

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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Annual Meeting is Just Around the Corner

by Eckhart Richter

Dear Fellow AEMA members:

Mark your calendar for the annual membership meeting, Saturday, May 1st. The event will again be held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta at Cliff Valley Way NE., starting at 10:00 AM and running to about 2:00 PM. Like last year, plans are under way to make this a fun informal musical as well as culinary potluck event, followed by the business meeting mandated by our by-laws. Jorg Voss will again lead the musical portion. You are all cordially invited to bring your instruments (voice, bowed & plucked strings, wind, keyboard or percussion) for a grand vocaliter and instrumentaliter potluck musicale. We want this time to especially encourage those who like to sing to lend their voice.

Since so much early music can be performed either vocally or instrumentally, those of you who prefer to stick to blowing into tubes, stroking or plucking strings, striking keys, drumming or shaking will be able to provide valuable support whenever there is vocal participation. The music-making will be followed by the potluck luncheon. AEMA will

provide two main dishes for vegans and carnivores respectively. You are encouraged to bring a side dish.

During the business meeting following lunch we will briefly summarize for you your board's work during the past year and solicit your ideas and suggestions as well as give you an opportunity to voice your concerns. We definitely need your input regarding the direction in which you would like AEMA to be heading and to help it grow and flourish. For all the above reasons we are pushing for a large attendance—the more the merrier! Your presence will be highly valued. SO PLEASE COME!

To plan ahead it would help us if you could let us know of your intention to attend by April 24th. You can fill out the brief questionnaire which you will find on page 3 and either send it to me via snail mail, e-mail me the information at eckrose@mindspring.com, or, if you prefer, phone me (404-634-4268).

Eckhart Richter, President

New Trinity Baroque Releases *Dido and Aeneas* CD

by Pat DeWitt

They are more appalling than Romeo and Juliet, because while the latter were mere teenagers, Dido and Aeneas were supposedly mature heads of state. Nevertheless, they were all too easily led astray by evil spirits and feigned voices of gods (can heads of state still be led astray by false reports?) Summoned by the evil Sorceress, a spirit masquerading as Zeus convinces Aeneas that he should leave immediately rather than marry Dido, queen of Carthage. After he sails away, Dido dies of grief.

Characterized by Bukofzer in *Music in the Baroque Era* as a chamber opera, Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* was written for a girls' boarding school (or, according to the notes accompanying the recording, for the court of Charles II, which also did not boast a large musical establishment) and necessarily employs limited resources. However, the chorus is

unusually important in comparison with other Baroque operas, a factor attributable to the English masque as well as perhaps to the imitation of Greek drama.

Predrag Gosta and New Trinity Baroque are to be congratulated on their well-produced CD of this chamber opera. Principal soloists include Evelyn Tubb as Dido and the Sorceress, Julia Matthews as Belinda, Thomas Meglioranza as Aeneas. Atlanta artists include Elizabeth Packard Arnold as the Second Woman and Allison Brown as half of the outstanding witch duo (with Terrance Barber as her partner). Kevin Sutton sings the humorous First Sailor's song, and Brad Fugate does the dirty work of impersonating Zeus to Aeneas. The packaging of the CD is very attractive, with interesting and personal notes on the work and biographical information on all the soloists.

NTB *Dido and Aeneas*, continued

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SUBMISSIONS

We gladly welcome articles
and letters but reserve the right
to edit all submissions. *E-mail*
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30165.

Overall, this performance has a sparkling clarity and excellent, lively tempi. As a singing actress, Evelyn Tubb fulfills the promise given in the accompanying notes. Her Dido is pure and beautiful yet very expressive. She does not hesitate to use added ornaments, as well as plenty of *parlando* freedom, to emphasize the effect of a line. Her portrayal of the Sorceress is full of vitriol, largely due to the distorted, nasal vocal tone used in this scene also by the witches and the chorus. Some may recall that this distorted vocal approach was also used in Lyle Nordstrom's Clayton performance of *Dido and Aeneas* in the mid-1990s. After the first few moments of the evil scene, one wonders if it is a greater achievement to use vocal distortion to portray hate or to be able to portray it without such a device, or at least with growls and caterwauls only on important words. But at the end, one has to admit that this was a very effective scene.

