

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCat)

BOOK REVIEWS

Keyboard Musical Instruments in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston

John Koster with contributions by Sheridan Germann and John T Kirk; illustrated by Stephen Korbet and John Koster
408pp, 16 colour photographs, 242 duotones, 79 line drawings
Boston, MA 1994
ISBN 0-87846-401-8

Koster's study examines fifty-three instruments and one unique keyboard action in the excellent collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, as well as providing a glossary, wood terminology and an extensive bibliography. The instruments include harpsichords, virginals, spinets, clavichords, grand pianos, square pianos, upright pianos, an orphica (portable piano), melodeons (the American reed organ), other small organs and a few other types.

Before becoming Conservator and Associate Professor of Museum Science at the University of South Dakota's Shrine to Music Museum in 1991, John Koster had over twenty years' experience in the Boston area, building early keyboard instruments modelled closely on historical examples. He had many purposes while planning this volume: that its contents be of interest to organologists as well as to art lovers; that it make clear the methods used to collect the information; that it serve as a reference for information about instruments not adequately described elsewhere; that it help add to or correct earlier keyboard research; finally, that it help remedy the lack of adequate descriptions of the various types of early pianos. He also hoped to add to the art of describing musical instruments by including scientific identification of the woods used—based on microscopic analysis—and technical drawings and photo-

BOSTON CATALOGUE IS NEW STANDARD IN THE FIELD

graphs of the instruments' internal construction.

In addressing these concerns, Mr Koster has produced something significantly more than a catalogue, even since the appearance of the landmark Leipzig collection catalogues. This is a state-of-the-art work which, I believe, is the new standard in the field. The care that has gone into research, analysis, organisation and production of this book is everywhere apparent. Beautiful colour and duotone photographs—the latter produced in black and neutral grey—and extensive technical information are accompanied by significant biographical, decorative art and historical essays that put the instruments in perspective in their period and in relation to each other.

As a reference book, the presentation is exemplary: the main photograph of each instrument always appears on the right-hand page, easing comparisons and flip-searching. Thankfully, all photos and diagrams of actions are made from the same vantage point, saving mental gymnastics in comparing actions. Keyboard dimensions include such data as the effective height of the sharps above the naturals and the approximate finger-weight needed to play the softest pianissimo on the various pianos—information of interest to the performer as well as the technician. The end-notes are copious and extremely useful for expanding points made in the text without obscuring the main purpose of each descriptive essay.

Koster is restrained in offering opinion or conjecture. He provides references to substantiate virtually

every statement that is not a direct measurement or observation of his own and has provided a secure body of data for reference purposes.

While front and back views of harpsichord jacks appear regularly, I regret that side views, so important for showing plectrum angle and length are not included. Except in small details such as this it is difficult to imagine what could be done to surpass Koster's work. For larger harpsichord collections, most of which have no significant published descriptions of their holdings, sheer numbers may well make it impossible to emulate this Boston catalogue. Since it would not be necessary to repeat much of what this book already covers so well, perhaps the essential elements of the format might serve as an example by which collections can realise the spirit of cultural enrichment that motivated their foundation and so many donations to them.

PAUL IRVIN

Igor Kipnis adds the following comments from his point of view as a player:

Lavish is certainly a word anyone would use in describing this publication, which is carefully, even meticulously, prepared. Whilst the book's visual appearance is elegant, my reference to lavishness applies principally to Koster's almost exhaustive scholarly descriptions of each instrument: provenance, bibliographical references, dimensions, compass, action, disposition, stringing and scaling measurements, materials, construction, decoration and condition. Organologically, this is most impressive. For the performer, however, one who may have less involvement with the technique of building, can this catalogue also have particular use?

At a time when historical practice is a vital element in the

re-creation of earlier music, and keyboard instruments are more often than not modelled on specific originals, descriptions of the museum's Italian, Flemish and English possessions—as well as American instruments, in the case of a number of pianos—can be extremely helpful to the performer. One can, for example, check keyboard ranges and compasses, giving the player an opportunity to judge what might have been playable on any of these instruments.

