the Early Music Shop).

Searching items related to early music on eBay can produce surprisingly good results it seems. That the website offers a vast quantity of goods facilitates this, though this volume can create difficulties in finding specific types of items. Browsing for early music generally requires a range of keyword searches, and searching is more efficient when a particular item is required. Despite some drawbacks though, to the early music enthusiast not too afraid of computers, eBay offers a variety of uses, some good bargains, and occasionally a rare find.

Daniel R. Melamed, *Hearing Bach's Passions*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2005. 178 pp.
ISBN 0 19 516933 6 (Hardback) £15.50

Bryan White

As an academic involved in the work of teaching historical musicology to university students, one of my primary personal aims is to stimulate what I think of as historical imagination. This involves taking whatever empirical facts are available, and knitting a world of ideas around them that allows one to enter the historical world, to look around it, hear it, and experience it as a discrete entity. It is not possible, of course, to experience such a world in the same way as those living people of whatever particular time and place is to be evoked, but part of the excitement of such imaginings is the distance, and the way in which that distance conflicts with, interacts with, and refigures one's experience of his own time and place. When I sense that I have succeeded in encouraging a student to make such an imaginative leap, it is immensely rewarding, in part because I recognize the experience myself. And I am certainly grateful to anyone who helps ignite my own historical imagination. David Melamed's short study, *Hearing Bach's Passions*, certainly succeeded in this way with me, opening up Bach's world, his thought and his music, and placing its differences to modern approaches and understanding of the passions in sharp and fascinating relief.

Melamed is an established Bach expert, but in this book, he wears his scholarship lightly. It is aimed at a general musical audience, does not assume any technical musical knowledge, and dispenses with footnotes and endnotes in favour of select bibliographies and discographies relating to the topics of each of the chapters. As he points out in the introduction, two of the chapters began as extended programme notes, and one as an article in the *New York Times*, but serious readers need not fear any dumbing-down of the content, for this is an erudite and sophisticated examination of the passions. The book's seven chapters are grouped under three headings: 'Performing forces and their significance', 'Passions in Performance' and 'Phantom Passions', and each chapter stands alone so that there is no need either to progress through the book in order, or to read every chapter. For those who may well find the book so compelling as to read it cover to cover over a short space of time (as I did), the structure results in some repetition between chapters, but Melamed's concise prose style and clear-sighted approach to the subject matter mitigates any sense of tedium when points are repeated.

The book's introduction serves to put the reader on guard against assuming that the passions as we know and experience them today have a significant correspondence with the way in which Bach and his audience conceived them. This as he puts it, does not render the passions meaningless to us, 'just different'. And this difference is where the excitement lies, and where the historical imagination is ignited.

The group of chapters focusing on performing forces develop the now familiar arguments advanced by Joshua Rifkin and Andrew Parrott on Bach's choir, namely that most of the choral music was written to be performed by one voice per part, sometimes

supported by ripieno singers, also distributed one voice to a part. Melamed produces an elegant argument based on interpreting the design of the performance materials, which neatly summarizes the one voice to a part argument. Yet he also explores the way in which each of the concertists sang throughout the work, including solos, choruses and recitative. This situation, he argues, has important implications for the complex attitude of Bach and his contemporaries to the dramatic aspects of the passions.

The second section of the book examines performance histories of individual works. With respect to the *St Matthew Passion*, Melamed questions the orthodox notion of the work as one for double choir and orchestra. He traces its evolution over several revivals, suggesting that it originated as a work much like the *St John*, but with a more extended role for the ripieno group. This role was subsequently expanded in 1736 to give a greater degree of independence to the ripienists, now the second chorus. Nevertheless, this second choir remained subsidiary to the first, that is, the concertists. Another chapter offers up the complicated history the *St John Passion*, and its several versions, which are in some cases significantly different from one another. I found the final chapter, however, to be the most fascinating. Here Melamed examines Bach's use of a passion that was not own The way in which he used it, cutting it, altering it and adding to it provides new insight into Bach's own passions, and their nature as functional liturgical works, meant to suit the needs of a particular time and place.

The book's final section deals with Bach's 'lost' passion, the *St Mark*, and the 'apocryphal' *St Luke*. Bach's recourse to the standard eighteenth-century practice of parodying other works, whether they were his own or those of another composer, is scrutinized, both for its use in the *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, and for its implications in reconstructing the *St Mark Passion* for which a libretto and a date of performance (Good Friday 1731) are known, but for which the music is no longer extant. The case for considering the *Ode for Mourning* BMV 198 as a likely source of parody movements for the *St Mark* is discussed. Nevertheless, even after identifying such a likely source for the passion, many gaps are left. Melamed's convincingly concludes that any attempted reconstruction is destined to fail if we wish to understand it as a work by Bach, though it may succeed as a genuine attempt at eighteenth-century pastiche.

