

Symposium

Forgotten relatives

Small bassoons of the 18th and 19th centuries on stage again

24.–25. Feb. 2023, Schola Cantorum Basiliensis

Abstracts

Donna Agrell (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW)

Historical Bassoon Reed-Making Pedagogy: Developing a Perfect Fit

A well-functioning bassoon or oboe reed is generally a major factor in the quality of a performance and must be regularly replaced, due to its unfortunately short life span. Although many contemporary technological aids serve to standardize reed construction, an effective and individual pedagogical approach defines personal parameters, hones skills of observation, and focuses on identifying characteristics of the material at hand – all necessary steps leading towards becoming a master reed-maker.

Reeds for small historical bassoons present a special challenge, given that these instruments often have a wider range of pitch flexibility than their larger counterparts. Finding individual solutions thus becomes essential for successful reed construction. In this presentation, a program outlining fundamental elements of basic reed pedagogy for historical bassoonists will be proposed.

Performing and recording with many of the most prestigious period instrument orchestras and ensembles throughout her career, historical bassoonist Donna Agrell has been a member of the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century (Amsterdam) since its founding in 1981 by Frans Brüggen. She has taught generations of young musicians at two of Europe's foremost institutes for early music studies, the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague (1990–present), and the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (from 2001–21), where she is currently a member of the research department (SNF project “Out of the bass register”). Donna Agrell completed PhD studies at Leiden University in 2015, focusing on 19th century virtuosic Swedish bassoon repertoire.

Thomas Drescher (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW)

Small Bassoons and Other Instruments “Out of the Register ...” – An Introduction

The small instruments of the bassoon family seem like lost (and rediscovered) relatives of an instrument family that was previously represented by only one single member.

Yet the concept of “family” in the context of musical instruments is defined by quite precise criteria that were developed above all in the 16th century. The small bassoons of the 17th and 18th centuries fit into this scheme only to a limited extent.

A look at other instrument families will show that analogous constellations can be found there, which can help to better understand the special functions of the small bassoons within a general development of instrument making.

Thomas Drescher studied German literature and musicology in Munich and Basel. During his school years and studies he was already active as an ensemble singer and especially as a string player (violin, viola and related instruments) in various early music ensembles. In 1989 he became a research associate at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, and in 1998 he was also appointed deputy director of the institute. Thomas Drescher was director of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW from 2016 to 2022. Doctorate at the University of Basel on 17th century violin music. Head of several research projects of the SNSF and other funding foundations at the SCB.

David Gasche (Kunstuniversität Graz)

Die Frage des Tenor-Fagotts im Kontext der Harmonie, türkischen Musik und Militärmusik

"There are several types of bassoon [...] 2. The tenor bassoon, whose notes sound a fifth higher." (Nemetz, Musikschule für Militär Musik, 1860, p. 53). Several authors from Zedler (1731-1754) to Nemetz (1860) mention the fagottino or tenor bassoon, and recent studies by Hubmann (2011) and Kopp (2012) provide various theories about its function, but its exact musical use is still poorly documented and known. The lecture will present some reflections and comments on the use of the tenor bassoon in the repertoire of harmony music. It will first present ongoing research on harmony, Turkish music and military music with a particular focus on instrumentation. A comparative analysis of contemporary sources will then shed light on the use of the tenor bassoon in this musical field. Finally, an attempt will be made to explain some of the characteristics of the Fagottino GdM I.N. 169 (Vienna) in order to contribute to a deeper exploration of the "small" bassoons of the 18th and 19th centuries.

David Gasche wurde in Le Mans (Frankreich) geboren. Er begann seine musikalischen Studien in Bayonne und setzte sie am Konservatorium und an der Universität der Stadt Tours fort. 2004 kam er nach Wien, um seine Doktorarbeit in Musikwissenschaft (Universität Wien, 2009) und sein künstlerisches Diplom-Hauptfach Klarinette (Prayner Konservatorium, 2011) abzuschließen. Mehrere Artikel und Beiträge bei internationalen Kongressen stellen seine Forschungsschwerpunkte dar, die auf der Wiener Harmoniemusik des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts und auf der sinfonischen Blasmusik liegen. Der „Fritz-Thelen-Preis 2012“ von der Internationalen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung und Förderung der Blasmusik (IGEB) würdigte seine diesbezügliche Forschung. Musikalische Tätigkeiten nehmen auch einen hohen Anteil ein. Er ist entweder als Klarinettist eines Trios oder als Mitglied des sinfonischen Pannonischen Blasorchesters (PBO) zu hören. David Gasche ist derzeit Senior Scientist an der Kunstuniversität Graz, Generalsekretär von IGEB, Präsident des PBO, er leitet das International Center for Wind Music Research und arbeitet als Kunstvermittler für die Sammlung alter Musikinstrumente Wien.

