Editorial

Thomas Arne
Peter Holman

Probably the most celebrated early music anniversary of 2010 will be not of a composer but of a work, that wonderful collection of pieces which has become known as 'the Monteverdi Vespers'. However, much will be written - and heard - of the Vespers next year. We therefore continue our usual series of composer articles.

Thomas Arne must be a prime example of a composer known to millions by one short piece, but otherwise largely unsung. In our first anniversary article Peter Holman gives an overview of Arne's life and work. The author needs little introduction to readers. A leading authority on Baroque music, particularly English, Peter Holman is Professor of Musicology at Leeds University and director of the Parley of Instruments, Psalmody, Opera Restor'd and the Suffolk Villages Festival.

In 2009 we began a sequence of anniversaries of the births of English contemporaries of Handel, the so-called 'generation of 1710': Charles Avison (1709-1770), Thomas Arne (1710-1778), William Boyce (1711-1779), and John Stanley (1712-1784). Of the four composers, Thomas Arne is the most intriguing, controversial, and, in my opinion, misunderstood. On one level, he is the best-known of the four: there can be few people in Britain today who cannot hum or at least recognise the tune of 'Rule, Britannia', and many will know his settings of Shakespeare lyrics such as 'Under the greenwood tree' or 'Where the bee sucks', even if they cannot name the composer. Yet the vast majority of Arne's works remain to be edited or even investigated properly, and Boyce and Avison are now much more fully represented on CD than him, thanks respectively to Graham Lea-Cox and the Hanover Band and Pavlo Beznosiuk and the Avison Ensemble.

Part of this can be explained by Arne's personal circumstances. He came from a prosperous middle-class family (his father and grandfather were London upholsterers and undertakers), and was sent to Eton, though as a child he adopted his mother's Catholicism (hence his middle name Augustine), and as a teenager he continued his rebellion against the status quo by studying music rather than the law, his intended profession. Thus he denied himself the usual routes to respectability and prosperity. As a musician Arne had to be content with a marginal status in society, and as a Catholic most of the normal routes for

advancement in his profession were closed to him, such as posts at court (Boyce and Stanley were successively Masters of the Kings Music) or in the Anglican church (London musicians commonly combined concert work with a job as a church organist on Sundays, when there were no concerts). This meant that most of his time was spent writing for the theatre, where there was no religious discrimination but where he was subject to fickle theatre managers, rapidly changing fashion, and competition from Italian opera.

The main problem with Arne's reputation today is that most of his stage works are unlikely to be revived in the modern theatre. His first great success was his setting of Milton's 1634 masque *Comus*, produced in 1738 [edited in Musica Britannica, iii]. Charles Burney wrote that Arne introduced in this work 'a light, airy, original, and pleasing melody, wholly different from that of Purcell or Handel, whom all English composers had hitherto either pillaged or imitated.' Arne used this forward-looking proto-*galant* style, which Burney characterised as 'an agreeable mixture of Italian, English, and Scots', throughout his career, though he was capable of deeper things, as in the beautiful Handelian air 'Nor on beds of fading flowers'. *Comus*, with its mixture of Milton's lyric poetry and Arne's charming music, is a wonderful evening in the theatre, though modern revivals have been limited by the need for a double cast of actors and singers. It survives more or less complete, but some of his important works, such as the masque *Dido and Aeneas* (1734) or the music for Mason's play *Caractacus* (1776), are lost, while others, such as the masques *The Judgement of Paris* (1742) [Musica Britannica, xlii], *Eliza* (1754), and *Britannia* (1755), or the Italianate opera *Artaxerxes* (1762) [Early Music Company facsimile], only survive incomplete. In other cases, such as his much-reworked setting of Mallet's *Alfred* (1745) [Musica Britannica, xlvii], successively a masque, an oratorio and an opera, or the fine music for Mason's *Elfrida* (1772), the tedious play would rule out modern stage productions. Perhaps, as with much eighteenth-century theatre music from other countries, these works are more viable today on CD than in the theatre or on the concert platform.

I have mentioned the forward-looking style in *Comus*, which enabled Arne to escape from Handel's compositional shadow early in his career, and it needs to be emphasised that he was a courageous theatrical innovator throughout his career. He was the first English composer to experiment with all-sung comic opera, unsuccessfully in *The Temple of Dullness* (1745), *Henry and Emma* (1749) and *Don Saverio* (1750), but triumphantly in the charming *Thomas and Sally* (1760) [Eulenberg], the prototype for later English operas imitating Italian intermezzi such as Pergolesi's *La serva padrona*. Similarly, *Artaxerxes* was the first attempt to set a full-blown *opera seria* in English. It held the stage until the

1830s, and my reconstruction (most of the recitatives are lost) was recorded for Hyperion in 1995. Burney, who could never resist a sly dig at his former teacher, accused Arne of 'crowding' its airs with 'most of the Italian divisions and difficulties that had ever been heard at the opera', though in reality he was just the first English composer to demand more than the Baroque vocal technique established in England by Handel. Arne's innovations, demonstrated brilliantly in performance by his mistress Charlotte Brent, were soon taken up by other English composers. He was equally innovative in his orchestration, using clarinets as early as 1760 (in *Thomas and Sally*), and *galant* orchestral effects in *Artaxerxes*, as in the dense writing for clarinets, horns, bassoons and strings portraying a flowing river in 'Water parted from the sea'.

Like other English composers of the period, Arne also suffers today for being known mostly by his relatively unimportant instrumental works, such as the eight harpsichord sonatas or the seven trio sonatas published respectively in 1756 and 1757 [Faber Music; Early Music Company facsimile]. The set of six keyboard concertos [OUP and Early Music Company facsimile], mostly composed in the 1750s for his son Michael, are rather more substantial, and are a fascinating mixture of Baroque and *galant* idioms, with solo writing suitable variously for organ, harpsichord and fortepiano. His *Eight Overtures* (1751) [Early Music Company facsimile], a mixture of Baroque-style French overtures and more modern Italianate works, are all probably introductions to theatre works, though his *Four New Overtures and Symphonies* (1767) [OUP] show that he had been studying the concert works of J.C. Bach and Abel. Interestingly, here and there (notably in no. 4 in C minor) the nervous brilliance of the writing recalls C.P.E. Bach rather than his younger brother. The mass of Arne's songs and other non-theatrical vocal music (much of it written for Vauxhall Gardens) has hardly been explored, though some of the *Six English Cantatas* (1755) [Early Music Company facsimile] have been recorded and some of his other cantatas would be well worth exploring; some of them require full orchestra, but many of them can be performed just with a few strings. One Arne work stands out on my wish-list for a recording: the oratorio *Judith* (1761) [Music Britannica, in preparation]. With its lyrical airs and surprisingly un-Handelian, forward-looking choruses, it is arguably the finest oratorio by an Englishman before *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Jean Ockeghem
Edward Wickham

Although, as Edward Wickham makes clear, the year of Ockeghem's birth is not actually known, all the music history books give it as 'c.1410' or during a period from that date, so it seems an appropriate time to celebrate the work of one of the most significant composers of the fifteenth century. Having recorded his complete sacred works with The Clerks Group, Edward Wickham has got closer to Ockeghem's music than many, and provides good advice on how to approach it. In addition to continuing his performing career, Edward is a Fellow and Director of Music at St Catharine's College, Cambridge.

The first thing to admit is that it probably isn't Johannes Ockeghem's birthday next year. 'Circa 1410' has been revised forwards recently, and 'circa 1425' might be closer to the mark. But everyone deserves a birthday once in a while, and for me personally – it being now ten years since finishing our Ockeghem recording project with The Clerks – NEMA's invitation to pen a birthday tribute seems like a good time to reassess the great man. The second thing to admit is that Ockeghem may not have answered to the name Johannes at all. More than likely, he was a Jean, born in the francophone town of St Ghislain, in modern-day Belgium. The impulse to categorise the work of Ockeghem and other contemporaries as 'Flemish polyphony' is still strong; but 'Franco-Flemish' is the more generous term, though perhaps 'Walloon polyphony' would be the most suitable.

