



The EMFS Newsletter

June 2021 Issue 14

Message from our EMFS Chair

Dear EMFS members and friends,

Here are two requests for your feedback. Please do respond, as YOUR opinions will shape the future direction of EMFS.

1. Restarting indoor music-making

An email from Making Music has just arrived in my inbox, confirming Scottish government guidance. At the time of writing, most (but not all) of Scotland is in Level 2, which means that organised adult non-professional performing arts activity is allowed outdoors, but not indoors. It is anticipated that all of Scotland will move to Level 1 on 7th June (indoor and outdoor activity permitted) and to Level 0 on 28th June. All this, of course, dependent on the COVID situation. 2 metre physical distancing is still expected at rehearsals, indoor or out, and organisers must conduct a proper risk assessment, keep records of attenders and take other measures to limit any potential exposure to risk.

I suspect that most choirs, orchestras and other large ensembles may hold off returning to live rehearsals until the autumn. Venue availability is likely to remain an issue - big groups will need considerably more space than before, to allow for 2 metre distancing. Small groups may be able to meet in private homes, but again the guidelines should be followed to minimise risk to all participants.

So we now have at least the theoretical possibility of being able to run EMFS choir and other workshops from June onwards. We need to know how you feel about this. Will you feel comfortable returning to live rehearsal/workshop events from June onwards, if the guidance allows? Or would you prefer to wait until August/September, when we would usually restart regular activities after the summer?

Please let us know.

2. What is the future for EMFS?

After many years as Chair, and with my personal circumstances having changed recently, I have no desire to continue for much longer. Many of the current committee have been in place for as long (and in some cases for much longer!). Our excellent freelance administrator, Susan White, can no longer commit the time needed. Previous appeals for help with running EMFS have produced a very poor response. This does lead me to question the value of EMFS as an umbrella organisation for amateur early music in Scotland now. So we need to know what YOU value about EMFS – what you would miss most if it all stopped completely. Is it the choir; the viol hire scheme and coaching sessions; the occasional choral and instrumental day workshops; the annual all-comers music-making day; the occasional performance days; the regular email updates about early music events; the Newsletters? Does EMFS offer you something you can't get elsewhere? And, importantly, if you value some or all of what we do, are you personally able to offer time and energy to help EMFS continue? Because, to be blunt, if no-one comes forward to take on some of the responsibility, then it is quite likely that the organisation will stagger to a halt. Of course early music-making will continue across Scotland - there are a number of thriving small ensembles and informal musical alliances. But does EMFS still have a valid role to play, one which is worth the administrative time and energy? That depends on how YOU respond.

Please send your thoughts on both of these questions to me, Alison Tollick – alison.tollick2@gmail.com. Feel free to discuss with anyone else who may be interested. I hope to hear from you.

Alison

Message from the editor

I've recently turned 70 years old and it feels like a significant milestone. I'm very thankful to have lived my three-score and ten years, and grateful for my good health. But I can confirm that we simply don't get value for money in duration of time these days. Three months in 2021 pass as quickly as a week used to pass in 1961.

So I'm pleased to deliver Issue 14 of the EMFS newsletter a mere 1961-week after Issue 13. As always, I am indebted to the news contacts for all the other Early Music Forums. I've started to collate emails of interest each week to send to you every Friday. I hope this is working out well for you.

Many thanks to the authors of items in this issue of the newsletter. There hasn't been so much offered this time - perhaps because we're all weary of the screen, and neither real-life music-making and concert-going have resumed yet.

You will notice that the "Message from our EMFS Chair" appears on the first page of this issue. This is an attempt to bring it to your immediate notice, hoping that you will respond. It's no exaggeration to say that without input from our members at this stage, the future of EMFS is in jeopardy.

If we still exist as an organisation, the deadline for the next issue is 15th August 2021. Hope to hear from you soon!

Sue

sue@emfscotland.org.uk

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Your EMFS committee (this time with names spelled correctly!)



Your EMFS committee:

From left to right starting at the top: Alison Tollick (chair); Sue Owen (news editor and EMFS choir administrator); Lynne Hope (recorders coordinator and viols); Philip Redfern (EMFS choir music director); Susan White (EMFS administrator); Vickie Hobson (EMFS viols coordinator); Kate Morss (EMFS treasurer); Patsy Campbell (viols).

