

500 YEARS OF MAKING MUSIC FOR DANCE:

a review of Sarah Deters' lecture delivered at the Early Dance Circle Online Festival, 18 October 2020.

By Paul Kent

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Dr Sarah Deters is the Learning and Engagement Curator of The Musical Instrument Collection at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh. St Cecilia's was originally built purely as a concert hall in 1763. The University purchased the premises in 1959 and began not only to restore what is the oldest concert hall in Scotland, but, importantly, to convert other parts of the building into a museum to house the University's magnificent collection of keyboard instruments, a bequest by Raymond Russell. The combined Concert Hall and Musical Instrument Museum was opened in 1968, and the Museum's collection has expanded since then, currently displaying over 500 musical instruments played in Europe during various periods over the past 500 years.

Viewed from the street, the exterior of St Cecilia's Hall appears bland and unprepossessing;



the building rather dominated by surrounding, taller properties of considerable age, and tightly fitted between 'Bannerman's Bar' and 'Bar 50' on Cowgate. Greater is the surprise therefore, when, after a short walk up the narrow cobbled lane at the side, one arrives at the Museum's remarkably imaginative new entrance extension (fig. 1). Here, the wall decoration is based on that to be seen on the ornately-decorated soundboard of a harpsichord in the Museum's collection, the doorway's profile cleverly imitating that of the instrument's lid, and the whole bronze facade of the wall is pierced through with an exquisite profusion of the instrument's parrot and flower motifs.

Figure 1

Sarah began her lecture by describing herself as very much a 'musical instrument person', not a dance expert in any sense, but hoped that her lecture would help us think about how the three main areas of music, dance and musical instruments have all interacted over the past 500 years, and help us see how developments, sounds, and performance elements, are all interconnected.

Acknowledging the EDC website resource, *Dance Through History*, as a guide for her talk, Sarah began with a discussion of the instruments of the Renaissance, necessarily so, it seems, since the Museum does not possess any of the rare instruments which have survived from the Mediaeval period. (The terms 'Renaissance' and 'Baroque' used in this review assume commonly understood periods without specifying date limits.)

THE TWO PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENTAL GROUPS

There followed a description of the two principal instrumental groups to be found in the Renaissance; groups, in fact, which had already formed and existed much earlier in the Mediaeval period, but whose contrasting timbre placed them in different performance locations. They are the 'Haut' or loud ensemble, and the 'Bas' or quiet ensemble. Sarah explained that the 'Haut' group was made up of instruments which produce loud and penetrating sounds, hence able to project music across great distances, and was thus the 'outdoor' ensemble, whilst the 'Bas' group, formed of instruments which produce quiet, more intimate sounds, was therefore the 'indoor' ensemble.



Figure 2

The 'Haut' Ensemble

Sarah described the 'Haut' ensemble (fig. 2 shows a typical one), as usually comprising a combination of brass and woodwind instruments, the emphasis being on clarity and delineation of each musical sound and part. A principal brass instrument here was the **trombone**, or sackbut as it was known in England. Trombones have a slide that is easily moved by the right hand which enable the playing of full

chromatic scales within the instrument's range, and which made them a favourite choice as melody instruments.

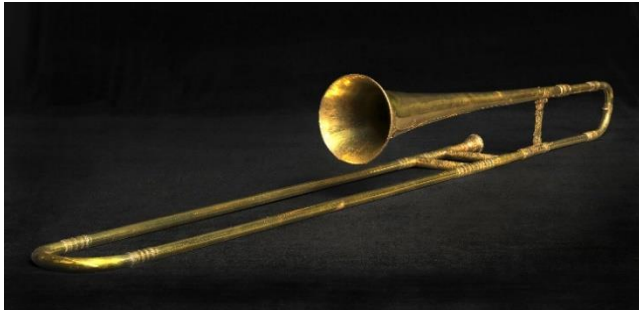


Figure 3

ubiquitous in Courts and ensembles across Europe. The Italian word 'trombone' means large trumpet, deriving from the slide-trumpet of the Renaissance.

Figure 3 shows the oldest playable trombone in the world, made by Anton Schnitzer of Nuremberg in 1594, and is currently in the Museum's collection. Nuremberg monopolised brass instrument manufacture from the 16th to the late 18th century; trombones and trumpets by Nuremberg masters were



Figure 4: Hans Memling - Angel Musicians - WGA14934.jpg Wikimedia. This image conflates the left and right panels of a triptych.

