

Between the »Revival of Ancient Artworks in the Correct Style« and the »Instrumentenfrage«. The Basel Collection of Musical Instruments between Musical Practice and Museum

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Abstract

Since its formation in the middle of the 19th century, the collection of historical musical instruments in Basel has been connected with the interest in music of former times that began to flourish at the same time, and continues to be so today because of the proximity to the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis – University for Early Music. The resulting tensions between practical-musical ideals and museal goals define the character of the collection to a certain extent. At the same time this blurring of boundaries offers unique scope for dealing with a collection that has to be interpreted afresh time and again.

Zwischen »stilgerechter Wiederbelebung alter Kunstwerke« und »Instrumentenfrage«. Die Basler Instrumentensammlung zwischen Musikpraxis und Museum

Die Basler Musikinstrumentensammlung ist seit ihrer Entstehung in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts in besonderem Maße mit dem parallel erwachenden Interesse an Musik früherer Zeiten verbunden, und sie ist es durch die unmittelbare Nähe zur Schola Cantorum Basiliensis – Hochschule für Alte Musik bis heute. Die sich daraus ergebenden Spannungen zwischen einerseits praktisch-musikalischen und andererseits musealen Anforderungen bestimmen ein Stück weit den Charakter der Sammlung. Zugleich bietet dies aber auch einen einmaligen Spielraum für den Umgang mit originalen Musikinstrumenten, der immer wieder neu interpretiert werden muss.

The Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (SCB) – still active today – was founded in 1933, the very first institution of its kind.¹ This school for Early Music can be seen as an offspring of the Basler Kammerorchester, a then-fairly new chamber orchestra that had been established by Paul Sacher (1906–1999) some years earlier, who was also one of the founders of the SCB. The hallmark of the Basler Kammerorchester was its interest in performing and discovering »Neue« as well as »Alte« Music side by side (at the time, »Early Music« was understood as the

music of the preclassical era without further differentiation). One of the co-founders of the SCB, Ina Lohr (1903–1983),² retrospectively described the idea of creating a school specialized in Early Music as a direct result of the problems which arose from the performance of Early Music (e.g. questions about instrumentation or stylistic aspects like ornamentation, tempo, etc.).³ The new school opened with an ambitious name and ambitious program: »Schola Cantorum Basiliensis – Lehr- & Forschungsinstitut für alte Musik«. The name seems to make rather problematic reference to the older Schola

1 Wulf Arlt: Zur Idee und zur Geschichte eines »Lehr- und Forschungsinstitutes für alte Musik« in den Jahren 1933 bis 1970. In: Alte Musik – Praxis und Reflexion (Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis, Sonderband zum 50. Jubiläum der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis). Ed. by Peter Reidemeister, Veronika Gutmann. Winterthur 1983, pp. 29–76. – Martin Kirnbauer: Paul Sacher und die alte Musik. In: Paul Sacher – Facetten einer Musikerpersönlichkeit (Publikationen der Paul Sacher Stiftung 11). Ed. by Ulrich Mosch. Mainz 2006, pp. 25–56. – Martin Kirnbauer: »Tout le monde connaît la Schola« – eine Spurensuche zur Vorgeschichte der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. In: Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis 32, 2008, pp. 145–157.

2 Cf. Anne Smith: Einführung zum Projekt »Ina Lohr«, URL: <http://www.rimab.ch/content/forschungsprojekte/projekt-ina-lohr> [21.10.2017].

3 »Lieber Paul, sofern ich mich erinnere, entstand die Idee für eine Schule, die ausschliesslich alte Musik als Gegenstand haben würde, aus den Problemen, die sich beim Aufbau der Programme für das BKO immer neu stellten.« (Undated letter from Ina Lohr to Paul Sacher from after 1973; Paul Sacher Stiftung Basel (PSS), Nachlass Lohr IL 2-2, 1. – Cf. Ina Lohr: Zur Programmgestaltung. In: Das Basler Kammerorchester (Kammerchor und Kammerorchester) unter Leitung von Paul Sacher – 1926–1951 (Alte und Neue Musik 1). Zürich 1952, p. 27).

Cantorum in Paris, devoted among other things to catholic church music. Yet the young founders in Basel chose the name as a pragmatic abbreviation for »Schola Cantorum Sonatorumque Basiliensis« in order to emphasize the important aspect of instrumental music in the program as well.⁴

Despite the new school's ambitious name the reality was much more modest to begin with: a four-room flat was rented in Basel, and the activities of the school consisted in music lessons (in singing, recorder, viol, lute, etc., and strikingly, the first professional diploma awarded was that of »Leiterin von Sing- und Spielgruppen und Lehrerin für Hausmusik«).⁵

The major problem for the new school was to find instruments – still a difficult task in 1933. Only a few people, such as Arnold Dolmetsch (1858-1940) in Great Britain or Peter Harlan (1898-1966) in Germany, were building recorders or viols – and a newly built harpsichord was a very expensive instrument at the time. This problem was more than a practical one, as can be seen in a concept paper delivered by the Schola's new director, Paul Sacher, at the very first press conference of the SCB:

»Es ist für jeden Künstler, der sich ernstlich mit alter Musik beschäftigt, wohl selbstverständlich, daß ohne historische Instrumente oder gute Neukonstruktionen eine sinnvolle und damit stilgerechte Wiederbelebung alter Kunstwerke unmöglich ist. Stil bedeutet ja – das muß wiederholt werden – nicht eine wissenschaftliche oder gar philologische Angelegenheit, sondern Wesensbestandteil aller Kunst. Die Instrumentenfrage steht für uns daher durchaus im Vordergrund [...].«⁶

(It is surely taken for granted by every artist who seriously

concerns themselves with Early Music that it is impossible to revive any ancient artworks in a sensible and thus correct style without historical instruments or good reconstructions. Style – and this must be reiterated – is not a scholarly or even a philological matter, but the essence of all art. The »Instrumentenfrage« [i.e. the problem of instruments] is thus certainly a priority for us.)

In 1934 this statement was highly programmatic, and the two keywords emphasized by Sacher (»stilgerechte Wiederbelebung alter Kunstwerke« and »Instrumentenfrage« – in a sense, the discussion of software and hardware) echoed several aesthetic debates of the Early Music revival from the beginning of the 20th century (such as the heated debate concerning the »Cembalofrage« – see below). In the following, I take a closer look at this context and the situation in Basel, a study that calls attention to the collection of musical instruments of the Historical Museum Basel, which played a crucial role in this story.

The predecessor of the Historical Museum in Basel was founded in 1856 after the model of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg. In Basel, the new museum was called »Mittelalterliche Sammlung« (medieval collection), geared towards a cultural and historical perspective.⁷ Especially its second curator, Moriz Heyne (1837-1906), was interested in musical instruments and announced, as early as 1871, a plan for the tailored presentation of musical instruments, which was realized in 1878:

»[...] so ward es uns möglich, die neu eingerichtete Abtheilung mit etwa 40 musicalischen Instrumenten zu eröffnen, die zum Theil von hohem Alter und durchweg, worauf es bei solchen Alterthümern ankommt, noch practisch benutzbar sind, sodaß sie einen nicht unwichtigen Beitrag zur Geschichte der Musik und der Entwicklung ihrer Instrumente abgeben.«⁸

4 Kirnbauer 2008 (note 1), pp. 148-149.

5 Cf. the hectographed first programme at the SCB, offering the following courses: »Cantus Gregorianus, Gesang, Blockflöten, Geigen in alten Mensuren, Armviolen, Gamba, Lauten (Gitarre), Orgel, Cembalo, Analyse mit Beispielen, Generalbass, Bibliographie der Neuausgaben, Ensemble« (Archive of the SCB); and the interview with some of the first students in Martina Wohlthat: »Ja, das war eigentlich der Hauptinhalt von meinem Leben ...«. Die Institutsgeschichte der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis im Spiegel der Erinnerungen ehemaliger Lehrkräfte. In: Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis 32, 2008, pp. 175-192, esp. pp. 176-181.

6 Paul Sacher: Rede anlässlich der ersten Pressekonferenz der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (3. Februar 1934). In: Paul Sacher: Reden und Aufsätze. Zürich 1986, pp. 40-44, esp. pp. 41-42. – Cf. Martin Kirnbauer: Die »Instrumentenfrage« der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis. In: Tonkunst macht Schule. 150 Jahre Musik-Akademie Basel 1867-2017. Ed. by Martina Wohlthat. Basel 2017, pp. 309-317, esp. p. 309.

7 Martin Kirnbauer: Die Viola da gamba von Joachim Tielke, Hamburg um 1704 (Basler Kostbarkeiten 35). Basel 2014, pp. 9-11. – Cf. Walter Nef: Die Basler Musikinstrumentensammlung. In: Das Basler Kammerorchester (Kammerchor und Kammerorchester) unter Leitung von Paul Sacher – 1926-1976 (Alte und Neue Musik 2). Ed. by Veronika Gutmann. Zürich and Freiburg (Breisgau) 1977, pp. 161-185, esp. pp. 163-165.

8 Moriz Heyne: Bericht der Commission für die mittelalterliche Sammlung. In: Geschichte der Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Guten und Gemeinnützigen. Hundertundzweites Jahr 1878. Basel 1879, pp. 254-257, esp. pp. 255-256; quoted also by Nef 1977 (note 7), p. 164.

(so it became possible to open the newly installed department with circa 40 musical instruments, some of them very old, and – most importantly – all still usable, so that they are a significant foundation for a history of music and the development of musical instruments.)

The asserted »significant foundation for a history of music and the development of musical instruments« is to be taken literally: in the summer term of 1878, Moriz Heyne delivered a university lecture with the title »Erklärung ausgewählter Stücke der mittelalterlichen Sammlung, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Geschichte der musicalischen Instrumente in den deutschen Ländern, Freitag von 3-4 Uhr, in den Räumen der Sammlung, publice« (Explanation of selected objects from the Medieval Collection, with special emphasis on the history of musical instruments in German countries, on Fridays from 3 to 4 pm, in the collection, open to the public).⁹ This is perhaps the first documented university lecture devoted to organology, held side by side with the lectures of Jacob Burckhardt and Friedrich Nietzsche at the University of Basel (fig. 1).