Perhaps more important are the details of registration: pre-17th-century singles, Koster tells us, tended to have either a single 8' register or 8' and 4' rather than the two eights until recently thought of as representing the disposition of most Italian harpsichords (p. 7). There are even hints to the performer, as the author

refers to the *petite reprises* in French repertoire as little echoes to be played on the upper manual—though Koster does not say it, one might infer from this that an upper 8' on a French double would be markedly softer than one often hears on today's instruments.

For the fortepianist too there is much information about such expressive devices as stops for raising or lowering dampers, as well as how machine stops worked on late-18th-century instruments. One learns much historical information that is not easy to come by elsewhere: in the section devoted to the museum's 1796 Broadwood six-octave piano, the author mentions that this firm began making five and a half-octave pianos as early as 1790, a six-octave by 1794—and that in fact Shudi and

Broadwood had already made harpsichords with five and a half octaves (down to C') by 1765 and possibly even as early as 1749 (p. 169). Also, though the latest harpsichord manufactured—one by Clementi and Co.—is said to have dated from 1802, spinets continued on occasion to be made in Italy even as late as 1839 (p. 185, fn. 8).

The compact but comprehensive biographical sections devoted to each of the builders represented are admirably up to date. A final valuable feature is Koster's superb digest of the history of keyboard instruments: a part of the Introduction that ought to be required reading for any keyboard player.

In short, for anyone interested in early keyboard instruments, this volume is essential.

Bate Collection Demi-Catalogue No. 1 Keyboard Instruments

Jeremy Montagu
23pp
Oxford, 1993

The breadth of approach of this multi-purpose guide is as impressive as the booklet is ambitious: catered for are neophytes to historical instruments, tourists and students as well as those genuinely interested in the gems housed in the Faculty of Music.

The "demi"-catalogue on keyboard instruments is divided into four categories: clavichords, harp-

"HARPSICHORDS PLUCK THE STRINGS"

sichords, domestic [*sic*] harpsichords and pianofortes. Each section is prefaced by a laconic historical overview of the development of the instrument. This is straightforward reading in a chatty, hands-on style which reflects the uniqueness of this small museum as much as the individuality of its curator. My favourite example is, "Harpsichords pluck the strings."

All the instruments, many of which are in good playing condition, are accurately listed and described. Montagu's anecdotal style helps to make additional details such as the history of the instruments' acquisition and restoration—or otherwise—an interesting read. There are as many original historical instruments as there are modern copies, most of which were acquired or built by Michael Thomas and presented to the Bate Collection, courtesy of the Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust. Of the eight listed clavichords, the most impressive must be the five-octave (with 4' strings) by Hass, 1743. Apart from



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the modern MacCoinnich muselaar, used for teaching temperament setting, the rest of the domestic harpsichords are original. These are four spinets by B Slade, c.1710–15, T Hitchcock, c.1725–30, J Harrison, 1749 and B Harris, 1776.

Discounting the two run-down Thomas instruments (c. 1700) for student practice, the collection of harpsichords in the Bate is rather impressive. The 1781 Shudi-Broadwood comes with machine stop and Venetian swell. The beautifully sonorous Jean Goermans of 1750 has five octaves and $2 \times 8' + 4'$ registers. The earliest surviving English double-manual harpsichord, by a certain enigmatic Joseph Tisseran (dated 1700, although this date was later removed and 1710 inscribed in its place), has four and a half octaves, $G'/B'-d'''$, with a split Eb key to give both B' natural and Eb; it has three stops— $2 \times 8'$ dog-legged + $4'$. There is also a $G'-c'''$ anonymous Flemish double-manual from the late 17th century whose scaling necessitates tuning at $a' = 392$ Hz. The highlight of the collection must be the 'Handel' harpsichord: a William Smith single-manual c. 1720 which bears an uncanny resemblance to the harpsichord on which Handel is leaning in the Philippe Mercier portrait (see *Early Music*, Feb. 1993).

