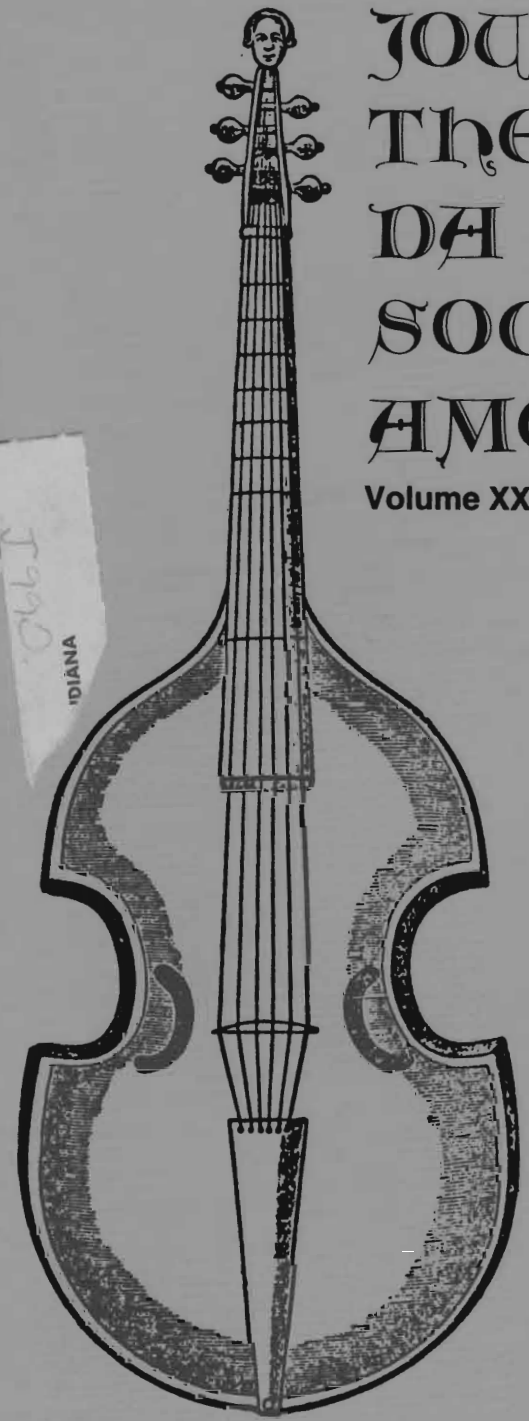


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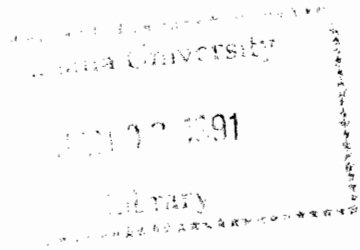
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GIOVANNI VALENTINI'S "IN TE DOMINE SPERAVI" AND THE DEMISE OF THE VIOLA BASTARDA

Steven Saunders

The music for viola bastarda has come to be recognized as the richest repertoire of Italian solo music for the viola da gamba from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The surviving works for the instrument are *tours de force* of virtuoso diminution, characterized by the successive embellishment of various parts of a preexisting vocal composition, usually a chanson or madrigal, with bold leaps and rapid *passaggi*. Two recent scholarly works have defined the repertoire thoroughly, and have helped to clarify the precise connotations of "viola bastarda," as well as its relationship (or rather, lack of relationship) to the English lyra-viol.¹ According to the conventional view, the viola bastarda had faded into obsolescence by the beginning of the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Veronika Gutmann dates the last composition for viola bastarda to 1626, but notes that reports on playing in the bastarda style extend until 1639.² Jason Paras, although he detects traces of bastarda style in compositions published as late as 1638, goes even further, asserting that "the possibility that the viola bastarda style survived much beyond the 1620s is remote."³ However, a hitherto overlooked composition, a remarkable setting of "In te Domine speravi" by Giovanni Valentini (Example 1), demonstrates that performance "alla bastarda" survived, and even flour-

¹Veronika Gutmann, "Viola bastarda—Instrument oder Diminutionspraxis?," *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 35 (1978): 178-209; Jason Paras, *The Music for Viola Bastarda*, ed. George Houle and Glenna Houle (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

²Gutmann, "Viola bastarda," 208.

³Paras, *The Music for Viola Bastarda*, 36.

Example 1. Giovanni Valentini, "In te Domine speravi," D-Kl, 2^o Ms. mus.

51^o

1

Viola Bastarda

Bassus

Bassus Continuus

In te Do-mi-ne spe-ra-vi, in te Do-mi-ne spe

5

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

ra-vi, spe-ra-vi, vi.

10

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

non con-

14

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

fun-dar, non con-fun-dar, non con-fun-dar se-ter-

17

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

num:

20

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

22

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

in ju-sti-ti-a

24

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

26

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

29

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

32

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

34

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

36

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

38

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

40

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

43

Vla.

Bass
ren tu- am,

B. C.

46 **f**4

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

49 **f**4

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

51

Vla.

Bass
ic-

B. C.
 #3 4 3

54

Vla.

Bass
ce- le- ra

B. C.
 6 6

56

Vla.

Bass
ix e- ni- as, ix e- ni- as me,

B. C.

58

Vla.

Bass

B. C.
 b

60

Vla.

Bass
ix e- ni- as, ix e- ni- as, ix e- ni-

B. C.
 b b

62

Vla.

Bass
 ut, ut e- tu- ut me, ac-

B. C.
 b # # b

64 ^{C4}

Vla.

Bass
 ce- le- ra

B. C.

66

Vla.

Bass
 ut- e- tu- ut, ut e- tu- ut, ut e- tu- ut

B. C.
 b #

68

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

69

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

70

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

71

Vla.

Bass

B. C.

73

Vla.

Bass
 me

B. C.

ished, until the middle of the seventeenth century.⁴ Indeed, other Viennese sources complement Valentini's composition to furnish the final chapter in the history of the viola bastarda.

Giovanni Valentini was among the countless Italian musicians who spent most of their careers north of the Alps. Born in 1582 or 1583, his first documented musical appointment was as organist to King Sigismund III of Poland.⁵ By 1614 Valentini had entered the service of the Hapsburg Archduke Ferdinand of Inner Austria,⁶ and after his patron's election as Holy Roman Emperor in 1619, he, along with the rest of the archducal court, was transferred from Graz to Vienna.⁷ He succeeded Giovanni Priuli as Ferdinand II's imperial chapel master in 1626, retaining that post for nearly a quarter century, until his own death in 1649.⁸

Valentini's sole contribution to the literature for viola bastarda, a paraphrase of the two opening verses of Psalm 70 for vocal bass,

⁴The transcription of the viola bastarda part in Example 1 is given entirely in the bass clef; figures in square brackets above the transcription indicate the original clefs. I am grateful to Crawford J. Strunk, a summer research assistant at Colby College, for the preparation of the musical examples in Examples 1 and 2, and for invaluable assistance during the preparation of this article.

⁵On the confusion surrounding Valentini's early biography see Steven Saunders, "Sacred Music at the Hapsburg Court of Ferdinand II (1615-1637): The Latin Vocal Works of Giovanni Priuli and Giovanni Valentini (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1990), 171-76.

⁶Hellmut Federhofer, *Musikpflege und Musiker am Grazer Habsburgerhof der Erzherzöge Karl und Ferdinand von Innerösterreich (1564-1619)* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1967), 219-25; and Saunders, "Sacred Music at the Hapsburg Court," 192-94.

⁷On Valentini's compositional activity during these years see Steven Saunders, "The Hapsburg Court of Ferdinand II and the *Messa, Magnificat et Iubilato Deo a sette chori concertati con le trombe* (1621) of Giovanni Valentini," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44 (Fall 1991): 359-403.

⁸The date of death of Valentini's predecessor as imperial chapel master, Giovanni Priuli, and consequently, the date when Valentini succeeded him, have long been the source of confusion. Köchel, and following him most other modern writers, have given the year of Priuli's death as 1629; see Ludwig Ritter von Köchel, *Die kaiserliche Hof-Musikkapelle in Wien von 1543-1867* (Vienna, 1869; reprint ed., Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976), 56. Jerome Roche's article s. v. "Giovanni Priuli" in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 15, 276-77, however, claims that Valentini succeeded Priuli as *Hofkapellmeister* in 1622. In fact, Priuli died in the summer of 1626, and Valentini succeeded him within a few months. Priuli's autograph will [Vienna,

viola bastarda, and basso continuo, survives in manuscript at the Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt und Landesbibliothek, Kassel (shelfmark 2° Ms. mus. 51°). There can be little doubt that the work dates from around 1650, and stems from the imperial music chapel in Vienna. The manuscript was acquired for the Kassel Hofkapelle sometime after 1638, as it does not appear in a catalog of music prepared in that year.⁹ The parts belong to a group of manuscripts transmitting works by composers from the Hapsburg court that were written predominately on high quality, bleached papers—papers that contrast starkly with the lower quality papers found in most seventeenth-century sources now preserved at Kassel.¹⁰ Each of the motet's three parts (for vocal bass, viola bastarda, and continuo) occupies only a single leaf of this paper, and only one of these, that for viola bastarda, bears a watermark. That mark, one version of the ubiquitous Hapsburg double eagle coat of arms, is of scant help in dating the manuscript, yet other clues enable us to pinpoint the manuscript's date and provenance with remarkable accuracy.

The parts to "In te Domine speravi" were written by an anonymous scribe who copied other manuscripts of Viennese provenance

Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Hofarchiv, Obersthofmarschallamt, Karton 624 (Testamente), 1626/2 (Priuli), fols. 181-84] is dated 18 July 1626, and was published just eight days later. By 20 November 1626, at the latest, Valentini was chapel master, for on that date Tarquinio Merula signed the dedication to his *Satirico e Corsica* (Venice: Alessandro Vincenti, 1626), a collection containing a sonnet by Valentini whose caption title proclaims him "Maestro di capella della Maestà Cesarea."

⁹Ernst Zulauf, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der landgräflich-hessischen Hofkapelle zu Cassel bis auf die Zeit Moritz des Gelehrten* (Kassel: L. Döll, 1902), 127 ff. On the Kassel manuscript collection see also Christiane Engelbrecht, *Die Kasseler Hofkapelle im 17. Jahrhundert und ihre anonymen Musikhandschriften aus der Kasseler Landes-Bibliothek* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1958); Clytus Gottwald, "Neue Forschungen zu den Kasseler Schütz-Handschriften," *Schütz-Jahrbuch* 12 (1990), 35; and Carl Israëel, *Übersichtlicher Katalog der Musikalien der ständischen Landesbibliothek zu Cassel* (Kassel: Im Kommissionsverlage der Hof-Buchhandlung von A. Freyschmidt, 1881).

¹⁰The Viennese provenance of some of the Kassel manuscripts was first recognized in Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, *Kirchenmusik am Hofe Karls VI. (1711-1740): Untersuchungen zum Verhältnis von Zeremoniell und musikalischem Stil im Barockzeitalter* (Munich: Musikverlag Emil Katzschler, 1977), 21; see also Gottwald, "Neue Forschungen zu den Kasseler Schütz-Handschriften," 35.



Plate 1. Giovanni Valentini, “In te Domine speravi,” D-Kl, 2^o Ms. mus. 51^o, first page of the viola bastarda part (Courtesy of the Murhardsche Bibliothek der Stadt und Landesbibliothek, Kassel)

now preserved at Kassel (see Plate 1), among them a setting of “Delectare in Domino” by the imperial organist Wolfgang Ebner (Ms. mus. 2^o 53^m), and Valentini’s “Vesperae Integrae de Dominica” (Ms. mus. 2^o 51ⁿ).¹¹

Watermarks in these two Kassel manuscripts point unmistakably to Vienna; they show a sickle within a shield, flanked at the bottom by the initials “TW.” The sickle watermark was used for more than two centuries by a paper mill at Lengfelden (near Salzburg), and the initials are those of Tobias Wörz, who owned the mill from 1645 to 1650.¹² Papers from Wörz’s mill were used in several music manuscripts prepared at the imperial court during the late 1640s and now preserved in Vienna, for example, the autograph score of Froberger’s *Libro secondo di Toccate, Fantasie, Canzone* ... (A-Wn, Cod. 18706), dated 29 September 1649, and a collection of music for Compline by Valentini (A-Wn, Cod. 19421). What is more, sickle watermarks identical to those in the Kassel manuscript of Valentini’s “Vesperae integrae de Dominica” (the papers came from the same molds) are found in the Viennese archives in the court pay books, or *Hofzahlamtsbücher*, from 1649.¹³

There is still further evidence that the manuscripts from the imperial chapel now in the collection at Kassel constitute a source complex—a complex copied around mid-century and transmitted to Kassel as a group. Watermarks bearing the crossed swords of the Saxon coat of arms, encountered in a “Sonata à 4” by Valentini (2^o Ms. mus. 60^o), are found as well in papers used in 1650, and the “DITERSBACH” watermarks that occur elsewhere in the same manuscript were used in the same year in a letter to the Saxon

¹¹For additional information on the activities of this scribe see, Saunders, “Sacred Music at the Hapsburg Court,” 500.

¹²Georg Eineder, *The Ancient Paper-Mills of the Former Austro-Hungarian Empire and Their Watermarks* (Hilversum: The Paper Publications Society, 1960), 69.

