

Harpsichord & fortepiano

Vol. 10, No. 1 Autumn, 2002

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCat)

Eighteenth Century English Publications of KEYBOARD MUSIC in the Library of BURGHLEY HOUSE, Stamford

GERALD GIFFORD

Built between 1555 and 1587 for William Cecil, the Lord High Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth 1, Burghley House, Stamford, is one of England's greatest houses. Amongst its treasures is an extensive collection of manuscript and printed music formed between about 1650 and 1850 by various members of the Cecil family, and of these, the significant contribution of Brownlow, Ninth Earl of Exeter has central importance. The Ninth Earl held his title between 1754 and 1793 and during this time, whilst fostering his keen interest in the patronage and performance of music, amassed an appreciable quantity of musical materials, including a number of instruments. Of the latter, a delightful chamber organ built in a harpsichord-style case, by Robert and William Gray in 1790, and a square piano by Longman and Broderip, dating from the late 1780s, are still to be found at Burghley House. The Ninth Earl's personal collection of keyboard instruments alone extended to three organs, at least two harpsichords, and two forte pianos, located either at Burghley House, or at his London residence in Lower Grosvenor Street.

The Ninth Earl of Exeter was a noted Handelian; he was one of the Directors (i.e. patrons) of the Handel Commemoration Festivals held in London from 1784 and, as well as acquiring numerous earlier Eighteenth century printed editions of Handel's music, also subscribed to the complete edition of the composer's works, published by Samuel Arnold.¹ The broad range of Handel's music thus forms the heart of the Ninth Earl's music library. Among the keyboard arrangements of Handel's orchestral music preserved at Burghley House is a collection entitled *Six*

Overtures fitted to the Harpsichord or Spinett ... Being proper pieces for the Improvement of the Hand which appeared in about 1745, as an eighth collection. The volume contains fine keyboard scores of the overtures to *Deidamia*, (which was Handel's last opera, first performed in January, 1741), *Hymen, Pernasso in Festa, The Sacred Oratorio* (i.e. *Messiah*), *Saul* and *Samson*. These works enjoyed immense popularity at the time, and extracts such as these would have been frequently performed in keyboard reduction, not least by the Ninth Earl himself. The title-page is reproduced as Example 1.

The remaining discussion of selected harpsichord and forte piano music from the Burghley House collection follows a chronological order of publication, though for convenience, a sequence of English publications of music by Italian composers has been grouped at the end. Publications of music primarily intended for organ have been omitted.

In his *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776), Sir John Hawkins remarks that John Loeillet 'of London' as he became known,² was 'an excellent composer for the harpsichord'; an assertion which is amply borne out by his fine set of *Six Suits of Lessons for the Harpsicord or Spinett In most of the Key's with Variety of Passages and Variations Throughout the Work* published in 1723.³ Loeillet's keyboard style is assured and idiomatic, and the figurations that he used often reflect a keen awareness of the instrument's resonance and sonority. He cultivated a tuneful manner, and his expressive melodies often remind us that the composer was also a

¹ Published between 1787 and 1797. Volumes 129 and 130 contain music for harpsichord.

² To distinguish him from other members of his family who were working abroad.

³ A complete facsimile republication of this copy, with an introduction and critical commentary by the present writer, was published by Oxford University Press in 1986.

Six OVERTURES
Fitted to the
HARPSICORD or SPINNET
viz.

Compos'd by

M^R. H A N D E L.

Being all proper Pieces for the Improvement
of the Hand on the Harpsicord or Spinnet
Eighth Collection.

London. Printed for I. Walsh, in Catherine-Street, in *St. Strand*.

McFick Just Publish'd for the Marplicard.

Handel's 48 Overtures from all his Operas
2 Sets of Lalliots
Voluntaries and Pugnoes
The Celebrated Water Musick
The Celebrated Aires from all his
Operas in 4 Vol.
13 Organ Concertos
Ladies Banquet, or Dance Tunes from 4 Operas

Haff's Comic Tunes to the Dance Tschirn
at the Opera and both Theatres in 2 Vol.
Haff's 4 Organ Concertos
Burgell's 4 Organ Concertos
Bonocensis Laffons
Smith's Laffons
Jones's Laffons
Riddings's Laffons and Voluntaries.

celebrated oboist and flautist. Loeillet's keyboard music exhibits qualities of fluency and geniality; it was evidently written in a medium that he fully understood and enjoyed.