Events, workshops and other treats for your diary

In real life! (Online events in next section)

(subject to cancellation due to lockdown restrictions - please check; Scottish events in **bold font**)

JULY 2021

- Sat 3 - Fri 9 Lacock. Music at Monteconero – early Latinoamericana (Gabriel Crouch) www.lacock.org
- Mon 5 - Wed 7 Benslow Music
Baroque Trio Sonatas with Da Camera. Tutors: Emma Murphy, Susanna Pell, Mie Hayashi. <https://benslowmusic.org/?PageID=3078>
- Sun 11 - Fri 16 Lacock. Edinburgh Early Music Summer School – Carver et al. (Rory McCleery). www.lacock.org
- Sun 11 - Fri 16 Benslow Music
The International Viol Summer School. Tutors: Alison Crum, Roy Marks, Peter Wendland, Alison Kinder.
<https://benslowmusic.org/?PageID=2597>
- Fri 16 to
Sun 18** **Scottish Plainsong Choir
Residency Orkney including Vespers-style Evensong St
Magnus Cathedral.
Contact c.mackenzie@strath.ac.uk**
- Sat 25 - Sun 1 Aug Cambridge Baroque Summer School
<https://www.cambridgeearlymusic.org/summer-schools.html>
- Sat 31 - Sat 7 Barnard Castle NORVIS 50 summer school. www.norvis.org.uk
(dates tbc)

Events, workshops and other treats for your diary

In real life! (Online events in next section)

(subject to cancellation due to lockdown restrictions - please check; Scottish events in **bold font**)

AUGUST 2021

- Sun 1 - Sat 7 Beauchamp Early Music Course for singers and players of Renaissance instruments, at Rendscomb nr Cirencester. "O quam gloriosum" - large & small-scale music associated with saints and sainthood (David Hatcher, David Allinson & Sue Addison).
www.glosacadmusic.org
- Sun 1 - Mon 8 Cambridge Renaissance Summer School
https://www.cambridgeearlymusic.org/summer-schools.html
- Sat 14 - Sat 21 Irish Recorder and Viol Course in Termonfeckin near Drogheda, north of Dublin. *https://www.irishrecorderandviolcourse.org*
- Sun 15 - Sun 22 Baroque Week summer school at Queen Anne's School, Caversham. The Grand Tour: Italy (Theresa Caudle, Ann Allen, Amanda Babington, Clare Beesley, Zoë Cartlidge, Steven Devine, Satoko Doi-Luck, Jane Francis, David Miller, and Kate Semmens).
www.baroque-week.org.uk (dates tbc)
- Mon 16 - Fri 20 HISS (Historically Informed Summer School)
"Where early, folk & traditional music come together". Bishop Burton College, near Beverley, East Yorkshire.
http://www.hiss.org.uk/
- Sun 22**
3 - 4:30pm **The Edinburgh Renaissance Band**
The Viol Rackett Show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2021. St Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street, Edinburgh
Details to be announced

Events, workshops and other treats for your diary

In real life! (Online events in next section)

(subject to cancellation due to lockdown restrictions - please check; Scottish events in **bold font**)

SEPTEMBER 2021

Fri 3 - Sun 5 Jackdaws. Stylish Baroque (Theresa Caudle & Alastair Ross) £10 discount if booking by 7th September 2020 www.jackdaws.org.uk

Fri 3 - Sun 5 Cambridge choral liturgy course

Sun 5 - Fri 10 Lacock. Trogir Music Week – Jacobean music (Patrick Craig)
www.lacock.org

Tue 7 - Mon 20 Lammermuir Festival, East Lothian
<https://www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk/>

Fri 10 - Sun 12 Jackdaws. The City Musick course on late 16th/early 17th C instrumental music (William Lyons and Richard Thomas) £10 discount if booking by 7th September 2020. www.jackdaws.org.uk

Mon 13 - Thu 16 Benslow Music
Consorting Viols. Tutors: Alison Crum, Roy Marks, Peter Wendland <https://benslowmusic.org/?PageID=2933>

Mon 20 - Thu 23 Benslow Music
The Grandeur of St Mark's: Venetian Sacred Music by Cavalli from his "Musiche Sacre" of 1656. Tutors: Theresa Caudle, William Carlslake. <https://benslowmusic.org/?PageID=2778>

Fri 17 - Sun 19 Medieval Music in the Dales at Bolton Castle
<https://www.medievalmusicinthedales.co.uk/>

Sun 19 - Sat 25 Lacock. Lucca Consort Week – Frescobaldi et al. in small groups
(Robert Hollingworth). www.lacock.org

DECEMBER 2021

Sun 12 The Edinburgh Renaissance Band
3pm Christmas Concert 2021
St Cecilia's Hall, Niddry Street

Concerts, workshops, vignettes etc from MEMF emails

Virtual Concerts

Un chemin d'étoiles – songs of the pilgrims of Saint-Jacques from the Middle Ages to the present age – a video concert by the Ensemble Discantus *here*. (50 mins)

Live From London Summer is a series of 14 new concerts from 4th July – 22nd August, hosted by the Voces8 Foundation. Click on each concert to see what the programme is. As usual the vocal concerts (Voces8, I Fagiolini, Kings Singers, etc) tend to encompass early to modern repertoire, most of the others are more modern with the exception of Mary Bevan (soprano) who sings Handel arias with Barnaby Smith (countertenor). Details and booking *here*. Season tickets £110 for all 14, £80 for 10 or £12.50 each.

