

BROADSIDE

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May-June, 2004

Annual Meeting Brings Discussion of Directions

by Nancy Buss



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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The annual meeting of AEMA was held on May 1, 2004, at 1:00 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta on Cliff Valley Way. The meeting was preceded by an informal playing/singing session and lunch. Our thanks to Jorg Voss for providing music for the 10 o'clock musical session and to the members who provided side dishes for the entrees provided by AEMA.

Item 1. Report and Acknowledgements. President Eckhart Richter listed those who helped get things done. He mentioned Jonathan DeLoach, Secretary, who was unable to attend the meeting because of a playing commitment; Jonathan has served as concert coordinator, including publicity, and prepared the concert calendar for publication for our members. Jorg Voss served as treasurer, chaired the education committee, and prepared the music for the morning's musicale. The education committee discussed how to get the membership more involved and planned the very successful workshop held in January. Serving with Jorg on the workshop committee were Susan Patterson, Kurt-Alexander Zeller, Jane McLendon, and Mickey Gillmor along with Brigitte Nahmias and others from the Atlanta Recorder Society. Johnette Crum served very ably as the membership coordinator. Jane McLendon chaired the nominating committee; serving with her were Kurt-Alexander Zeller, Sylvia Chandler, Davie Buice, and John Nelson. Pat DeWitt spent long hours getting the issues of Broadside together. UUCA and Travis Vaughn have provided space for the meeting. AEMA gives thanks to all of these for their dedication, long hours, and hard work.

Eckhart Richter spoke of his role as president, which he has seen as two-fold: stimulating people to do things and increasing membership involvement in the activities of AEMA, including the workshop and the concert series (which has one more coming up on May 2).

Outlining the activities of the Board during the past year, Eckhart highlighted three items. First, adopting a plan to get the membership rotation back on track so that the terms of board members conform to the bylaws, with overlapping terms of both appointed and elected members. Second,

updating the website, which is a "work in progress" and continuing. Third, approving submitting Form 990 to the IRS; this is not required but would be needed for grant applications if and when these are submitted in the future.

Item 2. Election Result. Susan Patterson was elected for a first term, and Pedrag Gosta was elected to a second term.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report. Jorg Voss presented the report and moved its acceptance. George Lucktenberg seconded the motion which was adopted unanimously.

Item 4. on the agenda included several plans for next season:

4a. Workshop. It is desirable to attract singers as well as blowers, pluckers, and bangers. One suggestion was a concert the next day (perhaps in church), which might attract more singers. Another was that having singing and instruments at different hours would permit instrumental players to also participate in singing. It was pointed out that good coaching on instruments would probably mean that players wouldn't want to sing.

4b. Alternative to Concert Series. Some concerts have had good attendance, but the majority of them have not. A concert series takes a lot of work to set up, and no steps have been taken for concerts next year. Alternative suggestions include:

- § Encourage musical activities of members at large.
- § Sponsor one event—a group from outside the area. The president gets information from various groups, some from the United States and some from elsewhere. This would be a risk because of the money needed for sponsorship.
- § Forget completely about concerts, at least for now.
- § Hold a kaleidoscope concert with several groups.

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Annual Meeting *continued*

THE ATLANTA
EARLY MUSIC ALLIANCE

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We gladly welcome articles
and letters but reserve the right
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submission must include the
author's name, address and
phone number. Letters must be
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College, Peter DeWitt,
faculty advisor.

- § Hold joint concert(s) with a local group and an outside group.
- § Set aside money for special project(s), which would be a supplemental fund with grants to be applied for either by outside or local groups.
- § Promote something for younger talent: perhaps a concert or a contest with the winner playing with a local group. A contest could be either for performance or composition.

4c. Ideas to get more students and children to attend concerts.:

- § A contest in which performances are judged. The target audience would be, for example, private keyboard teachers for harpsichord.
- § GSU Neighborhood School program—do they encourage early instruments (e.g. Recorders)?
- § Groups to play in schools.

Item 5. Membership Coordinator. Johnette Crum will not be able to continue in this position, and the President is looking for someone to replace her. The duties include keeping up the membership lists, membership renewals each year, and printing the directory. For 2004 renewals, Johnette has prepared the renewal letters, renewal forms, and envelopes. She has agreed to help in the transition process. The President stated that the membership

coordinator does not need to be a member of the Board.

Item 6. Editorship of Newsletter. Pat DeWitt, newsletter editor has agreed to continue her duties for one year more. She wants help especially with concert reviews and suggests that this could be done by a single person or a group of reviewers with someone to coordinate their schedule of concerts to review. Kurt-Alexander Zeller agreed to help with reviewing concerts but cannot act as coordinator.

