

Book Reviews: "Musical Instruments: History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music." by Murray Campbell, Clive Greated and Arnold Myers, and "From Renaissance to Baroque: Change in Instruments and Instrumental Music in the Seventeenth Century: Proceedings of the National Early Music Association Conference held, in association with the Department of Music, University of York and the York Early Music Festival, at the University College of Ripon and York St Johan, York, 2-4 July 1999." by Jonathan Wainwright and Peter Holman.

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**Book review: Campbell, Murray, Clive Greated, and Arnold Myers. *Musical Instruments: History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. ISBN 0-19-816504-8.**

**Wainwright, Jonathan, Peter Holman, eds. *From Renaissance to Baroque: Change in Instruments and Instrumental Music in the Seventeenth Century. Proceedings of the National Early Music Association Conference held, in association with the Department of Music, University of York and the York Early Music Festival, at the University College of Ripon and York St Johan, York, 2-4 July 1999*. Aldershot Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005. ISBN 0-7546-0403-9.**

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Musical instruments are at the heart of performance practice, therefore every student of the latter must have at least some knowledge of the former. The study of musical instruments is a wide field, encompassing such topics as construction, operation and playing techniques, notation, appropriate instrumentation, and so on. It is no wonder, then, that books on musical instruments can easily fill up a whole library, and that more such books are being published every year.

*Musical Instruments: History, Technology, and Performance of Instruments of Western Music*, a joint venture of three authors, Murray Campbell, Clive Greated, and Arnold Myers, is a general book on musical instruments, in that respect a descendent of Curt Sachs' pioneering works in this field (first published from 1913 to 1940)<sup>[1]</sup> and, for example, Francis Galpin's *Textbook of European Musical Instruments: Their Origin, History and Character*.<sup>[2]</sup> The aim and purpose of such books are clear: they provide the beginning student with a necessary overview of

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Curt Sachs, *A History of Musical Instruments* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1940).

<sup>2</sup> Francis Galpin, *A Textbook of European Musical Instruments: Their Origin, History, and Character* (New York: De Graff, 1937).

the whole field, and at least the basic knowledge required to understand its issues. For the more accomplished student they function as reference works.

*Musical Instruments* seemingly has no other aim than to inform its readers. No novel or innovative views are offered. This observation must not be viewed as criticism, for nothing is more important than having at hand a thoroughly reliable and thoughtful survey of the field of musical instruments.

The division of the text into thirteen chapters is wholly conventional. The first chapter discusses the necessary basic acoustics of sounds; the second applies this information to various classes of musical instruments that are categorized according to the Hornbostel-Sachs system. Subsequent chapters are labeled traditionally (although some of the heading titles coincide with Hornbostel-Sachs categories) and discuss instrument groups in the following order: reed woodwinds, flutes, bugles and horns, trumpets and trombones, percussion, bowed strings, plucked and hammered strings, clavichord and harpsichord, pianoforte, pipe organ, and electrophones.

Within these eleven chapters, the organization is remarkably constant. There are always five subdivisions, in most instances headed "Acoustical Principles," "Historical Development," "Instruments in Modern Use," "Instrument Construction," and "Performance Practice." Only in the chapters on keyboard instruments and the electrophones are slightly different headings found; most of these are self-explanatory and make clear that the book is not a simple listing of musical instruments with their most important features. Instead, there is an attempt first to discuss principles that hold for groups of instruments, then to discuss the properties that hold for individual instruments or even subtypes or variants. Instruments existing up to the mid-nineteenth century or so are discussed in the sections headed "Historical Development," and the rest are taken up in the sections headed "Instruments in Modern Use." To illustrate this procedure, we may consider the chapter entitled "Plucked and Hammered Stringed Instruments." The section called "Historical Development" includes the subsections "Plucked instruments in antiquity" and "Medieval plucked strings," followed by "Renaissance and Baroque harps," "Development of the pedal harp," "Renaissance and Baroque lutes," "Mandore, cittern, and guitar," and "Dulcimer and cimbalom." "Instruments in modern use" includes the subsections "Harps," "Lutes," "Mandolins," and "Guitars." Plucked and hammered stringed instruments with a keyboard are discussed in separate chapters.

It would not be difficult to find most of the information in the first three subdivisions of each chapter in other general textbooks on musical instruments. This work is different, however, for the concluding two subdivisions of each chapter. These subdivisions make clear that the book is not a regurgitation or mere re-ordering of information already present in many prior textbooks. The sections on instrument construction discuss relatively comprehensively the many materials used in instrument-making (from woods and metals via animal and plant parts to plastics) and the ways in which these materials are manipulated to create parts for musical instruments. After

the manufacturing of the parts they must be assembled to produce the instruments; these discussions make the book more useful than other writings on musical instruments.

