

## REVIEWS

*Born for the Muses; The Life and Masses of Jacob Obrecht*, by Rob C. Wegman. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994. xxv, 406 p.

The careers of most music historians march at a stately pace. Rob Wegman provides an impressive exception. He poured out a formidable series of articles even before completing his Ph.D. and now, with scarcely a year having elapsed after finishing his dissertation, Oxford University Press has published his first book, a splendid survey of the masses of Jacob Obrecht. Wegman's central issue, sacred music, may seem peripheral to the interest of readers of this journal, but he also provides a reevaluation of Obrecht's biography, which includes substantial new material concerning Willem Obrecht (Jacob's father), one of the leading trumpet players of the mid-fifteenth century. In so doing, Wegman provides us with a picture of the background and social context of a 15th-century musical family unique in its richness of detail.

The book begins with an introduction in which Wegman pleads the case for a reconsideration of the role of Obrecht as he was viewed by his fellow musicians. Subsequent history has emphasized the role of Josquin; indeed, in terms of musical developments the span is often referred to as the Josquin era. Wegman points out, however, that during the final decades of the 15th century Obrecht's reputation and influence were greater. The subsequent dominance of Josquin came largely after the death of Obrecht in 1505.

The body of the text is divided into three main sections. The first treats his early life (1457/8-85), the second the middle years (1485-91), during which his mature style evolved (apparently in a remarkably short span), and the third the final years of his life (1491-1505). Each section is introduced with a discussion of relevant material concerning biography and context, followed by closely argued analysis of the masses assigned by Wegman to that chronological span. An extensive appendix is added, with original texts of documents relating to the biography of Obrecht (given the extraordinary new information included, the availability of the texts is most welcome); a second appendix treats the issue of rhythmic density in Obrecht's masses. An up-to-date bibliography and a reliable index are also included. The text is provided with substantial musical examples. The illustrative material is especially well-chosen and effective, including the first publication in the musicological literature of a stunning contemporary portrait of Obrecht.

The biographical information concerning Willem Obrecht is concentrated primarily in Part I (with the circumstances of his final years taken up at the beginning of Part II). The link between Willem and Jacob, as father and son, was first provided to modern historians by the text of Jacob's motet *Mille quingentis*. The text has been known for several decades, but its full implications have not been understood until quite recently. Even with this knowledge, though, the early biography of Jacob had remained a complete blank (see the discussion in Reinhard Strohm in *The Rise of European Music 1380-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 487-8).

Determined and indeed dazzling effort by Dr. Wegman in the Ghent archives has altered this. Jacob's mother, it turns out, died while he was a very small child, and local law required an inventory of her estate. This inventory, and documentation surrounding it, opens up an unparalleled view of the context of the circumstances of the lives of the Obrecht family. These establish that the birth of Jacob came late in 1457 or early in 1458; furthermore, both father and mother were evidently of families of some wealth and status.

With further research, Dr. Wegman has been able to sketch out the broad outlines of Willem's career. The first mention of him is in the record of the appointment of an ensemble of six trumpets for the city of Ghent in 1452. This was an extraordinary group, not only in that it was unique (no other Flemish city established such a trumpet corps), but also in its quality. It was of such ability that the young Charles the Bold often called on its services when he required special pomp in his travels. Dr. Wegman speculates on the early training of Willem, and on the interactions between the trumpeters and the political factions of Ghent in these troubled years. Equally fascinating is the discussion of the guild of musicians to which Willem belonged (illustrated with startling photographs which reveal that not only is the chapel of this guild preserved in the church of St. John in Ghent, but contemporary ceiling paintings from the chapel have been found and restored).

Wegman has been able, then, to establish a great deal about Willem and his colleagues. They were all local (not drawn from other centers as was often the case with shawm bands), and they were well placed in their urban society. Oddly, only one of the players in the first ensemble of 1452 has any record as a musician before the document of appointment, although further familial ties developed with sons and brothers as players after that date. Also, their guild seems to have been a general one, not one composed exclusively of trumpeters.

Most readers of these biographical sections, of course, will be more concerned with the background of Jacob, and they will find much here that is new. This is especially true for his infancy, and for earlier years of his maturity. We now know his birth date (within very narrow parameters), and that Ghent was his native city. The later childhood years are still shrouded, but the documents that Wegman has assembled allow us to speculate on the striking fact that for other Ghent trumpeters, the civic ensemble became a family ensemble with sons following their father's career patterns. Young Obrecht, despite his potential professional connections, and despite his secure financial and social networks in his home city, chose a very different career. Wegman then documents the various phases of Obrecht's professional career, as singer and priest, as he served a variety of churches, especially in Cambrai, Bruges, Antwerp and Bergen op Zoom. Obrecht was restless (as Wegman shows), and was less than perfect in complying with the demands of the posts to which he was appointed. He was especially ineffective, apparently, in matters which demanded attention to administrative detail. Early there were occasional hints of troubles, but as years passed these became more explicit. These happened, on the surface, because of administrative incompetence (the grounds for dismissal in Bruges in 1501 after he had roused such dissatisfaction that he was abruptly fired). Still, as Wegman points out, deeper

troubles seem to have been lurking. Obrecht's career trajectory clearly flattened after he reached his early thirties. An important factor was, as Wegman suggests, that his voice was apparently less than adequate, a critical weakness as at that time composers were expected to function primarily as singers.

Wegman, as indicated above, has interwoven his biographical segments into the main stream of his argument, which is concerned with analysis. In entering this arena the reader should be prepared for a quite different text style. The writing, when concerning background, is crisp, vivid, and easily grasped. The analytical discussions, on the other hand, by the nature of their subject are complex and demand close attention. Numerous musical examples are provided, most of which are quite extended. These do provide a satisfactory base to follow the discourse, but the reader might be well advised to have the relevant volumes of the collected works available for consultation—and to allow ample time for careful reading.