The **natural trumpet** was used mainly for ceremonial and fanfare use rather than in the Haut ensemble. Unlike the trombone, the **slide trumpet** had a slide at the mouthpiece and required the player to hold the instrument near the mouthpiece and move the entire instrument forward and back. No slide trumpets have survived, but illustrations of them are found in iconography of the period, as seen in Figure 4, being played by the two outer angels in this altar piece by Hans Memling painted in the 1480s.

The **cornett** (fig 5) provided a good contrasting sound in the Haut ensemble. Renowned for



Figure 5

its resemblance in tone to a boy soprano, it was particularly useful for clarity in polyphonic music, served well in many types of ensembles, and was also favoured in early opera. The cornett in pictured is made of wood wrapped in leather. The cup-shaped mouthpiece, ivory in this instrument, categorises it as belonging to the brass family.

For its penetrating, somewhat shrill, sound, perhaps the most important instrument within ensembles playing outside was the **shawm** (fig. 6 below). This is a woodwind instrument

with a double-reeded mouthpiece which vibrates rather like that of the modern oboe, for which it is a predecessor, but produces a louder and less-controlled sound. The shawm developed in Europe from Turkish or Arabic origins, possibly encountered in the late Crusades.

The bass instrument of the group was often another woodwind instrument called the **dulcian, or curtal** (fig. 7 below). The dulcian is a double-reeded instrument, a predecessor of the modern bassoon, and is made out of a single piece of wood. It has a more pleasant sound than the bass shawm, and is easier to handle.

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Figure 6



Figure 7

THE 'BAS' ENSEMBLE

Sarah then talked about the 'Bas' ensemble, the quieter, more 'indoor' instruments, beginning with a discussion on **the lute**. This instrument was a development of the Ud, the



Figure 8

Arabic predecessor of the lute, which found its way into Europe with the Moors in their conquest of Spain. It is interesting that, given its origins, the greatest makers of lutes in the 16th century were Germans working in Italy, specifically in Bologna, Venice, Padua, and Rome.

The lute illustrated in Figure 8 dates from around 1620, and was made in Rome by Matteus Buchenberg. Its strongly-constructed body is of yew, and has more

strings, or 'courses', than the lutes used in the early Renaissance, an enlargement of compass, which gave it versatility and the capability to play a wider range of music. The lute had been played with a plectrum from mediaeval times, following an essentially monophonic line, but in the later Renaissance a new 'finger style' of playing came in and polyphonic music began to be played on the instrument, transcriptions of popular choral music forming much of the initial repertoire. The sound of a lute is soft, its exquisite intimacy especially suited to the acoustics of indoor performance. Among plucked instruments, the lute eventually reigned supreme, with some of the greatest composers producing a vast repertoire for it in solo works, for vocal accompaniment, and as part of an ensemble.

Remaining with plucked instruments in the 'Bas' ensemble, Sarah moved on to talk about **the harpsichord**. The term is a generic one since there are so many different versions, sizes, and styles to be found. The strings, made of different types of wire, may be aligned either parallel with the keyboard, or running directly away from the player. Figure 9 is an octave



Figure 9

spinet, possibly made around 1600 in Venice or Florence, and was a very popular instrument for domestic music-making; portable, but of small compass, and the shortness of the strings make the sound range an octave higher than normal.

A more full-size harpsichord would be used for solo work, as a basso continuo, i.e. to provide harmonic support to a voice or other instrument, or as a member of a larger ensemble. See Figure 10. This harpsichord is a typical 16th century Italian model, made in 1574 by Bernardinus de Trasuntinus in Venice, and would meet all those musical requirements. It is a single-manual instrument, i.e. one keyboard and one set of strings, and is the oldest playable instrument in the collection, delivering a consistent, clear sound. Such an instrument was not commonly found in Britain at that time.



Figure 10

The instrument in Figure 11, called a '**virginal**' or '**virginals**', was much more common in Britain. This model, although not playable, is the oldest surviving English virginal, and was made by Lodewyk Theewes in London around 1570. In common with all other types of harpsichords, the strings, in this case running parallel with the keyboard, are plucked by quill or leather plectra attached to the ends of the keys. One theory for the attribution of the name 'virginal' is that ladies of high rank, such as Queen Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots, were often devoted to the instrument, having received tuition on playing it as part of their education.