Throughout the book, the way in which the author succeeds in bringing the relevant detail to each discussion without the need for references is refreshing, and makes the text as pleasurable to read as the many insights into Bach and his world are absorbing. I find it hard to imagine any reader, whatever their background and knowledge of Bach's works, failing to find this book thoroughly stimulating. I would also add that the book is beautifully produced, and for those who still value the tried and true technology of pages and paper, it sits rather nicely in the hands while reading (in other words, don't wait for the paperback).

Finally it is worth noting that Melamed has no interest in prescribing how the passions should be interpreted today, either intellectually or in performance. He recognizes that in their altered and myriad twenty-first century manifestations, Bach's passions speak with great immediacy to the back row of the second sopranos, the expert practitioner using early instruments, and to the scholar. His concern is to enrich our understanding of these works by clarifying aspects of their original purpose and meaning, leaving us to wonder at how such artefacts from the past manage to transform themselves into works of the utmost importance to us today.

An Unknown Bach Aria Discovered

John Cunningham

In May last, a previously unknown aria by J. S. Bach was discovered in Weimar's Duchess Anna Amalia library. The two-page aria was found amongst documents in a shoebox by researcher Michael Maul. Maul made the discovery whilst working on an ongoing research project begun in 2002, which will systematically survey all central German church, communal and state archive collections.

The shoebox containing the aria was one of 50, 000 volumes (including a 1534 bible that belonged to Martin Luther), which were saved from the fire that ravaged the Anna Amalia library last September. The library, also known as 'Germany's literary memory', houses one of the country's most valuable collections. Thousands of items were taken from the library for restoration before the fire, in which many precious items were lost, including manuscripts by Schiller and Shakespeare. The library has since re-opened, February last.

The aria is the first new Bach piece to come to light for over thirty years. The last unknown piece was discovered in a private collection in 1974 when a copy of the 'Goldberg Variations' was found to have extra canons for keyboard in the composer's hand. The last previously unknown authentic vocal piece by Bach was discovered in 1935: the single movement cantata fragment 'Bekennen will ich seinen Namen'.

The newly-found aria was composed (and dated) by Bach in October 1713, when he was 28. Bach composed the piece as a gift for the fifty-second birthday of Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Saxe-Weimar, for whom he worked as a court organist. The aria is a setting of a twelve-stanza poem by the theologian Johann Anton Mylius, the first words of which are 'Alles mit God und nichts ohne Ihn' ('Everything with God and nothing without him'): the Duke's family motto. The setting of the strophic aria with *ritornello* is for solo soprano, accompanied by strings and basso continuo. Professor Christoph Wolff (of Harvard University, chair of the Board of the Bach Archive at Leipzig, and initiator and supervisor of the current research project) commented, 'It is no major composition but an occasional work in the form of an exquisite and highly refined strophic aria'.[1] The aria is one of the few works surviving from Bach's early period and is the composer's only known strophic aria; the precise date of the composition will make it of considerable interest to researchers studying the development of Bach's early style.

The four-minute aria is written in Bach's hand on two sheets of rare marble paper. Indeed, it was not the music but the paper and the binding that first attracted Maul's eye. He recalled, 'I was flipping through a file of occasional poetry without any particular expectations – and then I found this sheet music behind the Mylius poem. After ten hours of work without a break, without food, without water, I thought I was having a hallucination. But, pretty quickly, I was around 80 percent certain that it was the handwriting of Bach. A quick comparison with other Bach handwriting substantiated the thesis and the employees of the Bach Archive were also sure beyond a doubt'.[2] The aria was authenticated by a comparison with Bach's works in Harvard University. The aria (of which there has been no prior record, or reference) had been overlooked because it is not mentioned in any of the archives, and because it does not bear Bach's signature.

'Alles mit God und nichts ohne Ihn' was premiered by the English conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner on September 3, the first anniversary of the library fire. In May this year, Gardiner received a medal in recognition of his performance of Bach's music from the Saxony city of Leipzig, where Bach was cantor of St Thomas Church for 27 years. There are also plans by Germany's Bärenreiter publishing house to publish a facsimile and performing edition of the composition in the autumn.

1 http://www.bach-leipzig.de/main_englisch/aktuelles/menu/aktuelles/start_fr.html

2 As quoted in The Irish Times, 9 June 2005.

Hyperion Records Limited vs. Dr Lionel Sawkins

John Cunningham

In May last, Hyperion Records Limited lost its appeal against the ruling in the copyright case brought against it by Dr Lionel Sawkins. The dispute dates back to 2001, when four pieces, by Michel-Richard de Lalande, edited by Dr Sawkins were performed and recorded; they were subsequently released by Hyperion in 2002, on a CD entitled *Music for the Sun King*. Dr Sawkins claimed musical copyright on the editions, which Hyperion refused to recognise. The matter went before the courts in 2004, where Dr Sawkins sued Hyperion for breach of musical copyright: judgement was found in favour of Sawkins.

Dr Sawkins is a recognised authority on the music of the French Baroque composer Michel-Richard de Lalande; Lalande (1657-1726) was the principal court composer to the French kings Louis XIV and Louis XV. Since his retirement as a music lecturer in 1985, Dr Sawkins has devoted much of his time to giving lectures on Lalande as well as preparing many editions of Lalande's music (as well as other composers, such as Lully, Rameau and Royer). The sources of Lalande's music (both manuscript and copy) are often incomplete and contain many ambiguities, which require resolution by the editor. Many parts of the music require the addition of figures, ornaments and performance directions.

