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a rounded back—comes principally from the iconographical section. Hence specifics about the rebec's size, weight, materials, interior structure, and so on, are lacking. Symptomatic of this treatment is the extended discussion of the morphology of the early rebec and lyra, whose differences, the author maintains, depend more on the employment of a pegdisc or a pegbox than on how they are played, how they sound, or their musical uses. In actuality, such essentially decorative features as string fastenings are of more value in determining genealogy and cultural influence than in defining the nature of a musical instrument. No one, for example, would think of describing a guitar with sagittal pegs as a different instrument from one equipped with machine heads.

The first twenty-four pages are devoted to an introduction and a section entitled "Avenues for Research," the latter constituting a primer for instrument-related research that commends itself to anyone embarking on such a project, though it is not specifically related to the study that follows and slows the reader's progress into it. In the iconographical section—and indeed throughout the dissertation—the author is often similarly impeded by her methodology: for example, if one picture takes fourteen steps to describe, then all do, even though for many of the points there is only the statement "No information available." Although this leaves no doubt in the mind of the reader regarding these points, it also tends to obfuscate the significant observations the author does make about the representations. Aspects like these impart to the work a quality of overcareful earnestness—often encountered in dissertations but not contributing to their enjoyable use.

On the whole, however, the author's impeccable work yields considerable insight into a ubiquitous but little-known early instrument. Such detailed research contributes much to the continued development of our understanding of early music and its performance. This dissertation is an important organological contribution; pruned of its methodological excesses, it would make a highly publishable work.

CECIL D. ADKINS

Tom Wheeler. *American Guitars: An Illustrated History*. New York: Harper and Row, 1982. 370 pp.; 136 color, 830 black-and-white photographs; many drawings. \$30.95.

In his latest book, *American Guitars: An Illustrated History*, Tom Wheeler claims to provide us with "the first comprehensive volume devoted to the guitar's post-Civil War history." While this claim might be somewhat over-

stated, Wheeler should be congratulated for compiling a beautifully illustrated and undeniably useful book on the guitar's history and development in the United States.

Conceived as a reference book, *American Guitars* is arranged alphabetically, with information on each maker under that maker's personal or trade name (the text is extensively cross-indexed). Although the author is a bit weak on nineteenth-century material, the book contains a wealth of information on that most influential American instrument, the electric guitar. The electric guitar has received little or no attention from organologists, and, although it has been a mainstay of many forms of American music for almost fifty years, few museums contain examples of electric guitars in their collections. This book, which provides us with a history of the electric guitar's development as well as means for identifying and dating various models, will be a useful and worthwhile addition to a library's collection on organology.

American Guitars is a pioneering attempt to provide serious documentation for an instrument whose history is largely preserved through rumor and orally transmitted lore—often unhindered by facts—passed from one guitar player to another. Although Wheeler does not footnote his entries, he makes scholarly use of company records, trade histories, patent documents, and price sheets, and is usually clear about where he has obtained his information. The author should be commended for his frequent and successful use of oral history and transcribed interviews with such major figures associated with the development of American guitars as Leo Fender, Les Paul, Fred Gretsch, Adolph Rickenbacker, and John Dopyera. The importance of these leaders of the first generation of electric-guitar makers should not be underestimated. (After all, what would we give now for interviews with the earliest piano makers?) Wheeler's interviews and detailed descriptions fill a notable void in our literature.

American Guitars is a more focused, and for the organologist more useful publication than Wheeler's earlier *The Guitar Book: A Handbook for Electric & Acoustic Guitars*.¹ Like his earlier book, *American Guitars* is aimed at guitarists and guitar enthusiasts rather than scholars. There is some overlap between the two books, although most of the shared articles have been revised and expanded. But whereas the earlier book tried to cover all aspects of the guitar's history and present use, including chords and accessories, the latest book remains centered on guitar-making firms and their contributions.

1. Tom Wheeler, *The Guitar Book: A Handbook for Electric & Acoustic Guitars* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).

My major criticism of the book is the uneven length of its entries. Small firms often receive only two or three sentences, while a major firm like Fender receives fifty pages. (Perhaps this unevenness is inevitable, owing to varying quantities of primary data.) Curiously, the Fender entry is a reprint of an article, made from an interview, that previously appeared in *Guitar Player* magazine; and a short appendix listing a "few particularly interesting patent documents" appears to have been tacked on as a subjectively selected afterthought. Despite these lapses, the book accomplishes its stated goals by providing the reader with a readable year-by-year description of the history and development of the modern American guitar.

The volume is lavishly illustrated: all but three or four of the more than sixty instrument makers' entries are accompanied by photographs. In addition to detailed photographs of the instruments themselves, Wheeler provides us with a wonderful collection of illustrations showing the history, use, and manufacture of guitars. Photographs of makers at work, factory buildings, and unusual advertising materials, as well as patent drawings, movie clips containing guitars, and serial-number charts all enliven the text. (My favorite illustration is a reproduction of a chart showing the custom colors in which 1960 Fender electric guitars could be obtained; selections include "Lake Placid Blue Metallic," "Foam Green," "Surf Green," and "Fiesta Red.")

Wheeler's *American Guitars* certainly constitutes one of the largest collections of guitar-related material presently assembled in a single book. Despite its popular tone and some unevenness in its text, *American Guitars* provides scholars with enough solid information and visual documentation to recommend it as a much-needed roadmap through the wilderness of the modern American world of guitars.

NANCY GROCE

William Waterhouse. *The Proud Bassoon*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, 1983. 51 pp.; 15 black-and-white plates. £5 (plus £1 overseas postage; prepaid orders in £ sterling only, from Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments, Reid Concert Hall, Bristo Square, Edinburgh EH8 9AG, Scotland).

This catalog was designed as an accompaniment to the Edinburgh International Festival 1983 Exhibition showing the development of the bassoon over the centuries and featuring the William Waterhouse Collection of bassoons and related items. The exhibition, mounted at the Edinburgh Uni-