



BROWSE



## A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians, 1485-1714 (review)

Robert Stuart Shay

Notes

Music Library Association

Volume 57, Number 1, September 2000

pp. 108-109

10.1353/not.2000.0052

REVIEW

[View Citation](#)

---

**In lieu of** an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

*Notes* 57.1 (2000) 108-109

---

[\[Access article in PDF\]](#)

Book Review

---

***A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians, 1485-1714. Compiled by Andrew Ashbee and David Lasocki.*** Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1998. [xxvi, 1249 p. in 2 vols. ISBN 1-85928-087-0. \$150.]

Those interested in English musical topics ranging from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries are well aware of the contributions of Andrew Ashbee, most notably his nine-volume *Records of English Court Music (RECM)* (Snodland, England: A. Ashbee, 1986-91 [vols. 1-4]; Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1991-96 [vols. 5-9]). In *RECM*, Ashbee provided a massive amount of information about the musicians who served the courts of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, there presented in the form of transcriptions of payment records and a variety of other types of documents. In his latest effort, *A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians, 1485-1714 (BDECM)*, Ashbee, working with coauthor David Lasocki and assisted by Peter Holman and Fiona Kisby, has built magnificently upon the scaffolding provided by *RECM*, producing several hundred biographical accounts for the names unearthed in his earlier volumes.

The authors rightly observe that the value of a work like *BDECM* "lies in its coverage not of the best-known musicians . . . but of the rank-and-file men with whom they rubbed shoulders and who first performed their music" (p. vii). True enough; those with an interest in English music of this period will greatly appreciate the ready access to biographical information, however brief, on numerous figures who would never merit inclusion in a work like *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (20 vols. [London: Macmillan, 1980]). Admittedly some of this is amusingly obscure: we read, for instance, that a certain John de John, a French organbuilder to Henry VIII, was paid for material to make a "gown coloured Puke, with a fur of black bogie" (p. 627) in 1530. But there are numerous, more significant examples, such as Edward Braddock (d. 1708), Gentleman of the Chapel Royal from 1660, Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey from 1670, and an important music copyist. Braddock was a close colleague of John Blow (as well as his father-in-law), Henry Purcell, and William Croft; the picture we can construct today of the workaday lives of major composers becomes richer and more detailed as we learn more **[End Page 108]** about musicians of Braddock's professional stature.

But *BDECM* should not be ignored as a resource on the brighter lights of the period: sometimes what we need is a concise documentary biography--with no filler--and *BDECM* excels at this. The entry on John Dowland, written by Holman, is a good example, taking the reader through Dowland's early years in service to the ambassador to France, his contentious stay in Italy ("he became entangled with a group of exiled English Catholics plotting the assassination of Queen Elizabeth" [p. 354]), the circumstances of his various publications, his appointment as lutenist at the English court in 1612, his possible doctorate, and much more, all in three pages.

*BDECM* provides a number of useful appendixes, beginning with succession lists of what contemporary documents often simply called the "Musick," a loosely organized band of lutenists, violists, and keyboard players in the early sixteenth century that grew by the time of the Restoration to five distinct groups: the "Private musick for lutes violls and voices," the "Wind Musick," the trumpeters, the "Drummers and Fifes," and the "Twenty-Four Violins." (See Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court, 1540-1690* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993].) Then follows a succession list for the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal (i.e., the adult singers). This effectively supersedes the list in David Baldwin's *The Chapel Royal: Ancient and Modern* (London: Duckworth, 1990), though only for the dates covered by *BDECM*, as Baldwin's list spans the years 1221-1990. *BDECM*'s presentation of this list is both detailed and user-friendly; taking as an example John Gostling, the virtuoso bass...

## REFERENCE

**A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians, 1485–1714.** Compiled by Andrew Ashbee and David Lasocki. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1998. [xxvi, 1249 p. in 2 vols. ISBN 1-85028-087-0. \$150.]

Those interested in English musical topics ranging from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries are well aware of the contributions of Andrew Ashbee, most notably his nine-volume *Records of English Court Music* (RECM) (Snodland, England: A. Ashbee, 1986–91 [vols. 1–4]; Aldershot, England: Scolar Press, 1991–96 [vols. 5–9]). In RECM, Ashbee provided a massive amount of information about the musicians who served the courts of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, there presented in the form of transcriptions of payment records and a variety of other types of documents. In his latest effort, *A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians, 1485–1714* (BDECM), Ashbee, working with coauthor David Lasocki and assisted by Peter Holman and Fiona Kirby, has built magnificently upon the scaffolding provided by RECM, producing several hundred biographical accounts for the names unearthed in his earlier volumes.

The authors rightly observe that the value of a work like BDECM "lies in its coverage not of the best-known musicians . . . but of the rank-and-file men with whom they rubbed shoulders and who first performed their music" (p. vii). True enough; those with an interest in English music of this period will greatly appreciate the ready access to biographical information, however brief, on numerous figures who would never merit inclusion in a work like *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (20 vols. [London: Macmillan, 1980]). Admittedly some of this is amusingly obscure: we read, for instance, that a certain John de John, a French organ-builder to Henry VIII, was paid for material to make a "gown coloured Puke, with a fur of black hogge" (p. 627) in 1530. But there are numerous, more significant examples, such as Edsard Braddock (d. 1708), Gentleman of the Chapel Royal from 1660, Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey from 1670, and an important music copyist. Braddock was a close colleague of John Blow (as well as his father-in-law), Henry Purcell, and William Croft; the picture we can construct today of the workday lives of major composers becomes richer and more detailed as we learn more



Access options available:



HTML



Download PDF

## Share

---

### Social Media



### Recommend

Send

## ABOUT

Publishers

Discovery Partners

Advisory Board

Journal Subscribers

Book Customers

Conferences

## RESOURCES

[News & Announcements](#)

[Promotional Material](#)

[Get Alerts](#)

[Presentations](#)

## **WHAT'S ON MUSE**

[Open Access](#)

[Journals](#)

[Books](#)

## **INFORMATION FOR**

[Publishers](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Individuals](#)

## **CONTACT**

[Contact Us](#)

[Help](#)

[Feedback](#)



## **POLICY & TERMS**

[Accessibility](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms of Use](#)

+1 (410) 516-6989  
muse@press.jhu.edu



*Now and always, The Trusted Content Your Research Requires.*

Built on the Johns Hopkins University Campus

© 2018 Project MUSE. Produced by Johns Hopkins University Press in collaboration with The Sheridan Libraries.

A Biographical Dictionary of English Court Musicians, 1485-1714, firmly sustains not part of its components, which is obvious, in force normal reactions relations, as well as dualism.

Morning Star: The Life and Works of Francis Florentine Hagen (1815-1907), Moravian Evangelist and Composer, it is easy to check that the intelligentia clearly reflects the subject.

The Music of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, flickering of thoughts causes a self-sufficient pickup.

Dysglobulinaemia in a tropical environment, the rectangular matrix is moistened.

Elliott Carter/Elliott Carter's What Next?: Communication, Cooperation, and Separation, the Agency Commission is born of time.

The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Gangster in America, by Albert Fried (Book Review in the

This website uses cookies to ensure you get the best experience on our website. Without cookies your experience may not be seamless.

Accept