Harpsichord & fortepiano

Vol. 10, No. 1 Autumn, 2002

Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCat)

CONCERT REVIEWS

Report as requested from Michael Cole
International Festival of Spanish Keyboard Music.
'Diego Fernandez',
Almería, Spain.
12 – 15 October 2001

Imagine a picture book white-painted pueblo, perched on a hill top, two kilometres inland from the gently swelling waters of the Mediterranean. The place is Mojácar. The sun has set at the end of a stimulating day of papers and international encounters at the symposium dedicated to Spanish keyboard music. A taxi carries you through the darkness towards the twinkling lights of the old town, up the steeply winding road, through ever narrowing back lanes until you emerge at the very summit.
What a venue for a concert ??- the Mirador del Castillo! From the terrace you can pause for a while to view the dark Andalucian landscape and the sea. Then you are conducted through the Mirador, across the inner courtyard with its central pool, and into a small, seemingly ancient concert room. It's quite full, and soon even the few seats on the balcony are occupied.

This was the enchanting location for the first evening's concert, a perfectly judged harpsichord recital given by Luisa Morales. She chose music selected from the manuscripts she had researched in a closed convent, featuring music by Antonio Soler, José de Nebra, and several other Spanish composers of the 18th century, using her own harpsichord, a two manual based on an instrument by Zell of Hamburg. After the interval, which gave the Spanish, Portuguese, and American visitors a chance to mix with local residents, she returned to play Scarlatti – effective, rhythmic and charming – much enjoyed and warmly applauded.
But her great coup was at the end of the recital when she brought on traditional dance expert Cristóbal Salvador to perform boleros to the sonatas K.491 and K.380. Forget the romantic legacy of Andalucian dance generated in the 19th century – Señor Salvador is a complete master of the earlier styles and appeared in eighteenth-century costume, complete of course with castanets, to show us the traditional gestures, steps and jumps of the 'boleros de Vera' that fit the music so exactly. As Luisa Morales explained before they began – it is not necessary to make any adjustments to Scarlatti's music – 'I will play exactly what Scarlatti wrote'. The air of expectation and avid attention could not have been higher, and the performance was so enthusiastically applauded that it was necessary to repeat it.

The day began with a paper from Prof Gerhard Doderer, from Lisbon, giving a summary of current knowledge about the four surviving Cristofori-style fortepianos from Portugal, ending with a recording of a sonata played on the van Casteel instrument of 1767 now in Vermillion.
David Sutherland from Michigan followed with some brief speculation on the nature of early piano technique. Michael Cole then took up the conference theme – the piano in Spain 1770–1830 – giving a dual language paper aided by computer presentations entitled `Converting from Harpsichord to Piano – the important role of women'. Within this there was a rare chance for the audience to hear the numerous registrations on the type of early square pianos so prevalent in Spain.
On display just outside the conference room was a photographic exhibition assembled by Cristina Bordas illustrating a good selection of instruments by Juan del Mármol of Seville (all made between 1781 and 1790) and other Spanish makers of slightly later date such as Flórez of Madrid, which served to show how closely these makers copied English designs of the period.
Unfortunately, not one of Marmol's instruments is now playable or ever likely to be so again, according to Cristina Bordas, so when the symposium heard the music of José Ferrer, recorded by Warwick Cole on an Adam Beyer piano of 1778, this may be as close an approximation as may be found to the Iberian experience of that period.

Romá Escalas from Barcelona followed with a completely fresh paper describing a well-preserved cabinet upright by Johann Schantz of Vienna.
This piano is located in a fine early 19th century mansion in Catalonia where it is thought to have been since it was new. Most happily the owner's collection of music is also preserved, dating from the 1820s and 30s, and consisting chiefly of dance music ? - polkas and such like.
Señor Escalas remarked how the superior sound projection of early uprights was so helpful in making such music clearly audible to the dancing guests, helped when necessary by the special Janissary effects and drum pedals. This Schantz piano is a rare and important piece in its own right, but preserved as it is in its specific social context it offers enormously valuable insights for those who wish to understand the importance of the piano in the period.

