

Jan Bouterse: Dutch woodwind instruments and their makers, 1660-1760 (Utrecht, 2005)

Introduction

0.1 How it came about

The last quarter of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th, a period corresponding largely with what in musical practice is referred to as 'the Baroque', saw a remarkable heyday in woodwind instrument production in the Netherlands. We currently know about the activities of 30 to perhaps 40 Dutch fluytenmakers (as woodwind makers used to call themselves) who lived in that period and ca. 250 recorders, traversos, oboes, bassoons, clarinets and shawms with their stamps could be tracked down in museums and private collections all over the world. But up to about 30 years ago only a small circle of musicologists, musicians and instrument makers were aware of these instruments and their makers and around 1980, when I began to make recorders and traversos, I had not heard very much about the Dutch fluytenmakers either. But that all changed when I started to search for drawings which showed the dimensions of historical instruments and I realised that I would have to measure them myself. My first expeditions - to the Haags Gemeentemuseum and to view Frans Brügger's collection - had a catalytic effect: the distinctive characteristics of the old instruments, some of which were fragile but which visitors were permitted to play to their heart's content in those days, were a revelation to me, fuelling my decision to carry on making recorders and traversos. It was at that early stage that I had the good fortune to track down and examine three traversos made by Robbert Wijne of Nimwegen. So I became interested in Wijne's background, for example in whether there were any links between him and other historical Dutch fluytenmakers most of whom worked in Amsterdam. A few years later, trying to find out more about them, I established contact with the Haags Gemeentemuseum, where the curator of the department of musical instruments, Rob van Acht, had embarked on a project of subjecting the 17th- and 18th-century Dutch woodwind instruments to detailed scrutiny with a view to the publication of three catalogues (see § 1.1.3). It is thanks to him that I became closely involved in that major undertaking and spent many hours between 1988 and 1997 in the museum's repositories, describing and measuring the instruments in question. It was there that I came to appreciate the qualities of the Dutch recorders, traversos, oboes, bassoons and clarinets. I also discovered major and minor differences in their makers' conceptions of internal and external design and consequently of their views about the sound and other acoustic characteristics of their instruments. This gave rise to the plan to assemble as comprehensive a survey as possible of Dutch woodwind instruments from the 17th and 18th centuries. This meant more than drawing up an inventory of the surviving or recovered instruments; it meant examining their most important characteristics. In view of the scale and importance of the project, and in order to obtain the necessary scholarly support, I contacted Professor Kees Vellekoop of the faculty of musicology at Utrecht University in 1994. He agreed to supervise my work as a doctoral research project. Shortly after the completion of my thesis the Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis (KVNMG, the Royal Dutch Musicology Association) decided to publish an English translation of the thesis, hitherto available on a CD in Dutch. This publication is the result of that decision.

0.2 Comments on the questions addressed in the research project

Who were these Dutch fluytenmakers? Where did they live, and when; where did they learn their trade; how international was their orientation? What were (or still are) the musical possibilities of their instruments; could they compare with instruments made in other well-known centres such as London, Paris, Brussels or Nuremberg? Another question concerns the relationship between making woodwind instruments and other kinds of instruments such as the internationally famous Dutch church and house organs.

In order to answer these questions it was necessary to organise the investigation systematically. Firstly, an inventory was compiled of the whereabouts of the instruments and what has been

written about them. The resulting information was so patchy or unclear that an on-the-spot inspection of the instruments was called for in the collections in which they are kept. They were measured and photographed, described and played - where permission was granted. This inventorial and descriptive study led to a formulation of the problem, one of the key questions being whether there was any such thing as a typically Dutch recorder, traverso or oboe in the 17th and 18th century, or whether it was more a case of a typical Steenbergen recorder, a typical Borkens traverso or Haka oboe (etc., etc.). Answering these questions requires a specification of the elements of external and internal design that characterize each maker's oeuvre. In specifying these distinctive features it emerged that the results of earlier research were only limitedly valid. Another problem was that the interior design that is so important for the determination of each instrument's musical qualities is a highly complex business. What, for example, is the effect of a wider bore, a thicker wall or more deeply undercut fingerholes on an instrument's sound, tuning or range?

