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SOME RARE SOURCES OF GEORGIAN HARPSICHORD MUSIC

in the Library of Arnold Dolmetsch (1858-1940)

by GERALD GIFFORD

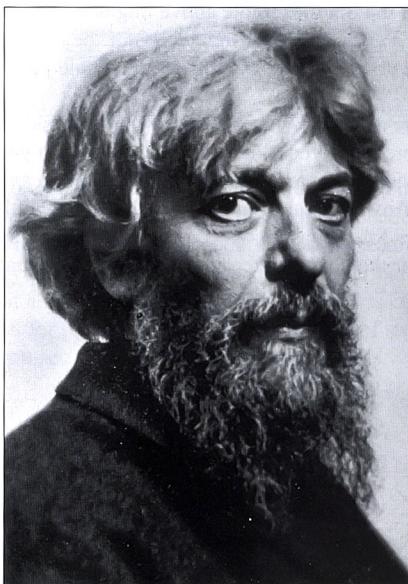
Having acted for many years as Honorary Keeper of Music at Burghley House, Stamford,¹ the present writer has also recently accepted the offer of a similar honorary appointment with regard to the Dolmetsch Library of Music, Haslemere. The attainment of this magnificent collection of historic manuscript and printed music, together with many rare books associated with musical instruments and performance practice, spanned the remarkable career of Arnold Dolmetsch, the great pioneer of the early music revival in Great Britain.² The Library, which remains at Dolmetsch's house in Haslemere, also includes a significant holding of material collected by his son, Dr Carl Dolmetsch CBE, though the present article concentrates on the former's collection.

Arnold Dolmetsch devoted his life to the research, restoration, and construction of a range of early musical instruments, and the study of their repertoire and performing practices. He also achieved international recognition as an instrument builder, as a scholar - his seminal book *The Interpretation of the Music of the XVII and XVIII Centuries* was published in 1915³ - and as a performer and teacher.⁴ Underlying all of this activity was the continuing development of an immensely important private collection of musical literature which both

spanned and substantiated his wide field of interest. His collection of books, treatises, historic music manuscripts and original printed editions, remains in the Library alongside his own published and unpublished performing editions and those of other members of his family. The collection is now in the ownership of François and Jeanne Dolmetsch, and permission for access to it is gratefully acknowledged by the present writer.

The Library of Arnold Dolmetsch was catalogued by Ute Henning-Supper in 1967,⁵ and shortly afterwards the same author also published a most interesting article entitled 'Treasures of the Dolmetsch Library Unveiled' in *The Consort*, the periodical of the Dolmetsch Foundation.⁶ Arnold Dolmetsch's Library consists of sixteen manuscripts, containing in excess of one-thousand works (many of them being brief dance movements or songs), and about seven-hundred printed works. We may thus fully agree with Henning-Supper when she writes that the Library represents "the documentation of a man who gathered one of the most comprehensive private collections in Europe".

Of the various manuscript and printed sources of keyboard music contained in the Dolmetsch Library, the present writer has to date concentrated on certain Georgian sources,



Arnold Dolmetsch c. 1910 [Photographer unknown]

and the research has found an outcome in his compact disc recording *Georgian Delights - A Treasury of Harpsichord and Organ Music from the Library of Arnold Dolmetsch* (Cantoris Records CRCD 6049). The instruments used are a Shudi & Broadwood harpsichord of about 1775, which once belonged to Arnold Dolmetsch, and a Snetzler bureau-organ of 1764, which is still to be found in the Dolmetsch Collection. The composition of the programme was deliberately conceived to indicate the typical repertoire of the harpsichord and organ in Georgian England, thus alongside substantial harpsichord works by Handel, Greene, Domenico Scarlatti and 'Pergolesi', smaller pieces such as popular dances of the day, variations on well-known melodies, and material intended for didactic purposes were included. Together with organ music by James, Felton and others (including two anonymous voluntaries probably composed by Prelleur), the programme thus enables a 'snapshot' view of 18th-century English musical taste to be formed. Although Handel's influence was dominant for much of the time, there was also an enthusiastic response to music of Italian origin, and in terms of keyboard music this actually led to the establishment of a Scarlatti 'sect' in 18th-century England.⁷