Prof Cristina Bordas spoke about a recently discovered organised piano by Francisco Flórez of Madrid, neglected and previously unregarded in a store at Aranjuez: it was presumably made for the royal court. It is an ornate square piano with, somewhat unusually, a separate keyboard for the pipework (now missing) and dates from 1794.
Immaculada Cuscó from Barcelona briefly described seventeen early pianos from the Museu de la Musica to illustrate some of the strands in Spanish piano making up to about 1845. But the most varied and unfamiliar instruments were those shown in a selection of slides by Juan Luis Garcia Orozco from Mexico.
The use of early keyboard instruments in South and Central America is almost virgin territory, and for many in the audience the most startling revelation was the survival of a clavichord of early date, made from Mexican timbers, that would certainly interest anyone inclined to research it, having first read Bernard Brauchli's book.

Dr Susanne Skyrm from South Dakota began the second day – talking about the sonatas of José Galles in a proto-classical style. Prof Linton Powell from Texas followed, with thoughts on the performance of short cadencial passages in many Spanish keyboard sonatas marked arbitri. The rest of the day's schedule included papers from

a variety of Spanish scholars on the minor byways of Iberian keyboard music.

Sunday's concerts comprised a harpsichord recital from Maggie Cole and, deputising at short notice and very capably, Marcia Hadjamarcos who alone played on an early piano, with great effect. But surely the most unusual concert was given in the great sandstone church flanking the Plaza Mayor at Vera. The Ensemble Al-Tarab comprised five young men of north African descent who played supposedly early Andalucian music using two uds, a large psaltery, a drum, and a fiddle played downwards (on the knee). Their pieces, which were generally of ten or fifteen minutes duration, consisted of endless elaborations of incomprehensible laments in what could easily pass for standard Moroccan music of today. As my Texan neighbour remarked: 'A little of this goes a long way!'. I never did understand what tuning the fiddle player was using, but what baffled me most was why his standard violin (for that is what it was) should still have its chin rest in place!

Luisa Morales is to be congratulated on her excellent initiative and faultless organisation. For 2002 I believe she plans to return to the theme of Spanish harpsichords and their music, which resulted in such useful disclosures in 2000.
Information has now been assembled on twelve Spanish harpsichords that survived at least into the twentieth century with a clear division into two categories as in most European countries of short-scaled Italianate design and – in the Spanish instance – longer scaled instruments notably from Seville which, with their double curved bentsides and framed stands, resemble Hamburg work.

Michael Cole

BOOK REVIEWS

The Clavichord,
Bernard Brauchli,
Cambridge University Press, 1998.
ISBN: 0 521 63067 3. Hardback,
Octavo, 384 pages with numerous illustrations.

