

PROGRAM NOTES



THESE PROGRAM NOTES consist of quotations from original documents. We have included comments from ancient Greek philosophers, early church fathers, medieval and Renaissance theologians, and contemporary scholars and critics. The notes are designed as supplemental readings for the music history you will hear in this program of the Lauren Pelon Musique Company, "The Living Roots of Music."



THE PHILOSOPHERS' VIEW OF MUSIC

❖ The overseers must be watchful against its [music's] insensible corruption. They must throughout be watchful against innovations in music and gymnastics counter to the established order, and to the best of their power guard against them, fearing when anyone says that song is most regarded among men "which hovers newest on the singer's lips" [*Odyssey* i. 351], lest it be supposed that the poet means not new songs but a new way of song and is commending this. But we must not praise that sort of thing nor conceive it to be the poet's meaning. For a change to a new type of music is something to beware of as a hazard of all our fortunes. For the modes of music are never disturbed without unsettling of the most fundamental political and social conventions.

—Plato (427–347 B. C.)

❖ Our first inquiry is whether music ought not or ought to be included in education, and what is its efficacy among the three uses of it that have been discussed — does it serve for education or amusement or entertainment? It is reasonable to reckon it under all these heads, and it appears to participate in them all...so that for this reason also one might suppose that the younger men ought to be educated in music. For all harmless pleasures are not only suitable for the ultimate object but also for relaxation; and as it but rarely happens for men to reach their ultimate object, whereas they often relax and pursue amusement not so much with some ulterior object but because of the pleasure of it, it would be serviceable to let them relax at intervals in the pleasures derived from music.

—Aristotle (384–322 B. C.)

BEFORE MUSICAL NOTATION

❖ Since sound is a thing of sense it passes along into past time, and it is impressed on the memory. From this it was pretended by the poets that the Muses were the daughters of Jupiter and Memory. For unless sounds are held in the memory by man they perish, because they cannot be written down.

—Isidore of Seville (560–636)

ON THE POWER OF MUSIC

❖ ...of the four mathematical disciplines, the others are concerned with the pursuit of truth, but music is related not only to speculation but to morality as well. Nothing is more characteristic of human nature than to be soothed by sweet modes and stirred up by their opposites. Nor is this limited to particular professions or ages, but is common to all professions; and infants, youths and the old as well are so naturally attuned to musical modes by a kind of spontaneous feeling that no age is without delight in sweet song. From this may be discerned the truth of what Plato not idly said, that the soul of the universe is united by musical concord.

—Boethius (480–524)

❖ For the very universe, it is said, is held together by a certain harmony of sounds, and the heavens themselves are made to revolve by the modulation of harmony. Music moves the feelings and changes the emotions. In battles, moreover, the sound of the trumpet rouses the combatants, and the more furious the trumpeting, the more valorous their spirit. Song likewise encourages the rowers, music soothes the mind to endure toil, and the modulation of the voice consoles the weariness of each labor. Music also composes distraught minds, as may be read of David, who freed Saul from the unclean spirit by the art of melody. The very beasts also, even serpents, birds, and dolphins, music incites to listen to her melody. But every word we speak, every pulsation of our veins, is related by musical rhythms to the powers of harmony.

—Isidore of Seville (560–636)



❖ The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

—William Shakespeare (1596)

❖ Is it possible to ask too much of music? As a child, I saw it as an irresistible force for good, uniting the human race at its universal depths beneath the divisions, working that magic which Schiller describes in his Ode to Joy as "binding together what custom pulls asunder."

—Yehudi Menuhin (1976)

❖ I believe the matter of music to be central to that of the meanings of man, of man's access to or abstention from metaphysical experience. Our capacities to compose and to respond to musical form and sense directly implicate the mystery of the human condition. To ask, "what is music?" may well be one way of asking, "what is man?"

—George Steiner (1989)

❖ One of the effects we strive to achieve with our music is to reflect the living roots of music and at the same time reflect our modern age. I believe that music has the power to transcend time, distance and culture. It allows us to cross boundaries without losing a sense of place. Musical expression actually helps us *find* our place in time and culture, in history. This process increases our self-awareness, and by doing so, helps us understand not only ourselves but also the world and its peoples.