Resound - St Martin-in-the-Fields is a series of concerts both live and online. Online, Rachel Podger plays baroque music on Monday 24th May at 7.30; St Martin's Upper Voices and Players perform Porpora, Hasse and Vivaldi on Tuesday 29th June at 7.30 and I Fagiolini are on Wednesday 30th June at 7.30. All online concerts available for 30 days. Details and booking *here*. Season tickets £99, Individual concerts £10.

The Bristol Early Music Festival can still be viewed on YouTube *here*.

Opera video

L'Orfeo by *Claudio Monteverdi* performed by Le Théâtre de Caen and Les Arts Florissants directed by Paul Agnew *here*. (1 hour 44mins)

Masterclass

Historical Performance with William Christie and students of the Julliard School playing Leclair on violin and Harpsichord, Telemann on oboe and harpsichord, and Mozart with a string quartet *here*. (YouTube - 1 hour 34 mins)

Viola da Gamba Society

(You have to be a VdGS member to access these zoom sessions)

Monday 17th May at 5pm – Technique class: *Reflections on Resonance* with Alison Crum.

Thursday 27th May at 7:30 – a talk on *Authentic Stringing* by Mimmo Peruffo
Details *here*.

Lute makers

Many of you know the sad story of Stephen Barber, who sadly died last year, and Sandi Harris. If not, listen to their story *here*. This week Sandi was on Radio 4's 'The Untold' talking about carrying on with the business despite all the difficulties (including Brexit) *here*. There are tributes on their YouTube channel, 11a Peacock Yard, in aid of their help campaign founded by friends.

Here is Nigel North playing 10 minutes of lute music by Francesco da Milano.

Vignettes

John Taverner: Christe Jesu sung by Stile Antico in their latest Spotlight film *here*. (2mins 49)

Telemann: Fantasia no.1 played on the harpsichord by Eva Carazzolo *here*. (Audio: 4mins 25)

Marco Uccellini: La Bergamasca played by Voices of Music (strings and continuo) *here*. (4mins 32)

Antonia Bembo (1603-1666): "Ha, que l'absence" for soprano (Amanda Majeski), viola da gamba and theorbo *here*. (6mins)

In vain the am'rous flute, from *Elegy*, a CD (2019) of Countertenor duets sung by Iestyn Davies and James Hall with the King's Consort *here*. (Audio: 6mins 21) - you can hear all the other tracks there too)

Giovanni Bononcini (1670 - 1747): 'Varii fiori del giardino Musicale' played by Ensemble il Falcone (string quartet) *here*. (7mins)

Johann Pachelbel: Partita IV in E minor played by Vladimir Shulyakovskiy and Music Antiqua Russica *here*. (8mins)

Nicola Porpora: Concerto in G major for Violincello, strings and basso continuo played by Joseph Couch and the English Concert *here*. (Audio: 17mins 27)

Other online events, workshops etc for your diary

2021

JUNE

Thu 17 Patrick Craig. Josquin 500 - linking heaven and earth
Southern Early Music Forum (<https://www.semf.org.uk>)

Sat 19 Scottish Plainsong Choir
10-11:30am Chant for Saints Magnus and Columba
2-3:30pm To register, *click here for the morning session*;
and *click here for the afternoon*. £5 per session

Sat 19 Gibbons Fantasias in 2, 3 and 6 parts, an instrumental workshop
10:30am with Mary Tyers.
We will spend our time playing and exploring three contrasting examples from this endlessly fascinating genre, all by Orlando Gibbons. Hosted by NEEMF, details and booking *here*.

Sat 19 Robert Hollingworth SingTheScore Extra tbc (<http://memf.org.uk>)
11am Midlands Early Music Forum

JULY

Sun 18 Lizzie Gutteridge, Arbeau and friends Renaissance Dances
2pm North East Early Music Forum (<http://neemf.org.uk>)

Regular Events

Wednesdays 1pm: Ensemble Hesperis. Lunchtime baroque concerts

www.ensemblehesperis.com.

Wednesdays 7pm: Trouvere Medieval Minstrels on their Facebook page [https://](https://www.facebook.com/TrouvereMedievalMinstrels/)

www.facebook.com/TrouvereMedievalMinstrels/.

Fridays 11-11.30am: The Telling in Retreat. Medieval singing workshops [https://](https://www.thetelling.co.uk/in-retreat)

www.thetelling.co.uk/in-retreat (available afterwards). 19/2-26/3 Women in Medieval Music.

Fridays 1pm: David Allinson Lunchtime Live (available afterwards) [http://](http://davidallinson.com/media/)

davidallinson.com/media/.

Fridays 1pm: Eboracum Baroque spotlight concerts on YouTube and Facebook

(available afterwards) <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYp4g02I56ZBZli2ndmFsYw>.

Fridays 6pm: SingTheScore (available afterwards) <https://www.ifagiolini.com>.

Fridays 29 Jan to 5 March, 7pm: 6 Platinum Consort workshops, also available on

demand afterwards. Bach: Jesu meine Freude at A=415. [https://](https://www.platinumconsort.com/jmf.html)

www.platinumconsort.com/jmf.html.

