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NATIONAL EARLY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

FORTY YEARS ON THE FIDDLE

Catherine Mackintosh talks to Poppy Holden

The violinist Catherine Mackintosh, 'Cat' to her huge circle of friends and acquaintances, is a household name to most early-music enthusiasts. She led the Academy of Ancient Music for fifteen years, and now is 'rotating leader' of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. She heads the Purcell Quartet, a group with an enviable reputation. She has influenced dozens of our best young players through her teaching at the Royal College of Music and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music.

For this interview, we met before one of her concerts, near where she used to live for many years, by Barnes Bridge; in this charming idyll of middle-class London, well-proportioned Regency houses line the river, flaunting their pretty iron balconies. It was a sunny, windy day, with the privet newly in bloom. Cat's car was full of instruments for her students, and before we could go for our chat she had to find somewhere safe to leave them. She drove down the street where she used to live, dashing from the car and ringing doorbells till she found somebody at home; we carried the violin cases into the front room (furnished with a piano and several music stands) amid friendly chatter.

When we settled to our talk, she told me she had just come to the end of a very busy period, giving her last three concerts with the RCM Baroque orchestra; after running it for sixteen years she was about to hand the group over to the oboist, Paul Goodwin. This orchestra was originally started as a chamber group by Francis Baines, Alison Bury, Robert Woolley and Annette Isserlis. Cat finds that as the students aren't only from the RCM, but are drawn from other colleges too, the administration is a nightmare, especially for someone as unbureaucratic as she is. Players tend to fall ill and drop out at the last minute, leaving gaps to be filled in a hurry. In spite of these burdens, she is sad to think she'll no longer be meeting all the up-and-coming young musicians as she did. Cat started running this orchestra when she was pregnant with her second child, in 1977. I asked her how she manages to combine looking after her family with a career which can take her round the world at a moment's notice?

> A very helpful husband, that's the number one requisite. He's very involved with the family – he's an architect with a regular nine-to-five job, so he's always there in the evenings and at weekends. I always had help at home. I didn't try and soldier on. I had a series of au-pair girls, and at one stage I had a daily nanny and I shared her with all the rest of the families in the street. Our house was like Piccadilly Circus, with thousands of little children running around all over it.

I ask if she travels a lot.

> Not as much as many of my violin-playing colleagues. When I started out playing the Baroque fiddle, the Academy of Ancient Music, which I led, was mostly a recording orchestra, which was really the most incredible stroke of fortune for me, as I had small children then. I was very busy with the AAM and decided not to play with other orchestras, and we were mainly based in London: we didn't start touring until '84/85 when we went to America twice in Bach and Handel year – and by that time my children were ten and eight.

Her natural cycle of enthusiasm seems to be about fifteen years, as she stopped working with the AAM, and with the RCM orchestra, after a similar period, feeling that by then she needed a new challenge.

Cat began playing the violin when she was seven years old. Next May, she told me, she'll have been 'forty years on the fiddle'. Her mother was a very keen amateur cellist and encouraged all four children to play, so Cat, as the youngest, had to catch up fast. Her elder sister still plays and teaches the violin, and another is a very good oboist. Her brother plays the viola and Scottish folk-fiddle, in California. Her father, who also encouraged his children, had been a musical child whose mother had played the piano very well, but he never learned to play; he was born in 1902, and boys, it seems, were discouraged from having music lessons in those days.

From the age of eight till she was twelve, Cat dreamed of being a dancer, and studied ballet seriously until she became, she says, 'too fat'. (The training was useful, as she feels that violin-playing is similar to Baroque dancing: the arms swing into similar positions.) At Cranborne Chase School in Wiltshire, she learned music from the composer Harrison Birtwistle, who introduced her to early music. He ran a choir in which she sang, and he also taught the O-level syllabus, famously getting from Machaut only as far as Bach by the time the exams came. She fell in love with Purcell's music while she was at the school. As a teenager she went several times to a music camp, where she met Nicholas and Timothy Kraemer, and worked with them on Bach cantatas, *Dido and Aeneas* and the Brandenburg concertos, all on modern instruments.

After school she went through the conventional violinist's training at the Royal College of Music, and then took up the viol. She also taught herself to play the Baroque violin, on which she has never had a lesson, and she says that she still learns all the time, as she teaches others. Although she plays a good deal of solo music, she's never thought of herself as a soloist; chamber music is her greatest love. When she showed her son that her recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* had beaten Julian Lloyd Webber in the charts, he couldn't believe it of his self-effacing mother.

I asked about her first Baroque instrument.

> I went through several stages in getting the complete equipment. I started off playing a modern violin with a Baroque bow, proper strings and chinrest and the whole caboodle, and that was a very good beginning. I'm glad I did it that way round. Then I borrowed an old instrument with gut strings which was set up as a Baroque violin and sounded quite horrible, as some still Baroque violins still do, so I took that back to its owner. Then Gill Solomon, a violin maker and repairer who worked for Beare, found an instrument which was an early eighteenth-century English violin with an original neck that had never been changed, and at the time it was very unusual for anyone to be interested in an instrument like that, so I bought it for a song and made a lot of money on it with the Academy of Ancient Music. I'd never sell it – it's at present being used by students at the Royal Scottish Academy. I've got about ten or eleven instruments, counting violas, and some of those are on loan to students – sometimes one never sees them again but I'm getting a bit more careful.

Her first recording was for Decca, *The Leaves be Green*, made in 1969 with the Consort of Musicke, on which she played the cittern (which she's never played before or since), and also sang, and played the treble viol and the rebec. That was around the time of the inception of the Consort, before it became vocally based when Emma Kirkby joined the group. Cat feels that the sort of thing they were doing in the early '70s would seem amateurish now. I suggest that they were pioneering, but she thinks that is too polite. Since then she has made, according to my researches, 89 recordings (though I'm sure I've missed some). The bulk of these were for l'Oiseau-Lyre, made with the AAM. Seven for Hyperion, and a dozen for Chandos, were mostly with the Purcell Quartet. Most recently she has recorded, again for Chandos, the Lawes Fantasy Suites, which should be on the shelves by the time you read this, and coming soon with the same forces will be a volume of Schütz's *Symphoniae Sacrae*. Swelling the throng will be a splendid company of singers: Emma Kirkby, Suzie leBlanc, James Bowman, Nigel Rogers, Charles Daniels, Richard Wistreich and Stephen Varcoe.

Cat is a visiting professor at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music in Glasgow: she teaches there six

times a year, seeing all of her pupils in one day, setting off at 5 a.m. and returning home in time for dinner. Her family comes from Scotland, so she enjoys the Scottish connection. The scheme at the Academy is that students must take up the equivalent of their main instrument on one of the Academy's collection of Baroque instruments, and then play it in public. In April 1993 their task was to perform the Bach *Magnificat*. Cat said it was fine, and the choir was good, even though the Academy's singing students receive no specific early-music training. In London, as well as having run its orchestra for fifteen years, she teaches at the Royal College of Music, where her unwieldy title is 'Professor of Baroque violin and viola and classical violin and viola'. As she says, it's just as well there aren't many pupils. The RCM has recently instigated a new option system, which enables students to play a Baroque instrument as their joint first or joint second study.

Her latest project has been to teach herself the *viola d'amore*, an instrument much larger than a violin, with six or seven gut strings plus a set of wire sympathetic strings which are tuned to whatever key you happen to be playing in. On the day we met, she was playing in a Telemann concerto for flute, oboe and *viola d'amore* in E major, so the strings were tuned to Bs and G-sharps: 'You can finish with a lovely flourish and a beautiful sound just by taking all your fingers off'. At the beginning of 1995 she will record the seven Vivaldi *viola d'amore* concertos – one with lute – for the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, on the Harmonia Mundi label. She also has a violin-and-harpsichord duo with Maggie Cole, established in 1992, which is doing well. Their next recording will be of Bach's obbligato harpsichord and violin sonatas.

But there's more to Cat Mackintosh than the career. She isn't just a wonderful violinist and a pillar of the musical performing and teaching establishment. She inspires huge affection in people, and I think it's important to try briefly to explain why. I asked some of her colleagues to tell me more about her.

Her former pupil, Clare Salaman, who now plays in several of our best Baroque orchestras, raved to me in an attic room at Finchcocks about her experience of Cat as a teacher, remarking on her magical knack of easily correcting a student's problem, often by suggesting a simple change of stance. I myself remember seeing her in action during a masterclass at Sutton House, when she remarked lightly, apropos one student's difficulties, that violinists with marks on their necks are using too much pressure. The student's grip relaxed a little, and his tone and phrasing improved right away. She champions those who struggle to learn music in difficult circumstances, and will give her time generously. She has many enthusiastic Czech students who relish the free lessons they get when she is playing in the Prague Early Music Festival.

Most people who talked about her brought up the subject of her kindness, but they mainly wished to keep their stories private. One which can be revealed goes like this: a singer was due to make her solo début as part of a South Bank concert: the performance had to be cancelled because Cat was unwell and no replacement could be found in time. The singer had no idea Cat knew of her existence, but some months later Cat sought her out and apologized. She had guessed, rightly, that the lost opportunity had meant a lot to the person concerned, who was touched and comforted by her sympathy.

While I was asking him for up-to-date details of the Purcell Quartet's schedule, Richard Boothby quoted their recording engineer, Nick Parker, who described Catherine Mackintosh as 'that rare player whose style, personality and musicianship are integral and continuous. She has great humanity, and no false vanity.' That just about sums her up.

She is putting on a concert in St John's Smith Square on 29 April, in aid of her early-music prize to launch RCM graduates in their careers. Many of the great and good with RCM connections will be taking part: among them, Emma Kirkby will sing *Jauchzet Gott*, and Cat and Alison Bury will play the Bach Double Violin concerto. Bring your friends! ❖

ELIZABETHAN FEVER: A 1920s EARLY-MUSIC 'BOOM'

ELIZABETH ROCHE

> It is not easy to isolate the quality which gives to a movement that sudden grip upon the general interest and attention which entitles it to be called a craze...

Though in fact referring to the then-current mania for crossword puzzles, that sentence, from a leading article which appeared in *The Times* in 1925, could just as well have applied to the rage for Elizabethan music which, following the classic 'craze' pattern, arose apparently out of the blue just after the Great War, reached its peak with the Byrd and Weelkes tercentenary celebrations in 1923, and a few years later had vanished almost without trace. The main difference between this craze and many of the others which swept Britain between the wars was that the enthusiasm for Elizabethan music did not start entirely from scratch; in some fields it represented an intensification of already existing activity rather than a radical new departure. A handful of madrigals and a little church music had formed part of the repertory of many Victorian and Edwardian choirs. And in the early years of this century, the foundation of the Oriana Madrigal Society, and the increasing use of madrigals as test-pieces at the leading competitive festivals, had given a further boost to the cultivation of secular vocal music. Even the Great War did not stifle such activity altogether, but all the same, this branch of early English music was still very much a minority interest, and in all probability few would have expected that it would ever be anything else.

