

The Atlanta Early Music News

Newsletter of the Atlanta Early Music Alliance

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March 1996

Baroque Fest '95: Celebrating the Music of Henry Purcell

By Glenn Middleton

From 26 October to 20 November no less than 18 performances or workshops were held in the greater Atlanta area, commemorating the untimely death on 21 November 1695 of the Orpheus Britannicus. These were all coordinated by the young Atlanta Early Music Alliance. An attractive glossy brochure was widely distributed listing all the performances, and briefly introducing Purcell himself. The opening event was auspicious indeed, featuring none other than Emma Kirkby, probably the world's leading baroque soprano, performing solo arias and songs by Purcell and his contemporaries and immediate predecessors. On the night preceding the concert she gave, with her husband, the lutenist Anthony Rooley, masterclasses to some very talented Clayton State College students.

As it would be impractical to review all of the concerts and workshops given, we will confine ourselves to a brief mention of some of the music presented as part of this Purcell celebration. First of course was music by Purcell himself. Anthems, motets and other vocal works from his extensive choral repertoire were performed by Canticum Novum, The Festival Singers of Atlanta, The Clayton State Camerata, Red Mountain Chamber Orchestra and Cathedral Choir, the Roman Renaissance Singers, and Collegium Vocale. Arias and solo songs with and without obbligato instrumental participation were spread throughout the concerts. His purely instrumental music was also sampled. We are fortunate here to have

top-flight professional performers on recorder and viol, which were favored instruments by Purcell.

In addition there was music by his English contemporaries and predecessors who strongly

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Editor's Notes

Thanks to those who have sent in mission statement ideas. Keep them coming, by email or regular mail. Mark your emails Mission Statement.

Mark your calendars now for AEMA's spring meeting for April 28, 5:00 p.m., after the Simon Preston organ recital at Spivey Hall. The meeting/potluck will be at Lyle and Pat Nordstrom's house in Stockbridge, Georgia.

Welcome and thanks to Peggy Lamberson, our new newsletter designer, and to Sue Roessel, our new membership coordinator. You may still use the Linwood address to send newsletter material to, as Frances Blaker and Letitia Berlin will continue to act as editors.

AEMA Directory Update: We have received some responses, but feel that more of you might be interested in being in the directory. Therefore, if you do not respond with an entry by April 1, you will be included in the directory with the information we have on hand at that time. Send info to: Frances Blaker, 592B Linwood Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.

You may also send in your information by e-mail marked "Directory" to tishb@aol.com.

Your AEMA Directory Entry

Name: _____ Phone(s): _____

(Fax): _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Instrument/Voice: _____

I am interested in forming ensembles/consorts with other players. Yes No

Special areas of early music interest: _____

Reader's Round Table: More Ideas on Amateur Concerts

From Emily Stevenson

I want to bring up a few points that have not been covered in the discussion on amateur concerts. One is that amateur groups may lose some of their better players if they don't give performances, or perform only to uncritical audiences. A critical audience will notice your good points better.

Two: Amateur groups can attract new players sometimes better than professionals can. The music they play is simpler and the listeners can realize that they could also do this. When I taught public school, the junior high teachers had a workshop each year for elementary music students and at first hired members of the symphony to give a performance. Then we tried bringing in high school band members instead and the kids paid closer attention to them, partly because they knew some of them and could see themselves as potential performers better. As a good result I think the more players of early music around, the more people you will find going to professional concerts and paying teachers. Also budding professionals must start somewhere and that will be an amateur group.

Three: It is true that anyone who is up on a stage is communicating something to an audience and a lot of times it is not enthusiasm and excitement. But this basically can be communicated by an amateur group. My father preferred going to high school games over college ones when those teams got too professional. Pros will get cautious and play it safe

sometimes, and audiences can pick up on this. I know someone who loves the music at the Renaissance fair, but left in the middle of a fine Boston Camerata performance. Some people get enthusiasm and excitement from different angles than a professional would.

Four: I do get pleasure from playing in private, and sometimes a public performance can be painful. But I have also learned a lot from trying to communicate with an audience, and made experiments with repertoire, etc., which I would not otherwise have done. I think anything that contributes to raising the level of performance is good, and public concerts will make people work harder. I do know amateurs who have lured modern instrumentalists into early music; in fact, this is how the Viola da Gamba society of America got started.

My conclusion is that amateur groups should be more particular about adequate rehearsal out of consideration of the audience and that professional should (as most of them are already doing) try to help raise the level of performances, which are not going to vanish.

As to what AEMA should do about advertising amateur concerts as part of a festival, etc., this is a complicated question and is where I see the conflict between amateur and professional interests coming out. There probably should be a distinction or separate listing made for potential concert-goers who don't know one group from another.

JOIN AEMA!

To become a member of the Atlanta Early Music Alliance, send a check with this form to AEMA, 592B Linwood Ave., NE, Atlanta, GA 30306. Dues are \$20.00 for an individual, \$30.00 for a family, \$45.00 for an institution.