First Saturday of each month, alternating mornings and afternoons: SWEMF are hosting “Early music chat” <https://www.swemf.org.uk>.

Organisations offering Early Music events, courses etc Outside Scotland

For details of events in the north of England which may be of interest and within reasonable reach:

North East Early Music Forum (<http://www.neemf.org.uk/>;
and <https://www.neemf.org.uk/other-events.html> for a long list of Early Music events in northern England.

North West Early Music Forum (<https://nwemf.org/>)

The National Early Music Centre in York presents a wonderful programme of concerts and events. <http://www.ncem.co.uk/>

Benslow Music runs several Early Music courses in Hitchin, Hertfordshire:
(<https://www.benslowmusic.org/>)

Some of their residential early music related courses are listed here:

Sun 11 - Fri 16 July 2021 *The International Viol Summer School*

Tutors: Alison Crum, Roy Marks, Peter Wendland, Alison Kinder

Mon 16 - Thu 19 August 2021 *Baroque Buffet: Baroque on Modern Instruments*

Tutors: Julia Bishop, Sophie Middleditch, Julian Perkins

Mon 13 - Thurs 16 September 2021 *Consorting Viols*

Tutors: Alison Crum, Roy Marks, Peter Wendland

Mon 20 - Thu 23 September 2021 *The Grandeur of St Mark's: Venetian Sacred Music by Cavalli from his "Musiche Sacre" of 1656*

Tutors: Theresa Caudle, William Carslake

Fri 15 - Sun 17 October 2021 *Georg Muffat: A bridge between Lully and Corelli*

Tutors: Julio Caballero Pérez, Coline Ormond

Organisations offering Early Music events, courses etc Outside Scotland cont'd

The Rondo Viol academy runs courses throughout the year for players of different standards. For details of all courses please see (<http://www.rondoviolaacademy.co.uk/>)

Venues are The Hayes in Swanwick, Derbyshire

(<https://www.cct.org.uk/the-hayes/the-hayes-conference-centre>).

High Leigh in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire

(<https://www.cct.org.uk/high-leigh/high-leigh-conference-centre>).

Hothorpe Hall in Theddingworth, Leicestershire

(<https://www.hothorpe.co.uk/>).

The Beeches in Bournville, Birmingham

(<https://chartridgevenues.com/the-beeches/>)

The Gargoyles of Gargunock

Some news (for a change!)

Helen Rowell



Photographer Mark Leslie setting up for the Gargoyle's photoshoot at Bannockburn House

We were back at Bannockburn House again at the end of April for two more photoshoots with Mark Leslie, the semi-professional and brilliant photographer (look him up on Google). This time we were together and we went inside the House, but it was perishing inside too! It's the first time that we've been together as the Gargoyles since Christmas 2019 so it felt wonderful. We have only seen a couple of his photo portraits ourselves, which are works of art. He is not releasing them until the exhibition but he has allowed us to show you some photos that I took of him working. It looks like our only booking this year will be at the book launch and exhibition of his work at the House at the end of August or early September. He's been photographing all the volunteers. There's some talk of a medieval encampment too. So if it all happens it'll be an exciting event to visit!

For those of you who were thinking of going to the Traquair House Medieval Fayre at the end of May, it has unfortunately been cancelled. Not a surprise really but disappointing nevertheless.

Meanwhile, we are desperate to meet for socially distanced, garden practices again! The first Tuesday we could have got together, we were being photographed, and the second, it was pouring with rain so we haven't managed it yet! Let's hope the weather warms up soon because Zoom practices have definitely lost the novelty factor!

Best wishes from the Gargoyles of Gargunock – Zoe, Liz and Helen

An evocative painting

Philip Bradfield



My late wife, Sheila, shared with me (and my two daughters and son) my continuing enthusiasm for small-scale vocal ensembles. The three figures in this famous painting *The Concert* (1530) by *The Master of the Female Half-Lengths* (the Schloss Rohrau collection, Vienna) always help me to remember my dear wife's exquisite musical abilities.

The painting shows a performance of *Jouissance [je] vous donneray* by Claudin de Sermisy (sung as a madrigal with text by Marot), with voice, flute (transverse - yes) and lute. (I wonder why the formal *vous* is used in the title, and not the familiar *tu*?).

The music manuscripts in the painting display the score quite clearly.

In our Viewpoint supported housing here at Croft-an-Righ (by Holyrood Palace) where I now live, we have a group who “gather” via Zoom to exchange stories and ideas, and they were very interested to have this Renaissance musical gem/portrait as a point of discussion.

(*Ed*: I was fascinated by the painting and the anonymity of the artist, and found this information on wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_of_the_Female_Half-Lengths). I'm sharing it with the usual warning that there is no guarantee the information is correct!)

