

2023
YORK
EARLY
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

The City Musick

***The Count and the Duke:
A Renaissance Big Band***

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall

Friday 7 July 7.00pm

The Count and the Duke: A Renaissance Big Band

William Lyons *director*

Courante de la Battaglia **Michael Praetorius** 1571-1621
Volte du tambour **Praetorius**

Courante CL: M. M. Wustrow **Praetorius**

Suite des Bransles:
Simple I II; Gay II III; Double I III; de Village **Praetorius**

Suite des Rondes:
Pour quoy; Ronde III; Mon amy; Il estoit une fillette; **Tielman Susato**
Les quatre bransles; Ronde IX c.1510-c.1570

Suite des Branles:
Double; Hermites; Lavandieres; d'Ecosse; **Thoinot Arbeau** [Jehan Tabourot]
Charlotte; de la Torche; Bourgoigne; Pingay; 1520-95
Chevaux arr. William Lyons

La Bouree **Praetorius**

Suite des Voltes:
CCXX; CCXXII; CCX; CCXI; CCI **Praetorius**

Pause: 10 minutes

English Country Dances:
Lett never crueltie dishonour bewtie; **? John Skene** c.1620;
Jamaica; Wilson's Wilde published **John Playford** 1651

English Masque Dances:
The Nymph's Dance; Courtly Masquing Ayre I; **Robert Johnson** c.1583-1633;
Adson's Maske; Grayes Inne the First; A Masque; **John Adson** c.1587-1640;
Courtly Masquing Ayre 8; The Maypole **William Brade** 1560-1630

Ciaccona arr. Lyons after **Maurizio Cazzati** 1616-78 &
Tarquinio Merula 1595-1665

Suite des Ballettes:

Amazones; Anglois; Princesses; Baccanales;
Mateloz; Coqs

Praetorius

Mille Regretz

Susato

after Josquin des Prez c.1450/55-1521

La Bataille

Susato

The mercurial presence of David Munrow flared for an almost inconceivably brief time from the mid 1960s until he took his own life in May 1976 at the age of just 33, an age at which most people have barely begun their life and career paths, but by which time Munrow had achieved an extraordinary breadth of musical achievements, creating a vital and far-reaching legacy.

The concert title 'The Count and The Duke' is a play on the different associations of the words: musicians in the sixteenth century would have sought patronage from such nobility, and in the twentieth century the two towering figures of the big band genre were of course Count Basie and Duke Ellington.

The two recordings that have inspired this programme are the Early Music Consort of London's *Praetorius – Dances and Motets* (1973) and *Two Renaissance Dance Bands* (1975) featuring the dances in Michael Praetorius' 'Terpsichore' of 1612 and the 1551 publication 'Danserye' by the Flemish trombonist Tielman Susato. These two recordings each had one side of an LP that featured arrangements of dance music from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries for a large ensemble of instruments forming what amounted to a Renaissance 'orchestra'. The early music movement at this time was still in its breathless, giddy adolescence, falling hopelessly for the exotic charms of instruments such as crumhorns, racketts, shawms, rauschpfeifs and sackbuts. These recordings reflect an outrageous exuberance, mirroring the energy exuded by their director.

Revisiting these discs, nearly fifty years after their release, produces a complex, complicated set of reactions for me. I first encountered them soon after my twelfth birthday, coincidentally in May 1976, just a few days after David Munrow died (although I only discovered this decades later). The experience then was of amazement at the infectious music itself, and Munrow's imaginative arrangements for instruments I had never heard of. Subsequently, with a long career of concertising and research in historical performance, I still am thrilled to the core, but now hear them through the lens of a deeper knowledge of performance practice, historic musical conventions, hierarchies,

and practical considerations. In those intervening years enormous progress has been made in the understanding of how professional instrumentalists and singers plied their trade, and of the conventions of early modern music making. We know that there were separate categories of instruments: those that were quieter and required less exertion to play were grouped together and were separate from those that were loud. Thus, stringed instruments and soft woodwind constituted a separate entity from shawms, trombones, trumpets and other related instruments. We also know that whilst complete consorts of one type of instrument – such as recorders and viols – were widely used, mixed consorts of each soft and loud category were common also. Munrow's recordings rely on combinations of predominantly whole consorts of instruments, the long-lasting influence of this approach being that some instruments such as the rackett and crumhorn have been cast as quirky extras, rather than serious instruments that had a significant presence in the art music of the time.

In the light of this developing knowledge, the Renaissance band recordings of David Munrow cannot be regarded in themselves as representative of a historical performance practice per se. Large groups of musicians *did* occur, for instance in the lavish masques mounted in England in the early seventeenth century, or as part of significant courtly, civic or ecclesiastic events, yet the musicians employed at these functioned as separate entities, having specific roles within the event, never playing en masse. Issues surrounding the pitches at which different classes of Renaissance instruments played still produce much brow-furrowed conjecture, and a good deal of what is heard on the recordings of dance music would have been largely impractical. There is also the nature of the music itself: dance music, until the proliferation of printed editions, was very much the province of professional players who could store a vast repertoire in their heads, passing it on aurally to apprentices and fellow players. Dancing was also a relatively intimate affair in the most part, and iconography shows that the size of dance bands from the Middle Ages until the mid-seventeenth century was relatively small, rarely more than six or seven musicians, often fewer, even for large gatherings in communal dances. The dance tunes in this programme that were harmonised by Praetorius and Susato originated for the most part as single melodies played on a dancing master's pocket fiddle or the one-man-band of pipe and tabor.