In the discussion of the masses, Wegman's approach is to trace phases in what he argues was a remarkable development (from brilliant mastery of contemporary style by Obrecht's early twenties, to a mature style reached only a few years later, to a stylistic breakthrough of striking originality in his early thirties). Such a scheme, of course, depends upon a secure dating of the masses—and another purpose of this book is to propose a comprehensive, substantially revised chronology of the masses.

Wegman suggests that, in his earliest mass efforts, Obrecht took Busnoys as his model. The argument here comparing and linking the two composers is persuasive (note that Wegman imposes rather strict limitations on himself, comparing styles only in masses, with those of Busnoys being few in number and from earlier in his career—the case is even more compelling if one considers Busnoys's later production of motets). A subsequent influence, according to Wegman, was Ockeghem, and parallels are drawn relating features in Obrecht's *Missa Sicut spina rosam* to those found in Ockeghem. Even in this early phase, however, segments which are written in the smoother contrapuntal styles of Busnoys and Ockeghem are contrasted with those (as Wegman observes) that are distinctive of Obrecht, i.e. passages with rapid passage work based on such devices as motivic repetitions and melodic and rhythmic sequences. This is especially true in sections involving reduced scoring.

From about 1485-88 Obrecht was required to compose several masses per year. In these years (which included a stay of several months in Ferrara in 1487-88), Obrecht's style, following Wegman, entered a "critical phase." Two key pieces reflecting this span are the *Missa Salve diva parens* and the *Missa Adieu mes amours*. Concerning the second Wegman proposes a possible influence of Josquin des Prez (who wrote not only a chanson of that title, but also a mass based on that piece). Concerning the second, Wegman notes a curious device that appears in passages which are built up of "additive" melodic structures; a tune begins, for example e-f; then e-f-g; then e-f-g-a, etc. Wegman notes the extreme rarity of this approach in works by Obrecht (or anyone else). It might be added that this device does occur in the works of Alexander Agricola, in, for example, the piece *Cecus non judicat*. This is not to propose Agricola as a major influence on Obrecht, but the two composers must certainly have had a mutual acquaintance of their respective music. Characteristic

of this period are a move away from the use of beginning sections with motto (these had been characteristic of all earlier pieces) and a freer approach to cantus firmus.

Obrecht's masses that appear to have been composed between about 1488 and 1493 are remarkable in several ways. First, the quantity of music Obrecht wrote seems to have been extraordinary; "the list of proposed works for this brief period has grown dangerously long," as Strohm has laconically remarked (*The Rise of European Music*, p. 617). Still, the evidence from watermarks and archival documents, as shown by Wegman (backed up by his arguments concerning musical style) places about half of the total of known masses within this span. More remarkable, according to Wegman, is the change in compositional approach. Obrecht returned to, or in fact intensified, the "conspicuous rationality" of cantus firmus treatment. Head motifs disappear completely, and "cut time" becomes almost the exclusive mensuration. At a higher level of musical structure imitative discourse and tonal language are coordinated, according to Wegman, in an entirely new way. Here "Obrecht became the composer as he was to be remembered by posterity: proficient, prolific, exuberant, playful, and, above all, highly individualistic" [p. 220].

Wegman writes with passion and enthusiasm. The combination works very well in the brilliant historical sections, which are written with compelling verve. The analytical sections are more exacting, and the reader should also be prepared to be flexible in accepting "standard" terminology (here a firmer editorial hand might have been in order). Period structure, which for many would suggest symmetrically constructed phrases, symmetrically grouped, for Wegman on some occasions does indicate a 4+4, then 8+8 structure; just as often, though, a "periodic" segment can refer to an unbalanced group of short phrases (4+4+3, for example, in an asymmetrical grouping of three phrases), and in one case Wegman suggests one period which spans twenty-five bars. Similarly, though Wegman is initially careful in terms of the terminology in reference to tonal phenomena (see p. 226, for example) he occasionally lapses, with references, for example, of a "shift to the dominant" in *Missa Malheur me bat* (p. 243). This passage, with the overall mode in A minor, does have a brief shift to E minor, but this is in turn followed by (to my ears) an even stronger, more emphatic shift to C (p. 241, m. 146-53). Strikingly, some long segments by Obrecht, especially those in F, do seem to shift between two principal tonal areas, F and C; and C then does indeed seem to function as the second of two primary harmonic poles. In all these cases, I must add, the generous musical examples make it clear how the terms are intended.

Given the very ample number of musical examples and Wegman's free-wheeling rhetorical style, the reader may well differ with Wegman's point of view from time to time. A very long sequence in *Missa Ave regina coelorum* (eight statements, spanning an octave), for example "could only have the effect of a witticism." After hearing this passage numerous times, it sounds to me like a surprisingly effective device to maintain drive, "playful," perhaps, but not necessarily witty.

Finally, I would have preferred to hear more of Wegman's views on Obrecht's use of modes. Pieces in the F mode, for example, do seem to establish a tonal polarity between F and C which is quite different from the harmonic structures of dorian modes (those on D,

G and A). Also, he threw down the challenge of the influence of Josquin in the introduction, but is silent on any possible stylistic interaction after about 1488. I should hasten to add that this was not, in fact, the subject here, but I do hope that Wegman will take up this matter in future work.

Wegman has produced a first-rate book, absolutely splendid on several levels. It is the kind of effort that often caps the career of a senior scholar. What a boon for us that it is the product of one of our younger music historians—thus the first of what we can anticipate will be a long and distinguished series.

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*How To Play The Cornett*, by Jeremy West with Susan Smith. London: JW Publications, 1995. (Publisher's address: 47 Chalsey Road, London SE41YN, England. Tel 44-(0)181-6928321. Fax 44-(0)181-6948784.). 171 pp.

