

Editorial

This issue celebrates a number of things. Firstly—and perhaps most significantly—this issue (roughly) marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of this journal. It was in January 1999 that the first issue of *Early Music Performer* was released, edited by Christopher Goodwin, aiming to expand and improve NEMA's offering of 'learned yet popular articles that bring recent research into performance practice to the attention of performers'. This format superseded *NEMA News* and was initially to be published quarterly. (Much to this editor's horror; biannual is far more reasonable...)

One can draw parallels between the circumstances that brought about the advent of *Early Music Performer* and the more recent update to the journal under my editorship, whereby we have expanded the offering and tweaked the name. However, I hope we have retained the 'learned yet popular' remit as laid down by Peter Holman in 'NEMA: Past, Present, Future' that opened the first issue of *EMP*. This current issue, I feel, represents this particularly well, with a mix of discussions from both scholars and performers – borne out in great and interesting form in the articles they have contributed. This is particularly pertinent as we forge onwards into a new era for this journal, and for *NEMA* as a whole, as the way in which we operate membership and, indeed, our chairpersonship changes.

With anniversary party hats already firmly on our heads, we might also consider this a belatedly celebratory issue for the composer anniversaries which fell last year: the 400th anniversary of the deaths of William Byrd and Thomas Weelkes, as well as the 400th anniversary of the birth of John Playford. In the case of the latter, I feel that this needs particular additional attention, as I think most would agree, if they realised at all, that his anniversary year was overshadowed slightly by Byrd and Weelkes. To any English Early Modernist, the impact of Playford and his printing/publishing business, beginning in the 1650s, perhaps needs little note. However, the quantity of music, indeed many popular and idiomatically 'English' tunes which may still be heard today, which saw their printed debut in Playford collections is staggering – on par with, if not surpassing, the collecting work of Percy Grainger, Cecil Sharp, and Ralph Vaughan

Williams in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

When one thinks of attempts to combine early music with other musical genres, a few (successful) examples might pop to mind: The Hillard Ensemble combining the music of Cristóbal de Morales' 'Parce mihi, Domine' with jazz saxophone from Jan Garbarek in *Officium* (ECM New Series. ECM 1525. 1994.) I'm sure being among the most easily recalled. In a departure from some of the more regular content this journal has seen for the last twenty-five years, Jon Boden (Bellowhead) offers an article delving into the usage of Playford tunes in the contemporary folk scene from the perspective of a professional performer. This exploration of another successful pairing of seemingly disparate (superficially, at least) genres will, I hope, encourage further conversation and thought considering the myriad performance contexts for what we might consider more 'regular' early music fare.

The links to Playford continue as we turn back to look at Byrd in Katherine Butler's article, looking at his legacy in popular culture. Weelkes also has some airtime through a review of Chichester Cathedral's most recent disc release, reviewed by Nancy Hadden. And, for those who might feel Byrd-ed out from last year's celebrations, we have some exceptional new insights from Olive Baldwin & Thelma Wilson, and Peter Holman looking at Josias Priest, Henry Purcell, and William Croft.

I hope that the offerings presented in this current issue reflect the ways in which the journal remains a thriving nexus for the 'learned yet popular' a quarter-century on from its inception as *Early Music Performer*, and that in another twenty-five years, one of my successors will be as equally able to make the same claim.

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