On the basis of the above, why then bother revisiting this phenomenon of the Renaissance 'big band'? For my part, this concert is more than just a straightforward recreation of those remarkable recordings by David Munrow. The historical performance world has become mainstream, and much of the music being taught and performed is motivated by the existential necessity to produce acceptable, marketable product that out of necessity conforms to a model of classical music reception. The instruments used in this programme are nowadays rarely taken up by students, and conservatoires operate

within parameters that offer little scope to explore the sonorities, textures and the wealth of pre-seventeenth century repertoires. The wind and reed instruments in this concert were common elements of an incredibly rich and abundant musical milieu in the early modern period and their latter-day consignment as exotica, suitable only for the amateur fringes of music-making, or for occasional effect in concert performance should be regarded as a great shame. Also, these instruments were integral elements of the fabric of early soundscapes, and the lack of acknowledgement of that means that so called historic recreations are no such thing, more anodyne mirrors of modern sensibilities than true attempts to explore sound worlds of the past.

So, here are crumhorns, racketts, shawms, dulcians, recorders, cornetts, sackbuts, hurdy gurdys, bagpipes, tabors, violins, regals, organ, harpsichord, lute and theorbo. Embrace the opportunity to rediscover the sheer brilliance of Renaissance wind, brass, and strings in many different combinations, some historic, some not, and savour a delicious and varied banquet of mouth-watering sights and sounds.

© William Lyons

The City Musick

Sarah Humphrys *shawm, recorder, crumhorn, dulcian*

Fiona Last *shawm, recorder, crumhorn, dulcian*

William Lyons *shawm, recorder, crumhorn, dulcian, rackett, bagpipes*

Sam Goble *shawm, recorder, crumhorn, dulcian, bagpipes*

Nicholas Perry *shawm, recorder, dulcian, rackett, bagpipes, hurdy gurdy*

Richard Thomas *cornett, trumpet*

Tamsin Cowell *cornett, trumpet*

Alma Mayer *cornett, lysard, sackbut*

George Bartle *sackbut*

Martyn Sanderson *sackbut*

Cameron Drayton *bass sackbut*

William Whitehead *organ, regals, harpsichord*

Toby Carr *lute, theorbo*

Daniel Bradley *percussion*

Jordan Murray *percussion*

The City Musick was formed by William Lyons to explore the diverse repertoire of civic and court wind bands in early modern Europe and is now firmly established as the premier Renaissance wind band in the UK. The group made its BBC Proms debut in 2012 with a performance of Venetian music in collaboration with I Fagiolini. The Decca recording of this and that of the Striggio *Mass in 40 Parts*, also involving the ensemble, have both met with great critical acclaim. A recording of music of the London Waits, *The Topping Tooters of the Town*, received unanimous critical praise. Postponed from 2020, this new project by the ensemble *The Count & The Duke: A Renaissance Big Band* is being performing at the Stour Festival, as well as the York Early Music Festival, in 2023. The programme is a homage to the monumental recordings of David Munrow in the 1970s, but also reflects current approaches to historical performance practice. Other current projects include *Reining in the Donkey* with I Fagiolini, featuring the music of Orazio Benevoli.

tcmusick.com

Monteverdi String Band

Oliver Webber *violin*

Marguerite Wasserman *violin*

Wendy Kelly *viola*

David Brooker *viola*

Mark Caudle *cello*

The **Monteverdi String Band** is inspired by the sound and style of the early violin consort, using seventeenth-century equipment, approaches and techniques to create a unique sound. The ensemble is frequently to be heard in performances of well-known repertoire such as Monteverdi's *Vespers of 1610*. It has also developed a number of unique programmes drawing on the elaborately interconnected cultural milieu of early seventeenth-century Italy: the literary origins of the madrigal, the life of Galileo, and the private entertainments of the Venetian nobility have all inspired performances which have included specially written scripts, live physics experiments and choreographed swordsmanship. The pandemic restrictions of 2020-21 gave an opportunity to develop smaller-scale projects, including *Con Arte e Maestria*, exploring virtuosic traditions of ornamentation, released on Resonus Classics in 2021. The Band's next recording, also for Resonus, will be *The Madrigal Reimagined*: a unique perspective on the diverse forms and influences of the Italian madrigal.

monteverdistringband.com

Ensemble Jupiter
Iestyn Davies *countertenor*
Thomas Dunford *director*

Eternal Source of Light

A seamless sequence of beautiful arias by Handel, composed in the 1740s and '50s, balancing the secular and the sacred, the tranquil and the tempestuous, the sumptuous and the sophisticated.

Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall
Saturday 8 July 7.30pm

<https://www.ncem.co.uk/events/ensemble-jupiter-iestyn-davies/>



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YORK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

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