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# SYNTAGMA MUSICUM III



MICHAEL PRAETORIUS

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY

JEFFERY T. KITE-POWELL

# Syntagma Musicum III

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Michael Praetorius  
Translated and edited by Jeffery Kite-Powell

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To my wife, Helga

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To my wife, Helga, go my greatest thanks for putting up with my trials and tribulations over the years I have been struggling with MPC and for being there when needed. It has been a long ride indeed.

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## Note on Clefs and Note Names

When Praetorius makes reference to a specific clef or clefs, he interrupts the text with a short five-line staff with the intended clef on it. To simplify matters I have chosen to use the standard clef designations as follows:

- C-1 (C-2, etc.) = C-clef placed on the bottom line (second line) of the staff;
- F-3 (F-4, etc.) = F-clef placed on the third line (fourth line) of the staff, with F-6 occupying the first ledger line;
- G-1 = G-clef placed on the bottom line of the staff (the French violin clef), and G-2 = the customary treble clef used today.

Specific pitch designations in the text are indicated in the following manner:

- $c'$  = middle C
- $c''$  = c above middle C
- $c'''$  = the c above  $c''$  (etc.)
- $c$  = the c below  $c'$
- $C$  = the c below  $c$
- $CC$  = the c below  $C$  (etc.)

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## Note on Page Numbers

Page numbers located in the margins in the translation represent those of the source. Numbers embedded in the text refer the reader to the marginal page numbers and not to a page in this book. A marginal or embedded page number followed by a number in brackets indicates that the pagination in the source is incorrect.

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## Abbreviations

- Adelung, *Wörterbuch* Johann Christoph Adelung. *Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart, mit beständiger Vergleichung der übrigen Mundarten, besonders aber der Oberdeutschen*. Vienna: Bauer Verlag, 1811. Online at: <http://mdz.bib-bvb.de:80/digbib/lexika/adelung>.
- Arnold, *Art* F. T. Arnold. *The Art of Accompaniment from a Thoroughbass*. London: Oxford University Press, 1931.
- Bernoulli, *SMIII* Michael Praetorius *Syntagma Musicum, Band III: Kritisch revidierter Neudruck nach dem Original, Wolfenbüttel 1619*. Edited by Eduard Bernoulli. Leipzig: C. F. Kahnt, 1916.
- Blumenfeld Michael Praetorius. *The Syntagma Musicum of Michael Praetorius, Vol. II: De Organographia*, Third Edition, First and Second Parts. Translated by Harold Blumenfeld. New Haven: The Chinese Printing Office, Yale University, 1949; repr. New York: Da Capo, 1980.
- CMM* *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae*.
- Crookes Michael Praetorius. *Syntagma Musicum, Vol. 2: De Organographia, Parts 1–2*. Translated and edited by David Z. Crookes. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.
- Eitner $Q$  Robert Eitner. *Biographisch-bibliographisches Quellen-Lexikon*. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1900; 2d ed., Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1959.
- Fleming Michael D. Fleming. “Michael Praetorius, Music Historian: An Annotated Translation of *Syntagma Musicum* I, Part I.” Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1979.
- Gerber Ernst Ludwig Gerber. *Historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler [1790–1792] und Neues historisch-biographisches Lexikon der Tonkünstler [1812–1814]. Mit den in den Jahren 1792–1834 veröffentlichten Ergänzungen sowie der Erstveröffentlichung handschriftlicher Berichtigungen und Nachträge*, Edited by Othmar Wessely. Graz, Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1966.
- JAMIS* *Journal of the American Instrument Society*
- JAMS* *Journal of the American Musicological Society*

- Lampl, *SMIII* Hans Lampl. "A Translation of Syntagma Musicum III by Michael Praetorius." DMA diss., University of Southern California, 1957.
- Leuchtman Horst Leuchtman. *Dictionary of Terms in Music: English–German, German–English*. 4th rev. and enlarged ed. Munich: Saur, 1992.
- Mf* *Die Musikforschung*
- MfMg* *Monatshefte für Musikgeschichte*
- MGG* *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Edited by Friedrich Blume. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949–79.
- Miller Ronald Miller. "The Use of Instruments in *Polyhymnia Caduceatrix et Panegyrica* by Michael Praetorius." MM thesis, Indiana University, 1967.
- Morley Thomas Morley. *A Plain & Easy Introduction to Practical Music*, 1597. Edited by Alec Harman. New York: W. W. Norton, 1963.
- NHDM* *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Edited by Don Randel. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1986.
- NG* *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Edited by Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 1980.
- NG II* *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2d ed. Edited by Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 2001.
- NG Online* *The New Grove Dictionary of Music Online*, ed. Laura Macy. <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>.
- VMw* *Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft*
- Walter, *ML* Johann Gottfried Walter. *Musicalisches Lexicon oder Musicalische Bibliothec*. Leipzig: Wolfgang Deer, 1732; repr. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2001.
- Zedler, *UL* Johann Heinrich Zedler. *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, vols. 1–40. Halle and Leipzig, 1732–54. Online at: <http://mdz.bib-bvb.de:80/digbib/lexika/zedler>.

