



Le Breton and the Counter Tenor Bassoon

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LE BRETON AND THE COUNTER TENOR BASSOON

In *An Universal History of Arts and Sciences* by the Chevalier Dennis de Coetlogon MD, London 1745, the section on music in volume two is worth reading since it contains some fresh information. For example on bassoons he writes:

The best *Bassoon* I ever heard was one Le Breton, Bassoon of our Lady at *Paris*, who invented a Counter-tenor to the *Bassoon*. The next to him is a Bassoon in the Guards of his *Britannick* Majesty; and next to him one De Ricourt a *Frenchman*, who is Bassoon at the Theatre in *Drury-Lane*, who is one of the best Hautboys in *Europe* and plays extremely well on the *German* flute.

De Coetlogon also has comments on harpsichord and organ players. He published medical and other books in London from 1736–49 and died there on 23 October 1749. His son appears in *DNB*. Could this Le Breton be the maker living in the Rue de l'Arbre Sec mentioned by Pierre in the Livre Commode of 1692? I suspect that the bassoon playing member of the Guards was John Miller of whom Burney also thought well. I have not been able to track down De Ricourt.

We know in fact that small bassoons were made at the beginning of the eighteenth century, by for example, Scherer but this reference to a Parisian instrument and maker is interesting. MAURICE BYRNE

THE NEW LANGWILL INDEX OF HISTORICAL WIND-INSTRUMENT MAKERS

The *NLI* seeks primarily to furnish biographical information on makers, with each entry of the 6th edition researched and rewritten.

Having attempted to examine the pertinent printed source material in English, German, French and Italian, I am asking now, in view of my deadline of late 1988, for information on any maker of which I might be ignorant. I am particularly anxious to learn of unpublished research data, hitherto unreported makers and articles in obscure journals. The scope of the *NLI* was outlined in *GSJ XXXIX* (1986), pp. 58–67; note that only makers active before 1945 are to be included and that location listings of instruments are no longer of primary concern.

In the past Lyndesay Langwill benefited from the help of many collaborators: I in my turn shall be grateful for assistance in making the *NEW LANGWILL INDEX* as complete and accurate as possible.

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