

*Journal of the
American Musical
Instrument Society*

VOLUME XXVI • 2000



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text. Representative examples are “kerken” (church, p. 10), “ander” (other, p. 11), “so he dar tho gebruket, de tydt auer, so he darauer is” (everything he needs during the time he is here, p. 13), “tho lone” (as payment, p. 13), “nigehoff” (the builder’s surname, p. 14), and “swaren” (directors, p. 18).

The statement of editorial policy does not indicate that the translators made any changes or corrections to Fock’s quotations of the original German documents. Therefore, I assume that discrepancies in this material between the German as it appeared in the 1939 article and as given in the present monograph are the result of the editors’ mistranscription. Among other variants, the word “außgegangen” is rendered as “aufgegangen” (p. 66), “weswegen” becomes “wesegen” (p. 76), and the word “ein” is omitted (p. 64). While such errors are not numerous and in most cases do not materially affect the meaning, they introduce possible confusion into a text that should have been absolutely faithful to the original document.

In conclusion, *Hamburg’s Role in Northern European Organ Building* has long been recognized as a seminal resource for scholars and organ builders interested in preserving and furthering the magnificent heritage of the North German Baroque organ. Minor flaws notwithstanding, this annotated English translation enhances the original work and makes Fock’s significant study available to a much wider readership.

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Alain Corbin. *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th-Century French Countryside.* Translated by Martin Thom. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998. xx, 416 pp.: 1 map, 1 table. ISBN: 0-231-10450-2. \$35.00 (cloth).

The distinguished Sorbonne historian Alain Corbin, author of innovative studies of French popular culture, here brilliantly elucidates the role of bells, which once dominated rural France’s “auditory landscape.” Tightly regulated by law and tradition, bell ringing served many purposes: bells called people to worship and to arms, warned of danger, warded off evil, celebrated festivities, honored celebrities, tolled deaths, and organized daily activities by marking the passage of time, a function later usurped by clocks, which were rare in the nineteenth-century countryside.

Village bells, most of them hung in church towers, were costly, venerable objects, a focus of great local pride and repository of communal identity. Many bore the names of saints or memorialized prominent donors. Yet most rural towers held too few bells to play tuneful music in the manner of a carillon. Rather, they communicated succinct messages; we may speak more properly of their language than of their repertoire. Each individual bell, recognized by its distinctive voice, often had a specific task and symbolic value in addition to being part of a peal. The Angelus bell, for example, invited people to prayer morning and evening and in many places at midday as well; its matinal ringing consecrated the day, recalling the Annunciation and Christ's rising, while at twilight, a foreboding time, it evoked Christ's death and the final end of days.

As Corbin makes clear, church bells asserted ecclesiastical authority and enjoined religious discipline aimed at enforcing social morality. With rising secularism these functions became increasingly controversial, to say the least. In a map of civil bells in use from 1884 to 1886, Corbin locates, among others, election bells, grape harvest bells, school bells, curfew bells, retreat bells, bells announcing meals and rest, firewood collections, auctions, recruitment, animal herding, council meetings, and the arrival of the tax collector. So many signals, which varied from place to place, could be confusing and upsetting; for example, antagonisms arose over whether the secular curfew bell or the Angelus bell should have the "last word" of the day. In any event, these bells conveyed information over a wide area to the entire populace within earshot and structured the community's life to a degree inconceivable today. Whoever governed the bells held considerable power, so bell towers were jealously guarded.

Drawing extensively on contemporary accounts, Corbin shows that control over rural bells was hotly contested after the French Revolution, as the First Republic challenged the autonomy of church authorities and began the tempestuous process of secularizing objects that had long been sanctified by ritual and custom. Napoleon, who "loved the sound of bells above all else" (p. 150), decreed that all the bells of a commune should ring whenever he entered its territory, thus reviving the honorific use of bells that had been curtailed during the Revolution. Regardless of widespread resentment, politicians and bureaucrats increasingly preempted church bells and thus disrupted the social order that they signified. Denied their use for religious purposes, angry villagers sometimes

reacted violently and were forcibly suppressed. Priests clashed with mayors, militia battled peasants, and proponents of standardized "official" time-keeping confronted bell ringers whose schedules varied with the seasons and the liturgical calendar. Punishment for illegal or provocative ringing included sealing towers or, in extreme cases, confiscating and relocating or melting down bells that had embodied the identity of a village, demoralizing its inhabitants and engendering deep hostilities.