The noted cornetto player Jeremy West has written and published a method book for cornetto that has much to offer to cornettists of all levels, particularly beginners and intermediate players. Exceptionally well equipped to write such a book, West is a noted cornetto soloist, director of the fine ensemble His Majesties Sagbutts and Cornetts, professor of cornett at the Royal College of Music, consultant to the Royal Academy of Music, and director of Christopher Monk Instruments. From this vast wealth of experience, West has produced a fine and much-needed cornetto tutor.

The book is divided into two sections—a text of fifty-five pages divided into nine chapters, and a section of exercises containing more than 100 pages of music. Having personally benefited from Jeremy West's excellent cornetto instruction, I find the text quite interesting. He writes very much as he talks—that is to say, clearly, methodically, and with a very personal turn of phrase and good bit of humor. Much of the book focuses on basics of playing which of course is good for the beginner as well as the seasoned player who occasionally needs a reminder on certain fundamentals.

West freely admits that this book avoids musicological debates on historical authenticity, but aims at being exactly what it is—a nuts-and-bolts, hands-on, systematic guide to the key ingredients of cornetto technique. The nine chapters give careful attention to decoration and ornamentation, intonation, fingering patterns, articulation, and breathing and support. West also includes several helpful warm-ups (and -downs), provides a thorough introduction to the cornetto and mouthpieces, and a discussion of the pros and cons of various types of woods and the nature of the repertoire. Again, the focus is always on the

practical, and West gives much practical advice, not only on obvious pedagogical aspects of playing such as tone production, fingering, and holding the instrument, but also about forming groups, professional ensembles and recordings, and of course, the benefits of the Historic Brass Society. Even though he is the director of his own ensemble and head of his own cornetto making concern, West expresses a very generous spirit in freely discussing the work of other instrument makers and recordings of many other ensembles.

Another admirable aspect of the book is the summary of key points given at the end of each chapter, where West recapitulates the main ideas just presented. The musical exercises cover a wide range of material. They begin with twenty-three pages of exercises designed to benefit the beginner as well as serve as warm-ups for the more advanced player. West provides fingering passages that gradually progress in difficulty. He not only offers excellent musical exercises, he also carefully explains them—an invaluable service. He further provides scales, articulations, and finger exercises for both moderate and advanced players.

Ornamentation is treated in a thorough manner. A large section of general ornamental patterns, proceeding from simple to quite complex, leads to a section of exercises containing many authentic 17th-century patterns and typical figures for decorating specific intervals. A few historical examples from such masters as Dalla Casa, Bovicelli, and Bassano are included.

The book is in a large format, produced on sturdy 8½ x 11-inch paper, spiral bound with a plastic cover. This book is another great example of the desk-top publishing revolution. Prepared entirely on a Macintosh computer, the text was entered using Microsoft Word, and the music using Nightingale by Advanced Music Notation Systems. The music notation is in a large and easily readable layout. Worthy of special mention is West's co-author, Susan Smith. A distinguished professor of geography at the University of Edinburgh, Sue Smith is an outstanding cornetto player and unflagging enthusiast of the instrument. She served as an assistant to West in the production of this cornetto method, helped write the text and choose appropriate exercise material, and evidently helped provide the extra energy that self-published projects often need in order to get up and running. This is a fine and much needed method for cornettists. The only thing lacking might be a section of "excerpts" from the repertoire. But in his discussion of repertoire, West encourages us to take heart, as he has in preparation a companion to this tutor in the form of a compendium of repertoire for the cornetto. We eagerly await its publication.

*Jeffrey Nussbaum*



*Technical Drawings from the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments: Tenor Trombone (Anton Schnitzer, Nuremberg, 1594 ), Tenor Trombone (Joseph Huschauer, Vienna, 1794), Trumpet (Joseph Huschauer, Vienna 1794), Cornett (Anon., 17th Century?),* by R. Parks. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, 1993-94. (Available from the publisher at Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square, Edinburgh EH8 9AG, Scotland.)

## General Comments

These drawings are full-size, with dimensions indicated in millimeters. Drafting is clear and precise, with very even lines and a generally neat, workmanlike appearance. The drawings should not be considered in isolation; they are accompanied by catalogue extracts providing further technical and historical information, and by an information sheet describing the conditions under which the drawings were made, and certain specific details of the instruments depicted. According to the information sheet, measurements were made at 16-20° C at a relative humidity (RH) of between 57 and 62%, presumably to allow the user of the drawings to compensate for expansion and contraction of metal with changes in temperature, and similar changes in the wood due to fluctuations of RH. However, the limit of accuracy used in the drafting, together with the comparatively small size of the objects measured, makes this precaution unnecessary by at least one order of magnitude.

The degree of accuracy in the rendering of dimensions is sometimes inconsistent. Larger dimensions, such as the lengths of yards and slides, are given to the nearest millimeter, while smaller dimensions are given to the first decimal place. This might be acceptable if there were a clear break between the larger dimensions and the smaller ones, but this is not the case. For example, on the proximal bow of the Schnitzer trombone the distance from a ferrule to the end of a bow is given as 47 mm (with no decimal point) whereas the larger dimension across the bow is given as 64.7 mm. Thus the smaller dimension is actually an order of magnitude less accurate than the larger one. (The drawing of the Huschauer trumpet, on the other hand, gives both bow dimensions more accurately to one decimal place.) It would have been preferable to use the same degree of error throughout, or at least to explain in the accompanying information sheet how the convention was arrived at.