Fortepianos in the collection are limited to square pianos, of which all five are original: A Beyer, 1779, J Bland, 1790–95, Longman and Broderip (NB: dealers, not makers), c. 1790, Astor and Horwood, c. 1818 and J Broadwood, 1840. The occasional commercial plugs for recordings on Bate instruments are quite endearing. Perhaps readers might actually purchase the recordings, or better still join the Friends of the Bate, so that the museum can eventually supersede the current in-house photocopied booklets (all at £3) with a glossy catalogue with colour pictures?

KAH-MING NG

Bate Collection Handbooks: François Couperin: Pièces de Clavecin—The Background

Jane Clark
22pp
Oxford, 1992

Jane Clark's Bate Collection Handbook on the background to François Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin* is a valuable addition to the library of any harpsichordist.

The early 18th century in France and the court of Louis XIV in particular always seem such an intricate puzzle of subtle and complicated characters and relationships: Jane Clark expresses the intriguing nature of this period in a concise, clear manner appropriate to the size of this booklet. She writes with the confidence of one who is extremely familiar with the background to her subject and refrains from taking an overly formal or 'academic' approach. However, the reader is in no doubt that this is an authoritative guide to the interpretation of François Couperin and for the beginner it will provide the stimulus to read further into the subject. It is a great shame that the printing and the general physical presentation of the booklet are less than enticing.

The booklet shows that Couperin's *Pièces de Clavecin* form, in a manner of speaking, a musical journal or autobiography and that a great many of the pieces are programmatic. Jane Clark reminds us of the 17th-century fashion for literary portraits and points out that Couperin in his preface to the first book of harpsichord pieces writes that many of them are 'portraits of a kind, which under my fingers have, on occasion, been found to be tolerable likenesses'. As well as the portraits there are other movements describing social situations which are intriguing for their own sake as well as in terms of the light they shed on the interpretation of the music. One example is the "Fastes de la Grande et Ancienne Ménestrandise" from the Eleventh Ordre. We learn that the Ménestrandise was an influential and

COUPERIN PORTRAYS A 17TH-CENTURY MUSICIANS' UNION

ancient form of musicians' union. Members' privileges included being allowed to cross the Petit Pont without paying, in exchange for a song or a trick. In 1693 it was decreed that harpsichordists had to join this guild and any who did not were imprisoned in the Châtelet and had to appeal to the parliament for release. Couperin was part of a small group of harpsichordists who, having influence at court, could intervene on behalf of the prisoners and finally the Ménestrandise was defeated. Let us all be grateful that things are different nowadays!

One especially useful thing that the booklet does is to show the chronology of different influences ebbing and flowing through Couperin's life. Comparisons drawn between Couperin, Molière and Watteau, for example, are fascinating. The contrast between the court under the sway of the prude(nt) Madame de Maintenon and the rebellious, pleasure-seeking society at Sceaux is shown to have been important, and the difference between the character of Louis XIV and his successor Regent Philippe d'Orléans is described with vitality.

The booklet is organized into a full and interesting introduction followed by a list of the pieces themselves in chronological order, with a paragraph explaining each one in detail. The last Ordre is seen as a summing up of Couperin's work and the ideas that had preoccupied him throughout his life. Typical of Couperin's character, as it has been portrayed, is the last piece of all, "Saillie", which expresses disappointment at not having been very well understood by his public. Jane Clark's booklet will without doubt help modern harpsichordists at whatever level to do a little better in this respect than Couperin's contemporaries.

SOPHIE YATES

DISC REVIEWS

Beau Génie—Pièces de Clavecin from the Bauyn Manuscript, vol. 1

Jane Chapman (hpd)
Timing: 69'24
Collins Classics 14202

The Bauyn Manuscript, one of the most important sources for French keyboard music of the 17th century, provides the repertoire for this fascinating disc, the first of a projected set of three.

