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Michael Seyfrit. *Musical Instruments in the Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection at the Library of Congress: A Catalog. Vol. 1, Recorders, Fifes, and Simple System Transverse Flutes of One Key.* Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1982. xxiii, 349 pp.; 56 black-and-white plates and over 400 black-and-white illustrations. \$15.00.

The Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection is one of our national treasures and deserves to be treated as such. That it has not received its due since its inclusion in the Library of Congress in 1941 is largely the result of a lack of funds. Unlike Mrs. Gertrude Whittall, whose endowment insures that the Stradivarius violins, viola, and cello that she gave to the Library of Congress are maintained and played regularly, Dr. Miller could not leave money for such purposes. Thus, this greatest assemblage in the world of historical exemplars of a single instrument has never had a full-time curator, and had it not been for independent funds provided mostly by the National Flute Association, not even a part-time caretaker could have been retained during the past few years. Indeed, at present the collection lies in a state of limbo, without any curator. Closed to the public pending inspection and recommendations about upkeep and repairs, it will shortly be moved to temporary quarters in the Madison Building until such time as a special, permanent home can be built in the Jefferson Building, near the Coolidge Auditorium and the Whittall Pavilion. It is encouraging, therefore, to see the Library of Congress publish the first volume of a lavishly illustrated catalogue dedicated to this important resource. One hopes that the renewed interest thus generated may serve as an impetus to raise money for an endowment to maintain both the instruments and the accompanying library of music, books, and iconography relating to the flute, which Dr. Miller refused to disperse.

When information about the instruments was made available in 1961 through a checklist,¹ the compilers hoped it would eventually be supplanted by a more extensive catalogue. Michael Seyfrit, a former curator, contributes toward this goal in volume 1 of his projected seven-volume catalogue of the Miller Collection. Although one may question some of his decisions, his separation of the items into groups based on morphology provides a more helpful format for study of the collection than the arrangement by accession numbers found in the *Checklist*. Furthermore, his inclusion of a photograph of each flute, with enlarged details of key

1. Laura E. Gilliam and William Lichtenwanger, *The Dayton C. Miller Flute Collection: A Checklist of the Instruments* (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, 1961).

mechanism and maker's mark where present, adds greatly to the available knowledge about flutes in the collection. In addition, Seyfrit was able to update the *Checklist* somewhat by including a few new or corrected attributions and by giving more precise dates to several of the items. In other ways, however, Seyfrit's opus falls seriously short, both of providing a more extensive catalogue than the *Checklist*, and of fulfilling his own stated purpose: to "present, in as concise a manner as possible, a number of relevant details about each instrument which should serve as an adequate foundation upon which to base future investigations" (p. vii).

Although each catalogue entry consists of a list of details, a number of which do not appear in the *Checklist*, some of these have limited value. The location numbers, for example, may soon be rendered obsolete by one or both moves. The measurement of the maximum diameter of each instrument, divorced from any consideration of the bore, likewise seems of little usefulness; and since Seyfrit fails to indicate whether this represents the internal or external dimension, this statistic is ambiguous as well. Then too, identification of the lowest note must remain hypothetical when the intended pitch of the instrument is unknown.

The most helpful addition to the *Checklist*, aside from the illustrations, is Seyfrit's transcription (along with a photograph) of makers' marks. However, these transcriptions are difficult to decipher because of the unfortunate use of typographical symbols instead of verbal descriptions for some of the designs. An asterisk, for example, leads one fruitlessly to the bottom of the page, while three dots imply that something has been left out. The words "star" or "three dots" in brackets would have spared the reader much frustration. Furthermore, Seyfrit omits some important marks from the photographs. The most serious lacuna concerns the mark on flute no. 199,² which most likely indicates the actual maker: Samuel Barnet and Son, not John Parker. Since this company was established in 1832, the flute must therefore date from a later period than that estimated by Seyfrit (1770–1815).

An important indication that this catalogue will not supplant the *Checklist* can be seen in the fact that in several cases Seyfrit omits important information from that source. This includes history (no. 225: "DCM replaced the 2 middle joints with those from another flute."³), description (no. 226: "DCM: 'The flute has clearly been rebuilt by the addition of the five keys, by cutting the tenon off the head, shortening the head to make high pitch, by

2. Numbers here refer to Seyfrit's *Catalogue*, not Miller's accession numbers.

3. Gilliam and Lichtenwanger, *Checklist*, p. 19 (accession no. DM 269).

putting in a lining and slide joint . . . and by enlarging the embouchure.' ⁴), and bibliography. Because of these omissions, one must use this catalogue in close conjunction with the *Checklist*. Even this is difficult, however, since the compiler corrects statistics on size, materials, and dates without documentation.