Two extensive manuscript sources, each containing evidence of a number of hands, were consulted for several of the works, and their contents were compared whenever possible with published texts of the period. In the majority of cases, whilst preparing performing editions for the recording, the manuscript readings were given preference, their texts indicating considerable competence on behalf of the copyist whilst also disclosing evident practical expertise. Sadly, few of the hands can be identified with certainty. Manuscript II B 4 contains works by Handel, a keyboard version of the *Ouverture in Otho*, Greene, Tireman,

and the two anonymous organ voluntaries mentioned above, and dates from the early 1740s. The transcription of the *Ouverture in Otho* [i.e. 'Ottone'], maintains the general approach adopted in published keyboard transcriptions of the time, namely the original orchestral texture is simplified and the voicing made more transparent, whilst the precise spelling of the French term 'Ouverture' in the title may be seen to confirm the anonymous transcriber's awareness of its musical applicability.

Although unasccribed in this source, the splendid harpsichord Suite in Eb major in manuscript II B 4 is known to have been composed by Maurice Greene, who was concurrently organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, Professor of Music at Cambridge, and Master of the King's Musick. The musical text here differs from other surviving versions in a number of significant ways; the Corant, in particular, being more extensively ornamented. The music reveals the cosmopolitan musical awareness of the composer, and demonstrates his considerable ability in adapting these influences to his own purpose. Another organist represented here, William Tireman, held an appointment at Trinity College, Cambridge. His confident single-movement



Example 1: William Tireman - [Lesson in F major] Manuscript II B 4

harpsichord 'Lesson', which is dated 19 October 1741 in manuscript II B 4, is otherwise unknown. The work adopts the Handelian style so widely influential at that time, and is most effective in performance. Perhaps this movement once formed part of a suite - it is reminiscent of an allemande in character - in which case the apparent loss of the remainder is to be greatly regretted.

Manuscript II C 26 contains harpsichord music by Berg, Gladwin, Handel, Stanley and Turner and others, and dates from the 1780s. It is partially in the hand of John Stafford Smith, the noted pioneer of musical antiquarianism, and is likely to have formed part of his own extensive library.

George Berg was an English composer, violinist and organist, of German origin. He was associated with music at Ranelagh Gardens in the late 1750s, and later became organist of St. Mary-at-Hill in the City of London. He published twenty-four Sonatinas for harpsichord (as his Opp. 3 and 4) in about 1759, and the Sonatina in C major contained in manuscript II C 26 is derived from this source. It adopts the *galant* style of the period, and is tuneful and attractive. Music such as this would have been very appealing to Georgian harpsichordists for both recreational and educational use.

In 1738, Thomas Gladwin became the first organist to be appointed to Vauxhall Gardens, and he also later accepted a similar post at the Audley Chapel, Grosvenor Square. His *Eight Lessons for Harpsichord* were published in the mid-1750s, and are notable demonstrations of the impact of Scarlatti's music in England. Manuscript II C 26 includes a copy of Gladwin's Lesson in F major, and its first movement contains hand-crossing and Italianate, brilliant figurations indicative of Scarlatti's influence. The Minuetto, however, is more typically English, and the dialogues which form an essential element of its pastoral styling, may be seen to

evoke quasi-orchestral timbres of alternating horns and strings.

Music by Handel in manuscript II C 26 includes an *Air for a Musical Clock*, and a number of keyboard arrangements of extracts from various operas and oratorios. The same source also includes a *Lesson with Variations by Mr. Handel* which is based on the theme of the so-called 'Harmonious Blacksmith' variations, though these present variations differ from those of Handel's well-known set, and are unlikely to have been written by him.

Occasionally the Dolmetsch Library's manuscript anthologies of keyboard music contain examples of neglected works by important composers. John Stanley's charming *Gavot* with four variations is a case in point, and is not generally known. It is a genial and attractive work which fully endorses Dr Charles Burney's observation that Stanley was 'a natural and agreeable composer'. The source is manuscript II C 26. Another most intriguing work contained in this manuscript is a jig entitled *Teipsy Jollity* which, according to an inscription immediately alongside the title was 'Composed by Miss Turner, prd. about ye. yr. 1740 frm. ye. College of Physicians in Warwick Lane'. It is not possible, at present, to establish the precise identity of the composer, nor to clarify the nature of her association with the College of Physicians. We can, however, confidently assume that this lively dance signified a particularly convivial occasion.