The Bauyn d'Angervilliers family themselves remain obscure, though presumably being of aristocratic status with a keen enthusiasm for music to have a single scribe employed to transcribe works by many of the famous composers of the time. Familiar names here are Chambonnières, Louis Couperin, D'Anglebert, La Barre and Rossi and amongst the more obscure are Pinel, Mezangeot and Vincent plus unidentified members of the Gautier, Monnard and Richard families. Mezangeot, Pinel and Gautier were lutenists whose works were frequently transcribed for keyboard by skilled masters such as D'Anglebert. Not much of the output of the Monnard family survives and very little is known of the Richards.

One of the challenges in a project such as this is to compile sensibly ordered suites and items from an apparently randomly ordered manuscript, and this first disc concentrates on the smaller pieces with the intention of including pieces unique to the Bauyn collection.

As a whole, the disc makes an interesting anthology of many of the great masters of the period, and many of the items make a first appearance on disc: welcome additions to the catalogue. Jane Chapman plays on a restored double-manual Ruckers harpsichord of 1614, tuned to $a' = 415$ Hz with unequal tempering in quarter-comma meantone. Imaginative combinations of registrations on this instrument give an attractive variation to the sound-

colour and add to the character of many of the dance movements.

Collins Classics have succeeded in capturing realistically the glowing resonance of the Ruckers instrument and—in common with many records of solo harpsichord—at quite a high level, such that the volume should be lowered for comfortable play. I look forward to sampling the forthcoming volumes two and three, scheduled for release later this year and early in 1995.

STEPHEN PATRICK

[See also Jane Chapman's article on page 7.]

The Music of Armand-Louis Couperin

Jennifer S Paul (hpd)
Timing: 77'18
Klavier KCD 11041

I have never been Armand-Louis Couperin's greatest fan, considering his music inferior both to that of his more illustrious ancestors and to a number of his contemporaries in the Galant period. Jennifer Paul's imaginative playing on this new disc has made me think again.

Miss Paul has a brilliant technique. I refer not only to dazzling dexterity as in "Les Cacqueteuses", but also to the way by which she cajoles lyricism from the harpsichord, as in "La Chéron". Also, she has quite a range of speeds and shapes for each ornament, as illustrated in the variety of trills she plays in "La Victoire"—a worthy rival, by the way, to Duphy's piece with the same title. I would criticise her tendency for what I can only call delayed mordents and there are perhaps a few too many spread chords for my taste.

Her interpretations show a deep feeling for, and understanding of, the style *galant*. Perhaps a petty criticism would be that she is inconsistent in her use of 'Lombardic' rhythms and *notes inégales*, which I found confusing. However, her generally flexible

approach to rhythm gives spaciousness to lyrical pieces and plenty of vitality to energetic ones. Strangely, I felt this vitality a little lacking in the first three pieces of what is probably Armand-Louis's most popular set, *Les Quatre Nations*, which for me require a bit of madness as well as manners.

The bright, rather reverberant acoustic of the recording suits the lovely harpsichord Jennifer Paul uses, and what sounds like a gently unequal-tempered tuning gives colour to chord progressions. Alas, the sleeve-note, whilst detailing even the type of DAT machine and microphone, disgracefully neglects to mention anything about either the instrument or the tuning.

Despite my personal quibbles, this is a well-recorded disc, with outstanding playing of music which, I must admit, I am enjoying more and more.

JOHN HENRY

English Eighteenth-century Keyboard Concertos

Paul Nicholson (hpd, fp, org);
The Parley of Instruments
Baroque Orchestra
Timing: 76'02
Hyperion CDA66700

This new disc is volume 22 in Peter Holman's already highly respected series *The English Orpheus*: the series explores some of the music written by undeservedly lesser-known seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English composers. Paul Nicholson has contributed several recordings to the project, including keyboard music by Thomas Roseingrave and concertos by Arne. Both these composers appear on the current release, in which Nicholson plays on three different types of keyboard instrument: a 1778 Kirkman harpsichord, a copy by Michael Cole of a piano by Americus Backers and two chamber organs. This versatility is necessary in order to represent adequately the variety of keyboard writing found in the works that he performs, and in order to demonstrate how the idea of a concerto for keyboard was only gradually emerg-

ing in the period. As Peter Holman explains in his excellent programme booklet, the relationship between the keyboard and orchestra was often unpredictable, with a great diversity of numbers of movements and textures.