However, mysterious though the origins of a craze may be, with hindsight it can still sometimes be possible to identify some of the factors which provided its initial impetus. Even before 1914 there had of course been a strong leaning towards 'Englishness' in the arts, old as well as new. In literature, for example, it was manifested not only in the work of the Georgian poets, but also in the fashion for reviving plays by Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists. Musically, however, this is probably better represented by the work of contemporary composers, and of course in the surge of enthusiasm for folk-song and dance, which paralleled the Elizabethan revival, while remaining largely quite separate from it. As far as the former is concerned, it seems quite likely that the second English musical Renaissance stimulated a renewed interest in the first, especially as composers such as Vaughan Williams freely admitted their interest in, and debt to, their sixteenth-century predecessors. And indeed, its Englishness was almost certainly one of the main reasons for the resurgence of Elizabethan music. It is even possible to see it as an assertion of national pride, for with Germany soundly defeated, and America both challenging Britain's political status as Top Nation and introducing all sorts of transatlantic fashions alien to the traditional British way of life, such as jazz and cocktails, there must have been something very attractive about a period when, as was widely believed, English music had been not only the best in the world, but entirely free from foreign influences. To take only two examples, lecturers such as Sir Richard Terry were prone to point to Byrd's Masses as sources of national pride which Englishmen should not allow to be neglected any longer; and the organizers of a competitive festival at Leeds were hauled over the coals for setting a Marenzio madrigal as a test when there were perfectly good English ones available.

Patriotic feeling was not the whole story, however. One of the chief characteristics of the 1920s was its passion for new and exciting sensations; that had nothing whatever to do with the stuffy old world left behind in 1914. Most notorious, of course, were the new types of recreation indulged in by the Bright Young Things, but there were new fashions in literature, art and even scientific thought as well, and these were embraced by a rather less exclusive section of the population. The most up-to-date things in serious music, however, were the latest excesses of continental composers such as Stravinsky and Schoenberg, which had little appeal for ordinary concert-goers. What *they* probably wanted was something in a style which was intriguingly different, yet not totally divorced from what they were used to. Paradoxically, the revival of old but not generally well-known music was the ideal solution to the problem.

So much for a few of the general reasons why the time was ripe for a revival of early English music. But what, if any, were the more specific elements that helped it to take off when it did? Not, probably, the imminent tercentenaries of Byrd, Gibbons and Weelkes. The relative neglect of Morley's tercentenary in 1903 suggests that such an event by itself had little power to generate extra interest, and it may well have been just a happy accident that those three anniversaries coincided with a significant change in the musical climate.

Much more important was the foundation in 1919

of the British Music Society, whose widely approved aim was to promote all types and periods of English music in the best and least chauvinist way. Elizabethan music naturally bulked large both in its publications (one of the first was a pamphlet on the English Madrigal by Fellowes, whose edition of the madrigalists was well on the way towards completion) and the programme of lectures by eminent authorities which it promoted in various centres around the country. Sometimes at least these were associated with performances, as in February 1920 at Newcastle, when a lecture on Byrd's Masses by Terry was followed by the Newcastle and Gateshead Choral Union's performance of the four-part work. Terry was indeed one of the Society's most active speakers; another was Sir Frederick Bridge, whose lecture on Elizabethan 'Cryes of London' was delivered many times, and must have been one reason for the many hearings which the newly published Gibbons and Dering settings received.

The number of such new practical editions of Tudor music as the *Cryes* and the English Madrigal School must also have stimulated increased interest, for hitherto only a tiny proportion of the output had been easily available to performers, and an expansion of the repertory was an essential prerequisite of any widespread revival. The revival itself, however, was probably responsible for many of the other performing editions and series of Tudor music which appeared during the early 1920s. The existence of Fellowes's editions did not prevent other editors getting to grips with the madrigal, obviously likely to be the most lucrative field, since so much madrigal-singing was done by choirs rather than by small ensembles. But other types of music benefited too. The lute-song repertory was at last being brought to light, by Philip Heseltine and Philip Wilson as well as Fellowes, and so was keyboard and string ensemble music (in all these types of music, lute parts were naturally arranged for piano, and viol textures redeployed for modern strings; but at least the music was being made accessible in what was then the only reasonably practicable form).

Neither were new editions the only aspect of the scholarly side of early music to take a higher profile. New books dealing wholly or partly with the subject appeared – Bridge's *Twelve Good Musicians* (pre-Purcell Englishmen) was one of the first of many. And widely read journals such as the *Musical Times* devoted more space than before to serious articles on 'early' topics and even found space for scholarly controversy on matters to do with the editing of old music.

Once the Elizabethan revival was fairly launched, and generating an increasing supply of performing material, its manifestations were too many and too various for all to be described in detail here. One important aspect of it which must be mentioned, however, is the involvement of professional musicians. Before the War, the performance of early music had been a mainly amateur preoccupation – inevitably, given that most of it involved choral singing. The role of professional singers had been restricted mainly to such tasks as taking the 'solo' parts in prestigious performances of polyphonic Masses. In the 1920s, though it would still not have been possible for a performer or groups to make a career entirely out of early music, professional musicians did begin to take more interest in it. Once modern performing editions were available, singers began to include lute-songs in their recital programmes; the tenor John Coates, an unusually skilled and enterprising programme-builder, made much use of this repertory, and so, until his untimely death, did Heseltine's collaborator Philip Wilson. Harold Samuel and Harold Craxton made something of a speciality of old English keyboard music, and pianists in general were more likely to open their recitals with the odd bit of Byrd or Bull.

Infinitely more significant in this field, however, was the foundation in 1920 of what was almost certainly Britain's first professional one-to-a-part mixed vocal ensemble, the English Singers. There were six of them, and though their programmes generally included modern works and folk-song arrangements as well, the English madrigal was the core of their repertory. They enjoyed considerable success right from the start, and audiences seem particularly to have liked their truly authentic Elizabethan habit of sitting around a table to sing their madrigals. Even more important than their concert appearances, though, were the English Singers' much acclaimed gramophone records of a small selection of English madrigals. The first batch of three, issued in time for Christmas 1921, contained seven pieces including Gibbons's 'The Silver Swan', Morley's 'Now is the month of Maying', and Wilbye's 'Flora gave me fairest flowers'. More followed a little later, so they must have sold reasonably well; indeed, the fact that there was a large enough potential market to justify making such records in the first place is irrefutable evidence that the Tudor revival was already thriving. But the records themselves, bringing even a handful of the best madrigals, really well performed, within the reach of those many listeners who rarely if ever had the chance to hear such music properly done, not to mention those amateur singers who badly needed a decent standard to aim at, must have had an incalculable effect on spreading the Tudor gospel even further. Yet however strong the market, it is likely that without a small professional group such as the English Singers such records would never have been made at all, at any rate until the advent of the electrical process in the mid-1920s made choral recordings more practicable.

But vitally important for the future though this professional interest in early music was, the main emphasis of the revival was inevitably on amateur choral singing. Concert programmes around the country reflected the new enthusiasm very strongly – if nothing else, Elizabethan music provided a welcome contrast with, and substitute for, the Victorian favourites that had been the backbone of the choral repertory before 1914, but were now being rejected as too hopelessly old-fashioned. And, though not necessarily easy to sing, actually reading the notes of a madrigal was still within the capacity of sol-fa trained choralists – which much newly composed choral music of an up-to-date sort definitely was not.

Perhaps the most interesting developments as far as amateurs were concerned were in the field of the competitive festival, rather than of the public concert. English madrigals and anthems had always had an assured place in the syllabuses of even quite modest festivals, and continued to do so – though judging by some accounts the standard of performance could be pretty poor. Even the most highly reputed choirs found the style difficult to bring off, and the less accomplished small choirs who were supposed to be being given a taste for this music had an uphill struggle, if not to sing the notes, then certainly to achieve any kind of rhythmic flexibility or convincing interpretation. But in 1922 the Blackpool Festival broke new ground by introducing a class for the self-accompanied singing (at the grand pianoforte, of course) of lute-songs. Terry adjudicated, the performances seem not to have been too bad, and the class was confidently proclaimed as the first of many that would spring up at festivals all over the country and help to make the public see Elizabethan music as a necessary ingredient in a balanced musical life, not as mere antiquarian stuff. In fact, with the exception of the Midland event at Birmingham, other ordinary festivals showed little interest in following Blackpool's lead, and the next step in this direction took the form of a whole specialist festival whose syllabus was to be drawn entirely from the work of Elizabethan and Jacobean composers.

The first Elizabethan Competitive Festival took place at the Kingsway Hall in London in March 1923. There were classes for various types of choirs, solo singers, two- and three-part vocal ensembles, pianists, organists and string quartets, and the composers represented included Byrd, Bull, Weelkes, Morley, Tomkins, Parsley and Parsons. The festival was widely welcomed as deserving the fullest support, and as the start of a movement which would greatly benefit English music and English musicians. But despite a great deal of earnest propaganda there were in the end only eighty entries, and the two classes for large choirs, sacred and secular respectively, had only one entry each; moreover, a large proportion of the entries in other classes seem to have been provided by detachments of one body – the London County Council Staff Philharmonic Society. Indeed, the vast majority of the competitors came from the South of England; the Midlands and North, where the festival movement was strongest and had the greatest influence on musical taste, was represented only by a single small choir, from Blackburn. The final concert, however, with contributions from the Choir of Westminster Cathedral, the Oriana Madrigal Society, the pianist Harold Craxton, and a number of solo singers, was a sell-out. For by 1923 early music was taking a more prominent part in London's concert life than ever before; not only was it turning up so often in mixed programmes that performers who could have included some Old English items and did not were liable to be rapped over the knuckles by the press, but in late summer it was awarded the final proof of having arrived – a niche in the Promenade season. For on 11 and 12 September the Halifax Madrigal Society appeared at the Promenade Concert in the Queen's Hall to sing selections of unaccompanied pieces which included not only a Bach motet but also madrigals and motets by a generous selection of English and continental composers including Byrd, Weelkes, Wilbye, Morley, Palestrina, Lassus and Marenzio.

The names Byrd and Weelkes are of course the clue as to why the Elizabethan revival reached its peak in 1923; not only were their actual tercentenaries celebrated with extraordinary lavishness, but the effect also spread over the whole year. Byrd did rather better than Weelkes; the main celebrations, most of which took place in early July, included among their principal events commemorative services at Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, and Peterborough and Lincoln Cathedrals, London recitals by the choir of Westminster Cathedral and the English Singers, a lecture by Fellowes under the auspices of the British Music Society, and a dinner given by the Worshipful Company of Musicians at Stationers' Hall. But these were only the tip of the iceberg, for the anniversary was celebrated with extraordinary thoroughness all over the country, and it is clear that the events were enthusiastically supported both by the singers who were recruited to take part and by the audiences, often including civic dignitaries, who flocked to hear them.

There was much more to the celebrations, however, than concerts and services. Articles abounded in the daily and weekly press, even in journals which normally showed little interest in serious music: Fellowes published a book on Byrd; new editions of music included two keyboard volumes from the Carnegie Trust; and the HMV record company did Byrd really proud with a collection of gramophone records. These included not only five discs of madrigals and church music (including excerpts from the three- and four-

part Masses, sung by the English Singers), but also two of keyboard music actually played on the harpsichord, and one containing a viol fantasia played by a modern string sextet. This last is particularly interesting, as it does seem to have been the Byrd and Weelkes centenaries, plus that of Gibbons two years later, which brought a few consort pieces (albeit on modern instruments) to the attention of those who were never likely to hear them in their original scoring.