These two revisions of some basic facts about Ockeghem – his birth date and his name – speak to something more profound about our changing understanding of Ockeghem and his legacy. One of the arguments for this early birth-date is a line in Crétin's lament on the death of Ockeghem, in which he mourns the fact that Ockeghem died just shy of his 100th birthday. The image of an elder statesman of music, the 'bon père' of Molinet's lament (made famous by Josquin's setting), rhymes with a reputation for fustiness with which his music was associated by earlier scholars. The image is supported by the well-known depiction of the French royal chapel which appears on numerous CD covers, with a bespectacled old man apparently leading the choir. Recent commentators, however, have disputed whether this figure is Ockeghem – he may in fact be the

younger looking man in the background. Nevertheless, Ockeghem's reputation as a composer for academic rather than lay appreciation has been hard to dislodge, with Charles Burney leading the way, assessing his work as of interest only to people who delight in cerebral puzzles. Certainly Ockeghem was responsible for some very clever music. But that is by no means the whole story.

In parallel with this reputation for stifling intellectuality, Ockeghem has suffered from a perhaps contradictory view that his work expresses in music the mystical tradition in late Medieval theology, as articulated most cogently by Thomas à Kempis. According to this view, Johannes is an outsider, a musician from the fringe, rather than a French/Burgundian sophisticate. In support of this claim we find in Ockeghem's oeuvre certain works which – unusually for the time – appear to adopt no pre-existing model: no chant *cantus firmus*, no song to paraphrase. These examples of entirely free composition, driven forward by a dense, swirling, apparently cadence-less polyphony, have encouraged some to describe Ockeghem's style as 'irrational'.

To understand this caricature, one must understand Ockeghem's place within the narrative of Renaissance polyphony, and the evolutionary forces which are superimposed on that narrative. In particular, so imposing on the landscape of early Renaissance music is the figure of Josquin Des Prez, and so deeply impressed on the consciousness of subsequent sixteenth century composers was Josquin's style – clear, economical, declamatory – that the rolling, rhapsodic style of Ockeghem and others comes to be regarded as an eccentric musical cul-de-sac. Many poets and musicians may have mourned Ockeghem's passing in 1497, but few commemorated him by imitating his style.

Once we dispense with these two, misleading, caricatures, then we can come to appreciate Ockeghem both as a contributor to the fast-changing language of music, and as someone who stood somewhat to the side of the mainstream. His early masses – the *Missa Caput* and *Missa L'homme armé* – are significant early additions to the genre of the mass ordinary cycle, in which all movements were linked by common material. Indeed, his *Missa L'homme armé* could be the first in that illustrious family of masses. But both also subvert traditional expectations by playing tricks with mensuration signs and scoring. In *Missa Caput*, for example, Ockeghem tricks the singers by presenting the mass as the singers might expect, but then adding a canon which instructs the tenor to sing in the bass register. Later masses provide similar challenges. The notorious *Missa Prolationum* presents each voice part in a different mensuration sign, while *Missa Fors seulement* extends the ensemble to five voice parts in its re-working of Ockeghem's own song: perhaps the first example of the 'parody' mass type.

At this point we can leave description of the musical style and the peculiarities of each work to the reference books. After all, peculiarities are a good deal easier to describe than the norm. To my mind the best insight one can get into Ockeghem's music is to experience it from the inside. Ockeghem was not, in his lifetime, best known as a composer but as a singer – the theorist Tinctoris describes him as a fine bass. We can best understand Ockeghem's puzzles and tricks – such as the one played out in *Missa Caput* – as musicians' games, for the entertainment not of scholars looking in, but of singers looking out. Perhaps we start at the wrong point if we start with Ockeghem's sacred music. As a song composer, Ockeghem is responsible for some exquisitely lyrical, arching melodies whose rationale we do not feel the need to question in the way that we do the sacred music. We find the same approach to melody in Ockeghem's (mature) sacred music: in the motets *Ave Maria* and *Alma redemptoris mater* for example. Because of the intellectual baggage that Ockeghem has accumulated, we sometimes fail to recognise his instinct for unfettered, melodic composition.

It is a problem with writing programme notes that the bits of music which are 'note-able' are given prominence, to the detriment of those which are not. And before we know it, we are constructing programmes – and ultimately music history – around these note-worthy pieces. Ockeghem has certainly suffered from this impulse: his name still strikes fear and awe into some students. To which the best antidote is – pick some up and sing it.

[Details of the Clerks' Ockeghem recordings are given on their website, www.theclerks.co.uk. Ed.]

The National Centre for Early Music, York, Delma Tomlin

Last year I wrote of the demise of the Early Music Network, but was also able to report that Arts Council funding for early music had not been lost, but moved across to NCEM. Delma Tomlin, Director of NCEM since its inception, reports on developments at NCEM since then.

Some 18 months on from the demise of the Early Music Network, I write to talk about the development of the National Centre for Early Music on to a national stage – thanks to increased funding from the Arts Council in April 2008.

So what has the NCEM done? And has it managed to 'make up' for the EMN? The answer to the first question is 'a great deal'. And the answer to the second? Probably not, but then the NCEM wasn't given an increased grant to replicate the work of the Network, but rather to find its own way to increase interest in early music.

Many of you will be aware of the two national tours the NCEM has been supporting. The first – the educational programme for secondary aged pupils running alongside the Mantra project led by The Orlando Consort working with three British Indian musicians – opened at the NCEM in May, and has subsequently toured to Bury St Edmunds, Salisbury, Cheltenham, Lichfield and the Lake District Summer Music Festival, with six more venues to follow in the autumn/spring of 2010. The second national initiative has followed The Sixteen's Choral Pilgrimage, offering over 600 primary-aged children from state schools from Bury to Lichfield, and from Southwell Minster to Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, a rare opportunity to learn some of Purcell's music and then stand on the same stage as the singers and be directed by Harry Christophers.

Focusing on more experienced young musicians, the NCEM has entered into an extraordinary fruitful partnership with The Tallis Scholars and BBC Radio 3's Early Music Show to look for composers aged up to 25 interested in writing for this vocal ensemble. The first 'trawl' across the country this spring produced over fifty pieces of note and six finalists were chosen to come up to York to spend a day with composer Christopher Fox and the York based Ebor Singers working

through their pieces, before presenting all six works to a panel of judges that included Chris Wines of BBC Radio 3, and Peter Phillips. The winners – 16-year-old Elizabeth Edwards from Camberley and 21-year-old Michael Perrett from Hampshire, currently studying at the RNCM – heard their pieces sung by The Tallis Scholars in York Minster on the opening night of the York Festival, and broadcast a week later as part of the Early Music Show. The NCEM plans to further develop this Award in 2010. Details will be on our web site (*www.ncem.co.uk*) from October.

And then the big one – the Young Artists' Competition formerly funded by the Network but hosted in York for some years. The winning group – Ensemble Meridiana – triumphed against intense competition from an exciting line up of 29 young musicians from around the world: Concitato Ensemble (USA); Grand Désir (Switzerland); MetroMarina (Belgium); Le Tic Toc Choc (France); Purcelli Abubu (Austria) and The Marian Consort (UK).

Ensemble Meridiana consists of five young instrumentalists from Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Norway and England who met during their studies at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland. They impressed the judges with a programme entitled 'Leipzig Connections' featuring works from the Baroque period. The group will receive a cheque for £1,000 alongside a series of opportunities to work with the National Centre for Early Music and a prestigious recording contract with the award-winning Linn Records. Highlights of the York Early Music International Young Artists Competition and music from the winner's recital were heard on BBC Radio 3's Early Music Show. John Bryan, Chairman of the Judges, said: 'We have enjoyed a feast of music ranging from medieval songs and dances to the subtle interplay of late eighteenth-century chamber music, all performed to a very high standard. The winning ensemble gave beautifully sculpted performances of Bach and his contemporaries showing a real understanding of the interplay between different instruments.' The Friends of the York Early Music Festival – a canny bunch who had awarded their prize to Stile Antico in 2005 – celebrated the medieval ensemble Grand Désir whose members came from Switzerland, Canada and Holland. The next Young Artists' Competition will take place in 2011, again as part of the York Early Music Festival.

The NCEM has also leapt on to the international stage with its Director Delma Tomlin joining the European Early Music Festivals Association [REMA] as its Secretary to the Board. Meetings in Paris have been followed by attendance at the Stockholm Early Music Festival in June, with REMA's own showcase of young artists taking place in Valencia in November. York will host the 10th

anniversary conference of REMA in July next year, and is already starting the search for an early music ensemble of note to support for the 2011 REMA Showcase – more of which anon!