Very little is known of the life of another of Handel's London contemporaries, Richard Jones, apart from the fact that he was an accomplished violinist, and led the orchestra in the Drury Lane Theatre from about 1730. He was later succeeded in this position by his pupil Michael Christian Festing, and died in January 1744. Jones published his *Suites or Setts of Lessons for the Harpsichord or Spinnet, Consisting of great variety of Movements as Preludes Aires Toccat's All 'mands Jiggs Corrents Borre's Saraband Gavots Minuets &c. &c.* in 1732. The music is both assured and original, wide leaps constantly remind us that the

composer was a violinist, and Italianate influence is also keenly felt. The Allemanda of the Fourth Suite, for example, contains certain figurations that are reminiscent of Scarlatti, and in this respect it is noteworthy that Domenico Scarlatti's harpsichord music was not widely known in England until some years later, notably following the publication of *Essercizi* in 1738, and *Lessons* in 1739. Jones may thus have been aware of Scarlatti through manuscripts that were circulating in England in the late 1720s and early 1730s, probably as a result of the championship of the composer by Thomas Roseingrave.⁴

A collection of *Six Sets of Lessons for the Harpsichord*, by Elizabeth Gambarini, was issued in 1748 and bears a dedicatory address (in Italian) to Lady Howe, and also a further address to the subscribers which begins:

I have not the Vanity to imagine, that I owe the illustrious List, which adorns the Pages immediately following, to any Merit of my own; but to the goodness of those, who were pleased to encourage so young a Person of my sex, who, how inconsiderable soever her Talent may be, would yet be overjoyed, could her Compositions afford the least Pleasure'

Conspicuous amongst the 'illustrious List' of subscribers, to which Gambarini refers, is the names of Handel, Greene, Geminiani, and St. Martin (i.e. Sammartini) who were clearly sympathetic to her enterprise. Gambarini's music presents few technical difficulties for the player, and is situated fairly comfortably in mid eighteenth century stylistic terms; some movements hark back to the well known formulae of Late Baroque dance and other forms, whilst elsewhere there is evidence of the *galante* manner, particularly in the styling of some of the slower movements. Alternating hand figurations are sometimes reminiscent of Scarlatti, whilst the inclusion of a varied selection of individual

⁴ The London publication of Scarlatti's *Forty Two Suites of Lessons* in 1739 was arranged by Roseingrave, who had met Domenico Scarlatti in Italy in 1708. Scarlatti's opera *Amor d'un'ombra Gelosea d'un'aura* was produced by Roseingrave in London in 1720 under the title *Narciso*. For further information about the dissemination of Scarlatti's harpsichord music in England, and its influence, see the present writer's 'Viscount Fitzwilliam and the English Scarlatti Sect', *The Harpsichord and Fortepiano Magazine* Vol 4 No 5 (April 1988) 113-116.

movements such as a gavotte, a march or a hunting jig, would undoubtedly have been of wide appeal, and not least, to the numerous members of the nobility and gentry who subscribed for copies.

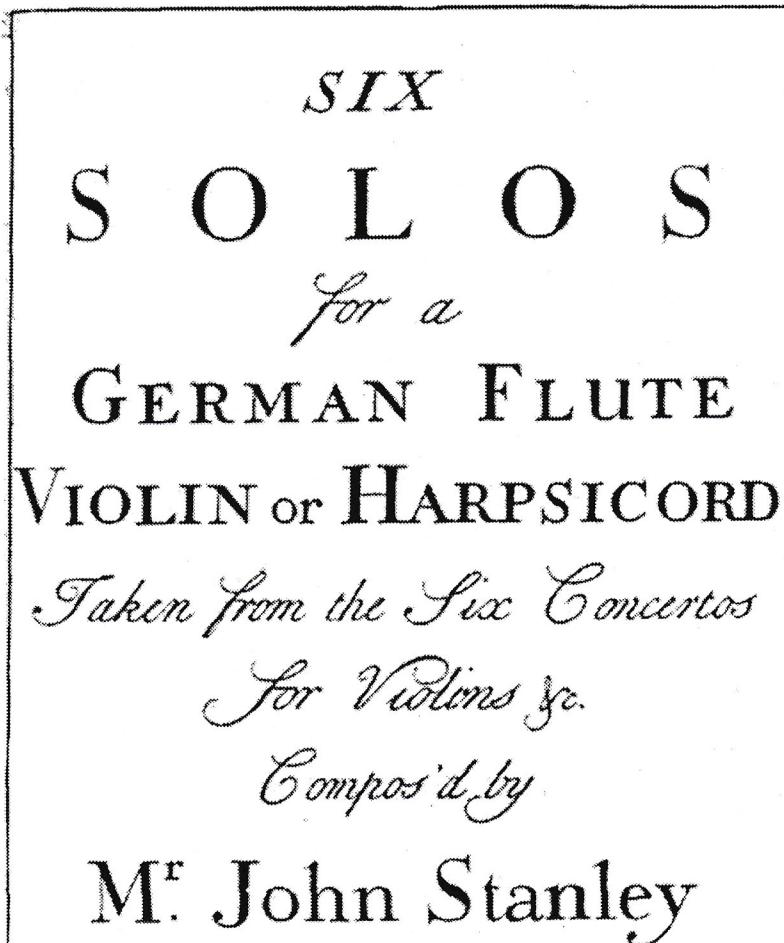
The Burghley House music collection contains a significant number of keyboard concertos, most of which have been preserved with their attendant orchestral parts, in full.⁵ Numerous works by Avison, Felton, Handel, Stanley and Wise are included, though many were clearly primarily intended for performance on the organ, several nevertheless are equally effective when played on the harpsichord or fortepiano. Of these, Charles Avison's twelve concerti, op. 9 have evident interest. Their full title reads as follows:

*'Twelve / CONCERTOS/
(Divided into 2 Sets) for 2 Violins, one Alto
Viola, and a Violoncello.
This work is also adapted to the Practice of
the ORGAN or HARPSICHORD alone
or these to serve as an Accompaniment to the
Parts in Concert,
which may be Reinforced at Pleasure'*

These are thus string concerti which can also be played by solo organ or harpsichord, and are highly effective in this alternative form. Performers should however note Avison's further guidance that: 'The accustomed Performer on the Organ or Harpsichord, will easily fill up the Harmonies of his Part as directed by the Figures in Thorough Bass'. These fluent and attractive works enjoyed considerable popularity in the eighteenth century, and are richly rewarding to play.

John Stanley provides us with a further instance where the careful reading of a title page can yield an unexpected addition to the solo keyboard repertoire. The Burghley House music collection contains both of his sets of concertos, (Opp. 2 and 10), but there is also a version of the first set under

example 2



the title: *Six Solos for a German Flute Violin or Harpsicord, Taken from the Six Concertos for Violins &c.* Observing the clause 'or Harpsichord' will here introduce the player to a delightful, and very satisfying, addition to his or her repertoire. The title page is illustrated as Example 2.

John Parry's *A Collection of Welsh, English & Scotch Airs with New Variations also Four New lessons for the Harp or Harpsichord* was published in 1761 and contains pleasing sets of variations on traditional tunes together with others based on themes drawn from well-known operas and oratorios by Handel. The four *Lessons* for harp or harpsichord are attractive when played on the latter instrument, though their styling, in general, seems to favour the harp.

Further neglected harpsichord and fortepiano music may be found in the short scores of various operas that are contained in the Burghley House music collection. Michael Arne's *Cymon, a Dramatic*

⁵ These complete sets of publications include some rarities, such as John Stanley's *Concertos for the Organ, Harpsichord, or Forte Piano; with Accompaniments for two Violins and Bass.... Opera X.* A facsimile republication of this copy, with an introduction and critical commentary by the present writer, was published by Oxford University Press in 1986. The Burghley House music collection apparently contains the sole surviving copies of the orchestral parts of these works.

Romance, Perform'd at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane in 1767 provides an appropriate example. As well as an effective keyboard transcription of the Overture, the publication also includes a beautiful instrumental *Andantino* (originally an interlude) and a rousing March.

The inclusion in the collection of music by Michael Arne and his contemporaries, is a timely reminder that although the Ninth Earl was generally more attracted to the 'ancient' style of Handel and Corelli, he nevertheless had evident sympathy with some of the more progressive musical elements of his own time too. His surviving Day Books and Account Books⁶ reveal that he purchased his first fortepiano in 1774, and he also acquired some suitable music to play upon it, such as the *Six Sonates pour le Clavecin ou le Piano Forte, Oeuvre V* (c. 1768) of Johann Christian Bach. Music contained in this publication, and indeed in many others in the collection, adopts the genial, tuneful, and elegant musical manner cultivated by musicians who were active in England at the time in which the Ninth Earl held his title. And interest in this music, once aroused, was eagerly followed through by the Ninth Earl himself, as the extensive holding of editions of keyboard music by Schobert, for example, proves. There are no fewer than seventeen individual opus publications; the fact that all of these had accompaniments would present little problem for performance at Burghley House, as suitable instrumentalists were regularly in attendance, drawn from the neighbouring town of Stamford, or from the musical personnel regularly recruited for concerts there from London. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the Ninth Earl's nephew, whom he adopted, and who later succeeded him to the Title, was also a string player.

The Ninth Earl professed a great love of Italy, and visited there on two extended occasions, in 1763-4 and in 1768-70.⁷ Burghley House is adorned to this day with magnificent examples of Italian art - and

not only paintings - that he purchased during these visits, and the visual splendours of the State Rooms (or 'George Rooms' as they are called), and of the Chapel, give proof to the fact that he cultivated a discerning eye.⁸ Study of the music collection would be expected to reveal numerous Italian works, and indeed they are to be found in abundance. Interestingly, however, it appears that the music which the Ninth Earl acquired in Italy, was mostly in manuscript form, and that the larger proportion of Italian printed music which has been preserved at Burghley House has an English or Dutch imprint. Of the London issues of music by Italian composers, the following examples may be regarded as being representative, and span the eighteenth century.