The interest in historical instruments was not limited to verbal explanations: in 1882, a first »Historical Concert« was organized in order to celebrate the museum's 25th anniversary, in which two keyboard instruments from the collection were used (an anonymous harpsichord and a spinet by Johann Heinrich Silbermann).¹⁰ In 1883, Heyne left Basel to take up a professorship in Göttingen, but the interest in musical instruments continued in Basel. This is documented in a second »Historical music performance with the use of musical instruments from the Historic Museum« in 1902 (fig. 2).

Here a wider range of musical instruments from the collection was used (harpsichord, spinet, clavichord, viola da gamba, viola d'amore) – and a later concert even made use of a corネット.¹¹ These concerts are owed to Karl Nef (1873–1935),

⁹ Verzeichnis der Vorlesungen an der Universität Basel im Sommer-Semester 1878, Basel 1878, p. 7. In the »Jahresbericht« (mentioned above) Heyne adds that the »Vorlesung über die Entwicklung der musicalischen Instrumente im deutschen Mittelalter und bis zum 18. Jahrhundert« at the museum's newly established »Musiksaal« was attended by 14 students until the end of term. Heyne 1879 (note 8), p. 256.

¹⁰ Nef 1977 (note 7), pp. 166–168. – Veronika Gutmann: Die Pflege alter Musik in Basel im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert – Zur Vorgeschichte der »Freunde alter Musik in Basel«. In: Alte Musik – Konzert und Rezeption. Sonderband der Reihe »Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis« zum 50. Jubiläum des Vereins »Freunde alter Musik in Basel«. Ed. by Veronika Gutmann. Winterthur 1992, pp. 15–36, esp. pp. 19–20.

one of the now forgotten pioneers of organology. Nef had studied musicology in Leipzig and came to Basel in 1897, where he established musicology as an academic discipline at the university. He was interested in organology and was affiliated to the musical instrument collection of the museum, at which he served as a collaborator and consultant from 1902 onwards and for which he published a pioneering, detailed catalogue in 1906.¹² Indeed, it was Nef who had arranged for the Leipzig instrument maker Hermann Seyffahrt to come to Basel in order to repair several instruments over a period of six weeks (keyboards, trombe marina and other stringed instruments, as well as a viol). These repairs made the concert of 1902 possible (and its revenues helped to finance Seyffahrt's work – an interesting business model).¹³

Karl Nef is one of the patrons of Early Music who has received little attention so far. For example, he was engaged in the debate concerning the so called »Cembalofrage«.¹⁴ This entailed a series of articles between Nef and Richard Buchmayer (1856–1934) on the question which instrument – the modern piano or the harpsichord – was appropriate for the performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's keyboard music.¹⁵ Nef argued in favor of the harpsichord – and he found an important supporter in Wanda Landowska (1879–1959). Nef invited her to give concerts in Basel, e.g. during the famous

