
The baryton is a little known and much-misunderstood instrument. In this very important volume, Carol A. Gartrell tells its tale, drawing from many sources, including historical documents, musical manuscripts, and photographs of surviving instruments. The book had been intended as a shared publication between Gartrell and Prince Pamplin, but Pamplin passed away in 2004; much acknowledgement is made of his enormous contributions, both as a researcher and as a performer and champion of the Baroque baryton. A History of the Baryton and Its Music sheds light not just on the history of a string instrument, but also on musical life in the European courts of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, and it will be a worthy addition to many an early music library.

For those of us who play viola da gamba, it is fascinating to learn about what is essentially a viol-family instrument: a bowed string instrument, resembling a bass viola da gamba, with a second set of wire strings behind the fingerboard, to be plucked by the left-hand thumb! Carol Gartrell explains that some early barytons may even have had a third set of strings (also plucked), though there are no surviving examples of this. The baryton evolved significantly over the centuries, but the essential message is that there are two basic types of barytons, the Baroque and the Classical, and a third type, the “cellyton,” which the author says came about because people thought the baryton had been a member of the cello family, used primarily to play the music of Haydn.

Gartrell takes us through the different phases of the baryton’s popularity, beginning with its origins in very early 17th-century England. She makes a convincing case for the instrument probably having been invented by one of two men: Daniel Farrant or Arthur Gregory, and along the way she mentions Walter Rowe, an English viol player hired at the court in Brandenburg, Germany, in 1614; Peter Munday, an Englishman traveling in Europe at that time, wrote: “I spoke with one Mr. Walter Row[sic]…. Among the rest of his instruments he had one Named a Barretone, 1tt being a basse viol with an addition of Many wire strings, which run From end to end under the Finger board, through the F belly of the instrument, which are to bee struck with the thumbe off the stopping hand: very Musicall, and concordant with the viol, like 2

THE SOUNDS AND SIGHTS OF PERFORMANCE IN EARLY MUSIC

*ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF TIMOTHY J. MC GEE*

Edited by MAUREEN EPF and BRIAN L. POWER

Instituments att once.” This early baryton was self-accompanying, and its strings were tuned in scordatura, the player reading from tablature.

As English musicians moved to other courts, the Baroque baryton moved onto the continent, and the author describes collections of music kept in St. Petersburg and Kassel, containing movements by well-known composers such as John Jenkins (1592-1678) and Simon Jves (bap. 1600-1662), often music that had been written for lute or violl and then transcribed for baryton. Several important viol player/composers, including August Kühnel (1645-c.1700) and Dietrich Stöeffken (early 17th-century-c.1673), turn out to have been skilled performers on baryton. A particularly significant contribution to the repertoire and popularity of the instrument was made by Gottfried Finger (c.1660-1730), a Moravian viol player whose works for baryton are in staff notation, the first such examples written in this way. Finger was also the first to write ensemble music for baryton and other instruments.

Carol Gartrell tells her story against a background of the Thirty Years War, the Habsburg dynasty, the Vienna Hofkapelle, and by the mid-18th century, the court of Prince Nicholas Esterházy. Prince Nicholas was himself a baryton player, and he hired Haydn as his Kapellmeister. What transpired then changed the whole nature of writing for baryton, which now became the Classical instrument—at first, Haydn’s works for baryton did not even make use of the plucked wire strings; his later works did develop further in their use of a greater range of all the strings of the baryton and in their exploration of the available tone colors. Altogether, between 1765 and 1778, Haydn composed more than 170 works for baryton: trios, duos, solos, divertimenti, and concerti.

Gartrell’s work is especially enlightening in the continuation of the story after Haydn’s time. Again we see names we may recognize, if we are familiar with late works for viola da gamba: Anton Lidl and Franz Xaver Hammer were viol players who played and wrote for baryton. The name Joseph Fiala, however, was a new one to me, as were several others. The long and colorful history of the baryton appears to have stopped briefly upon the death of the last barytonist, Vincenz Hauschka, but soon afterwards there began to be revivals, and so the story continues, including the 20th-century invention of the “cellyton,” a baryton which was more in the style of a cello, complete with endpin.

The second half of the book contains a wealth of information invaluable to a study of the baryton and not available anywhere else. This includes descriptions of all existing barytons, many pic-
San Francisco Renaissance Voices
Todd Jolly, Music Director


This anthology of essays is intended to honor the highly influential musicologist Timothy J. McGee. His research over a long and distinguished career has covered topics from the Middle Ages to contemporary music, but in this book, editors Maureen Epp and Brian E. Power have chosen to narrow the focus to the Medieval, Renaissance, and early Baroque eras. Even with this limitation, the articles cover a vast territory, including sacred and secular music, iconography, dance, notation, transcription, just intonation/temperament, and the relationships between poetry and music. To organize all this material, the book has been divided into two parts: six essays on “Viewing the Evidence” and six essays on “Reconsidering Contexts.”