—Lauren Pelon, from the program





MUSIC AND THE CHURCH

❖ When, indeed, the Holy Spirit saw that the human race was guided only with difficulty toward virtue, and that because of our inclination toward pleasure, we were neglectful of an upright life, what did He do? The delight of melody He mingled with the doctrines so that by the pleasantness and softness of the sound heard we might receive without perceiving it the benefit of the words, just as wise physicians who, when giving the fastidious rather bitter drugs to drink, frequently smear the cup with honey...

Passions sprung from lack of breeding and baseness are naturally engendered by licentious songs. But we should cultivate the other kind, which is better and leads to the better, through use of which, as they say, David the Poet of the Sacred Songs, freed the king from his madness.

—St. Basil (330-379)

❖ For nothing so uplifts the mind, giving it wings and freeing it from earth, releasing it from the chains of the body, affecting it with love of wisdom, and causing it to scorn all things pertaining to this life, as modulated melody and the divine chant composed of number.

—St. Chrysostom (349-407)

❖ Without committing myself to an irrevocable opinion, I am inclined to approve the custom of singing in church.... Yet when I find the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys, I confess that this is a grievous sin, and at those times I would prefer not to hear the singer.

—St. Augustine (356-430)

❖ Certain disciples of the new school, much occupying themselves with the measured dividing of beats, display their rhythm in notes new to us, preferring to devise new methods of their own rather than to continue singing in the old way...

The result is that they often seem to be losing sight of the fundamental sources of our melodies in the Antiphoner and Gradual, and forget what it is that they are burying under such superstructures... The consequence of all this is that devotion, the true aim of all worship, is neglected, and wantonness, which ought to be eschewed, increases. We hasten to forbid these methods, or rather to drive them more effectively out of the house of God than has been done in the past.

Nevertheless, it is not our wish to forbid occasional use of some consonances [i. e., polyphony] which heighten the beauty of the melody... Used thus, the consonances would, more than other music is able to do, both soothe the hearer and inspire his devotion, without destroying religious feeling in the minds of the singers.

—Pope John XXII, *Docta Sanctorum* (1323)

❖ Martin Luther to the Devotees of Music: Greetings in Christ! I would certainly like to praise music with all my heart as the excellent gift of God which it is and to commend it to everyone. But I am so overwhelmed by the diversity and magnitude of its virtue and benefits that I can find neither beginning nor end nor method for my discourse... First then, looking at music itself, you will find that from the beginning of the world it has been instilled and implanted in all creatures, individually and collectively. For nothing is without sound or harmony... Music is still more wonderful in living things, especially birds, so that David, most musical of all kings and minstrel of God, in deepest wonder and spiritual exaltation praised the astounding art and ease of the song of birds... Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise....

For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate... what more effective means than music could you find?

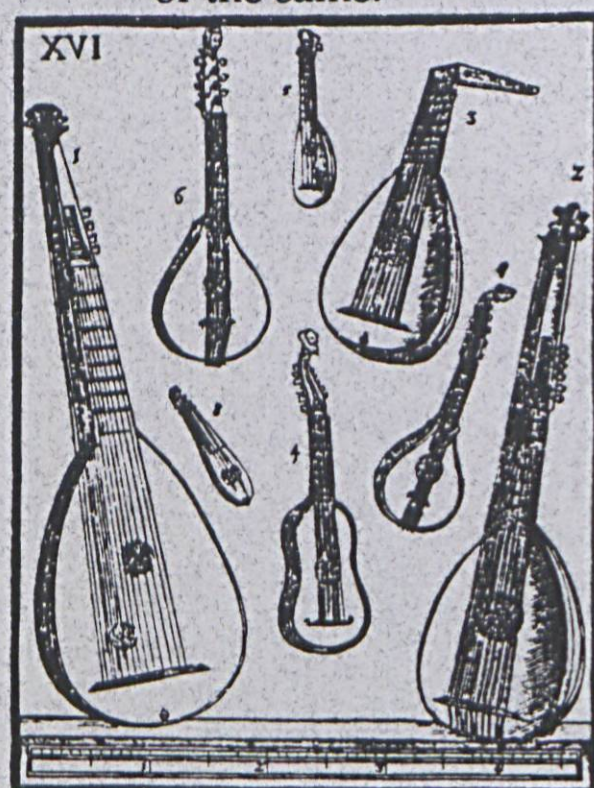
—Martin Luther (1538)