Many of the pieces on this disc are reconstructed from their extant source material: orchestral tutti put together from reductions in the published keyboard parts. This has been done with skill and sensitivity, so that the results are utterly convincing, even in the D major Roseingrave work, which Nicholson has already recorded as a harpsichord solo in volume 9 (CDA66564). This new version uses two trumpets, drums and strings in the bold ritornelli of the outer movements—an idea suggested by newspaper references to a Dublin performance of a D major concerto on 8 March 1750.

Handel is represented by two works—an arrangement of his G major Chaconne, with strings and organ continuo accompanying the harpsichord at three points, and a concerto movement in D minor,

which is an early version of the first movement of Op. 7 No. 4. Here the music has both solo and ripieno organ parts and is nine bars longer, the addition being a concluding ritornello. The presence of two bassoons adds a wonderful sombreness to the sound and Nicholson's playing, though elegantly decorated, is restrained.

Thomas Chilcot (c. 1700–1766) and James Nares (1715–1783) provide harpsichord works, the first reconstructed by Robin Langley and the second a fascinating example of an unusual concerto form, called by Nares "a Sonata in Score", Op. 2. The notes suggest that this hybrid sonata/concerto was a peculiarly northern English phenomenon—Holman cites examples by Avison, Ebdon and Garth—and it would be interesting to be able to compare some of these "concerted sonatas". Perhaps in time there will be an English Orpheus disc devoted to them.

The disc concludes with two piano works by Philip Hayes and James Hook. Hayes actually speci-

fied the piano for the first time in England (1769). The Hook piece was published with parts for two violins and bass, but Holman has added flutes and horns as well on the evidence of similar parts, *ad libitum*, in concertos by Hayes. Both works are charming and evince a truly English sensibility, the music's already having escaped the direct influence of either Italy or Germany.

HOWARD A FENTON

Forqueray: Suites de Clavecin 1747

Arthur Haas (hpd)
Timing: 63'37
Wildboar WLBR 9201

The two suites recorded here (nos. five and two, respectively) are from the *Pièces de Viole*, written by Antoine Forqueray (1671/2–1745) and published after his death by his son Jean-Baptiste. They appeared simultaneously in versions for keyboard, which it now appears were actually made by the younger

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Forqueray's wife Marie-Rose Dubois. They are extraordinarily adventurous compositions, in which the 'diabolic' playing of Forqueray *le père*—to which Hubert Le Blanc referred in his *Défense de la Basse de Viole* of 1740—can well be imagined. Jean-Baptiste provided a bass part and figures for the 1747 publication, thus adding considerably to the harmonic boldness of the music, and in fact also added three of his own compositions. Even in the original works, however, the music goes far beyond the confines of the dance forms on which many of the movements are based.

Haas presents two complete suites, plus two pieces written in homage to Forqueray by Rameau and Duphy. The fifth suite, which begins the disc, commences with a movement entitled *La Rameau*—an engaging, reverential touch. Many of the other movements represent well-known contemporary figures or the composer's friends, tellingly and humorously portrayed in a manner that testifies to a mordant wit. Haas plays the music with appropriate

forthright insistence, bordering sometimes on the aggressive—Forqueray *le père* was known for his violent temper and he even had his son imprisoned, then banished for a time in 1725, as the result of jealousy. The indications of non-simultaneity between the hands are followed scrupulously, though the style sometimes becomes a trifle mannered, as in the *notes inégales* of *La du Breuil* from the second suite, which to my mind are a little pedantic and lumpy for a gentle pastoral movement. The more virtuosic numbers are played with great panache (*Jupiter*, or the brilliant *La Leclair*, for example) and the quieter pieces are calm without being self-indulgent. I particularly enjoyed the lengthy *La Buisson* (second suite) and the extraordinary Duphy piece *La Forqueray* (which is in F minor!). Rameau's offering comes from the *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* of 1741 and—with Rameau's blessing—Haas makes his own virtuoso solo arrangement of it.