Item 7. Goldberg Musical Portal. The Goldberg magazine is published in Spain. The Goldberg Musical Portal is the magazine's web page and they are encouraging all early music groups to register. We have no information on whether there is a fee for this listing.

Item 8. Other. Pat DeWitt, who could not attend the meeting, sent certificates which were presented by Jorg Voss, honoring two members for their contributions to the *Broadside*: Eckhart Richter, especially for the article "The Amateur: Essential to Music" and his President's Messages; and Martha Bishop, especially for the two-part series on rhetoric in music.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 on motion by Kurt-Alexander Zeller and seconded by Emily Stevenson.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Buss, secretary pro tem

Announcement: Summer Music Opportunities

Jody Miller will be offering three sessions at Emory University this summer for musicians to develop their skills. The recorder orchestra, which began last summer, will continue this year and will work on historical and contemporary music appropriate for the large ensemble. This group will meet on Thursday evenings in the Performing Arts Studio at Emory University, 7-9 PM (1804 North Decatur Road, Atlanta, GA 30332). Fees are \$50 for the summer. Required material: Quartet Exercises for Recorder (Schott ST 05262) by Hans-Martin Linde.

A beginning recorder session will be offered to teenagers and adults with little or no experience playing recorder. This session will be arranged based on the schedules of involved participants. If sufficient interest exists, a separate session for children could be offered. Fees are \$50 for the summer session.

Jody will also coach chamber groups for interested musicians. Examples are recorder trios or quartets, trio sonata groups, or mixed consorts. Existing ensembles may participate, or Jody will match musicians up based on interest.

Fees are \$60 per ensemble for each one-hour coaching session.

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Harmonie Universelle Concludes AEMA Series

by Pat DeWitt

Harmonie Universelle is harmonious but not universal, for which we can be thankful. In fact, they specialize in French Baroque music, an area that rewards the kind of intensive study they have given it. Indeed, they expressed gratitude to AEMA for giving them the opportunity to prepare a program that they might not have given to a more general audience. This program, Sunday, May 2 at 4 P.M. in Scott Chapel of Decatur Presbyterian Church, was the last in the AEMA Concert Series for 2003-2004.

This program featured two suites by Marin Marais from his *Pièces en Trio pour les flutes* (1692), the first publication to call specifically for the transverse flute. Each suite begins with a prelude, followed by a series of dance movements, and ending with a slow abstract movement that restores the introspective character of the prelude. It was fascinating to hear so much of the music of this composer, best known for his viol music, on the flutes. In form, the music was either free, as in the preludes, in binary form for the dance movements, or in continuous variation form as in the chaconne. Each dance movement had a special character in addition to its general style; such as “Rigadoun du village.”

Regretfully, a scheduling conflict took away the planned viola da gamba player, who would have reinforced the bass. It also would have reminded us even more of *Tous les matins du monde*, that great early music movie which you must see if you haven't, because it takes us into the world of French 17th century music, that of Sainte Colombe and Marais, like nothing else.

The harmoniousness was enhanced in this concert by the two matched flutes played by Catherine Bull and Janice Joyce. These flutes, made by Alain Weemaels after Jacques Hotteterre, differ from the 18th century flute, having a darker sound. Like modern flutes, they are naturally in D, so that the suite in D major is much easier to play than the one in c minor. In the actual performance, however, the flautists played the more difficult suite with more energy and articulation than the easier one. One could just tell the slightest bit of difference between the two players during the many imitative passages the music afforded.

Likewise, the harpsichord was well suited to the concert's theme, being a 17th-century type based on Ruckers, built by Anden Houben. Daniel Pyle presented two groups of harpsichord music by Louis and François Couperin, including the famous “Les barricades mystérieuses”. The rather daring harmonic shifts this music often contains were enhanced by the low pitch and *temperament ordinaire* from Mersenne. It was a pleasure to hear this frequent bastion of the continuo department in a solo role, which he fulfilled nobly.

Certainly, nobility is a hallmark of the work of Bull and Pyle, who have mastered an elegant style in this most aristocratic of the Baroque literature. Occasionally one would like to hear a little more dramatic approach—perhaps even rushing and slowing down to emphasize musical turns of phrase. Nothing declassée, mind you, just a more compelling rhetoric. But if Harmonie Universelle has any competition locally in this repertoire, I have yet to hear it.

