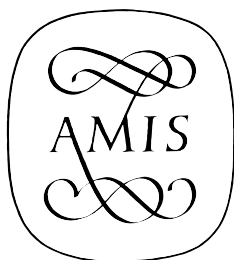


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has she written about the baroque oboe, but also she has measured (and executed a drawing of) Haynes' oboe by Naust! Additionally, he might wish to expand the list of works he cites by Anthony Baines, adding in particular *European and American Musical Instruments* (London, 1966), which is rich in both content and illustrations. And to Appendix 1, a listing of "Hautboy players 1600–1760," he probably should add the names of two seventeenth-century British "hoboys": Isaack Staggin (appointed 1660 "for the treble hoboy") and his son Charles Staggin (appointed 27 January 1685 as "musician in ordinary for ye tennor hoboy with fee").

All criticism aside, Bruce Haynes is to be justly commended for his skill in bringing such a multi-faceted project to fruition. His sheer industriousness calls to mind a comment attributed to Vincent van Gogh that "Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together." Such is the method adhered to by Haynes in preparing his book. Given its depth and comprehensiveness, *The Eloquent Oboe* should serve as the definitive text on the hautboy's history for some decades to come.

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Annette Otterstedt. *The Viol: History of an Instrument*. Translated by Hans Reiners. Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2002. 294 pp.: 7 color plates, 35 black-and-white illus., 28 musical exx. ISBN 3-7618-1151-9. 34.90€ (hardcover).

Setting out to write the history of an instrument is surely a labor of love. Annette Otterstedt, a professional viola da gambist, has used her years of experience and the knowledge gained from scrutinizing hundreds of original sources to write an informative, and equally provocative, history of the viol. In this revised, English edition of the author's original study, *Die Gambe: Kulturgeschichte und praktischer Ratgeber* (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1994), Otterstedt reaches out to both amateur and professional performers and instrument makers, as well as organologists. In addition to a new essay on the reception of the viol in the twentieth century and fresh insights into specific performance practices, Otterstedt has expanded her essays pertaining to original viol construction and the art of purchasing an instrument and bow. While musicologists looking for scrupulous documentation of sources or an extensive list of secondary

literature and critical editions of the music may be disappointed with some elements of Otterstedt's method and organization, this book provides useful discussion of a number of difficult questions and is clearly a welcome addition to the present-day body of literature on the viola da gamba.

The Viol: History of an Instrument is staged as a play, complete with a prelude ("Daughter of Orient and Occident") and conclusion ("Beauty in Eclipse"), and is divided into three main acts: "The Life and Opinions of a Princess," "Meeting the Family," and "Maintaining a Princess in Style." Each section consists of short essays: the first section focuses on specific regions, periods, and composers; the second on instrument types, specific repertoires, elements of performance practice, and details of construction; the third serves as a practical guide for the performer and viol owner, covering topics such as varnish, soundpost setting, strings, and the bow. The essay format makes the study very approachable. Yet, while it may seem advantageous to non-specialists to separate topics relating to cultural milieu from more technical discussions of organology, there are instances where the instrument's history and repertoire become scattered, where information from the first two "acts" could have been combined to render a more comprehensive presentation. For example, in the "Viol in France, 1550–1630" (pp. 28–31), Otterstedt presents an iconographic example and briefly mentions the consort repertoire, but then does not provide any specific musical examples and avoids a more detailed account of French instruments until the second part of her study (pp. 161–165). Similarly, the author mentions the demise of the treble viol in her essay on England after 1630, "Years of no Grace in the Country" (pp. 48–51); at this point, however, we haven't yet encountered the smaller instrument in Otterstedt's study, and the treble's place in English consort music is not well established until an essay in the second section, "Sweet, but too Weak: The Treble Viol" (pp. 143–145). One wishes the author had found a way to combine such discussions in adjacent essays, so that the viol—in all its details of construction and repertoire—would be seen as emerging from the cultural milieu.

In some places, Otterstedt could have made her study more practical for the reader who wishes to learn more about the various repertoires for the viol. For example, the author's discussion of viol consorts, in "The Republica of Consort" (pp. 114–129), is confusing. Instead of presenting a synthesis of the tunings and sizes of viols that would have ap-

peared in consort, specific to different regions, based on treatises, tutors, iconography, and the music itself, Otterstedt approaches consort playing in general terms only. Separated into sections entitled "The 16th century," "The 17th century," "Instrumentation," "The Instruments," "The Role of the Organ for the Viol Consort," and "The Music," the discussion is of little value to performer or scholar. To understand the regional differences in consort playing in specific European contexts, the reader must piece together information from various other essays throughout the book. Likewise, Otterstedt's chapter on ornamentation in "The Salt and Mustard of Music" (pp. 192–204) could have been more effective had the author presented it in the context of a particular repertoire, in a specific region or culture, during a given period. How one should ornament in consort playing, precisely what type of figure is appropriate or even expected, how one might add dynamics to shape a musical line—these are all valuable questions that the author raises. But the essay leaves the reader with quite a bit of sorting out to do if the techniques are to be implemented in actual performances.