Each chapter concludes with a subdivision that treats the performance practice of the group of instruments discussed. (These subdivisions justify inclusion of this review in a journal focusing on performance practice.) But, while performance practice is usually understood as the manner of interpreting musical compositions, in *Musical Instruments* performance practice is understood as the manner in which the instruments are played. Particular attention is paid to playing techniques for the instruments under consideration and to typical use of those instruments in the various repertoires of Western music. Of course, many of these subdivisions discuss topics that are to be found in texts on the performance practice of repertoires—but the approach is now from the perspective of the instrument, not the repertoire. Nevertheless, these subdivisions may make for quite interesting reading.

Although there are illustrations (both drawings and photographs) of whole instruments and details, as well as diagrams of various sorts, these are far fewer in number than one would expect in a general introductory book on musical instruments. Indeed, the authors apparently have attempted to do most of the explanatory work with words alone, so that the number of illustrations would be limited to what might be considered absolutely necessary, and I must admit that they have succeeded if this effort indeed was intentional. Musical examples also are present in small number; some are reproduced from existing scores, others were obviously newly-set. Strangely enough, the spacing of the newly-set examples is occasionally rather poor—unusually wide for some bars and narrow for others. This deficiency stands in stark contrast to the book's otherwise perfect production in every respect.

At the end of the book there are two appendices, the first containing frequencies of musical tones in equal temperament, the second offering “Keyword Tables for Typical Woodwinds”—a list indicating which fingers operate which tone-holes or keys. (I find this of limited use without the corresponding fingering tables.) The “Further Reading” includes useful listings of writings concerning musical instruments in general or with respect to certain groups of instruments or individual instruments. It must be said that these listings are totally confined to works written in English, just as the entire book is aimed at English readers only. Works originally written in another language are only listed in their translated editions. (Books that are not available in an English translation have been omitted.) Many publications on musical instruments contain lists that include the names of the instruments or other types of terms in various languages, but nothing of the kind is to be found here. Since many of the sources are in other languages and there exists a huge literature on musical instruments in other languages, this is a shortcoming, at least as viewed through European eyes. (The index contains some names of instruments in other languages with references to the English names.)

The index at the end is very detailed, and serves as an explanatory glossary at the same time. It includes most items that could be indexed: names of instruments and their parts or other

terms connected to them, names of instrument makers, composers, performers, and so on. Place names and other geographical names, however, have not been indexed.

As the authors rightly remark at the end of their short preface, the book is useful both as a “concise survey of the subject” and a “concise dictionary and work of reference.” For the latter use they recommend the Index/Glossary, for the former reading from beginning to end. It must be said, however, that reading it from beginning to end is made difficult by the even tone of the book. Although the content is excellent and the English immaculate, there is no sense of direction in the writing. The sections do not seem to go from a starting point to a goal or conclusion—they simply describe the various aspects at issue in a logical order.

The second book to be reviewed here also deals with musical instruments, but in a totally different way. It is in fact a conference report, with an introduction followed by fourteen chapters, each written by a different author, an expert on the particular subject. As a result, the various chapters are unequal in length, depth, style, discourse, tone, and so on. Such a book is not designed for the beginning student of musical instruments but for the one already knowledgeable in the field—and even the knowledgeable will probably pick a chapter of interest rather than read the book from beginning to end. The unifying topic of the conference, and therefore of the book, is defined in the subtitle, *Change in Instruments and Instrumental Music in the Seventeenth Century*, simplified and summarized in the main title, *From Renaissance to Baroque*. The topic is therefore somewhat dependent on the point of view that towards the end of the sixteenth century there was equilibrium in the manufacture of musical instruments (which we now call “Renaissance instruments”) and again around 1700 (with instruments that we now call “Baroque”). This may be too simple a presentation, perhaps based too much on the development of the woodwinds in seventeenth-century France. Instruments have evolved at different rates independently, and even though there have been periods of rapid change in instrument design separated by extended, stable periods, the periods of change have not all had the same durations, nor have they all occurred at the same time, for the entire range of instruments. It is certain, however, that many instruments underwent some kind of development during the seventeenth century—which is why it makes sense to investigate these particular developments.