The 1785 harpsichord by Jacques Germain (son of the more famous Jean Goermans) which Haas plays is

a colourful instrument, and the recording is lively and immediate. The booklet notes by Robert Haskins are excellent.

DAVID BRAY

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his predecessors

Brigitte Haubourg (hpd, pf)
Timing: 67'30
Discover International D1CD 920143

The anthology collated by French keyboardist Brigitte Haubourg, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his predecessors*, is something of a curate's egg. The predecessors in question are J C and C P E Bach, Haydn, and, less familiarly, Honauer, Schobert and Eckard, all three of whom were foreigners working in Paris in the 1760s. Haubourg plays both harpsichord and piano on this disc—copies by the Belgian maker Chris Maene of a Taskin and a Walter—which sound both warm and colourful.

Early piano music on period pianos



PETER KATIN 'Clementi on Clementi'

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This is essentially an entertaining concert programme. I wonder, however, why well-known pieces are included except as fillers on a disc that is of more value for introducing pieces by lesser-known composers who possibly informed Mozart's early years.

Johann Gottfried Eckard supposedly taught himself from C P E Bach's *Versuch*. He came to Paris with the maker Stein and quickly became famous there as a player and composer. The two short single-movement sonatas on this disc are clearly conceived for the piano—not the harpsichord—and demonstrate a classical sensibility, with a refined melodic line and relaxed chordal accompaniment.

Johann Schobert's dates are uncertain. He died in August 1767, but his date of birth has not been properly established. The notes to this recording give 1720 but at least two later dates have been suggested. The English writer Burney considered Schobert not to have the same genius as Eckard. The F major sonata which Haudebourg plays is described as having two movements but they are followed by an additional Presto, neglected in the booklet notes. It is a perfect example of what Burney called 'the symphonic, or modern overture, style upon the harpsichord' and which has led to Schobert's being associated with the Mannheim school.

History has treated Honauer less well even than Schobert and Eckard. Newman, in *The Sonata in the Classic Era*, was rather scathing about him and Burney did not see fit to mention him, but he had a good reputation in Paris by the 1770s. Haudebourg plays his lively first sonata (1761) on the harpsichord, as she does the J C and C P E Bach pieces.

The performances throughout the disc are skillful though a little over-careful. If the disc is good in parts, such credit is afforded as the result of its presentation of the intriguing transition to the new Classical style, and some of the German influences which precipitated it. More dubious is the inclusion of well-known works which do not really need further representation. Haudebourg might have focused more attention on the three Parisian immigrants, whose

music is sadly under-exposed on record.

SEBASTIEN DÉDIS

"Musick as befits a Queene": English Virginal Music 1570–1650

Edward Parmentier (hpd)
Timing: 76'21
Wildboar WLBR 9102

Using a wonderful-sounding and clearly recorded instrument modelled on a Ruckers harpsichord of 1640 Edward Parmentier has produced a very attractive disc of English virginals music. It ranges widely, including several pieces by Byrd, Gibbons, Tomkins, Peter Philips and Farnaby as well as 'Anon.' and pieces less often heard by William Inglot and William Tisdall, taken from a variety of sources. In the latter composer's *Pavana Chromatica* ("Mrs Katherin Tregian's Paven") and the virtuosic *Fantasia* by Farnaby the tuning of the instrument (essentially quarter-comma meantone, with a little 'fringing' adding colour to the sound when the registers are coupled) is particularly effective, making very striking the expressive dissonances of the music. The pitch is $a' = 415$ throughout.

Parmentier indulges every opportunity for chromatic colouring throughout the disc, enjoying false relations and English cadences to the full. His playing is bold and well directed: whilst relishing each moment, he never loses sight of the music's goals. Gibbons' *Fantasia of four parts* in particular achieves a powerful conclusion, using the different registrations available to the player, and in contrast Byrd's melancholy "*Lachrimae*" Pavan is presented calmly, with eloquent ornamentation. The recording is close and no attempt has been made to 'clean up' the sound, with the result that every sniff and extra-musical noise is left in—on repeated listening this can become irritating, but it does give the impression of overhearing the player in an informal manner and the recorded sound is realistic. The ordering of the music on the disc does not appear to conform to any specific plan, but the succession of

pieces is varied and interesting. The booklet notes are informative about the instrument, both the copy used for the recording and its historical forebears, but regrettably they are less forthcoming about the music itself. Inglot (Ingloft or Englitt) and Tisdall (Tisdale) are not particularly well known composers and it would be useful to have at least some background information on them.