Áurea Domínguez (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW)

Extended Family of Small Bassoons: Instrument Types and History

Small-sized bassoons were made by the most reputable woodwind makers throughout Europe, such as Denner, Grenser, and Savary, among others. The historical metamorphosis in the construction of fagottino is closely linked to that of the full-sized bassoon. National peculiarities in construction came together with the development of at least three types of instruments tuned in different pitches: the fagottino, tuned an octave higher, and tenoroons tuned a fifth and fourth higher. Each of these transposing instruments inherited the character and role the bassoon

played in different regions and times. This paper explores the history and types of small-sized bassoons from the early 18th century to present times. The organological descriptions of different models stem from examinations of preserved instruments in museums and private collections. Moreover, by studying them in this manner, it is possible to contribute to the history of bassoon making from the early 18th century to the turn of the 20th century, a period when the bassoon developed its main changes in construction.

Áurea Dominguez is a researcher and performer specializing in historical double reed performance practice. Following her studies at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, where she was later employed as a researcher, she earned her PhD in musicology from the University of Helsinki in 2014. Her interests include historical sound technologies and innovative approaches to organology in wind instruments, such as the use of CT scans and 3D printing as research tools. Her monograph on nineteenth-century bassoon performance *Bassoon Playing in Perspective* (2013) has become an important reference in the field, as has her work on the fagottino and early recordings of wind music.

Giovanni Graziadio (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW)

"Fagottino Potpourri" - Evidence of a Lost Practice

Recent musicological studies conducted about the history and organology of small-sized bassoons have brought forth testimonies of concerts and musical works which would include not only potpourris with adaptations of arias from operas, but also music specifically composed for these small-sized instruments. Often these 19th century accounts mention very talented bassoonists who were presenting their abilities as instrumentalists, composers or even as builders, and it is very interesting that they chose to play fagottino or tenoroon as a means to impress their audience. A consistent Italian tradition, very often Neapolitan, reveals the use of bassoons and tenoroons that certainly had a central European counterpart, yet to be explored in depth. This presentation will offer new information which may influence contemporary practice.

Giovanni Graziadio performs concerts with many well-known European orchestras and ensembles, with which he has recorded numerous CDs on several international labels. He has taught performance practice, recorder, and historical bassoon in workshops at various state schools and international academies and currently teaches baroque bassoon at the Conservatorio di Musica of Brescia (IT) and in the HfK Bremen (DE). He works as a researcher at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW and is a PhD student at the University of Basel, where he is writing about the "Use and Pedagogy of the Bassoon in Naples between the 17th and 18th centuries".

Klaus Hubmann (Kunstuniversität Graz)

Überlegungen zu Herkunft, Verbreitung und Repertoire des hochgestimmten Dulzians

The entry of *drey tenor und zween discant* [probably: alto] dulcians in the inventory of the Graz court chapel of 1577 is one of the earliest records of dulcians in higher registers, following the mention of *bassoni curti* in a 1559 estimate by Jacomo Bassano and his son-in-law Santo Gritti da Sebenico to the *Piffari* di Doge in Venice. Although the first instrumentation known today with a dulcian in the tenor register, namely for a *basoncico* alias *fagotto piccolo* in the *Altus Secundus Chorus* part, comes from the *Liber primus concertus in duos distincti choros* by Giovanni Pietro Flaccomio, a Venetian print from 1611, in the further course of the 17th century the use of these small instruments seems to have been concentrated mainly in Germany and the Habsburg countires. Numerous composers of distinction, such as Christoph Strauss, Johann Stadlmayr, Heinrich Schütz, Thomas Selle and Johann Rudolph Ahle used higher-

pitched dulcians. When the Nuremberg woodwind maker Johann Christoph Denner built his first small, four-part bassoons after the French model around 1700 or just before - an octave bassoon from his workshop is now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston - he was thus able to draw on a tradition that was still alive.