# Introduction

## MPC: The Author

There is considerable uncertainty regarding the birth date of Michael Praetorius—as early as 1569 in some sources to as late as 1572,<sup>1</sup> but the generally accepted date is 15 February 1571. He died at the height of his career in Wolfenbüttel on 15 February 1621, his fiftieth birthday. The location of his birth, Creutzberg (occasionally spelled Creutzburg; today it is Kreuzberg) on the Werra river not far from Eisenach in the province of Thuringia, is uncontested, due to his predilection for signing his name “Michael Praetorius C.” or referring to himself as M.P.C.,<sup>2</sup> a usage often adopted in this book. His father was a Lutheran minister who had also taught at the Latin school in Torgau, the birthplace of his mother. Prior to entering the service of Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel in 1595, Praetorius’s residences may be summarized as follows: Torgau (1573–82); Frankfurt on the Oder river (near Berlin) (1582–84), where he lived with one of his brothers and attended the university; Zerbst-Anhalt (1584–85), where he attended the Latin school and lived with his two sisters; he then returned to Frankfurt for more study at the university (1585–87), after which he became organist at St. Marien in Frankfurt (1587–93), where he remained until he moved to Wolfenbüttel in 1593.

During the time in which he was *Kapellmeister* at the court in Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, beginning in 1604 and lasting until his death, MPC became increasingly famous

<sup>1</sup> See the article on Praetorius by Walter Blankenburg and Clytus Gottwald in *NG II* 20:261–66, and by Arno Forchert in *MGG* 10:1560–72.

<sup>2</sup> See the title pages of *Syntagma musicum*, where he refers to himself in volume I as “Auctore Michaelae Prætorio C.” and on the next page as “Michaël Prætorius C.,” and as “Michaelis Prætorii C.” in both volumes II and III. Further, on pages 146[126], 147[127], 133, 137, 142, 148, 149, 221–26 of volume III he uses the abbreviation M.P.C. when referring to himself. It is entirely possible that the “C” stands for “Capellmeister,” as he adds this to his name on page vii in vol. 16 of the Collected Works; in vols. 1 and 2 his name is simply followed by C. M. (pp. xiv and vii respectively). In nearly every volume—often on multiple occasions—of the Complete Works he adds the letter C after his name. On page viii of vol. 10 he writes “Michael Praetorius Creutzburgensis”; it is abbreviated “Creutzb.” in the *Sextus* part of vol. 11, and “Cruciburgensis” is the spelling used on page vii of vol. 12. While he resorts to the abbreviation M.P.C. on numerous occasions in the introductions to his collections of musical works, he only uses it three times to mean *Mihi Patria Cælum* (Heaven, my fatherland), as seen on page xiv of vol. 5, page vii of vol. 7, and, curiously, on page xv of *Terpsichore*, his only purely secular work. A slight variant of this usage—*Mihi rus Patriæ Cælo*—is found in the bass partbook of the third choir in the work *Epithalamium*. In his monumental work on the thoroughbass, F. T. Arnold proposes the Latin phrase *Mæe propriae considerationes* (my own thoughts) as the appropriate meaning of M.P.C. (Arnold, *Art*, 95).

and ever more in demand as an organist, composer, and music director. Even as a young court organist he was invited in 1596 to the dedication of the new organ in the castle chapel at Gröningen near Halberstadt, which gave him the chance to mingle with over 50 other organists invited to play—some rather famous, including Hieronymus Praetorius and the Hassler brothers, Hans and Caspar. Over the years his travels took him to the following locations:

- Regensburg (1602, on business, and 1603, with organist's duties)
- Kassel (1605, 1609, and 1617 for visits with the Landgrave Moritz of Hesse)
- Prague (1613, with the duke for an extended visit)
- Naumburg (1614)
- Ringelheim near Goslar (1614), where he was appointed prior of the monastery<sup>3</sup>
- Magdeburg (1614 and 1618, as *Kapellmeister* to the administrator of the bishopric, the latter occasion together with Schütz and Scheidt)
- Halle (1616)
- Dresden (1613–16 after the death of Duke Heinrich Julius for an extended visit as *Kapellmeister von Haus aus*, and again in 1617)
- Schwarzburg at Sondershausen (1617)
- Leipzig, Nuremberg, and Bayreuth (1619) (again, with Schütz and Scheidt)

In all of these venues he was actively engaged in the performance of his music and in educating the choir directors, organists, and church musicians with whom he came into contact in the art and manner of the new Italian style. He married Anna Lakemacher in 1603 and had two sons.