The Weelkes celebrations in November, though on a less grand scale, took a similar form. With so much activity and enthusiasm, involving so many people, it must have seemed that early music was really on the map at last. But even when the junketings were at their height, there were those perceptive critics who wondered how healthy the situation really was, and questioned whether Elizabethan music was really destined to become part of their mainstream of musical life alongside Handel oratorios and Beethoven symphonies, or whether it would prove to be merely a rootless passing fashion destined, like all fashions, to fade away in the face of the next exciting new fad. Would the audiences who acclaimed the English Singers' performances go to other concerts of Tudor music, or was their interest limited to the activities of one particular group that happened to be the fashion? Was the interest in Byrd and Weelkes largely a mixture of band-wagon jumping and satisfying a mild curiosity about something vaguely unusual? And if so, was there not a danger that Byrd and Weelkes were nothing but centennial comets, flashing across the musical heavens once in a hundred years and, once the celebrations were over, destined to return to obscurity until their quatercentenaries brought them another flash of public notoriety?

Probably at the time, such doubts must have seemed disgustingly cynical, but events were to prove them justified. Even by 1925, when it was Gibbons's turn to have a tercentenary, the tide had begun to turn. The Gibbons celebrations were worthy enough, but seem not to have been on the scale of Byrd's, though they did include a live broadcast of the commemoration service from Canterbury Cathedral – a type of honour which presumably had not been practicable two years before, and thanks to a landline failure, was not without its problems.

The comments of contemporary critics suggest that the chief problem lay in many enthusiasts' too indiscriminate approach, programming long groups of Elizabethan pieces which were not necessarily the best of their kind, and were too similar in mood and style to hold a non-specialist audience's attention. Only judiciously planned performances of the best music, to audiences with some predisposition to appreciate it, would enable the revival to make solid progress and develop into something more than a nine days' wonder – and this was simply not happening, since many of those engaged in both publishing and performing the music seemed unable to discriminate between pieces with real musical value, and those which were of purely antiquarian interest. It was also suggested that an overdose of madrigals was one reason for the decline in choral entries at the smaller competitive festivals: too many choirs were being called upon to run before they could walk, and adjudicators were being forced to listen to some appalling hashes of Byrd and Weelkes served up by village and small town choirs who could have managed a modern part-song much more comfortably, and who probably found the style not only of the music but also of typical madrigal verse and its poetic imagery thoroughly alien.

When the boom was at its height, it would have been unthinkable to suggest that bulk madrigals were only suitable for specialist audiences, for was not the revival of Tudor music initiating fundamental changes in the British musical landscape? But as time went on the forebodings expressed in 1923 proved to have been all too accurate; Tudor music had indeed been a mere passing fashion, demand was falling fast, and by about 1927, the craze was virtually over. There was far less early music about, on the gramophone as well as in live performances, and it was returning to its old position as a minority enthusiasm – though sufficient permanent converts may well have been made for the minority to be substantially larger than in the old days.

The collapse of the revival is perhaps most clearly mirrored in the later history of the Elizabethan Competitive Festival. The 1924 event was a considerable advance on its predecessor, spread over five days instead of two, with well over 200 entries, and reasonable audiences, especially for Saturday's choral competitions. In 1925, however, the rising artistic standard was not matched by increasing interest among performers or listeners, and 1926 was even worse, with barely enough performers to make the event worthwhile, and virtually no audience at all. Naturally it was not financially self-supporting, and in February 1927 a committee of influential musicians launched an impassioned appeal for a reserve fund of £500. But despite the committee's assurances that keeping the festival going was a matter of genuine national importance, the appeal seems to have fallen on deaf ears, and there were no more Elizabethan Festivals. Even when the craze was at its peak, it would probably have been difficult to raise so enormous a sum for such a purpose – just the financial constraints under which most of the great Northern competitive choirs operated had made it impossible for them to travel to a festival in the South; once it was on the wane, both tasks had become impossible.

There was of course one annual event which, though it did come into being during the craze, con-

tinued to flourish long after it was over – the Haslemere Festival. But this was rather a special case. It did not begin until 1925, when the craze had passed its peak, and though the wider interest in early music may have been part of the reason why Arnold Dolmetsch chose to start it then rather than at any other time, Haslemere was the culmination of more than thirty years of work (Dolmetsch gave his first London concerts in the early 1890s). And given early music's much reduced presence in the concert life of London and the major provincial centres, it is difficult to regard the survival of one isolated event as evidence that a widespread general enthusiasm lived on after the craze was over. Certainly, with the best will in the world, the early Haslemere Festivals cannot be regarded as part of mainstream musical life, and there is also the not unrelated question of how far the audience consisted of a faithful band of Dolmetsch disciples rather than of new converts from the wider musical world. From the point of view of that wider public, perhaps the most significant thing about that first Haslemere Festival was that the BBC broadcast half of one concert live from its main London station 2LO (and another one-and-a-half from the experimental 5XX transmitter at Daventry). But however limited its appeal may have been, the fact remains that during the period between the end of the boom and the arrival of the BBC Third Programme the Haslemere Festival was one of the chief bastions of early music in Britain – and that in the Haslemere Festivals of the 1990s we still have a living memento of 'Elizabethan Fever'. ❖

HYMNS AND ANTHEMS

CLIFFORD BARTLETT

Clifford Bartlett, music publisher, editor and reviewer, peruses two recent publications.

Donald Davie is a distinguished literary critic, one of the few who have taken the hymn seriously, most recently in *The Eighteenth-Century Hymn in England* (Cambridge University Press; £27.95). It is a topic of considerable musical interest, since our hymn books are (or at least were, until invaded by awkward, pseudo-contemporary tunes) a marvellous source for fine melodies that can be sung by untrained voices of limited range. Regrettably, it is a repertory that will be confined to church-goers unless school assemblies with hymns come back into fashion.

Dr Davie has produced a fine literary study of Watts, Wesley, Smart and Cowper. He disappoints, however, in that, having so precisely isolated some of the factors that make the congregational hymn a distinct literary form (pp.18–19), he then writes the rest of the book about hymns as they were written, not as they came to be sung. He even ignores relevant musical considerations. For instance, if John Byrom's 'Christians, awake!' was sung to the familiar tune outside his house on Christmas Day 1750, it must have been divided into stanzas nearly seventy years before James Montgomery laid his hands on it and produced the normal modern version. Davie rightly says 'These poems are alive – in tattered hymnals, on insecure music-stands, and the inexact memories of infrequent worshippers everywhere from London to Kuala Lumpur'. Sadly, he has chosen not to write a book on this, but instead concentrates on the hymns in their original form, without tunes and before they have suffered (or enjoyed) the adaptation that many have undergone before achieving popularity. It would be churlish to complain that he hasn't written the book I would like him to have written – it is well worth reading on its own terms. But it is disappointing that he has not followed up his initial perception.

A curiosity of the hymn is that the origin of the words and the music are so often independent. This is particularly so in the case of the hymns of Charles Wesley. He deliberately eschewed the metrical limitation which would enable his hymns to be sung to the common psalm tunes, and not even Methodists sing them to tunes he would have known. Not a single tune from the first collection of Methodist tunes (by Lampe) survives in normal use, and the one apparent example with a contemporary tune, 'Lo! he comes with clouds descending', has words only partially by Wesley. Curiously, one hymn that was probably written for a tune that is still very familiar is rarely sung to it: 'Love divine, all loves excelling' to Purcell's 'Fairest isle'.

Wesley comes out poorly in Davie's book. He has a chapter headed 'The Carnality of Charles Wesley' and concentrates unduly on traits that have not survived the selection process of history and usage. Later, he quotes 'And can it be, that I should gain' alongside John Newton's 'Amazing grace' without comparing them in any detail: they would make a fine topic for a comparative study of the interrelationship of words and music. Both have distinctive tunes from around 1830, long after the date of the words. 'Amazing grace' has became widely known, thanks to Paul McCartney; Wesley's hymn, with its extraordinarily well-matching, florid tune, has a special status within Methodism but is virtually unknown elsewhere. I'd love to read what Davie might, in collaboration with a sympathetic musician, write on the living history of these two hymns: for a start, 'And' as an opening word invites comment. It is, alas, unlikely, since the press release describes the book as the author's swan song.

I turn now to Charles Wesley's grandson, Samuel Sebastian Wesley (whose name, incidentally, is a sign of the importance of his father in the revival of Bach's music in England). His anthems are now being published in Musica Britannica, with two volumes now available (MB 57 & 63; Stainer & Bell £70.00 & £65.50) and a third to follow. As a matter of status, it is immensely gratifying that he is now represented in our 'national collection of music'. But it is difficult to see the manner of publication as much more than a matter of prestige, with limited practical use.

Some anthems had a complicated publishing history, with changes (mostly only in detail) made during the composer's lifetime. Where they exist, the final version (which the MB editor, Peter Horton, takes as his source text) is the Novello octavo edition, i.e. the one that is regularly used in choirs around the country. Why, then, go to the expense of resetting all this music that already exists in perfectly usable editions that are in a more suitable format than the large pages of MB? Would it not have been more sensible to have reproduced the octavo scores, with errors corrected and critical notes added; only works not existing in that format would need printing from scratch. Early English Church Music is in the right format: can't the

two organizations publishing through Stainer and Bell (and with a common committee member) get together and allocate projects sensibly between them?

It would, incidentally, be worthwhile for someone to issue in facsimile Wesley's *12 Anthems* of 1853. Curiously, it is this earlier edition that is nearer to the MB format, one which emphasizes Wesley's continuity with the eighteenth-century tradition of anthem publication rather than the Victorian octavo format and may give a hint to the most appropriate style of performance – run-down provincial cathedral rather than burgeoning urban or suburban parish church.

Vol. 1 appeared in 1990 and contains eleven anthems. I wrote a review at the time which seems not to have been printed, so have rescued from it comments on the treatment of one of Wesley's most popular anthems, 'Blessed be the God and Father', comparing MB with the *12 Anthems* and the Novello octavo editions. MB does not make clear that there are two versions of this: the copy I own (*Novello's Octavo Anthems* 15, Price 3d) fits the brief bibliographical description in the MB notes, but the earlier one which Horton seems to have used is in vol. 1, pp. 123–30, of *Novello's Collection of Anthems by Modern Composers*. The later version makes some petty changes, but differs chiefly in adapting the organ part when it goes below bottom C.

In the opening section, 'Senza Org.' is unnecessarily replaced in MB by '[senza organ to b.18]', the brackets casting unnecessary doubt in the user's mind on the authority of the instruction. MB reinforces such doubt with small print for the unaccompanied section, which might be taken to imply that the notes are editorial. Both Novello editions keep the accompaniment (a term suppressed by MB) full size: conductors of less-experienced choirs will take comfort from the fact that Wesley himself seems implicitly to accept that accompaniment throughout the passage is better than the embarrassment of a clash of pitches at the climax of this sweeping opening sentence.