On all three brass instrument drawings, a caption states that the decorative detailing has been omitted for clarity. However, inclusion of the decoration probably would not compromise clarity, but would certainly make the drafting a lot more time-consuming and intricate. It is more likely that the details have been omitted for reasons of economy. Also, rather than show on the drawing all the concentric turnings on the ferrules (which certainly might have compromised clarity), the author provides a note on the part in question indicating, for example, "15 turned grooves." Black-and-white photographs of the decorative details are available from the Collection for a small charge, and pictures and other information are also available on the World Wide Web at the following address:

<http://www.music.ed.ac.uk/euchmi.index.html>

**(2695) Tenor Trombone (Anton Schnitzer, Nuremburg, 1594)**

How refreshing to encounter the term “trombone” instead of the almost universal but highly unscholarly “sackbut.” This trombone has a telescopic stay joining the legs of the outer slide, and the bow on this slide has a reinforcement soldered over it. Also, there is no wire loop (string ring) on the inside of the bow corresponding to the one on the bell bow. All these features suggest later replacement or repair, but it is clearly the draftsman’s primary concern to record what is there, rather than provide interpretations. This information is contained in the catalogue extracts that accompany the drawings. A table of dimensions for the bell is provided separately; an excellent idea to give this extra information, while not cluttering the drawing by indicating it in situ. The catalogue extracts also provide tables of wall thickness of the bell—useful information for both the maker and the historian of technology. A detail of the toothed bell seam is also given.

**(3205) Tenor Trombone (Joseph Huschauer, Vienna, 1794)**

Much of what has been said for the Schnitzer trombone drawing applies to this one as well. The lines are clear and precise, and the overall effect one of clarity and simplicity. There is a cross-hatched component shown attached to the inner slide stay. It is not clear whether the cross-hatching is a detail of the original or a draftsman’s convention, and the catalogue extract does not elucidate this. A photograph would clarify the issue. As with the other drawings of brass instruments, this one has a table of bell profile measurements set above the drawing of the bell, providing easy reference while giving an uncluttered appearance. A detail of the toothed bell seam is given.

**(3247) Trumpet (Joseph Huschauer, Vienna, 1794)**

A table of bell dimensions and a detail of the seams are given for the Huschauer trumpet, as for all the instruments. One wonders whether the bell seam is actually as consistent and measurable on the real thing as that shown in the drawing. The trumpet is shown disassembled, which does much for the clarity of the presentation, and as an aid in visualizing its assembled configuration a cross-sectional diagram of the layout of the tubes around the wood spacer block is inset. This is a very intelligent way of rendering a complicated shape diagrammatically. One could wish for a better idea of the true shape of the saddles (to which the string rings are attached), as they are a bit too diagrammatic. A clear and precise rendition is evident here, as it is throughout this publication.

**(3189) Cornett (Anon., 17th century?)**

This drawing consists of a cross-section and an overall view, with transverse sections of the tone holes provided at 90° orientations. The draftsman was very fortunate to have



the two halves of the instrument unglued and the leather covering removed so that internal dimensions, especially of the undercuts of the tone holes, could be recorded. Unlike the drawings of brass instruments, no dimensions for the cornetto are provided directly; instead, appended tables record dimensions of toneholes, distances along the face of the instrument, bore diameters at increments, and external dimensions. This is a much more convenient approach, given the curved shaped of the instrument. However, try as I might, I cannot reconcile the set of bore diameters provided on the drawing with those given in the catalogue extract. Although the drawing states that the diameters have been “averaged where not quite circular” (on the assumption that before shrinkage of the wood they originally were so), the discrepancies still seem large. For example, the bore diameter at L1 is given as 15.4 mm in the catalogue and 16.0 on the drawing; at L3 it is 18.1 in the catalogue and 17.6 on the drawing. L0 and R3 are the same in both sources. I am not sure that I can accept the circularization of the bore measurements; even in a turned wooden instrument this might present problems of extrapolation, but in a hand-carved cornett I feel this is on considerably shakier ground. Whatever the case, I would choose the dimensions on the drawing as the more accurate, but it is awkward to be placed in a position of having to decide between two apparently parallel authorities.

## Summary

I have quibbled to some extent about the accuracy of recording dimensions and conventions of measuring, but this raises the point that a drawing produced by another hand, no matter to what standard of accuracy, can never be the perfect intermediary between the original instrument and a maker’s successful production. How accurate does one need to be? Does one need to work to one tenth of a millimeter if one knows that the finished product will require all kinds of tweaking to get it right anyway? This is especially true with the cornett and other wooden instruments, whose original dimensions, beyond more than one decimal place of a millimeter, are quite often a matter of conjecture. In order not to become bogged down in details that might well prove insignificant, I would argue only for consistency in the rendering of dimensions and let the maker take it from there.

I purchased a number of drawings of brass instruments while in Nuremberg a number of years ago, and it has been my lasting regret that I had no tools for measuring wall thickness and bore diameter. Those drawings included all decorative details and were things of beauty, but for the practical maker of musical instruments or an organologist, Raymond Parks’ drawings are potentially more useful. Dimensions written directly onto the drawing, tables of thickness and bores, and other neat details—all add up to great utility. I have heard from several colleagues that my own drawings can be found pinned up in people’s offices and workshops, but I would be happier to see them dog-eared and grimy from repeated use on the bench. This, I suspect, will be the destiny of Parks’ drawings; frankly, they are too useful to be mere decorations.

Checklist of Technical Drawings of Musical Instruments in Public Collections of the World, by R. van Acht. Moeck Verlag, Celle and Haags Gemeentemuseum, den Haag, 1992. 185 pages. ISBN 3-87549-054-1.

This is an exhaustive compilation of the sources of 560 technical drawings from twenty-two collections world-wide. Entries indicate the maker of the instrument depicted and its historical details, the draftsman, the present location of the instrument, its accession number, the number of sheets the drawing occupies, and whether a microfiche also exists. The author, the chief compiler of the checklist, is to be commended for a thorough and painstaking job in assembling this material. Microfiches of every drawing are kept on file in the Documentation Centre for Musical Instruments in The Hague, but the author emphasizes that drawings can be purchased only from the participating museums. The entire checklist is indexed, and an address list of participating museums is included. This book is essential for musical instrument makers, curators, and organologists and already enjoys a wide distribution.