Figure 11



Figure 12 *The Coronation of the Virgin of Cologne*, by the Master of the Passion of Lyversberg, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

One of the main melody instruments in the 'Bas' ensemble was **the recorder**. In fact, the recorder was the most important flute instrument of the Renaissance. The painting in Figure 12, from around 1465, shows the typical Renaissance recorder. Recorders were made in many different sizes, each size named with a corresponding voice in a choir, reflecting the contemporary practice of playing choral music in a recorder group or 'consort'.

Figure 13 shows a tenor recorder dating from the latter part of the 16th century, made by the Bassano family, active in Venice and London, and is the largest known single-piece ivory instrument in the world. Renaissance recorders were made in one piece, typically of hardwood, whereas in the later Baroque period they were usually made in three sections, consisting of the fipple or mouthpiece, the body, and the foot joint.



Figure 13



Figure 14: *French Valois Schoo c1580*, at Penshurst Place, Wikimedia

Sarah used the familiar illustration, in Figure 14, to introduce the use of **bowed instruments** as an accompaniment to dance. During the Renaissance there was much change and development in the shapes and styles of bowed instruments, and the violin as we know it today did not have a dominant position. There was, in fact, rivalry between two factions: **the violin family and the viol family**.

The viol family, from bass to soprano, have different shapes to that of the violin family.



Figure 15

Figure 15 shows a bass viol made in 1700 by Matthias and Augustinus Kaiser of Düsseldorf. Of note is the fact that it has six strings, whilst its nearest rival in the violin family, the cello, has four. Also, unlike the cello, there are frets on the fingerboard. The instrument, indeed, the whole family, is more usually referred to as 'viola da gamba', i.e. a violin of the leg, from the particular technique of playing these instruments held between the legs.



Figure 16

Another major difference is that the bow of the viola da gamba is held with the wrist facing away from the instrument, as shown in Figure 16, whereas the wrist faces towards the instrument in the bow technique of the violin family. Because of its shape and manner of playing, the viola da gamba delivers a quiet, intimate, and somewhat mournful tone, quite a different timbre to that of the violin family. Although immensely popular in its day, it would become unfashionable towards the end of the 18th century with the advent of larger ensembles in concert halls, giving way to the more dynamic sounds of the violin family.

Whilst several Italian makers were involved in the development of **the violin family** of instruments, the Amati family of Cremona is especially important. Andrea Amati created the first violin, as we know it today, in the 1530s. It was originally referred to as the 'viola da braccio', i.e. the violin of the arm, being first held against the upper arm for playing rather than under the chin in the style of today. Figure 17 shows the back of the oldest known cello, the 'King Cello', made by Amati around 1538. As a royal commission, it was painted and gilded with the emblems and mottoes of King Charles IX of France. Sarah explained how the violin family's rise to prominence owed much to the French Court.



Figure 17



Figure 18: Violin du Roi engraving, 1688, N. Arnoult

At that time, Cremona was part of the kingdom of Navarre, ruled by French kings. Importantly, the French kings liked the new violin family and brought it into fashionable use at the French Court in 1570. Used primarily by Court musicians only, the number of players was increased by Henry IV, and the ensemble declared autonomous by Louis XIII in 1626. This group, famously known as the 'Vingt-quatre Violons du Roi', consisted of 24 members playing violin, alto viola, tenor viola, low-tenor viola, and cello, and performing music in 5-part settings. The violinist in Figure 18, an illustration of 1688, was part of this elite ensemble which existed at the French Court from 1626-1751.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS & NEW INSTRUMENTS, LEADING TO THE ORCHESTRA

The addition of wind instruments, which occasionally supplemented the string players,



Figure 19

helped move the ensemble in the direction of what would become the full orchestra. It was the envy of all Europe, with Charles I of England forming his own ensemble in 1631. The new orchestra would now become a dominant form in the Baroque period, with the violin family playing a leading role.

In Figure 19, a painting by Anton Gabbiano of the musicians of Prince Ferdinando de' Medici at the Italian Court in 1685, we see a fine example of the smaller forces used for chamber music, the violin for the principal melody supported by violas, theorbo, and the cello providing the basso continuo, or bass line, reinforced by the harpsichordist who fills out the harmony in an extempore chordal fashion.



