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## Reviews of Books

LEONARDO DA VINCI AS A MUSICIAN. By Emanuel Winternitz. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, xv, 241 pp.

At last another facet of Leonardo da Vinci's universal genius—that of gifted musician—has received long overdue attention. Emanuel Winternitz's new book brings together the fruits of recent musical scholarship and other materials hitherto available only in nonmusicological literature, and the result is a splendid full-scale investigation of the many aspects of Leonardo's musical personality. Here are discussions of Leonardo the singer and improviser on the *lira da braccio*, the musician whose skills were the wonder of his contemporaries and later generations; the designer of ingenious musical instruments for military campaigns and theatrical entertainments, some serious, some whimsical; and the thinker who wrote on musical aesthetics and experimented with acoustics. In musical matters also, to judge from Winternitz's persuasive presentation, Leonardo was truly a Renaissance man.

Winternitz is no stranger to Leonardo studies, and in the present volume he has made ample use of all of his previous writings on the subject, though each is now revised and illustrated even more abundantly than before with examples from contemporary paintings and woodcuts as well as from Leonardo's own notebooks.<sup>1</sup> In addition, several chapters are devoted to topics

<sup>1</sup> Winternitz's authority in this field was established in a long line of publications beginning with the 1964 issue of *Raccolta Vinciana*. In addition to the publications cited on p. iv, the author has written: "Keyboards for Wind Instruments Invented by Leonardo da Vinci" in *Aspects of Medieval and Renaissance Music: A Birthday Offering to Gustave Reese*, ed. Jan LaRue (New York, 1966), pp. 883–88; "Leonardo da Vinci," in *MGG*, XIII (1966), cols. 1664–67; "Anatomy the Teacher: On the Impact of Leonardo's Anatomical Research on his Musical and other Machines," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CXI (1967), 234–47; "Strange Musical Instruments in the Madrid Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci," *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, II (1969), 115–26; "La Musica nel 'Paragone' di Leonardo da Vinci," *Studi Musicali*, I (1972), 79–99; "Leonardo and Music," in *The Unknown Leonardo*, ed. Ladislao Reti (New York, 1974), pp. 110–35; "Leonardo da Vinci as a musician," *Times Literary Supplement*, London, III, 916 (April 1, 1977), 441–42. Earlier but inadequate treatment of Leonardo the

that receive detailed treatment for the first time: Leonardo's activities in musical circles in Florence and Milan and his relationship with four well-known contemporaries: Franchino Gaffurio, the theorist, composer, and chapelmaster of Milan Cathedral; Luca Paciola, the famous mathematician; Lorenzo Gusnasco da Pavia, an instrument maker and agent of Isabella d'Este; and Atalante Migliorotti, Leonardo's pupil who, following in his teacher's footsteps, not only played the title role in the 1491 Mantuan production of Poliziano's *Orfeo* but also worked later as an architect and construction supervisor for the music-loving Pope Leo X in Rome.<sup>2</sup>

Leonardo's association with the latter three men is amply documented by surviving letters and testimonies, from which Winternitz profusely quotes. His assertion, however, that "there were beyond doubt close friendly relations between Leonardo and Gaffurius" (p. 6) must remain conjectural, for nowhere does he give evidence to show that the two even knew each other, let alone that "they lent each other books." It is, of course, tempting and even reasonable to assume that Leonardo met the Milanese chapelmaster, but it would be nice to have the documentation proving that he did. Similarly, it seems risky to credit Lorenzo Gusnasco, or his artistic tradition (p. 21), with an instrument built in 1540, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, without having compared its design and decoration with another instrument known to be his. A positive organ with paper pipes made by Gusnasco has been in the Museo Correr in Venice since 1873.<sup>3</sup>