*Technical Drawings of Musical Instruments on Microfiche*, by R. van Acht, MMF Publications, Lisse, 1994. (Available from the publisher: No. M390, PO Box 287, 2160 AG Lisse, The Netherlands. Phone: 31 2521 17250, fax: 31 2521 18658, e-mail: 100315.315@compuserve.com)

Under the editorship of Rob van Acht of the Haags Gemeentemuseum, a series of microfiches of musical instrument drawings has been prepared. This is a continuation of the project that resulted in the book co-published by Moeck and the Haags Gemeentemuseum in 1992, and is equally destined to find its place among musical instrument makers, curators, and organologists. This set of microfiches brings together information, technical plans, and details of construction and decoration for instruments from twenty-six major collections around the world. There are drawings of 545 instruments on 575 microfiches. Subsets of microfiches are also available: wind instruments (225 items), bowed instruments (85 items), plucked instruments (90 items), and keyboards (145 items).

*R.L. Barclay*

\*Since writing this review I have been informed that the discrepancies in the dimensions for the cornetto have now been corrected.



*Berliner Gramophone Records: American Issues, 1892-1900*, compiled by Paul Charosh. Discographies, Number 60. Greenwood Press, 1995. ISSN 0192-334X.

Just over 100 years ago, Emile Berliner invented the gramophone and disc record. This is the first discography assembled of the earliest disc recordings in the United States. It documents more than 3,000 discs, which were sold to the American public from 1892 to 1900. Listings are arranged by catalogue number and cross-indexed by title, performer, and recording date. The gramophone discs are valuable research tools in the study of popular culture, providing objective data about what was offered to the public. In addition, browsing through this book is great fun for any brass enthusiast.

There are many recordings of interest to the brass community. Among the recording categories included are: band; cornet solos and duets; brass quartets and quintets; orchestra; trombone solos; bugle, cornet solos, cornet and trombone duets; euphonium solos.

There are a great many band recordings represented here. According to Margaret Hindle Hazen and Robert M. Hazen (*The Music Men*): "Just as baseball was to become the sport of the people, bands were understood to provide the music of the people." The bands of Arthur Pryor and Sousa are well represented, as well as several others.

Many of the famous brass soloists of the period are represented here, including Simone Mantia (euphonium), Arthur Pryor (trombone), and Bohimir Kryl (cornet). Also listed are many whose names are far less likely to be recognizable to today's listeners: Emil Cassi (chief trumpeter of Roosevelt's Rough Riders), and the cornet duo of Anton H. Knoll and Marie McNeil. Many of these late-19th-century soloists could be described as the "pioneers of modern-day brass playing."

An introductory essay discusses the earliest years of the invention and the repertoire appearing on the discs. Their physical properties are noted and illustrated with photographs of the records. A descriptive bibliography guides readers to other books and articles of interest, while another section lists Berliner Gramophone records that have been reissued on long-playing and compact discs.

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*The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531-1665*, by David Lasocki with Roger Prior. London: Scholar Press, 1995 (Distributed in the USA by Ashgate Publishing Co., Old Post Rd., Brookfield, VT 05036). 288 pages. ISBN 0-85967-9438.

When I was a graduate student I spent many hours pouring over the transcriptions of Lafontaine, Nagel, and other late-19th- and early-20th-century music historians. I was investigating the way the trombone was used in 16th-century England, and I realized early

on that my first task was to get some sense of the extent to which players of the instrument were employed by the Tudor court. Musical life in England was more centralized than it was in any other country. I held the view then, as I do now, that the innovations initiated by Henry VII and developed more emphatically by his son, Henry VIII, in building a musical establishment to match those at the other European centers, were fundamentally important in the history of English music. It was not simply the music itself that was important, but rather the infrastructures that ensured that music would be made. Many of the key figures were foreigners. The trickle of immigrants to the English court became a flood in the middle years of Henry VIII's reign. New surnames appeared in the account books and stayed there for a generation. Others remained a permanent feature of the records for a century or more.

It soon became clear to me that the work of the early antiquarians, though not seriously misleading, is not without blemish. More importantly, the transcribed and printed records do not provide an adequate reflection of the activities of early brass players, or the complex administrative infrastructures within which they worked. My thesis would have been delivered a lot earlier had I had the benefit of, for example, Andrew Ashbee's invaluable *Records of English Court Music* (now also published by Scolar Press). At about the same time, David Lasocki was researching his dissertation at the University of Iowa on *Professional Recorder Players in England, 1530-1740*. I had observed that a small number of families had had a major impact on musical life in England at that time, and had been frustrated that I knew so little of them. Lasocki's work, which was more extensive, demonstrated that one of these families had particular significance. That family—the Bassanos—is the subject of this book. Many of the ideas contained in the book came from Lasocki's thesis, but they are developed, re-ordered, and extended. The littérateur Roger Prior, whose name also adorns the title page, is better described as a collaborator or contributor rather than a co-author; but his contributions, which I describe below, are valuable and give added breadth to the subject.

The subtitle of the volume is appropriately broad, for this is not just a book about a musical dynasty; it touches on issues that have a wide and important relevance to performance practice. As I was blundering my way through the Public Records Office in London, trying to find out how and why one Bassano or another appeared to be in two places at the same time, Lasocki was piecing together, rationally and strategically, a picture that now sheds a great deal of light on many questions about which I found it difficult to reach a conclusion.

