President’s Message

Here I am in the middle of a small island in Maine surrounded by trees, rock and ocean life. And in the midst of this tiny spot I am once again amazed by the far reaching slender fingers of Early Music. On this Island (population less than 150) there is a recorder consort, a professional Baroque oboe player and another viola da gamba friend. This world of Early Music may be small, but it has an amazing scope. It has opened doors to me, friends from all over the world, touchstones wherever I go.
Then the music itself has carried me to internal vistas, poignant and beautiful.
And I want to thank you for being part of this world with me.

Susan Patterson

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Emily Stevenson died peacefully on June 10, 2010 after an extended illness. Although she was trained as a violinist and taught for awhile in the Atlanta Public School System, her chief joy in life was playing the viola da gamba, and for more than 30 years she was the first treble player in our Atlanta Monday night viol group. She played right up to the very end, and we knew it was a sad night when the last week of her life she had to stay in bed and just listen as we played some of her favorite music.

Emily Stevenson
In the preceding portion of [a] lecture, I determined that historical authenticity in music was an elusive, nigh-impossible standard to which to aspire, the pursuit of which opens up a great many possibilities for the performer. But if it is so impossible to have an authentic performance, then why attempt it at all? In my study on the subject of historical authenticity in music, the realization came to me – since the question concerns what a person ought to do – that it really is a moral question, and would be better expressed thusly: Should one strive for historical authenticity in music, even though it is so impossible to achieve? To answer this question, I shall employ the assistance of three great philosophical thinkers – you may have heard of them: Aristotle for virtue ethics, David Hume for empirical ethics, and Immanuel Kant for deontological ethics.

Let us examine first what the ancient Athenian philosopher Aristotle says we ought to do:

“If it is thus that every art does its work well – by looking to the intermediate and judging its works by this standard (so that we often say of good works of art that it is not possible to either take away or add anything, implying that excess and deficiency destroy the goodness of a work of art, while the mean preserves it; and good artists as we say, look to this in their work), and if, further, virtue is more exact and better than any art, as nature also is, then virtue must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate.” [1]

(Continued on page 3)
From this passage, we can infer that Aristotle means that each individual work of art (musical or otherwise) has an ideal to which it aspires, and that ideal is a virtuous compromise between a deficiency and an excess, called vices. But which two vices can we say we are charged with avoiding in our moral dilemma? Our vice of deficiency, I would argue, is the option not to have anything to do with historical authenticity at all – or worse, not to care enough to bother with it. A lackadaisical, unengaged approach to the matter would signify a deficiency in character. Our other vicious extreme – excess – is the option one has of slavishly, militantly, and zealously overindulging oneself in the pursuit of authenticity, to the point where the performer becomes the servant of the music, and the music becomes the servant of the scholarly article or peer-reviewed textbook.

What, then, would Aristotle’s Golden Mean be for this particular case – what can we say is the virtuous midway point between these extremes? The answer we will find lies in the dynamism of a few contradictory qualities and attitudes a performer of early music must have, including: learned innovation, spontaneous affectation, and speculative certainty. With such a tempered approach to the dilemma, according to Aristotle, we will be clear of vice, and our performance stands a chance of being a virtuous one.

Let us next examine the Enlightenment English philosopher David Hume’s take on the subject; this passage is from his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*:

“[I]n many orders of beauty, particularly those of the finer arts, it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment; and a false relish may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection. There are just grounds to conclude, that moral beauty partakes much of this latter species, and demands the assistance of our intellectual faculties, in order to give it a suitable influence on the human mind.”[2]

Here Hume argues that beauty, art, logic, and truth are all linked, and indeed that one’s perception of beauty can change depending on one’s interpretation and perception of the immutable facts surrounding the object of admiration. This applies in our case to reinforce the fact that one cannot play or sing early music in a morally viable manner without first studying and learning about it. With knowledge comes understanding, and with understanding comes what Hume has called “proper sentiment.”

But, Hume would argue, the goal of art is not the study or knowledge of it; the true goal of art is the “proper sentiments” aroused in people by their right perception and understanding of the art. Indeed, according to Bruce Haynes, “When you say something differently, you say something different.”[3] So a performer must be careful in his performance to know what to say and how to say it, otherwise he will deliver a misrepresentation of the piece of music and it will therefore no longer be authentic in any sense. Haynes also goes on to quote the early French Baroque viol master Marin Marais as saying that “the most beautiful pieces [lose] all their savour when not played in their proper style”[4]. So in order for a performer to arouse the proper sentiments in people, he must represent the music in as sincere and conscientious a way as he can, while yet adhering to the conventions of style.