Alongside all of this national activity, the NCEM continues to run a year-round programme at the restored church of St Margaret's in York comprising early music, jazz, folk and world music interspersed with the regular calendar of early music festivals at Christmas, in Beverley each May and back in York in July. The annual music-theatre summer school – this year focusing on the life and times of one Mr Handel – was sold out and extraordinarily well received by parents and youngsters alike, and the autumn season includes guest appearances by Donald Burrows, David Owen Norris, Ensemble Gilles Binchois, The Dufay Collective and Elizabeth Wallfisch.

And finally, for this year at least – the NCEM's new website will encompass an on-line directory of British-based early music artists. This new, free, facility can only work if artists/ensembles across the UK supply the information to us appropriately including their own website details, alongside good quality photographs. We will – hopefully – have a good cross-range of ensembles signed up by the launch date (although we are sadly short of any group beginning with Z!). If you haven't supplied your information as yet, please contact us soonest at *info@ncem.co.uk*. At the time of writing, we plan to be 'up and running' by the end of December, heralding the NCEM's own 10th anniversary – something to write about next year perhaps!

[Lindsay Kemp provides a more detailed review of the Competition in the following article. A printed directory of early music performers appears as Part V of this Yearbook, and will continue to be included in future editions. Ed.]

York Early Music International Young Artists' Competition 2009

NCEM, 18 July 2009

Lindsay Kemp

As Delma Tomlin has explained in the previous article, the National Centre for Early Music has now taken sole responsibility for the running of the Young Artists' Competition, and it is very good to see it continue under these new auspices. Lindsay Kemp is a BBC Radio 3 producer and Artistic Director of the Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music, and a prolific writer on early music matters. He gives an upbeat report on this year's competition.

The biennial Young Artists' Competition at the York Early Music Festival may have changed its name and management, but its tried and trusted format remains the same. And quite right too. Entries are invited from ensembles with an average age of under 30 from all corners of the early music world, and the lucky few to get chosen on the basis of submitted recordings turn up in York and present two twenty-minute concerts – one with the judges absent during the week of the Festival, and one in the day-long competition itself which forms the climax. Thus there is the chance for the young performers to get a feel for the venue (as ever, the converted church of the Festival's main home, the National Centre for Early Music) and enjoy performing free of competitive pressure, while for the Festival audience there is an opportunity to make their better acquaintance (and, who knows, perhaps open a book on them?). For good measure, the whole event is compered by a respected early music practitioner, who by talking to the musicians and discussing their performances with them brings a little bonding and feelgood factor to proceedings. This year it was Evelyn Tubb who took on the task, earning her corn with some lively, innovative and entertaining impromptu coaching which can have left no-one in doubt of her care and interest in the youngsters' progress.

The standard of this competition continues to rise, and all of the seven groups who performed here in repertoire ranging from medieval to late baroque are entitled to consider that their technical abilities and artistic personalities offer

them a future if they go about their business properly. Heeding Ms Tubb's advice will be a good place to start.

Every competition seems to throw up a recorder ensemble; this year's came from Austria (where they met at a competition) and boasted the splendid if slightly baffling name of Purcelli Abubu. In a programme of transcriptions of keyboard and vocal works by Byrd, Sweelinck, Merula and others, all played from memory, they showed the essential requirements of any recorder group, namely good internal rapport, tight ensemble and quickfire interplay in intricate music. True, they rushed the faster stuff sometimes – Sweelinck's *Mein junges Leben hat ein End* needed more repose – but this is a group that has the potential to prosper.

This year's only vocal ensemble – the Marian Consort – was from the UK. Made up of six Oxford singers, it was perhaps looking to follow in the footsteps of one of the 2005 finalists, Stile Antico, who have since gone on to great things. (I'm not kidding; one of the Marians' singers is sister to three members of Stile!) They looked at times a little like work in progress, and while that meant they were in a good position to benefit from Evelyn Tubb's suggestions for experimental singing positions, there were problems with intonation and unevenness of vocal blend that will need a bit of tweaking yet. But there was promise in these intelligent and well-shaped performances, which were responsive to text and particularly impressive in communicating the joy of works by Guerrero and Manchicourt.

The two medieval ensembles who made it to this year's final were both multi-national outfits; indeed, in the case of MetroMarina, their name comes not from a nostalgic homage to two cars of the British Leyland era, but from that of the Barcelona underground station where they first met. Theirs was an imaginative approach founded on sophisticated and atmospheric arrangements of music from the Chantilly Codex for voice, fiddle, recorders and a melancholic clavisimbalum (a tiny, twangy harpsichord), from which they drew an intensity and focus that impressed the audience in their preliminary performance, but perhaps saw them retreat too far into solipsism when it came to the competition proper. There is no doubt that this is a group with something strong and individual to offer, but they have yet to find a way of reaching out to the listener more invitingly.

Grand Désir, a product of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis with quite a few concerts and a CD already behind them, concentrated on repertoire from the 15th-century convents, which they presented on a mixture of voice, recorders, hurdy-gurdy and harp. Frequently varied scoring was a large part of

this trio's charm and interest – there was a wonderful moment when all three of them, quite unexpectedly, broke into song – but the beautiful singing of full-time vocalist Anne-Marieke Evers was certainly enough to attract anyone's enthusiasm. Despite their experience, this was the group which had seemed to gain the most from Evelyn Tubb's coaching, their late decision to give their programme from memory reaping results in warmly heartfelt and communicative performances whose sensuality and intelligence commanded the stage and won them the Festival Friends' Audience Prize.

But it was Baroque instrumental repertoire which dominated, as ever it seems. Two groups presented music for solo violin and continuo with expertise and care, but also with a hampering lack of the kind of outward rapport that could have made their performances really stand out. Le Tic Toc Choc (another good name) had members from Croatia, Switzerland and Sardinia, but with a common background at the Paris Conservatoire had French repertoire as their focus. In sonatas by Travenol and Rebel they were wonderfully stylish, with every ornament and inflection exquisitely turned and 'right', but while Jesenka Balic Zunic's violin-playing was assured and elegant, there was an expressive reticence to her playing and stage manner which served to distance the performers from the audience. Funnily enough, there was a greater sense of involvement in an Italianate sonata by Maschitti, but by then the damage was done. Similarly, the Concitato Ensemble, based in Chicago but featuring players from the USA, Spain and Canada, showed technical ability and strong stylistic awareness yet failed to find the vital spark required for fiery 'phantasticus' works by Castello, Cima and Fontana. Violinist Joan Plaza clearly had the chops for this music, but needed to show more variety, imagination and assertiveness.

Perhaps it was because Ensemble Meridiana was a bigger ensemble in which less of the responsibility for providing the driving energy fell on one player, that they were immediately able to make a stronger impression. On the other hand, perhaps it was also that they were sparky musicians who really knew their business. Another group from Basle, they fielded a versatile line-up of violin, flute, recorder/bassoon, gamba and harpsichord, and right from the off they had the appearance of a group fully equipped for a concert career. In works by Bach, Telemann and Fasch their music-making was neatly shaped, clean textured and joyfully communicative, with every member playing his or her part with alert enthusiasm and verve. Particularly impressive was how they were unafraid to take their time in places, establishing the kind of near-stillness in the Largo opening of their Fasch Sonata, for instance, which often eludes younger performers. Such intelligent and expert musicianship was enough to win them

the approval of the judges, and with it the main competition prize of £1,000, plus UK concert opportunities, a BBC recording and the chance to make a commercial CD. They deserve it.