Studium Fagott, Gesang, Musikwissenschaft und Germanistik in Graz und Wien. 1986
Lehrbeauftragter, 1987 Hochschulassistent, 2000 Ao.Univ.Prof., 2000 bis 2005 und wieder 2010 bis 2020 Vorstand des Instituts für Alte Musik und Aufführungspraxis an der Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz. Mitglied des Grazer Bläserquintetts, des Austrian Art Ensembles und des Ensembles für Neue Musik "szene instrumental"; als Spieler von historischen Fagotten Mitglied mehrerer renommierter Ensembles für Alte Musik. Gründer und Leiter des Renaissanceensembles "Catkanei - Studio für Alte Musik, Graz", des Vokalensembles "a più voci" und der "Harmonia antiqua". Publikationen zu aufführungspraktischen Fragen, zur Steirischen Musikgeschichte, zur Geschichte, Spieltechnik und Literatur für Blasinstrumente etc.

James Kopp (Portland, OR)

Small Bassoons by the Savarys: Context and Style

From the early nineteenth century to 1853, the makers Jean-Baptiste Savary *père* and Jean-Nicolas Savary *jeune* (1781–1853) produced bassoons and other woodwinds in Paris. Their bassoons attracted players in France and beyond, especially in England, where the son became known as “the Stradivari of the bassoon.” This chronological survey of their lives and production will draw on earliest sources, recent research, and surviving exemplars. The intended uses, customers, and style of the Savarys’ smaller bassoons (octave and tenor) will be a particular focus. Other selected topics will include documented events in the lives of father and son and an apparent reaction by French bassoon makers, including Savary *jeune*, to the German bassoon model of Carl Almenröder, exhibited in Paris in 1826. With this reaction, the traditional Savary bassoon began to diverge from the traditional fingerings codified by Etienne Ozi in 1803, in hand with a rethinking of bore dimensions and tone-hole configurations.

James Kopp has performed professionally as a bassoonist for more than twenty years. He has an international reputation as a clinician and maker of reeds for bassoon, contrabassoon, and early bassoon. His articles on the history and acoustics of woodwind instruments have appeared in many journals and reference books, and he is senior editor of the *Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, second edition.

Zoë Matthews-Visentin (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW)

The Hamburg Link - Evidence of Small Bassoon Use in and around Hamburg in the 18th Century - (as Video)

18th Century Hamburg was a cultural hub, attracting many composers both resident and visiting, who exchanged ideas, theories, and influences from across Europe. Keiser, Telemann, and Mattheson all lived and worked in Hamburg at some point during their lives and this provides significant evidence of the existence and use of small bassoons in the region.

Until recently, musicological research only assumed and applied the existence of the full-sized bassoon to historical performance practice. Just as it has been proven to play a significant role in the basso continuo section, smaller bassoons should also be viewed as significant orchestral and solo voices of the 18th century.

This presentation contextually and practically explores key repertoire for small bassoons linked to Hamburg, such as Mattheson’s *Das Grosse in dem Kleinen* (1722), Telemann’s cantatas

Abscheuliche Tiefe des grossen Verderbens and *Mit Gott im Gnaden Bünde* and Zachow's Osterkantate No X, *Dies ist der Tag*.

Zoë Matthews-Visentin is performer, teacher and researcher specialised in historical and modern bassoons. A member of two SNSF research teams about small bassoons, her main focus is on repertoire evaluation and research, co-creating a classification system for repertoire, instrument trials, reed constructions, and pedagogical methods. She has a Master of Music degree from the Royal Northern College of Music, as well as Masters of Music and Pedagogy degrees from the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW.

Kelly Landerkin (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW)

“...nor can they obviate the devious errors of scollars...” – Some Remarks on Teaching According to the Sources

How is teaching described in historical sources, and how might we integrate historical methods more consciously into our didactical approach today?

In this paper I will consider the particular roles of the pedagogue and student in the musical setting. In so doing we will encounter source readings across the centuries that present the teacher in both the best as well as the worst possible light, in the hope of learning from their examples.

