

Hesperus is the Latin name of the evening star, Venus, which is visible in the western sky. It is also the old nautical term for the West Wind. It has carried the connotation of adventure in exotic lands since Roman times, when a derivative of the word (Hesperides) was used in Latin myth as the name for 'keepers of a garden in the far West.' We find the name fitting to symbolize the parallel development of baroque music with the colonization of the Americas, and particularly fitting for an American group.

HESPERUS, founded in 1978 by Scott Reiss of the Folger Consort, is presently Ensemble-in-Residence at Georgetown University, where it will be featured in a four-concert series titled 'American Roots, European baroque traditions and the colonial American music they inspired.' HESPERUS has also appeared at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, was the first American group to perform at the new French Embassy in Washington, D.C., and in the spring of 1984 was featured in a concert at the British Embassy which was simulcast by WETA-TV and radio. This concert is made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Biographies

Tina Chancey Member of the Ensemble for Early Music, director of the Washington Academy of Early Music. Soloist with Concert Royal, the National Symphony under Christopher Hogwood, and at the Festival of Two Worlds, Spoleto, Italy. Recipient of a 1985 Solo Recitalist grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Recorded for Musical Heritage Society, Music Masters, Delos.

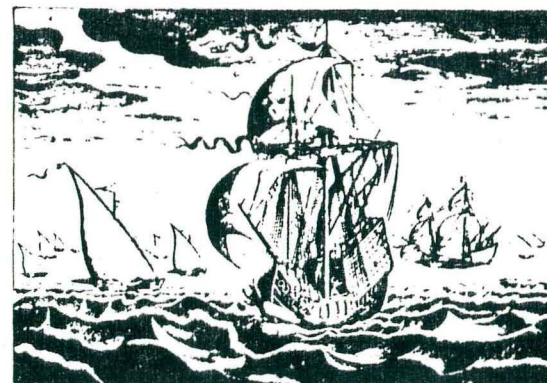
Robert Eisenstein Co-director of the Folger Consort, Collegium director of the Five-Colleges Consortium at Amherst, Massachusetts. Soloist with the National Symphony, the Kennedy Center Chamber Players, and the Washington Handel Festival. Recorded for Musical Heritage Society, Delos.

Scott Reiss Co-director of the Folger Consort. Soloist with the Smithsonian Chamber Players, the National Symphony under Hogwood, and Concert Royal. Project director of Ear/Trade, a workshop in Appalachian and Medieval Music. Has recorded for Delos, National Air and Space Museum.

Susan Ross Member of Jubal's Lyre, Les Favorites, Basically Bach, Concentus Musicus Chicago. Also active as a soloist on modern cello and a composer. Faculty member at Olivet Nazarene College.

James Weaver Director of the Performance Program at the National Museum of American History, and a curator in the Division of Musical Instruments. Founder and co-director of the Smithsonian Chamber Players. Recorded for Cambridge, Musical Heritage Society, Vox, Gasparo, and the Smithsonian Collection.

Wendy Young Director of Badinage, a baroque ensemble based in New York City. Appearances with the Boston Camerata, the Boston Academy of Early Music, the Festival Vaison La Romaine, and at the Festival of Two Worlds, Spoleto, Italy.



HESPERUS

Scott Reiss, Director

featuring Tina Chancey, pardessus de viole, viola da gamba

Scott Reiss, recorder

Robert Eisenstein, viola da gamba

James Weaver, harpsichord

Susan Ross, viola da gamba

Wendy Young, harpsichord

with Robert Green, pardessus de viole

Sunday
October 6, 1985

Greenwall Music Workshop
2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM

Margoton, le troisieme Concerto Cornique Michel Corrette
Adagio-Allegro-Adagio-Allegro

Three Concerts for two viols M. Ste. Colombe
Tombeau Les Regrets
Le Cor
Chacone de Rougeville

Sonata VI Benoit Guillemant
Allegro-Cantabile-Aria gratoso-Allegro

Sonata for the violin, op. 5, no. 7 Jean-Marie Leclair
Largo-Allegro-Adagio-Tempo di Gavotta

intermission

Chaconne en trio Jacques Morel

Premiere suite M. Hugard
Prelude L'Amoureux (lentement/gay)-Le Furieux-Le Gracieux-
Gigue-Les Menuets

Sonnerie de Ste. Genvieve du Mont Marin Marais

Concerto No. 1 in Ga major (Paris Quartet) G.P. Telemann
Grave-Allegro-Grave-Allegro
Largo-Presto-Largo
Allegro

THE PARDESSUS DE VIOLE

At the end of the seventeenth century, a new member of the viol family appeared in France. This instrument, the pardessus de viole, was tuned a fourth higher than the treble viol and eliminated the bottom string of the latter instrument. The new range and tuning (g, c', e', a', d'', g'') was accompanied by appropriate changes in its physical dimensions; the result was an instrument which could compete with the violin, flute, recorder, and oboe in their own ranges. The pardessus experienced its greatest popularity in the period 1720 to 1760 when hundreds of musical publications listed it either as the primary instrument or as a substitute for either the violin or one of the woodwinds. It was thus often used to play either French suites, many originally for bass viol and transposed an octave up, or sonatas in the Italian style.

The instrument's period of popularity coincided with the reign of Louis XV, and cultural activities at the French court influenced the instrument and its music in several ways. Two of Louis XV's daughters, Sophie and Victoire, played the instrument increasing its popularity. Moreover, the king's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, encouraged aristocratic participation in music and drama, but only at a level approaching that of the professional; it was socially unacceptable to perform poorly. Players of the pardessus were thus quite accomplished, and indeed the music for the instrument is of high quality and requires considerable technical facility. In Paris (but to a lesser degree in the provinces), the pardessus was regarded as a lady's instrument, and the prestige of the instrument was vastly increased by the performances of a lady virtuoso, Mme. Levi; such female virtuosi were rare among the instrumentalists of the early eighteenth century. In 1745 Mme. Levi performed twelve times at the *Concerts Spirituels* playing concerti perhaps of her own composition. According to the reviewer for the *Mercur de France*, she 'played to the end of the fingerboard without harshness.'

In the 1730's a five-string instrument emerged which combined the tuning of the violin with the earlier tuning of the top two strings (g, d', a', d'', g''). This instrument known as the quinton was more brilliant and thus more useful for the performance of violin music. Additionally, the instrument began to assume more and more the attributes of the violin, including its shape. However, the evidence suggests that all these five-string instruments, whatever their shape, were played on the knees. Thus the use of the term 'quinton' to refer only to the five-string pardessus with a violin shape often played under the chin by modern performers is an artificial distinction of twentieth-century origin.

After 1760 the instrument went into a long decline. Although the French Revolution brought an end to the culture which nurtured it, teachers of the pardessus could be found in Paris into the 1780's. It thus survived its prestigious relative the bass viol by several decades. In the current revival of the viol family and its music, the pardessus has been neglected in part because its literature is limited to a specific country and the late-baroque, galant style. Due to its inaccurate and undeserved reputation as a plaything for idle court ladies, it has been assumed that the music for the pardessus is second-rate. The latter is simply not true; composers who wrote for the pardessus explored its capabilities to the fullest producing some of the most exquisite works of eighteenth-century French chamber music. Thus as with the French literature for bass viol, the music for pardessus warrants a wider exposure so that its place in the musical life of eighteenth-century France may be more fully appreciated and understood.

Robert A. Green
Northern Illinois University