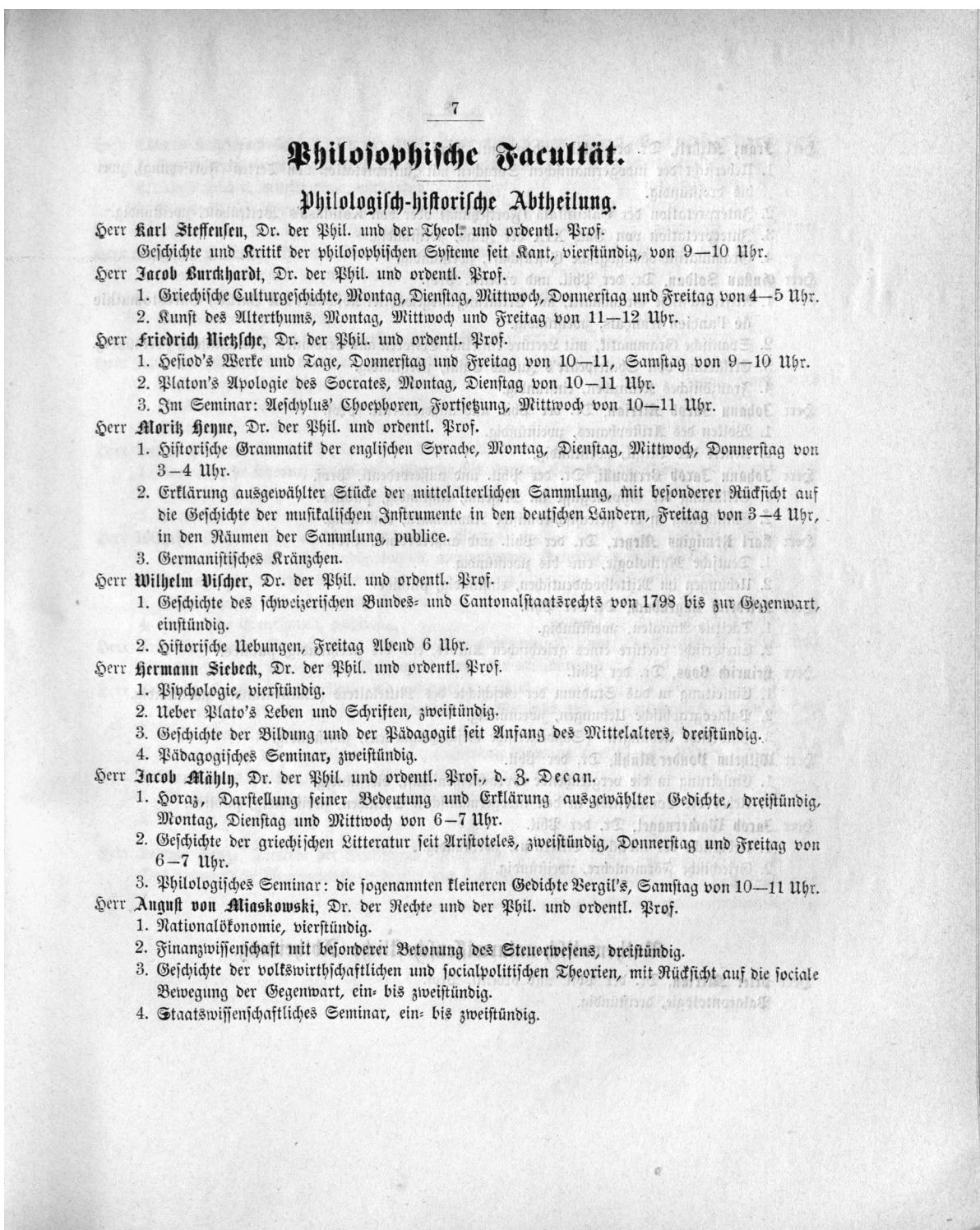
¹¹ »Historische Musikaufführung mit Benützung von Instrumenten aus dem Historischen Museum« (program in the archive of the Historisches Museum Basel). – Cf. Gutmann 1992 (note 10), pp. 21–22.

¹² Nef 1977 (note 7), p. 169. – Gutmann 1992 (note 10), p. 23. – Karl Nef: Historisches Museum Basel, Katalog No. IV. Musikinstrumente. Basel 1906 (published also as part of the Festschrift zum Zweiten Kongress der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft, Basel 1906).

¹³ Cf. Kirnbauer 2014 (note 7), pp. 31–32.

¹⁴ Dominik Sackmann: Zwei Beiträge zur Geschichte der Basler Bach-Rezeption. In: Nähe aus Distanz. Bach-Rezeption in der Schweiz (Veröffentlichungen des Forschungsprojekts »Musik in Zürich – Zürich in der Musikgeschichte« an der Universität Zürich). Ed. by Urs Fischer, Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, Laurenz Lütteken. Winterthur 2005, pp. 42–73, esp. pp. 54–56. – Martin Kirnbauer: »aufs eindrücklichste für das Cembalo werben« – Wanda Landowska in Basel. In: Notenlese. Musikalische Aufführungspraxis des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts in Basel. Ed. by Martina Wohlthat. Basel 2013, pp. 87–107, esp. pp. 87–88.

¹⁵ Cf. the series of articles by Karl Nef: Clavicymbel und Clavichord. In: Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters 10, 1903, pp. 19–27. – Richard Buchmayer: Cembalo oder Pianoforte? In: Bach-Jahrbuch. Ed. by Neue Bachgesellschaft. Berlin 1908, pp. 64–93. – Karl Nef: Zur Cembalofrage. In: Zeitschrift der Internationale Musikgesellschaft 10/8, 1909, pp. 236–237. – Richard Buchmayer: Zur Cembalofrage. In: Zeitschrift der Internationale Musikgesellschaft 10/9, 1909, pp. 278–280. – Cf. Kirnbauer 2013 (note 14), p. 88.



1 Verzeichnis der Vorlesungen an der Universität Basel im Sommer-Semester 1878, Basel 1878, p. 7 (Announcement of the perhaps first university lecture devoted to organology by Prof. Dr. Moritz Heyne, summer term 1878). University of Basel (photo M. Kirnbauer)

Historische Musikaufführung

mit Benützung von Instrumenten aus dem Historischen Museum.

Sonntag, den 7. Dezember 1902, vormittags 11 Uhr,
im großen Saale der Bärenzunft, Freiestraße 34, Basel,

Sel. Frieda Siegrist (Sopran), Sr. Dr. Moosberr-Engels (Cembalo, Clavichord), Sr. Walter-Strauß (Cembalo), Hh. R. Degen (Tenor), H. Weigel (Canto), Prof. A. Bertholet (Violino), Vermeer (Viola d'amore), E. Braun (Viola da Gamba), Max Sarasin (Violoncello).