Kelly Landerkin studied voice, music theory and historical performance in Hawaii und Indiana before coming to the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and the University of Basel as a Fulbright scholar. She continued for an advanced degree in vocal pedagogy at the Zurich University of the Arts. Her work balances on the border between research and practice. She is especially interested in chant repertoires of the Early and High Middle Ages, as well as historical music pedagogy. Kelly is the current chairperson of the SCB management team.

Ricardo Simian (The Oslo School of Architecture and Design)

Neo crafts and the future of instrument making

Modern industrial production evolved from ancient crafts expertise. The knowledge on how to transform every material into objects, which was accumulated for centuries, created the basis for the industrial revolution and modern production.

Crafts and industry have since dramatically split apart not only technically but also philosophically: the warm tradition of a personalised, handmade object opposes the cold but efficient assembly lines. Instrument making is a very lively example of all these aspects. Nevertheless, new technical developments such as 3D-printing and computer modelling are opening possibilities to bridge both worlds again. Artisans have gained access to industrial materials and larger production scales while the industry has started not only to integrate personalisation but also to develop solutions for small-scale niches.

This exciting new world of „neo crafts“, still in its infancy, will likely reshape our relationship with both tradition and industry in the upcoming years. The seminal hybrid work done for the reconstruction of the fagottini offers a sneak peek into this future.

The quest for exploring different areas, ranging from arts to technical innovation, has taken Ricardo Simian from Chile to Italy, to Switzerland and finally to Norway, collecting degrees in music performance, cultural management, and early music on the way.

All of these fields manage to come together in his main project, an ongoing PhD research on Design and 3D-print at the Architecture and Design School of Oslo (AHO). This research builds upon Ricardo's award-winning startup 3D Music Instruments, which operates at the cross section between 3D-print technology, music, design, and innovation. (www.3dmusicinstruments.com).

Vincenzo Onida (Milano)

Reconstructing Small-Sized Bassoons - a Builder's Standpoint

Recent research about the historical "fagottino" gave access to innovative tomographic scanning, 3D model printing technology and the subsequent processing of the data for the construction of the tools, achieving a hitherto unheard-of precision and adherence to the original measurements.

The work in the laboratory dealt with the encounter between the extraordinarily high definition of the measurements and the indispensable simplification - necessary for handcrafted work - which must measure itself against the requirements of the living material of wood, which itself has extreme variables. The experience made with the "Out of the bass register" research project has reached innovative milestones of great interest which deserve to be spread.

Historical bassoon and dulcian maker, as well as restorer of historical instruments, Vincenzo Onida, has been an external partner to both SNSF research projects about small-sized bassoons, advising in instrument data collection, photography, and data evaluation.

Letizia Viola (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW)

Pädagogische Anwendungen des historischen Fagottinos

At the beginning of the 1990s, bassoon maker Guntram Wolf (Kronach) began to develop small modern bassoons that were specifically tailored to the requirements of children, thus enabling an early introduction to the world of the bassoon. This also gave a big push to pedagogy in the context of the modern bassoon, but not to the field of historical instruments. As I will explain, the use of the small historical instruments that have recently come into view makes possible a new teaching method that allows children to work with a historical fagottino from the very beginning. The return of historical tenoroons and fagottini and the pedagogy associated with them can give rise to a new generation of bassoonists who have not played modern bassoon or recorder before becoming involved in historical performance practice - as has been the case in the past - but who are exposed to the characteristics of the historical bassoon from the very beginning, without this blocking the way into the world of the modern bassoon.

The Sicilian bassoonist Letizia Viola lives in Basel and teaches historical bassoon at the Hochschule für Musik Trossingen and the Music School of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, as well as modern bassoon at the Music School of the Musik-Akademie Basel. She was an academy member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and deputy solo bassoonist of the Bremen Philharmonic Orchestra from 2002 to 2017. Since 2017, she has been a member of the research team at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis FHNW in two SNSF-projects focusing on small-sized bassoons. Furthermore, she regularly performs with ensembles such as La Cetra, Freiburger Barockorchester, Kammerorchester Basel, Die Freitagsakademie, il Pomodoro, und la Scintilla.