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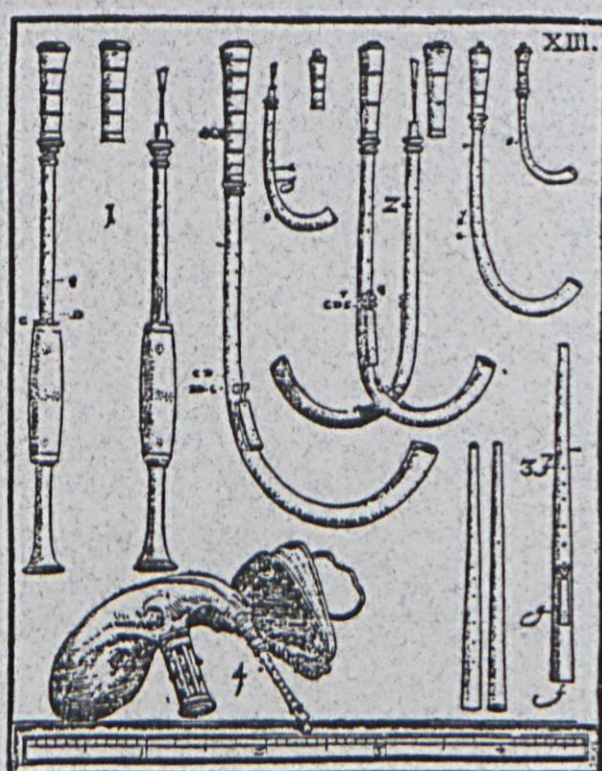
of Michael Praetorius

Therein the Nomenclature, Tuning and Character of
all Ancient and Modern Musical Instruments,
foreign, barbarian, rustic and unfamiliar as well as
indigenous, artistic, agreeable and familiar;
together with true and accurate drawings
of the same.



1. Paduan Theorbo 2. Lute with pegs 3. Choir-Lute 4. Quintern 5. Mandurchen
6. Six-stringed Choir-Cither 7. Small English Cither 8. Small Fiddle, called
a Posche.

Musical instruments may be described as the
ingenious work of able and earnest artisans who
devised them after much diligent thought and
work, fashioned them out of good materials and
designed them in the true proportions of art, such
that they produce a beautiful accord of sound and
can be employed for the magnification of God and
the fitting and proper entertainment of man.



1. Nicolo Bassett 2. Krummhorns 3. Soft Cornets 4. Bagpipe with Bellows.

And herein not only useful and necessary
information for the Organist, Instrumentalist,
Organ and Instrument maker and all Others
devoted to the Muses; but also very pleasant
and agreeable reading matter for the
Philosopher, Philologist and Historian.

