

BROADSIDE

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AEMA MISSION

It is the mission of the Atlanta Early Music Alliance to foster enjoyment and awareness of the historically informed performance of music, with special emphasis on music written before 1800. Its mission will be accomplished through dissemination and coordination of information, education and financial support.

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This issue is the first in the tenth year of publication of the Broadside. The editor apologizes for the lack of a September issue, due to family illness.

New President Predrag Gosta Reports Plans

Dear early music enthusiast,

I would like to welcome you to 2004/05 Season. As I take the post as the new President of the Atlanta Early Music Alliance, my hope is to see the Alliance become a greater presence in the Atlanta early music community and support provider for Atlanta-based early music ensembles and musicians. This year will bring many new initiatives, which will strengthen our organization and create a solid base for future expansion. Already, the Board of Directors has met twice (once as a full board and once as an Executive Committee), and has established the parameters within which we will work during the next 10 months. While more complete information will be provided to you in the upcoming issues of the Broadside, with this issue I would like to inform you briefly about them, and invite you to be involved. Only with your help we will be able to accomplish the goals that we set!

First, the board has recently decided to improve the newsletter, both in content and in distribution. We allocated twice more money in our budget for the newsletter, and we decided to offer bigger support to our editor, Pat Dewitt, who is pretty much on her own in the newsletter's "creation" (thank you, Pat!). The newsletter is probably one of the most important benefits that our association offers. We know that only through quality content on a greater number of pages instead of only on a few pages, we will be able to take your attention and bring forth more members. In this manner, I would like to extend an invitation to all of you to submit your writings, your reviews, your thoughts, comments, and even jokes, related to early music, historical performance practice and life experience. Tell us a story from your life, write about the instrument that you fancy (or not!), or comment on the concert that you heard. The newsletter is not only here to present the news, but also to be a link in the chain of our every-day lives.

Other initiatives for this year include an "official" Budget creation, submission of 990 forms to IRS, and archiving of our current and past materials. To support this effort, we recently appointed a newly formed honorary position of AEMA's Historian. Our past President, Eckhart Richter, has generously accepted the Board's nomination. He will, with help from all of us, create and maintain the archive of our organization, which will contain all past documents, newsletters, and even concert programs. We also thank



Eckhart for his past two years of great service as our Board President.

The biggest change this year is that there will not be an independent concert series organized by AEMA. While working on restructuring and improvement, the Board has decided to "rest" for a year, so that we can better prepare, raise money, and create a quality programming that will stand out and differ from the programs provided by other quality early music groups and soloists in Atlanta. We hope to be able to follow your suggestions and bring some out-of-town groups to Atlanta, as well as help and support our affiliated ensembles and soloists not only through encouragement but also through financial means. All of this is, as I said, under development, but discussion continues as you read this column, and more accurate information will be available as the year progresses.

And let me not forget the website: we promise to have it updated within a month, so that you can always refer to it whenever you need to find out about Atlanta's early music community.

Once again, welcome and we look forward to hearing from you! At the same time, we invite you to continue supporting not only the Atlanta Early Music Alliance, but also all other early music groups and soloists of this city and beyond! Come, bring your friends, and let the music begin!

Yours,

Predrag Gosta, president

THE ATLANTA
EARLY MUSIC ALLIANCE

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PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

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SUBMISSIONS

We gladly welcome articles
and letters but reserve the right
to edit all submissions. *E-mail
submission is preferred.* Each
submission must include the
author's name, address and
phone number. Letters must be
signed. Send submissions to:

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College, Peter DeWitt,
faculty advisor.



Harpsichord Subtlety in Basketball Arena

Editor's Note: On August 31, Peter DeWitt presented a brief harpsichord recital in a very unusual location: the gym (formally named the Winthrop-King Centre) at Shorter College. His recital provided an illustration of the main point he made in his Teacher of the Year address to the faculty and students: that subtle distinctions are important. On his oldest harpsichord, a Zuckerman Flemish IV (left in the picture), built by Pat DeWitt, he played Sweelinck's variations on "Mein junges Leben hat ein End"; on his most recent acquisition, a muselar by Robert Greenberg (center in the picture), he played Pavana Lachrymae, Byrd's setting of Dowland's "Flow, my tears"; and on the German double by Philip Tyre, the J. S. Bach Toccata in g minor.