Figure 20

At this time **the archlute**, with its extra strings, deeper bass notes, and more dramatic sound, began to replace the lute as a basso continuo instrument in ensembles. The archlute shown at Figure 20 was made by Martinus Harz in 1665.

Sarah related the consolidation of the violin family with parallel developments in other instruments and groupings, which would be extended over the next three centuries.

The Baroque oboe is a thinner, more delicate descendent of the shawm. Its reed, now only blown between the lips, giving a more controlled and gentler sound. Figure 21 shows an instrument made by Thomas Stanesby Senior in 1700,

This early clarinet, made around 1740 by an unknown maker, is a new instrument, a combination of a recorder and a reed instrument. See Figure 22.

The side-blown flute, the four-section model shown made by Charles Bizet around 1750, was the prominent flute at that time, producing more volume than the recorder, and its sound thus able to be heard equally within the string ensembles. See Figure 23.

The bassoon illustrated at Figure 24 was made around 1790 by an unknown maker. As a double-reed instrument it is generally considered a development of the earlier dulcian or curtal, and provides excellent bass support for both orchestra and small ensembles.



Figure 21

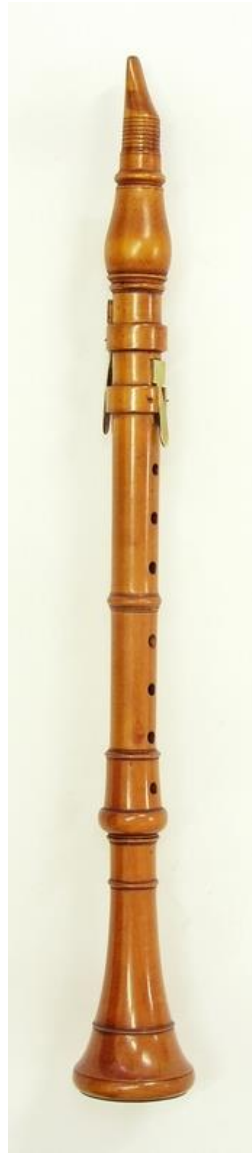


Figure 22



Figure 23

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Figure 24

Although **the trombone** was in evidence in the Baroque orchestra, the most important brass instrument of the day was **the horn**, playing in all kinds of music and ensembles. The model illustrated at Figure 25 was made in the latter part of the 18th century by an unknown maker. The trumpet shown at Figure 26, dating from the early 18th century, was, like the horn at this time, a natural instrument, i.e. one that plays notes in its natural harmonic series before the refinement of valves were incorporated into the instrument's design.



Figure 25



Figure 26

A painting of a German orchestral concert in 1771, at Figure 27, is a good example of **the mixed combination of instrument types**, albeit placed in an unconventional manner. Singers are joined by brass, woodwind, string instruments, and harpsichord. The separate role of conductor as we know it today did not begin to appear until the closing years of the 18th century, and, in this painting, the harpsichordist probably acted as ensemble director or leader.



Figure 27

The harpsichord of the Baroque era was popular in both domestic and concert use, playing solo repertoire or in an ensemble arrangement. The single-manual instrument shown above was made in 1709 in London by Thomas Barton, and has one set of strings. English

harpsichords of the period were plain, their exteriors sometimes refined by wood types and finish, but were always undecorated, as in Figure 28.



Figure 28



Figure 29

The double-manual harpsichord in Figure 29 was made by Jean Goermans in Paris in 1764. It has three sets of strings, plucked at different places, enabling a combination of disparate sounds to be used. This, and the highly-decorative chinoiserie, make for a very expensive instrument, suggesting a wealthy owner.



Figure 30

The single-manual bent-side spinet shown in Figure 30 was made in 1728 by Thomas Hitchcock of London. Economical in cost and space, the spinet fits against the wall, its strings aligned with its back panel, and by its angled keyboard, allows the player, most often the ladies of the house, to perform and be seen by the audience in more profile.



Figure 31

The instrument in Figure 31 is a **pochette**, made by Jacques du Mesnil in 1660, an especially narrow, portable violin with very little body. Designed for the peripatetic dancing master of the Baroque period, it fitted his pocket and was able to produce a penetrating, if thin, nasal sound which could be heard above that of the dancers' footwork. Unique among violins, pochettes often had elaborate carved heads, and were made of expensive materials to suitably impress wealthy or titled clients if needed.