¹³Vienna, Hofkammerarchiv, Hofzahlamtsbücher, Sig. 95 (1649). The entries in this series of court records are not arranged chronologically, but rather by category of expenditure. There are neither blank spaces nor empty pages in the paybooks; they must, therefore, have been copied after the end of the year. The 1649 books would in all likelihood have been assembled in 1650.

elector, Johann Georg.¹⁴ The AG/clover watermarks from vice-chapelmaster Giovanni Felice Sances's "Come viver" (2^o Ms. mus. 57^e) also occur in a letter to Ferdinand III from 1651,¹⁵ and the crossed keys of the Regensburg coat of arms, found in a "Sonata à 3" (2^o Ms. mus. 60^o) by Valentini's successor as imperial chapel master, Antonio Bertalli, turn up on paper used in Regensburg in 1650-51.¹⁶

The Kassel sources, then, provide a remarkably homogeneous and coherent picture. Works by imperial court composers, including "In te Domine speravi," were copied on papers known to have been in use between 1649 and 1651.

The appearance of the Regensburg coat of arms in some of those papers provides an additional clue concerning the history of the manuscripts, for it suggests that the Regensburg *Reichstag*, or electoral convocation of 1653-54, provided the point of contact between the imperial music chapel and the court of Wilhelm VI at Kassel. A large number of musicians accompanied the emperor (by this time, Ferdinand II's eldest son, Ferdinand III) to Regensburg on that occasion; a contemporary register of the imperial *Hofstaat* lists by name no fewer than forty-three members of the music chapel.¹⁷ Viennese compositions, then, most likely came to Kassel just after mid-century in the wake of the Regensburg electoral meeting. We cannot know exactly when Valentini's motet was composed, but there is every reason to believe that the work dates from around the time that it was copied--during the years, and perhaps during the months, immediately preceding Valentini's death in 1649. "In te Domine speravi," then, was written nearly a quarter century after the latest previously known composition for viola bastarda. Clearly there was a lively interest in the viola

¹⁴E. J. LaBarre, ed., *The Nostitz Papers: Notes on the Watermarks Found in the German Imperial Archives of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, and Essays Showing the Evolution of a Number of Watermarks* (Hilversum: The Paper Publications Society, 1958), 67-68, and 117.

¹⁵LaBarre, *The Nostitz Papers*, 122.

¹⁶Gerhard Piccard, *Wasserzeichen Schlüssel* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1961), 604.

¹⁷*Der Röm. Kayserl. Mayest. Ferdinandi III.... Hoff-Stat: Wie sich derselbe in Jahren 1653 und 1654 uff dem Reichstag zu Regenspurg eingefunden* (Frankfurt am Main: Wilhelm Gerlin, 1654), 12-13.

bastarda at Vienna and at Kassel in the mid-seventeenth century. Just as the viola da gamba continued to be used in Vienna long after it had gone out of fashion in Italy,¹⁸ the viola bastarda remained in vogue at the imperial court after its demise elsewhere.

One further source from Vienna illuminates the late history of the viola bastarda. The will of the imperial instrumentalist Orazio Segà, dated November 1626, bequeaths "my violetta, viola bastarda, as well as my auletti, a theorbo, and lute to His Imperial Majesty [Ferdinand II]."¹⁹ This mention of the viola bastarda divorced from any musical context provides a partial answer to the question posed in the title to Veronika Gutmann's article, "Viola bastarda—Instrument oder Diminutionspraxis?"²⁰ Segà's will corroborates the descriptions of the instrument by Francesco Rognoni and Michael Praetorius:²¹ in Vienna at least, the term could refer to a specific instrument with identifiable distinguishing characteristics, and not only to performance on the viola da gamba in the luxuriant style of diminution known as playing "alla bastarda."

The viola bastarda part to "In te Domine speravi" is typical of the bastarda style in its use of wide leaps and rapid passagework. More remarkable is its athletic solo bass line in emulation of that style, ranging over two octaves, D-d', in chains of thirty-second note *gorgie*. Such examples of singing "alla bastarda" are rare; only a handful of such pieces by Rognoni, Banchieri, and Bassano have come down to us. Valentini's motet was obviously written for an agile bass with an expansive range like those of the singers mentioned by Vincenzo Giustiniani in his *Discorso sopra la musica* (1628).²² Such singers were well known at the Hapsburg court; the only performer whose name can be associated with

¹⁸Eva Linfield, "The Viol Consort in Buxtehude's Vocal Music: Historical Context and Affective Meaning," in *Church, Stage, and Studio: Music and Its Contexts in 17th-Century Germany*, ed. Paul Walker (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990), 180-81.

¹⁹Vienna, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv, Alte Ziviljustiz Testamente, 4807/17. Jahrhundert.

²⁰See fn. 1.

²¹The relevant passages from Rognoni and Praetorius are translated in Paras, *The Music for Viola Bastarda*, 7-13.

²²Carol MacClintock, ed. and trans., *Vincenzo Giustiniani: Discorso sopra la musica* (N. p.: American Institute of Musicology, 1962), 69-70.

singing in the “bastarda” style, the Mantuan bass Giovanni Amigoni, served briefly in the chapel of Ferdinand II in the early 1620s.²³ It was Amigoni for whom Monteverdi wrote an aria *alla bastarda*, because, as Monteverdi put it, “I know how effective such a style is when Signor Amigoni sings it.”²⁴ Another motivating force behind “In te Domine speravi” may have been Valentini’s contact with Bartolomé de Selma y Salaverde, who published what were presumed to have been “the last compositions showing traces of the viola bastarda style.”²⁵ Selma y Salaverde appears in the imperial court pay records as early as 1630,²⁶ and also served as bassoonist in the music chapel of another member of the House of Austria, Archduke Leopold Wilhelm. Coincidentally, works of Selma y Salaverde exhibiting the bastarda style were printed in a collection whose dedication mentions Valentini in passing.²⁷

The viola bastarda part to “In te Domine speravi” spans three octaves, from D-d”, and was probably written for an instrument tuned D G c e a d’.²⁸ It employs the four clefs in common use by the mid-seventeenth century for the notation of vocal music (c₁, c₃, c₄, and f₄). In music for the viola bastarda based on a preexisting composition, such changes of clef usually indicate a change in the line of the vocal model that the viola bastarda’s diminutions are

decorating. It seems improbable, however, that “In te Domine speravi,” is patterned on a vocal piece by another composer. Unlike most surviving works for viola bastarda, it has an independent text, sung by the bass, lending the work an autonomy that other compositions involving the viola bastarda lack. Moreover, extended sections occur in which there are no changes of clef whatsoever, for example, measures 64-75. Indeed, there are passages where it is difficult to conceive that a vocal model provides the work’s underlying compositional logic, for example, at the second entrance of the viola bastarda (mm. 17 ff.), where the sequences suggest (and the explicitly figured bass demands) blatant parallel fifths and octaves. Such progressions, were something of a compositional signature for Valentini, who used them in a number of other works (see Examples 2a and 2b).

One of Valentini’s contemporaries, Samuel Capricornus, even singled out examples of the composer’s parallel perfect intervals to defend himself in a sometimes hostile musical colloquy with Philipp Friedrich Böhdecker, commenting on one passage by Valentini that, “if there are no [parallel] unisons and octaves to be found in this example, I don’t know what unisons are.”²⁹

“In te Domine speravi” unfolds as a succession of brief exchanges between the bass and the viola bastarda, followed by a short section where the two principal performers join together to perform two motives simultaneously (mm. 61-67), and is capped by a rapid-fire, virtuoso “duel” in thirty-second note *passaggi* (mm. 68 ff.). The writing for viola bastarda throughout the piece is in the overtly virtuosic vein championed in the last generation of diminution manuals, for example, those of Aurelio Virgiliano (ca. 1600), Francesco Maria Bassani (1621), and Vincenzo Bonizzi (1626).³⁰ Moreover, the viola bastarda part is conceived exclusively vertically, as the application of a single figure (always a motive seized from the preceding vocal entrance) above the notes of the *basso*

²⁹Joseph Sittard, “Samuel Capricornus contra Philipp Friedrich Böhdecker,” *Sammelbände der Internationalen Musik-Gesellschaft* 3 (1901-2): 104.

³⁰For examples from these diminution manuals, see Richard Erig and Veronika Gutmann, *Italienische Diminutionen: Die zwischen 1553 und 1638 mehrmals bearbeiteten Sätze*, Veröffentlichungen der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, Bd. 1 (Zurich: Amadeus Verlag, 1979).

²³Federhofer, *Musikpflege und Musiker*, 144.

²⁴Denis Stevens, trans., *The Letters of Claudio Monteverdi* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1980), 172-73.

²⁵Paras, *The Music for Viola Bastarda*, 48.

²⁶Vienna, Hofkammerarchiv, Hofzahlamtsbücher, Sig. 77 (1630), fol. 400.

²⁷*Primo libro canzoni, fantasia et correnti* (Venice: Bartolomeo Magni, 1638): “L’Opera è musicale, dono à punto proportionato àcompiuto concerto di tutte le virtù, e prerogative, che rendono riguardevole al mondo la Serenissima V[ostra] A[ltezza]. Oltre che il Signor Gio: Valentino Maestro di Cappella di S[ua] M[aestà] Cesarea, & Sig. Giacomo Porro Maestro di Capella del Serenissimo Duca di Baviera, m’attestorono che V[ostra] A[ltezza] Serenissima, si compiaceva, come in ogni età han fatto i più stimati Prencipi d’udire i musicali concerti, & in oltre, promisero fa nota la devotione à V[ostra] A[ltezza] Serenissima...” For information on Selma y Salaverde’s diminutions see Veronika Gutmann, “Die Diminution über ‘Susanne un jour’ von Bartolomeo de Selma y Salaverde (1638): Zur Entstehung von improvisierten Bassvariationen,” *Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 7 (1983): 184-91.

²⁸On viola da gamba tunings see Paras, *The Music for Viola Bastarda*, 19-25; and Ian Woodfield, *The Early History of the Viol* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 140-54.

Example 2a. Giovanni Valentini, “Salve tremendum,” mm. 62-67, from the *Sacri concerti* (Venice, 1625)

Canto 1
cru- ce sus-pen- sum vul- ne- ra- tum mor-

Canto 2
cru- ce sus-pen- sum vul- ne- ra- tum mor-

Tenore
cru- ce sus-pen- sum vul- ne- ra- tum mor-

Basso continuo
6 #

tu- um, et se- pul- tum.

tu- um, # et se- pul- # tum.

tu- um, et se- pul- tum.

4 3

continuo. This compositional technique evokes Baroque theories linking music and rhetoric—all the more so since each figure is introduced by the singer, and thus associated specifically with a short fragment of text. It recalls as well Christopher Simpson’s advice for beginners on the division viol to devote each section of an improvisation over a ground to a single motive or “point.”³¹ These associations are not entirely unexpected; even before the

³¹Christopher Simpson, *Chelys, minuritionum artificio exornata The Division-Viol, or, the Art of Playing ex tempore upon a Ground*, 2nd ed. (London, 1665; facs. repr., London: J. Curwen, 1955), 53-54.

Example 2b. Giovanni Valentini, “Regina caeli,” mm. 58-62, from the *Sacri concerti* (Venice, 1625)

Canto 1
al- le- lu- ia, al- le-

Canto 2
Al- le- lu- ia, al- le- lu- ia

Basso continuo
b b

lu- ia, al- le lu- ia, al- le lu- ia, al- le-

al- le- lu- ia, al- le- lu- ia, al-

b b

second quarter of the seventeenth century, works for viola bastarda came to be conceived, in essence, as improvisations over a ground bass. No longer were works constructed as migrating elaborations through the entire polyphonic web of a vocal composition; rather, they became free improvisations over a basso continuo line derived from such works.³² Valentini’s “In te Domine speravi” carries this process of distancing the viola bastarda from reliance on a model one step further, severing the connections to a vocal composition entirely.

Detached from the roots that had nourished the viola bastarda repertoire for nearly a century, Valentini’s writing for the instrument merely appliqués the generically conceived diminutions

³²For two slightly different views of this final stage of the viola bastarda repertoire see Paras, *The Music for Viola Bastarda*, 33-35; and Gutmann, “Die Diminutionen über ‘Susanne un jour,’” 186-88.

fashionable in the seventeenth century onto the basso continuo line. Gone are the engagingly variegated rhythms of sixteenth-century diminutions; gone the skilled ornamentation informed by a knowledge of Renaissance counterpoint; gone the artful connecting of various vocal ranges. Gone, in fact, is the viola bastarda's *raison d'être*: the instrument itself and the performance of diminutions "alla bastarda" historically had been so closely bound as to be virtually inseparable. Deprived of this nurturing bond, the viola bastarda part of "In te Domine speravi" shows itself to be somewhat bastardized—a misbegotten attempt to graft the bastarda style, which had its roots in Renaissance polyphony and in the art of improvised ornamentation, onto a new, and fundamentally incompatible Baroque aesthetic. Valentini's composition seems to have exhausted the possibilities of writing for the instrument; nevertheless, it provides a final, revealing culmination to the history of music making "alla bastarda."

THE FRETLESS APPROACH TO GAMBA PLAYING

John Rutledge

Today there is nearly universal consensus that frets are inalienable to the viol. In the modern, historically faithful understanding, frets are an organic and necessary part of the instrument. Nevertheless, at times in the history of the viols some players and important performers disdained the use of frets. The cellist-gambists who revived the instrument in the 1880s and the early twentieth century generally played without frets. This practice lasted from the 1880s to the 1950s, and even later in some quarters. It is time to explore dispassionately the phenomenon of playing without frets as an interesting chapter in the history of the viols.