The answers to these questions are based partly on one's own experiences and those of other makers in making copies of historical woodwinds. The results of the inventorial and technical scrutiny of the instruments form the basis of questions pertaining to the instruments' musical possibilities and to aspects of sharing knowledge among the makers. With regard to this latter aspect not only the correspondences between their instruments were scrutinized, so were the family relationships and what we know about the relations between the fluytenmakers and their apprentices.

For this, biographical and other relevant information about the makers was gathered and subjected to critical scrutiny. The lack of coherent results of examining the characteristics of the woodwind instruments from other European centres did however make it difficult - apart from a few general aspects such as typological classification and what material was used - to compare the instruments of Dutch makers with those made by their colleagues in Paris, Nuremberg, London and elsewhere.

Some recorders, traversos and reed-blown instruments (notably the oboes) are made of such luxurious materials (such as ebony, with ivory mounts and handsomely engraved silver keys) that they seem to have been expressly made for their owners to flaunt. Their musical qualities may not be underrated, though; these qualities - like those of less sumptuous or even dilapidated instruments - ought to be the chief objective of the study. In practice, though, playing the instruments was fraught with problems. Many of the recorders and traversos could not be played at all because they were too fragile or damaged. None of the oboes and shawms still had their original reeds and staples and it was very difficult to find suitable reed/staple combinations for playing these instruments.

Furthermore, existing information about playing the instruments (from the literature or personal experience) was not always practicable or suitable for comparison. Not only does every player have his or her particular technique, so that one and the same instrument sounds different every time, there is also the problem of formulating subjective experiences in unambiguous terms that everybody can understand. Despite these problems, an attempt was made to assemble systematically all the relevant information about how the examined instruments played and to present that information in as objective a fashion as possible.

I was able to carry out a detailed examination of three Dutch instruments - all from private collections - in my own workshop. The information obtained from this detailed examination proved to be extremely valuable, but also discouraging: it demonstrated clearly the limitations of the less detailed measurements of the other instruments that were examined in their own collections.

Examining an instrument's musical possibilities leads almost inevitably to the question as to how instruments were formerly used. In the first place, however, it must be emphasised that it is not the purpose of this study to present a general, systematic description and assessment of the status of the examined instruments in Dutch musical life in the 17th and 18th century; this would entail further research into the activities of musicians, musical education and composers and the music they produced for woodwind instruments. Detailed information about concert performances and suchlike would also have to be obtained. Of course there are occasional references in these chapters to aspects of Dutch musical life, but only in the specific context of Dutch woodwinds and their makers. The same applies for references to the political, cultural and socio-economical situation in the Netherlands in the 17th and 18th century. In the three aforementioned catalogues

of the Dutch baroque woodwind instruments of the Gemeentemuseum in Den Haag (The Hague), Rob van Acht deals with these aspects of Dutch history.

0.3 The instruments, space and time scope of the study

Dutch in the title of this study means the Republic of the United Netherlands as it was until 1795, i.e. it does not apply to instrument makers in the Southern Netherlands (present-day Belgium). Dutch also indicates that the instruments discussed in this book were made within the borders of the Republic. It does not mean that the makers were all native Dutchmen; we know that some of them, or their parents, emigrated to the Netherlands from England (Haka and Rijkel) or from the west-German regions (De Jager and Richters). Some instruments are however stamped with the names of makers whose location or period of activity has not been ascertained. These include Dutch-sounding names like Roosen and Van Gulik. § 1.2.1 indicates which makers' instruments are included in this study and whose are not. Another problematic group consists of a few anonymous (because unstamped) instruments; the curators of the collections, or other researchers, presume that these instruments were made in the Netherlands. Again, whether or not they should be included in the study was decided in individual cases. For instance, several oboes in the style of the Richters brothers and Rijkstijn were examined in order to see whether they could be related to the oboes on which their stamps do occur (see § 9.8).