Friedrich Blume, the general editor of MPC's Complete Works, devised an organizational scheme in which Praetorius's creative output is divided into five periods or "phases," as he calls them.<sup>4</sup> The first four phases contain works suitable for the Lutheran liturgy on traditional German tunes, drawing occasionally on the Latin liturgy. They range from the simple congregational hymns in two, three, and four parts all the way up to polychoral works for four choirs and motets for one to three choirs. It is in phase 5, beginning with the death of Heinrich Julius and his stay in Dresden, during which he came into contact with many Italian musicians and works by Italian composers, that we begin to see Praetorius incorporate the new Italian style into his own works. This is represented most clearly in his *Polyhymnia caduceatrix et pane-*

<sup>3</sup> It is not at all certain how a married, Protestant Christian could be a prior; Johann Walther may be the first to make this claim (Walther, *ML*, 490), but it has been cited in every reference work consulted, from *MGG* 10:1563 to *NG Online* (ed. Laura Macy). The *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary Handbook: Biographies and Sources* contains an entry under Prätorius, Michael that reads: "and was appointed honorary prior of the Ringelheim Monastery near Goslar, but without compulsion to reside there." Online at: [www.blc.edu/comm/gargy/gargy1/ELH.biographies.P..H.html](http://www.blc.edu/comm/gargy/gargy1/ELH.biographies.P..H.html) (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Blume, "Das Werk des Michael Praetorius," in *Syntagma Musicologicum*, ed. Martin Ruhnke (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1963), 229–74, esp. 232–41.

*gyrica* of 1619 by such innovations as the use of thoroughbass, echo effects, alternating homophonic and imitative sections, spectacularly colorful contrasts of vocal and instrumental masses of sound, spatially situated for the utmost dramatic and emotional effect, coloratura passages for vocalists and instrumentalists that challenge their technical abilities, boundless opportunities for ornamentation and improvisation, and more variety in orchestration than had been seen in the German realm up to that time.

Praetorius composed well over 1,000 works, most of them sacred, except for the French dances contained in the *Terpsichore* collection. Even though he was an organist of considerable accomplishment, only eight pieces for organ are extant.

### **The Encyclopedia: *Syntagma musicum***

In the early sixteenth century interest in learning about music among ordinary people began to take root, and by the time of the publication of volume III of *Syntagma musicum* (henceforth *SMIII*) in 1619, over 150 instruction or “how to” books had appeared across Europe. These teaching manuals, most of which were published, were designed for all types of users, including amateur and professional musicians, instrument makers, choir directors, school teachers, and choirboys. Those intended for the church fathers, professors, music theorists, and composers were written in Latin; the practical musicians and the children, on the other hand, were spared the necessity of knowing that language and learned their lessons in the vernacular. In some cases, they had the choice of languages, as many treatises were dual-language publications with Latin and German on facing pages.

The titles of a large number of manuals purport to teach singing, but in fact have little to do with actual vocal production and everything to do with basic musicianship. For example the following:

- Samuel Mareschall, *Porta Musices: Das ist Eynführung zu der edlen Kunst Musica: Mit einem kurtzen Bericht und Anleitung zu den Violen: Auch wie ein Jeder Gesang leichtlich anzustimmen seye . . .*, Basel: Sebastian Heinrich Petri, 1589.
- Cyriacus Schneegaß, *Deutsche Musica, für die Kinder, und Andere, so nicht sonderlich Latein verstehen, und doch gerne Wollen nach der Kunst singen lernen . . .*, Erfurt: G. Baumann, 1592.
- Christoph Demantius, *Isagoge Artis Musicae ad Incipientium captum maxime accommodata. Kurtze Anleitung recht unnd leicht singen zu lernen . . .*, Nuremberg: V. Fuhrmann, 1607.

In the majority of cases these treatises are of particular use to us for their documentary value, presenting a picture of day-to-day musical practices. They are down-to-earth, practical guides on such topics as how to play a certain instrument (viols, recorders, lutes, and organs immediately come to mind), how to execute divisions or

apply ornaments, what interval combinations are allowed or forbidden in a piece of music, understanding modes and how to transpose, the relationship among metric proportions, and so forth.

The three volumes of Praetorius's *Syntagma musicum*, on the other hand, belong in the same category as theoretical compendia by writers such as Johannes Tinctoris or Gioseffo Zarlino and far surpass in scope and erudition anything that had appeared in Germany prior to their publication; indeed, they are referred to and quoted from throughout the remainder of the century and well into the next.<sup>5</sup>

In the first volume, published in 1615, we learn why MPC chose to write in Latin for that volume and in German for the others, and that he envisioned four volumes for his encyclopedia:

Thus the first volume is entirely in Latin for the learned (although it would not be without use for others devoted to the art of music, but rather useful, perhaps, and beneficial, if a learned man would take the trouble to turn this first volume out of Latin into good German, and have it printed. This would be impossible for me, although very precious, on account of innumerable other hindrances, and it would be quite pleasant and useful to those not skilled in the Latin tongue). The second volume is entirely in German for organ builders, organists, and all other instrumentalists. The third and fourth are arranged for both *musicos* and *musicos cultores*.<sup>6</sup>