“*The Master of the Female Half-Lengths*” (sometimes referred to as *Master of the Half-Lengths*) is the *notname* given to a painter, or more likely a group of painters of a workshop, active in the Low Countries in the early 16th century. The name was given in the 19th century to identify the maker or makers of a body of work consisting of 67 paintings to which since 40 more have been added. The Master created female figures in genre scenes, small religious and mythological works, landscapes and portraits.

The works attributed to the *Master of the Female Half-Lengths* were apparently the product of a large workshop that specialised in small-scale panels depicting aristocratic young ladies at half-length. The ladies are shown engaging in various activities such as reading, writing, or playing musical instruments. The women all share the same heart-shaped face and gentle demeanour. The expressions of the female figures are characterised by their sweetness and grace. The Master clearly expressed in these works the high artistic and moral humanistic values of the Northern Renaissance. The figures are typically placed in a wood-panelled interior or against a neutral background. Some of the women are represented with an ointment jar, the attribute of Mary Magdalene.

There is no agreement on the *Master's* identity and the place and period of his activity. Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Mechelen and the French court have been proposed for the location of his workshop. Estimates for his period of activity vary from the early to the late 16th century. Generally, it is believed the *Master* was active in the early 16th century. The art historian Otto Benesch proposed an identification with the Bruges artist named Jan or Hans Vereycke. This identification has not found universal support among art historians.

Some art historians have argued that the artist must have worked in Antwerp or Mechelen in the 1520s and 1530s since the landscapes of the master are close to those of Joachim Patinir and the female types resemble those of Bernard van Orley. Certain similarities between the *Master's* work and that of the Bruges artists Ambrosius Benson and Adriaen Isenbrant have also been observed.

While his figures show an affinity with those of Isenbrant who worked in Bruges, the *Master* is more likely to have been active in Antwerp. The reasons are that he seems to have worked mainly for the export trade for which Antwerp was then the principal hub in Flanders and that his landscapes relied on the landscapes of Joachim Patinir. A similarity between the figures of the *Master* and those of another anonymous painter active in Antwerp referred to as the *Master with the Parrot* has also been noted.

Easter Day

by Mandy Macdonald

Christ rising again from the dead now dieth not --
Tallis' anthem for Easter Day
rises too, five-stranded skein of polyphony
knitting together the columns of the nave
brindled by slanting sunlight, splashed with
windows' scarlet, violet, emerald, gold,
rich blazon of transparent blue. It is cold,
pure, early spring.

For seeing that by man came death,
by man also cometh the resurrection of the dead.
Once, half a century ago, I would have been here
to worship or to contemplate;
now I am here for Tallis.
I am here to sing.
Perhaps that is prayer too. Singing,
I listen for the voices of the countless dead
not risen on this day, whatever the promise.
I sing their requiem.

The Lockedown Consort

D James Ross writes about his musical experiences in Lockdown

Like many other groups throughout Scotland, we had a couple of concert programmes in the final stages of rehearsal when Lockdown struck in March last year. One of these was a very special large-scale choral concert celebrating the 500th anniversary of the heraldic ceiling of St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen, which was due to take place on Sunday 15th March 2020. On the previous Tuesday evening we ran through the spectacular Glorias of the Masses *Cantate Domino* and *Dum Sacrum Mysterium* by Carver, processional music from the Inverness Fragments, David Peebles' *Si Quis Diligit Me* and consort music by the Aberdeen Sangscule Maister, John Blak – everything was ready. Little did any of us know that this would be the last time I and my musicians would see one another for many months. A Saturday of frantic phone-calls with the wonderfully understanding Dr Roger Williams, with whom we had coordinated the event, and a hurried campaign of 'unadvertising' ensued – in over forty years of concert-giving with Musick Fyne, Coronach and The Marvel of Peru we have only ever had to cancel three concerts! In the curious way of such things, on Sunday 15th, the very day of the planned concert, our 97-year-old mum took a turn for the worse in her care home and died around midday – the circumstances that allowed me to be with her, and the unfolding nightmare of isolation that she escaped now look like a shining silver lining.

In my retirement, my life has revolved around live music - staging concerts, conducting, singing, playing, and reviewing live concerts. All of this came to an abrupt halt in March 2020. Also in an advanced stage of preparation was a concert I was conducting in Inverness Cathedral with the wonderful Skibo Strings, including Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, which was also to feature a 40th birthday flashmob pop-up *Zadok the Priest* from Musick Fyne! Again like many other musicians in the intervening year, I tried various online alternatives and was frankly disappointed at the impossibility of simply singing or playing live together as an online ensemble. Several organisations, including Sue at the EMFS have done a remarkable job in offering a range of online options. Personally, what I enjoy about making music is the live interaction with others, and sadly this did not seem possible. I have even been disappointed at the wide range of socially distanced live performances available – the remoteness and inevitable raggedness of such performances just makes me want to cry for what we are missing. It is fortunate that the online experience seems to have been much more satisfying for most people.