As the century progressed through the Restoration and the July Monarchy, religious use of bells resumed to some extent, and many decimated peals were reconstituted under a regime nostalgic for the old order. Corbin's tabulation of bells cast in four districts during the year in which each regime fell shows healthy recovery in Moselle and Isère during the period 1815–1848 followed by a considerable slow-down during the Second and Third Republics, when efforts to regulate and standardize ringing continued. By one estimate, the number of bell towers declined by about fifteen thousand (or one-quarter) during the nineteenth century, even as the quality of bells improved. Across the countryside, however, the suppression and revival of ringing occurred irregularly in response to particular conditions, and Corbin is careful not to construct an oversimplified history heavily reliant on statistics. On the contrary, his text (admirably translated and thoroughly annotated) quotes generously from narratives that vividly document the practical and folkloric significance of provincial bells and the intense, localized struggles to control them.

For example, Corbin's sources tell of a bloody battle in Labrousse (Cantal) in 1831 over the ringing of bells to avert dangerous thunderstorms, a practice that survived at least to the end of the century. Instances like this demonstrate a strongly held "belief in the prophylactic properties of bronze" (p. 107), despite governmental and scientific efforts to debunk such notions. Indeed, bells cast late in the nineteenth century still occasionally bore inscriptions such as *Fugo fulmina* ("I drive away thunderbolts"). Consecrated bells were also widely believed to possess therapeutic and apotropaic properties and were closely bound up with the cult of saints. As temporal markers these bells "privileged" certain moments and thereby sustained a sense of what Corbin calls "qualitative time," as opposed to the purely quantitative, value-neutral time measured by clocks.

Corbin assumes familiarity with French geography and political history, and he hardly mentions bell founding and acoustics, subjects amply

discussed elsewhere. Among the few slips is “Jarart” for “Jadart” (p. 392). The importance of this book lies in its emphasis on meaning; Corbin shows why village bells mattered so deeply, and he reveals a world organized by sound to an extent that we can scarcely imagine.

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THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Alfred Planyavsky. *The Baroque Double Bass Violone*. Translated by James Barket. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998. xvi, 197 pp.: 58 figures, 2 tables. ISBN: 0-8108-3448-0. \$55.00 (cloth).

In the past, the history of the double bass has been called a mystery. Perhaps for this reason, only a small number of scholars have attempted to sort out the instrument's complex development. Even fewer have dedicated themselves to rediscovering its history as a means of encouraging performers and ensemble directors, as well as music editors and publishers, to give more authentic performances of early music. Alfred Planyavsky, in *The Baroque Double Bass Violone*, has committed himself to doing precisely that, arguing that the largest of stringed instruments was not simply a doubling instrument used strictly for orchestral purposes but a welcome participant in chamber music settings as well. Examining the earlier incarnations of the double bass as a late Renaissance and Baroque instrument, Planyavsky approaches the problem with careful consideration of primary sources in addition to drawing on his experience as a baroque violone player. The result is a lively—although at times unfocused—discussion that is bound to have an effect on the reception of early stringed bass instruments in performance.

The Baroque Double Bass Violone is a translation of Planyavsky's *Der Barockkontrabaß Violone* (Vienna: Kontrabaßarchiv, 1989), itself an elaboration on the early chapters of his colossal *Die Geschichte des Kontrabasses* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1970; 2nd edition, 1984). With the exception of a few articles translated and published in the *Journal of the International Society of Double Bassists*, Planyavsky's work has rarely been encountered by the English-speaking world, thus James Barket's efforts in preparing this serviceable translation are to be applauded.

From the title itself, it appears that Planyavsky's goal is to prove that the violone was an earlier version of the double bass. For those who may outright disagree with his premise—that the violone is the predecessor