New Trinity Baroque: Virtuoso Recorder Concerti

by Kurt-Alexander Zeller

Predrag Gosta and his New Trinity Baroque ensemble closed their 2003-2004 concert season with two performances of a program of concerti featuring English recorder virtuosa Emma Murphy. At the second of these performances (3:00 p.m. on Sunday, 16 May), a small but greatly enthusiastic audience (especially the savvy veterans who had brought their own seat cushions or even, in some cases, their own chairs) found the resonant and airy sanctuary of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church to be the perfect setting for a delightfully informal spring afternoon of Baroque chamber music. Emma Murphy proved to be not only a recorderist of formidable technical skill but also a performer of considerable personal charm, both in her poised and graceful playing and in her engagingly offhand, slightly diffident explanations to the audience concerning the three recorders she played in the course of the afternoon.

The first of those three instruments was a 2003 Von Huene Terton soprano, which was featured in the opening work, a Concerto in F major by Giuseppe Sammartini. Although the alto recorder is a more common choice as a concerto solo instrument, it was this work for soprano that elicited the most limpid and lustrous tone of the afternoon from Murphy. Giuseppe Sammartini (1693-c. 1750?) was the older brother of Giovanni Battista Sammartini,

who today is better known because of his influence on the eventual development of the Italian Baroque *sinfonia* into the Viennese Classical symphony and for having taught Gluck for a time; in their own day, however, Giuseppe was the more famous Sammartini. His prowess as an oboist attracted the praise of Quantz in 1726, and the following year he left Milan for London, where he entered the service of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and made his reputation as a virtuoso. (Hawkins asserted that “as a performer on the hautboy, [Sammartini] was undoubtedly the greatest that the world has ever known.”) Sammartini's recorder concerto is in the Vivaldian three-movement form, but the musical style is much later, its *ritornelli* infused with an emphasis on elegant rococo melody rather than virtuosity. Murphy responded with a beautiful cantabile tone, especially in the slow middle movement, a nostalgically languorous *siciliano* that was one of the highlights of the entire concert—one well worth waiting for through the lengthy episode of re-tuning that preceded it.

Tuning was something of an *idée fixe* throughout the afternoon—to players of instruments that have to “tune as you go” (including this writer), it occasionally may have begun to seem rather long, but there were dividends in the delays. The unison passages

New Trinity Recorder Concerti *continued*

between the recorder and strings in the final movement of the Sammartini, for instance, were almost breathtakingly in tune.

Murphy played each of her other instruments in two more three-movement Vivaldian ritornello concerti, both actually by Vivaldi himself and both written for his girls' orchestra at the Ospedale della Pietà. In the Concerto in C minor, RV 441, Murphy played a 1998 Stanesby Junior alto recorder from the Von Huene workshop and dazzled the audience with her mastery of the pyrotechnic passagework, especially in the episodes between the ritornelli of the two fast movements, in which the tonguing demands on the soloist are comparable to those of a double-time Gilbert and Sullivan patter song. Despite the brilliant performance, the piece of music itself largely failed to catch one's imagination; it rather gave the impression of having been written by Vivaldi for a smart-aleck pupil expressly to demonstrate that she still might have a few things to learn. Murphy, however, seemed to have learned them all and just thumbed her nose at the famously crotchety "red priest."

The final Vivaldi concerto, RV 443 in C major, was a more engaging work. For this, Murphy played a 2000 soprano recorder by Kung, an instrument that sounds in roughly the same register as the Irish pennywhistle. (Indeed, while G is a more common tuning, many pennywhistles are in exactly the same F tuning as the standard soprano recorder.) In addition to her work in early music, Murphy has recorded Celtic music, and that influence came to the fore most effectively in the middle movement of this concerto, which partakes of the ethos of slow and highly ornamented Celtic airs. The impression was heightened by Vivaldi's use of an eerie string drone, in which the players of NTB managed to sound uncannily like the Uilleann pipes. In the final fast movement, the players were frequently

accompanied by the percussive rumble of distant thunder—drawn, no doubt, as an answer to the lightning of Murphy's fingers. The only storm that erupted at the end of the performance, however, was that of thunderous applause from a well satisfied audience.