On a more technical note: the use of endnotes, rather than footnotes, is inconvenient, the more so since Otterstedt supplies only the author's last name and a page number reference, so one must refer to the bibliography to complete the citation. While the addition of an index, along with a list of illustrations, is an improvement over the German version, the new index remains incomplete, as it features important persons—but not places or things.

The author tackles a number of difficult questions surrounding the history of the viol, knowing full well that her findings may not be the "only" answers and that, in seeking to fit together some of "the incongruent bits and pieces before us" (p. 16) the task will not be an easy one. Not surprisingly, there are several occasions where the author is forced to simplify a complicated issue, for example, in her discussion of the origins of the viol (pp. 20–23), the migration of viol-playing Jewish Spaniards to Italy (pp. 39–42), and the music of central Europe in the second half of the seventeenth century (pp. 64–72). It would have been helpful in these cases if she had referred readers to additional secondary literature and critical editions by Ian Woodfield, Peter Holman and Roger Prior, and Eva Linfield and Charles Brewer, respectively. Otterstedt's desire to work primarily with original sources is commendable, but she could have made a greater effort to call the reader's attention to such useful secondary sources.

Perhaps the most controversial area in viol research today surrounds the music for viola bastarda and lyra viol. In the past, organologists have asked whether these terms represent special types of viols, or if they refer to specific repertoires for the bass viol. Otterstedt addresses this issue in part two of her study in the essay, "No Less Swift than the Violin itself: The Bass Viol" (pp. 130–137). After examining the writings of Rognoni and Praetorius, Otterstedt argues that a smaller type of bass viol would be appropriate for playing music composed for viola bastarda. But this conclusion is questionable for a number of reasons. Otterstedt overlooks the fact that Praetorius's description of the instrument, as a slightly-larger "Tenor Viol de Gamba" (*Syntagma musicum II*, Chapter XXI, p. 47), actually calls for an instrument larger—not smaller—than what we today consider a typical bass viol tuned in D. Otterstedt also misreads Praetorius's Plate XX in *Syntagma musicum II*, labeling the instruments as "bass viol, tenor viol, and treble viol" (Illustration II, 1, p. 117), when in fact Praetorius's caption states only "1.2.3. Violn de Gamba." Moreover, she takes too literally Praetorius's five tuning suggestions for "Viol Bastarda" (*Syntagma musicum II*, Table XXI, p. 26), which include fourths and fifths, as well as thirds, and she fails to point out that these peculiar tunings are English lyra viol tunings and that Praetorius has conflated tunings for two solo repertoires under the single rubric "Viol Bastarda."¹

The origins of the English lyra viol, according to Otterstedt, "are much less cut and dried" (p. 134). Again relying too heavily on Praetorius, Otterstedt calls attention to the sympathetic strings which she claims were a prominent feature of the instrument in its early development. Without citing any English sources that mention this innovation, however, Otterstedt does not build a convincing argument. In fact, English sources show that the lyra viol is essentially a bass viol or smaller variation thereof, and that what gives it a specific identity is its chordal style of playing and diversity of tunings. Otterstedt's treatment of this instrument would have been better had she gone into more depth on the various tunings and the specific repertoire, including reproductions of

1. For a more complete discussion of the viola bastarda, see Jason Paras, *The Music for Viola Bastarda* (ed. George Houle and Glenna Houle; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), a valuable secondary source which Otterstedt does not include in her bibliography. See also Joëlle Morton, "The Early History and Use of the G Violone," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 36 (1999): 40–66. Morton suggests that a larger bass viola da gamba tuned in GG, i.e., Praetorius's "Klein Baß-Viol de Gamba," would be the most suitable instrument for performing viola bastarda works which require notes below the D of a modern bass viol.

the tablature, rather than calling attention to the brief experiment with sympathetic strings.²

These criticisms aside, there are a number of excellent moments in Otterstedt's book. The author ventures into the world of feminist scholarship with "An Unseemly Instrument: Viol Playing Women" (pp. 84–89), in which she combines her own experience with observations from original sources. The essay is earnest and particularly well researched, as the author draws conclusions from contemporary writings by Baldassare Castiglione, Roger North, Thomas Mace, André Maugars, and Johann Mattheson, as well as from dedications of compositions by Vincenzo Bonizzi, William Corkine, and Tobias Hume.

In addition, the author (aided by her translator) does an excellent job of explaining the complexities of musical temperament. In "The Well-Tempered Viol" (pp. 184–191), she first describes the various tuning systems in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and then asks "What has this got to do with us?" After examining the various types of keyboard temperaments, she goes on to advocate tuning viols in equal temperament, strongly suggesting that we make an effort to stop "relapsing into mental patterns today which did not emerge until the 18th century: the uncompromising acknowledgment of keyboard domination" (p. 191). She comments that although some may find "it is dreary as a motorway . . . on the fretted instruments this dreariness is amenable to enlivenment by the left hand, which can pull up or push down the strings. It is well-documented that such corrections were expected of the players, and thus the system which looks so regular on the fingerboard turns out to be quite flexible" (p. 191). Here Otterstedt is at her best, combining her experience as a performer with a close reading of original tutors to make a convincing argument.