However, it was in a mixture of frustration and hope that I contacted two of my consort players to arrange to play live music in my back garden round a fire-bowl, and on August 24th 2020 The Lockedown Consort was born. Naturally enough we played music by Matthew Locke, but also lovely consort music from the 15th to the 18th century – to be honest, it was a particular delight just to be able to enjoy and try out repertoire without having half an eye on a concert programme. Over the ensuing months, the weather has been generally very kind to us, and we have been meeting periodically since then, and thoroughly enjoying the purest kind of consort playing.



Two members of the Lockedown Consort, well wrapped up and warmed by fire and flowers

A parallel lifesaver for me was the discovery that as a professional ensemble, my core group of vocalists, The Musick Fyne Soloists, could also meet and rehearse under certain strict conditions, and on the very week of the launch of the Lockedown Consort, the Soloists were able to meet and sing music by Victoria, Gabrieli, Guerrero, Jean le Febure, Alonso Lobo and others in preparation for Christmas. As the possibility of doing our usual busy round of live Christmas concerts and services began to recede, we made a contingency plan to record the music ‘live’ and make it freely available online for use in local churches. In addition to five Renaissance Latin motets we recorded five much-loved carols complete with descants! At the same time we also made the sound-files and scores available online to our mailing list friends, including the members of my monthly Sacred Music Workshop, sadly in abeyance during lockdown.

Thus it was that a number of local churches were able to present a range of Christmas services 'live' online with our music interpolated, and people restricted to their homes throughout the Highlands reported how much they appreciated being able to listen to our music, and to join in with their favourite carols!

The increased restrictions over Christmas brought both our musical enterprises to a temporary halt, but to my delight The Lockedown Consort began meeting again a few weeks ago, and plans are afoot to get the Soloists back together again very soon. As we begin to emerge slowly from what has proved to be as much a cultural crisis as a medical emergency, I think it is important that we show the same courage and determination in reopening our cultural lives as we did in closing them down a year ago.

(Ed: I think every one of us identifies with the sense of emptiness and loss with the lockdown of live music-making. During this time, I've enjoyed online concerts while tears were literally falling - for the musicians and for the empty concert halls and studios where they were performing.)



The Lockedown Consort enjoying warmer weather

Book review

Michael Graham

Baroque Possibilities – How to prepare an 18th century oratorio

Sergio Siminovich and Rodrigo de Caso

Edipan Press, 2017

ISBN 978-88-905478-5-0

This study aims to highlight interpretive options available to performers and conductors in the preparation of 18th century choral-orchestral music. It is very much inspired by the scholarship of the conductor Norman Del Mar, whose books on conducting orchestral works by early and late-romantic composers like Berlioz, Brahms and Elgar have proven illuminating resources. Handel's works have enduring popularity with choral societies across the UK and his oratorios brim with dramatic possibility. Even though the basis is religious rather than light entertainment, this does not mean that its story-telling has to lack drama or conviction – in fact, the biblical stories and musical retelling possibly demands it more. In Britain where we are used to straight-jacketed, tuxedo'ed performances by local choral societies, we potentially miss some of the more creative details that can still give impact and added meaning to even a semi-staged performance.

Demonstrating the interpretive approaches discussed in this book is a commentary of Handel's 1746 oratorio *Judus Maccabeus*. Certainly it is refreshing to focus on a work other than *Messiah* which has become so ingrained in the British choral repertoire. *Judus Maccabeus* is possibly more relevant to British social and cultural history, as it was composed in celebration of the Duke of Cumberland's victory at the Battle of Culloden that year and subsequent quashing of the Jacobite Rebellion led by Bonny Prince Charlie. Its triumphant third-act chorus, *See, the conqu'ring hero comes* has become a well-known Easter hymn, *Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring son*. However, *Baroque Possibilities* contains no accompanying material about either the origin of *Judus Maccabeus*, its position within Handel's wider oeuvre, how the genre evolved out of opera or relation to the wider cantata tradition of Central Europe.

This study does quantify the considerations a conductor must take into account when preparing a large-scale choral work, whether instrumentation, ornamentation or other methods of ensuring a fulfilling, if not authentic, performance. Guides for marking string bowing are given along with a discussion of singing techniques to help navigate tricky melismatic passages. One of its more useful points is highlighting how any baroque score really provides a framework for balanced improvisation and it makes suggestions how parts for brass instruments (in particular) could be rewritten to help enhance and elaborate orchestral climaxes. A discussion of agogics or the slight variations in tempo to help phrasing is brief, but clarifies that baroque tempos do not always need to remain rigid and strict throughout.

Overall the academic pedigree of this study could be purer. There is incomplete referencing despite drawing upon a wealth of historical sources on instrumental technique and the writing style favours a fairly generalised, bullet-pointed approach throughout. The writers try to find an academic language for already well-established musical concepts and terms, especially when referring to dynamics which risks overcomplicating the point. It does draw together many different strands of scholarship into a useful summary of a momentous collaboration, but much can be said for musical intuition and clear communication between conductor, soloists, chorus and orchestra.