Finally, we will look at the question from the Enlightenment German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s perspective. He has this to say in his book *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*:

“Everything in nature works according to laws. Only a rational being has the power to act according to his conception of laws… and thereby has a will. Since the derivation of actions from laws requires reason, the will is nothing but practical reason. If reason infallibly determines the will… the will is a faculty of choosing only that which reason, independently of inclination, recognizes as being practically necessary, i.e., as good. But… if the will does not itself completely accord with reason (as is actually the case with men), then actions which are recognized as objectively necessary are subjectively contingent, and the determination of such a will according to objective laws is necessitation.”[5] (Kant 23-4).

So according to Kant, the goodness of an action (including, I argue, the goodness of music and the performance of it) is determined by the purity of rational intent of the person doing it. So if, in our case, one
wishes to perform a piece of early music, it can (according to Kant) only be considered a truly good performance if the performer has well-thought-out, rational goals in performing it. Without a Kantian maxim of action in the performance of a piece – such as “I will do everything within my capability to perform this piece exactly as one would have performed it in the 15th century,” or “I will perform this piece as precisely and accurately as my human faculties will allow” – without such a statement of intent there is no real goal, and the performance will be aimless and, artistically speaking, pointless.

If one’s maxim of action is not capable, logically, of being represented as a universalized maxim – one that might viably govern the actions of all people – then the maxim, and thereby the goal, are to be considered logically unsound. Consider, for instance, if my maxim were something along these lines: “I will attempt to perform this piece authentically even though I have no knowledge of the style of the period, or about the composer of the piece.” This is clearly not a viable option according to Kant, since one cannot logically expect all people who strive for authenticity to do so without having studied about it first – for then the entire field of scholarship would have no grounding or credibility, and would fall apart. As a period performer, then, it is each individual’s duty to uphold the credibility and viability, not only of himself, but also of the music, the composer, and the others in his field who are also doing valuable research and practice.

Taking into perspective the venerable philosophies I have here presented, I pose the question once more: Should one strive for historical authenticity in music, even though it is so impossible to achieve? The answer, it seems, is an emphatic Yes and no: Emphatically yes, because it is our duty to the music itself to represent it in such a way as not to obscure its inherent and implied meaning or sentiment with misinformation, bad scholarship, or poor playing ability. Emphatically no, because the nature of the styles of music with which we are concerned (pre-Classical) allows for vast amounts of individualism in expression, and decisions concerning logistics of performance, which can only come from a modern performer when performed today – and that performer must convey his or her own interpretation – and that interpretation will always be influenced by that modern performer’s modern sensibilities.

So what does one do with this frustrating conclusion? The first thing to know is that the only completely wrong answer in this case is not to do anything at all with the music – the lackadaisical, ambivalent, characteristically deficient approach seems to me to be the most reprehensible, and least consistent with any human sensibility, past or present. It is also completely wrong to do nothing just to be on the safe side, for, as Richard Taruskin says, “There is nothing you can do, after all, and be sure that someone will not say, ‘Hey, you can’t do that!’ If you want no one to say it, you must do nothing – as many do in the name of ‘authenticity’. Such authenticity is worthy neither of the name nor of serious discussion.”[6] Next, the performer must come to the table with an open mind; an earnest yet flexible attitude; the willingness to learn about and immerse oneself in the history of the music at hand and all that it entails; and the realization that on the most basic level the people whose music we are representing were just that – people, like you and me; and that is a comforting thought.

Chris Armijo

A Music Anthology of Spain’s “Golden Age”

Shown is the cover of a valuable source book of Spanish polyphonic music for Early Music ensembles. Douglas Kirk happened on a “gold vein” of music discovered in the library of the Collegiate Church of San Pedro in the village of Lerma near Burgos, Spain.

This source book is therefore titled “Music for the Duke of Lerma”.

It contains 92 compositions by Franco-Flemish and Spanish composers of the 16th and early 17th centuries, very diligently researched and transcribed into modern notation by Mr. Kirk.

It contains polyphony in quartet, quintet, sextet settings and even one septet. These give pure delight to ensembles of most early instruments. Alas, there are no surviving lyrics.

The composers include Jacobus Clemens, Thomas Créquillon, Bricio Gaudi, Nicolas Gombert, Francisco Guerrero, Orlande de Lassus, Alonso Lobo, Cristóbal Morales, Giovanni Nanino, Giovanni Perluigi Palestrina, Phelipe Rogier, Alessandro Striggio, Johannes Wreede (UUreda) and Philippe Verdelot.

The Duke of Lerma was a very influential man as First Minister of Philip III of Spain. He inherited the ducal village of Lerma and built it into a show place, including a secular and religious community: A ducal palace, a collegiate church, a monastery and six convents. He endowed the church and engaged several instrumentalists and singers to serve the church and his court.