The applause was not only for Murphy herself, but also for her colleagues in New Trinity Baroque, who, under Gosta's leadership from his Kaeser one-manual Italian harpsichord, had provided much more than accompaniment for a visiting virtuoso. The performance of solo concerti as one-on-a-part chamber music rather than as orchestral music allowed one to appreciate fully the contribution of each individual part, particularly in imitative or contrapuntal passages, such as the second movement of Alessandro Scarlatti's Sinfonia in G minor for alto recorder and strings, where the soft-grained voice of Mirna Ogrizovic's violin was effectively answered by the more incisive tone of Sinisa Ciric's, and Martha Bishop's cello provided a sturdy foundation. The ensemble was luminous in the one work performed without recorder, Arcangelo Corelli's Sonata in G minor, Op. 1, no. 10. Although the *sonata da chiesa* by Corelli (1653-1713) was from a generation earlier than the concerti on the program (or perhaps *because* it was), it was the most enchanting work presented. From its Grave opening with a typically Corellian series of delicious chain suspensions, ceremoniously solemn in an inspiring (rather than depressing) sense, through an imitative Allegro that showed off the distinct voices of the three string players and a rapt Adagio with an exquisite unison cadence, to a final Allegro with nimble running figures, echo effects and a witty surprise ending that rang in the room for several seconds before the audience found its hands to express its vigorous approval, the work delighted. One hopes that more Corelli will figure in the ambitious 2004-2005 season for New Trinity Baroque that Gosta previewed in a brief "commercial" during the concert.



Emma Murphy also gave a workshop for recorder players on Saturday morning, May 15 at St. Bartholomew's Church. On the left, Murphy leads the group. On the right, Murphy (center, in white



tank) poses with the workshop participants, including Martha Bishop who furnished the playing scores as well as assisting with the bass part.

“Wind from Heaven” with the Atlanta Schola Cantorum

by Eckhart Richter

On May 16th the Atlanta Schola Cantorum, directed by Cynthia DeDakis, gave a concert with the above title at their regular venue, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Decatur, an attractive modern structure with a traditional ambience. The sanctuary with its high ceiling lends itself well acoustically to the repertory that is this choral group’s specialty, a cappella Renaissance polyphony. In this instance, their program was spiced by pieces from the late 18th as well as early and late 20th century and by the addition of guest artists, Daniel Pyle, portative organ; Jody Miller and Jonathan DeLoach, recorder. AEMA has had a rewarding relationship with Schola Cantorum, which gave fine performances on our concert series during the past two seasons. Harmonie Universelle whose members are Daniel and his wife, flautist Catherine Bull as well as Ritornello of which Jody and Jonathan are members have also appeared on the series several times including the season just ended.

The program was divided into four sections, each of which was focused on a unifying theme under the following headings: I. WIND FROM HEAVEN, II. HAIL MARY, III. A NEW SONG, IV. SONG OF SONGS. Organizing choral concerts around some simple overarching topics makes for effective programming. It piques listeners’ interest and helps them to stay attentive. They are less likely to feel overwhelmed and to become wearied by the copious textual material and thus more inclined to follow it closely, a precondition for truly attentive listening to any vocal repertory.

The opening five-part motet, “Canite tuba” and its Secunda Pars, “Rorate caeli” by G.P. da Palestrina was from the very outset delivered with assurance and authority. The group’s principal virtues became immediately apparent: good diction and intonation, clarity of texture and the maintenance of a stable pitch—most obviously so in Jacob Handl’s hymn-like “Ave Maria” and Giovanni Anerio’s “Cantate Domino”, the opening numbers of the HAIL MARY and A NEW SONG portion of the program respectively. The performance of the four-part motet “Factus est repente” by Gregor Aichinger effectively highlighted the key words, “tanquam advenientis spiritus vehementis” and the expressive musical contrast between the vehement opening and the following reverent closing stanza, “Confirma hoc, Deus, quod operatur es in nobis...”. Also worthy of praise in the performance of this piece was the solidity and unanimity of the basses, a great asset to any chorus, as that bolsters the harmonic foundation and makes for an unclouded spectrum of overtones, facilitating good intonation and enhancing the tone quality of the entire ensemble.

The centerpiece and high point of the WIND FROM HEAVEN portion of the program was the Gloria of John Taverner’s four-part cantus firmus mass, *Westron Wynde*. Throughout the movement this anonymous 15th century English tune is stated nine times, switching from part to part within the contrapuntal web. To acquaint the audience with it beforehand it was sung unaccompanied with haunting simplicity by tenor, David Foley. This piece was also well done, although the cantus firmus and

principal counter-melodies could have stood being brought more into relief over against subsidiary material. The respective bicinia and tricinia on “glorificamus te...”, “qui tollis...”, and “quoniam tu solus...” were ably sung by soloists, soprano, Vicki Porter-Fink; alto, Sue Reynolds; tenor, David Foley; and bass, Patrick Lail and the alternation between Tutti and Soli helped to clarify the movement’s shape and structure.