In Michael Fleming's preface to *SMI* we are told that the volume was written for the Lutheran clergy, especially the higher echelon of church authorities, and that MPC had two primary purposes in writing it; the first was to "present and explain piously all the types of songs, organs, and other instruments hallowed for the liturgical rites [which are] pleasing to God and useful to the public, and [to discuss their] use at gatherings of the church, both in ancient times and today."<sup>7</sup> The second purpose was "to refute the arguments of those 'who strive to diminish or to remove altogether the offices of the liturgy.'"<sup>8</sup> Further on Fleming adds a word of caution: "In reading through volume I of the *Syntagma musicum*, one cannot fail to be struck by the breadth of Praetorius' knowledge; the sheer number of sources he consulted is staggering. His use of these sources, however, needs closer scrutiny. In many cases he amassed and presented great chunks of information without making any attempt to sift fact from legend, or to disentangle the truth from a mass of conflicting viewpoints."<sup>9</sup> But, "One can hardly criticize Praetorius for failing to meet the standards of scholarship established in the nineteenth century. He was working in the tradition of the medieval chroniclers, whose aim

<sup>5</sup> By such writers as Gengenbach, Demantius, Friderici, Herbst, Johann Crüger, Falck, even Mattheson, among many others.

<sup>6</sup> *SMI*, c3<sup>v</sup>; translation by Fleming, 31; *musicos* and *musicos cultores* = "musicians and amateurs of music," Fleming, xi.

<sup>7</sup> *SMI*, 21–22; translation by Fleming, xi.

<sup>8</sup> *SMI*, 14; translation by Fleming, xii.

<sup>9</sup> Fleming, xxii–xxiii.

was to amass information, without necessarily scrutinizing it to see whether or not it was reliable.”<sup>10</sup> Book II of volume I deals with the instruments and secular music of ancient times and anticipates *De Organographia* of volume II (1618/19), the most important discussion of instruments by any writer to that date.

Volume II is divided into two principal sections, with Books I and II providing information on all instruments known to MPC, domestic and foreign (meaning folk and non-Western instruments), including the names and classifications of instruments, their ranges, sizes, and tuning. Of considerably greater size is the second section, comprising Books III–V, which is dedicated to the organ, ancient and modern. MPC was well known as an organ consultant and was frequently called upon to assess the need for renovation of an existing organ or to recommend the specifications for a new organ. We learn about the history of the organ, the first use of pedals, the names of the registers, the measurement of the pipes and how that relates to their sound, about coupling manuals, what mixtures consist of, the use of special effects (tremolo, cymbelstern, etc.), tuning systems, how to adjust and tune the individual pipes, and many other issues of importance to the early seventeenth-century organist. That he was well acquainted with the major organs of Germany and neighboring countries is apparent, as the dispositions of many of them are included in *SMII*, part V.<sup>11</sup> Of special significance is the set of plates at the end of the book, as they not only provide groupings of families of instruments from the smallest to the largest, but they are also drawn to scale, as each plate contains a ruler in Brunswick inches for one of its borders.

Volume III is divided into three books, each of which is subdivided into chapters. In twelve chapters Book I provides the definition and classification of vocal forms, such as concerto, motet, madrigal, canzona (= chanson), dialogue, aria, etc.; instrumental forms such as the canzona, prelude, fantasy, capriccio, fugue, sinfonia, sonata, toccata, etc.; and dance forms such as pavans, passamezzos, galliards, branles, courantes, voltas, allemandes, etc.—all in Italian, French, English, and “current” (his term) German.

Book II, also in twelve chapters, deals with general musicianship or, as it was so typically called at the time, “Was im singen bey den Noten.” Instructional material presented here includes a discussion of ligatures (most of which he disapproved of), the proportions *tripla* and *sesquialtera*, accidentals, note values and rests, modes, a lengthy explanation of time signatures and *sextupla*, keeping the beat, transposition, the names of the voice parts, the labeling of choirs in polychoral works, and the use of octaves and unisons in polychoral music (still a controversial topic in his day).

Book III, divided into nine chapters and by far the longest section, contains an in-depth discussion of performance practice, borrowing heavily from Italian practices that were current at the beginning of the seventeenth century. MPC unabashedly ad-

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, xxiv.

<sup>11</sup> See pp. 161 ff., in which he describes the organs of Costnitz (Konstanz), Ulm, Danzig, Rostock, Lübeck (3), Stralsund, Hamburg (2), Lüneburg, Breslau, Magdeburg (5), Bernau (near Berlin), Halle, Braunschweig, Leipzig (2), Torgau, Halberstadt, Kassel, Bückeburg, Dresden, Gröningen (Gröningen, near Halberstadt), Hessen, Schöningen, and others.

mits learning about the latest Italian compositional devices through reading Italian treatises on composition as well as prefaces to recently-published collections by Italian composers. He also studied the compositions themselves to see how the most current ideas in composition were applied, and he had many occasions to work with Italian musicians who played and sang at courts where he was active. The early chapters in this book focus on the interpretation and use of terms, such as *ripieno*, *ritornello*, *intermedio*, *forte*, *pian*, *largo*, *presto*, *trillo*, *capella palchetto*, *capella fidicina*, *chorus symphonica*, and more. He also provides the names and characteristics of instruments in Italian and demonstrates how concertos and motets written by Lasso, Merulo, and Giovanni Gabrieli can be arranged for multiple choirs. Of particular significance is his discussion of the thoroughbass, grounded on theories gleaned from several Italian publications.