The book examines the origin, growth, and influence of the Bassano dynasty, which originated in Italy in an apparently nondescript village where the earliest ancestors were silk farmers. They were musicians by the time they settled in Venice. Their move to London came in the reign of Henry VIII. The Bassanos were almost certainly Jews. No evidence exists that proves this conclusively, but the circumstantial evidence is so great, so compelling and clear, that their Jewish identity seems virtually proven. If they were Jews it would explain why they chose to leave Venice and chose to settle in reformation England. Their presence in the English court was, however, due to their merit as musicians. There is no doubt that

the first immigrant Bassanos were already accomplished. They were also, of course, highly experienced in Italian manners and tastes. Most of the important developments of musical life in London in the 16th century were touched by one or another of the Bassanos. Their influence is difficult to ignore.

There are two major reasons why brass historians should read this book. The first and most obvious one is that numbered among the Bassanos were some of the most important and influential trombone players of the Tudor and Stuart periods. The earliest Bassano immigrants were trombone players, and the name was associated with the trombone at the English court even in the years surrounding the Commonwealth period. The second reason concerns Lasocki's attempt to unravel the relationship between the various music ensembles of the court. The issue is of vital importance for anyone with an interest in English instrumental music of the period, because it is only through an understanding of the way in which groups of players related to each other professionally that we are able to attach any realistic meaning to other sources for performance practice, including the surviving music. Indeed the oft-used word "consort" is meaningless without such intelligence.

Roger Prior's contributions are contained within three chapters: a section on the family coat of arms; the chapter on the Jewish identity of the Bassanos; and another on Emilia Bassano and Alphonso Lanier. Emilia married Lanier (a member of the other major dynasty of court musicians). She is perhaps the most widely known member of the family, the only one to have an entry in *The Dictionary of National Biography*. The one chapter that is attributed to Prior alone is that which examines the most celebrated claim for Emilia—that it is she who is the "Dark Lady" of Shakespeare's sonnets. This is a fascinating chapter, beautifully written, and I am bound to say that the evidence Prior offers is seductive.

The chapters of the book that deal directly with musical matters are Lasocki's and he has done an excellent job. This is an extremely important contribution to our understanding of musical life in the English Court and I commend it without hesitation. The analysis of archival sources and suggestions about musical practice are thorough and thought-provoking. The wealth of information contained in this volume is reason enough for buying it, but I urge readers to observe and value the type of book that it is. The most salient and convincing quality, the one that impressed me in every chapter, is that Lasocki and Prior have not treated music as if it is disembodied from other social and historical processes, but adopted an approach that genuinely alchemises historical, musicological, and genealogical narrative in a way that provides a broad and immediately intelligible cultural history.

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*The Concerto for Trumpet of Joseph Haydn—A Performance Treatise*, by Kenneth Kronholz. Tallahassee: CrownWood Music Press, 1991. 56 pp. Edited solo parts for trumpets in E $\flat$  and B $\flat$ .

On the cover of Kenneth Kronholz' *The Concerto for Trumpet of Joseph Haydn* is an attractive representation of a keyed trumpet in faint outline and a modern trumpet more clearly delineated. This image arouses the reader's curiosity and suggests a performance-practice study in which the instrument for which the concerto was written might play a significant role. In the text one finds thoughtful writing concerning performance choices facing the modern trumpeter by an author who, one suspects, is a good performer himself. Unfortunately, the cover illustration is ultimately an emblem for Kronholz' point of view: for him Weidinger's keyed trumpet is a remote artifact which has long since passed out of memory and one must seek insight elsewhere concerning Haydn's Concerto, Hob. VIIe:1.

The author's aim, implicit in the preface and born out in the edited solo parts supplied with the text, is to give the modern trumpeter practical answers to questions of style, tempo, articulation, and the like. Following all-too-brief sections entitled "Introduction" and "Historical Information," Kronholz embarks on a descriptive discussion of each of the *Concerto's* three movements, attempting to justify his editorial choices along the way. At times one seems to be in the studio of an insightful trumpet teacher; but one also senses an overly energetic attempt to document musical-rhetorical common sense. Generally, the author's discourse is clear, although one does encounter the occasional unsupported assertion dropped at the end of a paragraph. An example of this occurs in Kronholz' discussion of the Andante: following a brief outline of the movement in terms of character, meter, and key centers, he says abruptly, "Musically this *Andante* is best performed at 80 beats per minute" (p. 33).<sup>1</sup>

His conclusions are derived in part from passages in well-known 18th-century treatises, primarily of C.P.E. Bach, Leopold Mozart, and J. J. Quantz, as well as more recent scholarship by H.C. Robbins-Landon and Dene Barnett concerning Haydn's notational practice. In dealing with questions of phrasing, articulation, and dynamics when the composer provides no explicit indications, Kronholz presents some useful summaries of efforts of these last scholars: his digest of Haydn's "abbreviation methods" from Robbins-Landon is valuable, as is his citation of Barnett's work regarding non-uniform slurring.<sup>2</sup> The author's use of 18th-century texts is a bit unsettling because he doesn't really treat them as primary sources, but often quotes them through the works of 20th-century writers such as Frederick Neumann and Robert Donington. In most cases this doesn't affect his argument much. But wanting to get to the bottom of things, many of us would like to see the original—perhaps in the original language—at least as a footnote. One is also disturbed by the book's dated bibliography; the reader can surely expect the most recent editions of standard works to be cited. When Kronholz identifies Arnold Dolmetsch and Robert Donington as "contemporary musicologists," introducing their "interpolation" [*sic*] of Quantz' tempo categories, the reader begins to lose faith in his scholarship.