This occasion was one for performance of early music before a broader audience than is usually available. The students were attentive, and reactions afterward were very favorable. The wife of one previous Teacher of the Year said that it was the best program since her husband's. The Health Services director said that the experience of sitting and listening to the music brought her peace.

Following are excerpts from the address: "In Praise of Subtlety".

The world we live in is too loud. 30 years ago, when we were gardening at my wife's family farm, the only sound that interrupted our quiet conversation was birdsong. Today, we cannot hear ourselves shouting over the ambient traffic noise. The garden is in the same spot, but the highway has changed from 2 lanes to divided 4 with too many attendant 18-wheelers. For the Republican Convention in NYC, police are using 150 decibel speaker systems for crowd control. The hearing threshold of pain is 120 decibels, the intensity experienced by being within 50 feet of a jet plane taking off. So we've replaced direct physical assault on the body or eyes with assault on the ears.

For me, I do not fear so much the threat of hearing pain or loss. (Obviously, I'm not attending the

Republican National Convention.) I fear the loss of distinctiveness. The world has gone all-white; we are so bombarded with white noise that we can't hear the colors. We seem less and less able to recognize subtle differences in sound; we can't tell if it's live or Memorex. Personally, I never had any problems telling the difference: if it was too loud, it was recorded. If the tape was softer, anyone could tell. If drums aren't being fed through electronic systems, they are not likely to be mistaken for drum machines. If MTV really wants to be unplugged, they need to get rid of the mikes. The problem with Rock concerts isn't that they are too loud; it's that they are always the same loud. Researchers in the 70s found that orchestras could be just as loud as Rock concerts. However, where the orchestras averaged a range of 40 decibels, the rock group averaged a range of less than five.

You see before you my three personal harpsichords. Why should anyone want three? Obviously for the subtle distinctions. Each of these instruments is a modern copy of a specific Northern European instrument, each perfectly suited to the music composed for it. The first mimics an instrument built in 1634 by Jan Ruckers, a most important Flemish builder.

The second instrument is a copy, including the original art work, of a *muselar*, also from the Ruckers workshop, built in 1655 by his apprentice Henri Couchet, the creator of the classic French harpsichord. Muselars, a type of virginals, so-called because they were frequently played by young women, were the most common instruments built by this maker at this time. The Latin motto is possibly directed at these performers: "Look, listen, and be silent, if you would live in peace." Notice the striking

**The Atlanta Early Music Alliance
P. O. Box 663
Decatur, Georgia 30030**

Are you a member of AEMA?

If not, we hope you will join us! To join, please clip this form, fill it out and send it, with your check made out to "The Atlanta Early Music Alliance," to AEMA, P.O. Box 663, Decatur, GA 30030. For more information, or a sample newsletter, call 404/874-7243. (NOTE: an AEMA membership now runs from July 1st to June 30th each year. Membership applications received January 1st or later will be prorated by 50%.)

Name: _____ Organization/Title (optional) _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

I enclose _____ for my chosen membership category checked below:

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Subtlety (continued)

difference in sound between this and the first instrument, caused by the 90° turn of the strings and the rightwards placement of the keyboard. This piece is a cover of John Dowland's famous song of despair over a lost love written in 1600: "Flow, my tears" from across the English Channel, where many of the Ruckers instruments were sold. William Byrd's setting is astounding in its constant variety of subtle changes on the basic tune, often depicting aspects of the text.

The last instrument has many more different possible sounds available, including 2 keyboards. It is a copy of a Hamburg instrument built in 1740. The lid painting is original by my wife and depicts the

country in which Bach lived. The 2 keyboards allow for contrasting loud and soft, required by the composer in this multi-faceted work. However, you should notice that the difference between the loud and soft is very subtle. The piece ends with a dance-like fugue, in which the theme is heard 25 times, but never exactly the same. We hear it in 6 keys, sometimes upside down, in different voices and with different accompaniments. It is exactly these differences that I fear we will lose the hearing of, if we cannot pay attention to subtle distinctions. After all, as it says in Latin on the muselar fallboard, "the ears are the doorways to the soul."

New Trinity Baroque to Present A Staged Opera

On Saturday, October 23, New Trinity Baroque will present Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's chamber comic opera "La Serva Padrona" (The Maid Mistress) at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church.

