

1. 20 January and 17 February Hoole, Chester. Music by Johann Pachelbel and his German predecessors. Tutor: Roger Wilkes.

Report on the NWEMF workshop on 20 January, 2007

On Saturday, 20 January, about thirty NWEMF members and other early music enthusiasts met at Hoole Community Centre in Chester for a workshop on the sacred choral music of Johann

Pachelbel (1653-1706) and a few of his German predecessors. This was the first of two workshops commemorating the 300th anniversary of Pachelbel's death (an anniversary evidently ignored last year by Radio 3 and early music circles!), the second workshop being on 17 February and both days being organised and directed by Roger Wilkes.

The weather was cold, but fine and bright, with little sign of the extremely strong winds which the whole country had experienced two days earlier, and journeys to the venue appeared to have been trouble-free! This was only the second NWEMF workshop that I had attended and I was impressed, as at the first one, by the warmth and enthusiasm of all the people there. We all just fitted neatly into the room to which we had been assigned! - and everyone looked forward very much to enjoying the day.

Our balance of forces seemed good, with an almost equal number of sopranos and altos and reasonably strong tenor and bass sections, some recorder players, and a bassoonist and spinet player to provide the continuo parts. The spinet was made by John Morley in London in about 1930 and is one of the early musical instruments available for loan through NWEMF. It was brought to the Hoole Community Centre for the day by Anne Clements (who takes charge of all the NWEMF instruments, I believe) and I was so thrilled to be asked to play it whenever a continuo part was required — a tremendous treat, especially as my bass line was doubled by a most beautiful bassoon sound right behind me! Wonderful.

We began and ended the day with Pachelbel's four-part *Magnificat* in D Major, which required recorders and continuo, as well as a four-part choir. This is one of Pachelbel's several *Magnificat* settings for the protestant church, I believe, and is such a lovely combination of clear chordal and contrapuntal writing. With excellent direction and encouragement from Roger, we managed the time changes from 4/4 to 3/2 fairly well! - and worked quite hard at achieving effective balance, musical phrasing and good

German diction. (One of our group spoke German extremely well and advised everyone on the correct pronunciation.) It was interesting to notice that a small part of this Magnificat sounds quite like J. S. Bach, showing Pachelbel's influence on Bach.

Between our performances of the Magnificat, we attempted two of Pachelbel's double-choir motets - *Jauchzet dem Herrn* and *Singet dem Herrlein neues Lied* - and also a motet by Meichior Franck, who was one of Pachelbel's German predecessors. The Franck had a time change from duple to triple time and back and some synchopation and hemiolas, all of which were fun to perform, and the Pachelbel motets were particularly lovely for being antiphonal, I thought.

This was such a thoroughly enjoyable day and I thank Roger very much for being so inspiring and, of course, I am very sorry not to be able to attend the second of these two workshops.

Janey Katovsky

17 February

As a newcomer to the NWEMF scene I write my account of the second workshop with some diffidence. I have played in recorder consorts with friends for many years but my main musical activity has always been singing madrigals and choral music. Making music as a recorder player with a group of very competent singers was a new and delightful experience and I was made very welcome.

There were about 24 voices and only 3 recorder players though one singer played her viol for one item. The combination worked well and Roger's direction was very clear and informative.

We began with *Machet die Tore Weit* by Hammerschmidt. It was my first encounter with Hammerschmidt who is not well known in this country but I believe his music is played a good deal in his native Austria. Certainly we found it very well worth while.

Pachelbel came next - *Gott is unsere Zuversicht* - and a lot of attention was given to the detail here including the pronunciation of the German. We really worked hard at this item.

That did not leave a great deal of time for the Schein, *Die mit Tränen Säen* (perhaps we may return to this?). The early section was very tricky so Roger concentrated on the middle section.

All in all this was a most rewarding day and an experience I hope to repeat. Thank you Roger very much for your expertise and to all the participants who shared in this excellent day.

Beth Lloyd