Seventeenth-Century Ballet: a multi-art spectacle An International Interdisciplinary Symposium

Barbara Grammeniati

Many readers will be familiar with the music of the intermedi *(particularly those of 1589) and ballet, but are perhaps less so with the dance itself, which is a rather vital ingredient and fundamentally shapes the rhythms and structure of the music. Over the next two issues we will seek to help inform readers a little better by including articles on early dance. Barbara Grammeniati is organizing what promises to be a fascinating symposium on seventeenth-century dance and dance music to be held at King's College, London on 7 August 2010. Here she explores the background and introduces the symposium, the Keynote Speaker for which will be Tim Carter, now Distinguished Professor and Chair, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

The tradition of ballet as a court entertainment during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a diverse and as yet largely unstudied area of study. The evidence related to ballet suffers by notable gaps both in sources and of our understanding of them: we know very little about the production and consumption of theatrical court entertainment, and this partly relates to the fact that very few have survived complete. The purpose of this conference is to give the opportunity to researchers and scholars of early music and dance to communicate their ideas and add to our understanding of seventeenth-century ballet. Performers of early music and dance will be considered for participation at the conference. The conference topics include:

- Seventeenth-century ballet music and choreography
- The role of dance in early opera
- Ballet as political display

- Iconography and stage design in seventeenth-century ballet
- Ballet and exoticism
- Ballet and Neoplatonism

Here it may help to present a brief history of the origins and evolution of ballet. In the fifteenth century, dance music was influenced by the polyphonic settings and concordances of *basse danse tenors* and the *canti* of *balli*. The *basse danse* or *bassadanza* (literally "low dance") was a slow dance in 6/4 imported into Italy from France and Burgundy. Its melodies (*tenori*), often based on chansons, were notated in breves or semibreves and they were expanded or shortened according to the requirements of the choreography. The *ballo*, on the other hand, was an Italian invention and consisted of several dances of varied meter and tempo. In contrast to the anonymous authorship of *basse danse*, the *balli* were arranged by the dancing masters who also composed the music (*canti*) for each *ballo* and notated the melodic lines [Paul Nettl, *The Story of Dance Music*, New York 1977, p.80].

The Italian dancing master Domenico di Piacenza (c.1400-1470), who was attached to the court of Duke Lionello d'Este of Ferrara (1407-1450), was the one who fashioned and perfected the *balli*. During the second half of the 15th century, Ferrara became a principal centre for Italian court dance. One of the earliest was a torch-ballet *maschere delle torze* that was staged in Ferrara in 1502 by Girolamo da Sestola, as described in Lewis Lockwood's *Music in Renaissance Ferrara 1400-1505,* Oxford 1984, pp.72-79.

The structural foundations of the theatrical dance tradition were established in Florence, which was the home of the most lavish courtly entertainment in Renaissance Italy. The festivities of the 1589 Medici-Lorraine wedding put in motion the intellectual and artistic forces of Tuscany at the zenith of its wealth, power and culture prestige. Prominent members of the *Academia degli Alterati*, including Cavalieri, Bardi, Malvezzi, Marenzio, Caccini, Peri, Rinuccini and Laura Guidiccioni, created the celebrated *intermedi* for Bartagli's comedy *La Pelegrina*. Their subject was related to classical myths and Neoplatonic concepts of music as a display of the supreme harmony of cosmos. These ideas are closely connected to the description and justification of renaissance dance itself: the harmonious unity of poetry, music and dance mirrored the harmony that rules the universe. The evident success of the 1589 Florentine *intermedi* is often categorized as the high point of a theatrical genre that united humanistic antiquarianism, innovation and important advances in architecture, mechanics and stage design [Tim Carter, *Music, Patronage and Printing in Late Renaissance Florence*, Aldershot 2000, p.68]. Cavalieri's ballo *Che nuovo miracolo,* which concluded *La prima rappresentazione avvenne nel cuore delle festività per il*

matrimonio di Ferdinando de' Medici, e si tenne nel teatro degli Uffizi, in una ampia sala che l'architetto e scenografo ***Bernardo Buontalenti*** *aveva progettato alcuni anni prima specificamente per gli intrattenimenti della corte medicea. the* the entertainment, was very significant in the evolution of ballet. It opened the way for more complex balletic scenes and the construction of much larger structures, and provided a model for a whole series of self-contained dance spectacles composed for the Italian courts [Claude V Palisca, *Studies in the history of Italian music and theory*, Oxford 1994, p.45].

Italian styles in entertainment begun to seep northwards when Italian dancing masters, such as Fabrizio Caroso and Cesare Negri, travelled to France. The ballet *Comique de la Reine Luise* (1581) was the first example of the French *ballet de cour* tradition and was masterminded by an Italian choreographer Balthazar de Beaujoyeulx and the French queen Caterina de Medici. The *Ballet Comique* was an innovative project, whose great significance is based on the fact that for the first time, music, singing, dances, recitations and processions were fused into a single artistic entry, a theatrical spectacle of dance, drama and music built around a unifying story line. The *Ballet Comique de la Reine* features a continuous narrative linked with the idea of unity of arts as it is expressed in the neo-Platonic concept of the harmony of spheres [Margaret McGowan, *L'Art du Ballet de Cour en France (1581-1643)*, Paris 1978, p.56].

The popularity of court entertainment in the French style soon spread across Europe. Monarchs sought to rival each other in splendour and extravagance, while luxury and conspicuous consumption became the hallmarks of sovereignty and prestige. The seventeenth-century ballet became part of a spectacular display, able to communicate political messages and promote idealised images of nations' rulers and their powers.

The ballets created during the period of High Renaissance are undoubtedly among the major masterpieces of the theatrical genre of the era, and this can be proved not only in terms of their popularity, but also by their high quality, craftsmanship and variety in form. Emphasizing this diversity, the conference will focus on the interplay and tensions between discourses, continuities and discontinuities, and competing images of the seventeenth-century ballet in Europe.

[For more information on the symposium contact Barbara Grammeniati at bgrammeniati@msn.com. A detailed diary of early dance events can be found at The Calendar of Early Dance, http://www.early-dance.de/en/events/by_month. Ed.]

The Viola da Gamba Society of Great Britain
Susanne Heinrich

Continuing our series on specialist instrument societies, Susanne Heinrich outlines the history and activities of one of the most venerable, and still one of the most active. The Administrator of the Society, Susanne is one of our finest viol players. She has performed and recorded with many leading European period instrument ensembles, working particularly with Charivari Agréable and the Palladian Ensemble. She has written for various early music journals, and is chief editor of Charivari Agréable Publications.

The Viola da Gamba Society of Great Britain was founded in 1948, which is still in the Dark Ages as far as the Early Music Movement is concerned. The aim of the Society is to advance the study of viols, their music, their playing, and their making. It is a Registered Charity which maintains information on a variety of aspects of the viol and its music for members. These areas are coordinated by individuals or sub-committees set up by the Society.

Viols developed in Italy and Spain in the late 15th century, slightly before the violin family. Within 50 years they were well established in many countries and by the end of the sixteenth century they had been heard as far from their origin as South America, Africa and Japan. Viols were especially popular in England up to the middle of the seventeenth century, and in France and Germany around the beginning of the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century they fell out of general use but never completely disappeared. Repeated attempts to revive interest in them finally succeeded in the twentieth century. They are now once more widely appreciated by both professional and amateur players. Societies for people with an interest in viols exist in many European countries and in the USA, Japan and Australia. The Viola da Gamba Society of Great Britian was the first such society to be established.

Over the years the Society has made an enormous contribution to the awareness and rediscovery of this unusual instrument by producing several types of publications for both members and non-members. The quarterly newsletter, issued free to members, provides news about forthcoming events, listings of new CDs and publications, reports of meetings, reviews, information about viol

activities around the world, and a range of other material, including some more substantial articles about viols, their music, its composers and performers.

The Society has published an annual scholarly journal *Chelys* for many years, containing articles on a wide variety of topics to do with the viol and its music. The new web-based *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society* (also annual) started in 2007 and replaces *Chelys*. The out-of-print volumes of *Chelys* can now be downloaded from the website *www.vdgs.org.uk.* The intention is to provide substantial articles on the viol and its music similar to those in *Chelys* which may be too lengthy for the Society's newsletter *The Viol*, as well as to include extensive reviews of major publications.

Music for Viols provides low-cost editions of a large variety of music for viol consort (three-part to six-part), solo, and accompanied viols. These Music Editions are sometimes referred to as 'supplementary' publications for obscure historical reasons: in fact they are the Society's main music publications. There are now over 150 titles in the catalogue, and these have recently been typeset and are now available with scores. New editions are published once or twice a year and are available for an initial period to members at 10% discount.

The *Thematic Index of Music for Viols* is the result of several decades of research by members of the Society led by Gordon Dodd, with the aim of cataloguing all known music for the viol, in consort, ensemble and solo. This is a big achievement and is of enormous importance to all viol players, as it has so far provided the most important part of the repertoire with a number which identifies every piece. Most English sources are now covered, but much work remains to be done on overseas sources.

The Joy Dodson Music Fund, financed through donations from members of the Society, assists students with the cost of attending a music course as a viol player or undertaking research related to the viol. Members can apply for a grant to help them finance a course or project.