Woodwind instruments appeared to be the most appropriate designation for the instruments in this study. It should however be borne in mind that some of these instruments are not made of wood, or only partly; a number of ivory recorders and traversos survive. The official term for the researched instruments is aerophones; these are instruments of the flute type such as the windway or block flutes (duct flutes or recorders), and transverse flutes, single-reed instruments such as chalumeaux and clarinets and double-reed instruments such as oboes, shawms and bassoons. The historical term *fluytenmakers* alternates with woodwind makers for the sake of variation; we should remember that these craftsmen usually made several types of woodwinds, not just recorders and transverse flutes.

Incidentally, no Dutch Pan-pipes, bagpipes or musettes have survived the period of the study, nor was any evidence found to suggest that such instruments were made in the Netherlands during that period. The study did not extend to the representatives of another group of woodwinds: 'lip-vibrating aerophones' such as the trumpet and horn. Although a few trumpet makers were active in the Netherlands in the 17th and 18th century (see § 3.8.3), none of their instruments have been found, with one possible exception.

As for the time scope, this study is largely devoted to recorders, traversos, oboes, bassoons and clarinets made between ca. 1660 and 1760; this period corresponds more or less with what in musical practice is referred to as 'the Baroque'. Woodwind instruments made during this period are characterised by their jointed construction, the joints being linked by tenon-and-socket connections; other characteristic features are the often exuberant turning of the instruments and their usually more complicated bores, which are reamed more conically than their older and frequently unstamped predecessors of the 16th and first half of the 17th century. With the odd exception, no woodwind instruments stamped with Dutch names predate 1660 or thereabouts, nor do the archives yield any information about professional instrument makers in this country. Born in England, Richard Haka (1646-1705) and his parents emigrated to Amsterdam when he was still a boy. He was one of the first to make woodwind instruments in the new baroque style in the Netherlands and probably the first to systematically stamp them with his name. A few of Haka's one-part recorders survive. Nowadays this type of recorder from that period is often designated early baroque; the term transitional or transition instrument is also current. In this case the transitional period dates back to the end of the previous period in music and instrument construction, and is known as Renaissance. The introductory paragraphs in the chapters on instruments (7 through 11) focus on a few early baroque or transitional instruments (some of them unstamped) which might have been made in the Netherlands.

It was not easy to choose which makers and their instruments should round off the researched period, and which should not. Willem Wijne (1730-1816), Johannes van de Knikker (1731-1815) and Jan (Barend) Beuker (1737-1816) were selected to bring up the rear. They almost certainly began to make instruments before 1760, or were evidently linked by family ties or by their style with the previous generations of Dutch flute and oboe makers. A factor that played a part in Van de Knikker's selection was the inclusion of his instruments - which are made in a quite different style, with no relations at all to those of the fluytenmakers in Amsterdam - in the catalogues of the Gemeentemuseum at The Hague. But I have made the decision not to choose for Johannes Christiani (ca. 1745-1816), as he started his workshop in Amsterdam not before 1786. It is also very difficult to distinguish his instruments from those made by his son Fransiscus. The traversos and clarinets by members of the Christiani family are, however, selected by Rob van Acht for the recently published third catalogue of Dutch baroque woodwind instruments of the collection of the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag.

0.4 The arrangement of the chapters

The first chapter, entitled 'Sources, methods and history of the research' discusses at length the research methods employed in this study and the incorporation and notation of that information. The chapter is important in that this book is the first study of its kind and scope to be devoted to woodwind instruments of the Baroque period, and the measuring methods and terminology used for the instruments have to be perfectly clear. Several paragraphs in chapter 1 refer to earlier studies of the instruments and their makers. Chapter 2 presents biographical data on the makers; an analysis of these data follows in chapter 3. Chapter 4 is primarily informative and contains the lists of instruments that have been tracked down or can be securely traced back to their makers, as well as information about their provenance and about instruments which have been lost. The results of chapter 4 are analysed in chapter 5, which specifies what type of instrument was the work of each maker, where and by whom instruments were found, the 18th-century collections in which they are mentioned. Chapter 6 discusses the stamps on the instruments.