Programm:

- 1) Sinfonia und Arie „Gehe aus auf die Landstraßen,” für Tenor,
 Violen und Cembalo 1657. J. R. Ahle.
 2) Sarabande für Clavichord J. G. Händel.
 3) 2 Lieder für Sopran mit Laute.
 a) „Viel Hinterlist“ aus A. Schlicks „Tabulaturen etlicher Lobgesang etc.“ 1512.
 b) „Tant que vivray“ aus Attaignants Sammlung von Lautenstücken, Paris 1529.
 4) Praeludium und Fuge im Eis-dur aus dem „Wohltemperirten
 Clavier“ (Cembalo) J. S. Bach.
 5) 3 Säge (Adagio, Allegro, Adagio) aus der Sonata für Viola
 da Gamba und Cembalo concertato in C-dur (ca. 1705) G. G. Händel.
 6) Sonatensatz für 2 Cembali Wilh. Friedemann Bach.
 7) Drei Lieder für Tenor und Cembalo aus Sperontes „Singender
 Muse an der Pleiße“ 1747.
 a) Ihr Grilien weicht.
 b) Liebster Engel zweifle nicht.
 c) Enster ist mein Element.
 8) Andante und Menuett für Viola d'amore 1770 Milandee.
 9) Zwei Lieder für Sopran, Violine und Cembalo aus dem
 „Musikalischen Zeitvertreib.“ Frankfurt und Leipzig 1740.
 a) Das gesraubte Band.
 b) Die Gemügsamkeit.
 10) Zwei Lieder von Goethe in Kompositionen von Zeitgenossen. Für Sopran.
 a) Nuber allen Gipfeln E. S. Zepter 1814.
 b) Heidentöslein J. S. Reichardt, 1794.
 11) Sinfonia für zwei Violinen, Viola da Gamba und Cembalo 1667
 Joh. Rosenmüller.

Kassaz und Saaleröffnung 8.45 Uhr. Anfang 11 Uhr.

Preis des Platzes 2 Fr. 50.

Dieses Programm dient als Eintrittskarte.

second congress of the Internationale Musikgesellschaft in 1906, organized by Nef, or again in 1909.¹⁶ Nef reported in the local newspaper (note the emphasis on sound in the argument made here):

»Der Streit ums Klavizimbel dürfte am Freitag Abend hier zu seinen Gunsten entschieden worden sein. [...] Das Wesentliche, die Hauptsache ist, dass man einmal erfährt, wie die Kompositionen von Bach geklungen haben, das muss doch die Grundlage für alles weitere bilden – und das große Verdienst von Frau Landowska ist es, dass sie es uns in meisterhafter Weise zeigte.«¹⁷

(The discussion about the harpsichord can be seen to have been solved in its favor last Friday. [...] The most important aspect is that one can hear what Bach's music might have sounded like, which is after all the foundation for all which follows; and it is the great merit of Mrs. Landowska that she has demonstrated this point to us in such masterly fashion.)

It is reported that, during this visit, Landowska was allowed to play the instruments of the museum as well – she was armed with several tools which she kept in her bag in order to bring the instruments into playable condition if necessary.¹⁸ In 1919, she was invited to give a master class at the conservatoire once again, and several keyboard instruments from the museum were placed at her disposal: two clavichords (fretted and unfretted) and a fortepiano by the siblings Stein, Vienna 1800. The harpsichord she brought with her, which was used for the masterclass, was a modern instrument by Pleyel designed on the basis of her own plans.¹⁹

16 Kirnbauer 2013 (note 14), pp. 89–92. – Cf. Martin Kirnbauer: A »Prelude« to the IMS. In: The History of the IMS (1927–2017). Ed. by Dorothea Baumann, Dinko Fabris. Kassel 2017, pp. 11–19, esp. p. 13.

17 In: Basler Nachrichten, 2. März 1909 (Beilage zu Nr. 59). – See Kirnbauer 2013 (note 14), pp. 91–92.

18 »Am selben späteren Morgen hatte ich die Spielerin [= W. Landowska] in ihrem Hotel abzuholen, um sie in die damals noch in der Barfüßerkirche aufgestellte Sammlung alter Instrumente zu bringen. Ich hatte alle Mühe, die angstvollen und teilweise schon sehr drohenden Blicke des dortigen Aufsehers zu beschwichtigen, als er gewahr werden musste, wie die kühne Besucherin aus den unergründlichen Tiefen ihres besagten Pelzmantels ein Werkzeug nach dem anderen emporholte und an die ihr gerade zusagenden Instrumente legte, um sie im Nu für sich benutzbar zu machen; mir blieb nur restlose Bewunderung übrig für die Unmittelbarkeit und Treffsicherheit, mit der sie zu einem jeden derselben ein förmlich persönliches Verhältnis zu gewinnen verstand.« Alfred Bertholet: Erinnerungen eines Musikfreundes. Ein Vortrag gehalten in der Schweizerischen Musikforschenden Gesellschaft Ortsgruppe Basel. Basel 1950, pp. 18–19.