Bar 21 The substitution of 'ATB' in the margin for 'Alto, Tenor, & Bass' above the staff makes it easier to miss the significance of the heading: that countertenors are expected to sing below their falsetto range: the revised Novello points this even more clearly with unison after Alto. MB modernizes the terminology of the organ registration here and elsewhere.

25 Layout of organ follows *12 Anthems*, not Novello.

31 The organ editorial tie is in fact in both Novello edns.

41 Ped in source, so doesn't need bracketing.

45 MB ignores the increasingly sanctifying capitalization of the sources: *12 Anthems* 'he which', Novello 'He which', later Novello 'He Which'.

65-6 MB has an awkward line-end with prevents the 'ritard.' straddling the bar line.
78 Whatever is the cautionary flat for?
79 The notes quote the Novello reading without saying that the emendment is a reversion to *12 Anthems*.
81 Do the sophisticated readers of MB need an editorial accidental when choirboys have negotiated the passage with no problem for over a century?
85 Another superfluous cautionary accidental: not in either Novello, so I don't understand the commentary.
107 The use of modern-style beaming of quavers is confusing. It encourages misaccentuation, and the need for a triplet seems to be a consequence of the new notation.
110 The 'f' at the last beat is omitted from MB.
117 The footnote is not distinguishable as editorial and is questionable: why should the fifths not be sung? *12 Anthems* omits the low F, the later Novello edition prints it small.

These points are fairly trivial; but an authoritative edition should be aware that even trivial changes may have implications that are not immediately obvious. It is also a pity that the commentary does not give, even in general terms, any indication of the extent of the various revisions (in this case, quite small).

Vol. 2 contains only two anthems, 'The Wilderness' and 'Ascribe unto the Lord', both in two versions, with organ and the previously unpublished orchestrations. The sources for the orchestral version of 'Ascribe unto the Lord' are particularly confused, resulting in a vast, indigestible list of variants which is still incomplete. But it is difficult to know how else the problem could have been handled. The organ version of 'The Wilderness' has additional performing instructions taken from MS additions to a copy of an earlier edition: these are very practical (e.g. 'Do not get slower' for the chorus entry 'For in the wilderness shall waters break out'), with several comments on the choral recit 'And a highway shall be there': church choirmasters should transfer these to their own copies.

In fact, since this edition is not going to be used for performance (except as a full score for the orchestral anthems – I hope parts will be produced) and does not reveal enough variants to make a thorough comparison between the standard editions something that choral conductors will feel is worthwhile, it would be useful if the final volume could contain an appendix (explicitly marked 'This may be photocopied') listing the changes needed to correct or supplement the Novello editions. Peter Horton's careful study of the sources could then be of use to the wide body of church musicians who are unlikely to buy these new volumes. ❖

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE FOR RECORDER PLAYERS

MARIANNE MEZGER

Marianne Mezger studied recorder and early-music performance in Basel and Antwerp and has held teaching posts at the conservatories of Antwerp, Zürich and Berne. She performs and records regularly with Duo and Trio Basiliensis (CD appearing later this spring). At present she is working on a publication for Dolce on English flageolet and recorder tutors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

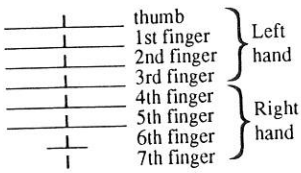
In the following article I would like to give some thought to the English ornamentation practice of the late seventeenth century, on the basis of evidence contained in contemporary recorder tutors. I shall restrict myself to one musical example: a division from Humphry Salters's *Genteel Companion* (1683)[1] which was published again for recorder in *The First Part of the Division Flute* in 1706.[2] In Salters's tutor the piece appears in two versions, firstly as 'Fardinels Ground' (no. 40) and then later in the book on pp. 4–5 as 'The King's Health' (see facsimilies). In the *Division Flute* the piece is published as 'Faronells Ground' (pp. 3–4).

Before I take a closer look at the music I would like briefly to give some background history to the recorder at this time. The recorder played a limited role in the spartan musical life of the Commonwealth period. When, after the Restoration, Charles II returned to England after his exile in France, he was followed by a number of French musicians, including, in *c.* 1673, James (Jacques) Paisible.[3] These musicians had the newly developed French Baroque wind instruments, the oboe and recorder, in their luggage. These instruments were probably products of the Hotteterre workshop, and formed the models on which the English Baroque instruments were based.[4] The recorder was an immediate success with the English public, and within a few years there were a number of tutors for the new instrument, the treble recorder in f, on the market. The tutors were directed at amateurs. They attempt to instil the basis of recorder playing into the beginner with the aid of dances, theatre and street music, together with an introduction to the rudiments of music.

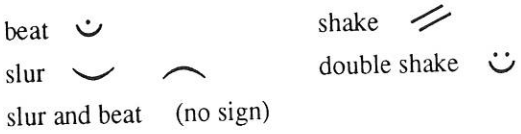
The publishers of the tutors adopted the style of the then popular flageolet tutor by Thomas Greeting.[5] The first pieces in the recorder tutors are written in conventional notation, but with an added fingering tablature (dot notation) below. In one of the tutors the first pieces are notated in tablature alone, exactly as in Greeting. The astonishing thing about the first four surviving tutors is that, from the very first piece, the ornaments are an integral part of the music. They are included in the tablature by a special sign, indicating to the student with which finger the ornament is to be executed. In a 4/4 time signature there are, on average, two ornaments per bar, while we find one or two per bar in triple time. As soon as the author assumes that the student can read music, the tablature is omitted and the ornaments are indicated by signs in the conventional notation.

The French violin virtuoso, Michael Farinelli, who was active in England between 1675 and 1679, was certainly largely responsible for the popularization of the ground that bears his name. The melody has also survived as a song with a text by Th. D'Urfey (1682) entitled 'All joy to great Caesar'.[6] From the words of the fourth verse it is clear that the song is addressed to Charles II. The melody is written on the eight-bar 'Follia' bass, and is the same as we find later in the works of Corelli, Schickhard, Marais and others. In Salters's *Genteel Companion* generally only the recorder part is printed. Only after 'Reddings Ground' do we find the four-bar ground bass, notated in treble clef, and ornamented with one ornament to a bar. The eight-bar bass model is printed in 'Faronells Ground' from the *Division Flute*. Salters's version of 'The Kings Health' and 'Fardinels Ground' are generously ornamented, in contrast to the *Division Flute* version which is completely undecorated.

To be able to interpret the ornament signs correctly we must turn to Salters's introduction and the first pieces notated in tablature. First the tablature which is explained in the text thus (the note f '):



In the first pieces the ornament signs have been omitted in the conventional notation, but are indicated in the corresponding tablature with a sign,), the top of which indicates the finger to be moved. From no. 13 the tablature is discontinued and the pieces have ornament signs in the conventional notation. The ornaments are given in the text as:



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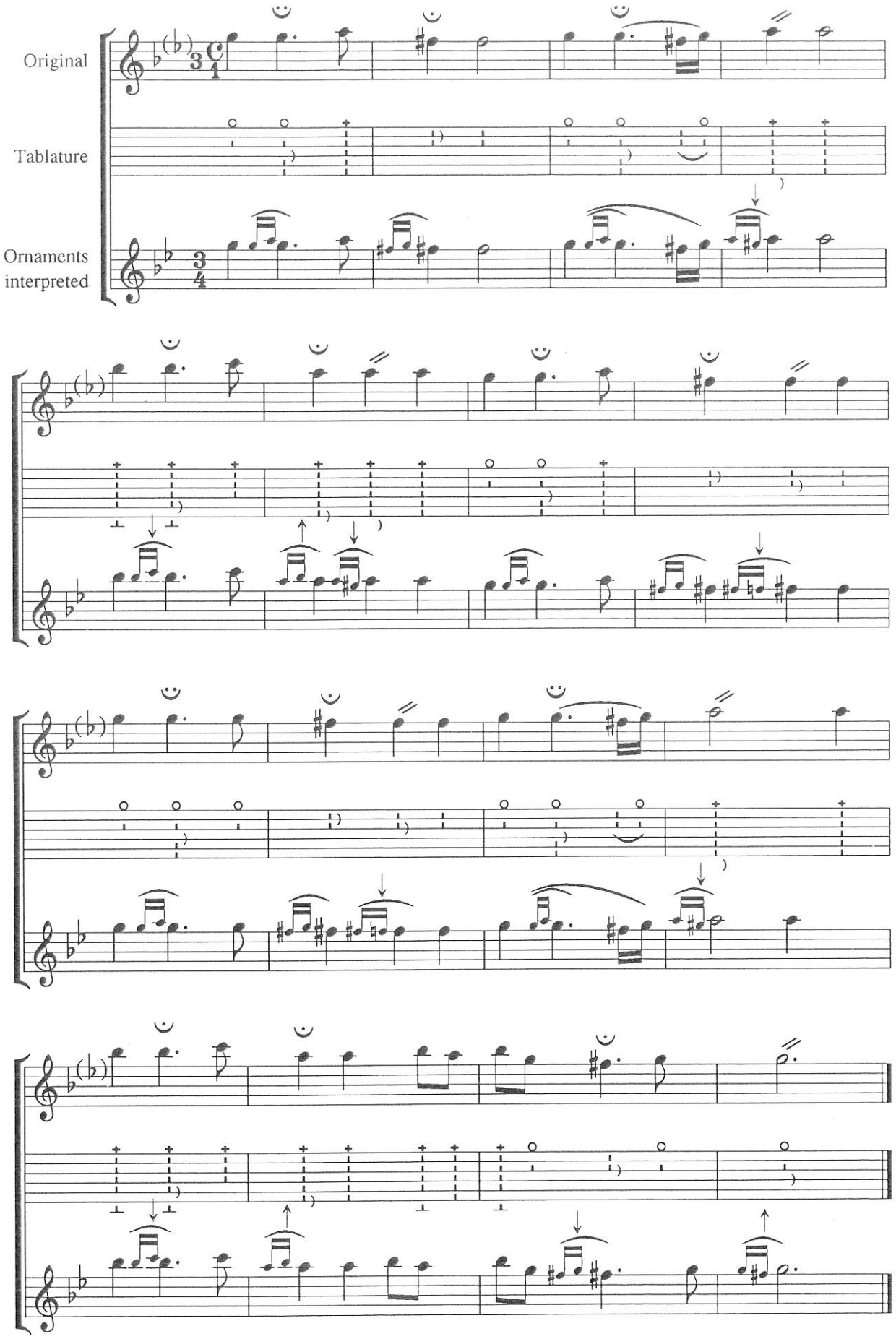
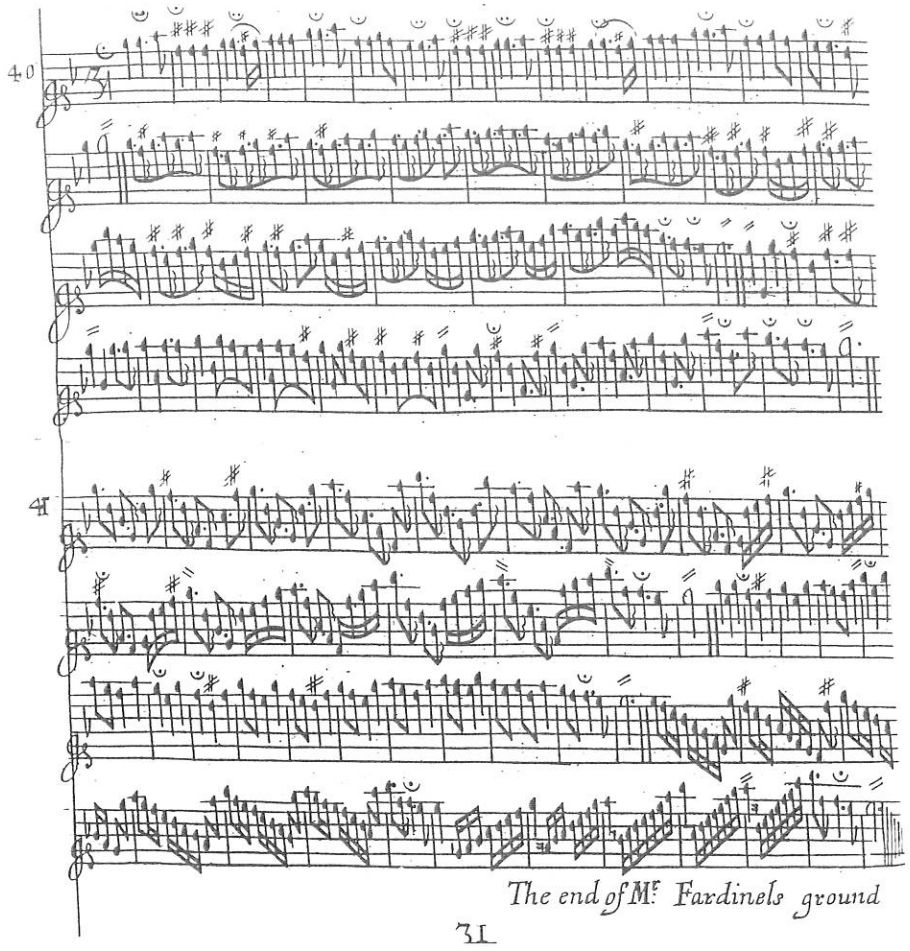
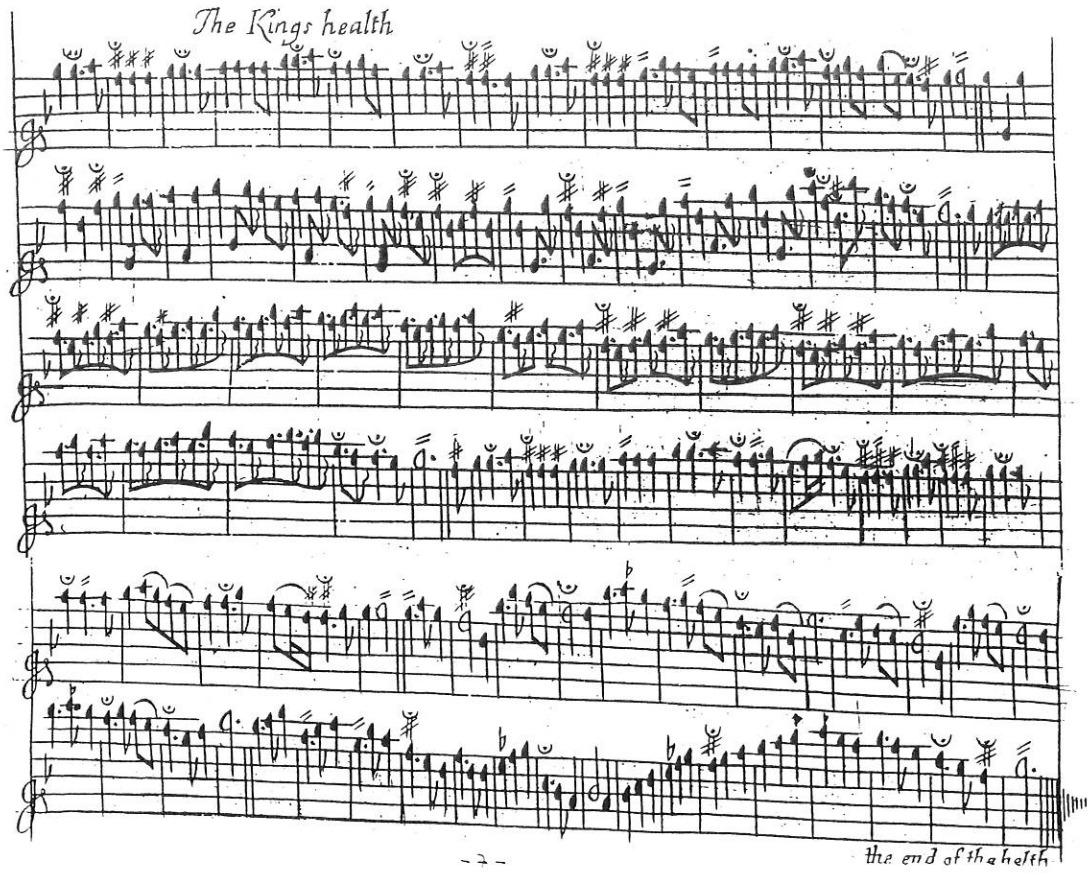

Original
Tablature
Ornaments
interpreted


40
41
The end of Mr. Fardinels ground
31


The Kings health
the end of the helth

They are seen in the tablature as shown in the example at the bottom of the page.

Remember:) indicates which finger performs the ornament. 'A beat is performed by shaking your finger upon that hole which line where it stands directs, and leaving it on. A shake is performed by shaking your finger on the hole directed and leaving it off. A slur and beat is played thus: hit your first note with the tip of your tongue, and continuing your breath take up your second, and bring on the first beating. The double shake is played by shaking your fourth finger of your left hand, holding those fingers on that the dots belong to.'

From these descriptions I have formulated a tablature to aid with the reconstruction of the theme, and also a sounding version in conventional notation.

Even after twenty-three years the same piece was being published for the amateur market. In the 1683 edition we find the theme with five divisions, whereas in 1706 it appears with ten divisions. The instructions to ornament in the recorder tutors changed and developed with the taste and fashion over the years. From the *Compleat Flute Master* (1695)[7] the tablature is omitted, with the ornaments described in the text only. New terms such as 'sweetning' (finger vibrato) 'sigh' and 'double rellish' (turned trill) make their appearance.

For the *Division Flute* version I have taken the ornaments from the later 'fashion' as follows:


close shake (trill starting from the upper auxiliary note)

\+ open shake beat or sweetning 'Is by shaking your finger over the half hole immediately below y^{e} note to be sweetned ending with it off'.

The beat is not explained in the text, but I interpret it as a mordent.


Double shake (on g": trill a"g"a"g")


Sigh


Double rellish

For more detailed information of the 1695 ornaments see the introduction to *J. Paisible: 5 Sonatas*, Dolce 250 (1993).

Note: for the transcription, the following symbols are also used:


Indicates where notes are sharper or flatter than the written pitch, using the tablature fingerings.


Indicates where the thumbhole is open or half-holed for overblowing.

Hopefully the player will be stimulated by the two ornamented versions here to experiment, and to get away from simple semi-tone and whole-tone ornaments in favour of the more diverse sound picture. Have fun! ❖

Further reading:

Dickey, Bruce: 'Untersuchungen zur historischen Auffassung des Vibratos auf Blasinstrumenten', *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis*, 2 (1978), pp. 88–91.

Habert, Andreas: 'Wege durch die *Division Flute*', *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis*, 11 (1987), pp. 89–138.

Footnotes

1 Humphry Salter, *The Genteel Companion* (London, 1683).

2 Anon., *The First Part of the Division Flute* (London: Walsh and Hare, 1706). Performer's Facsimile PF 15.

3 David Lasocki, 'Professional Recorder Players in England 1540–1740', Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa (1983).

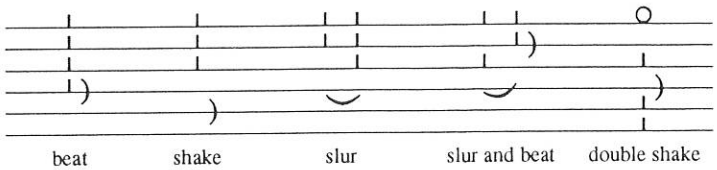
4 Tula Giannini, 'Jacques Hotteterre le Romain and his Father, Martin', *Early Music*, 21 (1993) pp. 377–95.

5 Thomas Greeting, *The Pleasant Companion*, 6th edn. (Playford, 1683).

6 Mary Vinquist, 'Recorder Tutors of the 17th and 18th Centuries, Technique and Performance Practice', Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1974), pp. 40–51.

7 Anon., *The Compleat Flute Master* (London: Walsh and Hare, 1695).

I would like to thank the British Library for allowing me to reproduce the musical insert, David Lasocki for his comments and Paul Simmonds for the translation.



REVIEWS

Tess Knighton and David Fallows, eds., *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music.* **London: J. M. Dent, 1992. xx + 428 pp. ISBN 0 460 04627 6. £40.**

The most refreshing aspect of this fascinating collection of short essays is the accuracy of its title: this book is indeed both companionable and musical. It is an anthology of largely informal discussion by some of the finest scholars and performers of today; indeed the list of forty-five contributors is nothing short of an abridged *Who's Who* of early music. For anybody who still views the world of early music as introspective, peripheral and fanatical, this book cannot help but break down the stereotype. The choice of contributors is itself as imaginative as the subject matter, although given the overtly controversial nature of some of the articles I found myself missing writers such as Richard Taruskin and Andrew Parrott.

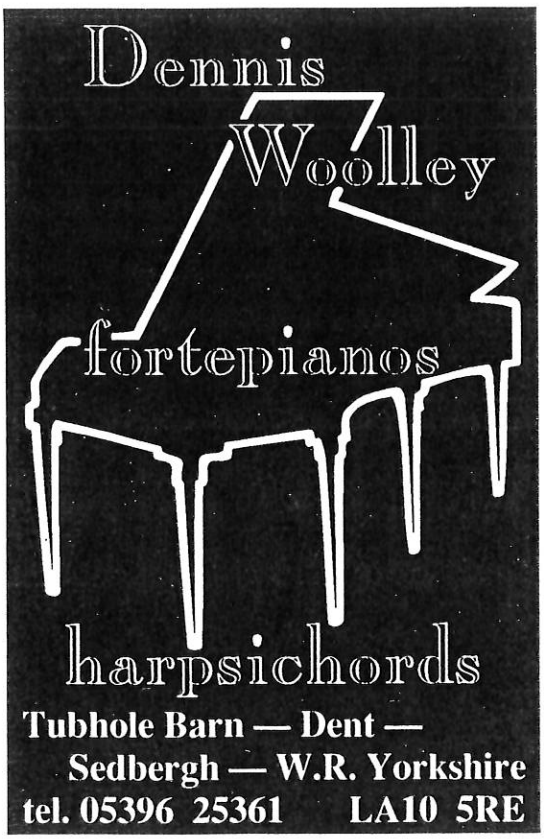
The book's overall strength is the way in which all of the contributors are treated with equal weight. Only four people are represented twice (Christopher Page, Tess Knighton, Reinhard Strohm and Lewis Jones), although there is no imbalance here because each author's two topics are so different. In fact the range of approach and subject matter throughout the book is remarkably broad: professional performers rub shoulders with heavyweight musicologists and appear to share the same aims. So it is that James Haar can evaluate the quality of the music, Reinhard Strohm can tell you how important it was at the time, Jan Nuchelmans can tell you where it might have been performed, Lewis Jones can tell you what it might have sounded like, and Andrew Lawrence-King can tell you how it should be performed today. Consequently it is difficult to give a flavour of this anthology without attempting a précis of each chapter, so varied and individual is each contributor's approach. Brevity is the common denominator, resulting in the extremes of specific analysis and general survey depending on the material and the author.

