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Paul Sparks. *The Classical Mandolin*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. xiv, 225 pp.: 27 black-and-white illustrations, 17 music examples. ISBN: 0-19-81629-5. \$44.95.

Paul Sparks's advocacy of the "much-misunderstood and frequently denigrated" (p. v) mandolin began with his 1989 doctoral dissertation ("A History of the Neapolitan Mandoline from its Origins until the Early Nineteenth Century" [Ph.D. diss., City University, London, 1989]), and continued with *The Early Mandolin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), written jointly with James Tyler. *The Classical Mandolin* extends this chronicle from 1815 until the present. Although it has been tremendously popular at certain periods during its 400 years of existence, especially with amateurs and folk musicians, the mandolin has not yet achieved wide acceptance as a serious instrument in the music establishment. The study of the mandolin was added to the curriculum at the Conservatoire National in Marseilles from 1922–1940 and is presently offered at Trinity College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music in London. Volumes of mandolin music have been published, including chamber music and parts in orchestral and operatic works by such composers as Verdi, Mahler, Webern, Massenet, Respighi, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Del Tredici, and Crumb, but the mandolin still does not enjoy the status of a solo instrument such as the piano or guitar, nor is it a standard instrument in the chamber music or orchestral repertoire. Sparks argues quite convincingly, however, that the recorded performances and compositions of the mandolin recitalists who flourished until World War I "are of lasting worth, and deserve to be better known" (p. v).

Neither the four-course mandoline later known as the Neapolitan mandolin nor the six-course mandolino which evolved into the single-strung Milanese mandolin could meet the demands of the large concert halls built during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. By mid-century, both were virtually forgotten by music audiences. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, the mandolin retained its popularity with Italian street musicians, and an adapted Neapolitan mandolin originally designed by Pasquale Vinaccia around 1835 began to gain ground with serious musicians during the second half of the century. In order to produce the louder sound and extended range demanded by the Romantic composers, Vinaccia made a number of changes to the Neapolitan mandolin. He raised the fingerboard and

increased the number of frets to seventeen, replaced the quill with a tortoiseshell plectrum, and increased the depth of the bowl. He also added machine heads for tuning and increased the size, weight and strength of the body, which allowed the use of the new steel strings. This design, with some modifications, is still standard for the European mandolin.

The mandolin had powerful and tireless protagonists during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Carlo Munier of Florence “dedicated the whole of his active life to the purpose of raising and ennobling the mandolin and plectrum instruments in general” (Giorgio Lorenzi, *Musica moderna*, 31 Oct. 1909, as quoted by Sparks, p. 59). In 1892 when the Primo concorso nazionale mandolinistico, “the first-ever national competition for mandolin soloists, quartets, and orchestras” (p. 50), took place in Genoa, most of the major Italian towns were represented by virtuoso performers as well as groups of amateur players (*circoli*) led by professional teachers and players. Ten years later, the mandolin was “one of the most widely played musical instruments in many of Europe’s major cities” (p. 86). To a lesser extent this was also true in other parts of the world, particularly in the USA with its large communities of Italian immigrants. Interest in the USA ebbed after World War I, although the mandolin is still a standard instrument in bluegrass music.

The main body of *The Classical Mandolin* is organized chronologically and geographically, giving most attention understandably to the metropolitan centers in Italy. The last chapter contains “Practical Information for Players and Composers,” which though reminiscent of the similar chapter in Sparks’s earlier book, is qualified here as “*not* intended to serve as a tutor for the instrument” (p. 183). This chapter concludes with the addresses of major journals, societies, publishers, makers, and suppliers. The appendix is a selective glossary of related instruments mostly from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the *Banjolin* whose “main purpose was to strum chords in dance bands during the ragtime era” (p. 205). The bibliography, which includes a list of periodicals consulted, is valuable not only for references to the mandolin but also for a choice selection of readings relevant to the musical life of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The index is particularly useful for names of individuals, including dates, and as an alternative approach to the subject matter in addition to the chronological arrangement of the book, since it includes references to the instruments of the mandolin

family and mandolin journals only for sections in which the instruments or journals are discussed in some detail. The obvious care given to the preparation of the index, which is on the other end of the scale from a machine-generated keyword index, is also reflected in the author's style of writing throughout the book. Sparks gives an excellent and readable account of the makers, leading players, composers and their music, journals, mandolin orchestras, organizations, and phenomenal popularity of the mandolin during its heyday. Anyone concerned with the history of plucked musical instruments or with the history of music in the nineteenth century will want to consult this sequel to *The Early Mandolin*.

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Edwin Buijsen and Louis Peter Grijp, et al. *The Hoogsteder Exhibition of Music and Painting in the Golden Age*. The Hague: Hoogsteder & Hoogsteder; Zwolle: Wanders, 1994. 388 pp.: ill. ISBN: 90-6630-468-5 (Catalogue); ISBN: 90-6630-470-7 (Catalogue, CD and Photo CD). Dfl. 130.

This superbly produced book was initially conceived by Hoogsteder and Hoogsteder, art dealers located in a historic house at Lange Vijverberg 15, The Hague, as a catalogue for a special exhibition of forty-seven paintings: thirty-three from private collections (of which twenty-five, not identified, were for sale), plus six from The Hague's Gemeentemuseum, five from the Bredius Museum in The Hague, two from the Boymans-van-Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, and one from Centraal Museum Utrecht. A great many people, including representatives of these museums, contributed to the organization of the exhibition and catalogue. Several historic instruments, including keyboards by members of the Ruckers family, were loaned from the Gemeentemuseum for the exhibit at Hoogsteder and Hoogsteder from May 11 to July 10, 1994, and from the Vleeshuis Museum in Antwerp when the exhibition was shown in that city at the Hessenhuis from July 29 to October 30, 1994. In addition to the large (10" × 11¼") catalogue, a special CD and photo-CD were produced on the Philips Classics label, "Jacob van Eyck and Dutch Songs of the Golden Age," with performances by Camerata Trajectina, but only the book was sent for review.

This volume makes a handsome book for one's coffee table, but it is much more than that, containing a wealth of scholarship and over two hundred excellent illustrations. Many of the forty-seven marvelous