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Patrizio Barbieri. *Acustica, accordatura e temperamento nell' illuminismo Veneto*. Pubblicazioni del Corso Superiore di Paleografia e Semiografia musicale dall'Umanesimo al Barocco. Serie I: Studi e testi, vol. 5. Rome: Edizioni Torre d'Orfeo, 1987. ix, 383, 264 pp.; 95 black-and-white illustrations, 15 tables, 8 musical examples. Lire it. 60,000.

The first impression received upon reading this book is that the title does not adequately reflect its contents. Originally conceived as an edition of two unpublished works by the eighteenth-century acousticians Alessandro Barca and Giordano Riccati, to be preceded by a short introduction, Barbieri's book has been changed by seven years of gestation into a work of near monumental proportions. In the first part of this two-part volume there are sections on Riccati, on Barca, and—with many sub-sections—on temperament during the Enlightenment (a discussion not confined to the Veneto, but extending to the rest of Europe as well). The second part includes unpublished writings of Riccati (a theoretical work and selected letters), of Barca, and a group of twelve practical treatises on the tuning of keyboard instruments. Some of the sections and subsections include separate appendices and bibliographies: to analytical indexes are provided, one for each of the major divisions of the book. I do not wish to limit my review to a mere description of the contents of the book, but I do hope that the reader will get a feeling for the tremendous, and sometimes unnecessary, complexity of this work. The drawn-out research and writing process has, in this case, resulted in a book which is too much a patchwork. To give but one example, the unpublished tuning treatises transcribed at the end of this volume date from 1657 to ca. 1830 (thus stretching somewhat the chronological boundaries of the title) and in many cases originated outside the Veneto, or even the Venetian sphere of influence. A trivial but telling example of completely unnecessary complication is the use of two separate pagination sequences (one with an asterisk attached to each number), where a single unbroken sequence would have been more logical and easier to use.

I am probably sounding overzealous in my criticism, but it is actually with some regret that I mention the shortcomings of the book, since it holds much that is interesting even to the uninitiated. First, there is a thorough discussion of the work of two of the foremost Italian acousticians. Alessandro Barca (1741–1814) was for many years professor of canon law at the University of Padua, but his real interest was in the sciences, leading him to seek (among other things) a comprehensive musical theoretical sys-

tem based on solid scientific grounds. More important than Barca, however, is Count Giordano Riccati (1709–1790), a mathematician and theorist who also taught physics and architecture, and had several distinguished music students. Of particular interest for music scholars is the correspondence kept by Riccati with other musicians, especially his letters to Francesco Antonio Vallotti (1697–1780), praised by Tartini as the best organist of his time. The many letters by Vallotti and Riccati published in this book provide a link between Riccati and Tartini, as Vallotti often mentions discussing theoretical points about tuning with Tartini prior to replying to Riccati's questions. Also of great interest for the practical applications of acoustical theory is the information on Riccati's activities as architect. Documents published for the first time in this book prove that Riccati designed the plans for the organ loft of the church of Sant'Andrea in Riva, Treviso, according to theoretical calculations, meant to place the organ in an acoustically optimal location. Similar juicy morsels appear throughout the book, but the author does not always follow through; often we are left wanting more information on the actual, practical influence of Riccati's and Barca's work on contemporary musicians, and less mathematical formulas and computations. On the other hand, Barbieri shows great thoroughness in his work, especially in the annotated bibliographies, which are much more complete than any of those found in previous works on Riccati or Barca, and in his indexes. I would have preferred a single bibliography (perhaps divided into subsections) and a single index, but the format adopted by the author does present all information in a fairly accessible manner.

In conclusion, in spite of its flaws, this book will be of interest not only to scholars specializing in the history of acoustical theory, but also to performers and builders of early keyboard instruments wishing to experiment with early tuning and temperament. Barbieri displays a tremendous amount of knowledge on his subject and a great command of his sources, but this might be a case when less could have been more.

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