Of the theoretical studies, those by Liane Curtis on mode and Rob Wegman on *musica ficta* are masterly. In both cases the received view of the subject is questioned and reassessed with such confidence and authority that it would be difficult not to recommend these two articles (both a mere nine pages long) alongside full-length studies dealing with the same material. Equally bewitching but vastly different in approach is the miniature glimpse of some surviving Renaissance instruments by Lewis Jones. In four short pages the translucent sounds of early keyboards, fid-

dles and recorders come alive, and with them (as Lewis Jones suggests) we may be able to imagine the sounds of the voices that sang alongside them. Add to that the descriptions by Elizabeth Teviotdale and Iain Fenlon of medieval and Renaissance paintings depicting musical scenes, and the sights and sounds of early music begin to appear very real indeed. However, the award for the most evocative view of the period must surely go to Tess Knighton for her virtuosic description of a day in the life of the Spanish composer Francisco de Peñalosa. Written in the form of an imaginary letter from the composer to his nephew in February 1511, the literary style is modelled on that of the Sicilian humanist Marineus who also served in the Aragonese royal chapel. Lifestyle, liturgy, music and Renaissance metaphor are beautifully combined to create a colourful picture whose effect has much in common with that of Umberto Eco's portrait of fourteenth-century monasticism in *The Name of the Rose*.

For those looking for musicological investigations of specific repertory there is much to enjoy. Hendrik van der Werf on the earliest sources of polyphony, Margaret Bent on the late medieval motet, David Fallows on polyphonic song, Lewis Jones on medieval keyboard music, and Gareth Curtis on the cyclic Mass are just some of the most memorable contributions, while Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and Reinhard Strohm look at the broader issues of quality and significance in medieval music. The ideas and revelations expounded in all of these chapters are not for the faint-hearted: these writers are all scholars of distinction, and consequently there is much detailed analysis and technical language to be negotiated. However, there is more background and generalized discussion of context than is usually found, for example, in a musicological monograph or journal. This is not to suggest for a moment that these chapters and others like them are the work of off-duty academics – caring specialists providing a spoonful of sugar with our mind-improving medicine. Far from it. These are state-of-the-art explanations of the problems associated with early sources but with a wider-than-usual readership in mind. I wonder how many others might read these gems and long for this method of communication as the norm in scholarly publications.

Undoubtedly the most provocative chapters in the book, and therefore those that will date most quickly, are those that deal with the current perception and performance of medieval and Renaissance music. It is gratifying to find that people who might erroneously be classed solely as performers are here given the chance to air their views alongside professional historians and analysts. Paul Hillier, John Potter and Rogers Covey-Crump are well-known names to those who frequent concert halls and record shops. They, and many like them, are rarely given the chance to



contribute to the early-music debate within the medium of the hard-backed book. Naturally enough these chapters are more prone to subjective disagreement than many others. Here the words 'original' and 'authentic' can begin to incite unease, especially if you find yourself in disagreement with the argument of the moment. Paul Hillier makes a convincing case for the historical pronunciation of certain early repertories, although much of what he says is necessarily shaped by his very particular experiences within the Hilliard Ensemble. The same is true of John Potter, whose chapter on the quality and range of the voice required by some early music is by turns enlightening and opinionated. However, in neither of these cases am I offering substantial criticism against the inclusion of these articles. They are what they are: intelligent and reasoned presentations of performance solutions whose authenticity can never be proved (or indeed disproved). Perhaps one of the achievements of this book will be to encourage acceptance of the idea that however dangerous we may feel such overt speculation to be, without it we would never hear a note of medieval and Renaissance music. By contrast, Rogers Covey-Crump seems to be on safer territory with his discussion of intonation and temperament. As a detailed and fairly dispassionate outline of a variety of problems associated with tuning this is remarkably clear and concise, and those of us who have struggled to understand even simple acoustics when explained by authors with a predominantly scientific viewpoint may wonder why we have not let a musician explain it to us before. Of all the chapters in this book it is therefore most unfortunate that this one contains two misprints on the same page. An error in the chordal analysis of Gesualdo's *Sicut ovis* and the incorrect addition of the interval of a major second to a minor third in order to produce a perfect fifth are slips that can confuse the argument at a crucial stage unless spotted early.

Naturally enough, the current state of performance practice and ideals – particularly with respect to the recording industry – has to form part of any publication that claims to be a companion to medieval and Renaissance music. Christopher Page and Tess Knighton both survey the last few decades of historical performance with admirable objectivity. In both cases the masterful clarity of the written style is so attractive that it is a pleasure to read what could very easily degenerate into a list of influential scholars and performers. Also laudable is the fact that both Page and Knighton appear genuinely grateful to those who launched the performance of medieval and Renaissance music into the public domain in the 1950s and 1960s: Noah Greenberg, Thomas Binkley, Michael Morrow, David Munrow and many others are afforded the respect that they so justly deserve; there are perhaps other critics whose hindsight would

allow an element of unwelcome cynicism to obscure the real issues of early music in performance. For their part, Peter Phillips and Philip Pickett (two of today's most widely circulated recording artists) are given the chance to put themselves into some sort of historical context. Again, the obvious debts are acknowledged: Peter Phillips to David Wulstan and Philip Pickett to David Munrow. And in both cases the justification of their present attitude to performance is not the slavish pursuit of unachievable authenticiy but something more audience-based. Phillips cites careful programme planning and musical vision while Pickett cites novelty and entertainment as some of the mainstays of their respective philosophies. To those of us who admire the work of these two researcher-performers (by whose high standards we now unavoidably judge other performances of related repertories) these acknowledgments and admissions will come as no surprise. But it is to the credit of this book that such views are published alongside recent scholarship in a way that lends respectability to all of the various specialists and enthusiasts currently involved in the early-music movement.

The *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music* is universally recommendable: Tess Knighton and David Fallows have produced a work of extraordinary charm whose delightful air of informality hides a wealth of research and ideas that is available nowhere else. While reading the book I had the growing feeling that with each chapter I had been privy to the sort of information that one normally only gleans from meeting scholars in their studies and performers in their green rooms. Player, singer, concert-goer, record collector, student and academic will all find this book valuable. To the few individuals that may leaf though this companion and find nothing of interest I can safely say that the world of medieval and Renaissance music is a closed book. ❖

JEREMY SUMMERLY

The First International Clavichord Symposium, 9–11 September 1993, Magnano, Piedmont

Of all the instruments 'revived' in the past thirty years, the clavichord must be among those with the lowest profile. Considering the wealth of keyboard music which is playable on the instrument, not to mention the up to 250 eighteenth-century German composers who wrote specifically for it, this is surprising. Even though its relatively small dynamic capability limits the amount of concert situations where it can be heard, one would expect the advances in recording techniques to have stimulated its revival more. Perhaps this is still to come. At present there are few musicians who claim the clavichord as their pri-

mary means of expression, and only a small number of makers build clavichords exclusively. Interest does seem to be on the increase, however. In 1988 the Dutch Clavichord Society was formed which, despite its title, can boast an international membership list, and earlier this year a similar society was founded in Germany.

In September of last year the first International Clavichord Symposium took place, organized jointly by the Dutch Society and the 'Festival Musica Antica a Magnano'. The instigators were Bernard Brauchli, one of the few players who have devoted themselves exclusively to the clavichord, and Christopher Hogwood, and the event took place in the tiny village of Magnano in Piedmont. It attracted around fifty-five scholars, performers, makers and restorers from all over the world for three days of lectures, demonstrations and concerts, mostly taking place in the isolated restored Romanesque church of San Secondo. A more picturesque and fitting setting for a clavichord symposium could hardly be imagined.

The days were taken up with the presentation of papers with Bernard Brauchli, John Barnes and Christopher Hogwood as moderators. Subjects ranged from a hypothetical reconstruction of a keyed monochord, an intriguing lecture/recital by Nelly van Ree Bernard, to discussions of the clavichord in twentieth-century music (Frances Bedford, Joan Benson) including the first performance by Rita Pieretti of a new work by the Italian composer Guido Donati. On two of the evenings there were concerts given by performers from Holland, Switzerland, England, the USA and Austria, while on the remaining evening makers had the opportunity to demonstrate their instruments.

Most of the papers were delivered by makers and restorers, and dealt with the construction or reconstruction of a particular instrument or instruments, their provenance, stringing and decoration. We were given, for example, a condensed but well-constructed summary by Koen Vermeij of his examinations of the surviving Hubert clavichords. He argues convincingly that some of these instruments should be re-dated. The significance of the hexagram in the construction of early clavichords was demonstrated in an interesting, if at times bewildering, talk by Alfons Huber, the conservator at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The maker Angelo Mondino described the process of reconstructing an instrument from the intarsia in Urbino (*c.* 1480) and we were to hear the result during the course of the demonstrations. Early though this reconstruction was, it was not the earliest on show, there being two instruments present based on the drawing of Arnaut de Zwolle (*c.* 1440). As the demonstrations were arranged chronologically according to instrument model, these were the first to be heard in what was a lengthy parade of clavichords, elegantly compered by Derek Adlam, spanning over 500 years of development. The general standard of instruments shown was high, and the concerts on the remaining two evenings demonstrated that there is an 'underworld' of fine players to do them justice. Curious it was, however, and disappointing that virtually no music was performed prior to J. S. Bach, although the twentieth century was represented. Perhaps because of the relatively limited opportunities to perform in public as a clavichordist, the temptation is almost irresistible to present music from the instrument's most idiomatic period, the last fifty years of the eighteenth century. Given the quality of the music of the Bach brothers Wilhelm Friedemann and Carl Philipp Emanuel and the seldom-heard composers Müthel and Hässler, this is hardly surprising. In one of the closing statements Derek Adlam compared the symposium to the first Bruges harpsichord week in 1965, when historically based instruments were rare. Then players were quick to make clear to makers what sort of harpsichord they expected them to make, and by 1974 the number of modern 'Serieninstrumente' at the 4th Bruges harpsichord week was reduced to a token presence. I appreciate the comparison and hope that Derek Adlam is right, and that Magnano 1993 will mark the serious revival of the clavichord and its music. One difference would seem to be that, unlike Bruges '65, the clavichord makers would need to prod the players! If Magnano is anything to judge by, players at present seem to be drawing very selectively from the wide range of instrument types being offered by the makers.