Modern fretless playing occurred mainly in a context of revival by cellists, who imposed fretlessness and other borrowings from the cello. Generally, those pioneer gambists who played without frets also played overhanded, with modified cello bowing techniques, and often on severely altered instruments. Old instruments were bowdlerized to conform to modern views of gamba playing; new instruments were built to accommodate playing under the chin (for the smaller viols), with necks rounded and shorter (violin fashion), making it impossible to fret them properly.¹ Frets can be taken *pars pro toto* for this approach. Frets fill a symbolic role, in addition to their tonal function. Because they are highly visible, frets help to define the instrument and to differentiate it from the cello (which it otherwise resembles).

¹Bessaraboff reports seeing such instruments built as late as 1935 in *Ancient European Musical Instruments: An Organological Study of the Musical Instruments in the Leslie Lindsey Mason Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, by the Harvard University Press, 1941), 427. The chapter on viol building during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has yet to be written.

There were sporadic revivals of the viols, and particularly the bass viol, throughout the nineteenth century, but very little is known about the practices of the earliest revivers. It is clear, however, that the concept of historical fidelity, as it has since developed, figured but little in their designs. They had a different agenda. By the 1890s there is a significant revival of the viols. "Early music" groups--the term is anachronistic--formed and performed regularly. Revivers such as Paul de Wit, George Saint-George, Edmund van der Straeten, and August Tolbecque helped to bring the gamba to the attention of concert-goers.²

The early twentieth-century revival of the viols a generation later was similarly dominated by certain cellists who for love of the gamba and its literature took up the instrument and tried to re-vivify it. First among these men were Christian Döbereiner and Paul Grümmer, figures who stand out not just as players, but as passionate educators as well.³

Döbereiner and Grümmer, because of their stature, cast a long shadow: they were both influential and long-lived. Both men published methods in which they taught their gamba students modified cello techniques. August Wenzinger, a student of Grümmer and an eyewitness to this period of history, recounts that Döbereiner and Grümmer "owned fine old gambas, but played them in cello fashion. New, narrow necks had been fitted to the instruments to make them more cello-like, and no frets were used."⁴

PAUL GRÜMMER

Paul Grümmer (1879-1965) was a distinguished cellist and chamber musician. Grümmer took up the gamba in 1909/10 and soon was performing in chamber ensembles in Germany and

²This period I has been treated in an article entitled "Late 19th-century viol revivals," *Early Music* 19/3 (August, 1991): 409-418. See also Malou Haine's "Concerts historiques dans la seconde moitié du 19e siècle" in *Musique et Société: Hommages à Robert Wangermee*, ed. by Henri Vanhulst and Malou Haine (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1988).

³Harry Haskell treats both these figures in his *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988). This rewarding book provides a thorough overview of the evolution of early music.

⁴An Interview with August Wenzinger," *August Wenzinger and the Smithsonian Chamber Players*, concert program of the Smithsonian Institution,

internationally. In Cologne he taught gamba to a class of students. As a music professor in Berlin before the war Grümmer had the singular distinction of playing gamba before Adolf Hitler. He was called to the Reichskanzlei to perform works of English composers for visiting British diplomats. Obviously savoring the glory of the moment, Grümmer quotes Hitler as saying, "Ihre Töne kommen vom Himmel."⁵ He also cut a recording on the gamba.⁶

Grümmer's gamba method "for cellists and friends of the viola da gamba,"⁷ first published in 1928, thoroughly treated the gamba as a cello. This tri-lingual method for viola da gamba was widely used. It is significant that he aimed his text at cellists, choosing a more narrow concept of the instrument and its possibilities.⁸ By directing his efforts so intently toward cellists, he ignored the potentially larger audience, namely, interested amateurs. Grümmer advocated application of a modified cello technique to the gamba. To learn about bowing one should seek instruction from a cellist. His treatise makes no mention of frets in its discussion of fingering.

Grümmer hoped for a reintroduction and modern revival of the gamba. The preface to his method dedicates the work to the hope "that modern composers will interest themselves for [sic] the instrument, which will well repay them with the charm of its tone, in solos or in combination with other orchestral instruments and in chamber-music, delighting the soul of every true artist with the charm of its 'timbre' and ideal tonal colouring...."⁹ New works for the gamba, he believed, would help to bring it back to currency. In his autobiography he pleads the case for a modern reintroduction of

Division of Performing Arts, Musical Instruments, etc. (Washington, D.C.), Sunday, Nov. 23, 1980 and Nov. 24, 1980.

⁵Grümmer reports this incident in his autobiography, *Begegnungen: Aus dem Leben eines Violoncellisten* (Munich: Bong & Co., n.d [1962?]), 138. Brief biographies of Grümmer are also found in *MGG* and *Riemann*.

⁶With Anna Linde on harpsichord he recorded selections of Haydn's *Divertimenti* on a 78 r.p.m. disk (Germany: Parlophon, [19--]).

⁷Paul Grümmer, *Viola da Gamba-Schule für Violoncellisten und Freunde der Viola da Gamba/Viola da Gamba, a School for Violoncellists and Lovers of the Viola da Gamba* (London, Hamburg: Benjamin, 1928).

⁸A contemporary review (Ernst Silberstein in *Die Musik* 21/6 (1929): 465) of Grümmer's tutor also comments on the limited audience of the text.

⁹*Viola da Gamba-Schule*, 3.

the gamba into contemporary musical life. He pursued his interest in the gamba until the end of his career.

Throughout his career he steadfastly advocated the fretless style of playing. He defends the absence of frets by reference to "historical precedent":

By the way, most of the soloists of that time played the gamba without frets, as can be seen from many old prints. The frets were borrowed from the plucked instruments so that domestic servants in the employ of wealthy music lovers could play better in tune. I cannot imagine why soloists today avail themselves of these crutches. Cellists should play the instrument **without** frets so that they can achieve the same expression that the human voice can reach. So it was taught in old methods as early as the 16th century.¹⁰

Thus Grümmer justified his belief that most soloists in olden times ("damals") played without frets, that frets served principally to enable the unpracticed to find the right notes, and that playing without frets allows contemporary cellists to play the instrument with greater expression. The argument about "domestic servants" strikes one not only as patronizing, but also as a ludicrous and anti-historical defense for his practice. It is also clear that Grümmer has no understanding of the new, more historically informed movement that favored the use of frets, chief among them Grümmer's own student August Wenzinger.

CHRISTIAN DÖBEREINER

Christian Döbereiner (1874-1961) was introduced to the gamba by his cello teacher, Josef Werner, who studied a Tielke instrument as early as 1893/94. As a performing cellist Döbereiner knew works for gamba that had been rearranged for cello. Finding these unsatisfactory he set out to explore the instrument for which they were written. Döbereiner recounts that the typical cellist (not

¹⁰"Uebrigens spielten die meisten damaligen Solisten die Gambe ohne Bünde, wie man aus vielen alten Stichen erkennen kann. Die Bünde wurde von den Zupfinstrumenten übernommen, damit die auf der Gambe ungeübten Hausangestellten der reichen Musikfreunde die Töne reiner finden konnten. Es ist nicht einzusehen, warum die heutigen Solisten sich dieser Hilfen bedienen. Die Cellisten sollten das Instrument **ohne** Bund spielen, damit sie denselben Ausdruck erreichen, 'wie die Sänger singen.' So wurde es laut alten Schulausgaben schon im 16. Jahrhundert gelehrt." (*Begegnungen*, 80).

himself) thought of the gamba as an outmoded and inferior instrument that had been "overcome" by the cello.¹¹ Döbereiner several times related how his early efforts at reviving the gamba met with scorn from colleagues. Nevertheless, he convinced the Akademie der Tonkunst in Munich to start courses in old instruments.¹²

Döbereiner based his practice on the belief that frets are not essential to the instrument. Döbereiner is eloquent and unequivocal on the issue of playing without frets:

Defenders of an aestheticizing and archaising practice of music make arguments that a perfected approach to playing the gamba requires as **most essential** not only the underhanded bowing style, but **frets** as well. One thing is to be said about that: frets are absolutely essential to the lute, but not to the gamba. On the lute they are absolutely necessary because by pressing down a string they form a new bridge and when **plucking** the string this creates a uniform, resonating tone. On a gamba the frets are dispensable because the tone is produced by the **bow**.¹³

¹¹It is interesting to note that these early revivers did not believe that the violin and cello developed out of the gamba. Nothing I have seen so far suggests that this belief was widely held. Döbereiner understands quite clearly that they are separate families. It was the ordinary, historically uninformed cellist, perhaps, who thought this.

¹²Vorwort to his *Schule*, p. vi. Döbereiner published basic biographical information about himself in several places. His own account of his musical career can be found in *50 Jahre Alte Musik in München: Eine Denkschrift zur Wiedererweckung Alter Musik* (Munich: Max Hieber, 1955).

¹³"Verfechter einer ästhetisierenden und archaisierenden Musikausübung polemisieren dahin, zum **Wesentlichsten** eines vollkommenen Gambenspiels gehören Führung des Bogens in der alten Untergriffhaltung, sowie **Bünde**. Hierzu ist zu bemerken: die Bünde gehören zum Wesentlichen der Laute, aber nicht der Gambe. Bei der Laute sind die Bünde absolut notwendig, da sie beim Niederdrücken der Saite einen neuen Sattel bilden, wodurch der durch **Zupfen** erzeugte Ton einen gleichmässigen schwebenden Klang erhält. Bei der Gambe sind die Bünde entbehrlich, denn hier wird der Ton mit dem **Bogen** erzeugt." "Ueber die Bünde bei der Viola da Gamba," in *Zur Renaissance Alter Musik*, 2nd rev. ed. (Tutzing: Schneider, 1960), 71-2. This work is still in print.

This statement from 1960 differs little from that given in his method for viola da gamba, first published in 1936.¹⁴ As a practical musician Döbereiner grants that the frets have real advantages in fingering difficult chords. But they bring with them certain disadvantages: they can interfere with smooth changes of position, and they are no guarantee of accurate intonation. They are essentially “Eselsbrücken” (cribs or crutches), a primitive auxiliary device for beginners. His view of the frets as primitive and vestigial led him to underevaluate the role of frets in tone production. Elsewhere he does not place so much emphasis on the bow as he does here (which is clearly ill founded).

CELLISTS AS REVIVERS OF THE VIOLS

Bessaraboff asserts that there is a natural “superiority complex” among people who play the difficult string instruments. The “superiority” of violin technique is taken for granted.¹⁵ Since most of the revivers were cellists, they came to the gamba with certain skills, preconceptions, and, perhaps, inflexibilities. Their “natural tendency” was to superimpose cello technique on the viols. Having learned the difficult task of playing the cello without frets, why would they want to take a step backward in evolution?

Playing without frets facilitated transfer of technique from one instrument to another, especially if the necks were “standardized” --gambas are notoriously irregular in size and shape. Cellists also tended to focus their attention on the bass viol, to the exclusion of the other members of the viol family. This helps put in better perspective the innovativeness of Bacher’s viol tutor (1932): *An introduction to the nature of the viol consort and the manner of playing of the old gamba masters* (in contrast to the new players of the cellist variety).

¹⁴*Schule für die Viola da Gamba (Bassgambe, Basse de Virole)* (Mainz: B. Schott, 1936). This is the principal source for Döbereiner’s position on frets. The text was ready for publication as early as 1930, but the Munich city officials were not willing to subsidize the publication. In 1935 the new municipal establishment, influenced by Fritz Müller of Dresden (author of *Das stielechte Spiel auf dem Cembalo* [Moeck, 1933]), made a hefty contribution towards the publication of Döbereiner’s method. (See the “Vorwort,” p. VI.)

¹⁵*Ancient European Musical Instruments*, 262.

Cellists feared that playing with frets interfered with sensitive playing and playing “in positions.” Frets eliminated the possibility of portamento, an important feature of string playing of the period. There was a general tendency to avoid open strings. Frets, it was argued, deprived the artist of control. Even though frets were “primitive aids” evidently some cellists did experience initial difficulty in learning to play with frets.¹⁶ When assertions about the problems caused by frets were made there were few who could effectively refute them. If one had not heard fretted gambas it was not self-evident to most audiences that they should be played with frets. Bessaraboff, while willing to admit that unfretted viol performance by cellists could be “brilliant,” has suggested that hearing viols played “correctly” was often convincing,¹⁷ but I suspect only to those who were prepared and ready to believe in the new approach. It certainly would have sounded very different from the “cellamba”¹⁸ sound.

BOLSTERING THE ARGUMENT AGAINST FRETTS

Programmatic and ideological differences also made the frets seem unimportant to these revivers: they intended something very different than playing it like it used to be. The early revivers did not have historical fidelity foremost in their minds. Bringing the gamba back without frets was to make it something new, to continue its development. Without falling prey to the fallacy of authorial intention, we must look carefully at their aims.

At an early stage in the debate the revivers could find some support among organologists for abandoning frets. Julius Rühlmann’s *Die Geschichte der Bogeninstrumente* (1882), long a

¹⁶Hans Bol reports that it took months before he felt that the frets were no longer bothersome. See his “Bespelingswijze van de viola da gamba,” *Mens en melodie*, 13 (1950): 295.