Otterstedt's practical advice in "Aspects of Playing Technique" (pp. 204–221) is a godsend for the performer. She compares different methods of holding the instrument, positioning of the feet, left-hand technique, whether to use open or stopped strings, changing positions,

2. Otterstedt overlooks the sole English author who mentions sympathetic strings on a lyra viol: John Playford, in *Musick's Recreation on the Viol, Lyra-Way* (1661), in which he states that using sympathetic strings on the viol was the short-lived experiment of Daniel Farrant. For a more thorough discussion, see Peter Holman, "'An Addiction of Wyer Stringes beside the Ordenary Stringes': The Origin of the Baryton," in *Companion to Contemporary Musical Thought* (ed. John Paynter [et al.]; New York: Routledge, 1992), 1098–1115.

bowing, types of articulation, and slurs, basing her observations on comments from original tutors. However, in the absence of specific English or Italian sources, she tends to exaggerate late Baroque French aesthetics, applying concepts such as *inégalité* to non-French repertoires. Thus, it behooves the reader to take careful note of Otterstedt's citations and to remember that not all techniques apply to all styles of music.

In the third "act," Otterstedt's discussion of the bow is especially enlightening (pp. 251–258). The author advocates a return to a clip-in or fixed-type frog rather than the screw-type so prevalent today. After pointing out that "a screw mechanism for moving the frog was invented some time after 1720, but was not generally accepted until late in the 18th century, so that all editions of Leopold Mozart's tutor *Gründliche Violinschule*, for instance, show exclusively fixed-frog bows" (p. 254), Otterstedt then poses a challenge to viol players, one that is in fact applicable to all string instrument performers of early music today: "Why do viol players fight tooth and nail to keep their bows with the screw . . . ? The iconography is unequivocal in denying movable frogs. It shows that the invention, which seems so practical to us nowadays, did not succeed in making its presence felt for a long time. . . . This in itself ought to be enough to convince us" (p. 255).

One of the stronger essays in *The Viol* is Otterstedt's new and improved discussion of viol construction (pp. 151–170). The author takes seriously the findings of Karel Moens, who has suggested that "there is not a single Renaissance viol preserved in a state sufficient to permit any conclusions about their [sic] original shape or manner of construction" (p. 154). One by one, Otterstedt examines early extant viols through Moens's scrutinizing method, which utilizes ultraviolet and infrared light and takes into account dendrochronological evidence. The author strikes a perfect balance between technical detail and accessibility in this chapter: the viol enthusiast will find the descriptions interesting, and the organologist will be pleased with the range of extant instruments she examines.

Otterstedt never fails to challenge her audience to think critically and to question what has been taught in the past. She makes clear early in the book that one of her aims is "to disseminate doubt, not for the sake of dissension, but for kindling discrimination and enhancing knowledge" (p. 16). A true humanist at heart, she argues passionately that a return to original sources will be the antidote to what she sees as our present state of cultural stagnation. In her conclusion, "Beauty in Eclipsa"

(pp. 259–262), she laments, “Today the viol is in a desperate situation, for it is not itself. Its musical condition is that of a derivative of the violoncello. . . . With depressing predictability player after player . . . keeps aspiring back to a totally un-viol-like sound of robust clarity with no accidental noise components, which is really that of the modern violin family. . . . Played with historical means, including flat bridges and an even tension of all the strings, the viols sounds completely different” (p. 259). Otterstedt is surely right in this respect, and her level of commitment is unquestionable.

Otterstedt’s quest for knowledge and her ability to communicate are commendable. Despite some of the book’s shortcomings, her efforts should serve as an inspiration for gambists. Thanks to Hans Reiners’s serviceable translation, those who seek to present a more meaningful and authentic performance of a vast body of solo and consort literature, as well as the more general reader who pursues a better understanding of the viola da gamba’s place in history, have a new and worthwhile source to consult.

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Michael Fleming. *Viol-Making in England c. 1580–1660 (VME CD-ROM)*. Ph.D. dissertation, Open University, Milton Keynes, U.K., 2001. Published in two volumes on one compact disk by the author (13 Upland Park Road, Oxford OX2 7RU, U.K.; e-mail: viols@flemingoxford.co.uk), 2002. 245, 261 pp.: 108 color illus., charts. £15.00 (includes postage in the U.K.).

In examining the art of the past, which in many cases comes down to us with little documentation of its creators’ methods or intentions beyond what can be gleaned from the objects themselves, it can be tempting to generalize theories about artistic intention. If we find the golden section in a musical instrument, does that mean the maker consciously used it? Old English viols have enjoyed an excellent reputation—they are favorite models or inspirations for modern makers of the instrument—yet the limited numbers that survive and the difficulties encountered in trying to establish their original condition and appearance make it very hard to make scientific generalizations about them. Theories may abound, but proof is difficult to provide. Michael Fleming, in his *Viol-Making in England c. 1580–1660*, assiduously avoids the temptation to