Karl Nef's teaching was likewise important because several of his young students (including Paul Sacher, August Wenzinger, or Arnold Geering) were to found the Schola in 1933. It is not an overstatement to claim that Nef's interest in historical musical instruments and the »Collegium Musicum«, a student ensemble he had established with the purpose of transforming the subject matter of his teaching into sound, directly influenced the idea of founding a school for Early Music. Moreover, the museum's instrument collection was housed in the same building as the musicology department – a perhaps not unimportant detail.²⁰ The viol player August Wenzinger (1905–1996), who had been crucial for the reestablishment of the viol, later recalled that his first encounter with a historic viola da gamba had taken place in a class with Nef, when Nef had asked the cellist Wenzinger to demonstrate a viol from the collection:²¹

»1924 nahm ich als Altphilologe und für die neue Musik begeisterter Cellist an einem Seminar des Basler Musikwissenschaftlers Karl Nef teil. Er bat mich, seinen Studenten die Viola da gamba der Instrumentensammlung des Museums vorzuführen, die schon mein früherer Cellolehrer Willy Treichler in Passionsaufführungen gespielt hatte. Ich machte mich notdürftig mit dem Instrument vertraut und spielte es, wie alle damaligen Gambisten nach Celloweise ohne Bünde und mit Cellobogen. Wir nannten das später »Cellamba«.«

(As a student of classics and an enthusiastic cello player, I attended a seminar run by the musicologist Karl Nef in 1924. He asked me to demonstrate to his students the viola da gamba owned by the museum's instrument collection, which was played by my cello teacher Willy Treichler in performances of Bach's passions. I tried to become roughly familiar with the instrument and then I played it like a cello without frets and with a cello bow, as all viol players at that time did. Later we called this »Cellamba«.)

19 Kirnbauer 2013 (note 14), pp. 95–97.

20 Nef 1977 (note 7), pp. 173–174. The collection was housed at the Segerhof am Blumenrain from 1926 to 1934, the musicological seminar in the neighboring »little« Segerhof.

21 August Wenzinger: Erinnerungen an die Anfänge der Wiederbelebung alter Musik in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren. In: Historische Aufführungspraxis im heutigen Musikleben. Konferenzbericht der XVII. Wissenschaftlichen Arbeitstagung Michaelstein, 8.–11. Juni 1989, Teil 2 (Studien zur Aufführungspraxis und Interpretation der Musik des 18. Jahrhunderts 43). Michaelstein, Blankenburg 1992, pp. 29–33, esp. p. 31. – Cf. Kirnbauer 2014 (note 7), pp. 34–36.

Furthermore, Nef also helped to solve the »Instrumentenfrage« stressed by Paul Sacher in the first press conference in 1933 (see above). The Swiss merchant Otto Lobeck (1867–1951), one of Nef's cousins, had collected musical instruments in Herisau since the beginning of the 20th century.²² Influenced by the Swiss collector Heinrich Schumacher (1858–1923) in Lucerne he gathered more than 400 instruments, a sort of ›Noah's Ark‹ collection with specimens of every type of instrument – and he was interested in keeping his instruments in working order if possible:²³

»Musikinstrumente sind nicht zum Anschauen da wie Bilder oder Skulpturen, sondern zum Spielen. Ihr Leben ist Klang. Wer sie zu behandeln weiß, kann sie zum Leben erwecken. Dazu müssen sie in einem guten Zustand sein, und das war immer eine Hauptsorge ihres Besitzers. Sammeln hieß für ihn nicht nur erwerben, sondern auch erhalten.«²⁴

(Musical instruments are not designed to be looked at like paintings or sculptures, but to be played. Their life is sound. Those who know how to handle them can awake them to life. In order to do so, they have to be in good condition, and this was always their owner's main concern. To him, collecting means not only to acquire, but also to maintain.)

Nef arranged for Lobeck to loan a major part of his collection – over 300 instruments – to the SCB in 1935. This generous act was fueled by a visit of some of the Schola's young teachers to Herisau, where they played on some of Lobeck's instruments – a practical demonstration which convinced the collector to lend his collection, because he loved to hear the original instruments. And this possibility was offered by the Schola, which wanted to use his instruments in concerts and for teaching.²⁵ The mutual benefit of this transaction is documented, for example, in the list of the instruments used in the SCB's first concerts in the summer of 1934, including

²² Walter Nef: Die Musikinstrumentensammlung Otto Lobeck. In: *Alte Musik – Praxis und Reflexion* (Sonderband der Reihe »Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis« zum 50. Jubiläum der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis). Ed. by Peter Reidemeister, Veronika Gutmann. Winterthur 1983, pp. 91–106.

²³ Nef 1977 (note 7), pp. 103–104.

²⁴ Walter Nef: Die Musikinstrumentensammlung Otto Lobeck. Otto Lobeck in Herisau zum 80. Geburtstag. In: *Basler Nachrichten*, 5. Sept. 1947, quoted in: Arlt 1983 (note 1), p. 56.