At last we have a book devoted to the history and development of the clavichord. It is long overdue. When you consider how many years have passed since Hubbard's Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making - (it came out in 1965) the dearth of any equivalent literature for the clavichord is really quite astounding, and depressing. Bernard Brauchli explains matters himself on page one: 'By the 1960s the harpsichord was much in evidence, but the clavichord, whose delicate sound was not compatible with large concert halls, remained somewhat in the shadows. Moreover, clavichord enthusiasts, like the instrument they practiced, were often isolated and introverted.'
Pianists and harpsichord players should make no mistake about it: the clavichord is a serious keyboard instrument. Played by J.S.Bach (and his sons), by Mozart (and his sister), by Haydn, and even by Beethoven as a young man, this was an instrument so important in German musical culture up to 1800 that no musician could be taken seriously who had never learned to play it. Lengthy treatises were written specifically addressed to its devotees by such prominent and influential men as Daniel Gottlob Türk and C.P.E. Bach. And if you look further back in history, to the sixteenth century and beyond, the clavichord was so widely defused and ubiquitous in Europe that it could be heard from Spain to Scandinavia. Its neglect in our own times and its demise in Britain and France by 1700 certainly require some thoughtful examination.
Bernard Brauchli's book, if it doesn't answer all the questions, at least makes a significant and worthy beginning. He takes each century in turn, collecting the documentary sources, the iconography, and a wide sample of surviving instruments, and this material he then cuts and pastes in a kind of scrapbook style, rigidly segregated, chapter by chapter, into 100 year epochs. He admits that 'history can never be neatly divided into centuries', but he explains that he chose to gather the material in this way 'for clarity'.
We follow the development of the clavichord from its origins in the monochord or Kanón employed by Euclid (says Brauchli) around 300 BC, probably used exclusively to demonstrate intervals and their mathematical relationships. Next we postulate a more versatile variant equipped with a simple keyboard, so that one could move from one pitch to another with sufficient ease to render a simple melody. The single string gives way to the multi-string version that enabled consonant intervals to be sounded. So we arrive at the earliest known clavichords, with twenty diatonic notes plus to two raised keys for the B flats. They have fewer strings than keys—the lowest notes each having dedicated strings but the upper range having as many as four pitches sharing one course. Perhaps they were in use as early as 1350. Certainly there is clear visual evidence for their use all over Europe between 1400 and 1450, as for example in the stained glass windows of St Mary's, Warwick where two angels are shown using an instrument about a metre in length, with (perhaps notionally) six strings shown aligned with the long axis of the rectangular case. Its keyboard projects outward. The position of the bridge can also be clearly seen. This window was designed and glazed by John Prudde between 1439 and 1447.
Arnault de Zwolle's well-known manuscript probably dates from about the same time and provides information on the fretting system, whereby a modest number of strings (apparently nine in Arnault's diagram) produced either thirty four or thirty seven pitches, depending on whether you believe his text or his fretting diagram. The soundboard ran the whole length of the instrument, under the keys, which in turn meant that the bridge had to be quite tall, probably similar in shape to an early viol bridge, though of course having a flat top, not arched. Tuning such instruments was easy, since all strings were in unison: you take away the damping cloth and pluck. (The implication must be that listing cloth

was not woven between the strings as it was on later instruments.) I think we obtain good overview of these developments here. It is clearly traced.

From this Brauchli takes us on a survey of sixteenth century clavichords, describing five surviving examples, still with parallel strings but with a new soundboard type, raised higher than the keys at the right(as we are accustomed to see it) but having several small bridges to give various string lengths. The narrow shape of this box, with the keyboard still projecting in the earliest examples, allied to the straight disposition of the strings, produced an innately strong construction with none of that tendency to twist longitudinally which plagues later instruments.

And so we pass on to more familiar territory with the fretted clavichords of the seventeenth century, with serpentine bridge and angled string courses that improve the touch so much. (It may be remarked here that the line drawings by Thomas Steiner are really first rate and clarify matters very succinctly.) Brauchli gives useful summarized information about the fretting schemes found in old instruments so readers can follow the evolutionary process that refined Arnault's four-notes-per-string system through to the pairwise fretting adopted around 1700 (usually with As or Ds unfretted), while the keyboard compass increased progressively in step with contemporary harpsichords: early seventeenth-century examples often had a short octave C/E ' c3 but C ' c3 was soon standard. As early as 1618 Praetorius recommends C ' d3, and mentions that some instruments even extend to f3. This compass was to prove very long lasting.

Throughout these chapters Brauchli maintains a detached, informative style, reporting his sources with care and leaving the reader to select or harmonize any conflicts inherent in the material. But this falters somewhat when he comes to the eighteenth century as he intervenes in his own voice to explain that fretted clavichords have many advantages over the unfretted type. The touch is crisper, the sound is brighter, and the smaller instruments are generally more durable and less prone to structural deformation. All of this is true, and might well be endorsed by many present day enthusiasts. One might also remark that fretted clavichords can be tuned much more speedily than unfretted ones.

Brauchli than reiterates Arnold Dolmetsch's observation that performing Bach's Well-tempered Clavier poses very few problems on the pairwise fretted type. (Ed. Ripin found only three instances where a pairwise fretted clavichord might have difficulty). But thereafter you may be somewhat surprised as Brauchli goes on to claim that 'the only real advantage of the unfretted clavichord was the possibility of altering the temperament easily'. This is an unsustainable assertion, and plainly contradicts many eighteenth-century witnesses.

