

Here in silence
The summer gone
Herrick lies...

A somber solo tenor viol draws the listener to the end of the cycle.

The *Songs of the Glass Bead Game* for countertenor and viol consort are by Natalie Williams (b. 1977), an Australian composer finishing a DMA at Indiana University. The poems are by Peter Henley, also Australian, and are based on the Hesse novel *Glasperlenspiel*. Ms. Williams is a highly gifted melodic writer, and the viols and countertenor make a wonderful blend. The song "Life ebbs from life" is one of the bleakest poems I have ever read, and the viols and Sky-Lucas capture the mood perfectly.

Elizabeth Macdonald, St. Louis, MO

Friedemann and Barbara Hellwig. *Joachim Tielke: Kunstvolle Musikinstrumente des Barock*. Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011. ISBN 978-3-422-07078-3, €78.

Joachim Tielke (1641–1719) was a maker of string instruments (both bowed and plucked) who was active in Hamburg during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. His work has long been admired and valued not only by musicians but also by connoisseurs of the visual and decorative arts, for the majority of his instruments are highly decorated with intricate wood carvings and/or elaborate inlays of ivory, ebony, and tortoiseshell. As the authors note in their introduction (p. 11), Tielke's instruments are "amazing examples of baroque craftsmanship" unequaled by the output of any other instrument maker, in addition to their very considerable musical merits. This undoubtedly helps to explain why so many of them have survived: for example, of all known viols dating from before the twentieth century, more were made by Tielke than by anyone else, a total exceeding 85 (plus some fragments), all of them basses. (His two closest rivals in this respect are the Englishman Barak Norman, an almost exact contemporary currently credited with more than 50 basses, and Louis Guersan, the maker of some 65 *pardessus de viole* in mid-eighteenth-century France.

One important reason why we are so well informed about Tielke's accomplishments is that in 1980 the German luthier Günther Hellwig published a book containing descriptions and illustrations of 139 instruments, based on his lifelong study of this maker. Writing in our Society's journal, John Rutledge called it "a contribution of the first rank to the literature on the gamba," and in his review for the *Galpin Society Journal* John Pringle described it as "a valuable source both of reference and of inspiration for a long time to come." Now, more than 30 years later, Hellwig's son and daughter-in-law have produced a completely rewritten volume that is far more than a revised and expanded second edition, containing as it does information on nearly three dozen additional instruments, more than 800 photographs (nearly all new and in color), and a new system of catalogue numbers. (The latter are prefaced by "TieWV," an abbreviation for *Tielke Werke-Verzeichnis*, analogous to BWV numbers for the music of J.S. Bach.)

As impressive as the father's book was in its day, its successor improves on it in nearly every respect, even though the younger

generation's overall approach to the topic remains fundamentally the same. Both volumes begin with a series of introductory chapters devoted respectively to biographical matters, Tielke's labels and other signatures, and the lavish decorations so characteristic of his work. The rest of the book is then given over to a comprehensive catalogue consisting of meticulous and detailed descriptions of each instrument,

accompanied by numerous photographs. In the new version these fill nearly 300 pages, incorporating but also expanding on (and sometimes correcting) the information presented by Günther Hellwig in 1980. With rare exceptions the updated entries are all based on first-hand inspection, and where appropriate reflect the availability of newly developed investigative techniques such as dendrochronology and CT scanning as well as relevant research undertaken by others during the past three decades. Although the length of the individual entries varies, all follow a standard format that allows the reader to find easily the information he or she is seeking; a particularly valuable feature, not found in the older book, is the frequent addition of a final section containing anywhere from a single sentence to several paragraphs of general commentary and evaluation.

The main change in presentation concerns the arrangement of entries in the catalogue: instead of listing all types of instrument together in a single chronological sequence, as Günther Hellwig did, the current authors have chosen to devote a separate section to each type, prefaced by a brief overview of Tielke's activity in that particular area. For a comprehensive and year-by-year overview, one can turn to a "Short Index of All Tielke's Works" found at the back of the book, where the maker's entire output is listed in chronological order according to the new numbering system. The latter reflects not only the recently discovered instruments mentioned above, but also Friedemann Hellwig's redating of fully two dozen previously known specimens, in most cases as a result of careful comparisons between undated examples and stylistically similar instruments that are dated.