It appears that the music collection evolved in part by pieces brought there by these musicians and in part by other means of acquisition. It is a great wonder that nearly all this music stayed intact in two bound manuscripts for almost 400 years. The introduction exposes cases of theft and illicit behavior which partially undid this priceless collection and explains the diligent approach to research and transcription.

I can also recommend a wonderful source of over 2000 pieces of PDF-formatted music. http://icking-music-archive.org/Folop/
"Name that Composer"

Details on the lives and careers of composers born before 1700 tend to be a bit skimpy, at best. For example, we know that this Italian Baroque composer was born on today’s date in 1561, but we’re not sure if that was in Rome or Florence. As a point of reference, remember that William Shakespeare was born in 1564, just three years after him. And by the 1580s, around the same time Shakespeare was learning to be a playwright, this composer and some of his Italian colleagues were experimenting with a new art form that we now call "opera."

There was much discussion at the time about what the music of the ancient Greeks must have been like, and how a complete dramatic story might be told from beginning to end in music, utilizing some of the same techniques that composers employed to accompany the much shorter songs and madrigals popular at the time.

This composer was active as a musician and singer at the Medici court in Florence, where early attempts to come up with some answers took place. He was instrumental in the production of two of the earliest operas for which the complete music survives: "Dafne," which premiered around 1597 and "Euridice" from 1600.

He outlived his English contemporary Shakespeare by some 17 years. Shakespeare died in 1616 at the age of 52, while he died sometime in August of 1633, at 72 -- a ripe old age for the 17th century.

Composers’ Datebook, August 20, 2009

"Name that Composer", from the February quiz

Guillaume DuFay lived from 1397 to 1474, a member of the Franco-Flemish School of composers.

He was among the most influential composers of the 15th century, and his music was copied, distributed and sung everywhere that polyphony had taken root. Almost all composers of the succeeding generations absorbed some elements of his style. The wide distribution of his music is all the more impressive considering that he died several decades before the availability of music printing.

He wrote in most of the common forms of the day, including masses, motets, Magnificats, hymns, simple chant settings in fauxbourdon, and antiphons within the area of sacred music, and rondeaux, ballades, virelais and a few other chanson types within the realm of secular music.

None of his surviving music is specifically instrumental, although instruments were certainly used for some of his secular music, especially for the lower parts; all of his sacred music is vocal. Instruments may have been used to reinforce the voices in actual performance for almost any portion of his output. In his lifetime, he wrote seven complete masses, 28 individual Mass movements, 15 settings of chant used in Mass Propers, three Magnificats, two Benedictus Domino settings, 15 antiphon settings (6 are Marian antiphons), 27 hymns, 22 motets (13 are isorhythmic) and 87 chansons. Assigning works to him based on alleged stylistic similarities has been a favorite pastime of musicologists for at least a hundred years, judging from the copious literature on the subject.

from Wikipedia
The Atlanta Early Music Alliance offers Grants up to $500 to schools, churches and other qualifying non-profit organizations to host concerts of professional Early Musicians in the Atlanta area.

The Atlanta Early Music Alliance is a non-profit group focused on supporting and promoting music created before the year 1800. We would love to see more professional Early Music groups perform in the Atlanta area.

To this end we offer $500 for organizations to host concerts of professional musicians who feature Early music, instruments, styles, composers, etc.

AEMA will:

- give you $500
- offer suggestions about finding persons/groups to perform if you wish

The hosting group will:

- Provide a playing venue and advertising
- Will meet any/and all other expenses
- Credit the Atlanta Early Music Alliance either in their program or orally during the concert
- Open the concert to the public including members of AEMA
- Allow AEMA to display membership materials during the concert

The person or group applying for this grant needs to be a member of AEMA.

Contact: Susan Patterson, spatterson@atlspsch.org, to apply for this opportunity.

For Concerts of the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra, see Website http://atlantabaroque.org/

Our Next Concert

Saturday, September 11, 2010 (Season Grand Opening):

Music by Vivaldi, Corelli, Handel et al

http://www.newtrinitybaroque.org/
AEMA Membership Form

Thank you for your interest in AEMA! Membership includes a newsletter, the Broadside, member rates at the Midwinter Workshop and other AEMA events, and reduced admission (same as senior admission) to concerts of the Atlanta Baroque Orchestra.

- Our membership year is July 1 to June 30.
- Your membership contribution, minus $10 for the newsletter, is tax deductible.
- If you work for a company that matches charitable contributions, please check with your Human Resources department to see if they will match your contribution to AEMA.

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If you participate actively in early music, please fill in medium and check performance category:

Instrument or Voice       Beginner  Intermediate    Advanced  Professional
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Enclosed is payment of ______ for the membership choice checked below:

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