**Masters of the German Baroque, Johann Hermann Schein and Samuel Scheidt.**

**A workshop for recorders and strings.**

You probably already know more about seventeenth century German music than you think you do! Michael Praetorius is well known for sacred pieces and his mighty work Terpsichori, and last spring we enjoyed a BMEMF workshop on a mass by Johann Kaspar von Kerll. Now we're going to look at consort pieces by two of Kerll's contemporaries, Schein and Scheidt.

The seventeenth century in Germany saw the rise of several centres of musical excellence and innovation, and the start of the many musical forms which we now most readily associate with Bach. This process was driven by the Reformation and the Thirty Years War, and a good deal of foreign influence. Before the start of the war in 1618, Heinrich Schutz (1585 - 1672) spent four years studying under Giovanni Gabrieli, and, back in Dresden, became a major teacher of the Venetian style. The best known German composer of his day, Schutz was a great friend of Johann Hermann Schein, (1586 - 1630) the cantor of St Thomas's church in Leipzig, and so we see how the Italian influence spread from Dresden to Leipzig . The third of the 'three great S' composers of the time was Samuel Scheidt,(1587 - 1654) who spent a formative year studying with Sweelinck in Amsterdam , which greatly influenced the style of his keyboard compositions.

Schein wrote much fine music for the Lutheran service, including Latin and German motets and cantatas, and although he never left Germany, his work shows an Italian influence which we may deduce came to him via Shutz. He also wrote secular works including lieder and dances, and the piece Canzon a 6 we are going to study is from a collection of Intraden, Gagliarden and Canzonen dating from 1609.

For nearly twenty years Scheidt worked in the service of the margrave of Brandenburg at Halle, as organist, choir master and composer. He is best known for his development of chorale variations for the organ, but his harpsichord toccatas and fantasias are equally important and he also wrote for voices and instruments. His five part Canzon super O Nachbar Roland is a lovely piece, modulating from A minor, through many changes of time and key, to end, surprisingly perhaps, in a bright D major. It has been recorded by several single instrument consorts, but I think we will enjoy playing it as a mixed ensemble of recorders and strings.

Despite the different influences on their music, the two pieces have quite a lot in common and make good companions for each other. They both start in A minor, you'll be pleased to hear, and both dart from duple to triple time and back again, and there are lovely subtle key changes and adventures into polyphony for us to enjoy. I think they owe quite a lot to traditional tunes and dance rhythms, and whether they should be embellished as in French Baroque I don't know...lots of puzzles for Andrew to help us with.

I have chosen as a venue the Community Centre at Knucklas, near Knighton, which I hope you will like. It is a pleasant and comfortable modern building, in a delightful setting, with views over the surrounding hills and the viaduct. There is plenty of free parking, but Knucklas has a railway station, so you might find you can take the train from Craven Arms, like the folk musicians do for 'Folk down the Track'

Our tutor, Andrew Collis, will be familiar to many of you. I first met him at the late lamented study centre Farncombe, (now a hotel called The Fish!) where he conducted weekends for recorder and viol players, and SRP Wales has enjoyed his tuition on several occasions. He studied at Trinity College with Philip Thorby and Paul Clarke, and later in Amsterdam, and is now a hugely popular and respected performer, teacher and adjudicator. You can read more about his work and achievements on the BMEMF website, and I can assure you that we will have a super day enjoying his expert guidance!