

Hellwig Friedemann & Barbara, Joachim Tielke - Kunstvolle Musikinstrumente des Barock. Berlin 2011. Deutscher Kunstverlag ISBN: 978-3-422-07078-3. Price: c. 80 EUR.

In 1980 Günther Hellwig published his important works on the violin and lute maker Joachim Tielke. The book has since become a standard work and an example how a good biographical summary and list of works over a instrumentmaker should look like. My copy of this book was bought in the early 80's from the shop Accordion Imports at Stora Nygatan 26 in the Old Town, Stockholm, a small business with a lot of interesting things in addition to accordions. ... Well, a lot has happened in 30 years since Hellwig's book was published, and his son, Friedemann Hellwig, together with his wife Barbara, has now published a follow-up of Günther Hellwig epoch-making work with this new book about Tielke. There are similarities and differences between the both editions. Much new knowledge has of course been added, new techniques to examine the the interior of instruments, but the basic approach remains the same: to collect all available information on the instrument maker family Tielke, their engineering, technologies used, models of the embellishments of the instruments, instrument characteristics and what unites the contemporary builders, a detailed description of the extant instruments with provenance, dimensions, etc. Of course, previously unknown works by Tielke have emerged over the decades that have passed, but not least, photographic technology, the possibilities of radiography and computed tomography have contributed to increased knowledge. While the photographs in Günther Hellwig's book are only in black and white, they are in the new book mainly in color and the splendor of Tielke's instruments stand out clearly. The book contains two main sections, the first dealing with biographical information, the workshop, the relationship to guilds, materials supply, Tielkes followers, customers, signatures, tags, embellishments, materials and techniques, finishes, etc. There are interesting pictures where we with the help of the CT-scan might look into some of Tielke's instruments. The bulk of the book's content, however, is devoted to a detailed list of Tielke's preserved and known instrument that is partly based on Günther Hellwig list, but is very much enlarged, corrected and supplemented. At some points, Friedemann Hellwig corrects his father's information. The book also includes information on and lists of other instrument makers connected with Tielke: his brother Gottfried Tielke, his father-in-law Christoph Fleischer and his son Hans Christoph Fleischer, his brother-in-law Lucas Gold, his son Samuel Gold and his son Jacob Heinrich Gold as well as Hinrich Kopp. Joachim Tielke epitomizes the typical violin and lute maker of the time: he (or his workshop) made both string and plucked instrument of most conceivable types (lutes, guitars, Angeliques, citrinchens, violins, gambas, etc.). What perhaps distinguishes him particularly is the lavish and rich ornamentation of many of his instruments (and therefore perhaps is one reason that they survived!) And sometimes one wonders if he and his workshop was more focused on the production just for show rather than on making good musical instruments. The decoration of some instruments make them almost unplayable! However, there is little doubt but that Tielke knew his craft also as an instrument maker, but as Hellwig points out, there was not so much development of his instruments. Tielke's instruments are well represented in Sweden, particularly in the Music and Theatre Museum and Stiftelsen Musikkulturens Främjande. Tielke would have had been even better represented in Sweden if the Swedish government in the 1880s had been wise enough to buy Christian Hammer's large collection of musical instruments. At the auction after Hammer 1893 disappeared many interesting instruments (not only of Tielke) from Swedish hands and thus a piece of Swedish music history. Several of Tielke's instrument had certainly come to Sweden in the late 1600s and early 1700s. One example is the guitar (unfortunately converted into a six string guitar during the 1800s) from 1704 that later was in the Wallox Säby manor, but which was sold at an auction in Stockholm in 1991. It has now been reunited with a sister guitar from 1703 in the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg. In the book there is extensive documentation about the instruments and one certainly realizes that there is a dedicated work and many years of research behind it. Of course there are both indexes, an extensive bibliography and a summary in English. The quality of the book is of the highest class, not least in terms of the extremely rich visual material. Considering the richly decorated instruments the book is also of an art historical interest. So much better than this it could hardly be, and I'm sure that Tielke in his heaven is greatly satisfied with this epitaph.

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