The Society has an extensive *Picture Collection* of photos (mostly 35mm slides) of artworks in which images of viols appear. This is open for members to examine by appointment with Dr Thomas Munck, the maintainer of the collection. The Society's *Instruments sub-committee* looks into all aspects of the viol family's technology and construction, both historical and contemporary. Roger Rose at West Dean College is the Instruments Adviser for the Society.

Members can also take advantage of our scheme of *Viol Hire*. Viols owned by the Society can be hired for a flexible term through Bridgewood & Neitzert in London, *www.londonviolins.com* This provides new players with a valuable

stepping stone into discovering the instrument, before deciding to purchase one for themselves.

The Society holds three meetings a year, mostly in Oxford, London and York (or a similar place in the North of England). Lecturers are invited to speak on a subject fitting the theme of the day. Recent meetings covered areas like the Kessler Collection, with a demonstration of five viols from the seventeenth century, as well as an illustrated talk by the instrument restorers who worked together with Dietrich Kessler on rescuing these invaluable instruments. At one meeting a few years ago there were thirteen old viols in one room, and aural experiments were conducted to determine whether listeners could guess the nationality of the instruments. Other subjects include Renaissance viols, detailed examination of the use and repertoire of viols and many others.

The *Viola da Gamba Society* is also involved in some other projects, like supporting an annual summer course for New Viol Players in Huddersfield, and a recent effort to raise money for charity through a raffle of an instrument which was made jointly by all reputable viol makers in the UK. The Society now has well over 500 members, and this figure is rising daily. We are always on the lookout for new ideas of themes for the meetings, and articles for both the Journal and the newsletter. Our website contains concert listings and links to members' sites.

If you would like to find out more about the Society, visit our website *www.vdgs.org.uk*, or email the administrator on *admin@vdgs.org.uk.*

Wigmore Hall's Early Music and Baroque Series, 2009/10

Edward Bhesania

In previous articles we have covered large and small early music concert series in various parts of the country outside London. Here Edward Bhesania outlines one of London's major offerings, the extensive and exciting early music programme at Wigmore Hall, many performers' favourite venue.

Renowned for its intimate setting and its enviable acoustic, Wigmore Hall has for many years been able to attract an array of the world's leading artists, making it an international focal point for the cream of song recitals, piano recitals and chamber music. At the same time it also represents one of the most respected showcase platforms from which the careers of young artists are launched. The same combination of top-flight artists and exciting young performers features in the Hall's *Early Music and Baroque Series*, which in the 2009/10 season makes up fully 10% of the Hall's 330 or so own promotions.

Early Music has been a feature of the Wigmore's offering for many years, with some of the fraternity's leading artists – such as Anthony Rooley, Trevor Pinnock and Dame Emma Kirkby – having been regular faces for decades. But it has been part of the ethos of John Gilhooly, the Hall's Executive Director since 2000 and overall Director since 2005, to consciously expand the series – a goal which has been made possible thanks in part to savings in rent payments resulting from the acquisition in 2006 of a 250-year lease. Along with jazz and contemporary music, early music has become a grateful beneficiary.

The first instalment of the 2009/10 season's *Early Music and Baroque Series* (14 September) features Wigmore Hall veterans Dame Emma Kirkby and countertenor Michael Chance with the period-instrument Purcell Quartet in a programme of vocal and instrumental works by Purcell – including excerpts from the semi-operas *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*. The 350th-anniversary celebrations for Purcell then overlap with those for Handel's 250th in three Purcell/Handel programmes, given by the Academy of Ancient Music with the

radiant soprano Carolyn Sampson (22 November), The English Concert with Mark Padmore (26 November, part of the tenor's exciting season-long residency) and by Florilegium (31 December, with the return of Dame Emma Kirkby). The last two of these concerts each feature excerpts from Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, composed in 1692 to be performed as part of a bowdlerised version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the complete semi-opera can be heard on 15 April in a collaboration between the Retrospect Ensemble and the Israeli Baroque ensemble Barrocade, under the direction of Matthew Halls.

It's a measure of Wigmore Hall's prominence as a centre for early music that all the large ensembles so far mentioned have ongoing series at the venue – an eye-widening parade of bands that is as varied and distinguished as any available around the world. And extending the dramatic element, in January alone there's not only a rare collection of Gluck's operatic highlights, from Christian Curnyn and his Early Opera Company, but also Handel's first oratorio, *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* ('The Triumph of Time and Enlightenment') – whose riches Handel understandably plundered for later projects – from Ian Page's Classical Opera Company. In May, a Renaissance English programme performed by theorbo player Elizabeth Kenny's hand-picked Theatre of the Ayre ensemble culminates in Blow's *Venus and Adonis*.

Marking his 65th-birthday year, Ton Koopman appears in a three-concert residency that features him as both director and soloist. This mini-series begins on 21 September with a continuation of Wigmore Hall's Haydn bicentenary celebrations (which have already featured all the string quartets from the Op. 20 'Sun' quartets onwards), when the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra – which marks its own 30th anniversary – performs two of the 'Paris' symphonies, in between which Koopman is the soloist in one of Haydn's organ concertos. Bach has been one of Koopman's abiding passions, and his direction of the *Musical Offering* on 25 April with members of the ABO is likely to be a highlight of the season. Koopman's series closes with a recital on harpsichord and organ (15 June).

Complementing the ABO's 'Paris' symphonies, on 29 October the British ensemble Florilegium – another Wigmore regular – performs two of Haydn's 'London' Symphonies (Nos. 97 and 100) in the pared-down arrangements by Johann Peter Salomon, the impresario responsible for Haydn's career-reviving visits to London in the 1790s.

Like Koopman, Trevor Pinnock is a singular and versatile musician with

wide-ranging talents. He features in two concerts, firstly as director of the European Brandenburg Ensemble (which he founded in 2006) in a fascinating concert featuring soprano Lucy Crowe, which reveals some of Handel's musical 'borrowings' (11 November); and, on 12 March, in a solo recital of German and French keyboard music by Froberger, Bach, Rameau and Couperin.

From the younger generation, harpsichordist/director Gary Cooper makes three appearances, firstly in his award-winning partnership with Baroque violinist Rachel Podger (in a recital of Mozart and Beethoven, including the rarely performed 'La bergère Célimène' Variations, 7 October), then playing Bach concertos with the Ghent-based ensemble B'Rock, making its UK debut (23 October); and finally in a solo recital (12 April).

Of course, Classical-period works (or earlier) are not confined to Wigmore Hall's *Early Music and Baroque Series*. Christian Zacharias, for example, centres on Scarlatti and Haydn in his solo recital (19 September), there's Handel from David Daniels as part of Wigmore Hall's 'The Art of the Countertenor' strand (21 February) and Jean Guihen-Queyras performs all six Bach solo cello suites across two concerts on 17 April. Near the beginning of the season (30 September), the ever-curious and engaging violinist Viktoria Mullova teams up with harpsichordist Ottavio Dantone for a selection of Bach's solo and accompanied violin sonatas, as well as the D minor solo Partita.

While the Cardinall's Musick takes us on a tour of Renaissance Spain towards the end of the season (12 July), the Hilliard Ensemble spans English church music and Gesualdo madrigals as part of its three-concert residency in November. The young Brook Street Band honours Handel (23 October), from whose place of residence, only a stone's-throw from Wigmore Hall itself, the group takes its name; and another dynamic ensemble, the Grammy-nominated Norwegian Trio Mediæval, makes its UK debut (13 December) with a selection of the 13th- and 14th-century 'Worcester Fragments' – one of the '10 for 10' series of ten autumn concerts with tickets priced at just £10.

Plans are already afoot for forthcoming seasons. Following his mesmerising solo viol recital in the 2008/9 season, Jordi Savall returns in 2010/11 (as Wigmore Hall celebrates its 110th anniversary), along with his wife, soprano Montserrat Figueras, and their daughter and son Arianna and Ferran. The 2011/12 season will bring Byrd's four- and five-part Masses, special series for Holy Week and Pentecost, English consort songs and a continuation of 'The Art of the Countertenor' with Andreas Scholl, American Lawrence Zazzo and

thrilling French sopranist and countertenor Philippe Jaroussky. Early music seems set to pervade the fabric of Wigmore Hall's programming, also developing a presence within the Sunday Morning Coffee Concerts and the BBC Radio Lunchtime Concerts. This may be only one of the many repertoire areas that make up Wigmore Hall's year-round musical feast, but it's one that's presented with increasing range and depth.