¹⁷*Ancient European Musical Instruments*, 426, footnote 605.

¹⁸Bessaraboff is perhaps the first to satirize the cellized gamba as a “cellamba” in print: “A waggish musical friend of the writer, after attending a concert of old music played by a very competent violoncellist on an unfretted bass viol, remarked that he had not heard the viol. To the question, ‘What did you hear?’, he answered, ‘A cellamba!’ (‘cello plus gamba).” (*Ancient European Musical Instruments*, 426, footnotes 613 and 616.) As a *bon mot* the word may be decades older.

classic of organology, indicted the frets as an impediment to fine tuning on the viols which also restricted them to a more or less even tempered system.¹⁹ Curt Sachs, in his treatise on musical instruments (1913),²⁰ speaks of the “frets which have only latterly been dispensed with” (“erst zuletzt abgelegten Bünde”).

Alfred Einstein’s important monograph on the literature of the viola da gamba was available to the early twentieth-century revivers. Einstein, writing in 1905--the same year that Döbereiner’s early music group was formed--begins his treatise on the German literature for viola da gamba with a definition of the viol as a “bowed instrument with the fingerboard of a lute, that is to say, a fingerboard on which frets set boundaries for successive semitones.”²¹ But it is possible to imagine a further evolution beyond the instrument described by Einstein. If early viols were “bowed lutes” and were used chiefly for consort playing or accompaniment, was it so illogical to conclude that as the viols developed more sophistication and became solo instruments and as technique became more advanced, that they would lose their frets, further differentiating themselves from the lute? In any case, the evidence readily available to the cellist-revivers did not refute the theory of historical and natural evolution away from the use of frets.

An evolutionary way of thinking suited their purposes and seemed correct from the practitioner’s point of view. Strong personalities also played their usual role: a review of a concert by Döbereiner points to the charismatic nature of Döbereiner, who “schlug alle in seinen Bann” (“mesmerized all”).²² The publication of Döbereiner’s method was subsidized by the city of Munich. A

¹⁹Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1882, p. 157.

²⁰*Real-Lexikon der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin: J. Bard, 1913), 411-12.

²¹Alfred Einstein, “German Literature for Viola da Gamba in the 16th and 17th Centuries,” translated by Richard D. Bodig, *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 23 (1986): 81.

²²*Zeitschrift für Musik* 97 (1930), 948. See also a celebratory appreciation of Döbereiner on the occasion of his eightieth birthday by Wilhelm Zentner in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 115/4 (1954), 214-15. Here Döbereiner is praised as a great original, an “authentic” musician.

combination of government support and personal charisma furthered this style of playing. With important printed works and leading performers ignoring frets, we have, in short, a musical establishment working against the use of frets. Perhaps there was a cultural bias at work as well since only popular instruments such as guitar, banjo, mandolin, and guitar-lute had frets.

Döbereiner is quite aware that frets were used historically. In fact, he makes the point, invoking Simpson, that frets mainly helped players to find the right notes. In defense of his anti-fret position he cites²³ two older treatises that find fault with frets. Michael Praetorius, in the *Syntagma musicum*, pt. 2, says that even if properly attached, the frets are no guarantee of pure intonation. Jean Rousseau’s *Traité de la viole* (1687) finds certain problems with the frets: they easily get out of position and they are frequently improperly attached. Döbereiner was partially correct in his reading of the older texts: some older treatises emphasize more the function of the frets in finding the note rather than creating the tone.

References to playing the viols without frets are very infrequent in older literature. Sebastian Virdung (*Musica getutscht*, 1511) uses frets as an element of his taxonomy of instruments.²⁴ Viols are “fretted stringed instruments.” But his text leaves some room for debate since he specifies “frets and otherwise lines or marks” to help the player know where to place the fingers.²⁵ Arguably Virdung’s requirement could be met by non-physical lines or marks on the neck of the instrument, although the picture of his “gross Geige” clearly shows frets (but no bridge!). Martin Agricola (1528), speaking of the smaller fiddles (*Geigen*, not viols) with three strings tuned in fifths, allows both fretted and unfretted play, though the

²³*Schule*, 7.

²⁴For a discussion of frets as an early classification device for stringed instruments see Ian Woodfield’s *The Early History of the Viol* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

²⁵“Die ander art der sait spil dye selben haben nit schlüssel. Aber bünde vñ sunst gewisse zile oder gemercke / do man sicher griff mag haben,” *Musica getutscht* (Berlin: Eitner, 1882), A7v.

instruments are usually found without frets. Agricola adopts a practical, pedagogical approach: since it is harder to find the notes without frets, one should practice first with frets, then when one has become proficient, one can “cut them off with a knife.”²⁶ Dolmetsch did exactly that when teaching children modern stringed instruments.

A similarly flexible approach is found in Philibert Jambe de Fer (1556), who states--clearly speaking of the viols--that you can use as many frets as you want and that there are some very good players who do not use frets.²⁷ Hans Bol, aware of the Jambe de Fer passage, says that probably a large number of players in the sixteenth century did not use frets, at least in France and Italy.²⁸ Nor was the number of frets fixed at this early date. Players in consorts presumably did not venture high up on the neck and could get by with fewer than seven.

In Döbereiner’s understanding, as technique advanced in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the frets disappeared from bowed instruments, gambas included. He cites Quantz (1752) to show that in the eighteenth century frets were used not only on the gamba, but on violoncello and double bass (*Contraviolon*) as well. This reference seems at first to strengthen his argument that many instruments had frets but with advancing sophistication they disappeared. What Quantz actually says, however, undercuts Döbereiner’s

²⁶ Jdoch sag ich dir zu disse stunden
Das es one bünd schwer ist zu fassen
Darumb soltu das nicht faren lassen.
Sondern vb dich erst auff die bündisch art
So magstu darauff recht werden gelart.
Wiltu darnach die bünde nicht leiden
So magstu sie mit eim messer weg schneiden....

Musica instrumentalis deutsch (1528 and 1545; New York: Broude Brothers, 1966). See chapter 10, p. 97.

²⁷“Ladicte Viole contient en soy de dixsept, à dixhuit tons, & plus s’il est necessaire, autant en à vne partie que lautre, car toutes ont autant de cordes l’vne que l’autre, & de taste tant que lon veut: aucuns bons ioueurs n’en y veullent nulle, comme bien asseurez sans marque, ou ilz doiuent asseoir leurs doigts.” Philibert Jambe de Fer, *Epitome musicale*, p. 61 in the facsimile edition by François Lesure, “L’*épitome musicale de Philibert Jambe de Fer (1556)*,” *Annales musicologiques* 7 (1958-63).

²⁸Hans Bol, *La basse de viole...* (Bilthoven: Creyghton, 1973), 11.

argument. Quantz states that frets are “üblich” on the gamba (commonly in use, conventional, although might this not allow for exceptions in the eighteenth century?). He positively recommends frets for the double bass.²⁹ It seems likely that Döbereiner is conveniently following the then standard organological explanation--stated by Rühlmann, for example--that the viols had retained their frets “until the middle of the eighteenth century.”³⁰ Döbereiner was certainly not alone in this (not implausible) belief: Bol, at least in 1958, believed that in the eighteenth century some gambists came to prefer playing gamba without frets.³¹

Because both Döbereiner and Grümmer relied on pictorial evidence, we need to look into this matter briefly. Döbereiner claims to have seen a painting of Carl Friedrich Abel in which frets are not visible on the instrument depicted. Döbereiner, who did not hesitate to call himself the successor to Abel, probably had in mind one of the two portraits in oil by Thomas Gainsborough of his intimate friend Abel. Both paintings show Abel’s gamba. Reproductions of these portraits generally do not make the frets visible.

The testimony of Gainsborough on performance practice would be particularly valuable because he not only played the gamba himself but also owned several fine instruments. Neither was Gainsborough given to inaccuracy, rather the opposite. One commentator on an Abel portrait by Gainsborough says “[t]he viol-di-gamba is as true to actuality as ...[Holbein was]--it was this viol-di-gamba which the painter Jackson said that Gainsborough would contemplate in rapt attention for minutes together.”³² The instruments depicted by Gainsborough, however, do have frets. I am informed by the curator of the Huntington Art Museum that upon

²⁹*Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Breslau: Korn, 1789 [third printing]). The relevant sections are XVII, IV, 2 and 11 and XVII, V, 4.

³⁰Julius Rühlmann, *Die Geschichte der Bogeninstrumente* (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1882), 157.

³¹“Bespelingswijze,” 296.

³²Ronald Sutherland Gower, *Thomas Gainsborough* (London: George Bell, 1903), 84-85.

close inspection the frets on the Huntington's Gainsborough/Abel are indeed there, right down to the fret knots.³³ The Cincinnati Art Museum owns Gainsborough's portrait of Ann Ford Thicknesse, shown with a gamba. The curator relates that it too has frets.³⁴ In short, a careful examination of two paintings runs counter to Döbereiner's argument.³⁵ And despite claims of cello influences on Abel's playing, we do not yet have reason to believe that Abel ever abandoned the use of frets.

While Döbereiner erred in not investigating further to corroborate his observation, he almost certainly believed that the question did not turn on historical research. Döbereiner saw the issue of frets as one of expediency rather than artistic concern. He treats them much as he does the end pin on the cello. Use of the end pin varied from one player to another, and the end pin was considered to be an auxiliary device, neither an essential, nor organic, nor defining feature of the cello. Although he played the gamba with an end pin, he did not regard it as essential. In like fashion, since cellos were occasionally played with frets to help in finding the notes, gambas did not need frets either. Because Döbereiner regarded frets as a matter of expediency, he did not absolutely forbid frets on the

³³Letter from Robert R. Wark, Curator of Art Collections, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, to John B. Rutledge, August 20, 1990. The frets are not visible from a normal viewing distance, but "at close range under a strong light" they are unquestionably there.

³⁴Letter from John Wilson, Curator of Painting and Sculpture, Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio, to John B. Rutledge, September 5, 1990. Mr. Wilson offers the following sage advice to anyone using pictorial evidence to understand instruments: "A problem might be that the strings of instruments on paintings, like the rigging of ships on marine paintings are always painted on last and with great delicacy, and therefore they are easily cleaned off by restorers." Further, "One thing I can suggest is not to base any conclusions on something as thin as a painted line unless one sees the object, and to make sure it is in good condition."

³⁵The intent here was not to examine all of the pictorial evidence relating to Abel and the gamba, which would have to include works by other artists and even sketchy caricatures difficult of interpretation. There is other corroborating evidence for Abel's use of frets, however. Rowlandson's famous sketch of Abel does show frets. See also *Gainsborough and his musical friends* (a catalogue published by The Greater London Council, 1977), and Mary Cyr, "Carl Friedrich Abel's Solos: a musical offering to Gainsborough?" (*Musical Times* 128 [June, 1987], 317-321).

gamba either. Unlike the lute, the bowed instruments, gamba and cello do not require frets--frets are not essential to the bowed instruments in Döbereiner's view.

A DIFFERENT AGENDA

Frets were not necessary for the achievement of Döbereiner's musical goals, which, though they are somewhat elusive and nearly untranslatable, varied little over thirty years. He advocates a "lively, spiritual reproduction of the old works for gamba, observing appropriately all the laws of style and any other imponderables with the aid of the musical instrument which in producing the sound arises anew."³⁶ Or, elsewhere, the aim is "a stylish re-invigoration of old music" ("eine stilvolle Neubelebung alter Musik"). Much depends, however, upon the interpretation of "stilvolle," an issue which would stir up much bitter debate.

Döbereiner clearly opposed the uncritical revival of the old practices; he speaks positively of modern-day gamba technique ("neuzeitliches Gambenspiel"). He thought that allowing the gamba the benefit of the advances that had been made in modern string techniques would release it from the bonds of history and return it to its place in practical musical life. Despite what we would probably consider a Romantic style of playing, Döbereiner thought that he was escaping the chains of Romanticism. He recognized another school--those "defenders of archaism"--and he was familiar with the kind of sound favored by historical revivers who played with frets, but he aimed at something different.

A more moderate view of frets is offered by Carel van Leeuwen Boomkamp (born 1906), who built up a collection of ancient instruments.³⁷ He was particularly interested in the viols. He takes up the issue of frets in his monograph on the tonal world of early

³⁶"[E]ine lebendige geistige Wiedergabe der alten Gambenmusik unter gebotener Wahrung aller stilistischen Gesetze und sonstiger Imponderabilien mit Hilfe des im Klange neu erstehenden Tonwerkzeuges," "Über die Bünde bei der Viola da Gamba," 72. This differs hardly at all from the definition published in his *Schule*, p. V.

³⁷This collection, which contained several viols, is described by him and J. H. van der Meer in *The Carel van Leeuwen Boomkamp Collection of Musical Instruments* (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1971).

music.³⁸ While arguing that the frets limited the player's ability to fine tune each note and to produce vibrato, he also recognized that they helped to produce the "objective" character that he saw as a quality of consort music for viols. He also recognized their contribution to correctly fingering chords. But he finds soloistic playing with frets troublesome because intonation is so limited (*Klanksfeer*, 60). His position on the frets is that they are an imperfection of the gamba (p. 124), much like quills on the harpsichord that break easily. Even with Leeuwen-Boomkamp in the 1940s we are far from musical practice based heavily on historical antecedents. Leeuwen Boomkamp too aimed at a modern technique for reviving the viols and pithily voiced his skepticism about historic fidelity (p. 120): "een historie-getrouwe uitvoering is noch mogelijk noch wenschelijk" (a historic performance is neither possible nor desirable).