The dramatic potential of the score is best realized during the dialogues, recitatives, and arias of the soloists. In the final scene between Dido and Aeneas, before his departure, the soloists are genuinely and convincingly committed to the characters and their interaction. What is missing is the same level of commitment on the part of the

chorus. Since the chorus is such a distinctive element of this opera, often having a real part in the dialogue as well as commenting on the action, its music ideally would be performed with the same care as the recitatives and arias. In this recording, the chorus was not always well-balanced or as clean as the rest of the performance, and while the phrases individually might be well-shaped, they tended not to add up to a dramatic rendition.

A rhetorical approach might also have made the performance of the orchestra more compelling. While neatly turned in the politically correct Baroque style, the phrases do not build on one another and lead to an exciting or inspiring arch or trajectory. An example of this is the fast part of the overture; on another recording I compared, the repetitive figures built to a climax, while on this one they simply repeated.

The standard of recorded Baroque performance today, with which the New Trinity recording will be compared, is high. The present recording holds its own in terms of the vocal soloists, which is saying a lot, but less so in terms of the chorus or of the orchestral numbers. It is still a good recording from which one may gain or renew an appreciation of this delightful work.

A Note on Domenico Gabrielli (1651-1690)

by Eckhart Richter

Domenico Gabrielli was one of the chief representatives of the group of cellists that emerged and flourished during the latter half of the 17th century in his native city of Bologna. His *ricercari* along with those of G.B. Degli Antonii and the solo suites by Domenico Galli belong to the earliest pieces written for unaccompanied cello. The manuscript source for these *ricercari* as well as the Sonata in G included in this program is housed in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena, Italy under the shelf number G.79. The Luigi Silva Collection in the library of UNC at Greensboro contains a facsimile of this manuscript volume. It contains Silva's copious comments and fingerings. In addition the collection has a copy in his own hand of the untitled sonata with beginnings of his figured bass realization, all of this presumably in preparation for an eventual edition by him of these pieces composed in 1689. In the meantime all of them have appeared in print, the seven *ricercari* in an edition published by Schott in 1975 and Gabrielli's complete works for cello recently in a Hortus Musicus edition by Bärenreiter, dated 2001.

The tuning C-G-d-g, common in the late 17th century in Bologna seems to have been preferred by Gabrielli. Chords appearing in the last two *ricercari* and the sonata can only be played unaltered in this tuning. Unlike Bach's fifth cello suite, however, his pieces do not employ scordatura notation. According to Brent Wissick's convincing surmise this Bolognese tuning is a raised alteration of the old violone tuning B^b-F-c-g. The invention of covered gut strings during the 1660s made it possible to achieve a full-bodied bass quality on smaller instruments with shorter strings, tuned one tone higher. As Wissick points out, "the two G-strings in this Bolognese tuning share a great deal of sympathetic resonance when one or the other is sounded."

The above-mentioned manuscript volume is not in Gabrielli's own hand but was copied by three different scribes. It bears the title *Lezione* (lesson) and includes a canon for two cello, an inherently didactic compositional procedure. It may thus have originated among Gabrielli's circle of pupils.

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College, Peter DeWitt,
faculty advisor.

POTLUCK MUSICALE-LUNCH CUM ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ATTENDANCE CONFIRMATION.

Name: (Please print) _____

Voice: S,A,T,B (if applicable) _____

Instrument: (if applicable) _____ Do you need driving directions? (Yes/No) _____

Please mail to: Eckhart Richter

1830 Ravenwood Way NE.

ATLANTA, GA. 30329-2723

Inaccuracies and anomalies in the musical text suggest that it was intended for private use.

As teaching pieces Gabrielli's ricercari put a premium on the deft, agile string crossing required by so much of his period's music for string instruments, confined as it predominantly was, to the lower left-hand positions with frequent resort to open strings, taking advantage of their resonance. These ricercari impress one, if not as written-out improvisations, at least as compositional first drafts rapidly jotted down. They often captivate through their spontaneity of invention, but they are not always meticulously worked out with the unflagging consistency and compelling melodic, harmonic, tonal and formal logic of the Bach solo suites. I am particularly fond of Ricercar 4, even though it undeniably contains rhythmic, melodic and harmonic dead spots. Some of them can be overcome by embellishing in the Italian manner. For others that solution only results in musical padding. Silva's markings reveal his attempt to overcome the rhythmic weak points notationally. I have attempted to revise the aforementioned dead spots by means of my own musical invention, while at the same time preserving the piece's musical substance and hewing to its style. Ricercare 3 will be performed as originally written safe for a couple of minor alterations.