In chapter 8 MPC describes in great detail in twelve subsections (one of which is further divided into nine subsections) how pieces in his *Polyhymnia caduceatrix et panegyrica* may be arranged for multiple choirs—not just who is to sing or play which parts and on which instruments, but where individuals and choirs are to be placed. He draws a clear connection between this chapter and the preface to the *Polyhymnia* and to the introductory remarks preceding each piece, making this one of the most remarkable early accounts of orchestration in the history of music. The chapter concludes with a listing and partial description of all of his other compositions and writings as well as those he still intended to produce (many of which never saw the light of day).

Chapter 9, the final and most frequently quoted chapter in the entire book, is a presentation of various types of ornamentation practiced in Italy in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. MPC studied the works of Caccini and Bovicelli in preparing this chapter, and he provides a fair number of (their) examples to assist the user in executing the embellishments. This is the first description in German of the Italian manner of singing, and it was transmitted in numerous treatises over the next decades. Volume III ends with an index of authors and a general index, as well as a list of *errata*. Praetorius's indexes have been updated and expanded here, and the corrections included in his list of *errata* have in most instances been incorporated without further comment.

### ***SMIII: The Scope of the Edition***

There are always expectations attached to a book, both on the part of the author and on the part of the consumer, and it is incumbent on the author to spell out at the outset what is covered in his book and to what extent, so that readers are aware of the parameters set by him and those set by the publisher.

The first thing to keep in mind is that this is first and foremost a translation. The most important and time-consuming aspect of this project has been transforming a highly technical, centuries-old language into modern English (more on this below). I have made every effort to refer the reader to recent scholarship that in any way eluci-

dates areas of discussion undertaken by Praetorius so as to avoid cluttering the text with definitions of terms that are readily available in reference books in most libraries.<sup>12</sup> For instance, the reader will not find a footnote with the definition of such standard terms as “motet,” “sonata,” or “canzona,” but there will be a reference to at least one work in which more historical information may be found. The same is true for authors and composers. There is simply not enough room to provide a footnote containing a biographical sketch of the over 160 names that appear in the book, and the interested reader is encouraged to seek additional information on these subjects in the appropriate reference works. The known dates of the people whose names appear in the text are included in the Index of Authors at the end of the book.

Another limitation imposed by the exigencies of space is any discussion of the history or characteristics of the instruments Praetorius mentions; nor is there room for any sort of critical or formal analysis of the many compositions, both his own and those of others, that are referred to throughout the work. Further, the inclusion of excerpts from any of the works in question, as helpful and enlightening as they would no doubt be, would increase the size and cost of this book beyond the publisher’s comfort level. It is hoped that the reader will have access to Praetorius’s Complete Works,<sup>13</sup> which will facilitate any comparisons of music with text that may need to be made. For the same reason facsimiles are not provided with the transcriptions of Praetorius’s examples into modern notation.

Two final areas in which elaborate detail has been curtailed are performance practice and historical background. In both cases the reason is simple: this is a translation and not a general book on performance practice or a biography of Michael Praetorius. There has been an explosion of research in the field of performance practice, especially since 1980, and a considerable number of historically informed recordings of Praetorius’s works have been released on compact disc in the past few decades (a Discography is provided in Appendix B). The Bibliography contains a large number of books, articles, and dissertations that deal directly with specific issues related to performing Praetorius’s compositions, as this sample listing of works that actually have his name in the title indicates:

- Lars Ulrich Abraham, *Der Generalbass im Schaffen des Michael Praetorius und seine harmonischen Voraussetzungen*, Diss., 1961.
- Paul Brainard, “Zur Deutung der Diminution in der Tactuslehre des Michael Praetorius,” *Die Musikforschung*, 1964.
- Hans Otto Hickel, “Der Madrigal- und Motettentypus in der Mensurallehre des Michael Praetorius,” *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, 1962–63.
- Hans Lampl, “Michael Praetorius on the Use of Trumpets,” *Brass Quarterly*, 1958.

<sup>12</sup>E.g., *NG*, *NHDM*, *MGG*, etc.

<sup>13</sup>*Gesamtausgabe der musikalischen Werke von Michael Praetorius*, ed. Friedrich Blume, vols. 1–20 (Wolfenbüttel: Kallmeyer, 1928–56). Referred to as “Complete Works” in the text.

- Herbert Myers, “Praetorius’s Pitch Standard,” *Galpin Society Journal*, 1998.
- Gordon Paine, “Tactus, Proportion, and Praetorius,” in *Five Centuries*, 1989.
- Harold Samuel, “Michael Praetorius on Concertato Style,” in *Cantors at the Crossroads*, 1967.
- Ephraim Segerman, “Praetorius’s *Cammerthon* Pitch Standard,” *Galpin Society Journal*, 1997.
- Dale Voelker, “Performance Aspects of the *Polyhymnia Caduceatrix et Panegyrica* of Michael Praetorius of Creuzberg,” Diss., 1977.