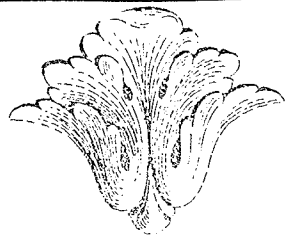
Name: _____

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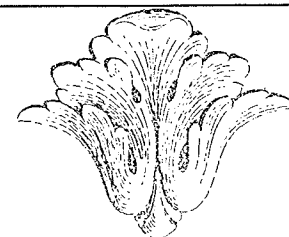
Phone: _____

Membership category: _____



Early Music Calendar

March -- April, 1996



English Country Dancing

First Sunday of every month at 2 p.m., at Westchester School auditorium. No experience or partner necessary. 758 Scott Blvd., Decatur. \$5.00.

The Boston Camarata

March 4 - 7. *The Boston Camarata* will be in residence at the University of Georgia, Athens. Master classes etc., open to the public. Thursday, March 7, at 8 p.m., *The Boston Camarata* will perform in the UGA Chapel. Call Sandra Pinegar for more information, at 706/613-0511.

The Marriage of Figaro

March 8-9, 8:15 p.m. *Clayton State College Department of Music* presents Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Free, call 770/961-3633 for reservations.

Scottish Country Dance Workshop

March 8-10, at Unicoi State Park. For beginners through experienced dancers. Call Jane McLendon at 404/378-3380.

Atlanta Recorder Society

Sunday March 10, 3 p.m., *Atlanta Recorder Society* concert at the High Museum. Free. 404/659-3976.

Sonus—All-German Concert

Sunday, March 10, 4 p.m. *Sonus* presents an all-German program, including Telemann and Haydn. Oglethorpe University Museum, Skylight Gallery, 4484 Peachtree

Rd. \$8/6 for seniors. Call 404-364-8555.

Camerati

Saturday, March 16, 8 p.m. *Camerati* will perform German Baroque Music at St. John's Lutheran Church, Ponce de Leon Ave. in Atlanta (the church with the red door). Admission \$7. Call 770/498-6900.

Ensemble Concert at Little Chapel

Friday, March 22, 8:15 p.m., *Jane Flynn*, harpsichord with guests *Leila Lazenby*, *Elizabeth Arnold*, *Letitia Berlin*, *Martha Bishop*, *Frances Blaker*, et al. Little Chapel, Emory. Free.

Workshop by Triangle Recorder Society of North Carolina

Saturday, March 23, 9:00-5:15 p.m., *The Triangle Recorder Society* of North Carolina sponsors a recorder and viol workshop with faculty Sheila Beardslee, Tom Zajac, Kay Bailey, Stewart Carter, Bruce Larkin, Carol Marsh, Patricia Petersen, Kathy Schenley. Call Pat Petersen at 919/683-9672.

Musicians of Swanne Alley

Fri., March 29, 8:15 p.m., The Musicians of Swanne Alley perform at Spivey Hall, Clayton State College. \$15/\$7.50 students. 770/961-3683.

The Georgian Dancers with The Emory Early Music Consort

March 29-30, 8:00 p.m., GSU Movement Force spring dance

concert featuring Baroque dances performed by *The Georgian Dancers*, accompanied by members of *The Emory Early Music Consort*. In Alumni Hall Theatre, corner of Courtland and Gilmer Sts. Call Peggy Lamber-son for more information, at 770/482-8717. \$5.00 general admission, free with GSU ID.

Alasdair Fraser

Wednesday, April 24, 8 p.m., Theatre Gael presents *Alasdair Fraser*, premier Scottish fiddler, with pianist *Jacqueline Schwab* of *Bare Necessities*. At Westchester School auditorium, 758 Scott Blvd., Decatur. Tickets \$15. Call 404/876-1138.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Plan now for AEMA's general membership meeting on Sunday, April 28 at 5 p.m., after Simon Preston's organ recital at Spivey Hall. Potluck at Pat and Lyle Nordstrom's house in Stockbridge (south of Morrow).

AEMA needs your ideas for its mission statement. Please send them to AEMA, 592B Linwood Ave. NE, Atlanta, Georgia, 30306 or email to tishb@aol.com, marked *mission statement*. We will be forming a committee to work on this statement after we have received your input. Please indicate if you would like to be on such a committee.

Baroque Fest

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influenced him. An example of this was an instrumental piece by William Lawes very well performed by Martha Bishop (viol), Elizabeth Phillips (baroque violin) and Randolph James (harpsichord). This is very rarely performed, and was a revelation to listeners and performers (especially) alike. Lawes is considered by most music histories as a direct predecessor,

so it was very appropriate for deepening our understanding of Purcell.

There were at least two performances of the very moving Blow/Dryden Ode on the Death of Henry Purcell: *Mark how the lark and linnet sing*. Atlanta was able to field different (and excellent) counter-tenors and recorderists for both the performances we heard. This commemoration made me very proud to be (even in a very small, amateur way) part of the Atlanta early music community. We remembered a very great musician.

The lark and linnet can resume singing, but with caution, because here it was made known that he whose music made these songsters mute in awe is not forever gone. His music has re-echoed, and will continue from time to time to re-echo.

Thanks to Glenn Middleton for his remarks. He also deserves thanks and recognition of the fact that he has probably attended more early music concerts in Atlanta than anyone else. Thanks for your support and enthusiasm, Glenn!

