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Tobias Schönfeld's  
*Compendium instrumentorum musicalium*  
(Liegnitz, 1625)

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**S**ERIES B VI of the International Inventory of Musical Sources, entitled *Écrits imprimés concernant la musique*, was published in two volumes in 1971<sup>1</sup> and is the result of an attempt to list all known copies of printed writings about music in the European languages from the fifteenth century to the year 1800.

This remarkable bibliography is full of treasures for the organologist. It lists very numerous instrument instruction books, especially of the eighteenth century, but also of the seventeenth century; many of these exist in unique copies, and many are little known. A few other items deal with instrument construction. There is no subject index to these volumes; some diligent person could render an important service by publishing an indexed short-title list of the items that have to do particularly with instruments.

One of the most intriguing titles listed in the 1971 bibliography is Tobias Schönfeld's *Compendium instrumentorum musicalium*, published in Liegnitz in 1625, with a German subtitle that reads in translation: "Brief synopsis of certain musical instruments, the Italian, French, English, and Netherlandish names by which these are called in the concerted works issued in the present times, as well as their pitches, and how high and low each can be used."<sup>2</sup> The unique

1. Ed. François Lesure (Munich-Duisburg: G. Henle).

2. *Kurtzer begriff etzlicher Musicalischen Instrumenten, wie dieselbten bey itzigen zeiten an Tag gegebenen Concerten, mit Italiänischen, Frantzösischen, Engell. und*

copy in the University Library of Halle an der Saale is reported to have ten leaves and to be incomplete.

Schönfeld's publication, as far as I can ascertain, has never been mentioned before in the literature on musical instruments. It would be rash to assert that it is completely unknown, but I have consulted with reasonable diligence all the most likely authorities from the seventeenth century to the present. Even the author is almost totally obscure; only publications of the omniscient Robert Eitner make any mention of him. On the title page of the *Compendium*, Schönfeld identifies himself as Director of the Musical Choir of the Prince of Liegnitz, and the dedication of the work, although its beginning is lost, seems to be to the prince.

The city of Liegnitz lies in Silesia and is now a part of Poland under the name of Legnica. In the seventeenth century, it was the capital of the German principality and duchy of Liegnitz. The prince and duke of Liegnitz from 1613 to 1653 was Georg Rudolph, who was a composer himself as a youth, and who kept a court musical organization about which very little information is known today.<sup>3</sup> Among the manuscripts preserved from the ducal library (in the City Library of Liegnitz at least until World War II) is a set of six part-books containing 195 compositions for three to twelve voices, nearly all sacred. One of the pieces has the signature of Tobias Schönfeld as copyist, with the date January 10, 1625.<sup>4</sup>

Schönfeld's *Compendium* in its present state consists of ten leaves, with a total of nineteen printed pages. The beginning of the dedi-

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*Niederländischen Namen genennet, Item, Wie ihre Intonationen, und wie hoch und tieff ides zugebrauchen.*

3. See Wolfgang Scholz, "Georg Rudolph, Herzog von Liegnitz, Brieg und Goldberg," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 4, cols. 1769-71; idem, "Hallmann von Strachwitz, Paul," *ibid.*, vol. 5, cols. 1373-74; idem, "Liegnitz," *ibid.*, vol. 8, cols. 856-62; idem, "Das musikalische Leben in Liegnitz bis ca. 1800," *Musik des Ostens* 5 (1969): 113-43; and Fritz Feldmann, *Die schlesische Kirchenmusik im Wandel der Zeiten*, Das Evangelische Schlesien, vol. 6, part 2 (Lübeck: Verlag "Unser Weg," 1975), esp. pp. 75-80.

4. Ernst Pfudel, "Die Musik-Handschriften der Königl. Ritter-Akademie zu Liegnitz," *Beilage, Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte* 18 (1886): 25-30; Robert Eitner, *Biographisch-bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon der Musiker und Musikgelehrten* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1898-1904; reprints, New York, 1947, Wiesbaden, 1959-1960, and Graz, 1959-1960), vol. 9, pp. 60-61.

cation is lost; it must have amounted to two or (less likely) four pages. The end of it is in the standard servile tone and includes no real information, other than that Schönfeld was greatly indebted to the dedicatee.