I have endeavored to cite these and other secondary literature at the appropriate places in the text where the discussion centers on performance practice. The most basic reference work on performance practice is Roland Jackson’s *A Bibliography of Performance Practice* (1988), with updates on the website located at <http://www.performancepractice.com/> (see also the link [Jackson 87-97](#) under Currency of Research). And finally, an excellent resource for performance practice treatises of this time is John Butt’s *Music Education and the Art of Performance in the German Baroque*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1994.

For biographical information on Praetorius the reader will find a wide assortment of works in the Bibliography, ranging from the very earliest listings in a lexicon: Johann Caspar Wetzel, *Hymnopoeographia: Historische Lebens-Beschreibung der berühmtesten Liederdichter* (1719), Johann Gottlieb Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon* (1732), or Johann Zedler, *Großes Vollständiges Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste* (1732 ff.) to the first dissertation on him, Wilibald Gurlitt’s *Michael Praetorius (Creuzbergensis): Sein Leben und seine Werke* (Leipzig, 1915), to the most recent entry by Walter Blankenburg and Clytus Gottwald in the *NG II* (2001).

## The Translation

Previous writers<sup>14</sup> have noted that Praetorius’s reason for writing the second and third volumes of his encyclopedia in German rather than Latin, the language of the first volume, was simply that he wanted the information contained in them to be accessible to a larger group of people, especially those involved with performing (playing, singing, directing) his music and the music of other composers of the early seventeenth century. Judging from the performance instructions (generally called *Ordinantz*) found in the prefaces to his many collections of music, not to mention the detailed discussion preceding nearly every composition in his collections *Polyhymnia caduceatrix et panegyrica* and *Puericinium*, among others, it was of the utmost importance to Praetorius for the practical musician to have the guidelines necessary to realize his music in performance, and for that reason he recognized the urgency of writing in the vernacular. Nonetheless, there are still a great many passages, indeed whole sections of *Syntagma*

<sup>14</sup> Fleming, x–xi and 31; Crookes, xiii; Möller-Weise, 137–38, among others.

*musicum*, that are in Latin, the language he chose to use when the issues under discussion became more intricate and complex and were therefore perhaps targeted to the more learned or scholarly user. But there is an even more practical reason for Praetorius to use German in this volume, and that has to do with the terms themselves: most of them would have had to be created in Latin, as they simply did not exist.

Because I feel it is important for today's reader to know when Praetorius was writing in German and when in Latin, I have used italics to designate the latter, not for individual words, which occur in practically every sentence, but for longer phrases up to and including whole sections. Another very common practice employed throughout the source is the constant switching from the typical *fraktur* font (ꝛaꝛftur) to a plain roman font when he uses a word that is not German, such as *sinfonia*, *tutti*, *omnia*, *Symphoniæ Sacræ*, etc. Latin of the early seventeenth century can be every bit as abstruse and inscrutable as the German of this period, and I have tried to simplify Praetorius's highly Baroque manner of writing without doing injustice to what he is trying to say. I am grateful to Professor Charles E. Brewer for permitting me to adjust his Latin translations to accommodate the style of this book and my concept of how Praetorius's thoughts should be captured, thus assuring a smooth transition between the two languages.

For someone comparing the present translation with the original text it might appear that I have taken too many liberties, and indeed, the translation may occasionally look completely different. In fact, some chapters would have benefited from a complete revision and restatement of Praetorius's thoughts on the subject. But this is a translation, and I have made every effort to preserve his meaning. Complex sentences have been shortened by converting parenthetical insertions and dependent clauses into free-standing sentences, or by creating several sentences out of a string of clauses, and passive-voice constructions have often been converted into active statements.

Another attempt at simplifying Praetorius's writing style involved modifying one of the most common writing practices of the day, that is, using at least two adjectives to describe something, with one of them being in Latin if at all possible. This practice can be found on virtually every page; for example, *Distributiones und Abteilung* (139 [119])<sup>15</sup> or *in einer stillen und eingezogenen Music gebraucht/referirt werden* (same page). An argument could be made for translating such duplications if they are used for special emphasis and only occasionally; but when they occur frequently, the translator must not be afraid to assume the role of editor and excise what is superfluous. (Note that in the above example it was felt that both adjectives, "distribution and classification" and "quiet and reserved," should be retained.)

