

## • Jubal's Lyre: A 1770 Musicale • Program Notes

The cittern enjoyed a lively period of renewed popularity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Its user-friendly qualities were heightened by the development of an improved tuning mechanism and a system of tuning the instrument's strings in a C major chord. This type of cittern has come to be known as an "English guittar," as distinguished from the guitar-shaped "Spanish guitar," which eventually overtook the cittern in popularity.

Duo Marchand succeeded in acquiring a vintage 1770 English guittar bearing the stamp of a London maker, Thompson Brothers, at Christie's in the spring of 2006. Andy has since acquired two additional instruments from the same period. The two guittars he plays this evening are the same basic model, differing mainly in the amount of inlay and other ornament.

One claimant to the "invention" of the English guittar was Frederick Hintz, a skilled cabinetmaker and luthier who operated in Austria and London. Hintz became a convert to the Moravian church in 1738 and later published two cittern books, one containing arrangements of Moravian hymns. Many of the hymns are resettings of Lutheran chorale melodies. Others appear to be fiddle tunes with added text.

The guittar became an instrument of fashion in England, briefly eclipsing even the harpsichord in popularity. The guittar then followed the emigration pattern across the Atlantic and became the popular instrument of Colonial America, where it was played in the homes of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin among many others.

Franklin was a cultivated musician with an extensive private collection that included a viola da gamba, a Welsh harp, and his own invention, a glass 'armonica.' One of the pieces he enjoyed playing on this curious instrument was "Handel's Water Piece," a favorite theme from the *Water Music* of 1717. Handel was the favorite composer of the Colonies, and Franklin's print shop stocked his works in sheet music form, along with works by Corelli, Purcell, Geminiani, and others.

Musical amateurs on both sides of the Atlantic were assisted by the ready availability of "Pocket Companions" or "Pocket Guides," compact booklets of exercises and popular tunes for instruction and amusement. The books, like the instrument, were inexpensive and simple to use. Most contain melodies only, in the manner of today's "fake books," plus a scattering of duets.

In content, the booklets reflect the 18<sup>th</sup>-century interest in ballad opera -- with many tunes imitating hunting horns or peddlers' street cries -- as well as the contemporary craze for Scottish song. Well-remembered tunes from Handel's operas turn up in every collection. We include below, for your information, a few examples of cover copy. Young ladies were thought to look especially fetching and graceful while playing the guittar, a fact that was used as a selling point and was sometimes featured in a title page illustration.

### *Calliope*

A collection of the most Celebrated English and Scots Songs, neatly Engrav'd and Embelish'd with Designs adapted to the Subject of each Song taken from the Compositions of the Best Masters, in the most correct Manner for all Teachers, Scholars and Lovers of Musick, rendering the Undertaking more compleat than any thing of the kind ever Publish'd. (London, 1737 [many subsequent reprints throughout the century])

***The Ladies Pocket Guide or The compleat Tutor for the Guittar,***

Containing Easy Rules for Learners after a new Method, with a choice Collection of the most favourite Airs neatly fitted for that Instrument with some agreeable Lefsons in two Parts for ye improvement of Young Ladies.

Printed and sold by David Rutherford at his Music Shop at the [sign of the] Violin and German Flute in St. Martin's Court near Leicester Fields, London (c. 1755).

[The Colonies followed suit, a few years later, with such publications as this:]

***The Philadelphia Pocket Companion***

For the Guittar or Clarinette

Being a Collection of the most favorite Songs &c selected from the European Performances and Publications of the last twelvemonth and as its continuation will be annual it may be considered as a Yearly Journal of the most esteemed Lyric Compositions. (1794)

- notes by *Andy Rutherford and Marcia Young*