Ultimately Bernard Brauchli makes his own prejudice plain when he concludes that—'what the unfretted clavichord gained in technical facilities it lost in musical qualities'. This judgement is certainly not drawn from any of his historic sources. He quotes no early authority in support of his views.

The best he can do is to cite the output of maker C. G. Hubert of Ansbach. Workshops drawings of Hubert's fretted clavichords are very widely used by makers today. The design is of proven merit and generally produces an instrument with a clear singing tone from a very handy portable instrument. They are justly popular with many players.

Like many others Bernard Brauchli has observed the nature of Hubert's surviving oeuvre (about 20 examples), and sees that there is a prima facie case that he made unfretted clavichords only during the 1765-75 period. Apparently after 1775 only fretted examples survive. Whether this is really conclusive is debatable, but clearly, if accepted this would still have to be reconciled with the contradictory trend seen in the work of the Fritz, Hass, Lemme and Silbermann workshops, not to mention the heavy preponderance of fret-free instruments from Sweden.

Türk in his Clavierschule—clearly advises against fretted instruments: 'every key should have its own strings' he says.

But this perturbation is a minor indiscretion. The chapter on eighteenth-century clavichords contains heaps of information that will not be seen collected so comprehensively in any other publication. There are pictures of numerous instruments, summary details of extant examples from various workshops, details of stops, such as the Pantalonzug and Coelestin, and short excursions into literary sources. Unaccountably, there is also a photograph of an amazingly innovative instrument ascribed (I think justifiably) to Cristofori in 1719, but Brauchli having shown us the picture omits even the most cursory description of it! His section on 'The New World' flatters to deceive as it is almost exclusively drawing on the instruments associated with the Moravian Community, composed of German migrants recently settled in Pennsylvannia. There is no mention of the rest of the Americas, or any of the other linguistic and cultural groups.

The final chapter on 'Aspects of clavichord performance and practice' is disappointing. Here the author reverts to a strictly detached style, reporting only what can be seen in iconographical sources (which isn't really very much), together with a few points extracted from antique writers such as C.P.E.Bach and Türk. Speaking personally, I would have liked to have had either the author's observations on the touch and sonority he has encountered in a variety of old instruments, or, to avoid any accusation of personal bias, a collection of comments from eminent players of the present age. After all, such judgements have the benefit of a much wider viewpoint than any eigthteenth-century treatise could muster.

The other thing that is wanting is technical analysis. In spite of Bernard Brauchli's disclaimer—that this is not 'a technical manual on clavichord building'—mathematical information can be very valuable in illuminating the differences in touch or sonority between outwardly similar instruments. Information about string scaling and tensions is very sparse in this book. Yet, it is the relationship between the tightness of the strings, as applied from the wrestpin, and the resistance created by tightly weaving the damping cloth through the after length of the strings (or the construction of an over-rail) that contributes so much to the elasticity or firmness of touch, and hence to the confidence with which a player can search out the real resources of a clavichord. And this is precisely what

is so miserably in error on many twentieth-century instruments. What a service it would be to musicians if such matters had been clarified for a general readership!
As a reader of this journal, you are probably more interested in the harpsichord and fortepiano, and not completely devoted to the clavichord. So after reading Brauchli's book you will maybe wish to reflect on the place of various keyboard instruments in relation to the eighteenth century repertoire, and its rôle in the day-to-day life of musicians of that period. Why, for example, did Mozart need and want a clavichord? Irrespective of whether you believe widow Constanze's testimony concerning the clavichord that is now in the Geburthaus Museum, no one can deny the evidence that Vincent Novello collected when he met Maria Anna Mozart in 1829. There was a clavichord near the frail woman's bed. Its compass was AA to f3, and she who had absolutely no reason to lie, told her visitor that she and her brother used to play duets on this instrument. Where does this information ' not given in Brauchli's book—fit into the larger picture of Mozart the youthful harpsichordist and later fortepiano virtuoso? If you begin to think about this larger context you may perceive that there is a serious limitation in the present book. Brauchli sets out to inform us only about the clavichord, and it is clearly part of his intention that the instrument should be credited with greater importance, but there is in this book no discernible attempt to take a more comprehensive view in which eighteenth-century players, like today's musicians, would have also used harpsichords, pianos and organs. Without this there is no context: we are left disconnected, unable to make an informed assessment. We really must recognize that very frequently other keyboard instruments were in the same house with the clavichords , often in the same room; that musicians turned to the different instruments for different purposes, and in different contexts. Similarly, we simply cannot get to grips with this subject without at least making some comparison with the square pianos that very often displaced the clavichords ' but Brauchli does not even mention their existence.