Chapters 7 to 11 are devoted to the instruments, which are discussed in the following order: recorders, traversos, oboes and Deutsche schalmeien, bassoons and rackets and ending with the clarinets. The various aspects of these instruments are treated thematically: an introductory paragraph dwells briefly on their nomenclature and history. Technical aspects follow. The longer instrument chapters 7 (the recorders), 8 (the traversos) and 9 (the oboes) contain a paragraph on each maker and a description of the instruments in his oeuvre. At the end of these chapters the most important conclusions are summarized in turn. Because there are only a few extant Dutch bassoons and clarinets, chapters 10 and 11 are arranged differently and the bassoons and clarinets are discussed separately; it was not necessary to present a comprehensive survey of these instruments. The instrument chapters are followed by a comprehensive summary of the study and concluding remarks. Finally, all the makers and their surviving instruments are briefly reviewed. A large number of instruments in this research project are in collections which are difficult to access or whose personnel have not fully measured and/or described the instruments. It was therefore decided to present a large amount of the source material (descriptions, measurement data and bibliographic references) systematically in Appendix C. A large number of the author's own colour slides and photographs of the instruments are also included. The numbering of the photographs conforms with the system employed for their coding in the author's archive. Different kinds of illustrations were prepared by the author for this publication: firstly, computer-generated line drawings of instruments, instrument components and bore diagrams. Others are pencil sketches of details (such as stamps on the instruments). Thirdly, there are a number of black-and-white photographs, some of them from collections in other countries and reproduced here with their permission in writing. Most of the black-and-white photographs show instruments from the collection of the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag. The majority of these photographs were taken by Theo Strengers, the museum's former house-photographer.

0.5 About the translation and the alterations to the original thesis

This publication was translated by Ruth Koenig of Buren, who was also responsible for the English translation of the catalogues of Dutch baroque woodwind instruments published by the Gemeentemuseum at The Hague (see § 1.1.3). The translation of the technical terms keeps as closely as possible to the terminology and spelling used in these catalogues and also in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians (editions 1980 and 2001). See also the remarks in § 1.4 and § 1.9 for the translation of specialist terminology in connection with the descriptions of the instruments.

To a considerable extent this English edition of the book is identical with the earlier CD-ROM version of the Dutch thesis (Bouterse 2001: *Nederlandse houtblaasinstrumenten en hun bouwers, 1660-1760*). The arrangement of the chapters is the same, as few alterations as possible have been made in the tables and in order to avoid confusion the numbering of the instruments remains unchanged. The original text, however, has been subjected to detailed and critical scrutiny, resulting in a few minor changes and corrections to errata, and a different layout. After publication of the thesis I received from various sources important supplementary information on certain points which I have incorporated in the text to the best of my ability. An example is the discovery of Jan Boekhout's advertisement; like his father Thomas Boekhout, Jan made woodwind instruments (§ 2.5). In 2003, three new instruments (by Haka, I.V.H and Robbert Wijne) were discovered. The most important data of these instruments are also incorporated in the relevant chapters.

The lists and appendices have undergone greater changes. The bibliography is somewhat longer and includes the addresses of consulted internet sites. The old List II, with the full names of the museums and public collections in which the instruments in the study are kept, is now in Appendix A. The new Appendix B lists instruments in inventories and sale catalogues of the 18th and early 19th century. The old List III, with a glossary of technical terms, is now omitted. The most important data can now be found in a few tables and drawings in chapter 1; see for example § 1.9, in which the most important elements of the turnery are discussed.

