

FRIEDEMANN AND BARBARA HELLWIG.
Joachim Tielke: Kunstvolle Musikinstrumente des Barock. Berlin and Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011. 456pp., illus. ISBN 978-3-422-07078-3 (hardback). Price: €78

Nearly half a century ago the German luthier Günther Hellwig published in this Journal a preliminary list of 91 'instruments by Joachim Tielke ... known to the author at the present time', prefaced by a brief biographical sketch and supplemented by an appeal for information about additional instruments.¹ Sixteen years later he presented the fruits of his lifelong study of this maker in an extensively illustrated monograph containing detailed descriptions of 139 bowed and plucked string instruments dating from 1669 to 1718, accompanied by photographs of the great majority.² This was hailed by reviewers as 'definitive',³ 'a valuable source both of reference and of inspiration

¹ Günther Hellwig, 'Joachim Tielke', *GSJ* 17 (1964), pp.28–38.

² Günther Hellwig, *Joachim Tielke: Ein Hamburger Lauten- und Violonmacher der Barockzeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Das Musikinstrument, 1980).

³ Howard Schott, *Early Music* 9 (1981), pp.240–43.

for a long time to come',⁴ and 'a contribution of the first rank to the literature on the gamba'.⁵

As impressive as Hellwig's pioneering work was, the present book by his son and daughter-in-law is even better in nearly every way. In their Foreword (p.8), the authors explain that because Günther Hellwig had dedicated his *magnum opus* to them, they felt an obligation to continue his research. Accordingly, after retiring in 2003 from a distinguished career as a restorer and conservator of musical instruments, Friedemann Hellwig began work on a second edition of his father's book. He soon realized, however, that the discovery of nearly three dozen additional examples of Tielke's work, as well as newly-developed investigative techniques and relevant research undertaken by others during the past three decades, meant that an entirely new publication was needed. He and his wife therefore embarked upon an extensive program of international travel in order to personally examine nearly every one of the 169 instruments documented in this much-expanded presentation of Tielke's life and work.

The result is far more than a revised second edition, containing as it does a completely rewritten text, more than 800 photographs (nearly all new and in colour), a brand-new numbering system, and appendices devoted to the work of four makers with family or commercial ties to Tielke. And yet the new book's overall approach is not so very different from its predecessor, for both contain a series of introductory chapters—devoted to biographical matters, labels and other signatures, and the distinctively lavish decorations found on most of Tielke's output—followed by a lengthy catalogue raisonné, with individual entries for each instrument, that occupies the remaining three-quarters of the volume. The main change in presentation concerns the arrangement of entries in the catalogue: whereas Günther Hellwig listed all types of instrument together in a single chronological sequence, Friedemann and Barbara Hellwig have chosen to devote a separate section to each type. This approach has the advantage of grouping like with like, while a comprehensive and year-by-year overview is still available thanks to the 'Short Index of All Tielke's Works' found at the back of the book, where his entire output is listed in order according to the new—but still chronological—'TieWV' numbering system (an abbreviation for *Tielke Werke-Verzeichnis*, analogous to BWV numbers for the music of J.S. Bach). This

also serves as a concordance between the new and old numbering systems, but unfortunately there is no reverse listing to conveniently provide the new number—and thus the location within the book—of an instrument already known under its old number.

As mentioned above, the new catalogue contains a total of 169 instruments, of which one-third are plucked strings (21 members of the lute family, 27 guitars of various sizes, and 8 Hamburg citterns) and two-thirds are bowed (3 pochettes, 5 violins and a cello, 8 violas d'amore, 93 bass violas da gamba or fragments thereof, and 3 barytons). Yet the seeming precision of these subtotals is illusory, for most of them invite qualifications of one kind or another, and indeed nearly every section of the catalogue has an addendum listing instruments whose authenticity is doubtful or whose current location is unknown; the former usually have no catalogue number but the latter mostly do, even though some were last documented as long ago as the early nineteenth century and may no longer exist.

A more important issue than exactly how many instruments of each kind still survive is the question of who actually made them, and here the younger Hellwigs explore important new territory, notably in an added chapter on the organization of the Tielke workshop. While it is an increasingly common realization that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the named makers of all kinds of instruments (strings, winds, and keyboards alike) were normally assisted by varying numbers of apprentices and journeymen, in Tielke's case it seems likely that his primary role and accomplishment was as a merchant and entrepreneur rather than as a craftsman who personally fabricated the instruments bearing his name. Although he married into a Hamburg family of instrument makers, there is no evidence that Tielke himself was ever trained in that trade (rather, we now know that he spent three years studying medicine and philosophy at the University of Leiden), and the Hellwigs write that 'In view of the obvious diversity of styles in his instrumental decoration we may safely assume that Tielke employed a number of craftsmen brought in from outside' (p.456). This assumption applies not only to the extensive wood carvings and elaborate inlays of ebony, ivory, and tortoiseshell that are typically found on his instruments, but also to at least some of the bodies: several early viols resemble those by Gregor Karpp (who worked in Tielke's native city of Königsberg), and both of the pochettes bearing

⁴ John Pringle, *GSJ* 34 (1981), pp.158–60.

⁵ John Rutledge, *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America* 17 (1980), pp.74–78.

Tielke's label were actually made by the Parisian luthier Jacques Regnault, as Friedemann Hellwig recently demonstrated in these pages.⁶ Moreover, the Hellwigs convincingly propose that ten instruments made during the last few years of Tielke's life, after an apparent hiatus in the workshop's output lasting from 1709 to 1716, were actually produced by (or under the supervision of) a grandson of Mrs. Tielke's sister, the young Jacob Heinrich Goldt, whose own signed instruments bear dates ranging from 1725 to 1768. Nevertheless, both this group and the pochettes are given TieWV numbers, which thus ultimately serve to identify instruments produced for sale under Tielke's name rather than necessarily made—in whole or in part—with his own hands.