Julia Matthews, soprano, known from New Trinity Baroque's latest CD release of Purcell's "Dido & Aeneas" (where she sang Belinda) will return as the lead singer for this chamber comic opera (Serpina), as well as the Stage Director. Together with bass Jason Hardy (as Uberto) and Kurt-Alexander Zeller (as Vespone). New Trinity Baroque will perform on period instruments and present a fully staged historically informed performance of Pergolesi's masterpiece. NTB will also perform two famous concertos for oboe, featuring Boston-based oboist, Joyce Alper - Albinoni's Concerto No. 2, Op.9, and Alessandro Marcello's Concerto in d minor.

Pergolesi's chamber opera buffa "The Maid Mistress" (1733) was enjoyed from the first day it was presented in the Theatre in Naples, and through many subsequent generations. The splendid acoustics of St. Bart's will enhance the experience while New Trinity Baroque tries to visually "transform" the space to fit within the lines of the story (stage-wise). This performance is fully staged. Seating is limited. For more information and tickets, please visit NTB's website www.newtrinitybaroque.com, or call 770 638-7574. Via email you may write to newtrinitybaroque@earlymusic.net. The performance starts at 8

PM, and the tickets are regularly \$25, \$15 for NTB Friends, and only \$5 for full time students (with ID).



Stevenson Weighs In On Historically Informed Performance

Editor's Note:

This letter is the first in what we hope will be a series of personal and professional reactions to that key term in our mission statement, "historically informed performance". What is it? Why is it important? How can we recognize it? How can we attain it? This is a worthy topic for the 10th year of the Broadside. Please consider yourself invited to respond.

For those who may not know Emily Stevenson, she has been a mainstay of the early music scene in Atlanta for many years. If I go to a concert and look around for AEMA members, the probability that I will find Emily present is high. Such patronage is priceless. Moreover, she is an excellent amateur performer on the viola da gamba (treble). If I go to a workshop and find myself in Emily's group, I am confident that the experience will be rewarding.

How do I define an authentic performance of early music? The usual criteria are the use of period instruments and practices we know from writings and pictures of the period. The further back we go, the less we know of these things, and yet, to me, an "authentic" performance is very important. Viewing first-hand a piece of history, such as the "Winged Victory" statue in the Louvre or the bedroom of Mary, Queen of Scots, is an exciting event, and a good performance of early music can provide equal fuel for the imagination.

I once played with an early music group at a church service and afterwards a lady told me that she had imagined herself to be in a great cathedral in France where a famous cleric (I forget his name) was speaking. At the time I didn't think this was a compliment and wished she had listened more attentively to the music instead of drifting off! But now I realize part of my criteria of "authentic" performance is that it must appeal to the imagination. Hearing someone on a stage using a microphone and modern instruments, not to mention a constant vibrato, really turns me off the music. I get a thrill if I can imagine I am at the time and place the music was composed. And it has to sound right, though the right sound is a personal definition to some extent, maybe a large extent.

Emily Stevenson (770-309-8742)



**The Atlanta Early
Music Alliance**
www.atlema.org

The Alliance: News of AEMA People and Communities

Additions to Concert Calendar

Wouldn't you know! No sooner did Jonathan DeLoach finish the excellent Concert Calendar enclosed with this newsletter than more concerts rolled in. The Broadside will keep you updated on these developments.

Atlanta Schola Cantorum

Cynthia DeDakis, director

404-378-0595, www.atlantaschola.org

Please contact lesnroy@alltel.net for times and prices.

October 31, 2004

Monastery of the Holy Spirit, 2625 Hwy. 212 SW, Conyers

December 3, 2004

St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 1790 LaVista Rd., Atlanta

December 4, 2004

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 515 E. Ponce de Leon Ave., Decatur

Collegium Vocale (in collaboration with the Chancel Choir of St. James United Methodist Church) featuring Haydn's "Mass No. 6 in G Major" (Mass in Honor of Saint Nicholas). The program is completed with Latin motets by Palestrina, Philips, and Bruckner, a set of North Country Folksongs arranged by contemporary British composer Philip Wilby, a Christiansen hymn arrangement, and a spiritual.

Saturday, Nov 13, 2004, 8:00 pm. Schwartz Center for Performing Arts, Emerson Concert Hall. 1700 North Decatur Road, Atlanta, GA 30322.

Concert repeated on Sunday, Nov 14, 2004, 5:00 pm. St. James United Methodist Church, 4400 Peachtree Dunwoody Road NE.