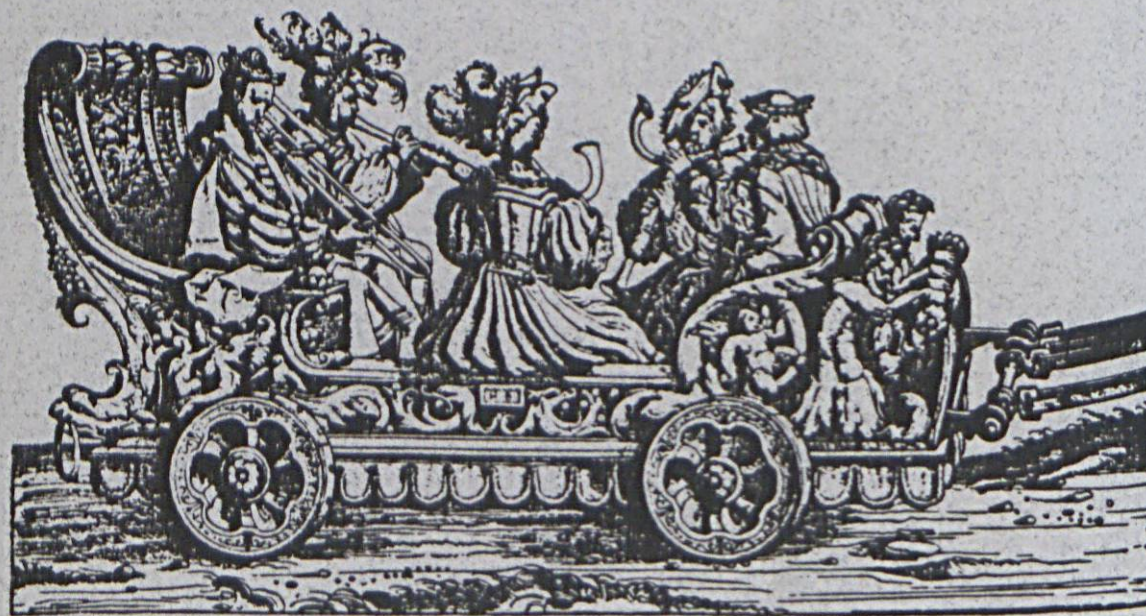
from:

THE TRIUMPH OF MAXIMILIAN

(1512)



Now lutes and viols harmonize
In elegant and courtly wise;
Thus bade by His Imperial might
Have I produced this fair delight,
Blending these tuneful instruments
As well befits such great events.



The trombone and the shawm adorn
The joyous sound of curving horn,
Each to the others well adjusted.
Since His Majesty entrusted
This musical command to me,
I have performed quite frequently.



MUSIC AND THE CHURCH cont.

❖ Among all the other things that are proper for the recreation of man and for giving him pleasure, music, if not the first, is among the most important; and we must consider it a gift from God expressly made for that purpose. And for this reason we must be all the more careful not to abuse it, for fear of defiling or contaminating it, converting to our damnation what is intended for our profit and salvation... Nor should it lead us to lasciviousness or shamelessness. But more than this, there is hardly anything in the world that has greater power to bend the morals of men this way or that, as Plato has wisely observed. And in fact we find from experience that it has an insidious and well-nigh incredible power to move us whither it will... This is why the early doctors of the Church used to complain that the people in their time were addicted to illicit and shameless songs, which they were right to call a mortal, world-corrupting poison of Satan's... It is true, as St. Paul says, that all evil words will pervert good morals. But when melody goes with them, they will pierce the heart much more strongly and enter within. Just as wine is funneled into a barrel, so are venom and corruption distilled to the very depths of the heart by melody.

—John Calvin (1543)



MUSIC IN COURTLY LIFE

❖ Raimbaut de Vaqueiras was the son of a poor knight from Provence; he moved to Montferrat to the court of Boniface. He stayed a long time in that court and inspired it by his vitality, his skill at arms, and his songs. When the Marquis went to Rumania (as head of the Fourth Crusade, in 1201) he took Raimbaut with him and knighted him.

And then did Raimbaut fall in love with Beatrice, the Marquis's sister, who was married to Enrico, Lord of Carreto. For her he made his finest songs.

Then one day, as he had a favorable access to Beatrice, he said to her, "Vouchsafe, my lady, to give me your advice; I stand in great need of counsel. I love a gentle lady, full of grace and merit. I converse with her continually, without daring to let her know my affection so much do I stand in awe of her virtue. For heaven's and pity's sake, tell me whether I ought to die for love, from the fear of making it known."

"Every loyal lover," replied Beatrice, "who attaches himself to a lady of merit, whom he fears as well as respects, always explains his sentiments before he suffers himself to die for her sake. I advise you to declare your love, and to request your lady to retain you as her servant and her friend. If she is wise, and courteous, she will neither take it amiss, nor think herself dishonored; for you are so good, that there is no lady in the world, who ought not freely to receive you as her knight."