DAVID BRAY

Scarlatti: Unpublished Sonatas

Mayako Soné (hpd)
Timing: 51'02
Erato 4509–94806–2

It is surprising that since Scarlatti spent more than half his life in Portugal and Spain there were until recently no known Spanish manuscripts and only one Portuguese source surviving. This situation has changed in the last few years and some 400 sonatas have been unearthed since the Scarlatti tercentenary in 1985.

Writing in the booklet for this interesting disc, Malcolm Boyd says that of the pieces which have recently come to light a number were unknown, and although some of these are clearly not by Scarlatti a few may well have some claim to authenticity. It is some of these pieces which appear here, played by the Japanese harpsichordist Mayako Soné.

A shorter version of one of the sonatas in the Kirkpatrick catalogue (K. 96) is played here, taken from a Parisian edition of the 1740s. Only one of the pieces is well authenticated: an A major allegro from the Instituto Português do Património Cultural, Lisbon. Two other A major sonatas appear in London and Madrid in copies bearing Scarlatti's name, but Boyd considers these to be stylistically doubtful. Perhaps the richest source is a manuscript in the Metropolitan Cathedral, Valladolid—three of these works come from there, grouped with other pieces known without doubt to be by the composer. Two interesting pieces are from a private collection in Tenerife: the second is what appears to be just a fragment of a Fandango, which,



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like the well-known one by Soler, is in D minor. The ending in the dominant, which Boyd considers to be an indication of incompleteness, is surely a feature of the faster type of this Castilian or Andalusian dance, which always tends towards this harmonic irresolution. Soné develops the 114-bar fragment into an extended composition lasting nearly four and a half minutes.

The harpsichord used in these recordings is a copy by David Ley of a Blanchet (1733), which has an attractive sound but whose temperament is tested by the chromaticism of some of the music. Mayako Soné was a prize-winner in the Bruges harpsichord competition in 1986. She is a persuasive advocate for these pieces, which she plays with style and verve, especially the Fandango, which has some convincing moments of *duende*.

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The exciting and colourful sound-world of the Iberian composers forms the *raison d'être* for this disc, which is the second release by Sophie Yates on the Chandos early music label Chaconne. That much of the repertoire remains shrouded by obscurity owes as much to the economics of publishing, loss of manuscripts and reticence of virtuosi to publish as to the fact that improvisation was the basis of performance for such keyboard players during the 16th and 17th centuries. Music was often notated in an obscure tablature used for harp, vihuela or keyboard, and printed music remained a comparative rarity, leaving large gaps in our appreciation of the repertoire today.

This release, performed on a modern reproduction of an Italian harpsichord of c. 1600, is presented as a snapshot covering composers ranging from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Antonio de Cabezón was in fact blind, but studied much abroad, including England. His development of keyboard style includes the *tiento*, an Iberian form related to the Italian *ricercare*. His son, Hernando de Cabezón, also composed and in 1578 published a collection of his father's works. In a still later generation, the Portuguese organist Manuel Rodrigues Coelho was influenced by Cabezón and his writing also shows the influences of Byrd and Sweelinck.

Another Portuguese, António Carreira, a singer at the Chapel Royal and virtuoso keyboard player, is represented together with later composers: José Ximénez and the Catalan Joan Cabanilles feature, their music often displaying rhythmic and harmonic interest and influences from abroad. Cabanilles, who visited France, was also renowned as a virtuoso performer.

In total, a most fascinating and enjoyable release, giving a welcome airing on disc to repertoire which I am sure is not familiar even to many devotees of early music. First-rate clean and immediate recorded sound, as one has come to expect of Chandos.

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