Am I expecting too much? Perhaps so. Brauchli's achievement has to be taken as it stands. With all its limitations this is the book that will offer the first and most obvious source book for conservatory students and academic departments for the foreseeable future. Let's hope that it will help to make the instrument better known and more widely understood, and that in future its contribution to western music will not be overlooked.

Michael Cole

DISC REVIEWS

Bach's Harpsichord Concerti

It is always of interest to compare a number of recordings of the same work or genre and so I was excited by the arrival of three sets of Bach harpsichord concerti, accompanied by three different German orchestras. However, when I started listening to this bundle, I was very disappointed by the lack of variety on offer. One hears many depressing stories of the parlous state of the record industry and, however popular the Bach concerti, one does wonder if the market needs three such similar recordings. All three orchestras employ modern instruments and very capable keyboard soloists; they all play with panache but there is a lack of fresh ideas and little in the way of profound expression.

For the sake of clarity, I will list these recordings with a few individual comments about the whole CD or set of CDs and then I will describe the D minor concerto, as a representative comparison from each, finishing with a summary of all three.

J.S.Bach.
Harpsichord concerto in D minor BWV 1052,
Triple Concerto BWV 1044,
Müthel Concerto in Bb major.
Akademie für Alte Musik, Berlin.
Single CD: Harmonia mundi HMC 901740

The emphasis upon the ensemble/orchestra is evidenced by use of three different keyboard soloists, none of whose names are featured upon the front cover of the CD. This is a compilation of three concerti, as might have been played by the Leipzig *Collegium musicum*, under Bach's baton, and written in a couple of bursts of creativity between 1730 and 1742.

The Triple concerto surprisingly uses a Silbermann-copy fortepiano, although the programme notes mention that the outer movements are related to two earlier works for harpsichord. Despite my own personal affinity with both keyboards, I find this instrument is as unsatisfactory here as, in other respects, thc harpsichord is to a Mozart concerto but I am sure there will be readers who disagree with me. There may also be listeners who are relieved at the more mellow overall effect after the somewhat metallic rattle of the preceding D minor concerto, but the dominant double bass is an irritation in both.

The Müthel Concerto is a clever coupling, and may make this CD worth having as an example of the influence of both Bach and his sons. Müthel's use of unaccompanied instrumental recitative is a unique contribution to the concerto, reminiscent of the Bach sons' solo fantasias perhaps? The Piano's first entry is the more disappointingly weak as it follows a technically impressive, bitingly aggressive string-ritornello. That said, the piano-playing of Christine Schornsheim is varied and expressive and it seems rather unfair that she is treated like the poor relation, by this overbearing orchestra.
The D minor concerto BWV 1052, which opens the CD, is played by Raphael Alpermann on a harpsichord by Wolf, after Vater. The very fast, vigorous string-playing with strongly accented rhythms is almost too brittle and there is a lack of warmth or idiomatic harpsichord sound. The wiry rhythmic rattle of the harpsichord doesn't quite gain the precedence required in the battle for space that this movement seems to suggest and this could, perhaps, be the reason for abandoning the harpsichord in favour of the fortepiano in the next two concerti. Slightly uncomfortable and self-conscious appogiaturas are evidenced in the slow movement that is rendered rather pedestrian by the heavy accompaniment - more of a plodding bass than walking quavers! One should be aware of nothing but

the yielding filigree line of this intensely beautiful right-hand melody. The last movement, like the first, is well up to speed and trips along happily but neither the harpsichord nor the over-present growling of the double bass sounds have grown on one.