In all, the new catalogue presents information on a total of 169 instruments emanating from Tielke's workshop, two-thirds of which were made to be played with a bow. While the great majority of these are bass viols, there are also three pochettes, five violins and a cello, and three barytons (only one of which, unfortunately, survives in anything close to original or playable condition). Perhaps most interestingly for readers of these lines, this category also includes eight smaller instruments that are here identified as an early form of the viola d'amore having (usually) only five strings. Although aware of the evidence supporting this theory, Günther Hellwig was not entirely convinced by it, and therefore categorized each of them



as a “Viola d’amore (?)” with a parenthetical question mark that the younger Hellwigs have now removed. Such instruments seem to have been a North German specialty during the late seventeenth century, whose distinctive “silvery” tone (as reported in numerous sources of the period) was due to the use of metal bowed strings rather than the presence of sympathetic strings that later came to define instruments known by this name. Despite having unpointed body corners, flat backs, and C- or flame-shaped soundholes, these are not treble viols, for they also have relatively shallow ribs and violin-style necks, and would have been played on the shoulder, without frets. Indeed, there is a growing feeling that many or most instruments from the historical period presently classified as German treble viols—especially those with five strings and flame holes—are more likely to have started out life as this early type of viola d’amore, even though a fair number of them are currently and successfully being played with frets and held *da gamba*.

Surveying Tielke’s surviving (bass) viols, we find that those with dated labels span the full half-century of his career, from 1669 to 1719. The great majority have body lengths of anywhere from 63 to 72 cm, but half a dozen are significantly smaller, clustered around 59 cm, and according to Friedemann Hellwig were probably intended for a pitch standard at least a whole tone higher than the others. Nearly all were originally made with six strings, but two, dated 1696 and 1699, are among the earliest German viols to be built as seven-string models, presumably for customers who wanted to play the newly fashionable solo literature being written in France at that time. Although it is commonly thought that arched backs are a distinguishing feature of Tielke’s viols, in fact he also made at least a dozen with flat backs; likewise, while most have C-shaped soundholes, some dating from the 1690s instead display a narrow crescent form lacking “eyes” at either the upper or lower end. As for where they are now, about a third remain in Germany, while the rest have migrated widely over the past three centuries, not only to a dozen other European countries but also to North America and Japan. The majority have found homes in various museums, but fully a third are still privately owned, often by professional musicians who actively play them. (Five viols currently reside in the United States, three—plus a viola d’amore—in private hands and two more in public collections, while other American museums own three guitars as well as a pochette, a violin, a cittern, and a theorbo by Tielke.)

The plucked-string instruments presented in the Hellwigs’ catalogue include 21 members of the lute family, 27 guitars of various sizes, and 8 so-called bell citterns (another regional specialty of late-seventeenth-century Hamburg), most of which now reside in museums. Noteworthy new insights about this group of instruments include the discovery that Tielke made three mandoras (or colasciones, a kind of bass lute used for continuo accompaniment), and that all of the extant swan-neck theorbos bearing his name were subsequently converted to that state by other hands, having in most cases originally been built as eleven-course Baroque lutes. The authors also explain that the unusual hinged tailpieces found on Tielke’s citterns are designed to allow the player to produce a kind of vibrato, or tremolo, by varying the pressure with which his right

forearm rests on them, as described in several sources of a slightly later period.

A more important issue than exactly how many instruments of each kind still survive and where they are located is the question of who actually made them, and here the Hellwigs explore important new territory in a chapter on the organization of the Tielke workshop. Apart from supervising the usual assortment of apprentices and journeymen, it seems that Joachim Tielke himself was much more a very successful and respected merchant and entrepreneur than a craftsman who personally fabricated the instruments bearing his name. So far as we know he had no training as a luthier, instead studying medicine and philosophy at the University of Leiden before marrying into an established Hamburg family of instrument makers. As the authors note (p. 456), “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,” but in at least some cases this assumption seems to apply not only to the decorative work but also to the bodies themselves: for example, several early viols resemble those by Gregor Karpp, who worked in Tielke’s native city of Königsberg. 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, who subsequently went on to a 40-year career making viols and other string instruments under his own name.

Even in its second incarnation, more than thirty years after the first, this remains the only book-length study devoted to a single maker who specialized in viols. Like its predecessor, it is a splendid accomplishment, containing a wealth of information that will repay close study for those interested in the full details of particular instruments or instrument types, while offering a visual feast for all readers. Considering all it contains—especially the hundreds of color photos, excellently reproduced on coated paper—it is quite reasonably priced at the equivalent of about \$110 (plus postage from Europe). For the benefit of those who do not read German there is a two-page English summary at the very end, and the authors’ website (www.tielke-hamburg.de) offers an English translation of the table of contents. The book also contains a set of diagrams giving the German names for the different parts of each kind of instrument, supplemented by a glossary in which these are translated into both English and French, so language issues need not stand in the way of deriving a considerable amount of knowledge and enjoyment from perusing this publication. While certainly and primarily a serious work of scholarship, it is also the closest thing I can think of to a coffee-table book on the viol, with the possible exception of Adolf Heinrich König’s profusely illustrated but comparatively slender *Die Viola da Gamba* (Verlag Erwin Bochinsky, 1985), now long out of print. If you are at all interested in the history of the viol, or alternatively in how our instrument could be used as a vehicle for some truly amazing decorative artwork, the Hellwigs’ magnum opus on Tielke deserves a place on your want-list: perhaps you should consider telling Santa Claus about it now?

Thomas G. MacCracken, Oakton, VA