²⁵ Cf. Nef 1977 (note 7), pp. 93–94.

(besides modern copies) an ivory recorder and two viols from Lobeck's collection as well as a discant viol owned by the museum (fig. 3).²⁶

This approach leads to the second point mentioned by Sacher, the »stilgerechte Wiederbelebung alter Kunstwerke«. This phrase makes covert reference to a discussion between Sacher and the musicologist Jacques Handschin (1886–1955) which had taken place a few years earlier. Handschin was some years older than the founders of the Schola and had already had a respectable career as an organ professor in St. Petersburg, before he came to Basel in 1920 and embarked upon a second career as musicologist there (delivering his dissertation one year later, in 1921, and his habilitation in 1924, becoming successor to Karl Nef as full professor for musicology in 1935).²⁷ In 1930, Handschin was asked by Sacher to write a statement in favor of the harpsichord (because Sacher wanted to raise money in order to acquire an expensive instrument by Pleyel for his Basler Kammerorchester). Handschin, however, refused with the following argument:

»Aber indem ich als Musiker dem Cembaloklang mit begehrender Sympathie gegenüberstehe, indem ich seine Verwendung als Historiker begrüsse, würde ich doch nicht so weit gehen, die Verwendung dem Interpreten zur Vorschrift zu machen. Ich möchte hier ein wenig Relativist sein und die Sache in letzter Instanz dem künstlerischen Gewissen zur Entscheidung überlassen. Gewiss, die Aufführungen alter Musik im 19. Jahrh. ohne Cembalo waren weniger stilecht als die unsern; aber objektiverweise glaube ich, dass ›stilecht‹ nicht das einzige Kriterium ist, welches bei der Interpretation in Frage kommt.«²⁸

(Yet even though, as a musician, I have great sympathy for the sound of the harpsichord, and – as a historian – appreciate its use, I would not go so far as to prescribe it for performers. In this matter, I would like to be a bit of a relativist and leave the matter, in the end, to the decision of the artistic conscience. Of course, the 19th-century performances of Early Music without a harpsichord were less

²⁶ Cf. Arlt 1983 (note 1), p. 56.

²⁷ See the introduction in Jeanna Kniazeva (Ed.): *Jacques Handschin in Russland. Die neu aufgefundenen Texte (Resonanzen – Basler Publikationen zur Älteren und Neueren Musik 1)*. Basel 2011, pp. 17–244.

²⁸ Handschin in a letter to Sacher, 27 August 1930 (PSS, Korrespondenz P. Sacher, Ordner Fr-Hol bis 31. Dezember 1931). – Kirnbauer 2008 (note 1), pp. 155–156.



3 Concert of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis with several original instruments from Lobeck's collection (undated, perhaps 1935) with the caption: »Die Schola Cantorum Basiliensis konzertiert auf alten Instrumenten. Das kleine Streichinstrument ist eine Rebec, dahinter die Musetten-Flöten und davor eine Kniegeige, dazu Geige, Laute.« (The Schola Cantorum Basiliensis gives a concert with old instruments. The small string instrument is a »Rebec«, behind this are the »Musetten-Flöten« and in front a »Kniegeige«, supplemented by violin and lute). Archive of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (photo Eidenbenz)

»stilecht« [stylistically correct] than ours; but objectively, I believe that »stylistically correct« is not the only criterion which needs to be considered in performance.)

It was this critical comment concerning the use of historical instruments to which Sacher was responding at the SCB press conference. As we know today, Handschin's critical objection was not heard – and the history of Early Music was dominated by the idea of a »historical performance practice« and the use of so-called »original« instruments.

However, playing original instruments caused many problems. There was not only the problem of maintaining the instruments – for there was then a lack of specialized instru-

ment makers or restorers in Basel.²⁹ Only in 1955 did a specialist for keyboard instruments, Martin Scholz (1911-1985), begin to work in Basel, later joined by other makers based in Basel who also concentrated on historical instruments (e.g. Rainer Egger for brass instruments, Bernhard Fleig for organs, Georg Senn for keyboards etc.). According to Walter Nef (1910-2006), vice director of the SCB, a second big problem was caused by the pitch of the original instruments:

»Dazu kam, daß bei Gründung der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis die sogenannte tiefe Stimmung eingeführt wurde,

²⁹ Lobeck had commissioned the string instrument maker Fritz Sprenger (1879-1936) and the organ builder August Forster (1877-1953).

die einheitlich – aus praktischen Gründen – auf einen temperierten Halbton unter dem modernen Kammerton festgesetzt worden war.* Nur Instrumente in dieser tiefen Stimmung waren verwendbar, und das machte die Auswahl nochmals enger.*

*Der Kammerton betrug damals 435 Hz, der tiefere Stimmton der Schola Cantorum also ca. 410 Hz. Die kleine Erhöhung des Kammertons auf 440 Hz, die 1939 an der internationalen Stimmtonkonferenz in London beschlossen war, zwang auch die Schola Cantorum, mit ihrer tieferen Stimmung um das gleiche Intervall auf ca. 415 Hz hinaufzugehen. Der Stimmton mußte aber, mit Rücksicht auf alte Instrumente in fester Stimmung, besonders in den Konzerten etwas flexibel gehalten werden.³⁰

(Moreover, the so-called low pitch had been introduced at the foundation of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, which – for practical reasons – had been set at an equal semitone below the modern standard pitch.* Only instruments in this low pitch could be used and this limited the choice even further.