The appendices of the thesis, with the historical Dutch nomenclature of the instruments, discoveries of early woodwind instruments in the Netherlands and iconographical research (Bijlagen A, B and C), are now omitted; the most significant results in these appendices are now incorporated in the first paragraphs of the chapters on the respective instruments. Bijlage D of the thesis, with descriptions and dimensions of the examined instruments, has been revised and is now stored as Appendix C. Because the delivery of 40 woodwind instruments in 1685 by Richard Haka to Sweden is treated in several chapters (§ 2.12, § 4.14 and § 5.3), all information about this delivery is for the readers' convenience brought together in Appendix D.

Finally a remark about the relation between the information in this publication and the three catalogues of Dutch baroque woodwind instruments in the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague: there are some differences, such as in the spelling of the names (for instance Robbert Wijne instead of Robert Wijne) and some dimensions of the instruments may vary too. These differences are a matter of interpretation, but are also caused by the fact that for the catalogues of the Gemeentemuseum the recorders and traversos were measured by various people using different techniques (see § 1.10 about comparing measurements).

0.6 Acknowledgments

Most of this field-work was conducted between 1991 and 1996. Grants from the *Prins Bernhard Fonds* and the *Stichting Voortgezette Opleiding Podiumkunsten* (Foundation for Advanced Podium Arts) enabled me to visit collections in other countries. I am very grateful to the staff-members in those various collections of musical instruments and also to private owners of only one or two flutes or oboes, all of whom were enormously helpful in one way or another and furthered my investigation. In addition to Rob van Acht and curators of other collections, particular thanks are due to my fellow

flutemakers as well as to a number of professional and amateur musicians, with whom I had frequent discussions about my research. Compared with Alec Loretto (recorder maker and also my teacher for a few courses), Bruce Haynes (who aided me with the critical revision of the chapter on oboes), Friedrich von Huene and Ardel Powell (traversos), most instrument makers have not published very much about their experiences in examining and making copies of historical instruments. My research was also stimulated by Annemies Tamboer (early instruments) and various people whom I met during courses and other activities of *Bouwerskontakt* (a study group of *Huismuziek*, an association for music and instrument making) and the English *FoMHRI* (Fellowship of Makers and Researchers of Historical Instruments). I am most grateful to the editorial boards of journals published by these associations (*Bouwbrief* and the *FoMRHI-Quarterly*) for accepting my contributions - ripe and unripe - without a murmur.

In collecting and examining the relevant literature I received generous support from the staff of the Haags Gemeentemuseum's music library (since the beginning of 2001 part of the *Nederlands Muziek-instituut* in The Hague); I also made grateful use of the opportunity to consult the large collection of historical books in the library of harpsichord player and conductor Ton Koopman.

Although it was not my original intention to engage in extensive field-work myself for the biographical and historical scrutiny of Dutch flute-makers, I did eventually visit or contact various archives. After several fruitless attempts my detective work concerning the consignment of woodwind instruments made by Richard Haka and shipped to Sweden was eventually crowned with success. In the Amsterdam Municipal Archive (*Gemeentearchief Amsterdam*) I obtained several useful tips from Johan Giskes; in connection with the activities of the flute-maker Van Hallum Mr. G. van der Heide of Franeker consulted the archives for me. Mr. G. Verloop of Schagen gave me liberal access to the results of his research into the incidence of musical instruments in old auctions.

I am of course very grateful to Professor Vellekoop, who during my doctoral research carefully checked the great number of pages in the chapters and ensured that the investigation remained on course. Sadly, because of his tragic death in 2002, he was unable to see the publication of this translation. Bruce Haynes and Anthony Rowland Jones (Cambridge, England) helped me with the corrections of the translations of the descriptions of the instruments. Help also came from several people in my direct surroundings, particularly in the last phase of the thesis. Thanks are due to my father, Dr. J. Bouterse of Vlaardingen, for transcribing a few historical texts. My elder son Martijn frequent advised me on computer problems. The many pages of this comprehensive work were translated by Ruth Koenig, whose pleasant collaboration was much appreciated.

Finally, I am greatly indebted to my wife Marian for helping me to recover from a serious illness and thereby enabling me to work on the mainly unsubsidized phases of this project.