[For more information see Wigmore Hall's website, www.wigmore-hall.org.uk, or call the Box Office on 020 7935 2141. Ed.]

Oxford Baroque Week Summer School 1977-2009: A Personal Reminiscence

Peter Collier

In the fourth in our series of articles on early music summer schools we report on another school that has been running for over 30 years. Peter Collier is a harpsichordist and director of the Manchester-based Telemann Baroque Ensemble. He has been associated with the Baroque Week since its foundation and now directs the course.

Before the war Walter Bergmann had been a successful Jewish Lawyer in Germany but when warned that he was about to be arrested had managed to escape to England with one suitcase and fifty Deutschmarks in his pocket. Initially he was interned, but after being released he looked for work and found it as a packer in the offices of the music publishers Schott. Eventually he became a valued editor of recorder music and it was because of his avid interest in music that he started Baroque Week 32 years ago. It was held at Wycliffe Theological College, Oxford, and he invited me as a member of staff. It was held at Easter which was very early and bitterly cold. I felt like one of the early church fathers, suffering for my faith – baroque music! We used to go to the pub to get warm.

In those days we always had visiting celebrities. It might be the recorder player Ferdinand Conrad, the principal flautist of the LPO Fritz Spiegel or Anthony Hopkins the broadcaster. Fritz was very droll. I remember rehearsing a canonic sonata by Locatelli with two groups of players at opposite ends of a very long stage. 'You're playing an E flat!' shouted Walter from the distant corner. 'It was E natural when it left here', responded Fritz. All the staff were players of modern instruments and pitch was always 440. 'We've been hundreds of years reaching a standard pitch and we must respect it', said Walter. I remember at one concert oboes were allowed to play at 415 and it was really frowned upon and the experiment was never repeated. How times have changed! Two years ago there was only one person who only played at high pitch.

One of the reasons Walter started the week was to make a course where everyone made music all the time, with music and musicians of their choosing. He did not want a course of master classes – he wanted a 'hands-on' course. To effect this he brought his own library of music for everyone to use. People chose the music they wanted to play, and with whom they wanted to play it, and staff would go round tutoring the ensembles. That still happens, the only difference being that I have enlarged the original library of 300 items to a huge collection of some 1000 concerti grossi and some 2000 pieces of chamber music.

After Walter died his secretary Ursula carried on with the course for several years and when she became ill I took it over – that was sixteen years ago. The first change I made was to only employ staff who were baroque specialists and who played original instruments. I also changed the evening activities. Previously Walter always had massed playing where a motley crew of perhaps 50 musicians playing recorders, flutes, oboes and strings would be divided out amongst the orchestral parts, which was fun but hardly produced an authentic sounding performance. I realised instrumentalists liked to sing, so now we might do a Bach cantata with soloists, choir and orchestra which is performed both after the staff concert and in the final course concert. I think it a fitting end to the week, especially when one year it involved all but eight of the course members.

Having being connected with the course for so long I remember with affection people who have gone off radar, like the cellist, the Rev Mowat, a mild-mannered grey-haired gentleman who asked if he could sell his recently finished autobiography in aid of charity. We sold all his books and I was surprised to read that as a young man he had served in the Second World War, been captured and put in the notorious Changi POW camp by the Japanese, and that this book told of his life there and his escape through the Burmese jungle. His wife who came on the course had believed him 'missing presumed dead'. And then there

was Mary Purver OBE whom I 'inherited' as course librarian and who was secretive about her OBE (she voluntarily retired when she was a very nimble 90). Not long ago she sent me a newspaper cutting of her opening a garden fête and it related her war experiences as a Special Operations Executive.

Of course younger musicians join all the time: Abdul and Fatima sent in their forms two years ago. I phoned Fatima to check some details. 'And your husband?' I asked. 'My husband!' she replied, 'He's my brother! He's twelve and I'm fifteen. They came and had a great time and are coming again. Baroque Week is really a meeting of friends. I remember another good friend, Alex, who came as a violinist aged twelve. In one session we were playing recorder concerti with Sarah and Patrick, who both came as youngsters. 'Oh!' said Alex, 'I've not played with Winnie. She's such a sweetie'. I remember it distinctly as they were 23, I was 53, and the 'sweetie' was a sprightly 83! Only in music can age be bridged so amiably – and long may it continue.

We have moved around over the years but have eventually returned to our roots – Oxford. For some years we have been based at Headington School, a superb location with 22 acres of grounds, lockable rooms, lovely gardens, large playing rooms and most importantly waist-enhancing good food. Oxford is easy to get to with buses every 20 minutes from London and the airports. It is an attractive city to visit, so I hope some day you might join our course. We are not too big, usually around 60-70 souls, so you get to know and play with everyone. As someone who wrote to me said, 'The best week of the year'.

For course details contact Peter Collier, 13 Brackley Road, Monton, Eccles, Manchester M30 9LG, email *p.b.collier@googlemail.com*, ring 0161-281-2502 or see the website *www.baroque-week.org.uk*.

Eastern Early Music Forum
Robert Johnson

We continue our series of articles on the early music fora with a look at EEMF, which operates in East Anglia, including Essex and Cambridgeshire. Robert Johnson is Newsletter Editor and Webmaster.

EEMF cannot claim to be the earliest of the regional fora to be founded, having been beaten to that by NWEMF and SWEMF. However, the origins can be traced back to an inaugural meeting at the Colchester Institute in June 1981, where Peter Holman, then Senior Lecturer at the Institute, and John Wellingham of Dartington College were the speakers. Peter then left to work in USA and management of the embryonic forum passed into the hands of various local musicians, many of them active or former professionals, teachers or instrument makers, including Alison and the late Michael Bagenal, Alan Turner (harpsichord maker, also deceased), Marjorie Harmer (viol player and cellist), and Anne Jordan (wife of Brian, renowned music retailer of Cambridge).

After about a year there was a crisis because of other commitments, and because of the geographical difficulties of our large area, but a reorganisation saw things moving again. The register of members then stood at about 60. Committee offices changed hands often; publisher and musicologist Clifford Bartlett came on board early, as did wind player Stephen Cassidy. There was always an intention to produce a quarterly newsletter, and some of the early editions contained quite learned articles, as well as extensive diaries of concerts in East Anglia. It reached epic proportions under editor Ann Elliott, who, with Marjorie Harmer, has kindly provided much of the information on which these notes are based. In the early days forum activities naturally concentrated on viol consorts and a string orchestra, as these were the skills of the committee, and there was also the occasional early wind workshop. It's interesting to note that there was a musical picnic and playing day at Thetford for which the entry fee was 75p a head! There wasn't much for singers at the start, but that has been more than adequately compensated for in recent years, as described below. One

name that looms large in the early list of tutors is that of Philip Thorby, of whom more anon.

A great expansion of membership has taken place over the two-and-a half decades of EEMF's existence, such that the register now stands at about 260. This has led to a considerable extension in the range of activities, much of which is due to the indefatigable Selene Mills, an arts administrator with an extremely wide circle of contacts who has organised annual events for many years. One significant innovation was the Epiphany Party, which still takes place annually in Beccles, Suffolk, and could be called EEMF's flagship event. It is a day for players of all renaissance wind instruments and singers, with organ continuo, at which the polychoral works of major and minor renaissance or early baroque composers such as Palestrina, Heinrich Schütz, Michael Praetorius, Gabrieli, Benevoli and Marenzio are given a good outing under the authoritative direction of the implacable tutor Philip Thorby, whose immense knowledge, drive and enthusiasm for this period are now legendary in Early Music circles at home and abroad. An important additional feature of the Party is the delicious lunch prepared to recipes of the period by Jennie Cassidy, who with husband Stephen undertook all the organisation for many years, but who now gratefully has assistance from the membership in general.