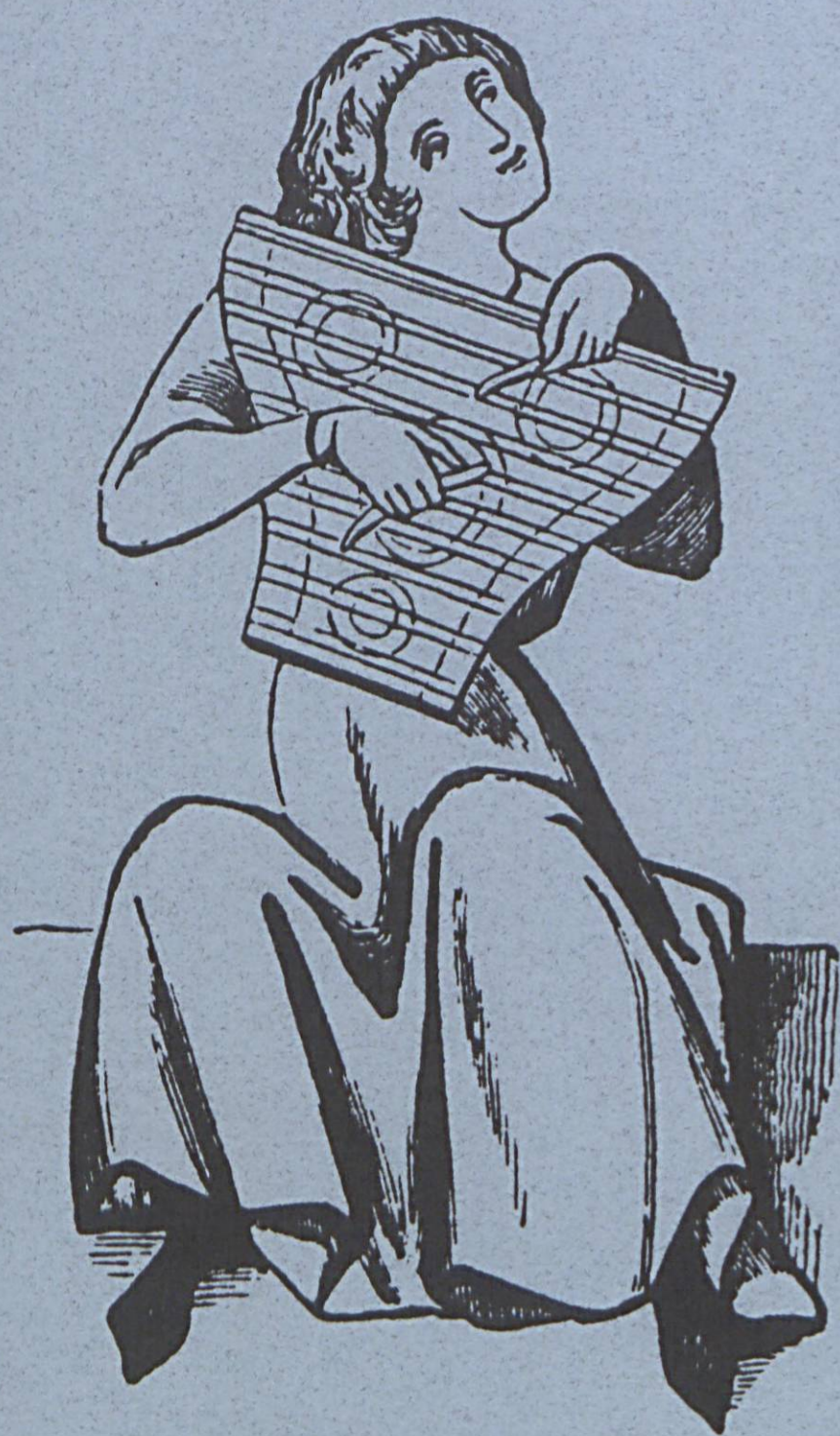
And Raimbaut, on hearing this advice and the assurance that she gave him, told her that she was indeed the lady whom he so adored. And the lady Beatrice said to him, "Welcome my new-found lover! Try more and more, by your speech and by your deeds, to make yourself worthy to serve me. I retain you for my knight." And then straight away did Raimbaut celebrate his felicity in a song.