The opening portion of the program concluded with two instrumental numbers featuring two recorders and portative organ. Although unrelated to the overarching theme, they provided a welcome timbral contrast while exemplifying the stylistic transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque period. The title to Girolamo Frescobaldi’s *Canzoni a due canti col basso continuo* expressly states that they could be played “con ogni sorte di stromenti”. Performed on the program was the Canzon seconda, pairing two alto recorders with the organ, an instrumental combination truly soothing to the ear. The chordal accompanying instrument had, in fact, originally been designated by the composer as “Basso per l’organo”, this specific designation being later discarded by him. The tempo changes were smoothly negotiated by the performers and the due canti parts were rendered skillfully enough, though cornetti or violins are probably better suited for providing the needed clarity of articulation and bringing out the mercurial sprightliness of this music. Besides one could have wished for more of the “vivicità” that according to Frescobaldi’s pupil, B. Grassi, characterizes these canzoni. The Sonata sopra l’aria di Ruggiero by Salamone Rossi which followed with a switch to soprano recorders is built on a stock ground bass line, one of the longer ones. Overall this piece came off more convincingly.

With F being the tonality of the next two numbers, Rachmaninov’s “Bogorod’itse D’yevo” followed almost seamlessly Jacob Handl’s “Ave Maria” which opened the HAIL MARY portion of the program. Though it was sung in Russian, the choral sonority was, not too surprisingly, more Anglican than Muscovite Orthodox, but for all that, the singers deserve credit for the impeccable intonation of the octave passages between the women and the men. The syllabic, quasi-parlando of the immediately following “Bogorod’itse” by Arvo Pärt offered an effectively contrasting treatment of the same text. This portion of the program concluded with Robert Parson’s inspired “Ave Maria”. DeDakis’ pacing allowed this beautiful piece to flow expressively, convincingly shaping it with a sense of direction.

Anerio’s “Cantate Domino”, opening the program’s A NEW SONG portion was followed by Claudio Monteverdi’s festive six-part motet of the same title but different text. The spirited sequential motives on the words “cantate et exultate” bear his characteristic signature. The chorus was reinforced in this piece by the organ and after all the previous a cappella singing one’s ear was sensitized to the occasional pitch discrepancies between the fixed tempered tuning of the keyboard instrument and the

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Schola Cantorum *continued*

singers' flexible intonation based on the pure intervals and shifting commatic adjustments.

There followed the Sonata a tre by Giovanni Paolo Cima and the Sonata a due canti by Francesco Turini, both performed on soprano recorders and organ. The two pieces exemplified well the freshness, inventiveness and high compositional quality of much of the Italian instrumental music from the early 17th century. The piece by Cima contains an engaging interplay between the two upper parts. Turini's, probably originally intended for two violins and continuo, contained an impressive development of a salient motive in the opening section, its rhythmic transformation in the succeeding section in a slow triple meter, and a rousing conclusion in fast triple time. Both compositions, for all their free-wheeling approach to the handling of musical form, are temporally well-balanced structures and the performance by the evening's instrumentalists did them justice.

The high point of this portion of the program and of the concert as a whole was reached with Monteverdi's exuberant motet, "Beatus Vir", in which the chorus was joined by all three instrumentalists. It is punctuated by intermittent bassi ostinati and by ritornelli on the words, "beatus vir". The latter are strikingly reminiscent of the composer's famous canzonetta, "Chiome d'oro", so admired by Heinrich Schütz among others. While the

performance tempo was perhaps a bit on the conservative side, good dynamic contrast to good dramatic effect was achieved by the ensemble in the concluding Doxology. The chorus was really shining with a bracing brisk tempo, good French diction and a vivacious spirit in the following number, the four-part a cappella motet, Chantez à Dieu by Jan Pieters Sweelinck.

The subdued "Sicut liliun" by Antoine Brumel opened the SONG OF SONGS portion of the program for an effective expressive contrast. In the opulent seven-part "Ego flos campi" by Clemens non Papa, the rich texture was kept transparent and good intonation maintained throughout despite occasional individually emerging vibratos among the sopranos. William Billings' "Rose of Sharon" made for a rousing conclusion of the official part of the concert.

For an encore the audience was regaled with Parting Friends, a shape-note tune from Hart County, Georgia, in an arrangement by John McCurry, as found in the Sacred Harp collection. Finishing this concert with two pieces of old Americana was not only delightful but entirely appropriate, for in spite of their unique New World stylistic traits their musical and spiritual roots can be traced back to Elizabethan times, if not earlier, and to the ancient musical lore of the British isles.