

Johann Christoph Demantius, “Two Canons for Two” (17th century)

Abstract

Music played a central role in early modern German religious and social practice and expression. While song had long been central to Christian religious practice, the Reformation era intensified the role of music in spreading and informing Protestantism and reinforcing religious community and ritual. The early modern period also experienced significant musical innovation in both religious and secular music, especially in terms of instrumentation and composition. In addition to church services and celebrations, musicians enhanced weddings, civic celebrations, and other social functions. In some urban areas, musicians held positions as civic employees who contributed to the city’s reputation and guilds for musicians provided standards and guidelines for members.

The music performed here was written by Johann Christoph Demantius (1567-1643). He was educated at the University of Wittenberg, became Kantor at the Freiberg Cathedral, and played a significant role in the transition from Renaissance to baroque music. The recorder played a special role in the music of this period. A medieval fixture in ensembles, the recorder developed into an important solo instrument in the seventeenth century.

This piece, “Two Canons for 2,” has been transposed and performed by Gerald Leatherman on instruments he constructed: the bore and other acoustically critical characteristics were made according to measurements of historical instruments by recorder maker Bob Marvin and based on models from the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum (8537) and the Conservatoire in Paris (E1935). They are made of maple treated with linseed oil.

Source

Source: Johann Christoph Demantius, “Two Canons for 2,” 17th century. Recorder: Gerald Leatherman. Used by permission.

Gerald Leatherman

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