J.S.Bach.
Harpsichord concertos BWV 1052-1054, and BWV 1055-1058
Robert Levin with the Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling.
Two separately packaged discs: Hanssler CD 92.127 and CD 92.128

These form part of the *Bachacademie* complete recordings of Bach.

Helmuth Rilling has made his name conducting music as diverse as Monteverdi and the Romantics to the contemporary works he has commissioned from composers such as Penderecki and Pärt. His admirable philosophy, as stated in the CD booklet, has always been to create a positive atmosphere in which the musicians under his direction can discover the music and its meaning. He states: "Making music means learning how to know and understand other people and how to get on peacefully with them."
He was awarded the *Grand prix du disque* for the culmination of his massive project in recording the complete Bach Cantatas and this forms part of the complete works of J. S. Bach under his artistic directorship. One therefore expects, and receives, serviceable renditions of these favourite works.
The harpsichord used in the first disc is a fine sounding instrument after a Hasse of 1754 by Martin Christian Schmidt. The second disc uses another two instruments by the same maker, an instrument after a Silbermann of 1740 and, for BWV 10577, the lighter yet more nasal sounding copy of a Gräbner of 1739. The latter is a little thin in the upper registers but it blends happily with the well played recorders.
The orchestra's articulate playing and excellent ensemble is evident but Levin is not always particular enough about his ornamentation; articulation and his detached notes are less varied than they might be (compare them with the articulation of the recorder players in BWV 1057). There is a lack of elasticity or over-holding in his touch, particularly in the slow movements, which, after all, do not come much more profoundly beautiful than this! To me, there is a lack of sobbing in the F major, BWV 1057 that requires more over-holding and no sense of "treading on hallowed ground" in the agonised slow mvt. of the G minor, BWV 1058.
The D minor concerto's first movement is taken at a fairly fast first-movement-speed with an invigorating rhythm but suffers from over-regular articulation of shorter notes, as mentioned above.
In the second movement, the solo harpsichord pursues its own path in the manner of dealing with the walking quavers in the left hand and in the rather angular treatment of the right hand solo line.
The first note of the final movement is short and sudden, lending a panicky feel to the whole but it may be intentionally nervy and urgent and it certainly does not lack the vitality at which they are aiming, according to the well-written programme notes.

J.S.Bach.
Harpsichord concertos BWV 1052, 1053, 1055 & 1056, and BWV 1054, 1058, 1064 in both versions (3 hpschds and for 3 vls) & 1063
Robert Hill with Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Bruhl .
Naxos 8.554604, 8.554605 & 8.554606 (three separately packaged discs)
Nos. 3, 4 and 5 from another set of Complete Orchestral works by Bach.

This CD seems to be more of a showcase for the orchestra than for the harpsichordist/s. More than four times as many words are used to describe the orchestra, than are devoted to the CVs of the soloist/s and there is no mention of the harpsichord/s used. The different recordings in the later discs necessitate tweaking the volume-settings. Gerald Hambitzer and Christoph Anselm Noll give a standard rendition of the two-harpsichord concerto in C major that is satisfyingly stereophonic. One would expect this concerto to be the best served by the orchestra as it plays such a subservient role; the concerto can after all, stand alone without any accompaniment at all but one is again disappointed by the orchestra' s sheer weight and volume. The second movement is free of the fetters of the orchestra yet this imaginative and passionate dialogue never really lifts-off but chooses to stay on terra firma.
The D minor concerto starts at a brisk speed, leaving little space for subtlety. Helmut Müller-Bruhl is rather too fond of exaggerated crescendi and diminuendi; unnecessary in a work of such varied textures. The harpsichord touch is rather detached in general and also does not make the most of the variety of tone-colour and figuration within this movement. There is a lack of warmth of sound from either instrument or player. In the slow movement, again, varied lengths of notes in the bass are provided by the orchestra, but not by the harpsichord. The opening arpeggiations and the shortened appogiatura in the right-hand solo part suggest that Robert Hill's ornamentation is not embellishing the solo line so much as hijacking it. However, the forceful approach of Hill probably works most successfully in the final movement of the D minor where the driving quality takes no prisoners and in this movement he also adds some exciting and effective ornamentation.