The instrument in this painting by Johannes Vermeer of 1672 is a **baroque guitar**. It gradually replaced the lute as a popular domestic instrument in the Baroque era, achieving a high status over time. It uses two-string courses and was suitable for solo or continuo repertoire. Sarah suggested that the playing of this instrument in public would be done by a man, whereas playing in



Figure 32

a domestic setting, as in the painting, could well be the musical interest and activity of a lady.



Figure 33

At this point in the lecture Sarah moved forward into the 19th century to discuss the harp. The harp illustrated at Figure 33 was made by Sebastian Erard of Paris in 1837. It is a very refined model with 8 pedals which alter the pitch of the strings, thus enabling music in all keys to be played. Instruments such as these were often more expensive than harpsichords, occupied places in upper class households, and were equally suitable for solo and concert performance with an orchestra.

In the early 19th century there was a brief interest in the timbre of 'Janissary' music, that is, military music and instruments of the Janissaries, the elite Turkish royal bodyguards. The **'bell tree'** or **Turkish Crescent** percussion instrument, pictured in Figure 34, is called a 'Jingling Johnny', dates from the mid-19th century, and was shaken or twirled to actuate its bells. As with the **'Jingling Johnny'**, the 19th century **tambourine** was a popular percussion

instrument adding an exotic Eastern or Oriental flavour both to dance ensembles or orchestras in outdoor pleasure areas such as Vauxhall Gardens. See Figure 35.



Figure 34



Figure 35

Although the Florentine harpsichord maker Bartolomeo Christofori had been experimenting with his original idea of a **pianoforte** around 1700, the instrument illustrated in Figure 36, made by Johannes Zumpe in 1765, was the model which made it a singularly popular keyboard instrument. 'Piano' and 'forte', i.e. Italian for 'soft' and 'loud', defined the control of tone and dynamics now available in an instrument which strikes the strings with small hammers, rather than plucks them as in the harpsichord. Zumpe, a German immigrant, had designed this **square piano** which was cheaper than the cheapest bent-side spinet, with a different sound and touch, was compact with its strings parallel with the keyboard, perfectly capable of playing all forms of music, and would now find a wide market in the musically interested but less wealthy public.



Figure 36

Cheaper music publishing helped in this, sheet music that had 'For harpsichord' in the title now had 'or piano-forte' added, and the instrument was brilliantly demonstrated by the great Johann Christian Bach at Covent Garden. By 1800 there were several dozen registered piano makers in London, and the harpsichord era was over. The next few decades would see the pianoforte's wooden frame replaced by an iron one, the development of the upright and the grand piano, and a new piano repertoire and playing technique.

At this point Sarah moved on to the 19th century to discuss the creation of **the Brass Band**, and to certain factors which led eventually to a standardised set of brass instruments and percussion, at least in Britain. She emphasised the important part played in this by developments in design, in particular of natural instruments.

The natural trumpet is limited to its harmonic series of notes, and in performance demands the utmost skill of the player. **The addition of keys to a trumpet**, as seen in the illustrated model made by Louis Müller around 1835 (Figure 37), introduced a control mechanism into the air flow, enabling the instrument to play the full range of diatonic notes. This development placed the instrument within the capabilities of dedicated amateurs.

The tone of the notes achieved by the opening and closing of keys was, however, relatively uneven. This led to an improvement where **the keys were replaced by piston valves**, as shown in Figure 38, made by York of Grand Rapids around 1927. The introduction of valves to such instruments as trumpets, horns, and bugles, gave them a new evenness of tone, revolutionised the quality of brass instruments, ensuring a consistency of sound in ensemble, and helped lead to the formation of Brass Bands.



Figure 37



Figure 38

The saxophone was a new instrument invented in the 1840s by the Belgian maker Adolph Sax. His tenor saxophone shown in Figure 39 was made in 1867, and, although made of



Figure 39

brass, is classified as a woodwind instrument because its sound is generated by a reed mouthpiece, rather than a cup mouthpiece of brass instruments. In its early career it saw use in French and British military bands, and in some classical ensembles, but progressively entered a new field of popular music, in repertoire of the vaudeville theatre, dance bands, and ultimately the world of the Jazz Age in the 20th century.