The Italian organist and composer Domenico Zipoli, is chiefly remembered for his *Sonate d'Intavolatura per Organo e Cimbalo*, published in Rome in 1716. A few years later, (probably in 1722), the London publisher Walsh reissued this music, as part of a series, under the title *A Third Collection of Toccatas, Vollentarys and Fugues for the Organ or Harpsichord, with particular Great Pieces four the Church*. Though this issue contains works generally more suited to the organ, the canzonas are very effective when played on the harpsichord, and some of the 'verses' can be chosen to form suitable preludes to them, if the performer does not wish to improvise such music, as would often have been done at the time.

Moving on to indisputable harpsichord music, Domenico Alberti's set of *VIII Sonate per Cembalo, Opera Prima* was published by Walsh in London in 1748. Alongside numerous examples of the characteristic left-hand arpeggiated figuration, to which the composer bestowed his name, are movements of considerable beauty: the *Andante moderato* movement of Sonata V in A major, for example, gently exploits both the resonance of the harpsichord, and also the player's ability to convey elegant part writing (See Example 3).

⁶ The musical contents of which are reviewed extensively in the Introduction to the present writer's *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Music Collection at Burghley House, Stamford* (Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot) scheduled for publication in November 2001.

⁷ For further general information about these visits see John Ingamells: *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701-1800, compiled from the Brinsley Ford Archive*, Paul Mellon centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 1997.

⁸ See Hugh Brigstocke and John Somerville: *Italian Paintings from Burghley House*, Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia 1995.

example 3

SONATA V

Adagio Moderato

Born in Naples in 1707, Pietro Domenico Paradies later spent a number of years living in London, where he achieved wide recognition as a harpsichordist and singing teacher. According to Dr Burney, Paradies achieved particular repute 'by the Lessons he published for the harpsichord and the scholars he made on that instrument, of which he was an admirable master'. The 'Lessons' mentioned by Burney were in fact the twelve *Sonate di Gravicembalo dedicate A Sua Altezza Reale La Principessa Augusta*, published in London in 1754, and frequently reprinted. The Sonatas were each set in two movements, though within this overall plan Paradies was able to create a wide variety of mood and content. No doubt the teaching potential of this impressive range of music was fully appreciated.

Historically speaking, Paradies' Sonatas have similarity with the keyboard works of Galuppi and Martini, particularly in their treatment of figuration, whilst the influence of Domenico Scarlatti is also strongly felt, notably in the employment of hand-crossing (Sonata XII/i), wide leaps, unexpected harmonic progressions, and so on. However, the tuneful manner and 'Alberti' basses are telling indications of the contemporary *galante* style

(Sonatas I/i and XII/i), as are the occasional glimpses of the *opera buffa*. Several movements of Paradies' Sonatas anticipate Classical sonata structure in their use of two contrasting themes (Sonatas I/i and XIII), and in their development of material. The confident employment of musical techniques such as these, and the instantly attractive nature of the music itself provides ample reason why these Sonatas should have attracted the admiration of the Mozarts, Clementi and Cramer.

No doubt the Ninth Earl of Exeter himself would have found Paradies' music to be most pleasing though we do not know if he actually met the composer. He did, however, cultivate the friendship of one of Paradies' most celebrated pupils, the noted Handelian soprano Madam Mara. Following the tremendous impact of her singing during the 1784 Handel Commemoration Festival in London - of which the Ninth Earl was, as it will be recalled, a Director - Madam Mara was frequently invited to sing at Burghley House and became a personal friend of the Earl.

Various keyboard sonatas by Muzio Clementi are to be found in the Burghley House music collection, though these are mostly in French imprints, and

were not purchased by the Ninth Earl. An English publication of Sonata II, from Opus 2, is described on the title page as being a 'New edition, with considerable improvements' and must therefore date from between 1810 and 1819 during which period the composer, as a publisher, was in partnership with Collard, Davis and Collard, who issued the volume.

Readers wishing to learn more about the remarkable archive of music at Burghley House are referred to the present writer's *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Music Collection at Burghley House, Stamford* due to be published by Ashgate Publishing of Aldershot, in November 2001. It includes an extensive introductory essay on the music and musicians of Burghley House, and also describes a number of musical instruments that were commissioned or purchased whilst the music library itself was formed over the centuries. The present writer, as harpsichordist or organist, has recorded a number of albums of music from the collection, and of these the following titles and

programmes are particularly relevant to this article: '*His Lordship's Delight*', *Georgian Music for Harpsichord and Organ* (Meridian CDE 84374), and *Harpsichord and Organ Music from the Library of Burghley House* (Cantoris Records CRCD 6052). The harpsichord tracks on both of these albums were recorded on the performer's own Shudi and Broadwood harpsichord of about 1775.

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