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***The Keyed Flute by Johann George Tromlitz.* [Translated and] Edited by Ardal Powell. Oxford Early Music Series, 17. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 268 pp.: 6 black-and-white photographs, 4 graphs, 2 facsim., 2 black-and-white drawings. ISBN 0-19-816462-9. \$72.00.**

For reasons about which we can only speculate, the esteemed and accomplished flutist Johann George Tromlitz (1725–1805) abandoned regular professional appearances in 1776. Tromlitz had enjoyed success as a member of the Leipzig Grosses Konzert (later to become the Gewandhaus Orchestra) and as a touring virtuoso. It is for work following his performing career, however, that he is best known and most relevant today. His thirty-year retirement from the concert stage was devoted to studying nearly every aspect of the flute, including design, manufacture, performance technique, and style. A builder of distinction, Tromlitz's instruments were elegant and innovative. His encyclopedic theoretical and practical writing on the flute comprises three volumes: *Kurze Abhandlung vom Flötenspielen* (*Brief Discourse on Flute-Playing*, 1786), *Ausführlicher und gründlicher Unterricht die Flöte zu spielen* (*Detailed and Thorough Instructor for Playing the Flute*, 1791), and *Über die Flöten mit mehreren Klappen* (*The Keyed Flute*, 1800). While the *Abhandlung* is a brief yet general essay, the two later volumes are detailed technical pedagogical treatises that Tromlitz himself considered one extended work. The *Unterricht* looks back toward Quantz's *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (*Essay on Playing the Transverse Flute*, 1752) and serves to codify prevailing technique and performance practice. *Über die Flöten mit mehreren Klappen* looks forward in light of recent technical developments and even adumbrates elements of the pedagogical style of Charles Nicholson's *School for the Flute* (1836).

Flutist, flutemaker, and historian Ardal Powell has already published a translation of the *Unterricht* as *The Virtuoso Flute-Player* (Cambridge University Press, 1991). Now he has translated *Über die Flöten mit mehreren Klappen* as *The Keyed Flute*, the subject of this review. While the former was essentially limited to a (very good) footnoted translation of Tromlitz's text with an equally good introduction by flutist/scholar Eileen Hadidian, *The Keyed Flute* includes not only the translation but also nearly 150 pages of extensive yet economically presented commentary and appendices, which together total more than half the book.

Introducing the book is a discussion of terminology, an extremely useful tool that addresses the needs of a diverse readership. What might

have been an esoteric monograph aimed at a handful of specialists is, instead, an informative guide for all flutists as well as students of aesthetics, musicology, general organology, and semiotics. Then follow three essays that explore the social, economic, political, technological, aesthetic, and interpersonal milieu of the flute in eighteenth-century Europe. The first of these, "The Flute Market," is a well-researched and cogent survey of the social and economic context in which flutes were designed, produced, sold, and played. Here, as elsewhere, Powell gives us enlightening and entertaining quotations from primary sources of the period.

In the second essay, "Aspects of Flute-playing," Powell draws on his command of flute technique to provide an informative overview of the more technical aspects of flute playing. I do not believe, however, that the non-Tromlitz keyed flutes from the late eighteenth century contributed to the demise of inequivalent enharmonic playing, as Powell implies. Any competent player of early keyed flutes will distinguish differences between enharmonic pitches.

In the third essay, "The Tromlitz Flute," Powell makes or clarifies a number of important points that have often been overlooked or widely misunderstood by scholars. For example, he points out that execution, even of the most convoluted and chromatic passage work, should not present significant problems to the competent advanced flutist when playing on an appropriate and well-made one-keyed flute. This essay becomes a sort of "Origin of the Species," tracing the elements of flute design that soon became the characteristics of the national style of flutes as they evolved in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. By bringing to light Tromlitz's development of, and preferences for, the "open D# low E," Powell defines the moment from which the Viennese, English, and French ideals of flute aesthetics diverge, to remain distinct even into the twentieth century. Concluding the essays, Powell muses about whether or not Tromlitz's contributions could be bettered. While Tromlitz's solutions are unsurpassed for particular problems as he chose to confront, define, and articulate them, the same can be said of a number of other flute makers, from Charles Nicholson in the early nineteenth century to Albert Cooper in the late twentieth century.

Then follows Tromlitz's treatise, which he wrote to convince readers that his eight-keyed flute was superior to all others—that only on this flute could they "perform everything correctly and in tune, even in the remotest keys" (p. 69). To that end, Tromlitz includes lengthy and detailed chapters on playing scales and trills on the eight-keyed flute, as

well as discussing the tuning considerations that led to the addition of various keys. Powell's translation of the treatise itself reads well. Rarely are technical texts in German so neatly yet comfortably rendered into enjoyable English. Tromlitz's own style, however, is another matter entirely. His whining, carping, and caviling are at first amusing but soon become enervating. I disagree with the translator that it was Tromlitz's efforts to express himself with precision on ineffable topics that resulted in his verbosity. Tromlitz's chronic defensiveness may have been symptomatic of a subconscious reaction to the rise of the bourgeois amateur flutist in light of the populist political movements in France and America. Or it may have been the quixotic inveighing of an old grump tilting at windbags. Tromlitz was evidently not influenced by his exact contemporary, the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), whose struggles with the ineffable were far less vitriolic.