Seyfrit's measurements of length often differ from those in the *Checklist*. Whereas most vary by only two or three millimeters, for recorder no. 36 the discrepancy is 79 mm.; for no. 37 it is 40 mm.; and for flute no. 117 it is 200 mm. Yet no explanation is forthcoming.

Concerning the materials, one wonders how he was able to verify the type of wood used, as he frequently departs from information in the *Checklist*. As for the keys, it is not at all clear whether by "silver-colored metal" Seyfrit means that it is definitely *not* silver or that it *might not* be silver. If he means the latter, then a question mark after the word "silver" would dispel all doubts.

Seyfrit's dating of the instruments often confuses the serious reader. Sometimes he indicates the life and death dates of a maker rather than the span of his career, thereby predating an instrument by at least fifteen to twenty years (e.g., nos. 87 and 150). He enigmatically gives different dates for the same maker, even when the same mark is employed (e.g., nos. 110, 111, and 192; nos. 171 and 172). He occasionally gives incorrect dates (e.g., no. 166 should read 1829–43 instead of 1818–21, while no. 181 should have ca. 1829 instead of ca. 1929) and undocumented dates (nos. 26 and 100). He is also careless about providing question marks and using "circa" where any doubt exists (e.g., nos. 141 and 142).

In addition to these inaccuracies and inconsistencies, the catalogue has many typographical errors. The most serious of these is the misnumbering of flutes on several plates. If the catalogue entries are correct, then the following errata should be noted: on plate 51, nos. 148 and 248 should be exchanged; on plate 52, nos. 250 and 253 should likewise be reversed; and on plate 53, every number should be corrected to read (from left to right) 254–258, 246. The usefulness of the photographs, which constitute the greatest advantage of this catalogue over the *Checklist*, is thus jeopardized.

One could point to numerous other failings, but the message is clear. Rather than providing a useful vehicle for organologists and other technical historians, as well as for collectors, players, makers, and restorers of wind instruments, Michael Seyfrit has served us a lemon. The number and nature of the mistakes cast serious doubt upon the reliability of even the

4. *Ibid.*, p. 28 (accession no. DM 388).

best the catalogue has to offer. This book, like a defective automobile, ought to be recalled by the publisher for an overhaul—or at least for a long list of corrigenda. The Dayton C. Miller Collection, sadly, has still not been given its due.

(See *additional communication*, p. 139.)

BETH BULLARD

Friend Robert Overton. *Der Zink: Geschichte, Bauweise und Spieltechnik eines historischen Musikinstruments*. Mainz: Schott, 1981. 260 pp.; 90 black-and-white plates. Paperback, DM48.

Friend Robert Overton wrote his Ph.D. dissertation, *Der Zink: Ikonographische Studien zu seiner Geschichte, Bauweise und Spieltechnik an Instrumenten in europäischen Museen*, under the supervision of Heinrich Hüschen at the University of Cologne. The present publication reproduces the typescript of the dissertation. The book cover indicates that this is a work that was eight years in the making, and that it recounts a 2000-year history of the cornett.

Overton's work falls short of a comprehensive history of the cornett, its repertory, design, and technique, but it does provide insights. Perhaps the scope of the work is overstated. We find some very interesting and detailed original research, but the broader history is much too generalized, relying on older secondary sources. Overton gives considerable attention to predecessors of cornetts, such as lurs, buisines, and oliphants, but he offers barely more than a paragraph on serpents. There is detailed information about cornetts in England and Germany, much less for Italy, and little for France or Spain.

Overton divides his work into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with terminology: Latin, Italian, French, English, and German names are explained, but with very little documentation. There is a better indication of sources in chapter 2, which is concerned with the instrument's history. In the first of the five sections within this chapter, Overton examines lip-vibrated instruments before 1200. These predecessors of the cornett variously influenced its mouthpiece designs, bore and body shape, concept of finger-holes, and choice of material. In the second section, covering the period from 1200 to 1600, Overton points to the first appearance of the term *cornetum* in 1376 at Sainte Chapelle in Paris, and he mentions several iconographic sources for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. (As the title of his dissertation indicates, iconography is an important basis for his work. The book contains reproductions of fifty-seven iconographic