The Dolmetsch holding of 18th-century English printed editions of the works of Domenico Scarlatti is of great importance, and is likely to have been the outcome of a special interest of Arnold Dolmetsch himself. The inclusion of Thomas Roseingrave's 1739 edition of *XLII Suites de Pièces Pour le Clavecin ... Composées par Domenico Scarlatti* (II C 15) is particularly noteworthy as it was one of the earliest editions of Scarlatti's music to be published in England. On the title-page, Roseingrave (who met Scarlatti in Italy)

commended the contents 'for their Delicacy of Stile, and Masterly Composition' as being 'worthy the Attentions of the Curious'. He also, most unusually, prefaced the first volume with an introductory composition of his own, the dotted rhythms of which might, to some, seem more appropriate to the French manner! The Dolmetsch Library also includes a copy of John Johnson's c.1748 republication of this music (II C 15a), together with the sixth volume of a series of *Libro de VI sonatas modernas para clavicordio ... Compuestas por Domingo Scarlatti*, (II C 14) published by Welcker in London in the mid-1770s. Further indication of Arnold Dolmetsch's fascination with early printed editions of Scarlatti's harpsichord music is provided by the existence in his Library of the Haffner, Nuremberg, edition of *VI sonate per il cembalo solo. Composte dal Sigr. Domenico Scarlatti. Op. 1.* (II C 13) which was published in 1740.

A later 18th-century edition of Scarlatti's music preserved in the Dolmetsch Library has much interest. Published in London in 1791 under the title *SCARLATTI's Chefs-d-œuvre for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte; Selected from an Elegant collection of Manuscripts in the possession of MUZIO CLEMENTI* (II C 12) the title-page bears Clementi's signature and is also inscribed: 'the Editor begs Mr Graeff's Acceptance of this Book'. Perhaps the recipient was Friedrich Hartmann Graf, who had received an honorary doctorate in music from the University of Oxford two years earlier. The imprint states that copies may 'be had at Mr. Broadwood's, Harpsichord Maker, in Great Pulteney Street, Golden Square'; this same address, of course, is also found on the nameboards of many Shudi & Broadwood harpsichords. Clementi's texts contain a number of readings which diverge from earlier 18th-century sources; whether these were faithfully reproduced from the 'elegant collection of manuscripts' in his collection or whether they represent his personal performing preferences cannot be ascertained. But it is clear that

adaptation has taken place; the inclusion of *crescendo* and *diminuendo* markings and various dynamic markings certainly indicate this. We may also note the addition of tempo indications not found in earlier sources, and even the transposition of originals, perhaps taking advantage of the extended compass of certain late 18th-century English keyboard instruments.



Example 2: Domenico Scarlatti / Muzio Clementi: Sonata III [in F major] II C 12

Noticeably marked 'Allegro commodo', this is a transposed version of the Sonata in E major (Kk 380), and there are a number of textual differences as well - such as in the right-hand figuration in the approach to the double bar.

It is possible that Arnold Dolmetsch would himself have been intrigued by the stylistic diversity of the two volumes of harpsichord 'Lessons' attributed to 'Giovanni Battista Pergolesi' in his Library. It was only a few years after Dolmetsch's death that research proved that substantial amounts of music formerly attributed to Pergolesi were not actually composed by him, and were generally the result of publishers exploiting the consequences of the composer's posthumous reputation. The *Eight Lessons for the Harpsicord Compos'd by the Celebrated Gio. Batta. Pergolesi* volumes I and II (II E 14 1, 2) were published in London by Longman, Lukey & Co in 1771 and by Longman & Broderip in 1778, and contain a particularly wide range of musical material. Lesson II of the second set, for

example, indicates the diversity of style to be encountered: the first movement is a gentle, melodically-expressive Andante, typical of the Classical era, whilst the second movement - adopting the evocative title 'Aurora' - is styled as a brilliant and exuberant Baroque toccata. The first movement is in F major, the second in D minor, which further indicates that the whole is likely to have been an 'assembled' composition, even though the two movements complement each other remarkably well.



Example 3: [Misattributed to] Giovanni Battista Pergolesi: Lesson II [Andante] Manuscript II E 14 (2)



Example 4: [Misattributed to] Giovanni Battista Pergolesi: Lesson II (Aurora) Manuscript II E 14 (2)

The Dolmetsch Library contains many manuscript and printed editions of Handel's keyboard music, both solo and

concerted, and these include the Walsh 1736 edition of the *Suites de pièces pour le clavecin*, two volumes (II B 25 1,2), and various appropriate volumes of the Arnold edition (mostly published between 1784 and 1793). Manuscript II B 4 contains extracts from the 'Great' suites, though these are often incomplete, and thus indicate the likelihood of a personal selection by the compiler of this anthology.