Scholarly quibbles aside, a greater concern is Kronholz' failure to give substantial

consideration to the keyed trumpet itself. To be sure, the instrument is introduced and described in the book's opening section which is derived substantially from Baines, Bate, and Dahlqvist. The clear implication, however, is that this obsolete and inferior instrument passed justly into obscurity. Kronholz advances the following as one of the challenges facing the modern performer: "...there is no keyed trumpet performance practice legacy that can be traced back to the time of the *Concerto*."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps this is so in an absolute sense, but strides have clearly been made toward rediscovering that legacy. One example would certainly be Friedrich Anzenberger's annotated bibliography of 19th-century methods for the keyed trumpet.<sup>4</sup>

That the instruments of the past themselves have a great deal to teach us would seem beyond question by now. It is disturbing that Kronholz is unaware or chooses to ignore the highly significant recordings and live performances of the concerto on the keyed trumpet that have been going on for some time now. In this connection, Peter Ecklund's interesting review of two recordings of the *Concerto*, which appeared in the *HBS Newsletter*, Issue 5 (1993) comes to mind. Ecklund addresses conventional mythology concerning the keyed trumpet at the outset and goes on to describe the highly musical results of two historically informed renderings of the piece in which the keyed trumpet is used.<sup>5</sup> Recalling that Weidinger's training was undoubtedly in conventional 18th-century trumpet technique and that the keyed trumpet itself is a natural trumpet with judiciously placed holes, one would assume that the ongoing rediscovery of 17th- and 18th-century *praxis* by a growing number of modern players and scholars *with instruments in hand* would be an essential consideration in a study such as this. The results would be particularly valuable to the modern trumpet playing readership to which Kronholz' treatise is directed. Considering the interests of the historic brass community, the book is hard to recommend. While a work can't be judged by its cover, this particular one reveals a strong correspondence between cover image and what it lacks in content.

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## NOTES

- 1 Equally bothersome is the occasional *non sequitur* or completely isolated and undeveloped statement, e.g. the second paragraph on p. 3 which consists of a single sentence, stating that the autograph survives in the archives of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Wien. Why introduce such a fact and say nothing more about it?
- 2 H.C. Robbins-Landon. *The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn* (London, 1955), pp. 155-6.
- 3 Dene Barnett, "Non-uniform Slurring in 18th-century Music: Accident or Design?" *The Haydn Yearbook* 10 (Eisenstadt, 1978).
- 4 Kenneth Kronholz *The Concerto for Trumpet of Joseph Haydn*, p. 17.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 6 Friedrich Anzenberger, "Method Books for Keyed Trumpet in the 19th Century: an Annotated Bibliography," *Historic Brass Society Journal* 6 (1994): 1-10.

7 Peter Ecklund, "The Keyed Trumpet in Two Recordings of the Haydn *Trumpet Concerto*," *Historic Brass Society Newsletter* 5 (1993): 37.



*Das Jagdhorn: Seine Geschichte von der Steinzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, by Werner Flachs. Zug: Verlag Kalt-Zahnert, 1994. Postfach 250, CH-6301 Zug, Switzerland. 208 pp., 165 half-tone illustrations, 9 musical examples. ISBN 3-85761-254-1.

As a musical instrument, the horn is unquestionably a product of its cultural history. One of the oldest instruments still in use, the horn is not only an important element in the history of Western art music, but is inseparably connected with the hunt. Werner Flachs is a hunter who has considerable enthusiasm for the horn. His excellent collection of historic horns is today preserved in the Jagdmuseum des Schlosses Landshut in Utzenstorf near Bern, Switzerland. He is not only a collector but also an author and scholar with a passion for illuminating the history of his instrument, especially as it relates to the hunt. His book *Das Jagdhorn: Seine Geschichte von der Steinzeit bis zur Gegenwart* is in my opinion an exceedingly important contribution to the cultural history of this instrument. Enthusiasts of the hunting horn are spread widely throughout Europe, and most of the amateur horn players there originally came to the instrument by means of the hunt. Flachs' book fills a gap in the literature for our instrument, recounting its history from the Stone-Age hunting horn to the modern orchestral instrument.

The book is divided into three parts: 1) Origins of the hunting horn, 2) Hunting calls of the Middle Ages and present-day parforce and riding horns, and 3) Development of the hunting horn into a musical instrument and present-day hunting horns. Flachs deals extensively with the antique predecessors of the present horns and the hunting traditions of the Middle Ages and the Baroque—an appropriate approach because of the horn's function as a signal instrument over the centuries. The book provides important information on amateur hunting traditions and the hunting horn itself. Here is a book that offers for the first time extensive information on the horn in the Stone Age and Antiquity. This section alone makes the book worthy of purchase, because the information is generally unavailable elsewhere. Flachs' representation of the change from a purely hunting instrument to an instrument of art music is perhaps overly general, but this is not the principal objective of the book. Flachs leads the reader through the instrument's early history and explains the different types of horns, the development of the hunt signals, and the traditions of the hunt.

The book has several musical examples, a discography, and an extensive bibliography. The many fine illustrations are mostly of instruments from Flachs' own collection, and the reader therefore might be inspired to visit Schloß Landshut, where the collection is preserved. Flachs' book constitutes an important addition to the literature about our instrument.

*Oliver Kersken*





*La Téléphonie and the Universal Musical Language*, by David Whitwell. Northridge, California: Winds, 1995. 86 pages, spiral bound paperback, \$20.00. Available from Winds, P.O. Box 280513, Northridge, CA 91328.

M. Sudre is offering to us at this moment a new and sad example of the fate of all inventors in our attentive, forgetful, and jealous society. For twenty years he has been fighting, swimming against the current, speaking, writing, demonstrating, proving that a discovery of the highest importance for armed forces of the earth and sea, and even also for the rapid propagation of pacific ideas, is in his possession. He is demonstrating that this discovery is his, that he alone made it, that he then perfected and simplified it to the point of make its use extremely easy, and for twenty years they have sent him about his business, they scorn him in a thousand ways, they make him promises not kept, in his regard they commit unspeakable abuses of confidence, and meanwhile, the poor man is using, in order to exist, his last resources and those of his friends.... Time is a great teacher, true, but man is a very stupid scholar.