Working with words formulated over three hundred years ago is similar to interpreting the musical notation of the Renaissance (and earlier), where there are often differing opinions on how a specific passage should be interpreted and thus transcribed into modern notation. When performing from a transcription it is imperative that the

<sup>15</sup>MPC notes in the *errata* section on page 257 that pages 22–24 and 104–29 have been misnumbered.

person using the edition have access to the original signs and symbols, either in a footnote or in a critical apparatus, in cases where ambiguity exists. To be sure, the editor cannot skirt the issue, and it is incumbent on him to make a decision; but in deference to the knowledgeable or inquisitive user—whether scholar or performer—all other options must be included. Jeffrey Kurtzman's remarks relating to the differing perspectives and needs of the scholar/editor vis-à-vis the performer are applicable here (bracketed insertions are mine and intended to show the close relationship between a transcription and a translation):

it is not the role of the scholar/editor [translator] to make the decisions that should be made by performers [readers] themselves. Ultimately it is the performer [informed reader] who must select among the relevant options and take responsibility for those chosen for a particular performance [reading, interpretation]. That this increases the burden on the performer [reader] is unquestionable, but a function of the scholarly enterprise is to educate performers [readers] by making such information available so that performers [readers] are better equipped to assume these burdens and make informed choices. That such information and options in 17th-century music [treatises] are complicated, distressingly vague and ambiguous goes with the territory.<sup>16</sup>

In the same manner it would be unconscionable for a translator to render ambiguous words or phrases into another language without providing the original ones or alternate interpretations of them either in square brackets or in a footnote. One concern of particular note is Praetorius's use of the terms *Geige*, *Violin*, *klein Geige*, *Viol*, *Violist*. At times they appear to be applied interchangeably, while on other occasions they are used more specifically. In order to avoid cluttering the translation with the original name of each instrument every time it occurs, the instrument in question will appear in brackets when it is not on the following list:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
Blockflöte or Blockflöit	Blockflöten or Blockflöiten
Capella Fidicinia	Capellæ Fidiciniaë
Clavicymbel	Clavicymbeln
cornett(o)	Cornetten
Fagott(o)	Fagotten
(Chorist, Doppel, Quart, Quint)	
	Herrpaucken
Menschen Stimme	Menschen Stimmen
Pommer (doppel)	Pommern (doppel)
Posaun (Quart/Quint)	Posaunen (Quart/Quint)
Querflöte (flöit)	Querflöten (flöiten)
Trommett	Trommetten

<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey Kurtzman, "Editions, Scholarship and Performance," *Early Music* 29 (2001): 157.

Viol da Gamba  
violin(o)  
voce humana

Violen da Gamba  
Violini

In other words, if the translation reads “violin [*Geige*],” that means Praetorius used the word *Geige* instead of *Violin*.

Another word used ambiguously by Praetorius is *Harmony* (and its various grammatical configurations, e.g., *harmonia*, *harmoniam*, *harmoniae*, etc.), meaning “harmony” in some cases and “sound” in others. The word “sound” itself appears in a variety of guises, including *Concord*, *Concentum*, *Intonirn*, *Klang*, *Resonantz*, *Concordantz*, and *lauten*. In these cases and several more (e.g., *tactus*, *Takt*, *Schlag*, *Kapellmeister*, *maestro di capella*, *Directori*, *Musicorum Chororum Directoribus*) the original word has been placed in square brackets to indicate that the decision to use one word rather than another may have been purely arbitrary. *Harmonia* and *tactus* will be added in brackets only when not translated as “harmony” and “beat,” respectively.

There has been no attempt to standardize Praetorius’s inconsistent spelling, as there may be some benefit in knowing that he either encountered differing versions of the spelling of a specific person, place, or thing (e.g., Giovanni Battista Fergusio, Ioan Fregusij), or that he may have spelled it phonetically (e.g., Claudius de Monte Verde), or that he was simply confused (e.g., Alexius Alexander for Alexius Neander [89]). Of course, many of the words reflect the required endings of proper grammatical usage (see *harmonia* above), and then it is entirely possible that the majority of mistakes are simply errors made by the printer. Unfortunately, some of the errors may prevent scholars from ever finding the person to whom he was referring; for example, Antonius Faber, who has not been located, may perhaps be Giovanni Antonio Fabri (fl. 1620) or Benedictus Faber (1573–1634).<sup>17</sup> Praetorius himself is well aware of the problem; see his comment preceding the list of *errata* found on page 235 of *SMII*: “At times not only words have been omitted, but also letters have been mixed up, switched around, or even omitted. Of those only the most notable have been listed here; while reading, the lesser ones may be corrected by the well-meaning reader himself.”<sup>18</sup> Of course, not every reader will benefit from the original material having been put in brackets or footnotes, but the ones who are in a position to know will appreciate being able to draw their own conclusions.

The fact that only one translation of *Syntagma musicum III* (submitted as a Doctoral of Musical Arts dissertation)<sup>19</sup> has been attempted since its appearance in 1619

<sup>17</sup> Nothing has been located on the life of Giovanni Antonio Fabri, but he and Benedictus Faber were active around the turn of the seventeenth century; the latter wrote motets for two choirs in a rather conservative style (see Adam Adrio and Dorothea Schröder, “Faber, Benedikt,” *NG Online* [accessed 14 Aug. 2002]).

