

The Atlanta Early Music News

Newsletter of the Atlanta Early Music Alliance

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Editorial Notes

Baroque Fest Opens!

This is another AEMN lite edition. Share the calendar with friends and co-workers. The Baroque Fest is now in full swing and well-publicized thanks to many volunteers, donors and advertisers. We hope you will be able to attend as many of the events as possible.

Keep in mind that **you** can contribute to the Atlanta Early Music News. Just write or call, or email tishb@aol.com or pnord@aol.com. Look in December's newsletter for contributions received this fall.

Want to support early music nationally? Join Early Music America. Write EMA at 11421 1/2 Bellflower Rd., Cleveland, OH 44106

Kirkby/Rooney Master Class

reviewed by Brenda Lloyd, Decatur freelance writer and singer

Clayton State College offered a rare opportunity in October to work with renowned early music soprano Emma Kirkby and accomplished lutanist Anthony Rooley in a master class for singers and their accompanists.

The class, held October 27 at the college's Spivey Hall, was a casual and intimate affair, attracting about 30 participants, seven of them singers performing onstage and then receiving insightful critiques from Kirkby and Rooley. Rooley remained onstage, often near the instrumentalists, while Kirkby sat in the audience a few rows back from the stage during performances, then returned to the stage to work with singers.

Rooley worked with the lutanists, instructing them to sit up and not hunker over their instruments as lutanists are wont to do but which covers the sound. He said that the lute and other accompanying instruments are not merely background music but are a vital part of the performance and should be heard. Where the instrument plays the opening bars, he said, that is the beginning of the performance -- not where the singer enters later. (cont. >>>>)

AEMA - what's happening?

Filing for incorporation is still proceeding. Many thanks to the ad hoc board, especially John Mortison and attorney Steven Flack for their work on this effort. The state must sell their mailing list, because one of the side effects of filing is receiving lots of calls from businesses who think we are now a business and in the market for things like credit card paraphernalia. Our policy is to convince these callers to join AEMA. Most of this month has been spent feverishly preparing for the Baroque Festival. Some of you have been kind enough to distribute posters and brochures. We welcome any volunteers for this service throughout November - call us!

Come Play With Us!

Purcell's Welcome to all the Pleasures: A

Chance for Everyone to Get in to the Act!

Henry Purcell's ode for St. Cecilia's Day, Welcome to all the Pleasures, was written for chorus, countertenor, bass, and soprano soloists, and orchestra. Composed for the inaugural celebration of London's Musical Society (a group of musicians who met annually on St. Cecilia's Day) in 1683, it is a joy to hear and to perform. While vacationing in Port Townsend, WA this summer, I sat in on a workshop performance of this ode. Arranged for recorders, gambas, continuo and singers by Peter Seibert (long-time music director of Seattle's Recorder Society and prolific arranger), this version of the ode gives amateur musicians the chance to perform one of the great works of Purcell. Almost any instrumentalist and certainly any singer can participate, provided she or he is at least at an intermediate level of playing or sight-singing. By agreement with Mr. Seibert, the Atlanta Early Music Alliance has procured this arrangement and will offer a coached rehearsal/informal performance of the ode on Saturday, November 18, 1995, as part of the Atlanta Baroque Festival. Coaches will be Letitia Berlin, recorder, Martha Bishop, gamba, and Eileen Moremen, voices/conductor. Beginning at 2:30, the event concludes at 6:00 p.m., taking place at the Northwest Unitarian Universalist Church, 1025 Mt. Vernon Hwy, NW, Atlanta. There will be a \$2.00 charge to AEMA members and \$5.00 for non-members. You must register by no later than November 10 by calling 404-658-1357. Must be able to sight-read and be at least at an intermediate level on your instrument. There will be auditions for the solo parts of one solo countertenor, one bass, and two sopranos. We hope to have lots of AEMA members there as well as others. If you have friends who play instruments other than recorder or gamba, encourage them to give us a call and discuss the possibilities!

Master Class, continued

Six sopranos and one bass comprised the master class, accompanied by harpsichord, lute or theorbo. Their selections included "Evening Hymn" by Purcell, Dowland's "The Lark", and Monteverdi's "Lamento della Nympha."