From a performer's point of view such tampering is not as sacrilegious as may appear, as long as one adheres to the proper style. Musicians of the Baroque era plagiarized from each other all the time and adapted the appropriated material to their own use. Of course, nowadays any respectable edition of early music is expected to faithfully reproduce the original and clearly indicate any editorial addition and alteration whatsoever. Besides, no one in his right mind would dare to tamper with the Bach solo suites.

The untitled Gabrielli sonata required some editing in regard to repeats, notational ambiguities and embellishments. Its original bass part is unfigured. It might well have been performed first of all simply on another cello or possibly a violone. Besides harpsichord, a chamber organ, theorbo, guitar or harp could all serve as a continuo instrument. I played the two ricercari and the sonata by Gabrielli on a cello hailing from the workshop of the Klotz family in Mittenwald ca. 1780. It was expertly modernized ca. 1890 in New York City by the then well known luthier John Frederick. He left the basic structure and dimensions of the instrument intact. It was reconverted for me to its more or less original specifications by Stephanie Voss of Atlanta, who trained and received her master diploma at Mittenwald.

Concert Reminders

If you missed the **Emory Early Music Ensemble's** first performance of "The Well-Travelled Musician: A Tour of Renaissance and Baroque Europe," you can hear it at Emory on Sunday, April 25. The program will consist of works for small ensembles, renaissance band, vocal ensemble, and baroque orchestra. Sean Sullivan will be the featured recorder soloist in John Baston's Concerto No. 2 in C Major for soprano recorder and orchestra.

Location: Schwartz Center for Performing Arts at Emory University, 1700 North Decatur Road, Atlanta, GA 30322, on Sunday, April 25, at 6:00 PM. Admission is free. 404-727-5050.

May 2004

- Sun 2 **AEMA Concert Series presents Harmonie Universelle** (Catherine Bull & Janice Joyce, Baroque flutes; Joshua Lee, viola da gamba; Daniel Pyle, harpsichord). 4:00 pm, Decatur Presbyterian Church, 205 Sycamore St. at Church St., downtown Decatur (across from Decatur Marta station), Scott Chapel (entrance faces Church St.). \$15 general admission; \$10 AEMA members, Decatur Presbyterian Church members, students & seniors.
- Sat 15 **New Trinity Baroque.** Predrag Gosta, director. Virtuoso recorder concerti by Vivaldi & Sammartini with Emma Murphy, recorder. 8:15 pm, Episcopal Church of the Epiphany. Directions to various venues available at NTB web site. Single concerts: \$25 general admission; \$15 Friends of NTB; \$5 students with ID. Season tickets: \$100 for all concerts. "Build Your Own" season tickets: any 4 concerts for \$80. newtrinitybaroque@earlymusic.net or 770-638-7554 (Predrag Gosta). www.newtrinitybaroque.com
- Sun 16 **New Trinity Baroque.** Repeat of above program. 8:00 pm. St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church.
- Sun 16 **Atlanta Recorder Society.** Spring Concert. 3:00 pm, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta, 1911 Cliff Valley Way (on the access road to I-85 North off N. Druid Hills Rd.). Free. 404-634-9955, brigittebn@aol.com (Brigitte Nahmias).

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The Atlanta Early Music Alliance
www.atlema.org

The Alliance: News of AEMA People and Communities

Eckhart Richter performed some of Domenico Gabrielli's pieces for cello on his Baroque cello at the recent Luigi Silva Centennial Celebration, held from March 5-7 at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Silva (1903-1961) was a brilliant cellist, scholar and pedagogue. The celebration attracted professional and student cellists from throughout the United States. Several of Silva's former students held masterclasses, gave demonstrations and performed during the four concerts, though all excepting Eckhart, on modern cello. The library of UNC at Greensboro houses what is probably the largest collection of cello music in the world bequeathed to any institution from the legacy of distinguished cellists of the past century. Silva's avid interest in all phases of string and particularly cello playing--technical, stylistic and pedagogical--also embraced early music for string instruments and he was familiar with the relevant treatises of the 17th and 18th century.

The Luigi Silva Collection includes a number of facsimiles of autographs from that period that he had acquired. (See the reprint of Eckhart's program notes about Domenico Gabrielli's music for cello included in this issue on p. 2.)



Flemish double manual harpsichord recently completed by Adam Decker. Owner is a professional harpsichordist in the Chicago area.