*The »Kammerton« was then 435 Hz, the lower pitch of the Schola Cantorum thus c. 410 Hz. The small-scale sharpening of the concert pitch to 440 Hz, a decision made by the international pitch conference in London 1939, in turn forced the Schola to rise its lower pitch by the same interval to c. 415 Hz. However, pitch needed to be handled flexibly in order to make allowances for the old instruments with fixed pitch, especially in concerts.)

As far as I know, the history of »A 415« as a modern – and ahistorical – standard pitch for Early Music is still to be written, but perhaps the Schola helped to establish it.³¹

In 1953 Sacher bought the collection from Lobeck's heirs, but donated it to the Historical Museum Basel three years later under two conditions: first, to exhibit the collection together with the museum's instruments; this condition was a trick in order to force the government to open a proper museum, the »Musikinstrumenten-Sammlung«, which was opened in 1957 and which was located on the Schola's campus.³² This lead to a stronger connection between the museum's instrument collection and the Schola, even more so

30 Nef 1983 (note 22), p. 93.

31 An interesting note can be found in the »Vorstandsprotokoll« of the SCB's board meeting on 11 December 1934 (PSS): it was reported that the local music store Hug was willing to give a 20% discount on a second recorder at »low pitch« which would be matched by a grant of 20-30% by the school, in order to encourage the establishment of »low pitch« at the SCB; I am grateful to Anne Smith for sharing this document.

32 Historisches Museum Basel, Jahresbericht 1957, Basel 1959, pp. 15-16. – Walter Nef: Das neue Musikinstrumenten-Museum. In: Musik-Akademie der Stadt Basel 90. Jahresbericht 1956/57, Basel 1957, pp. 33-39.

when Walter Nef was not only vice director of the Schola but also acted as custodian of the museum's collection (a similar connection existed in the case of Veronika Gutmann, Nef's successor, until she opted for a position only at the museum in 1993).³³ Second, Paul Sacher insisted that some playable instruments from the Lobeck collection should be available for the Schola »in the case of need«.³⁴ In fact, some of the good, playable string instruments from the Lobeck collection have remained at the Schola until today.³⁵ In addition, Paul Sacher bought other historical instruments for the use of the school, e.g. some original fortepianos, which lead to the opening of a pioneering fortepiano class in 1956.³⁶ However, these fortepianos were later also donated to the museum, because it turned out that a music school was not an appropriate place to keep original instruments.

The museum was located in close proximity to the Schola until 1995 and has remained close by even after the museum's relocation to its current building at the Lohnhof – nevertheless, the two institutions became more and more separated. From time to time keyboards were used for recordings, instruments from the collection served for diploma theses, or classes were held in the museum in order to explore selected instruments like keyboards or brass instruments. Despite the increasing links between the museum and the Schola, generated by their location and members of staff, the two institutions have become more and more detached from one another. This process is a result of the availability of copies of historical instruments (at the modern »historical« pitch of A 415 Hz), which (hopefully) have all the qualities of new instruments without the infirmity of old instruments, as

33 Martin Kirnbauer: Nachruf Dr. Walter Robert Nef. In: Glareana 55 / 1, 2006, pp. 49-50. – In 1981, his successor as curator at the museum was Veronika Gutmann, who was also employed at the SCB until 1991.

34 »Ferner sollen einige spielbare Instrumente im Bedarfsfall der Schola Cantorum Basiliensis zur Verfügung gestellt werden. Sie müssten zu diesem Zweck unter Umständen repariert und instandgestellt werden.« Quoted in Nef 1983 (note 22), p. 105.

35 See Kirnbauer 2017 (note 6), pp. 309-317.

36 Ibid., pp. 313-314. As documents in the »Nachlass Rück« reveal, Paul Sacher had asked Ulrich Rück as early as 1954 to restore some of the SCB's pianofortes and had ordered a »historisch getreue Kopie« (»a historically faithful copy«) of the famous fortepiano at Mozart's birthplace in Salzburg (see Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, Historisches Archiv, NL Rück, I, C-0036). The documents suggest that this fortepiano was set up at A 418 Hz in order to suit an original transverse flute owned by one of the SCB's flute players. I am grateful to Linda Escherich for providing this information.

well as the changes of museum policy regarding the use of musical instruments in performance. In fact, some of the new instruments built for the Schola between the 1930s and the 1960s are now themselves part of the museum collection. This brings us full circle: at the beginning of the 20th century, the museum initiated the discovery of Early Music (and offered the hardware). Now, the museum is responsible for documenting the history of this discovery. To speak the truth, though: the »Instrumentenfrage« is still unsolved ...

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