In summary, within these CDs, Bach's masterpieces for harpsichord have been poorly served by their accompaniments. However much they protest they are historically aware, the large string orchestra cannot provide the subtle and flexible support that a smaller ensemble of baroque strings gives. My over-riding impression is that I have been bombarded by a plastic-coated self-assurance and a machine-made driving-power which allows one no time to contemplate, to weep or to wonder.

I should like to give these keyboard players the benefit of the doubt, their solo performances would surely have benefited from the interplay and sensitivity of music-making with baroque strings. I personally shall return to Bob van Asperen's recordings of 1993, in which he is accompanied by *Melante~Amsterdam,* a perfectly balanced line-up of two violins, viola, violoncello and double bass.

Penelope Cave

WILLIAM CROFT (1678-1727)
The Complete Harpsichord Works — premier recording
Julian Rhodes: Harpsichord, Spinet, Virginal
2CDs: Ismeron JMSCD6 & JMSCD7

With Julian Rhodes' untimely death in March 2001, the keyboard world lost one of its most innovative and fascinating performers. Rhodes' highly individual brand of musicianship seemed often at odds with what he saw as the entrenchment of authenticity, and he made no concessions to the higher dictates of 'historically-accurate' performance practice. At the heart of Rhodes' musical philosophy was a remarkable versatility encompassing the organ (his main passion), the piano, the harpsichord and the clavichord, and he possessed that rare ability to switch brilliantly and instinctively from one to the other. He mused that the harpsichord was essentially 'a box of wood and wire', but he took this 'raw' view in trying to draw out the more tactile and expressive qualities of an instrument which he felt was otherwise static and burdened by the weight of constraints which performance practice had imposed upon it.
Although I felt that Rhodes' playing on this recording belies a somewhat more cerebral and objective approach, I was nonetheless compelled by its noble authority and impeccable, robust technique and it drew me to a new appreciation of these excellent yet neglected works. Indeed, it seems puzzling even in the light of Croft's important reputation as a composer for the church, that so little attention has hitherto been afforded his substantial keyboard output, and even that the first modern edition did not appear until 1974.

This then is a milestone project: the first complete recording of Croft's keyboard music in a two-CD set, comprising 19 *Suites*, a *Trumpet Overture*, a *Chaconne* and a *Sarabrand* (sic), with other miscellaneous movements forming extra suites, or added to existing ones. Newcomers to Croft's keyboard music will no doubt be delighted and possibly even surprised by the wealth of musical invention revealed here: the melodic and rhythmic imagination and the consummate mastery of keyboard forms and styles. Often reminiscent of Purcell (for example in the *Ground in C minor* from *Suite no 3* (Vol.2)), his writing is certainly of equal interest to that of his more celebrated contemporaries. There are three instruments used: a spinet after Thomas Hitchcock by Alex Temple, a Virginal after 17th-century English originals, and a harpsichord after Blanchet by David Law (1989). All three serve the music admirably, although the Blanchet's 4-foot had a slightly sour edge in the upper registers, as can be heard for instance in the Suite No.1 in C (Vol.1) and in the opening *Slow* of *Suite No. 8* (Vol. 2). However, I enjoyed the inventive use of registration on the Blanchet, particularly the refreshingly liberal but well-judged use of the buff, which Rhodes combines with the 4-foot or with the second 8-foot to great effect. The intimate warmth of the Virginal is perfectly captured in this recording and it is here that the clarity of articulation can be heard to particular advantage, for example in the *Sarabrand* from *Suite No. 18 in D minor* (Vol.2).