Hector Berlioz, cited in Whitwell, pp. 42-44.

This latest book by David Whitwell serves as an introduction to work by Jean-François Sudre (1787-1862), which is fascinating both in its ingenuity and in the futility associated with its reception and promotion. Sudre was a French musician who formulated a means of communication based on musical pitches and pitch combinations. In his introduction, Whitwell points out that Sudre's efforts have bearings on several important social, political, technological, and musical developments in the 19th Century. First and foremost, Sudre's work reflects a widespread desire for universal communication and understanding between countries and cultures. Sudre's *Universal Musical Language* was well-received in philological circles and in some extreme cases heralded as a possible answer to world peace. Also, Sudre's persistent entreaties to the French military for the use of his musical language as means of communication over longer distances, on flat terrain (where visual means become useless), in fog or dark, received favorable reviews, yet the repeated inability of the military to act on his discoveries shows a typical frustration of political realities. Independently conceived and invented, his musical language appeared in France just before Morse code in America, along similar means and intentions. Whitwell points out that the aural possibilities of Morse code were realized well after Sudre's ideas and methods were known in Europe. The popular means of telegraph communication in the 1830's in France used visual codes that worked only in the daytime. Sudre's *télégraphe acoustique* used audible codes, and as a result

received the new term *téléphonie*, the first appearance of this word.

Whitwell points out that musically, Sudre's efforts had several interesting elements and possible effects on the future. From the broadest perspective, his development of a musical language is in keeping with other contemporary "universal" musical intentions and goals in opera and descriptive instrumental music, all directed toward achieving higher levels of expression and communication that combine intellect and emotion more directly. Also, Sudre's specific intentions presage (and predate) Wagner's *leitmotif* experiments; Whitwell proposes that perhaps Wagner's initial creative impulses in this direction came from some exposure to Sudre and his public efforts (and written accounts thereof) while in Paris around 1840. Other composers in Paris, most notably Hector Berlioz, were fascinated by the possibilities and ramifications of the acceptance and even adoption of such a universal musical language. And, finally, as Whitwell shows, Sudre's work was the last new idea to incorporate the natural trumpet, on its last legs as a musical instrument that inspired new compositions, and relegated to service as a military signalling device.

The bulk of Whitwell's book describes the three primary inventions that grew from Sudre's imagination: *The Musical Language* (ca. 1823), *La Téléphonie* (ca. 1829, published 1844), and *The Universal Musical Language* (ca. 1833, published later in the form of dictionaries). The first of the three is the foundation for the other two, which are separate applications of the initial concept. The earliest roots of his idea came from his apparent abilities as a teacher and his desire to be a composer of opera. Sudre was trained as a violinist at the Paris Conservatoire, and after working as a teacher in Tarn and Toulouse, he returned to Paris to study operatic composition. Whitwell found a report stating that his "revelation" about the possibility of a language based on musical tones came in 1822 and by 1823 he was teaching and giving public demonstrations of his ideas.

By 1829 news and success of his efforts reached the military establishment. Over the next thirty years, Sudre provided numerous successful demonstrations, revisions, and simplifications of his methods, to which the military response was favorable, but elicited no action. The "language" was deemed easy to teach, understand, and implement, and the military offered several encouraging recommendations, such as forming a school for instruction and the development of instruments or mechanical devices louder than natural trumpets. All of this support received no apparent attention from the government. Even reducing the number of pitches needed to communicate ideas from seven to three did not help.

Over the same period of time, Sudre began to develop his original idea, which began with assigning pitches and simple rhythms to the letters of the alphabet, further into a system which combined pitches and keys into specific meanings, thoughts, and words. His work was eventually manifested in dictionaries, a French version of which first appeared around 1833. He set out to expand this work to include German, English, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Russian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Chinese, thinking that these languages would provide access to the vast majority of the world's cultures. By the time he died, he actually had completed eight of the proposed twelve, though accounts of his public demonstrations suggest that he had figured out at least nine. By the 1850's, Sudre finally

began to receive awards and acknowledgement for his life's work, which was continued after his death by his wife, Josephine. Until his death, he gave successful demonstrations to the general public, to different branches of the military, to royalty of many countries, to intellectual and scientific societies, and received universal acclaim. What eluded him, as Whitwell shows us, was the one thing that would lead to actual adoption of his methods: the patronage of a government.

In this book, Whitwell gives us a thorough chronology of accounts from newspapers and journals, both musical and non-musical, as well as some military commission reports of Sudre's work. The primary resources are reviews or accounts of public demonstrations, which not only show how well-received his ideas were, but also raise the question as to why various governments (particularly the French) and other appropriate bodies did not move to adopt his methods. Perhaps from today's rampant skepticism of government's ability to act, it is easy to formulate reasons why Sudre was hindered, but it would be interesting to know more details from "the other side" at that time. The author also gives us some tantalizing examples of Sudre's early pitch/alphabet assignments, as well as some of the general principles of the later developments in *The Universal Musical Language*. Unfortunately, I was left wanting more details of the methods themselves. Perhaps someday facsimiles or translations might be in order, for which this initial *forée* could serve as an introduction. Another area Whitwell has opened up for study is that of musical applications or attempts on the part of composers familiar with Sudre's ideas (or perhaps Sudre himself) to put them into practice. It seems from this overview that the methods and materials could appear in any genre, vocal or instrumental. Whitwell has left us with intriguing possibilities, particularly in his proposal regarding Wagner's music. Whether or not further expansions of this book are planned, David Whitwell, as he has many times before, has given us another useful launching point, re-introducing us to a little-known and apparently forgotten figure in the evolution of music, and opening up several new areas in need of study and clarification.

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