I have already mentioned that the lectures were dominated by makers and restorers – of the twenty-five-odd papers delivered five at the most touched on the music. Of these Christopher Hogwood's talk, 'The Clavichord, a Victim of Public Taste', sketching the rise and fall of the clavichord in eighteenth-century Germany, was an interesting and welcome counterbalance. I would have liked to have heard more discussion of the music, its interpretation and technical problems, of which there are many. If this is a criticism, it is of the players, including myself, for not coming forward to share their ideas and research. Perhaps makers are generally more talkative, the players communicating more easily with the aid of an instrument.

Christopher Hogwood pointed out in his closing statement that a 'professional clavichordist' did not exist in the past, and is even less likely to exist today. I would, however, take issue with Mr Hogwood's categorical dismissal of the clavichord as a solo instrument in concert situations. The range of venues is for obvious reasons restricted, but not necessarily to rooms of domestic proportions with a handful of devotees clustered as near as possible to the instrument. It is being repeatedly shown, not only in

Magnano, that churches or halls with a good acoustic and a seating capacity of around 200 can be more than adequate concert venues. The argument that this takes the instrument out of historical context I would counter with a reminder that most music prior to the age of the public concert is performed 'environmentally inauthentically'!

The symposium closed with the resolution to hold a festival of this nature every two years. The proceedings will be published (in English) by the Associazione Festival Musica Antica a Magnano. ❖

PAUL SIMMONDS

The Purcell Experience, 20–21 November 1993, Queen Elizabeth Hall

1995 will be the tercentenary of the death of Henry Purcell and already the bandwagon is rolling. It was given a hefty push last November at the Queen Elizabeth Hall by Roger Norrington's 'Purcell Experience', a weekend of talks about Purcell, the man, his music and his background, performances of his songs and theatre music and culminating in a semi-staged performance of *The Fairy Queen*.

Professor Curtis Price presented us with Purcell the man, confident of his own talent and able to take Italian and French styles and better them, impatient of fools, meticulous in his musical detail. Dr Roger Savage set this man in his London background and in particular in the Dorset Garden Theatre where his operas were performed, while Bruce Wood and Andrew Pinnock explained the construction of the half-play, half-opera *The Fairy Queen*, written in 1692/3 and based, somewhat loosely, on Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. So far, so good – some interesting and scholarly presentations.

Much emphasis was laid on Purcell's dance music. We were told that he took just as much trouble over it as he did with his other works. Sadly, as far as the dancing was concerned the Purcell Experience did not follow his example. On the Saturday evening we were invited to observe an 'open rehearsal' of the dances, introduced by Roger Norrington and Kay Lawrence. This could have been a splendid opportunity to explain the style, technique and system of dance notation in use in the 1690s. Two slides of notation were shown but no real attempt was made to explain them. Not only was this an opportunity missed, but even Norrington displayed a surprising lack of understanding. He stated that we do not know the tempo of Baroque dances. Surely he has come across d'Onzembray, L'Affilard and other eighteenth-century writers, if not in the original, then at least through the research of Rosemary Harding, Neal Zaslaw and more recently Rebecca Harris-Warrick. The pendulum markings for dance tempi may not be totally fool-

proof but they do offer parameters which form a basis for dialogue between dancers and musicians on particular choreographies, and some of them are so consistent – e.g. ♩ =120 for bourées, ♩.=71 for minuets – that they must be taken into account, and, on the whole, they present us with much faster tempi than Norrington allowed. Another comment made by Norrington was that the hornpipe was a 'stately dance'! What a pity that he did not attend the conference held recently by NEMA on this very dance, when several of the extant eighteenth-century notated hornpipes were danced by Moira Goff and Jennifer Thorp. He would have seen the extremely complex and intricate footwork, crossed rhythms and danced hemiolas which characterized the hornpipes and made them very lively dances indeed.

A similar lack of research was apparent in the dance presentation. Access to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century dance tutors is not difficult; some are available in fascimile, the British Library has an extensive collection, and a number of dance historians have produced translations/interpretations. There is, therefore, no excuse for ignoring this material. Ballet dancers may find it difficult to adjust their technique to the Baroque style, but it should not be beyond their capabilities. It is obviously difficult for a choreographer to work with dancers who have no concept of Baroque style, and since I understand most, if not all, of the dancers in *The Fairy Queen* were products of our major ballet schools, they provide a sad reflection on the teaching of dance history in these establishments. However, as trained dancers, it should have been possible to stretch them technically rather more than they were. From the enormous variety of Baroque dance steps, I recognized only three in this performance, fleuret, coupé and demi-contretemps.

This standard is no longer acceptable in the light of developments in Baroque dance performance practice which have been going on in recent years. The French group Ris et Danceries pioneered this research. Americans such as Ken Pierce are carrying it forward, and in England serious work is being done on the English Baroque source material. Even within the English Folk Dance and Song Society there are many who now question the jolly, rustic, straw-in-the-hair interpretation of Playford country dance which was presented at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

The final performance was something of a curate's egg. The excitement of *The Fairy Queen* is in the integration of the various elements – Settle's drama, Preist's dance and Purcell's opera, probably under Betterton's guiding genius. Unfortunately this performance actually separated these elements. The actors performed on the forestage, wearing practice dress of simple black and white and retiring to chairs on either side of the stage during the masques: very much a drama-school project presentation. The dancers were for some reason wearing costumes of *c.* 1720, and between dances they disappeared from the stage completely. The chorus, in regulation black evening dress, were tucked choir-like behind the orchestra. The soloists, also in evening dress, sat beside the orchestra and took a few tentative steps forward when called upon to sing. I can appreciate that financial constraints made it necessary for each group to rehearse separately, but the result was a very disjointed presentation.

Happily, Purcell's glorious music managed to shine through the mist of woolly thinking which surrounded this 'experience'. ❖

MADELEINE INGLEHEARN

Roger Norrington is to be congratulated on his laudable enterprise in mounting a complete semi-staged performance of the Betterton–Purcell *Fairy Queen*. The overall effect was a thorough vindication of what Roger Savage has been telling us for over twenty years (in print and on the stage), that, taken on its own terms, Restoration 'Dramatick Opera' actually works.

The main strength of this performance (as I'm sure it was at Dorset Garden in 1692) was the acting – most of the cast managed to get beyond the limitations of a bare stage, rehearsal dress and scripts in hand to convey, often powerfully, the comedy and (in the lovers' quarrels) pathos of the play. Taken seriously (with other Restoration drama in mind, rather than the Elizabethan stage), it can safely be allowed to speak for itself – the uncalled-for 'mugging' on the part of James Ryland as Puck towards the end of the evening did the play no service. (It is sad that even Messrs Wood and Pinnock, in their afternoon double act – a worthy rival to Hinge and Bracket – could not resist 'guying' some of the text alterations.)

To a greater or lesser extent, the other elements in the production – playing, singing and dance – fitted

well into context. (Some of the provisos have already been outlined by Madeleine Inglehearn.) However, the whole performance raised a number of questions which need to be addressed if we are to contemplate any possible staged revival of a Purcell 'Dramatick Opera' for 1995.

Orchestra

Norrington's forces numbered some twenty-five players. Would there really have been room in the (?temporary) orchestra pit at Dorset Garden for so many players *and* their instruments? The larger the pit, the less room for the paying audience, and for most stage productions the band would probably have been in a small gallery over the stage, with even more constraints on space. Is there any evidence that theatre bands consisted of more than one or two string players per part? Earlier in the afternoon, we were treated to a selection of Purcell's other theatre music played by a string quartet and theorbo – a combination that was just as effective, even in the cavernous space of the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

The London Baroque Players played well, if safely, in a rather general mid-eighteenth century all-purpose Baroque style. However, Purcell's instrumentalists were almost certainly trained by performers who had been active in the court bands of the pre-Commonwealth Stuarts. The work of Peter Holman's Parley of Instruments on the repertory of the early seventeenth-century violin band has had a noticeable effect on their performance of the music of the later part of the century, and this should surely be taken into account.

Chorus

The stage of Dorset Garden would have been large by the standards of a modern theatre of similar size, but large in depth rather than width, to accommodate the perspective and a variety of scenic changes. With a stage already occupied by a full cast of actors as well as dancers, would there really have been room for an additional chorus of nineteen singers? Is there any evidence that 'choruses' in dramatic works were sung by more than two or three voices per part? (The wordbook's reference to the Act V Chaconne as 'the Grand Dance of Twenty-four Persons' would suggest that such a large number of bodies on stage at once was deemed worthy of comment.)

Singers

Recent years have seen the rise of a number of young singers with good 'early music' voices – that is, capable of performing the music in a way that does not jar with its style or the instrumental sounds that go with it. However, it must be remembered that our ideas of what a voice should sound like are conditioned by the products of a technique that has only been around for

some 300 years. In Purcell's day, it was only just beginning to be taught in the academies of Bologna and Naples, and did not make significant inroads into Britain for another 100 years. More experimentation needs to be done on the effects of non-*bel-canto* vocal techniques, especially on the projection of words.

Both Norrington and Bruce Wood had told us earlier in the day that we would not hear any 'countertenors' in the evening's performance, since at that time the part would have been sung by a high tenor. It cannot be stressed too much or too often that there is *absolutely no contemporary evidence* for this oft-repeated assertion, and until someone can come up with such evidence, it is reasonable to assume that the parts were sung by falsettists, as they have been for the past 100 years or more. (Even Norrington hedged his bets – the countertenor parts in the chorus were sung by women!) The Corydon/Mopsa scene particularly suffered since the two voices sounded so similar in tone. The whole strength of this duet is that (like Danny La Rue) the 'girl' has the appearance (visual and audible) of being a woman, while reminding us continually that 'she' is really a man (by, for example, breaking into a healthy baritone for the low notes, or for the spoken interjections found in the autograph 'Guildhall' manuscript).

Actors

The cast at the QEH employed all the skills of modern acting technique and stage production to put across the drama. However, in the world of historically informed performance, how appropriate is the modern naturalistic style of acting? It would seem to owe its inception to the new naturalism of David Garrick in the mid-eighteenth century, but its final fruition surely did not come until the 'kitchen-sink' school of drama in the mid-twentieth. Acting techniques of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are well documented by theatre historians, and have more recently been put into practice in stagings of Baroque opera by Dene Barnett, Ian Caddy and others. So far, there has been no noticeable reaction from the spoken theatre! Less is known about the declamation of previous ages, but some idea of the stylization can be gleaned from early recordings and even from the memory of the older generation of actors.

