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the financial risk of bringing us this treasure. And by all means let us thank Laurence Pickin for this immense labor of love, twenty-five years in the making, a masterpiece nonpareil. Dr. Picken, *tebrikler!*

KARL SIGNELL

The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments Bulletin. Edited by René de Maeyer. Vol. 4 [Anniversary offering to the Ruckers Genootschap of Antwerp]. Buren, The Netherlands: Frits Knuf, 1974. Hfl 36.

In his introduction to the first volume (1971) of *The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments Bulletin*, René de Maeyer stated, as the aim of the undertaking, "to account for the scientific activities of or in connection with the Museum, to discuss current problems of instrument making or musical acoustics, to report researches made in the field of folk music, to emphasize the significance of musical iconography, to contribute to ethnomusicology by the study of non-European instruments." One suspects from reading his introduction that Maeyer, who is the curator of the Brussels museum, hoped as well to achieve further awareness among the Belgian public of the existence of this marvellous collection; but it should not be inferred that the *Bulletin* is in the nature of puffery, for it has so far served as the forum for a considerable number of significant studies in organology. Except for volume 1 (volume 3 had not yet appeared at the time of this writing), each annual issue of the *Bulletin* has been turned over largely to the investigation of a single instrument: volume 2 (1972) was devoted mostly to the Jew's harp and volume 5 (1975) to the dulcimer.

Volume 4 of the *Bulletin* was published as a sort of *Festschrift* on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Ruckers Genootschap of Antwerp. It contains a catalogue of the exhibition put on in Antwerp by the Genootschap in the summer of 1974 (pp. 65–70), an account by its president, F. Aeby, of the achievements of the first five years of the Genootschap (pp. 11–15), appreciations by Gustav Leonhardt and Kenneth Gilbert, and an account by Hubert Bédard and Jeannine

Lambrechts-Douillez of the restorations of three harpsichords (pp. 17–32)—together with several substantial contributions to our understanding of the Ruckers family and their work. One of these is by the Administrator-Secretary of the Genootschap, Professor Lambrechts-Douillez, who has compiled a collection of archival documents relating to the Ruckers (pp. 33–54). These are presented in their original Flemish, together with substantial summaries in English. (All contributions to the *Bulletin* which are in a language other than English are summarized in English.) Some of these documents—those pertaining to the guild rolls—were published in the nineteenth century by Rombouts and Van Lerius, but they are presented now with their original spelling and punctuation restored. Another document apparently published for the first time is the record of the marriage on 17 July 1611 of Jan Couchet's parents, Carel Couchet and Catarina Ruckers, daughter of Hans Ruckers (I).

Perhaps the most fascinating contribution to the volume is "The Numbering System of Ruckers Instruments," by G. Grant O'Brien (pp. 75–89). The author has studied the various marks and numbers to be found on the action parts of instruments built by different members of the Ruckers family (including those of Jan Couchet). These markings seem clearly to be the means by which the shop identified the parts of one instrument in order to keep them separate from the parts of another. Heretofore, no one has been able to trace any clear logic behind these markings. O'Brien begins by observing that for most of the instruments the markings consist of two parts: the first is the same for all instruments of the same type (i.e., virginals of various lengths, mother-and-child virginals, and single and double manual harpsichords), while the second is a number which differs from one instrument to another. By separating the markings by type of instrument as well as by individual maker, O'Brien has observed that the numbers fall into approximately straight-line series corresponding to known chronology.

There are several significant results of this investigation. First, it makes clear that the Ruckers' shops did use a serial system of numbering. From this it is possible to make educated guesses as to the approximate dates of certain instruments for which no date is provided explicitly by the instruments. One interesting hypothesis

regards the 1640 two-manual harpsichord in the Schloss Ahaus in Westphalia, which is signed by Joannes Ruckers. This instrument has a low "serial number" (14), which is inconsistent with the production of Hans Ruckers (II). However, when it is taken together with the two-manual harpsichord of 1646 by Jan Couchet (no. 17; this is the only instrument of Couchet investigated by O'Brien, and its serial markings just happen to be used as the subject matter for the front cover of all issues of the *Bulletin*), we find that the two numbers are consistent with a production beginning around 1627 when Couchet entered his uncle's shop as an apprentice. Although more of Couchet's instruments would need to be examined along these lines, O'Brien seems justified in tentatively concluding that Couchet began building and numbering his own instruments around the time he entered his uncle's shop, but that since he did not enter the guild as a master builder until 1642, he was unable legally to sign them with his own name; hence they were signed by his master and sported an *IR* rose as well.

Another result of O'Brien's investigations is to demonstrate that both instruments of a mother-and-child virginals were identified with the same serial number, but with the larger being prefixed with *m* (*moeder*) and the *ottavina* with *k* (*kind*). Thus, the 1628 Joannes Ruckers virginal in Brussels, "which at first sight appears to be a normal 6-foot single virginal, is revealed originally to have been a double mother and child . . . [whose] original appearance has been completely disguised" (p. 80).

O'Brien, in closing, states that his "primary philosophy has been to get as much information as possible from the instruments themselves, and to relate this wherever possible to early written works or archival findings" (p. 88). Obviously such research is possible only where the original parts of the instruments are available to look at. It is absolutely essential, therefore, when restorers find it necessary to replace original parts of an instrument, that they return the original (replaced) parts along with the restored instrument. This is precisely the procedure outlined by Bédard in his restoration reports contained elsewhere in the *Bulletin*; unfortunately, it is a practice that has not always been adhered to.

The remaining article in the *Bulletin* is "La facture de virginals à

Anvers au 16^e siècle," by Nicolas Meeùs, the assistant editor of the *Bulletin* (pp. 55–64); this paper is, in fact, the only contribution from the Brussels Museum per se, an indication of just how broadly based a forum the editors hope to make of their publication. Meeùs discusses the position of the Brussels Museum's polygonal virginal by Joes Karest near the beginning of a hypothetical line of development from the *épinette* to the *muselar*. He not only describes the nature of these two types of instruments more precisely than had previously been done but also suggests some experiments which might show why the *muselar* eventually became the most prevalent form of virginal in Flanders. Meeùs's contribution is original and shows what sort of results can be obtained from creative investigation of a set of organological classifications.

All in all, *The Brussels Museum of Musical Instruments Bulletin* shows promise of providing a most valuable contribution to the budding discipline of organology. It is well printed in a generous (8½"×11") format on good-quality paper (one does wish, however, that it were bound in signatures rather than glued), and there seems to be an unlimited budget for illustration (O'Brien's article alone contains seventeen quarter-page photographs, and there is a stunning color photograph of the Hans Ruckers (I) mother-and-child virginals loaned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art for the 1974 exhibition in Antwerp). Let us wish the *Bulletin* a long life which continues to fulfill its early promise.

R. PETER WOLF

Smithsonian Institution, Division of Musical Instruments Staff. *A Checklist of Keyboard Instruments at the Smithsonian Institution*. Second Edition. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1975. 82 pp.; 7 figures. \$2.00 (plus \$.45 mailing; available from the Smithsonian Bookstore, National Museum of History and Technology, Washington, D.C. 20560).

When in 1959 the directors and curators of a number of large instrument museums and divisions and some private collectors con-