BOWS AND STRINGS

During the fretless period we find a great deal of experimentation with both strings and bows. Döbereiner admits a variety of bows, since for him bows and grip are only means to achieve a "spiritual reproduction" of early music. One could use an old bow and play underhand, or a copy of an old bow played overhand, or a light cello bow. To Döbereiner the overhand grip of the bow represents progress. Overhand playing makes it possible to produce more sound ("klangfähiger") than in the old position--without falling into the error of "Romantic" forms of expression.³⁹ Grümmer's bow is a light cello bow, although at least by 1926 he had been given an antique gamba bow.

Commercially available gamba strings probably date from the late 1930s. Grümmer and Döbereiner recommend a combination of cello, violin and guitar strings of varying thicknesses. Both gut and overspun metal strings in varying guages were used for gamba strings.⁴⁰ Historically attuned critics consistently fault the cellists

³⁸*De klanksfeer der oude muziek in het bijzonder der 18de eeuwse muziek voor strijkinstrumenten* (Amsterdam: Het Hollandsche Uitgevershuis, 1947).

³⁹*Schule*, 3-4.

⁴⁰"Ueber die Viola da Gamba und ihre Verwendung bei J. S. Bach," *Bach-Jahrbuch*, 8 (1911): 85; also *Schule*, 4.

for using strings that are too thick, rendering the sound unviolllike. Grümmer advises against metal for the top strings. That steel strings were sometimes used in the twentieth century on the viols is evident from Leeuwen Boomkamp's discussion of the tonal differences caused by this practice. The use of steel strings heightened the contrast between open and stopped strings. He recommends against the use of steel strings for performing ancient music.⁴¹

EFFECT OF PLAYING WITHOUT FRETTS

As one might expect, the gamba played without frets gives a different effect than the fretted gamba, although the difference may be influenced by other factors such as vibrato, bowing, stringing, string tension, and "style." Döbereiner argued that without the frets the old fingering patterns are no longer "justified," even though the composer himself may have written them out. (Indeed, without frets the old fingerings were often impossible!) Intervals of thirds stopped on the C and E strings were played using the third finger as a *barré*, instead of using the third and fourth fingers as the old notation required. The second finger pressed on the third from above to support and strengthen the *barré*.⁴² Nor did they shy away from the French repertory with its five- and six-note chords. Döbereiner says that when playing the gamba without frets you have to set the fingers down more forcefully than with frets. This alone must have caused a slight character difference in the music.

Lack of frets affects the sound as well. Bessaraboff reports his audition of a phonograph record of a bass viol played without frets by a competent player. He notes that when chords are formed using both open and stopped strings, the "difference of tone color and sonority between [them] becomes immediately apparent."⁴³

There is some reason to believe that absence of frets may have caused intonational difficulties as well. A contemporary reviewer of a performance by Folkmar Längin in 1930 complains that the double stops were not in tune and attributes the problem to the

⁴¹*Klanksfeer*, 80-81.

⁴²Döbereiner, *Schule*, 48.

⁴³*Ancient European Musical Instruments*, p. 426, footnote 605.

strings not holding the pitch.⁴⁴ It seems more likely that the absence of frets created nearly insuperable technical difficulties.

For players in the fretless style the very nature of gamba sound seems to change. Descriptions of its sound tend towards the Romantic and mystical. Grümmer, for example, says its sounds of the spheres seem to come from heaven without worldly expression (“sphärenhaften Klänge ohne weltlichen Ausdruck”) and speaks of its inward soulfulness (“innere Beseeltheit”).⁴⁵ Helene von Schmitt, a member of Grümmer’s circle, writes of inwardness (“Innigkeit”) of the gamba.⁴⁶ Döbereiner characterizes the gamba’s tone thus:

[It is] not the masculine powerful sound of the cello. Rather, its sound has a captivating mildness and a lovely, endearing tenderness; its tone coloring has a very special quality, veiled with a breath of Romanticism. The gamba was made for graceful, enthusiastic playing, for deeply felt, inward expression.⁴⁷

This is very far from Hubert LeBlanc’s depiction of the gamba’s sound as “not loud (and even a little nasal)” like that of an ambassador.⁴⁸ In contrast to eighteenth-century (and earlier) descriptions of the gamba’s sound, the fretless school placed emphasis on its “inward” qualities, on deeply felt emotions, stressing the “subjective” side of playing and solo literature. The fretted school, by contrast, found the old music, particularly consort music, to be “objective” in character, a feature which was heightened by using the ancient performance practices, frets above all. How one conceives of the gamba is certain to affect how one plays it, and consequently how it sounds.

⁴⁴Otto Weinrich, *Ausgewählte Schriften IV: Konzertkritiken 1923-1933 und 1945-52* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1975), 304.

⁴⁵*Begegnungen*, 80.

⁴⁶See her “Nocturnal Dialogue Between a Gamba and a Cello,” included in Grümmer’s *Begegnungen*, 160.

⁴⁷Nicht das männlich Machtvolle des Violoncells...dafür hat ihr Klang eine bestrickende Milde und liebliche Zartheit; ihr Kolorit hat etwas Eigenes, wie umwebt von einem Hauche von Romantik. Die Gambe ist geschaffen zu anmutigem, schwärmerischem Spiel, zu tief empfundenem, innigen Ausdruck.” Christian Döbereiner, “Ueber die Viola da Gamba und ihre Verwendung bei J. S. Bach,” *Bach-Jahrbuch* 8 (1911): 78.

⁴⁸*Défense de la basse de viole . . .* translated by Barbara Garvey Jackson, *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 11 (1974): 24.

OTHER FRETLESS PLAYERS

It would be possible to produce a fairly lengthy list of cellists, who in the 1930s and 1940s, performed various works for gamba on the unfretted gamba. Döbereiner’s influence was amplified in the careers of some of his students. One of them, Willi Schmid, founded the Munich Viol Quintet, which performed in Munich and other parts of Europe in the early 1930s. The musicologist F. T. Arnold heard the group in 1931 and wrote to Dolmetsch:

They did all they could to modernize the music &, if one shut one’s eyes, one might have been listening to a Schumann quartet, besides wh: they had a number of annoying, characteristically German mannerisms: e.g. on almost every accented note the Gambist gave a little backward jerk of his square closely cropped head that made me long to punch it, & the “leader” was always stretching himself forward (as if he was trying to get out of his clothes--a swallowtail coat & white waistcoat at 4 o’clock in the afternoon!) in a quite unnecessary attempt to “conduct” the others.⁴⁹

This unnecessarily pugilistic critique might easily be dismissed as xenophobic anti-German sentiment, if it did not also show how a more historically oriented critic perceived the “fretless style.” While the music may have sounded “modern” to Arnold, Schmid probably would have explained his intentions in terms that echoed Döbereiner’s “spiritual revivification.” A very different view of a performance by the group is seen in a review by Wilhelm Zentner, who praises their performance as “uncommonly lively and up-to-date.” Zentner is pleased that the performance was not a “dry chapter of music history, that they didn’t lecture or aesthetically belabor fine points.”⁵⁰ One could hardly find greater contrast of viewpoints.

Another Döbereiner student was Folkmar Längin, a gambist and editor of works for viol. A photograph of Längin from about 1936 shows a gamba without frets.⁵¹ Längin founded the Karlsruher

⁴⁹Shelagh Godwin, “The F. T. Arnold Correspondence,” *The Consort* 33 (1977): 244. Cited by Harry Haskell, *Revival*, 56.

⁵⁰[E]s wurde nicht doziert und nicht ästhetisierend gebosselt, sondern von den berufensten Interpreten alter Musik, dem Döbereiner-Trio...und dem Münchner Violinquintett...ungemein lebendig and tagnahe musiziert.” *Zeitschrift für Musik* 99 (November, 1932): 1011.

⁵¹*Zeitschrift für Musik* 103 (1936): 942.

Kammerquartett für alte Musik. He occasionally performed with Döbereiner and was praised for his technical accomplishment and musical understanding. Although it would be fascinating to trace when and why Döbereiner's and Grümmer's pupils abandoned their methods and came to a more historically informed stance, it is a nearly impossible task. It is clear, however, that they did it at varying times; some may never have. Playing with frets may also have expressed a certain rebelliousness and a generational conflict between Döbereiner/Grümmer and the younger performers.

OPPOSITION DEVELOPS

Opposition developed outside the professional musical establishment, particularly in university collegia. The revival of the collegium musicum at German universities during the first two decades of this century is a well-known phenomenon. Such groups performed a wide variety of music from Medieval to Baroque. These collegia gave the impetus for the founding of collegia in America as German musicians, as for example, Paul Hindemith, were forced to leave Germany. Wilibald Gurlitt's collegium at the University of Freiburg gave three concerts in Karlsruhe in 1922, two years later a week-long series in Hamburg. They played modern replicas of viols.⁵² The performance practices of these groups, while a fascinating topic, is nevertheless too vast to be considered here. In general, the collegia were composed of persons more interested in historical accuracy in performance than were the cellist-revivers.

Musicians and laymen associated with the *Hausmusik* movement also championed the viol consort in historically more "correct" styles on similarly correct instruments. A return to the use of frets was one of their causes. But *Hausmusik* had its own ideological program, placing particular emphasis on consort music-making in the home, often leading to some surprising unhistorical results.

An arresting case is that of Richard Möller, an instrument builder and editor of the monthly *Die Laute*, who in 1918 wrote a little treatise advocating the reintroduction of the viola da gamba. The *Wandervogel* and the *Jugendbewegung* had taken up the six-string

guitar-lute, making it much more widely available. Möller predicted that in ten years gambas would be available in every little music store and even record stores just like the guitar-lute! Aware of the historic relationship between lute and viols, and believing that one ought to be able to play both, Möller built viols to be more like guitars. He put 12 fixed frets on the necks of his viols (warning that extreme care was necessary to get them in the correct place--otherwise the instrument was unplayable). Further, he built both viols and guitars with the same string length, and played viols with end pins. To make change between instruments even easier, he tuned his viols as guitars: E, A, d, g, b, e. In effect, he had reinvented the arpeggione 100 years later. Möller revived the viol with very little interest in authenticity or historical fidelity.

Later on the *Hausmusik* movement becomes more interested in fidelity and some pupils of the cellist-revivers converted to the *historisch-getreu* school. Haskell credits Wenzinger, who had studied with Grümmer, with leading the revolt against "unfashionable playing."⁵³ (It was fashionable in some quarters--Döbereiner often played to full houses.) Wenzinger gave a course in stylistically correct gamba playing in 1929.⁵⁴ *Hausmusik* adherents also promoted the popularization of the viols among amateurs.⁵⁵ The conflict between the mainstream professional cellists and the amateur musicians is a counterpoint to the fretless controversy.

Momentum builds with the publication in 1930 of Hayes's passionate and rhetorical defense of frets in *The Viols and Other Bowed Instruments*.⁵⁶ The frets are for Hayes the "form and the substance" of the viols. He apologizes to his readers for having to devote so much time to prove what is self-evident--that frets are an essential feature of viols:

⁵³p. 56.

⁵⁴Lecture given by August Wenzinger ("The Revival of the Viola da Gamba in the Twentieth Century") at the International Viola da Gamba Symposium in Utrecht, 31 August 1991. Notes provided by Thomas G. MacCracken.

⁵⁵Bessaraboff says, "...if viol playing is to become popular among amateurs, viols should be built properly and played fretted" (*Ancient European Musical Instruments*, 427, footnote 624).

⁵⁶London: Oxford University Press, 1928-30.

⁵²Haskell, 56.

[E]very possible evidence of books takes frets for granted; every artistic record in paint, pencil, or engraved line for three centuries shows viols fretted... (p. 24)

For Hayes the frets serve a two-fold purpose: they give each note played the “clear ringing quality of the open string,” and they provide for an equal-tempered scale (pp. 20-21). The problem with his arguments is that the old writers do not talk about the ringing tone; more often their concern is about finding the notes! Hayes’s exaggerated argumentation is clearly driven by strong conviction: it is possible to examine many art works and not know for certain whether the instruments are fretted or not. Hayes rightly points out that the presence of frets does not inhibit the playing of “divisions,” which must have included lots of “passage-work.” He is concerned to show that frets are not “the device of the incompetent,” as writers on the violin, he alleges, have claimed for generations. Perhaps the strongest argument he marshals is that some older organographers used frets as a defining element in their taxonomy of instruments.

The organological issue that now develops is whether frets are essential, vestigial, or optional. An important date in the controversy is the publication in 1932 of Josef Bacher’s treatise on the viols.⁵⁷ Bacher launches another fervent attack on the fretless style of playing. Bacher claims that the early revivers--it is uncertain who he means--did not take the trouble to refer to the old masters. But this clearly is wrong, since the revivers of the 1880s and 1890s had access to and quoted from the ancient treatises. Only Wasielewsky is cited by name as a defender of fretless playing, although Wasielewsky had been dead for about 40 years. The arguments attributed to Wasielewsky are that frets “would impose a substantial hindrance as regards runs and passage work as well as in changes in position” and that they prevented playing purely in tune.⁵⁸ Why did Bacher not attack Grümmer’s method, for ex-

⁵⁷*Die Viola da Gamba: eine Einführung in das Wesen des Violenchores und in die Spielweise der alten Gambenmeister...* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1932). Bacher’s treatise was affirmatively reviewed by August Wenzinger in *Hausmusik*.