These essays come across as small snapshots of their topics, and in some cases they serve as introductions to what could become large and involved studies. The book should also be a reminder to musicologists and Medieval/Renaissance/Baroque enthusiasts that there still is a great deal to study out there and that further papers would help advance this field.


As one can imagine from such a wide variety of subjects, probably very few people would have a reason to read this book from cover to cover, but the individual articles will have an important impact on students in various disciplines. As for this reviewer, the book opened the door to many topics that I have not paid much attention to recently, and it set my imagination going toward programming ideas for future concerts. A few of the articles shed more light on some of my own personal, longstanding questions, such as the 13th-century picture of a vielle player performing from sheet music and the question of how to treat a dance when the musical form does not conform with known choreography. I enjoyed the interdisciplinary themes, for example the relationship between women and men as seen through 15th-century dance, and parallels between music theory and art in the article on Vincenzo Galilei. It was good to find an up-to-date listing of Timothy J. McGee’s publications, as this helped anchor my understanding and appreciation of the size and scope of his work.

The Sounds and Sights of Performance in Early Music is a fine collection of essays, and Timothy J. McGee should be proud of having inspired such a distinguished group of authors to

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Kreuz” from Bach’s St. Matthew Passion and the French tombeau, although I feel that he relies perhaps a bit too heavily on the relatively new field of “carnal musicology” and its theories about the “anthropomorphic potential” of instruments. Mary Oleskiewicz shares with us some exciting news about a newly discovered and potentially valuable source of information about 18th-century performance practice: a Quantz flute concerto with seven cadenzas, possibly written by the composer. Jean-Paul C. Montagner analyzes a recitative from Mondonville’s motet Venite exultemus within the context of the transition from opera seria to French “grand motet” and comes to the conclusion that “the grand motets meant for Louis XV’s Chapelle Royale and the Concert-Spiritual were not subject to the same rigid rules and habits set by Lully and later Rameau.”

The final section takes us into an entirely new territory, both musically and geographically: the United States. Candace Bailey reminds us that women composers encountered considerable obstacles in the antebellum South but still managed to publish their music during this era, and Joel Sheveloff writes about “Bernadus Boekelman’s Analytical Edition of Selected Fugues from the Well-tempered Clavier,” printed in America in 1895. The final chapter of the book is a most fitting and touching tribute to the life and work of Alexander Silberger: Daniel Katz’s discussion of a “Still Hidden Synagogue Repertory.” Although the vast majority of Jewish liturgical music was destroyed by the Nazis in the 20th century, some of this repertoire survives. The same can be said about the millions of Jews who heard and sang it. The Holocaust destroyed most of them, but some survived. One of these is Silberger, who escaped from the Netherlands with his family after the Germans occupied his native country in 1942. We are all fortunate that he did, and Katz shows that we can also be grateful that some of his Jewish musical heritage found its way to America as well.

Mark Kroll recently published Francesco Scarlatti: Six Concerti Grossi and Charles Avison: Concerto Arrangements of Gemini-ani’s Violin Sonatas, op. 1, for A-R Editions. He is currently writing a biography of Ignaz Moscheles for Boydell and Brewer Press and preparing an edition of Geminiani’s Sonatas for Violin and Basso Continuo, op. 4, for a complete edition published by Ut Orpheus.

IN BRIEF


Even though this collection of selected papers from the first conference of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music was published four years ago, it deserves to be better known and merits a review here. The seven essays cover a wide range of subjects, some mainstream and others quite eclectic, such as “A Mid-18th-Century Devotional Book from the Viennese Convent of St. Jacob.” “Evidence for Corellian Style Adagio Improvisation in London Concerts,” and “Exotism in 18th-Century Turinese Opera.” (MK)


John Harley has already written two important studies on Byrd: William Byrd: Gentleman of the Chapel Royal (Ashgate, 1997/rev. 1999) and William Byrd’s Modal Practice (Ashgate, 2005). This new book, as Harley tells us in the preface, “amplifies information about the background to Byrd’s music...[,] examines some things in greater depth, and introduces new material.” It is a most welcome addition. Particularly interesting are Harley’s discussions about Byrd’s activities in the world of commerce, as a landowner and publisher, and his connections to the leading businessmen of the era. The book also comes with a detailed Byrd family tree, a map of London from Byrd’s time, and seven appendices that include “William Byrd’s Will” and “William Byrd’s Leases.” A must read for all who love Byrd’s music and who are interested in the world in which he lived. (MK)