Another important annual event was the series of liturgical weekends in Cambridge directed by Michael Procter, an expert in renaissance polyphony. These always attracted a large crowd of *a cappella* singers desirous of spending a Saturday exploring some of the choral masterworks of the sixteenth century and at the same time preparing a Mass for liturgical performance in a local church on the Sunday morning, followed by a convivial lunch. In addition to this, a number of themes have been explored by the forum. There have been workshops on Spanish and Mexican music and dance (Andrew Lawrence-King and Steve Player), opera weekends such as *La Dafne* and *L'Orfeo* (Philip Thorby), music for recorders and viols (Margaret Westlake), medieval and traditional song (Belinda Sykes), solo and group singing masterclasses in Cambridge and Ipswich (John Potter and Richard Wistreich), Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 in Norwich (Philip Thorby), a klezmer day (Ilana Cravitz and friends), a viol masterclass (Amit Tiefenbrunn), a choral workshop on Lalande (Jeffrey Skidmore), workshops on Bach and Charpentier in Suffolk (Peter Leech), renaissance polyphony singing days (David Skinner and David Allinson), a Victoria workshop (Roger Wilkes) and other events too numerous to mention.

Particularly worthy of mention is the annual baroque choral/orchestral workshop taken normally by Peter Holman, now an honorary member, at the converted Baptist chapel that is the charming home of our member Michael Taylor (warmest thanks to him for his hospitality) in the village of Elsworth near Cambridge. This event draws together people from all over the country for a day of cantatas, odes, operas or oratorios, often by Purcell, Handel, Draghi, or Arne. This long-running series shows every sign of continuing well into the future as it is a day where old friends are reunited in a special musical atmosphere. Visiting tutors have included Catherine Mackintosh, Paul Goodwin and Gary Cooper.

Occasionally we organise joint workshops with Thames Valley Early Music Forum at Waltham Abbey, Essex (Philip Thorby again!) and we assist them in recruiting new members at the Early Music Exhibition every November in Greenwich. Indeed we are accustomed to seeing many TVEMF members at our workshops and we are grateful for their support.

We are also glad to provide financial support for the Cambridge Early Music Summer Schools (another of Selene's enterprises) in order to provide bursaries for young 'rising stars' who may not otherwise be able to take advantage of the very high standard of tuition on offer there.

We continue to maintain an actively updated website *www.eemf.org.uk* with details of our own activities, free adverts for Early Music concerts in East Anglia, and a list of courses both locally and further afield. Anyone wishing to post details on the site should email *webmaster@eemf.org.uk*.

What of the future? We face changes due to the impending retirement of our long-standing chairman Clifford Bartlett, so some reallocation of committee responsibilities may be needed. In the meantime the committee keeps as busy as ever, and is determined to maintain a full programme of attractive workshops and to provide a good service to the Early Music world of our area.

[Selene Mills wrote about the Cambridge Early Music Summer Schools in the 2008 Yearbook. *Ed.]*

Royal Northern College of Music Collection of Historic Musical Instruments

Anna Wright

Having last year looked at the RCM's instrument collection, we continue our series with a report on the instruments held at its counterpart in Manchester. Anna Wright has been a member of the library staff at RNCM since 1980, and was appointed Librarian in April 2001.

The origins of the RNCM Collection date back to 1900 when Dr Henry Watson (1846-1911), a Professor at the Royal Manchester College of Music, gave his collection of instruments to that institution. Watson was a keen collector whose name is still known in Manchester. In 1902, by deed of gift, he presented his private library, comprising some 16,700 volumes of music and books, to the City, becoming its 'Hon. Librarian' and retaining custody of it until his death. It was known as the Henry Watson Library, the name which it has retained to this day. Watson's collecting encompassed more than books and music; he took a keen interest in musical instrument studies and was a member of the organizing committee of the 1900 International Loan Exhibition of Musical Instruments at the Crystal Palace in London and lectured on the History and Development of Musical Instruments at the Victoria University of Manchester.

In a letter to the Principal of the RMCM, Adolf Brodsky, dated 10 October 1900, Watson wrote: 'For some years past I have been gathering together a Collection of old & curious Musical Instruments with a view to presenting them, (when the collection became of sufficient interest) to some public Institution where they would be of service. The number of Instruments now in my possession has already out-grown the space at my disposal, and I now wish to hand them over to the Institution I have decided on, which is the Royal Manchester College of Music …The only conditions I attach are that proper provision should be made for their display, & that I should have the care of the Collection, & have access to it at all reasonable times.' It is difficult to determine exactly the number of instruments that Watson gave in 1900 but by 1906, when the Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue was published, it consisted of 158.

By 1910 Watson had acquired more instruments but there was no room for them in the College and so he gave them to Manchester Corporation, together with some duplicate items from the original RMCM collection. In 1942 these were augmented with items from a collection that had belonged to Josiah Thomas Chapman (1843-1907), photographic pioneer and founder of a well-known firm of photographic chemists in Manchester. During his lifetime Chapman's collection numbered some 300 items, notable particularly for the stringed instruments and bows. In 1904 he and his wife lent some twenty violins, including rare examples made in seventeenth-century London, to the London 'International Loan Exhibition' at the Fishmongers' Hall. Many of the instruments were sold off by his family after his death and the current collection contains 27 instruments and 37 bows identifiable as having belonged to him.

The RMCM Collection remained on view until the College closed in 1973 and amalgamated with the Northern School of Music to form the RNCM. Two years later the collection from the City was transferred to the College on indefinite loan; some of the instruments were put on display in the new College building and others were housed in Hartley Hall, the RNCM's then Hall of Residence. In 1997 the two collections were officially amalgamated when ownership of the items formerly belonging to the city council was passed over to the College, and the construction of an extension to the College building enabled the collection to be housed in one place.

The RNCM Collection now comprises some 315 instruments: 54 European woodwinds, 27 ethnic woodwinds, 12 European brasswinds, 6 ethnic brasswinds, 6 European percussion instruments, 27 ethnic percussion instruments, 38 European bowed string instruments, 42 string instrument bows, 9 ethnic string instruments, 30 European plucked string instruments, 24 ethnic plucked string instruments, 15 keyboard instruments, 5 mechanical instruments and 19 miscellaneous items. The earliest instrument is an anonymous Italian virginal dating from c.1540; highlights of the collection include a violino piccolo by Stradivari, a Barak Norman bass viol, a harpsichord by Shudi & Broadwood dating from 1791 and a number of interesting bows from the Chapman collection, one being a 'picture' bow attributable to Voirin with a crystal lens in the eye of the frog containing a 'microphotograph' in the form of a miniscule negative image of Vuillaume seated at a table holding a violin. Microphotography had been invented in Manchester in the 1850s by J. B. Dancer and this bow would have been of particular interest to Chapman, himself a pioneer in photography and adopted Mancunian. There are some curiosities amongst the miscellaneous items, including a fragment of Beethoven's

shroud (reputedly), a lock of Mendelssohn's hair and two relics of Chopin - a cast of his left hand and a death mask.

A few of the instruments are in playing condition and are used on an occasional basis for performances within the College and further afield. With the aid of a grant from the museums organisation Renaissance North West we have been able to undertake a small project to film some of these instruments being played by College students and the results are available for visitors to watch *in situ* and for viewing on the website.

For a number of years William Waterhouse looked after the collection and his catalogue can be viewed in text format on the College website at *www.rncm.ac.uk*; a printed catalogue with photographs is in preparation with the aim of publishing in 2010. At present the Collection does not have regular opening hours but is open to visitors at advertised times prior to concerts, during festivals and by appointment. Details are posted on the website on a termly basis and potential visitors are advised to check for more information. Groups are welcome to come, by special arrangement, for organised visits outside of the advertised opening hours, as is anyone wishing to visit for research purposes.

A Survey of British Harpsichord Making 2009

Sophie Yates

In the fourth article in our series on British instrument makers, Sophie Yates provides an overview of makers of plucked keyboard instruments, informed by her experience as a leading performer. One of Britain's most talented harpsichordists, Sophie performs regularly around Europe, the United States and Japan, and has recorded numerous solo CDs. She is particularly well known for her performance of French and English music, including music for virginals.

It is clearly beyond the scope of this short article to list and consider every maker of early keyboard instruments who is active in Britain, so I have confined my focus to plucked instruments – harpsichords, virginals and spinets – and those makers who currently have the highest profile.

Any article on instrument building written by a performer risks being subjective, coloured by inevitably strong tastes and opinions, based on experiences gained over years of playing. In order to balance this and give a better-rounded view of the current state of British harpsichord making, I asked various makers their own thoughts on the matter. Their responses are fascinating and I will attempt to put them in order by looking at different styles of instrument in turn.