Kirkby and Rooley first addressed the singers' nervousness. In fact, Kirkby, who was full of good and cheerful advice, directed most of her critiques to the presentation of music, rather than voice quality. She and Rooley removed props, such as the harpsichord, and barriers to the audience, including a stool and the music stand, even the music sheet or binder when the singer knows the music. Simple, innocuous-seeming things were taken to task, such as the music binder with a weak spine. It's wonderful for instrumentalists who want the binder to lie flat, said Kirkby, but lousy for singers who must provide the support. It produces tension

Continued on page 4



**Readers
Respond**

Reader's Round Table

Responses to Kathy Kennedy's comments published in the October '95 newsletter.

Patricia Adams Nordstrom, gambist (and more) and founding member of AEMA, contributed the following comments to our discussion:

Amateur & Professional: Are Our Needs Really at Odds?

Some thoughts about the "amateur/professional" controversy among AEMA members:

I propose that this can be viewed as part of a larger set of truths about the early music movement in America, and that there need be no conflict between the needs of music lovers and working musicians. AEMA can meet both requirements handsomely.

The key is to view the professional experience as essentially **public**, and the amateur as largely **private**. In my view, this conceptualization contributes most to the long-range health of early chamber music in the U.S.

First, the professional area. By its very nature, professional activity takes place in the *public* arena, and this is as it should be. It is essential for the uninitiated public, whether or not they are sophisticated lovers of "classical" music, to initially experience "vintage" music at its highest, most appealing, level. These are the experiences that create enthusiasm, excitement and the sense that this music is and can be important to the quality of local cultural life. It also generates general and financial support for groups such as AEMA, giving them a budget base from which to schedule regular services for amateurs. Music lover-performers and amateur groups and societies can then, in effect, skim the gravy from the credibility and increased activity created by professional events, especially large, general-interest ones. Another side benefit is the number of new amateur performers of early music who come from the ranks of the general concert-goer. [Happily, professional performers, who need to be paid in order to survive, also benefit from this increased activity.]

More than in most countries, interest in early music in the United States has been a function of the large number of amateur performers who have come to concerts and sought out opportunities to play with others. For these folks, public performance can be fun, and often provides the necessary "goosing" for players to come to grips with technical and musical problems, but the basic thrust and motivation for amateurs, by definition, is the personal satisfaction they receive from playing or singing. [This is why we have so many amateur choirs, and why a common complaint of amateur players is that they "just want to play," not go to concerts.] But the focus of activity is, at its heart, *private*. The aficionado plays for the sheer pleasure of it, not to generate income. Therefore, the presence of an audience is not essential to the amateur experience.

The motivation is different; the needs are different. As amateurs and professionals, we all love the same music, but we have different ways of relating to it. The essential truth is that activity, enthusiasm, inspiration and success benefit us all. ● ● ●

Glenn Middleton, amateur lutanist, Baroque bassoonist (and more) and very active concert-goer, sends his comments:

Amateur Participation in the Purcell Commemoration

Kathy's letter regarding the "Pro-Am" connection was interesting, however I, as an amateur (in both senses of talent and love) have some reservations about general public performances involving the less talented among us. We must not be too complacent that "Early Music" has "arrived" to the entire classical music community. There is still reaction in some quarters. We have seen this in the International Double Reed Society, which formerly covered the baroque (late) instruments, but more recently has in its publications given only very negative reviews of the Early Music baroque performances, and no longer has sections on the early instruments at the annual meetings. We have a solfège teacher (at Clayton State, of all places) teaching that "Early Music is an aberration." A leading professional bassoonist and operator of a recording studio feels that all early music people play out of tune. Public performances by less than the most highly qualified (and prepared) can only add fuel to these unjust, but extant, opinions.

Yes, I believe Kathy's idea of Pro-Am collaboration in performances is good -- BUT these performances need to be clearly of an informal nature, and the audience needs to be aware of the make up. This is exactly what occurs at workshops, where the teachers perform with the students, also at annual recitals given by teachers where most of the audience is comprised of parents. Community orchestras are another good example, as she states. But these are recognized as such; ditto university student concerts, where we have a mix - future professionals sometimes giving already professional level performances, and sometimes students playing an instrument on which they do not major (or in my case, on which they could never hope to attain professional caliber). Informal church performances are another good place for the mix of pros with amateurs. Prepared performances by amateur groups (with professional intercession when possible) need to be

Continued on page 3