Having received this book, it took a few moments to realise that James Hudson's 1756 portrait of Handel on the front cover has been doctored. Instead Handel is reading his sheetmusic off an iPhone. He stares out at the reader with a fairly unimpressed look on his face, possibly disappointed at the quality of counterpoint or grimacing at JS Bach's latest Instagram selfie...

Period Instrument Ensembles receive grants

press release shared by Sarah Farall

Continuo Foundation Awards £150,000 in first round of grants to support period instrument ensembles

“The availability of these grants has inspired ensembles to start planning, and given musicians hope of playing together again following a year of isolation, uncertainty and cancelled performances.” – Tina Vadaneaux, Founder of Continuo Foundation

New charity *Continuo Foundation* (“Continuo”) announced in March 2021 the awarding of its first round of grants to UK period-instrument ensembles, supporting 23 projects and creating work for well over 300 freelance musicians. Established in October 2020, Continuo was set up by former City director and classical music lover Tina Vadaneaux to support the community of period-instrument ensembles across the UK, many of whom haven’t played together since March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In response to Continuo’s January announcement of the launch of a £100,000 first round of grants, applications were submitted by 65 period-instrument ensembles, with grant requests totalling £475,000. After receiving another £50,000 from generous donors in February, Continuo’s Trustees decided to increase this grant round to £150,000, in recognition of the urgent need and abundance of excellent applications.

Vadaneaux adds: *“The number of very worthwhile projects exceeded our available resources by a long way. Subject to raising sufficient funds, we will launch a second grant round in the summer for projects from autumn 2021. We are also seeking additional major donors to provide the core funding required to roll out our longer-term plans to bring innovation and technology to grow the sector and make period chamber music accessible across the UK.”*

Continuo’s decisions for awarding the first round of grants were the result of a rigorous two-stage evaluation process. With input on artistic merit from its expert Advisory Panel, the Trustees then sought to balance these recommendations with considerations of financial need and applicants’ access to alternative funding sources. Supported projects are scheduled to take place from April to September 2021 in venues across the country, and will include concerts with live and digital audiences and CD recordings.

Continuo Trustee Hannah French comments: *“The breadth and diversity of work being planned for the months ahead is truly inspiring. We’re thrilled to be able to support such a variety of projects showcasing the talent of freelance period-instrumentalists and highlighting the vital role they play in British cultural life.”*

The 23 projects are from ensembles small and large, both long-established and more recently formed, and span repertoire from the medieval dance music of *Joglairesa* to the world premiere of *Errolyn Wallen’s* new opera ‘*Dido’s Ghost*’ for the *Dunedin Consort*. Highlights over the next few months include:

- The English Concert records Handel’s opera ‘*Tamerlano*’ at Sage Gateshead
- Fretwork records music by Leonora Duarte, the only 17th century woman composer for viol consort
- Consone Quartet tours a series of chamber concerts to beautiful old barns around the UK

Established in October 2020 by Tina Vadaneaux, Continuo Foundation raises funds to award grants to UK period-instrument ensembles, supporting projects which create work for freelance musicians whose careers are at risk due to the ongoing impact of Covid-19. Continuo’s mission is to sustain the careers of virtuosic musicians, create opportunities for the next generation of artists and widen access to excellent chamber music for communities across the UK.

For further information, visit www.continuoofoundation.co.uk/firstroundgrantees

Continuo Foundation’s Patrons include:

Dame Emma Kirkby DBE, who dedicated her career to Early Music, as both an artist (soprano) and mentor for several generations of musicians. She has made well over a hundred recordings. In 2011, Dame Emma received the Queens Medal for Music and, in 2019, the Gramophone Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sir Roger Norrington CBE, who is a pioneering conductor and proponent of historical performance, having founded the Schütz Choir (1962), London Baroque Players (1965), and London Classical Players (1978). He has worked as a guest conductor with leading orchestras worldwide and made hundreds of recordings.

Rachel Podger, who is an acclaimed baroque violinist, sought-after internationally as a soloist, and teacher at the Royal Academy of Music and Julliard (USA). In 2018, Rachel was Gramophone Artist of the Year.

Full list of first round grant awards:

Ensemble (please click links for websites)	Project Title
<i>Boxwood & Brass</i>	New Sounds for Old Winds
<i>The Brook Street Band</i>	The Dragon of Wantley' by John Frederick Lampe
<i>Consona Quartet</i>	Barnstorming!
<i>Dunedin Consort</i>	Dido's Ghost
<i>Ensemble Augelletti</i>	The Library of a Prussian Princess
<i>Ensemble Hesperii</i>	From Caledonia to the Capital
<i>Ensemble Marsyas</i>	Mozart Bassoon Concerto K.191
<i>Ex Cathedra</i>	Bach St John Passion
<i>Feinstein Ensemble</i>	The Great Funeral Cantatas of Bach and Telemann
<i>Florilegium</i>	Haydn Symphonies: Le Matin, Le Midi, Le Soir
<i>Fontanella</i>	Delightful Companion Concert Tour
<i>Fretwork</i>	Paradise Lost
<i>His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts</i>	Merchants of Venice
<i>Illyria Consort</i>	Johann Jacob Walther: Scherzi da Violino Solo op.1
<i>Joglaresa</i>	Boogie Knights
<i>La Nuova Musica</i>	Mozart Symphonies and Violin Concerto with Rachel Podger
<i>La Serenissima</i>	Concertos and Orchestral Suites by Brescianello, Dall'Abaco, Sammartini, Vivaldi & Zavateri
<i>Linarol Consort of Viols</i>	Josquin 500 Festival
<i>London Handel Orchestra</i>	Messiah Reimagined
<i>The Mozartists</i>	MOZART 250 Chamber Concerts
<i>Palisander</i>	Double, Double, Toil and Trouble
<i>Spiritato</i>	Inspiring Bach
<i>The English Concert</i>	Handel Tamerlano

Early Music Keyboard workshop - brief review

Sue Owen

“Fools rush in.....” were the words that flitted through my mind in the run-up to the nationwide early music keyboard workshop that I decided to organise. This was in response to one of our EMFS members contacting me a few months ago, asking if there was any online provision for keyboard players. I emailed all my early music forum contacts in England (they have lots of forums there) but there seemed to be nothing. After an enormous amount of emailing and seeking advice and opinions, and with the blessing of the EMFS committee and the offer of financial contribution from the North West Early Music Forum, I found myself realising that this was actually going to happen.

Julian Perkins had been recommended as a tutor, and he responded quickly and positively to my inquiries. So, in full ignorance of what playing figured bass continuo means, and without playing keyboard myself, and never having organised a workshop like this before, live or on Zoom, it actually happened. The vast majority of potential and actual participants were very patient as I stumbled along.

Julian was a very enthusiastic, knowledgeable, patient, kind and understanding tutor. The twenty-two participants from around the UK had a wide range of experiences and expectations but Julian tackled it with good-nature and skill. He began the session with absolute basics - posture, arm and hand position, followed by a few elementary exercises, which he explained, demonstrated and then invited participants to play along. His instrument was tuned to 415 but he effortlessly repeated all exercises transposed to 440 for participants whose instruments were at that pitch. Later in the session he gave hints, tips and examples of how he would treat a particular piece of music, Handel's Recorder Sonata in F major.

Below is a selection of participants' feedback. I think it's very encouraging, and who knows, there may be another similar event in the autumn!

“...it was a fascinating session with Julian and very well organised too. Thank you for this, and perhaps there will be another one?”

“What a fascinating session and what a musician Julian is!! So full of musical insights...”

“...I enjoyed the workshop very much and was happy to have several longstanding misconceptions laid to rest. I'd always struggled with suspensions but am a lot clearer now and have much material to work on. If he does another one please count me in. Many of his warm up hints were very helpful on the harp as well...”

“Thank you for the link to the Zoom recording...I thought you had organised the workshop very well and Julian’s presentation was an effective introduction to figured bass...”

“Thank you very much...I found this workshop just perfectly ‘pitched’ for my abilities...”

“Thanks for sending the recording of the Zoom session on figured bass...As a ‘newbie’ to the whole idea I gained a great deal from this. It was specially valuable to hear how Julian Perkins planned beforehand the way he was going to play a particular piece. The introductory remarks on keyboard technique were very valuable too - things we often forget about. ‘Baroque polyfills’ is a concept I shall remember, as also the line ‘If I make a mistake it’s an ornament!’”

“Thank you for arranging Saturday’s workshop. It was most informative...the most effective part of the session was hearing Julian talk through how he approached realisation of the figured bass in contrast to the printed Schneider version. It would be good to hear similar commentary on other works at some time. This served as an excellent substitute for a live masterclass...”

“Thank you for hosting the workshop last Saturday. It was altogether a delightful morning with Julian so very good to listen to. I’ve benefitted greatly, although still a long, long way still to go. The good thing was, just being encouraged to concentrate on the subject, with the preparatory exercise in hand prior to the event.”

“Many thanks for an excellent workshop. I learnt such a lot and found him approachable and inspiring”

“A huge thank you for organising today’s session - I hope everyone else enjoyed it as much as I did...Roll on the end of lockdowns so that we can all get together to enjoy some live music-making again - wouldn’t Julian be a great choice for a live workshop? He had such a warm ‘can-do’ manner and was full of such good practical advice.”

“Thank you very much for this workshop. It did just what I wanted it to - gave me lots of practical ideas and inspiration to work on!...”



Have you contacted our Chair, Alison Tollick,
with your views on making music again, and the
future of EMFS?

Please read her opening message in this
newsletter and respond!

'bye for now!

Thank you to Thomas Green for proof-reading, and thank you again to all contributors. It really does look as though there might be light at the end of the tunnel for making music together in real life. Keep well.

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