Naturally, a buyer's choice of instrument will be determined by several considerations, including budget, space and the repertoire favoured. In my view, there really is no such thing as the 'all-round' harpsichord, or a style of instrument upon which all kinds of music sound equally good. After all, a founding principle of the period performance movement was to place repertoire in the right context and surely that has to begin with the instrument. I advise my students to research the differences between the national styles of harpsichord building and how this affects sound, touch and disposition: it is also essential to listen to and play as many instruments as possible. There is always the option of hiring in the short term, to try out a certain style before you commit to buying.

Italian harpsichords are popular today on account of their light weight and lively sound. One maker who has recently done a huge amount of research on these instruments is Edinburgh-based Grant O'Brien, whose background as the former curator of the Russell collection and working relationship with the late

John Barnes offered him access to many important antique instruments. His study and restoration of these instruments has allowed him to make groundbreaking discoveries about their design and construction, which in turn has informed his own making. At the moment, his interests lie in Neapolitan style harpsichords: an early 4-octave one and a later, 5-octave model. He collaborates with the Italian harpsichord maker, Graziano Bandini.

Another maker of fine Italian instruments is David Evans of Henley, who copies instruments from museum collections, including (like Grant O'Brien) the Neapolitan Guarracino harpsichord from the RCM collection. He also builds instruments from northern Italy, including those by the Roman seventeenth-century maker, Giusti, and the sixteenth-century Venetian, Baffo. David is attracted to smaller instruments and makes a beautiful copy of the so-called 'Queen Elizabeth' virginals from the Victoria and Albert museum. His output is fairly small but his work is very fine.

West country-based Colin Booth, who is an active player in addition to his activities as a harpsichord maker, also makes Italian instruments with a particularly clear and bell-like tone. They are increasingly similar to the old instruments that inspired them but, unlike David Evans, Colin is happy to base an instrument on an original design rather than aiming always to make a faithful copy. In their search for 'authenticity', makers and players will always debate what degree of personal interpretation is desirable.

Alan Gotto of Norwich says that he sees the historical makers as his teachers and continues to study and consider their solutions to the diverse aspects of harpsichord making. He points out that, time and again, one finds that those masters had refined their product over many decades, so careful study of their work repays the effort and time involved. Alan, like David Evans, makes fine northern Italian virginals & harpsichords and is happy to consider commissions of unusual instruments within these genres: he once copied the 1620 Boni with 15 notes to the octave!

Of course, unlike their illustrious forebears, modern makers have the luxury of being able to study and make a variety of different styles of instruments; though many specialize in similar genres. For example, in addition to their Italian harpsichords, Messrs Deegan of Lancashire, Booth and Gotto are unusual in this country for their interest in German-style instruments. To my knowledge, there is nobody else in Britain with such expertise in this particular kind of harpsichord.

Moving on to the **Flemish** style, we must remember that these were the most highly prized instruments in northern Europe during the seventeenth and early

eighteenth centuries. They were so desirable that contemporary makers would often fake them, giving their own work a Flemish appearance to increase its value. Flemish harpsichords were often kept in a family for generations and, as their compass gradually became too restrictive for the later repertoire, they were sent off to a different (French) maker for *ravalement* – to be enlarged and modernised. These *ravalements* sometimes resulted in an instrument that combined the best of both worlds and there are many modern harpsichord builders who copy these – of which, more later. However, there seem to be comparatively few who currently specialize in pure, unaltered Flemish instruments. The most notable of those who do are the Dorset-based Michael Johnson, David Evans, who produces a mid-seventeenth century Couchet harpsichord and a Grouwels virginals, and Andrew Garlick, who makes copies of the Fleshuis and Colmar Ruckers in Somerset.

Andrew Garlick is a maker with enormous flair, whose passionate interest in producing the best sound spurs him constantly to review and refine his craft. A player himself, what sets him apart is that he understands the whole nature of the instrument he is copying, including a depth of knowledge of decorative styles and techniques unusual in a harpsichord maker.

Franco-Flemish *ravalements* were probably the most popular style of harpsichord for a modern maker to copy in the 1970s and '80s, possibly because of their impressive appearance; their large compass and mixed lineage also makes a broad repertoire playable. As a result, many makers who started their careers at that time became interested in this style of instrument. Michael Johnson is one such, who has been so inspired by the Edinburgh Goermans Taskin that he has spent much of his making life refining this instrument. Over a long career, he has been faithful to the Flemish and Franco-Flemish style of harpsichord building and has sold his very reliable and flexible instruments to players and conservatoires in many parts of the world.

Instruments from the **Iberian peninsula** are somewhat neglected by modern makers, possibly because so few of the originals are accessible. However, a reliable copy of the Portuguese Antunes harpsichord, which is kept at Finchcocks in Kent, is available from the London-based Andrew Wooderson.

There are four notable makers of **English** instruments: Christopher Barlow in Frome, Malcolm Rose in Lewes, Edinburgh-based Darryl Martin and Huw Saunders in London. Christopher Barlow and Huw Saunders both copy instruments from the eighteenth century: these large, complicated harpsichords pose an extra challenge to the craftsman in that they were not painted, but

veneered in the manner of English furniture of the time. Christopher Barlow's harpsichords are especially beautiful examples of this kind of cabinet work.

Most of the makers I have mentioned started their careers during the surge of interest in period performance during the 1970s and '80s and are now in their 50s & 60s: oddly enough, there seem to be few new faces emerging. Huw Saunders, a comparatively younger maker, has a remarkably traditional approach, saying: 'I enjoy working by hand and use machines as little as possible. I like traditional tools like moulding planes, scratchers and scrapers and I quite often make my own. Usually I copy, or base an instrument closely on an original but I am not afraid to experiment with the design'.

Darryl Martin and Malcolm Rose both copy earlier English instruments from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Original examples of these are rare and it is something of a mystery as to what happened to all the English harpsichords and virginals from such a vibrant period in our musical history. One that we do have is the Theewes of 1579, by a Dutch maker who had moved to London. Malcolm Rose points out that this instrument provides an intriguing link to the English virginalists, as its first owner was a friend of Tallis and Byrd. Darryl Martin also makes a Theewes and copies some later English virginals, such as the 1680 instrument attributed to John Player. Darryl is Grant O'Brien's successor as the curator of the Russell Collection in Edinburgh, so also benefits from the opportunity to study these valuable old instruments at close quarters.

The last important style of instrument to discuss is the **French**, an area of special interest for me. Throughout his long career Robert Deegan has been making fine copies of the Edinburgh Taskin, a wonderful instrument that represents the late flourishing of the harpsichord's popularity, before it gave way to the pianoforte. Malcolm Rose is more interested in the earlier French style, choosing to focus on the 1683 Dufour and 1711 Donzelague. Anyone fortunate enough to have played many French museum instruments will know that the qualities one searches for are a long, 'blooming' quality in the treble and a dark richness to the bass. The maker who I feel understands the French sound quite exceptionally is Andrew Garlick. He makes both early and late styles, copying the Victoria and Albert Museum's Vaudry (1681) and the Goujon harpsichord (1749) from the Paris conservatoire. He was inspired by the Goujon early in his career and has perfected this mid-eighteenth century model for many years. Needless to say, his instruments also have a highly refined French touch and always look as aristocratic as they sound. This is my own instrument of choice.

As for price? Most makers charge between £5000 and £30,000, depending on your choice of instrument, its stand and the decoration chosen. As the proud

owner of a new harpsichord, you might need some help in looking after it and, if repairs are needed and the maker is not on hand, there are various technicians who specialize in this.

Makers:

Grant O'Brien	Andrew Wooderson	Malcolm Rose
David Evans	Robert Deegan	Darryl Martin
Colin Booth	Michael Johnson	Huw Saunders
Alan Gotto	Christopher Barlow	Andrew Garlick

Instruments for hire and technicians:

Edmund Pickering,	Simon Neal	Robert Deegan
Malcolm Greenhalgh,	David Wright	Alan Gotto
Keith McGowan,	Claire Hammett	Andrew Garlick
Andrew Wooderson	Mark Ransom	
Alexander Skeaping	Colin Booth	

[The Buyer's Guide in Part III of this Yearbook provides contact details for most of the people listed by Sophie, and in addition of many others in Europe and beyond who make and/or restore plucked keyboard instruments: note that making and restoring are separately listed. Sophie's website is www.sophieyates.co.uk. Ed.]