After the treatise itself come six appendices, a register of instruments cited, a bibliography, a list of sources, and an index. The appendices provide admirable depth and breadth: Powell's use of primary material from both organological and literary sources is particularly laudable. Too many English-speaking writers on flute history rely on late nineteenth-century sources (especially Richard Shepherd Rockstro) for information on the development of the flute before Boehm. Although his work on flute history is an invaluable resource, Rockstro's *A Treatise on the Construction the History and the Practice of the Flute* (London, 1890) represents research and conclusions of only one highly opinionated amateur. A sad comment on the state of flute history is that Rockstro's views are held in nearly scriptural esteem and are shamelessly recycled by some of our most widely distributed flute historians. In one rare instance Powell cites Rockstro's affirmation of Tromlitz, and avers that Rockstro had "no ax to grind." It seems to me that Rockstro was undue in his opinions (e.g., his hagiography of Jenny Lind or his vicious telling of the Boehm-Gordon controversy) and took to gratuitous ax-grinding with gusto. It is refreshing that Powell has, for the most part, chosen to look beyond Rockstro and similar sources.

The first appendix discusses flute making from 1750 to 1850 and consists of sections covering London, France, Germany, Vienna, Italy, and the Tromlitz workshop. Powell's observations are thoughtful and detailed, and rely on an ample number of specimens. What makes for compelling reading here is that, in addition to his presentation of evidence concerning flute making, Powell demonstrates his keen process of observation and analysis. In his discussion of flute making in London,

however, I do find at least one of his conclusions troublesome. Powell argues that the flute *US-MA Cambridge: Straus*, which he attributes to John Just Schuchart, is the earliest extant “keyed flute” from England (or anywhere), and he discusses the development of flute design as having flowed from this prototype. Based on its stamp of “Schuchart/Senior” Powell dates the instrument to the period 1753–58, when both John and his son Charles were in business. The instrument, however, exhibits all the characteristics of a high-quality flute of fully thirty years later. That something this advanced should have appeared, fully developed, in the 1750s seems unlikely, especially since there is no instrument like it extant (in whole, in part, or in ephemeral evidence) until a flute made by Caleb Gedney in 1769, now at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which exhibits some but not all of the “Schuchart/Senior” flute’s innovations. Powell contends that it is unlikely that the Schuchart flute in question is a forgery, but it is not uncommon to see flutes stamped by makers who could not possibly have produced the instruments. In some cases, instruments of inferior manufacture were clearly made as counterfeit; in others, where the quality of the spurious instrument is unquestionably high, the stamp of the apostate maker may have been added in tribute to esteemed forebears, particularly when the stamp, tools, and goodwill of a deceased maker had passed into the hands of an admiring successor.

The material concerning London makers concludes with a survey of dated instruments from the Potter workshop. Powell concludes that its fame was due more to marketing than to the quality of its flutes. Given the firm’s prodigious output, there may be some truth to this when considering Potter flutes in the aggregate, but such disparagement is misleading. A more balanced assessment can be arrived at by considering one of the cited sources, David Shorey’s “History and Buying Guide of Potter Flutes.” Following a concise overview of flute making in France, the section on Germany gives informative details of extant work from Saxon makers (Crone, the Grenser dynasty, et al.) and those from elsewhere (Kirst, Boie, et al.). At this point I found that the detailed prose concerning such an abundance of instruments was overwhelming and confusing, at least partly because of a lack of illustrations. Although the (very few) bore graphs are informative, more of them, as well as line drawings and high-quality photographs, would have been a welcome addition throughout this appendix.

The remaining appendices are elegant translations of related writings, beginning with a fine translation of a 1796 pamphlet by Tromlitz, in which he introduces his eight-keyed system for the flute and defends

himself against an apparently hostile world with his usual self-esteem and sense of omniscience. Heinrich Grenser's critique of *The Keyed Flute* is a remarkably levelheaded, wise, and thoughtful reply in the face of a fellow traveler's asperity and rancor. An essay by Johann Heinrich Liebeskind obliquely critiques the aesthetics of, then cites the acoustical studies of, Rousseau. Then follows an exchange between A. André, A. E. Müller, and Tromlitz, in which the aesthetics of flute playing are graciously discussed. Of note are André's observations concerning the raised leading tone and Tromlitz's uncharacteristic civility. The final appendix is from H. W. T. Pottgiesser's critique of Quantz's enharmonic keys for D# and Eb. In the end praxis reigns over theory.

In conclusion, Powell provides both practical and theoretical material of great use to historians, musicians, and organologists. Tromlitz's treatise becomes a vehicle for Powell to write about the flute in the eighteenth century, something that he does extremely well, even brilliantly. Despite some shortcomings, his discussion of the treatise is, I believe, even more important than his fine translation of the treatise itself.

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Bernard Brauchli, Susan Brauchli, and Alberto Galazzo, editors. *De Clavichordio II: Proceedings of the International Clavichord Symposium = Atti del Congresso Internazionale sul Clavicordo: Magnano, 21–23 September 1995.* Magnano: Musica Antica a Magnano, 1995. 274 pp.: 12 plates. 90,000 Lit.

The first International Clavichord Symposium in Magnano in 1993 established that picturesque little village in the foothills of the Italian Alps as the Mount Parnassus of the clavichord. A second conference followed in 1995, and the third will have occurred by the time this review appears in print. The brainchild of Bernard Brauchli and Christopher Hogwood, the congresses have focused world-wide attention on an instrument hitherto considered something of a stepchild in the early keyboard world—but stepchild no more. The clavichord now has societies devoted to it in six countries (England, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Switzerland, and the U.S.), as well as a periodical, *Clavichord International*. It also has *De Clavichordio*, the *Proceedings* of the Magnano conferences. The second of these, the subject of this