During the production, the cast made use of various regional accents to characterize the rustics – this was necessary given the doubling of parts by a small cast, but how appropriate are such accents (especially the all-purpose 'Mummerset' of the Haymakers and Corydon & Mopsa) for a period before the advent of Received Pronunciation and 'BBC English', when everyone spoke with some kind of regional accent? Presumably Shakespeare's Warwickshire accent was just as noticeable on the stage as Walter Raleigh's Devon accent was at court, only it was not deemed so worthy of comment! Rustic characters would have been delineated by dress and by the language they used (and perhaps the music to which it was set), rather than any imposed accent. Then, of course, there is also the vexed question of period pronunciation...

To much of the above, many will doubtless respond that the result will not be dramatic enough – that it will not engage an audience. This begs the question of what we mean by 'dramatic' – it seems clear that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century concepts of what was dramatic were not necessarily the same as ours. Our performers (both actor and singers) seek to reach out and grab an audience by the scruff of its neck. Baroque performers, on the other hand, sought to draw an audience in by the power of language and the beauty of music. Modern audiences no longer demand the full-blooded sound of a symphony orchestra to enjoy Bach and Handel – let us trust them to take this next step, and accept Baroque stage works on their own terms! ❖

SIMON HILL

International Recorder Symposium, 27–30 August 1993, Utrecht

In August a symposium with the theme 'The Recorder in the 17th Century' took place in Utrecht. It was organized by Stimu (the Institute for Historical Performance Practice), the Holland Festival for Early Music and the University of Utrecht. There were daily lectures and masterclasses, and a series of concerts dedicated to the recorder and its music. In addition there was an exhibition by makers from all over the world together with publishers' stands.

The situation of the recorder in the seventeenth century in the various European countries opened the proceedings. David Lasocki presented us with a wide-ranging glimpse into the musical life of seventeenth-century England. The Baroque recorder was imported into England by French immigrants in 1673 and Jacques Paisible was largely responsible for its popularization. It found its way into the Roman Catholic chapel, was very popular at court, and was used in operas and public concerts. Composers who wrote for the recorder included Paisible, Gottfried Keller, Godfrey Finger, Raphael Courtiville, John Banister, Robert King and William Williams. The recorder was taught at the newly opened 'Royal Academy of Music', the teachers being Banister, Paisible and the Huguenot immigrant Daniel Demoivre. Amongst the local recorder makers of the time were Bradbury, the Stanesbys, Gedny and the Frenchman Bressan. The instrument which Pepys bought in 1668 from the London maker Drumbleby was in all probability still a Renaissance recorder. The years around 1700 represent the climax for English seventeenth-century

recorder music. In support of his talk Lasocki had compiled a comprehensive bibliography and a 'family tree' of English recorder makers.

Patricia Ranum gave a talk on French articulation of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The phrasing of the instrumental music followed closely that of the vocal music, with the French Air providing the model for instrumental declamation and the source from which the 'tu-ru'-based articulation was derived. Because of the lack of accents which can be marked by explosive consonants in the French language, the key words, or syllables, had to be lengthened. These moments are often pointed with ornaments. Many twentieth-century players have slavishly followed Hotteterre's articulation examples, without giving due thought to, or having an understanding of, the rhetorical basis. For this reason a study of French poetry is indispensable. Bart Kuijken, who spoke later on the theme of French articulation, advised instrumentalists to work closely with singers and to learn French.

Beryl Kenyon de Pasqual concluded in her paper that intensive research had revealed no music in Spain written specifically for recorder. She also concluded that there was no violin music which lent itself to transcriptions for the recorder. The preferred instruments in seventeenth-century Spain were the double-reeds; while clavichord, harpsichord and guitar were dominant in the musical life of both court and merchant classes.

In Italy, on the other hand, we find ten compositions which specify the recorder. As Peter van Heygen pointed out, almost all of these compositions are by organists working in the Scuola Grande in Venice. Most original recorder music was notated in the C1 clef or, on the assumption that one would have to transpose down a fourth, in the G2 clef. Little Italian music gives any indication as to instrumentation, but if one takes the notation as a guide, we could add about 160 symphonies, canzoni and sonatas to the recorder repertory. All recorder parts were written for a treble recorder in G, an instrument described by Ganassi and Jambe de Fer. Descant recorders in C or D were never used as solo instruments.

On the Saturday we heard from a number of recorder makers and restorers. Unfortunately, although museums are full of recorders, virtually no 'transitional' instruments have survived. In the seventeenth century the makers were looking for a new recorder sound, and the Renaissance instruments no longer matched the changing taste. Philippe Bolton presented a detailed survey of the development of the Renaissance types. Makers today have to base their reconstructions on a limited quantity of mostly undated instruments, and work from pictures and fingering charts. At present players have to be content with instruments after van Eyck or Ganassi. One of the most important developments in the transitional instruments, before one progresses to the three-part Baroque type, was the so-called 'choke-bore'.

Martin Kirnbauer discussed the Nuremberg recorder makers. In the sixteenth century Schnitzer was making Ganassi-type instruments, and in the eighteenth century the Denners, of course, were making Baroque recorders. Seventeenth-century Nuremberg was famous for music printing and trumpet makers, and historical documents provide us with information about woodwind makers, but unfortunately few instruments have been preserved. The lack of instruments from this time could reinforce the theory that makers were trying to develop a new instrument type. Present-day makers can glean valuable information from the surviving instruments by Kynsecker, those signed 'Rauch von Schratt', and the early Baroque recorders by Denner and Schell.

From Laurence Pottier we got a glimpse into the world of French painting in the seventeenth century. The recorder is depicted in paintings showing concerts (with professional musicians), in pastoral scenes or in paintings with an allegorical content. The instruments shown are either descant or treble instruments of the Renaissance or early Baroque design. Sopranino and tenors are seldom depicted and bass recorders are never shown.

The Sunday was dedicated to Jacob van Eyck. Ruth van Baak-Griffioen and Thiemo Wind have both been researching van Eyck's music. Griffioen examined the corpus of Dutch songs which were circulating at the time and which form the basis for the *Fluitenlusthof*. The melodies were drawn from the many songbooks (the 'hits' of the day), from church hymnals (Psalms) and the carillon repertory. There was no need to print the words of the melody, as these were known by everyone. The blind van Eyck remembered melodies better than words, and this is why the surviving texts don't always fit the tunes. The melodies were in circulation between 1500 and 1800, and the Frankfurt bookfair, which took place in the mid-seventeenth century, was largely responsible for their wide dispersal. We find the same melodies in places as far afield as Scotland and Portugal. Wind raised the question of whether van Eyck's music was captured spontaneous improvision, or composition. By the time the *Fluitenlusthof* was published van Eyck was an old man with a lot of music-making behind him. If one examines the variations one sees how carefully he treated the main notes of the theme. A constant standard of this sort would, even with the best ears and a virtuoso improvisation technique, not be possible. In songs such as Caccini's 'Amarilli' van Eyck profiled the drama and adjusted the emotional statement to suit Dutch music lovers. He uses rhythm and pitch changes in an improvisatory manner.

Jan Bouterse examined surviving Dutch seventeenth-century recorders in relation to van Eyck and

contemporaneous Dutch recorder music. The fingering chart of the *Fluitenlusthof*, in conjunction with the depiction of the recorder and the range required by the music, should give us an idea of the type of instrument used. A cylindrical bore must be excluded – Frederick Morgan's reconstruction, made in accordance with the depiction, doesn't work for van Eyck's music. The fingering chart in the *Fluitenlusthof* indicates a Baroque system, certainly for the third register. This means that the instrument must have had a conical bore and a short foot-piece. Until further research has been carried out, players will have to make do with Haka copies (Haka was the founder of the Dutch Baroque recorder style) or with reproductions of the Rosenborg recorders found in Denmark.

Eva Legêne, who discovered the Rosenborg instruments, raised further questions about contemporaneous instruments, and examined still-life paintings by Edwaert Collier made between 1663 and 1704. In two of his pictures she found music by van Eyck, 'Questa dolce sirena' and 'Onan of Tanneken'. On the strength of Collier's paintings she concluded that the three-part Baroque recorder could only have come into being in Holland after 1690. In her opinion the Rosenborg recorders are the instruments best suited to van Eyck's music. Van Blanckenburgh's fingering is well realized on instruments based upon Virdung, but these are not as flexible as the Rosenborg recorders.

The themes of the Monday papers were centred on the gaps in our knowledge and the lack of seventeenth-century repertory. Bart Kuijken presented the 'problem' a different way: there was probably never a virtuoso repertory of the kind the twentieth-century player wants, and perhaps this 'need' is a characteristic of our century alone. Players today should be better equipped with historical knowledge, which could result in more interesting and satisfying performances of the existing repertory. Perhaps in this way one could get away from the arranging and interpreting of virtuoso solo-literature, which gives the public such an imbalanced idea of the repertory and presents the performer in a distorted light. The recorder fulfils its function perfectly in the *Prima Prattica* but cannot do justice to the new expressivity of the *Seconda Prattica*. For the performers, as well as for the early-music scene in general, it would be better if recorder players who wanted to present this repertory learned another instrument.

David Lasocki had, in the light of the subjects already discussed, formulated a list of areas where further research needed to be done. It was unfortunate that in the masterclasses much of what is already known from previous research was ignored by the teachers. The emphasis seemed to be more on today's fashion in recorder playing at the expense of, for example, expressive intonation and ornamentation practice. I often wonder to what extent musicologists and musicians communicate and react to one another. It was certainly noticeable that, although practising musicians were present at the lectures of the musicologists, the latter were in the main conspicuous by their absence in the masterclasses. Hopefully the symposium has enriched both sides. Perhaps more players will dare to present more historically based performances (on the 'right' type of instrument) even though they may alienate themselves from the present-day commercial recorder scene.

The lectures of the symposium will be published (probably Winter 1994) as *Proceedings of the International Recorder Symposium Utrecht 1993*. I would like to thank Paul Simmonds for his translation. ❖

MARIANNE MEZGER

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Musica Obscura

Dear Madam:

Whenever I read concert or record reviews, I get the impression that people are being rather cautious, for fear of rocking an extremely precarious boat.

At long last, someone has cried 'foul'. It happened in the review by Denis Stevens of CD releases for Radio 3 on 4 December.

Stevens was reviewing recordings of Rore and Marini by the Consort of Musicke, and he castigated the performers in no uncertain terms for: unintelligible words and unintelligible syntax when the words *were* audible; inconsistent and incorrect syllable stresses, caused by performing from barlined scores; the use of a bad edition; wrong instrumentation; and generally, singing that was so insipid, anorexic and passionless that it was impossible for the listener to get any idea of what the songs were about.

Now, to amateur musicians who have been receiving occasional instruction from some of the better teachers, these errors are elementary. Was this a momentary lapse by otherwise expert and seasoned performers? Or need we look no further than the pages of your esteemed journal? During an interview reported in the Autumn 1993 issue the director of the ensemble concerned describes himself as 'virtually unteachable, being pig-headed and arrogant, and lacking a certain humility and grace'.

On another occasion – Monteverdi's 350th anniversary – Stevens was asked in which direction our understanding of the maestro's music was heading. 'Backwards', he replied gloomily. Perhaps that is why performances of Italian madrigals remind one of the chap who once asked 'What's sex like in Britain: is it as bad as the vegetables?'

STEVE HEAVENS