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change his mind, as many other professional players seem to have done.

Because this volume's new documents shed so much light on their subject, its careless preparation is all the more regrettable. The papers reproduced in facsimile, together with the photographs of instruments, justify the book's price, but the material set in type falls far below acceptable standards. It deserved better.

ARDAL POWELL

FOLKERS & POWELL, MAKERS OF HISTORICAL FLUTES
HUDSON, NEW YORK

David Lasocki, with Roger Prior. *The Bassanos: Venetian Musicians and Instrument Makers in England, 1531–1665*. Aldershot, Hants., England: Scholar Press; Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1995. xxxvi, 288 pp.: 2 black-and-white photos, 7 black-and-white drawings, 8 tables, 5 musical examples. ISBN: 0-85967-943-8. \$67.95.

Among the many musical dynasties of the Renaissance and Baroque, the Bassano family stands out for the sheer number and importance of its members, and for its influence on the musical life of England and Italy. The researcher interested in writing the history of such a numerous family faces some very daunting obstacles: simply tracing family relationships sometimes can be nearly impossible, as names recur from generation to generation, and court or church scribes fail to distinguish between individuals with similar names. The tendency to use only the first names of individuals in official records also clouds the picture: when one finds a reference to a "Zuane musico" in a sixteenth-century Italian document, for instance, that name could usually refer to anyone of a half-dozen similarly named musicians in town.

In the case of the Bassanos, researchers have despaired at times of ever being able to disentangle the complex family tree, and thus to gain a clearer picture of the family's activities. Progress in that direction has been slow, incremental, and often due to pure serendipity. This is true for my own research: I have found a couple of documents about the Bassano family in Venetian archives while looking in notary records for something quite different. David Lasocki, however, has taken giant strides towards a complete reconstruction of the activities of the English Bassanos through his own skillful, methodical, and detailed research.

This book collects the fruits of nearly twenty years of work on this and related subjects; part of it is based on Lasocki's doctoral dissertation, "Professional Recorder Players in England, 1540–1740" (University of Iowa, 1983), but the finished product is much more than that.

The book is divided into four parts, plus two short appendices—one dealing with the English Bassanos after 1665, the other summarizing the information known about Jacomo Bassano and the Venetian branch of the family up to the early seventeenth century. The four main parts are of uneven length: Part II, on Emilia Bassano (1569–1645) and her possible identification with the "dark lady" of Shakespeare's sonnets, and Part IV—"Conclusions"—are much shorter than the rest. The first part of the book deals primarily with a chronological history of the Bassano family, while Part III discusses their musical affairs, the court performances, and their activities as composers and instrument makers. The co-author of the book, Roger Prior, is mainly responsible for a chapter that is sure to be controversial, on the religious identity of the Bassanos, and for the chapter on Emilia Bassano; he also co-authored the section on the family's coat of arms. For those who are primarily interested in the discussion of music at court and in the musical activities of the Bassano family, David Lasocki suggests skipping Part I, using instead, as quick reference to family relationships, a short biographical dictionary and family tree found on pp. xxiii–xxx of the introduction. A large section of Part I is in fact taken up by what amounts to a chronological biographical dictionary of the family. The detail of information contained in this section is simply extraordinary, and I doubt that anyone else could add anything of substance to the documents found by Lasocki. On the other hand, I think that this section might be hard to read for all but the most dedicated document lovers, such as I am, and many readers will undoubtedly be thankful for the abbreviated dictionary provided in the introduction. If I have one criticism of this section it is, in fact, that much information seems to have been included primarily because it was available: a more critical approach might have resulted in some trimming without leaving out anything of substance. On pp. 39–40, for instance, while outlining the life of Andrea Bassano (1554–1626), Lasocki spends over a page on details of Andrea's lease of a manor and lands in Surrey. While it is interesting to know that the property still exists (a photograph of the manor house is included), and while some of the details of the lease are fascinating, others, such as the exact lease payments in agricultural products, are

perhaps unnecessary. The tendency to provide such details whenever available quickly becomes tiring for the reader, while adding little to our knowledge of the Bassanos' biography or of their musical activities.

The most controversial section of Part I, and perhaps of the entire book, is a chapter on the Jewish identity of the Bassanos. I must say I am not entirely convinced of their Jewishness, even though Prior and Lasocki present some tantalizing evidence. This is not the place for a complete discussion of this subject, but I think, for instance, that statements like "a Christian who called himself Bassano in sixteenth-century Venice would certainly have run the risk of being thought a converted Jew" (p. 92), do overstate the case. Still, this is a fascinating subject and perhaps the controversy could be resolved by more discoveries in Italian archives.

Part III ("Musical Affairs"), with its chapters on performing, composing, and instrument making and repairing, holds much interesting information. I do find, though, that some of the problems of Part I resurface here: a lot of the information provided in the main body could have been relegated to footnotes, leaving a more fluid narration. Often what ought to be a mere passing reference ends up taking much space without noticeably enhancing the main discussion. A good example of this can be found on p. 153, where the innocent statement "[Queen] Elizabeth was herself a keen dancer," is followed by four quotes from contemporaries, confirming the queen's love of dance. I would think that the prospective audience for such a detailed study of the Bassano family would know enough about the period to be familiar with some of the facts and terms that are often explained and discussed in the main narration.

The topics of Part III are extremely interesting, and, unfairly, I wish that Lasocki had written more about music at court. His choice to focus on that part of the musical activities that involved (or might have involved) the Bassanos is an obvious one, and I am not criticizing it. Rather, I could not help thinking about all the additional information about musical life at court that Lasocki must have at his fingertips, and I am hoping that he will share it with us in his next book.

Having said all this, I think this book is extremely valuable as a source of information on the Bassanos and on music in Renaissance and Baroque London. The amount of work done by the authors, especially by Lasocki, is simply astounding, and I am certain that this book will be the

standard work on the English Bassanos for a long time. The importance of the Bassano family in English musical life means that no one who is interested in the broader subject can afford to ignore this important contribution.

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Richard Griscom and David Lasocki. *The Recorder: A Guide to Writings about the Instrument for Players and Researchers.* (Music Research and Information Guides, Vol. 19) New York: Garland, 1994. xx, 504 pp. ISBN: 0-8240-2945-3. \$70.00

David Lasocki is a well-known researcher on the recorder, having written a fine dissertation ("Professional Recorder Players in England, 1540–1740" [University of Iowa, 1983]) and published numerous articles, including a series of bibliographical essays appearing in *The American Recorder*. Richard Griscom is a more recent student of the recorder and its literature who decided to undertake a bibliography of writings on the subject. Fortunately, Griscom and Lasocki learned that both were engaged on the same project, and they joined forces. They also found a collaborator in John Martin, who contributed a brief essay on "Acoustics and the Recorder" and shared responsibility for the section covering acoustics and other scientific studies. The end result is this remarkable survey, which is essential for anyone interested in the recorder.

At the outset the writers define their book as "a guide to writings about the recorder for players and researchers" and limit it to "what is relevant, what is significant, and what is readily available in the United States." They have omitted all writings on the recorder in education, modern recorder methods, and articles in other than specialized recorder magazines. They have attempted to be comprehensive in their coverage of English-language materials from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia, and have indexed the major recorder periodicals of France, Germany, and Italy, but have generally excluded materials in Dutch and other languages. Their coverage includes articles published in major periodicals through 1993.

The book is organized into thirty-three chapters, which are further sub-divided, followed by four appendixes and an index. Each item in