Taking us into the sound recording era, Sarah explained the use of **the 'Stroh violin'**, the model shown in Figure 40 dating after 1919. Augustus Stroh, an electrical engineer with an interest in acoustics, designed the above instrument to overcome the inability of early sound recording systems to capture



Figure 40

the sound of the violin in an ensemble or an orchestra.

Played like a violin, the sound produced is thin and penetrating, coming as it does from a metal resonator, and is directed via its larger speaker cone towards the large acoustic pickup cones of the recording system. The smaller speaker cone feeds the sound back to the player. Rendered obsolete with the advent of electrical microphone recording, the Stroh violin found a new lease of life in folk music, especially that of Eastern Europe, and jazz.



Figure 41

This modern dance **drummer's console** dates from the 1930s, and contains, within its transportable frame, a bass drum, side drum, tom-toms, cymbals and miscellaneous kit. The tray containing miscellaneous items was called the 'contraption', shortened to 'trap', giving the name **'trap set'** by which the assembly is known. Sarah explained the evolution of integrated percussion was a result of dance band organisers wanting the economy of one

drummer playing everything, rather than three drummers playing separate items.



Figure 42

The hurdy-gurdy in Figure 42, by an anonymous maker, dates from the early 17th century, and shows the basic principle of operation whereby the large wheel, rotated by the player's right hand, activates the strings which are stopped by the keys operated by the player's left hand. The instrument also has drone strings, i.e. unstopped strings, which, whilst restricting its key range, do give it a commonality with bagpipes, allowing the sharing of repertoire.

It is commonly seen in iconography of street musicians, in the everyday world of ordinary people, and was a very popular instrument for playing dance music.

The late 18th century **French hurdy-gurdy, or vielle à roue**, shown in Figure 43, was made by Ouvrard. The French aristocracy, nobility, and upper classes, found it fashionable escapism to pretend to 'live' in the unrealistic, idealised world of the shepherd and shepherdess. Whilst the mechanisms are almost the same, the expensive ivory and ebony decoration place the playing of this instrument in quite a different world from that of the previous model. The guitar-shape body suggests the instrument is a recycling of a Baroque guitar, which was going out of fashion at this time.



Figure 43

Sarah drew her lecture to a close appropriately discussing instruments popularly, and traditionally, played in Scotland. She began with the many different types of **bagpipes**. Figure 44 shows a set of **Pastoral Pipes**, attributed to Hugh Robertson of Edinburgh and



Figure 44

made around 1775. It is elegantly constructed of ivory with silver keys, evidence of a wealthy owner, and has small bores and tone holes which give it a gentle sound, hence the pastoral name, making it especially suited to indoor playing, for dancing, and to blend in an ensemble.



Figure 45 shows a set of **Lowland or Border Pipes** made by George Walker of Edinburgh around 1840, showing the bellows used to blow air into the instrument. Again, it has a relatively soft volume suitable for indoor use, and, particularly accompanied by a violin, to provide music for dancing and at ceilidhs.

Figure 45



The set of **Great Highland bagpipes** in Figure 46 is a three-quarter size version, made exquisitely with ebony drones and stocks, and silver slides and mouthpiece, by Duncan McDougall of Aberfeldy in 1894-5. Sarah commented on the strong campaign for Scottish Highland culture in the 19th century, and how big a part the Highland bagpipes played in it. The strong and powerful sound of Great Highland bagpipes made them a first choice for military music, indispensable for popular and dance music, and especially for the many playing and dancing competitions that are part of the Scottish tradition.

Sarah concluded her lecture by explaining how an **18th century classical violin**, possibly made by the Hornsteiner family in Mittenwald (see Figure 47), was used by the renowned Scottish composer-fiddler William

Marshall (1748-1833). The term '**fiddler**' is applied to a violinist who plays a rhythmic style of music, mostly dance orientated, characteristically using quick note changes, improvisations and discretionary embellishments. Sarah wished to leave us with the

Figure 46



Figure 47

thought that William Marshall would play on this classical violin his wealth of compositions of Scottish airs, melodies, strathspeys, and reels, as some evidence for her conclusion that, “ any instrument can be played for dancing: it is all about how one plays it, and the style of music that one plays on it”.