⁵⁸Bacher is cited in the Kinney translation, p. 24. Wasielewsky did state as much in his *The Violoncello and its History*, translated by Isobella Stigand (New York; Da Capo Press, 1968), 40: “the [cello] fingerboard had no frets, which, in regard to runs and cadences, as well as changes of positions, opposed (sic) a substantial hindrance to the gamba player.”

ample, which had been published only four years earlier? Perhaps social, political or tactical considerations dictated that the names of established proponents of the fretless style were not to be used. He called on musicians to abandon techniques that do not suit the old music. Bacher elsewhere denounced the absence of frets and the cellizing of the gamba. In a review of Wenzinger’s *Gambenübung in Hausmusik* (1936) he decries the early cellistic treatment--even by proponents of the *Jugendmusikbewegung*--as “wrong and harmful.”⁵⁹ Döbereiner, a champion of the gamba for twenty-odd years, did not suffer this criticism silently. Döbereiner was no doubt offended that the authority and correctness of his approach were not recognized. (This is ironic since Döbereiner seems largely unaware of the pioneering work of revivers of the gamba before his time.⁶⁰) In the preface to his *Schule* (1936) he attacks Bacher’s treatise (without naming its author) as polemical, adding the specious argument that if they really want to be authentic, they will have to wear long wigs as well.

The problem for the historically faithful revivers was that they were confronting a revival already in process which had gained some acceptance among the public, even though it involved playing the instrument “improperly.” The attack on fretless playing had the underlying motivation of a conceptual change in approach to early music. The pro-fret faction recognized in frets a potent deterrent to a Romantic style of playing. Herman Reichenbach (1922) brings this out neatly: “The frets were necessary for fingering chords correctly; for us, however, they are more important as a barrier to a subjective stylization of the tone.”⁶¹ Two very different approaches to older music found the focus of their argument in the use of frets.

What the pro-fret faction in their zeal conveniently overlooked, however, was that the gamba is both a fretted and an unfretted instrument, at least above the seventh fret. No one among the

⁵⁹He probably has in mind Richard Möller’s *Laute, Viola da Gamba, Viola da Braccia* (1918) and H. Reichenbach’s *Mein Gambenbuch* (1922).

⁶⁰He claims, for example, to be the first to revive the gamba part to the *Matthew Passion*. There was a performance in Krefeld in the 1880s featuring a gamba (reported in the *Zeitschrift für Instrumentenbau* [21 April 1884]: 271).

⁶¹*Wandlungen im Musikinstrumentarium vom Barock zur Klassik in Deutschland*, Dissertation (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1922), 105.

restorers of frets complains that the tone isn't ringing and objective enough if you don't have frets all the way up the neck. This would have been technically possible (and was even done by Möller), but there were no museum models for it. For most of the gamba's existence some composers have written for the higher register (there, of course, without frets). This probably would have been expected of better players. J.-B.-A. Forqueray (1767-68) advises his royal correspondent to become more familiar with the higher positions.⁶² Abel played high up on the neck on the lower strings as well.

DECLINE OF FRETLESS PLAYING

By the 1930s, then, fretless playing found itself publically attacked and on the defensive. The intellectual attacks from musicologists such as Hayes and more authentic performances from a new generation of musician-scholars such as Wenzinger made converts to the more objective style of playing. The journal *Hausmusik* occasionally carried brief articles on the gamba, which included affirmations of the use of frets. An article by Bacher in *Hausmusik* in 1932⁶³ contrasts those who approach old instruments from the point of view of modern instrumental practice with those who try to get at the spirit of the old music unburdened by habit, tradition, and prejudice. Advocacy of frets was positively avant-garde in its "backwardness" and the use of frets became a symbol of progressive antiquarianism. On the Continent the number of amateur players begins to grow. Soon more amateur players gather at a viol "conclave" than all fretless performers together.

Recordings by the Dolmetsch group were available in Germany, but evidently did not influence Döbereiner and Grümmer. Dolmetsch's approach was reported in Germany: the late Günther Hellwig, an important modern gamba builder, was one of the

⁶²Your Highness must endeavor to become acquainted with the upper fingerboard of His instrument, that is, from the last fret to the middle of the rest of the board. ... Many good things will come of this improved acquaintanceship: 1st, the beautiful sound which is the soul of the bowed instruments...." See John Rutledge, "A Letter of J.-B.-A. Forqueray, Translated and with Commentary," *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 13 (1976): 15.

⁶³1932, H. 4, p. 74.

several German visitors to Haslemere and a source of Dolmetsch influence in Germany. Writing in *The Consort* in 1937 he speculates that the modern revival of the viols in Germany had had little response because the audience recognized that the methods were wrong.⁶⁴ This, I think, says more about Hellwig's faith in new-style fidelity than about the ability of an audience to assess a performance. The performances of Döbereiner and Grümmer were generally well received. Their success almost certainly caused consternation and perhaps a certain amount of jealousy among the historically informed.

In 1941 an important organological event occurred: the publication of Nicholas Bessaraboff's catalogue of instruments in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Bessaraboff lends his authority to the position that frets are organic and essential to the viols. (Yet even he calls this a "vexing question.") After reviewing the arguments made against the use of frets, Bessaraboff decides in favor of frets because they are "functionally connected" with tone color and fingering technique (p. 266). Viols played as cellos, he argues, lose their distinctive tone color. What is the sense of reviving them if they are made to sound like the violin family? Bessaraboff reasons that the regularity of violin fingering helps to determine that it is played without frets. The irregularity of viol tuning and the number of strings determine that it should be played with frets. Bessaraboff provides a good summary of the state of viol playing at the end of the 1930s and into the 1940s:

So at present there are two schools of viol playing, one of which still continues with its early misconceptions, and another one which is supported by the painstaking scholarship based on the writings of contemporary authorities such as Martin Agricola, Gerle, Lanfranco, Ganassi, Ortiz, Zacconi, Cerreto, Cerone, Praetorius, Playford, Simpson, Mace, and Rousseau. (p. 427)

Only one year earlier, another organologist, Curt Sachs, had changed his tune: it is now incorrect to undo the frets and play with cello bows.⁶⁵

⁶⁴July, 1937, p. 2

⁶⁵*History of Musical Instruments* (New York: Norton, 1940), 349.

Now we must examine how long that state of affairs continued. As we shall see, fretless playing was in large part a Germanic phenomenon (although there was Germanic opposition as well). The events of the 1940s in Germany placed severe strains on the entire musical community. One can only speculate about how viol playing might have developed in Germany if the Second World War had not interfered. There was also fretless playing in England--otherwise Hayes probably would not have written so urgently against it. John Catch⁶⁶ raises the interesting question, while attempting to demonstrate an unbroken tradition of authentic gamba playing in Britain, of how fretless playing got there. It seems likely that it was introduced by cellist-revivers, such as the Saint-Georges. The "two schools" described by Bessaraboff existed in Britain as well.

To fret or not to fret was still a burning issue in the early 1940s. Even at the end of the decade Robert Dolejsi begins his article on ancient viol tunings with a defense of the use of frets. Robert Doljesi is one of the few defenders of frets to point out how necessary they are for playing from tablature.⁶⁷ But the fretless school was still alive, for in the 1950s Döbereiner and Grümmer were still concertizing, of course without frets. A second edition of Döbereiner's method was published in 1954. In *The Interpretation of Music* (1954) Thurston Dart rails against the "cellamba": "[These instruments] may be good or bad--the future will decide that--but to fob them off on the listener as though they were authentic" is unacceptable.⁶⁸ For Dart the organological issue is simple: a viol without frets is not a viol.

⁶⁶John R. Catch, "Prince Albert's Early Music," *Galpin Society Journal* 42 (August 1989): 8.

⁶⁷Dolejsi, Robert. "Ancient Viol Tunings," *Violins and Violinists*, 10/7 (Oct., 1949 through Mar.-Apr., 1950), in five installments.

⁶⁸(London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1954), 32.

As late as 1958 Hans Bol states that "at the moment a great many Dutch gambists play the instrument without frets." He attributes this to the fact that most of them come from a cello background.⁶⁹ By the early 1960s unfretted viol playing, though still present, no longer poses a threat to the more historically faithful; it has become risible--particularly in Anglo-American circles.

Döbereiner, however, defended playing without frets in print as late as 1960 in the second edition of his *Zur Renaissance alter Musik*.⁷⁰ Grümmer's method for gamba remained commercially available into the 1960s, carrying its period of influence well into the 1970s. Many gambists active today, both amateur and professional, have probably used one or the other of these methods at some point in their careers.

In 1961 Nikolaus Harnoncourt wrote that when confronted with the difficulty of playing with a modern orchestra the original gamba sounds far too thin. When playing the Bach passion the standard procedure is to use a cello or a "verstärkte Cello-Gambe" (reinforced cello-gamba).⁷¹ This compromise position must have been maintained by some players in Germany through the 1970s. Harnoncourt also retained overhand bowing, and his ensemble played treble viols under the chin for their early recording of the Purcell sonatas.

⁶⁹"Dat momenteel een groot gedeelte van de Nederlandse gambisten op een instrument zonder ribben speelt . . . vindt mijns inziens zijn oorzaak in het feit dat het merendeel van hen van huis uit cellist is." "De bespelingswijze van de viola da gamba," *Mens en melodie*, 13 (1958): 294.

⁷⁰The second edition of his gamba method was subsidized by the Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultur (see *Musik in München: eine Denkschrift zur Wiedererweckung alter Musik* [Munich: Hieber, 1955], 16). It probably would not have been a successful commercial venture because most of the potential (and presumably) amateur audience was more attuned to historic fidelity. A review in *Mens en melodie* says Döbereiner has ignored recent historical research.

⁷¹"Zur Geschichte der Streichinstrumente und ihres Klanges," *Oesterreichische Musik-Zeitschrift* 16 (1961): 525.

NO MORE FRETTING ABOUT FRETS

Today, it is safe to assume, almost no one plays the viol without frets. There are several reasons for this. We have had enormous benefits from the historically faithful movement, one of them being a general recognition that the normal condition of viols is fretted. Players are no longer drawn mainly from the ranks of cello players and there has been a recognition that frets make the instrument quite accessible to many adults.

The admittedly exotic path we have pursued has led us to new discoveries about the history of the gamba. There was more variety and flexibility of approach to the gamba than we ordinarily imagine because our perspective has been formed and limited by the post-60s early music renaissance. Yet the historical record is not as uniform as we might imagine and our understanding of it needs some clarification. Even during its early historical period, the gamba evidently had a few players who disdained the frets.

For a significant period of its history--the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--the gamba was played without frets. I think it is impossible to write the history of the viols without including Döbereiner and Grümmer and other virtuosi of the fretless school as major figures.

The fretless revival of this century, which lasted until the 1960s at least co-existing with the modern authentic revival, was not the result of ignorance and poor scholarship; rather, it was a different approach to the gamba. The fretless revivers served to test the limits of the instrument, in some cases seeking to carry it beyond where it had been, and perhaps where it could go. There is little reason to consider this a sad chapter in viol history. The experiment encouraged the organological debate, but it did not solve it, for few, pace Thurston Dart, would maintain that a viol without frets is not really a viol.

Most modern players will correctly continue to use frets because viols usually had frets; moreover, having frets makes the instruments easier to play and also gives the viols their distinctive tone color. But historicism must recognize that some authentic playing might occasionally be done without frets. There are historical antecedents for playing certain types of viol music in certain periods without frets. Would a historically informed performance of Yrjö

Kilpinen's suite (1939) for gamba (or cello)⁷² require no frets? Flexibility and tolerance in approach can expand our horizons and open up to us an appreciation for the work done by musicians in the past.

⁷²Kilpinen, the "Finnish Schubert" wrote his "Suite für Violoncell oder Gambe und Klavier" (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1939) for Grümmer's daughter, Sylvia, who also took up the gamba.

RECENT RESEARCH ON THE VIOL

Ian Woodfield

This bibliography is intended as a concise guide to recent research relating to the viol. It lists books, articles, dissertations, selected reviews, unpublished papers and major scholarly editions of music. Research on any aspect of the viol (and related instruments such as the baryton) will qualify for inclusion. Suggestions for additional entries in any language will be most welcome. They should be sent to: Ian Woodfield, Department of Music, Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 INN, Northern Ireland.

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REVIEWS

Elway Bevin and John Baldwyn. *Two Brownings of Three Parts*. Edited by George Hunter. Urbana, Illinois: Northwood Music, 1989. Score & 3 parts. \$4.00.

William Byrd *Four Part Consort Music*. Edited by George Hunter. Urbana, Illinois: Northwood Music, 1990. Score & 4 parts. \$10.00.

In 1575 William Byrd (1543-1623) was granted a patent by Elizabeth which gave him, along with his mentor Thomas Tallis, a monopoly on the printing of part-music and manuscript paper. He became sole owner upon Tallis's death in 1585 and then assigned the license to Thomas East in 1587. It eventually passed to Byrd's famous pupil Thomas Morley in 1598. How unfortunate for us then that Byrd published so little of his own purely instrumental music. He did include two fantasies in his last collection, the *Psalmes, Songs and Sonnets* of 1611, but even the bulk of his glorious consort songs were printed in the fully vocal collections of 1588 and 1589 to be sung as vernacular part-songs.