Winternitz's discussion of the sketches of the *viola organista* presupposes an evolutionary theory of development, and from what is known of Leonardo's thought processes this theory may well be correct. Recent dating of the relevant folios in the notebooks in fact support this theory. However, the sketch of the *viola organista* in *Codice Atlantico*, folio 213 Verso-A (see the illustration) allows a different interpretation from that given by the author (pp. 155-57).<sup>4</sup> Not the least of the remarkable features of the instrument is its

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musician includes: Luca Baroni, "Il Musicista di Leonardo da Vinci," *Raccolta Vinciana*, II (1905-06), 74-80; Augusto Marinoni, *I Rebus di Leonardo da Vinci: Raccolti e Interpretati* (Florence, 1954); Enrico Magni-Dufflocq, "Da Vinci's Music," in *Leonardo da Vinci* (New York, 1956), pp. 227-31.

<sup>2</sup> For an exhaustive discussion of Lorenzo's relationship with Isabella d'Este, see William F. Prizer, "Isabella d'Este and Lorenzo da Pavia, 'Master Instrument Maker,'" *Early Music History*, II (Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 87-127, with an expansion of Migliorotti's biography on pp. 107-08.

<sup>3</sup> A photograph and further published information on this organ (dated 1494), the maker of which was established in 1949, appear in Prizer, pp. 97-99. Lorenzo died between May 19 and November 5, 1517; *ibid.*, p. 91, n. 8.

<sup>4</sup> This folio is dated ca. 1493-94; see Carlo Pedretti, ed., *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci: Compiled and Edited from the Original Manuscripts by Jean Paul Richter*, 2 vols. (University of California Press, 1977), II, 216. A color photograph appears in the facsimile edition, *Il Codice Atlantico di Leonardo da Vinci*, 12 vols. (Florence, 1973-74), VII, plate 568.

two keyboards. Leonardo's extraordinary care with this drawing is evident in that he gives measurements of two of the instrument's largest dimensions. The first, the vertical rise of the case, spans "14 *once*." The second is that of the keyboard manuals and tangent mechanisms assembly; its "1/3 *di braccio*" brings the total height of the instrument to slightly less than a meter. The presence of the bow, or *archetto*, in a horizontal position with no corresponding disposition, together with a horizontal disposition without a corresponding *archetto*, suggests that this instrument had two *archetti* and two dispositions. The two keyboards, one above and slightly behind the other, confirm this observation. A set of rods serves as connecting devices between the keys of the manual and the tangent mechanisms, which in turn bring the strings into contact with the *archetto*. Because of its size and two dispositions (not to mention its weight), it seems probable that Leonardo designed this model as a stationary instrument and not one to be carried in procession.

In addition to Winternitz's enlightening discussion of the details of construction and operation of the musical instruments in the sketches, one also cannot fail to notice his impressive command of Renaissance iconography. For example, in illustrating the social, mythological, and allegorical contexts of the *lira da braccio*, Winternitz furnishes illustrations from a plethora of paintings, woodcuts, sculptures, and little-known intarsias from Leonardo's time that is nothing short of lavish. (The publisher merits praise for including 178 illustrations in the text and for presenting them in a pleasing, large format.) As further examples, in a discussion of Leonardo's silver lyre in the shape of a horse's skull, the author traverses with ease such wide-ranging terrain as, on the one hand, the fascination with skulls in contemporary Renaissance paintings, and on the other, Leonardo's preoccupation with horses in preparation for his equestrian monument of Francesco Sforza. Nearly four centuries elapsed after Leonardo's death before scholars began to reevaluate his relationship with music and musicians. The cornerstone of this field of inquiry was laid only in the last two decades and done so almost exclusively by Winternitz. His masterly synthesis of his subject matter needs no further comment. It is certain to become a landmark in the literature dealing with one of the most creative geniuses the world has ever known.

JONATHAN COUCHMAN

DUFAY. By *David Fallows*. London: J. M. Dent, 1982.

As the first extended study of Dufay's life and music in the English language, this book is indeed welcome. The author admits to having done very little original source research, but that is no great drawback in what is essentially an introductory work relying for the most part on prior achieve-