In the introduction that follows, Schönfeld exclaims over the heights to which the art of music has been brought, questioning whether anything can still be added to it. His list of the great composers of recent times is interesting; they are mostly Italians, some still noted today, some obscure (Francisco Bianciardi, Girolamo Boschetti, Giovanni Cavaccio, Camillo Zanotti). The Germans are Gregor Aichinger, Heinrich Schütz, Johann Hermann Schein, and Daniel Selich, the last of whom was the successor to Michael Praetorius as Brunswick court music director at Wolfenbüttel; all of them were still alive in 1625. The purpose of his *Compendium*, Schönfeld states, is to bring together in one place all the current names of instruments, including the Italian, French, and English names, together with their ranges and their suitability for the various voices of a composition, so that inexperienced musicians may more easily choose the appropriate instruments to perform modern *Concerten* and *Moteten*.

Schönfeld divides the instruments he will discuss into two classes: *inflatilia* and *fidicina* (winds and strings). The body of the work is in fourteen sections in which he discusses eleven types of winds and three types of strings, not to mention some subdivisions. The instrument families treated are the trombones, trumpets, bombardas (including shawms), recorders, transverse flutes, rackets, bassoons, cornetts, crumhorns, Cornamusen, Schreyerpfeiffen, viols (viole da gamba and arm viols), lutes, and the theorbo (together with the keyboard string instruments).

Unfortunately, when one examines the details, all hope that a valuable new source has been found vanishes. For Schönfeld has simply cribbed his material, almost *in toto*, from Praetorius's *Syntagma musicum*. Volume 2 of the *Syntagma*, on musical instruments, was published in 1619; Praetorius died in 1621 and was no longer available to prosecute for copyright violation. There can be no doubt about the derivation—everything is reworked, but immediately betrays its source. Even misspellings of foreign terms are copied, such as “Dolce suono” and “recordor.” And, in the time-honored tradition

of plagiarism, Schönfeld never mentions Praetorius's name (though I might possibly be unjust in making this accusation, as the extant copy is not quite complete).

The main differences can be summarized as follows: Schönfeld abbreviates and deletes many details; his book, after all, is a compendium. He omits all discussion of many instruments: obsolete and exotic ones, percussion, and notably the organ. The order in which the instruments are presented is somewhat different. The ranges are described, not given on a staff; they differ in a number of cases from Praetorius, but the reasons for the differences seem always to be attempts to simplify, misinterpretations, or just carelessness. Several terms are spelled somewhat differently. There are no pictures. The text is always rewritten a bit; in a few cases Praetorius's meaning is misinterpreted, or altered so as to change the sense; for example, the trumpet is said to have "all tones and some semitones"; Praetorius states that this is true only in the high register.

In only a few spots is there any indication that Schönfeld had any knowledge of his own, or used another source. Most of these cases are trivial, as when he mentions that the trombone is made of brass, or are irrelevant to the seventeenth century, as when he lists biblical references to *Posaun* and *Trommet*. Schönfeld gives two additional names for the trumpet (*Clarín* and *Claret*), and two additional ones for the *cornetto muto* (*Stummer Zincke* and *Mut Zincke*).

In discussing the viols, he mentions their use in Daniel Selich's *Opus novum*, a collection of two- to twelve-part Latin sacred *Concerten* and Psalms published the year before in Wolfenbüttel, and states that in some of the pieces Selich calls for a whole set of viols. Schönfeld asserts that the shortness of the bow makes it impossible to hold a tone for a whole *tempus* on the arm viols.

Finally, he says of the string keyboard instruments that Johann Hermann Schein makes use of them in his *Musica boscareccia* (Part I of which was published in Leipzig in 1621). In fact, Schein suggests in his preface several alternate ways of performing these three-voice secular songs, one of which is to play all parts together on harpsichord, spinet, theorbo, or lute.

It would be pleasant to be able to say that a new source for the

history of instruments in the seventeenth century had been found, worthy to stand alongside Praetorius, Trichet, Mersenne, and Kircher. But even the most minor document is precious, as it helps a tiny bit to fill the gaps left by the more exhaustive sources.

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