In 2001, Dr Sawkins prepared an edition of four Lalande pieces, which were performed by the choral group *Ex Cathedra* at concerts in Paris and in Birmingham. These concerts were recorded with the intention of being released as a CD by Hyperion. Hyperion paid Dr Sawkins the appropriate hire fee to use the editions, but refused to recognise his claim of copyright to the edition.

Dr Sawkins had made it clear that he intended to produce a faithful representation of Lalande's work, and not an interpretation or an arrangement thereof (which would have legal status as an original work). Hyperion's main objection was that unless the edition was 'a new and substantive musical work in its own right [or] unless the performing edition is original'[1] then it could not amount to a new musical work. Hyperion conceded that Dr Sawkins' skill and labour in compiling the edition did give him a literary copyright in the text, but argued that this could not extend to the musical sound, as this was Lalande's own.

In 2003, Dr Sawkins sought legal advice from Carter-Ruck, the firm which has an arrangement with the NATFHE (the university and college lecturer's union). Carter-Ruck agreed to take on the case on no-win-no-fee basis. The case went to trial in May 2004 and lasted for six days. Mr Justice Patten handed down the judgement in favour of Dr Sawkins in July 2004. It was ruled that Dr Sawkins had done enough work in producing the editions to entitle him to copyright protection. However, it was also decided that an insufficient amount of one of the works appeared on the CD to amount to an infringement. Hyperion were awarded leave of the court to appeal. The consequences of the verdict were so far-reaching for other record labels, and musicians generally, that Hyperion were given £50,000 to pursue the appeal by the British Phonographic Industry

The appeal was heard last May and the initial judgement upheld (the Appeal Court Judgement is available at www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Ch/2004/1530.html). Hyperion Records Limited were ordered to pay royalties to Dr Sawkins and to seek his permission before any further exploitation of his work can take place. The cost of the royalties, according to Hyperion, are not estimated to be very high; however, the no-win-no-fee basis on which Carter-Ruck took the case on Dr Sawkins' behalf means that legal costs are likely to be twice that of the real costs and are estimated to be as much as one million pounds. This will have a drastic affect on the company's ability to

record future projects. According to Hyperion's website:

> Hyperion now is forced to reconsider its general recorded output and will be reducing dramatically its commitment to many new recordings over the next year or two to concentrate on fund-raising activities to help with the legal costs and to keep a limited number of new recordings in its diary. The collateral damage caused by this decision not only will affect the prosperity of the company but also the dozens of artists and groups, producers, engineers, composers, music publishers and musical editors but most importantly the record buying public whose access to rare and collectable repertoire served by Hyperion, and perhaps many of the other record labels, will be severely diminished.

Hyperion was founded twenty-five years ago by Ted Perry (who died from lung cancer in 2003) and is now run by his son, Simon. In that time the label has pioneered recordings of lesser-known composers and neglected repertoires, such as the English Orpheus Series. An appeal for donations was launched through the company's website, and the label hopes to release twenty-five recordings over the coming months.

One wonders whether Dr Sawkins' personal victory is not also a pyrrhic one for editors of early music as a whole. The judgement means that almost every out of copyright work will actually have its own musical copyright, as the law will view it as 'original'. This will have severe ramifications for the recording of early music, as recording companies will now have to seek, and pay for, a licence before recording or performing a piece of music from an edition. Furthermore, the judgement has significantly broadened the legal definition of 'originality' in music performance, and opens the way for performers to claim a musical copyright in addition to their performing rights. These extra expenses are sure to limit the ability of companies like Hyperion to continue to produce much needed and important recordings. It is a judgement, which has divided the musicological community and, one that is likely to have a dramatic and far-reaching effect on the recording of early music.

1 Hyperion website

Recent Articles on Issues of Performance Practice

Compiled by Andrew Woolley

Journal of the American Musicological Society Vol. 58/ ii (Summer 2005)

- Steven Zohn, *Telemann in the marketplace: the composer as self-publisher*
- Mary Hunter, *'To play as if from the soul of the composer': the idea of the performer in early Romantic aesthetics*

Cambridge Opera Journal Vol. 17/i (2005)

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Chelys Vol. 32 (2004)

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- Florian Grampp, *A little known collection of canzonas rediscovered: the* Canzoni a cinque de sonarsi con le viole da gamba *by Cherubino Waesich (Rome, 1632)*
- Lambert Smit, *Towards a more consistent and more historical view of Bach's violoncello*

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- Grant O'Brien, *An analysis of the origins of a large Franco-Flemish double-manual harpsichord - would a Ruckers by any other name sound as sweet?*

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- Stephen Rose, *Daniel Vetter and the domestic keyboard chorale in Bach's Leipzig*
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- Christian Speck, *Boccherini as cellist and his music for cello*
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