One might presume that the publishing of strictly instrumental music was still too risky a venture in late sixteenth-century England and that the viol playing craze did not really take until the seventeenth-century. Curiously, however, even in Jacobean times most consort music continued to be circulated in manuscript form, the publications of East being a notable exception.

Since in turn no autograph's of Byrd's music survive, we must turn to a confusing number of manuscript copies for both his consort and keyboard output. The best known of these is the famous virginal collection titled *My Ladye Nevells Booke* which is in the hand of John Baldwyn. This "presentation copy" contains keyboard arrangements of two surviving Byrd consort pieces, a clue which led the pioneering Edmund Fellowes to restore a "Nevell" keyboard voluntary to hypothetical consort form. (See vol. 17 of the old Byrd edition [1948] and Byrd *Three-Part Consorts*, ed. Hunter [Northwood Music, 1986]).

The ever-curious and creative George Hunter continues this sort of hypothetical work and offers us three of his own reconstructions of keyboard pieces in four-part consort form alongside four "famil-

iar” Byrd masterpieces. He brings to this task his many years of experience in early music as a scholar, editor, harpsichordist, viol player, choral conductor and teacher. The two Pavan/Galliard pairs and the Prelude and Voluntarie he has selected all show technical signs of their possible consort origins, particularly the imitations in four-parts and many suspensions; and while his generally excellent introduction does not discuss this aspect in great detail, he does refer to the major study by Oliver Neighbor, *The Consort and Keyboard Music of William Byrd* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978). Mr. Hunter chooses to omit the keyboard-style variations on the repeats of the dance strains, pointing out that such ornaments are rarely found in consort sources, and he invites modern players to introduce their own variations. I like this solution, which might stimulate some “informed creativity” and more likely result in passages idiomatic to the viol than simply reproducing the keyboard divisions.

The four “familiar” Byrd works included here also benefit from Hunter’s skilled editing. Conveniently, he does conform to the numbering established by Gordon Dodd in the VdGS Thematic Index and also followed by Kenneth Elliot in volume 17 of the Byrd Edition (ed. Phillip Brett). But that superb 1971 monumental publication, while offering an alternative to Fellowes violin bowings, was never intended for primary use by performers, although many of us used it, and here again Hunter comes to our rescue. Original note values are restored and in Northwood policy, tenor viol parts are given only in alto, but not necessarily original clefs. Both scholars and players will admire the concise and expert commentary as well as the policies for placement of barlines and time-signatures where irregular phrase lengths are involved. The score and parts, carefully numbered, are now computer produced, making them even cleaner than the successful early Northwood editions.

While Fantasia No. 1 is taken from the composer’s own 1611 print, Fantasia No. 2 involved some composition on Hunter’s part, since none of the three sources described in the commentary offers the parts complete. It is interesting to compare Hunter’s new treble part with the one given by Kenneth Elliott in the Byrd edition. Both gentlemen demonstrate a profound knowledge of counterpart, but

Hunter’s is less fragmented and shows more of a players feel for a line.

The two Byrd “In Nomine” settings are also available in a London Pro Musica publication edited by Bernard Thomas (EML 139). This too is given only in score, although there are no page turns, and only in “recorder” clefs with note values halved. Both Thomas and Elliott mention however that in one source, In Nomine No. 1 is attributed to Parsons, a small detail that Hunter chooses not to submit.

“Browning” or “The Leaves be Greene” was a popular tune in Elizabethan England, and the several extant settings are again much loved by twentieth-century consort players, especially the magnificent five-part settings by Byrd and Woodcock and the three-part by Elway Bevin (c.1554-1638), familiar from *Musica Britannica*, volume 9, “Jacobean Consort Music,” edited by Thurston Dart and William Coates. Hunter brings us a new edition of this well-crafted piece with its eight-bar tune migrating from part to part. The only complete source is a British Library manuscript, Royal Music 24. d. 2, which is in the hand of John Baldwyn (c.1560-1615), copyist of “My Ladye Nevells Booke.” Following the Bevin in the manuscript is a “Browning” by Baldwyn himself, who was a singer in the Chapel Royal and very likely an associate of Byrd. This piece and several others suggest that while not a refined master he was at least bold and imaginative. A facsimile print of this manuscript is now easily available from the Garland Series, Renaissance Music in Facsimile, volume 8. This can give one an opportunity to examine the twenty other Baldwyn works in the manuscript and to see the numerous scribal problems that Hunter describes in his commentary on the Baldwyn piece.

It is the familiar Bevin piece, however, that clarifies for us the Northwood editorial policies. Gone are the superscript accidentals of the old “Jacobean” which reported details in the score, useful as they are to scholars. Hunter offers scholarly commentary but both score and parts are first and foremost for the performer. The critical apparatus is present but does not detract from the clear and attractive layout. George Hunter and Northwood have given us something

nearly as fine as Faber, only in smaller packages and very affordable. The paper is really quite decent and the presentation attractive. We applaud his labor of love and look forward to more.

Brent Wissick

Priscilla Parson. *An Organological Study of Leg-Held Bowed Chordophones.* D.M.A dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1989. Available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

From its beginnings the early music revival has had a large component interested in recreating, restoring and playing historical instruments. Today our use of instruments is more informed than ever, as players, builders, and scholars continuously refine their concepts of how instruments originated and evolved, how they varied from one country to another, how they evolved in particular countries, what sounds were the norm, and what musics they played. Delving into all this seems endless, and indeed the more we know the more questions come to light.

This study is concerned with the physical measurements of historical stringed instruments, particularly the violoncello and the viola da gamba, and the historical and geographic relevance of these measurements. Violins and various "viols da braccio," are included to some extent, chiefly for further comparison among bowed stringed instruments.

It is Parson's belief that the most valuable and useful measurements for the leg-held bowed chordophones are those of the sound box itself, specifically its length, width, and depth. In pursuing this she has gathered statistics for 760 instruments covering the years circa 1500 to circa 1789. Each of these 760 instruments is then assigned to one of five geographic areas: (1) Italy and South Germany, (2) Austria, (3) England, (4) France, and (5) North Germany. Many famous names are encountered within this database from Louis Guerson, Gasparo da Salo, and Jacob Tielke to Antonio Stradivari.

Next the measurements are expressed as ratios in several ways: (1) length to width (W/L), (2) length to depth (D/L), and (3) width to depth (D/W). Ratios of various instruments are then compared to determine if the ratios can help define specific instruments and/or their families. Various countries are compared to determine nationalistic characteristics, various eras to determine evolutions in instrument making, and various sizes of instruments within the same families to see how the shapes of smaller instruments vary in their proportions from their larger counterparts. In some cases the

ratios show us a great deal and help us in quantifying concepts we may have suspected but could not describe as accurately as we might wish.

The author spends a great deal of space in defining terms, instruments, and instrument families. Her definitions and statistics are especially helpful in shedding light on the elusive *lira da gamba*, and they are helpful in clarifying differences between the viola da gamba and violin families.

Her brief discussions of historical writers—Martin Agricola, Hans Gerle, Giovanni Lanfranco, Sylvestro Ganassi, Marin Mersenne, et al—is useful but without detail. Much of her discussion derives and builds on more modern writers such as Gerald Hayes, Sibyl Marcuse, David Boyden, Nicolas Bessaraboff, and Ian Woodfield. Lowell Creitz, cellist and retired professor at the University of Wisconsin, provided major support as dissertation adviser, and Peter Tourin's list of viol measurements seems to have played a major role in inspiring and aiding the study.

Appendices supply a number of helpful lists of the 760 instruments: (1) by body length, (2) by date, (3) by maker, (4) by country, type, and date, (5) by source, and (6) by country according to the ratios. A number of charts bring together the diverse materials, and the rudimentary illustrations help us visualize some of the author's thoughts. The bibliography also serves the study well.

There is a lot of material included in this work, and it is easy to get lost along the many paths taken. While it seems that there is excessive repetition, most of the material is needed and indeed required. Sometimes the statistics are slow going, but the conclusions can be examined without delving into all the logic and calculations. Of course one must be wary of "proving anything by statistics." Ms. Parson's "averaging" of dimensions and ratios, for example, sometimes helps to create a model but frequently creates a false sense of standardization or a hybrid which simply did not exist in the real early music world. For me a particularly fascinating part was that devoted to the elusive *lira da gamba*. Here the author provided one of the clearest definitions I have seen.

Parson's work is not definitive, and it is probably not for the average person to peruse in great detail. The ratios created by the author do start to sketch distinctions, influences, and evolutions in

string instrument building. While the conclusions are of necessity tentative, they should provide a foundation for future research. Tom MacCracken, with encouragement from the Viola da Gamba Society of America, is currently undertaking a massive listing of extant historical viols, and even his work will not provide the final word in the search for answers in viol iconography and organology.

Gordon Sandford

Jeremy Yudkin. *Music in Medieval Europe.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1989.

David Fenwick Wilson. *Music of the Middle Ages: Style and Structure.* New York: Schirmer, 1990.

David Fenwick Wilson. *Music of the Middle Ages: An Anthology for Performance and Study.* New York: Schirmer, 1990.

James McKinnon, ed. *Antiquity and the Middle Ages: From Ancient Greece to the 15th Century.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1991.

In 1981 David Fallows dedicated his biography of Dufay to his wife and “to our son Benjamin, born exactly a fortnight ago into a world where the performance and understanding of medieval music are among the few things likely to improve.” It was a memorable phrase, the first of many in a splendid and influential book. Now, as Ben Fallows approaches adolescence, it may be time to look back and reflect that both sides of his dad’s prediction have been amply fulfilled. Whatever has happened with the rest of the world, the performance and study of medieval music has come a long way in the last ten years. Research into our earliest repertoires (especially the more intractable repertoires like the thirteenth-century motet and the *Ars Subtilior*) has done much to clarify the structure, style, situation, and performance practices of music before 1400, and spectacular recordings by groups like Gothic Voices, P.A.N., and the Ensemble Alcatraz have taken it to a wide and enthusiastic audience outside the academy.

It was probably only natural that in the last couple of years we should see a new crop of general histories of medieval music attempting to bring things up to date for the nonspecialist music student. And among the most effective efforts are two textbooks by Jeremy Yudkin and David Fenwick Wilson and a collection of essays edited by James McKinnon.

The Yudkin and Wilson books are meant to be used in graduate and advanced undergraduate courses on the music of the middle ages: they are competitors to the well-known texts of Richard Hoppin and Gustave Reese (indeed, the Yudkin is in a very concrete sense the successor to Albert Seay’s book, which it has succeeded in the Prentice Hall catalogue). As such, they are similar in a number of important ways. Both cover European music from chant through

Ars Subtilior (though Yudkin goes a bit farther on both ends, adding antiquity and Ciconia). Both proceed more or less chronologically, but are unafraid to divert into a geographic or generic approach when the music demands. Each includes an anthology (Yudkin's incorporated into the text, Wilson's bound separately) and a pair of cassette tapes to go along with it—indispensable in a world where so many college libraries are deficient in medieval music and where so many recordings, especially recordings more than five or ten years old, are starting to sound pretty painful. Each tries, as every music history textbook must, to combine historical consideration of the surroundings of music, examination of the various surviving repertoires, speculation on the nature of the unwritten tradition, and an overview of the original sources.

For all this, however, there are two striking differences between Yudkin and Wilson. First, while Yudkin has structured his text rather conventionally, mixing historical and biographical information with musical description in roughly equal proportions, Wilson departs from the tradition of medieval-music textbooks in a very dramatic way by focusing unashamedly on the music itself. Where Yudkin builds his chapters from the outside in, describing repertoires in terms of the social and aesthetic pressures that formed them, Wilson tends to begin each chapter with a quick historical introduction and then move on to the music right away. His analyses of individual pieces in the anthology are of a level of detail unprecedented in this sort of book, and he is careful to place them into the bigger picture, with exceptionally thoughtful general discussions of the musical style of a particular period. Even more remarkable are Wilson's ten "practica," in which he has students actually getting their hands dirty, from transcribing modern chant notation, to analysis of various musical genres, to singing with the hexachords, to improvising early organum, to composition in the style of Machaut. In short, the titles have it right: Yudkin's book is about music *in* medieval Europe, Wilson's about *the* music of the middle ages.

The second important difference is in the recordings that accompany the two texts—both prepared by long-recognized authorities on medieval performance, and both of the highest quality, but both presenting two very different views on how this music is supposed

to sound. The tapes for Yudkin's book have been assembled by Thomas Binkley: several pieces were newly recorded by his Early Music Institute at Indiana University, and one cut is from a Swiss radio recording of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, but most of the tapes' contents are excerpted from existing records of his Studio der frühen Musik. They represent Binkley at his best, with imaginative and bold use of instruments and an always astonishing virtuosity in all the performers. Some of his most famous recordings are here, including one of the Estampies-in-the-Casbah and the wonderful East Tennessee Nota; and even the lesser-known entries (I might especially mention a hair-raising version of the planctus "O monialis concio" from the Las Huelgas codex on tape 1) offer a wide variety of thoughtful and sensitive performances of medieval music.