The organizers of the conference have invited experts on the various instruments that played a role in seventeenth-century music and obviously have tried to attract experts on a broad range of instruments. There are chapters on reed woodwinds, flutes and recorders, bowed and plucked stringed instruments, the organ, and ensembles. That means that brass instruments and stringed keyboard instruments (harpsichord, clavichord) are missing from the collection. The chapters are ordered according to the list of instrument groups just mentioned.

The chapters on reed woodwinds open the book (this group of instruments is well-served with four chapters). They all deal, from various points of view, with the changes these instruments underwent in the seventeenth century, especially the innovations realized in France. Bruce Haynes summarizes the development from shawm to oboe in France from 1620 to 1670, Marc Ecochard Michel de la Barre’s late (ca. 1740) comments on the history of the musette and

the oboe, Jan Bouterse the woodwind instruments of the Dutch woodwind maker (of English descent) Richard Haka, and Graham Lyndon-Jones the transition (or rather the lack of one) from curtal to bassoon.

The recorder is dealt with in a long essay entitled, “The Iconographic Background to the Seventeenth-Century Recorder” by Anthony Rowland-Jones, which also includes material presented at the conference by Eva Legêne. The chapter in fact contains considerations of several kinds, not only iconographical, and it is not exactly clear what meaning it intends to convey, despite the many references to, and examples of, the use of the recorder in iconography and the musical repertoire. Nancy Hadden follows the use of the sixteenth-century (“Renaissance”) transverse flute in the seventeenth century, up to about 1670, when the new “Baroque” transverse flute was introduced, and used for entirely different goals than was the case for the earlier flute. Hadden draws on both methods and actual repertoire. The second chapter devoted to the flute skips to the eighteenth century; here Mary Oleskiewicz gives a survey of the roles of woodwind players in the various musical establishments of the Electoral Saxon Court at Dresden in the first half of that century.

Peter Trevelyan’s contribution has a double focus. On the one hand, it briefly describes the instruments (two basses, a viola, and two violins) by the early English violinmaker William Baker, who worked in Oxford from 1669 until his death in 1685, while on the other, it proposes to play these instruments in ways not compromised at all by modern requirements, such as preferring single instruments for widely varying repertoire, the use of wound strings, and bows with little hair and fixed frogs.

Matthew Spring gives a very useful overview of the developments that took place in French lute playing during the first half of the seventeenth century, a time that witnessed the transition from the “Renaissance” tuning via the “transitional” tuning to the “Baroque” tuning. Concurrent with this development, the instrument evolved from a ten-course into an eleven- or perhaps even twelve-course instrument. Jonathan Le Cocq has investigated the various forms in which the French *air de cour* has come down to us since the first half of the seventeenth century—as part song, lute song, or (occasionally) as “duet” for voice and bass line—and has tried to explain the extent to which figured-bass-like practices were occurring before the advent of explicit figured-bass notation in France around 1650.

Dominic Gwynn discusses developments in organ building in England by comparing two sets of instruments twice—that is, two church organs of 1631 and 1743, respectively, and two chamber organs of 1630 and ca. 1740. The restriction makes sense, because full treatment would be impossible within the limits of a single conference paper or book chapter.

Near the end of the book, Peter Holman deals with the composition of string ensembles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the addition to those ensembles of wind instruments at the end of the seventeenth century—a process that started in France and has given rise to the modern “orchestra.” Then there is the last chapter by Jeremy Montague, entitled, “Organological

*Gruyère.*” The last word in the title is a reference to the cheese by that name, characterized by its many holes. The paper deals with the holes in our knowledge of how musical instruments in the past were used and how they really sounded. There are of course many of them, and the chapter works as a welcome *caveat* to remind us that, while we may believe that we know everything, we in fact only know a lot.

At the end of the book there is a common bibliography for all chapters, stressing thereby the unity of the book. The bibliography has sensibly been divided into a section for books and articles and another one for music. Next is a very detailed index that includes personal and geographical names, musical instruments and related terms, and the sources used, both musical and theoretical.

When one reads the table of contents of this book for the first time, the publication might appear to be a loose collection of chapters on various musical instruments or topics related to them. Upon reading the chapters, however, one soon discovers that the book actually follows a well-designed plan, and that many chapters relate to one another. Many problems are dealt with in more than one chapter. The most frequently recurring theme, of course, is the redesigning of the woodwinds (recorder, oboe, transverse flute, and bassoon) in France during the third quarter of the seventeenth century. Chapters unrelated to this topic offer other interesting discussions. This well-edited volume is therefore a more-than-satisfactory summary of the conference discussion about the evolution of musical instruments in the seventeenth century.