Another significant difference between this book and its predecessor is that fully two dozen instruments have been redated, by anywhere from a year to more than a decade. Sometimes this is due to the availability of new information, but in most cases it is the result of careful comparisons between undated examples and stylistically similar instruments that are dated. Only four items from Günther Hellwig's catalogue have been rejected as inauthentic (a violin with a fake label and three bows with anachronistic features whose attribution rested on nothing more than their claimed association with certain Tielke viols), though each of these is still briefly described and illustrated. As a welcome bonus, not found in the 1980 publication, four appendices similarly describe and selectively illustrate no fewer than three dozen string instruments by members of Tielke's circle, including two by his brother Gottfried (whose main vocation was as a pastor); one by his father-in-law Christoph Fleischer and three by his brother-in-law Hans Christoph Fleischer; four by his wife's nephew Samuel Goldt and seventeen by Samuel's son Jacob Heinrich; and nine Hamburg citferns by Hinrich Kopp, whose pegbox heads are so similar to those on some Tielke viols that they must all have been carved by the same person, perhaps Kopp himself.

As Friedemann Hellwig notes (p.238), his father was reluctant to accept the classification—initially proposed in 1972 by John Henry van der Meer—of smaller five-stringed bowed instruments as violas d'amore, whose distinctive tone (as reported in numerous sources of this period) was due not to the presence of sympathetic strings but rather to the use of metal bowed strings. In the 1980 catalogue each of Tielke's eight examples of this type is therefore identified as a 'Viola d'amore (?)', but in

the 2011 edition Friedemann and Barbara Hellwig have removed these parenthetical question marks, citing additional research by Kai Köpp showing that such instruments were quite common in northern Germany during the late seventeenth century. They also conclude that the Tielke baryton body (now with a cello neck but a viol pegbox) in London's Horniman Museum is not, as Günther Hellwig believed, identical to the instrument that a certain Joseph Lidel showed to the Society of Antiquaries in 1849, which must therefore be considered lost. However, they are able to add to the catalogue a fragmentary baryton neck and pegbox that was unknown to the elder Hellwig but can be confidently attributed to Tielke. New insights concerning plucked instruments include the discovery that Tielke made three mandoras (or colasciones), and that all of the extant swan-neck theorbos bearing his name were subsequently converted to that state by other hands, having originally been built either as eleven-course baroque lutes or occasionally as angeliques, a simplified model with sixteen single strings tuned to a diatonic scale that was primarily used by amateur players.

As in the original book, a lengthy chapter is devoted to description, illustration, and analysis of the often extravagant decorations found on Tielke's instruments. This is entirely appropriate since they are, as the Hellwigs note (p.11), 'amazing examples of baroque craftsmanship' unequalled by the output of any other instrument maker, quite apart from the instruments' very considerable musical merits. (This high degree of visual appeal no doubt accounts for the relatively large number of surviving examples, which the authors estimate at perhaps half of the workshop's total output over a period of fifty years.) Once again, though, it is the 'Descriptive Index of the Instruments of the Tielke Workshop' that constitutes the heart of the volume, with nearly 300 pages chock-full of meticulous and detailed descriptions of each instrument, accompanied by numerous photographs. Although the length of the individual catalogue entries varies, all follow a standard format that allows the reader to find easily the information he or she is seeking, with separate paragraphs for signatures, various aspects of physical description, basic measurements, provenance, and previously published references. The new catalogue incorporates but also expands on, and sometimes corrects, the information presented by Günther Hellwig in 1980; a particularly valuable feature is the frequent addition of a concluding section containing anywhere from

⁶ Friedemann Hellwig, 'Hamburg and Paris: Joachim Tielke's Pochettes', *GSJ* 62 (2009), pp.183–90.

a single sentence to several paragraphs of general commentary and evaluation. The two-column layout is similar but not identical to that used previously, taking advantage of a larger page size (approximately A4, compared to the earlier 19 × 23.5 cm). A minor inconvenience is that some photos appear before the written description of the instrument shown, but all are clearly captioned, so with careful attention the potential for even momentary confusion is low.

In sum, this book is a splendid accomplishment, containing a wealth of information that will repay extensive and close study for those interested in the full details of particular instruments or instrument types, while offering a visual feast for all readers. It is very well produced, using coated paper for superior reproduction of the many photographs, and there are almost no typographical errors. For the benefit of those who do not read German there is a two-page English summary (pp.455–56), as well as a set of diagrams giving the German names for various parts of each kind of instrument, supplemented by a glossary in which these are translated into English and French (pp.101–06). In addition, the authors' website (www.tielke-hamburg.de) contains an English translation of the book's table of contents, and will moreover be used to provide information on any instruments that may come to light in the future.

Even in its second incarnation, this remains the only book-length study devoted to a single maker who specialized in viols (as opposed to violins, of which he evidently made only a few), and who in fact produced more extant bass viols than anyone else from the historical period, fully half again as many as his contemporary and nearest rival in this respect, the Englishman Barak Norman. Its purchase (at a very reasonable price, especially considering how many photographs it contains) is strongly recommended to anyone interested in the history of either plucked or bowed string instruments, and to libraries whose patrons hold similar interests. May it serve, as its predecessor has done for some three decades, as a model and inspiration for still more research in this area in the years to come.

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