Of the various publications of dance movements for keyboard, *Thompson's Compleat Collection of 100 Favourite Minuets for the Harpsichord ... Vol. I* (II C 18), which appeared in about 1764, contains a number of interesting works which may serve to indicate the musical fashion of the day. Several are named after prominent individuals, and in view of the present writer's association with Burghley House, Stamford, it was particularly pleasing to discover not only a *Stamford Minuet* but also another named as *Lord Exeter's Minuet*. The Ninth Earl of Exeter (who held his title from 1754 until his death in 1793) resided at Burghley House, and was a most enthusiastic amateur of music.

The musical sources discussed in this article are indicative of the wider content of Arnold Dolmetsch's Library as a whole, and his collection of keyboard music could, and should, stimulate much further research. Similar articles could be written about the early French keyboard sources, for example, or the English keyboard sources which pre-date the Georgian period, or the historic German keyboard music. There is also much potential for investigating the keyboard treatises alongside appropriate repertoire, and this research would also be greatly assisted by appropriate reference to the holding of organological studies.

It is immediately evident from perusal of his Library that the pioneering vision of Arnold Dolmetsch was everywhere endorsed by his active and painstaking study of both the letter and spirit of early

music. And he was also able, through his multi-faceted genius, to enhance this understanding through his first-hand practical knowledge of the historic instruments themselves. This was acquired by his detailed research of their construction, by the restoration work which he undertook, and also by the cumulative experience of his own instrument building. Unifying and applying this range of experience, Dolmetsch could continually evolve and substantiate his understanding of the instruments' defining characteristics, their repertoire and performing techniques, and then pass on this insight to others. As Marco Pallis has so perceptively observed, Arnold Dolmetsch indeed embraced a truly 'prophetic mandate'.⁸

Footnotes:

1. A selection of early keyboard music from this important private archive will form the subject of a later article by Gerald Gifford.
2. Marco Pallis: 'The rebirth of early music' *Early Music* Vol 6 No 1 January 1978, pp. 41-46
The following extract pertinently describes the situation, and latterly emphasises the breadth of Dolmetsch's ability:
'The movement which we still call 'early music' virtually started in this country with one man, Arnold Dolmetsch. This is not to belittle the contributions of others working independently in particular fields at an early date: Fuller Maitland, Canon Edmund Fellowes and Wanda Landowska provide notable examples. Nevertheless, the universality of Dolmetsch's vision placed him in a category apart: one can truly speak here of a prophetic mandate which, by the nature of things, remains unique'.
3. Arnold Dolmetsch: *The Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Revealed by Contemporary Evidence* Introduction by R Alec Harman, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1915 (Novello), 1969
See also: *An Appendix to The Interpretation of the Music of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* [Reproduced from the original edition] Ampersand / Dolmetsch Foundation [Haslemere] 1990
4. Mabel Dolmetsch: *Personal Recollections of Arnold Dolmetsch* Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1957
Margaret Campbell: *Dolmetsch: the man and his work* Hamish Hamilton, London 1975
Elizabeth Goble: 'Keyboard lessons with Arnold Dolmetsch' *Early Music* Vol 5 No 1 January 1977, pp. 89-91

5. Ute Henning-Supper: *Catalogue of the Dolmetsch Library* [Haslemere] 1967. Unpublished typescript.

6. Ute Henning-Supper: 'Treasures of the Dolmetsch Library Unveiled' *The Consort* No 26 1970, pp. 433-444

7. Gerald Gifford: 'Viscount Fitzwilliam and the English 'Scarlatti Sect' *The Harpsichord and Fortepiano Magazine* Vol 4 No 5 April 1988, pp. 113-116

8. Marco Pallis: *ibid.* 2

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This article is partially based on a Grove Forum presentation given by Gerald Gifford at the Royal College of Music, London, in October 2000 and entitled 'The relevance of archival research for the modern performer - a case-study of early keyboard holdings in the Dolmetsch Library of Music, Haslemere'. Music examples have been reproduced by kind permission of François and Jeanne Dolmetsch. Enquiries about the Dolmetsch Library should be addressed to Jeanne Dolmetsch, 112 Birch Road, Headley Down, Hampshire GU35 8BW, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.