—tales of the troubadours (1201)



ON PERFORMANCE AS ARTS CRITICISM

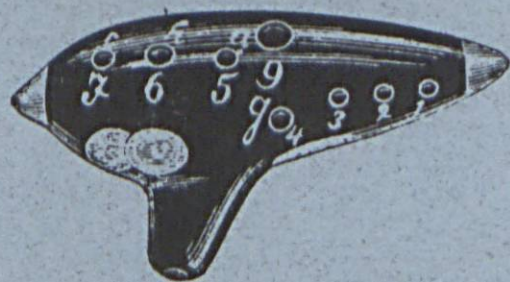
❖ Each performance of a dramatic text or musical score is a critique in the most vital sense of the term: it is an act of penetrative response which makes sense sensible... In turn, no musicology, no music criticism, can tell us as much as the action of meaning which is performance... More than any other act of intelligibility and executive form, music entails differentiations between that which can be understood, this is to say paraphrased, and that which can be thought and lived in categories which are, rigorously considered, transcendent to such understanding. More narrowly: no epistemology, no philosophy of art can lay claim



to inclusiveness if it has nothing to teach us about the nature and meaning of music. Claude Levi-Strauss's affirmation that "the invention of melody is the supreme mystery of man," seems to me of sober evidence... When it speaks of music, language is lame.

...The authentic experience of understanding, when we are spoken to by another human being or by a poem is one of responding responsibility. We are answerable to the text, to the work of art, to the musical offering, in a very specific sense, at once moral, spiritual and psychological... The immediate point is this: in respect of meaning and of valuation in the arts, our master intelligencers are the performers.

—George Steiner (1989)



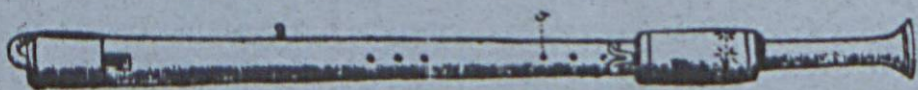


ON MUSIC AND ARTS AS A CRITICAL ACT

❖ All serious arts, music and literature is a *critical act*... The readings, the interpretations and critical judgements of art, literature and music from within art, literature and music are of a penetrative authority rarely equalled by those offered from outside...

In music, at a more radical level than in either literature or the arts, the best intelligence, interpretative and critical, is musical. Asked to explain a difficult *etude*, Schumann sat down and played it a second time. We have already noted that the most "exposed", therefore engaged and responsible act of musical interpretation is that of performance. In ways closely analogous to those we have cited in texts, paintings or sculptures, the criticism of music truly answerable to its object is to be found within music itself. The construct of theme and variation, of quotation and *reprise*, is organic to music, particularly in the West. Criticism is, literally, instrumental in the ear of the composer.

—George Steiner (1989)



ESKIMO DANCERS

We weave strange ornaments
Into our music; skin drums
Tolling the movement of men and seals

Our heads incline toward songs
As yet unsung; their notes
Crouch in tall grass,
They ride the wings of cormorants
Vibrate in voiceless throats of voles

We sing to the long light of days
In summer lingering,
Praise autumn with songs
Of shadows drowning our rivers

Composing our lives in time
To the losing of seasons
We dance against darkness
Create a new spring
Make music the measure
Of life in the land

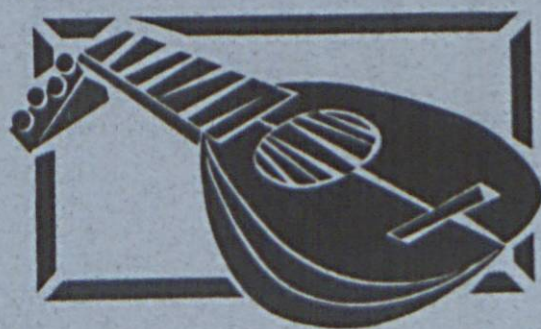
—Gary H. Holthaus (1978)



A poet with lira da braccio, from *Epithome Plutarchi* (1501).

PERSONAL NOTES

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