Wilson's recordings were prepared by Paul Hillier, with his groups Western Wind (for monophony and early polyphony) and the Hilliard Ensemble (for the thirteenth-century motet and beyond). All the material is newly recorded, none of it is available elsewhere, and the performances, as we have become accustomed to hearing from Hillier and his people, are just terrific. My only qualm is that, with the exception of a couple of very inconspicuous organ accompaniments, all the recordings are by a-cappella voices. This reflects the trend of modern scholarship on medieval performance (a trend well described, incidentally, by Wilson in extensive insert notes), however, the singing is so spectacular that it is hard to complain. But the debate on medieval performance practice is by no means over, and users of these tapes should be aware that they may rely too heavily on one point of view.

The third new work on medieval music, *Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, edited by James McKinnon, is the first entry in Prentice Hall's new "Music and Society" series (previously published in England by Macmillan as "Man and Music"). As with its seven companions, it is meant not as a conventional textbook, but as a more or less comprehensive collection of new essays on the surroundings and situation of music back then. McKinnon has gotten articles from the absolute top notch of English and American scholars in each era: Andrew Barker on archaic Greece, the editor himself on early western civilization, Christian antiquity, and early chant, David Hiley on later chant, Marion Gushee on early po-

lyphony, Peter Lefferts on medieval England, Christopher Page on twelfth- and thirteenth-century France, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson on fourteenth-century France, Michael Long on fourteenth-century Italy, and Reinhard Strohm on the end of the middle ages. The essays are always informative and literate, never too technical—easily understood, I should think, by anyone with even a mild interest in this music. These are rare qualities in medieval scholarship, and McKinnon and series editor Stanley Sadie deserve much credit for a virtuoso editing job.

Perhaps the most striking section of the book is Christopher Page's chapter on urban and courtly musical life in France from 1100 to 1300, which not only confirms its author's place as the preeminent prose stylist writing on early music today, but manages to strip away and replace the mixture of romance and ignorance that has long surrounded the troubadours and trouvères. Page's view of these most tantalizing of medieval musicians is hardheaded and iconoclastic, but all the more vivid for its clean common sense; and the truth turns out to give more rein to the imagination than any legend ever did. By singling out this one essay, however, I do not mean in any way to diminish the others, which all share its greatest strengths: these are not mere summaries or state-of-the-argument papers, but imaginative and often brilliant personal syntheses of enormous amounts of material. No one, from the timidest novice to the crustiest medievalist, will fail to find something interesting and surprising in this book.

Even if you are not teaching or taking a course in medieval music you will probably find your enjoyment and understanding of the middle ages enriched by browsing through the essays in McKinnon's collection. Yudkin and Wilson, as more conventional textbooks, may be a little slower going, but not too bad (especially Yudkin) as textbooks go; either is worth acquiring as a reference book, and either set of tapes (especially Wilson's) is worth adding to the record collection. All and all, it has been a good couple of years for medieval music: now back to work on the rest of the world.

Kenneth Kreitner

Sieur de Machy. *Pièces de viole en tablature*, Jonathan Dunford. ADDA compact disc, 581256, AD 184, digital recording, 1991.

Just off the recording press is Jonathan Dunford's performance of four suites from the *Pièces de viole* by Le Sieur de Machy. This new release expands the available repertoire of French Baroque music for unaccompanied viol, and represents the solo recording debut of a young American viol player as well as his "new" eighteenth-century viol. Dunford was born in New York, studied with Jordi Savall in Basel for several years beginning in 1984, and obtained a master's degree in viola da gamba from the New England Conservatory in 1987. He now lives in Paris, where he pursues an active schedule of performing, teaching, and recording.

De Machy's collection, published in 1685, contains eight suites for solo viol (without basso continuo), four in staff notation and four in tablature—A major, A minor, D major, and D minor—complementing Jordi Savall's 1977 recording on Astrée of three of the suites in notation—D minor, G minor, and G major.

As explained in Dunford's notes, these pieces represent an important point in the history of viol music in that they are the first solo pieces published in France, documenting a playing tradition for the bass viol which undoubtedly began long before. Unfortunately, the collection is de Machy's only known surviving work, published or otherwise, contradicting his promise in the preface to issue subsequent publications. It seems to be no coincidence that de Machy's pieces precede Marais' Book I by only one year, and we must question the possible influence of Marais' work on de Machy's output.

We have very little biographical information about de Machy. According to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, he was born in Abbeville, France at an unspecified date. There is no indication of his first name in surviving documents. The title page of the published pieces lists his address in 1685 as rue neuve des Fosseux Fauxbourg Saint Germain, the same location cited by Du Pradel in his 1692 list of Paris musicians. I know of no evidence to suggest de Machy's presence in Paris after that date. He was probably a student of Nicolas Hotman, as was his rival Sainte Colombe. The latter was more highly regarded than de Machy.

Important information about the state of solo viol playing in Paris in the last third of the seventeenth century appears in the extended preface of de Machy's 1685 collection. As Dunford indicates, de Machy looks both backward and forward in that collection, backward in his use of the more traditional tablature notation for half of these suites, and forward in his inclusion of staff notation, which apparently many viol players were beginning to prefer. He takes a strong stand for playing in the older, tablature-based tradition in his advocacy for a harmonic style of playing (*jeu d'harmonie*), characterized by frequent *tenuës* (holding down of the fingers) in the manner of the lute, rather than a melodic one (*jeu de mélodie*), which is inspired ultimately by the voice. De Machy was not reluctant to criticize opponents of the harmonic style, particularly Sainte Colombe and his students Jean Rousseau (who rebutted de Machy in several vitriolic writings) and Marais, whom he never cites by name. The preface to the 1685 publication also includes a table of eighteen ornaments, with explanations of how to execute them. Many of these ornaments have also been clarified by Marais in the prefaces to his *Pièces*, but Dunford singles out the *petit tremblement* as still enigmatic to players today. It is, not coincidentally, the one closest to lute embellishment.¹

Dunford's performance illustrates the viability of de Machy's traditional approach to the viol—Dunford and de Machy both offer convincing evidence that music for solo viol need not include basso continuo to make musical sense. Dunford allows this repertoire to speak through his adept management of both the harmonic and

¹To focus this essay on Dunford's work and not on the history of the French solo viol, may I offer here just a brief comment on the situation de Machy describes. There are several ambiguities in de Machy's preface. For one, there appear to be no differences in musical style between his pieces notated in tablature and those in staff notation. Additionally, one must be equally adept, it seems to me, in both *jeu d'harmonie* and *jeu de mélodie* in order to successfully perform his pieces, requiring a constant fluctuation between hand positions. And de Machy's style is not so different from that of Marais, at least Marais' compositions in Book I. What then is this all about—the “tempest in a glass of water” Gordon Kinney wrote about in this journal in 1977 (vol. 14, p. 42)? Twentieth-century evaluations of de Machy's preface have generally interpreted this controversy as a conflict created by personal allegiance to one school of playing or another in Paris in the last third of the seventeenth century—to include at least Hotman, de Machy, Sainte Colombe, Rousseau, Danoville, and Marais.

melodic techniques de Machy requires. His performance is rendered all the more striking through the vibrancy of his recently-acquired historical instrument, the only known bass viol built by the Parisian violin maker Salomon, who is also known for making *pardessus de viole*. The viol is dated 1741 and was restored in Paris by American builder Judith Kraft just a few months before this recording was made.

Overall Dunford's musical interpretation of de Machy's dance suites is tasteful and filled with “bon goût.” I enjoy the freedom and surprises I hear in the unmeasured preludes in D minor and A minor. In particular I appreciate his interpretations of most of the allemandes, the most complicated of the dances, and courantes, in which the changing meters sometimes challenge convincing performance. However, I question Dunford's choices of tempos in some of the dances. After a stunning prelude, the Allemande of the D minor suite is much too slow, resulting in a lack of metric focus, and all four very slow sarabandes would certainly stymie most dancers.² As a listener who has now heard these four suites in quick succession, I wish that de Machy, as he did in the suites in staff notation, could have deviated somewhat from the same standard seven movements (Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue, Gavotte, and Minuet). Maybe Marais actually did have something over him. Each, suite, however, is delightful and well presented by Dunford.

The physical presentation of this compact disc deserves notice. I particularly appreciate program notes written by the performer(s), rather than by a party not as directly involved as the performer of

I would argue, however, that the conflict was created not so much from different points of view regarding the viol itself and playing techniques, but instead from a more general and pervasive conflict of musical styles which was descending on France at the time. The established, and undoubtedly for some time popular, method of “shining” on the unaccompanied viol favored by de Machy and others was being challenged by a very powerful force in Baroque music, the *basso continuo*, which was just beginning to appear in music for the solo viol in France during the last third of the seventeenth century. De Machy may have seen first hand the demise in popularity of the lute as a solo instrument and feared the same for his precious viol.

²At the risk of generating another tangent for this review, let me simply state one of my ongoing concerns, that we musicians should remember how knowledge of the dance can inform our playing of dance-related musical styles.

the music. In particular, Dunford's essay reflects his intimate understanding of de Machy's musical and technical language, directing the listener to what is most important about his concepts. The casual viewer may wonder what the painting on the cover, *Le Dégagement de la colonnade du Louvre et la démolition de l'Hotel de Rouillé*, has to do with late seventeenth-century viol music, until noticing that the entire production represents Dunford's clever association of the names of other de Machys. The cover illustration is by Pierre Antoine Demachy (1723-1809), painted for the salon of 1767, while the recording project was sponsored by the Paris bank Demachy Worms & Cie. As far as is known, there is no blood relation among the three de Machys.

The Demachy bank's commitment to this recording project compels me to comment on relative conditions of support for early music performance in the United States and Europe, at least in terms of my own experience. I doubt that this album could have been produced in the United States with the speed and ease with which Dunford realized the project in Paris. Alas, still in 1991 it seems that to "make it" as a full-time performer in early music, many Americans are compelled to go to Europe. I can only lament what is currently the meager level of support for early music performance in many segments of our otherwise rich American cultural life, compared to the support by the public, corporations, and governments in Europe. I laud the role of the Demachy bank in presenting de Machy's music, and thus preserving an important part of not only their cultural heritage but ours as well, and I encourage similar patronage from this side of the Atlantic.

Barbara Coeyman

CONTRIBUTOR PROFILES

Barbara Coeyman received an NEH Research Fellowship during 1990-91 for research on performances of musical theater in the court of the Sun King, 1643-1715. She was a Fulbright scholar in France during the 1981-82 academic year and received her Ph.D. in musicology from the City University of New York in 1984. As a viol player, she specializes in Baroque solo and ensemble literature for the bass viol. She has taught music history and theory at Brooklyn College and West Chester College and is currently a member of the faculty at West Virginia University and director of the Darlington Consort of Early Music, Pittsburgh. She is also an editor of viol music, especially French theatre music.

Kenneth Kreitner holds a Ph.D. in Musicology from Duke University and is currently a faculty member at Memphis State University. The title of his dissertation was "Music and Ceremony in Late Fifteenth-Century Barcelona." He has books published by Greenwood Press and the University of Illinois Press as well as numerous articles and reviews in such journals as the *Instrumentalist*, *MLA Notes*, and *Early Music*. In addition, he has been invited to speak about "Franco-Flemish Elements in Tarazona 2 and 3" at the 5th Congress of the International Musicological Society in Madrid next April.

John Rutledge is bibliographer for Western European Resources at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He received his Ph.D. degree in German from John Hopkins University and his master's in library science from the University of Pittsburgh. He is a player of the viol and has had other articles about the viol published in *Early Music*.

Gordon Sandford is in his twenty-sixth year as a faculty member at the University of Colorado in Boulder where he directs the Collegium Musicum and teaches graduate courses in Music Education. Professor Sandford is President of the Viola da Gamba Society of America, was Chair of the International Competition for New Music for Viola da Gamba in 1989, and hosted the 1985 and 1991 Conclaves in Boulder. He has published in *The American Recorder*, *Music Library Association Notes*, *The Consort*, *Music Educators Journal*, *Journal of the American Musical Instrument*

Society, and *Council for Research in Music Education*. He is currently preparing a revision of *Published Music for Viols* for Harmonie Park Press, and serves as Music Review Editor for *American Recorder*.

Steven Saunders received bachelor's and master's degrees from Carnegie-Mellon University as well as a master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh. He was an NEH Institute on Editing Baroque Music Fellow at the University of Maryland in 1984, a Fulbright scholar in Vienna, 1987-88, and is presently a Dana Faculty Fellow at Colby College. He has published in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, *College Music Symposium*, *MLA Notes*, and *Current Musicology*. He is currently the editor of *Seventeenth-Century Music*.

Brent Wissick teaches viola da gamba and cello at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he is co-director of Ensemble Courant, a group specializing in performance on original instruments. He made his New York solo debut in March, 1990 and has been a frequent guest with ensembles such as Aston Magna, Concert Royal, Helicon, Hesperus and the Folger Consort. In addition, he has performed as a soloist at festivals and universities throughout the country. Formerly on the faculty at the College of St. Scholastica in Minnesota, he is well-known as a teacher at conclaves and workshops. He was a board member of the Viola da Gamba Society of America for six years and continues to serve on the board of Early Music America.

Ian Woodfield received his bachelor's degree from Nottingham University and his master's and Ph.D. from King's College, University of London. He was a Herschel Fellow at Bath University in 1976-77 and was appointed Lecturer in Music at Queen's University of Belfast in 1978. His first book, *The Celebrated Quarrel between Thomas Linley (Senior) and William Herschel: An Episode in the Musical Life of 18th-Century Bath*, was published by the University of Bath in 1977. He has also contributed articles and reviews to *Early Music* and the *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*. His latest book, *The Early History of the Viol*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 1984.