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Technicalities aside, Robert Eliason describes these important American craftsmen in such an informative and entertaining way that one wishes it were possible to go back and visit their shops. A short time ago, Dr. Eliason composed an equally interesting study of another American instrument-making firm, Samuel Graves & Company, which is available from the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. I look forward to more publications of this type.

ROBERT E. SHELDON

Laurence Libin. *Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum*. Foreword by Philippe de Montebello. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1978. 48 pp. plus a 7-in. LP recording. \$3.00.

Laurence Libin. *A Checklist of European Harps*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979. iv, 16 pp. \$1.00.

William L. Monical. *A Checklist of Viole da gamba (Viols)*. Preface by Laurence Libin. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979. viii, 20 pp. \$1.00.

Joyce Smar, Michaelene Gorney, and Jane Vial. *Musical Instruments*. Foreword by Roger Mandle. Toledo, Ohio: The Toledo Museum of Art, 1978. Vol. 20, no. 4, of the Toledo Museum of Art's *Museum News*. 29 pp. No price given.

Musical instruments, after having a Cinderella status in most museums for many years, are at long last coming to be recognized as works of art. Only a handful of the some four thousand instruments in the magnificent collection at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art were on display prior to the opening in 1971 of the André Mertens Galleries for Musical Instruments, but since then thousands of visitors have been able to view and hear recordings of a representative selection of the instruments. About eight hundred instruments are now on permanent exhibit. Serving as an introduction to the collection, and nicely reflecting the amazing breadth of its holdings from all over the world, is the handsomely produced booklet *Musical Instruments in*

the Metropolitan Museum. In his authoritative text, Laurence Libin discusses the characteristics of the several broad categories of instrument type, acoustics, and symbolism involved in the design of instruments from various cultures. The bulk of the booklet consists of superb photographs, sixteen of them in color, by the Metropolitan Museum's photography studio and Rudy Muller. Accompanied by commentary, these depict rare and unique specimens from North America, Oceania, Africa, Islam, Central Asia, Eastern Asia, and Southeast Asia, as well as European instruments from the Middle Ages through the mid-nineteenth century. This booklet will be of value to anyone interested in musical instruments, and the splendid photographs will be of interest to specialists as well. Adding to the appeal of this publication is a seven-inch LP recording of eight selections played on instruments from the collection: a 1540 Venetian virginal, a 1666 Zenti harpsichord, a Kirkman harpsichord and German porcelain flute from the late eighteenth century, a mid-nineteenth-century barrel organ, a 1691 Stradivari violin, a 1720 Cristofori piano (which I found especially pleasing in sound), two early eighteenth-century Denner oboes, and a 1790 Schmidt piano.

The checklists of European harps and viols in the Metropolitan Museum are aimed at specialists and include descriptive data and measurements. *A Checklist of European Harps* describes twelve harps without mechanism, nine with manual mechanism, nine pedal harps, three chromatically strung harps, and two harp-lyres. Seven are shown in photographs. The collection of viols at the Metropolitan's Department of Musical Instruments includes ten instruments dating from the seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries. All are illustrated and described in detail in *A Checklist of Viole da gamba (Viols)*.

The Toledo (Ohio) Museum of Art has no formal collection of musical instruments, but it does have five keyboard instruments in playing condition: an octavina by Giorgio da Trento, Rome, 1594; a pianoforte by Johann Andreas Stein, 1784; a handsome Dutch bureau organ by Johann Strumphler, ca. 1785; a piano by R. Nunns, Clark and Company, New York, 1830-31; and an organ made by the Skinner Organ Company, New York, 1927. All but the latter are illustrated in the booklet *Musical Instruments*, together with photo-

graphs of a sixteenth-century chitarrone and an unusual English pagoda clock, ca. 1780, which contains a miniature spring-driven pipe organ. Lacking other instruments in their holdings, the Toledo Museum authors use twenty-four examples of visual art featuring various string, woodwind, brass, percussion, and keyboard instruments. Their commentary is generally informed, except for the description of the range of a tabor pipe as being "about five notes" and the labeling of the Italian octavina as a virginal rather than a spinet. This booklet should help increase readers' awareness of musical instruments portrayed in paintings.

DALE HIGBEE

Ian McCombie. *The Piano Handbook*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980. 176 pp.; 32 black-and-white plates. \$12.50.

Ian McCombie's *Piano Handbook* is a broad survey of a little-known craft, piano technology—half science, half art, partly modern, partly centuries old. Concerned with the nature and workings of the piano as they pertain to maintenance, tuning, and repair, the *Handbook* is primarily designed for the musician and the amateur piano tuner, although the author does not state so directly. It should be made clear that this volume is entirely elementary and basic in its technique and purpose.

The work, divided into two sections, "Basic Piano Information" and "Piano Tuning and Repair," offers seventeen fact-filled chapters which outline the fundamentals of the piano and piano servicing. Photographs and exploded-view diagrams facilitate the reader's understanding of the function of the instrument and the procedures being described.

An introductory overview presents a brief history of the piano's origins and proceeds through the developments of iron framing and improved methods of making music wire that led to the evolution of the modern piano.

The following three chapters are by far the most immediately useful and informative to both the musician and the amateur piano