

Obituaries

HENRIK GLAHN

29.5.1919–16.8.2006

Henrik Glahn came from a well-known family in which clergymen and soldiers are plentifully represented. The name Egede, which is included in the names of several members of the family, derives from a distinguished forebear, Hans Egede (1686-1758), sometimes referred to as ‘apostle to Greenland’. The name Wiehe, which was one of the baptismal names of Henrik’s clergyman-father Thorkil, on the other hand, testifies to a relationship to the famous 19th century theatrical family. Though the Glahn family has fostered several architects, Henrik, who said that he would have chosen theology if he hadn’t chosen music, is apparently the only Glahn to have made a career as a musician and it is perhaps the artistic Wiehe strain in his genealogy that tipped the balance. In any case, his musical talent was early evident and after studying piano under Alexander Stoffregen and organ under Hakon Godsk Nielsen he took the organist diploma from the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in 1941. At the same time he studied musicology at the University of Copenhagen under Erik Abrahamsen and, more especially, Jens Peter Larsen, completing his M.A. in 1945 with a thesis on Brahms’ symphonies. During the years of the German occupation of Denmark the military side of his inheritance had a chance to assert itself; in the difficult years 1943–45 Henrik was chairman for the Student Council of the university, whose political activities resulted for the chairman in a short period of imprisonment by the Gestapo. A person of authority and integrity, he was a natural leader, a quality of character that brought with it responsibilities which he tirelessly assumed to the advantage of persons as well as institutions throughout his life.

In 1945 he began a teaching career at the Department of Musicology at the University of Copenhagen that was to continue (lecturer 1957, reader 1964, professor 1967) until his retirement in 1989. He was a distinguished teacher, who represented the highest ideals of humanistic scholarship, which he felt (with many others) were frustrated by the ideological compromises represented by the constitution that was adopted by the university in 1973, very much against his opposition as a member of consistorium (1971–74). He was awarded the university’s gold medal in 1947 for a study of the rhythm of hymn tunes from the time of the Reformation, based on a study of the Danish hymnbook of Hans Thomissøn (1569), which was an important preparation for his doctoral dissertation, *Melodistudier til den lutherske salmesangs historie fra 1524 til ca. 1600* (Studies of the Melodies in the History of Lutheran Hymns from 1524 to c. 1600), i-ii (Copenhagen, 1954). With this the foundation was laid for what was to be the central theme of his life’s work as a scholar, unfolded in numerous articles and editions and culminating in the late summing-up, *Salmemelodien i dansk tradition 1569-1973* (The Hymn Tune in Danish Tradition 1569–1973) (Copenhagen, 2000). He added a practical dimension through his work as organist at Jægersborg Church (1947–59), and as one of the succession of distinguished organists (N.W. Gade, T. Laub, M. Wöldike, K. Jeppesen, and S. Sørensen) at Holmens Church (1959–64). He collaborated with J.P. Larsen and Mogens Wöldike on *Den danske Koralbog* (Copenhagen, 1954, 2nd edn., 1973), and was alone responsible for the third edition (1992). He was, furthermore, active in the work of *Samfundet Dansk Kirkesang*, as a member of its board of directors (1947–83), as chairman (1955–71) and as joint-editor (1950–88) of its Yearbook, to which he was also a regular contributor right up to 2005. In view of his

authority in this field, it was inevitable that he should be a member (1970–73) of the parliamentary commission on reform of the liturgy in the Danish church.

Henrik Glahn's research was not limited to hymnology, however. In his investigation and edition of music from the court of Christian III (*Dania Sonans. Kilder til Musikkens Historie i Danmark* (Dania Sonans. Sources for the History of Music in Denmark), Series IV-V (Copenhagen, 1978, 1986)), he was able, while remaining rooted in the Reformation period in Denmark, to cast light on an international repertoire that included works by some of the greatest composers of the Renaissance. Similarly of importance for its broad, international, perspective is the contribution he made to music history, Danish and European, through his work with The Museum of Musical Instruments in Copenhagen (founded in 1898 as The Museum for the History of Music, in 1977 'and Carl Claudius' Collection' was added to its name; since becoming part of the National Museum recently it is now known simply as The Danish Music Museum). In 1953 he was appointed assistant to Gotfred Skjerne, whom he succeeded in 1955 as director of the museum. During his 25 years as director he developed the museum into a well housed, modern research institution, which was one of the founding bodies of the international organization of museums of musical instruments. Glahn's achievements as director of The Museum for the History of Music required considerable administrative and diplomatic ability: in 1966 he succeeded in moving the museum from rented quarters in the Museum of Art and Design to occupy a home of its own in the former manse of the Reformed Church, a handsome building in Åbenrå St. in Copenhagen. Plans to enlarge the museum by annexing the adjoining house were complicated in the early 1970s by the occupation and proclamation of the projected building as the first 'Women's House' in Copenhagen. Glahn calmly proceeded nevertheless with the delicate negotiations needed to permit altering the terms of the bequest of Carl Claudius' Collection so that it could be incorporated with the The Museum for the History of Music into one institution. By the time this was achieved the 'Women's House' had without rancour abandoned Åbenrå 26-30, which Glahn had managed to raise money to renovate and join to the existing museum. By 1979, therefore, he could invite an interested public to visit a fine museum in an attractive row of buildings, Åbenrå 26-34, where the music-historical collection had grown to double its previous size. He retired as director in 1980, but continued as chairman of the board of directors until 1994.

Glahn's administrative and diplomatic skills and good judgement were always much in demand. He was, among much else, director of *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae* (1971–93), a member of the council of the International Musicological Society (1972–82) and a member of the board of directors of the Carlsberg Foundation (1978–89). He was, in short, a pillar in the academic and cultural life of Denmark for more than half a century, but more than that, he was a noble character and a good friend, who is sadly missed.

John Bergsagel