Entire books have been written on quite specific areas of dance, music, and musical instruments. Within a short lecture, however, Sarah managed to use the instruments in the Museum’s collection to explore how her three main areas of music, dance and musical instruments have interacted over the past 500 years. Her knowledge of the instruments, their use, and development, was thorough and impressive, and delivered in a most engaging manner. I think dancers and musicians alike found many new details to supplement their knowledge. Even if the interaction between all three different topics was (inevitably) not deeply

charted, the lecture nevertheless raised some interesting aspects to ponder. The instruments discussed covered a span of centuries, and I'm not sure how much detailed interaction one could delineate beyond a few general observations. In this respect, dance was generally referred to in terms of where it might be performed, along with specific instruments associated with certain types of dance.

TOPICS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Although Sarah's initial stated aim was to encourage her audience to think about the interaction of music, dance, and musical instruments, the lecture's main thrust was an exploration of the instruments in the collection, their time in history, their popularity, and their development. As such, it was a delightful presentation, illustrations given of all the instruments, with around 15 audio tracks in support. Her knowledge of the instruments, their use, and development, was thorough and impressive, and she delivered the lecture in a most engaging manner. I think dancers and musicians alike would find many new details of information to supplement their knowledge, and, even if the interaction between music, dance and instruments, was inevitably not deeply charted given the time restraint, the lecture nevertheless raised some interesting aspects to ponder over. Entire books have been written on very specific areas of dance, of music, and of musical instruments. The instruments discussed covered a span of centuries, and I'm not sure how much detailed interaction one could delineate beyond a few general observations, such as where dance might be performed, or particular instruments associated with certain types of dance.

Change in dance, music, and instruments, is, as in life, a forward moving process which can only be fully understood looking back. To understand these changes in taste and style, one has to attempt to investigate and establish the context in which they occurred; a multi-disciplinary task of relating the issues involved in each area.

Looking at one element, an assessment of the development of Renaissance instrumental music would have to examine its liberation from that of vocal dominance; that is, the new-found freedom in the composition of music not constrained in form and character by text. Alongside this, one would have to take into consideration the fact that much popular choral music was adopted as repertoire both for the newly-emerging polyphonic style of playing on the lute, and for small instrumental ensembles. There would be the need to observe the influence which the long-established improvisatory style of playing exerted on new compositions, not just those for the lute, but on the remarkable keyboard works of the Elizabethan period. It would be important to trace how composers for the lute introduced dance music into the world of art music, and how this repertoire would feed into the great keyboard masters' compositions at that time, and, as a genre, into the works of future generations of instrumental composers, equally elevating and elaborating the music far beyond the requirements and realm of the dance floor. Aspects of performance would have to be considered, along with those tantalising questions surrounding the profusion of dance music publications of the sixteenth century, for every conceivable combination of instruments, by publishers such as Phalèse, Attaignant, Moderne, and Susato. If dance musicians of the day were traditionally skilled and practised improvisers of well-known dance tunes, then who played these multi-part, formalised, polyphonic settings of solo dances and dance suites? Were these publications produced for amateur ensembles, for performance at concerts, or for dance events?

One item notably missing from the lecture was the tabor, which, along with the pipe, was a fundamental accompaniment to so much early dance, and was, of course, the instrument which Arbeau considered crucial to the initial teaching of dance in his book *Orchésographie*. 'In the beginning was rhythm', quoted by the great pianist and conductor, Hans von Bülow, has a relevance here for us as dancers because it reminds us that in its very earliest beginnings, dance and dance movement, as a natural human tendency or primitive ceremonial expression, would almost certainly have taken place with, and be dependent upon, some form of fundamentally rhythmic and perhaps percussive accompaniment, such as stamping, beating, hand-clapping, finger-snapping, etc., but originating quite independently of, and pre-dating, musical sound or music as we perceive it today. Man's rhythmic sense is stronger than his melodic sense. It is instinctive, as very young children and marching soldiers will testify. From this premise it is possible to see how this elemental requirement of dance, this rhythmic and time-related framework for movement, has

exerted a phenomenally persistent, important and inestimably far-reaching, influence on the form, structure, development, expectations, and appreciation, of all music throughout history. This leads us on to the next stage: interpretation, which, paradoxically, looks beyond just the rhythm, the step, and the bar-line, to see the shape, phrasing, and significance, of the dance and the music as a whole - but that is another story.

Paul Kent

31/12/20