<sup>18</sup> *Das bißweilen nicht allein Wörter aussen gelassen / sondern auch die Buchstaben vnd Distinctiones verwechselt / versetzt oder gar mangeln. Von denen / allein die vornembste alhier verzeichnet / die andern vnd geringere wolle der guthertzige Leser im lesen selber Corrigieren.*

<sup>19</sup> Lampl, *SMIII*.

suggests that a translation has represented a daunting prospect for scholars. Volumes I and II of *Syntagma musicum* have not fared much better, as neither has been translated in its entirety. Part I (of two parts) of volume I was also submitted as a dissertation<sup>20</sup> and remains unpublished, and parts I and II (of four parts) of volume II have twice appeared in print.<sup>21</sup>

Any deficiencies that may be found in the translation, whether in German or Latin, are entirely my own and should not reflect adversely on those who have offered advice and assistance along the way. Needless to say, I will never be satisfied that I have captured the subtle nuances and intricate ambiguities of a long lost culture, and I therefore beg the reader's indulgence and understanding.

## The Sources

This translation is based on the exemplar found in Braunschweig that was published in facsimile by Bärenreiter in 1978 as Volume 15 in the series *Documenta Musicologica*, edited by Wilibald Gurlitt, as well as on Bärenreiter's recently published facsimile paperback edition, edited by Arno Forchert, 2001, based on the Wolfenbüttel exemplar. A revised reprint of the second edition of 1619, edited by Eduard Bernoulli and published by C. F. Kahnt Nachfolger in Leipzig in 1916, was also consulted. There are a number of exemplars of the second edition in libraries throughout Europe and North America, occasionally bound together with the first two volumes, but copies of the first edition, published just one year earlier, are quite scarce.

It has not been ascertained just how many copies were printed of either edition, nor is it known why the second followed the first so closely. One could conjecture that the first edition sold out quickly, necessitating a hasty reprint. But the second edition is a revision, not simply a reprint of the first, so it is possible MPC was not pleased with the many mistakes contained in the first edition and therefore ordered the second edition. It is beyond the scope of this introduction to itemize all of the differences between the two editions. There is no point, for instance, in listing the many discrepancies in pagination—a problem found in both editions, but far worse in the first—nor spelling inaccuracies and inconsistencies, also found in both editions.

Major differences between two editions of *SMIII* were discovered by Bernoulli, but only after his reprint had already appeared. The edition he used in preparing his revision, which he submitted to the publisher in the fall of 1915, is located in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (formerly known as the Munich Hof- und Staatsbibliothek). In a *Berichtigung*, or *errata* page, dated the end of May 1916 and pasted into the book following page XXVI, he reports that the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek in Bonn (known as the Königliche Universitätsbibliothek prior to 1918) has an exemplar of *SMIII* that he maintains “does not actually represent the reprint of an earlier edition,

<sup>20</sup> Fleming (1979).

<sup>21</sup> Harold Blumenfeld (1949/1980) and David Crookes (1986).

but, on the contrary, that it is clearly the very first edition, even if not fully complete” (“nicht etwa der Nachdruck einer früheren Auflage vorliegt, sondern daß es im Gegenteil offenbar die allererste, wenn auch nicht vollständige Ausgabe ist”). He says this because it concludes on page 240, omitting the last twenty pages, which contain two full pages of text, as well as the two indexes and the *errata* listings. Further, apart from a few orthographic variants on the title page, the words on the fourth line from bottom of the page are missing: “Appended is an extensive index” (*Sampt angehengtem außfürlichem Register*). This suggests that the twenty pages missing at the end of the book, constituting perhaps a complete gathering, were never intended to be there. In a communication of 19 May 2003 Bonnie Blackburn suggested that the final twenty pages might have comprised the final gathering, which may have been removed or lost, or that they might not have been prepared until the second printing was undertaken, and then were bound to copies of the first edition; they do appear, for example, in the 1618 Tenbury edition, even though it, too, is missing the fourth-last line on the title page. The final two lines on the title page of the Bonn exemplar conclude with: *Getruckt zu Wolffbüttel, bey Elias Holwein Fürstl. Br. Buchtr. und Formschn. Im Jahr 1618*, while in Munich they read: *Getruckt zu Wolffbüttel, bey Elias Holwein, F. Br. Buchdr. vnd Forms. / daselbst. In Verlegung des Autoris. Im Jahr / 1619.*

A partial list of differences has been assembled in table 1 after consulting the following exemplars (all are second editions unless indicated 1618). It is apparent that even the first edition had a subsequent printing as there are certain differences between them, so it is entirely possible that the pages missing at the end of the volume were only absent in the Hirsch and Bonn prints and not in others, as the variants are not insignificant (my thanks to Bonnie Blackburn for additional notes on Tenbury):

- Douce P 710 (Bodleian Library, Oxford)
- Tenbury e.45 (1618) (Bodleian Library)
- Hirsch I.468 (1618) (British Library)
- M.K.8.f.1 (British Library)
- Reid Music Library c168 (University of Edinburgh)
- W.I.1. Musica (all 3 volumes in 1) (Herzog-August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel)
- W.I.4.10 Musica (Herzog-August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel)
- NL II G 6, stored in Manuscripts and Old Printed Books (record number 411)  
(National Library of the Czech Republic)
- Bonn Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek (1618) (known as the Königliche Universitätsbibliothek prior to 1918); references to this library stem from Bernoulli, pp. XXVII–XXVIII and the *errata* page.