There's no doubt that this is technically masterful and authoritative playing — the meticulous precision of the fingerwork which so beautifully illuminates the melodic detail in Croft's music, and the powerful undercurrent of pulse which brings out the robustness and rhythmic feeling of the dance. However, some listeners may find Rhodes' performance too metrically-driven and business-like, and I confess I did sometimes weary from the rather strident 'efficiency' and uniform legato with which he often delivers his bass-lines. There is also a rather stiff and routine manner of phrasing in certain movements - the Corants and the Allemandes in particular - where unswerving adherence to the pulse never quite allows for that greater breadth and flexibility needed here. Elsewhere however, it was good to hear Rhodes finding a more relaxed balance of both directness and spaciousness, for example in many of the Sarabands and in the *Chaconne in A minor* (Vol.1).

Perhaps the important point to make about this recording is that it will certainly incite players to visit, or revisit, Croft's music for themselves, not least by Rhodes' own obvious enjoyment of it which is so infectiously conveyed. This is a valuable and major contribution to the recorded library of 18th century English music - a worthy legacy for both composer and performer to leave for posterity.

Pamela Nash

Johann Christian Bach
Piano Concertos Op.13 Nos.4-6 and Op.14
Anthony Halstead,
The Hanover Band cpo 999 691-2

These are four of Bach's most mature keyboard concertos, dating from about the same time as Mozart's K.238, 246 and 271, but in many ways pointing forward to Mozart's later works. Of the Op. 13 set, No.4 is arguably Bach's finest piano concerto, and shares its opening theme with the younger composer's K.456.
No.5 has many 'pre-echos' of K.453; and No.6 (my personal favourite) even anticipates the lyrical style of such early nineteenth-century composers as Dussek and Field. The single concerto published as Op. 14 (despite the number, a year before Op.13 appeared) has a more virtuoso solo part, and may have been written for the famous Mme Brillon of Paris, who greatly impressed Burney on his visit in 1770.

The performances by Halstead and the Hanover Band are excellent. The tuttis are spirited and the solos sensitively played, the difficult bits being dispatched with aplomb. There is a little additional ornamentation from time to time, nicely judged and subtly devised, and the few short cadenzas are models of 1770s style. Full marks, too, for using an early Broadwood grand instead of the regrettably uniform 'Viennese fortepiano', and to the band for reducing to single strings for solo accompaniments and for some delightfully mellow Bb basso horns in Op.13 No.4.

Reincken:
Partitas and harpsichord music
Robert Wooley, The Purcell Quartet
Chandos CHAN 0664

This disc contains at least some of the music from each of Reincken's six partitas for two violins, viola da gamba and continuo, published as *Hortus musicus* in 1688 (according to

New Grove 2; the programme booklet says 1687), together with some of his solo harpsichord music. As was evidently fashionable in north Germany at the time, each partita combines an Italianate sonata (including movements for solo violin or gamba) with a suite of French dances: Allemand, Courant, Saraband and Gique, as the print calls them. The playing by Robert Wooley and the Purcell Quartet is superb, and makes a strong case for the work of an unjustly neglected master who was admired and transcribed by no less a person than J. S. Bach.

But I can't see why only one of the partitas is presented complete, and just selected movements from the others, sometimes not even in the right order. It is true that, as the programme book says, the solo movements in the sonatas are printed in alternative versions for violin or gamba, but to conclude that 'Reincken probably did not intend that each partita should be played through in its entirety' is clearly a *non sequitur*. Obviously there isn't room on one CD for the harpsichord music and all of *Hortus musicus*; but why not record, say, three entire partitas instead of this frustratingly incomplete selection? I can't believe the movements left out fall below the excellent standard of those chosen for this recording, especially when they include some of the pieces Bach arranged for solo keyboard.

I have another worry: all the dance pieces in the partitas and the harpsichord suites have French titles, but the programme book says the former are 'in the manner of a Corellian chamber sonata', and every dance is played absolutely 'straight', without a hint of *notes inégales* or other French mannerisms. If Reincken really modeled his suites on Corelli (Op. 2, presumably, which was the only set of his *sonate da camera* in print by 1688), why didn't he use Italian titles instead of French to make his intentions clear? (French conventions were surely well understood in Hamburg at the end of the seventeenth century.) Or have I missed some recent piece of research that demolishes the Italian/French distinction?
Despite my reservations, I strongly recommend this disc. It's good to have *any* of Reincken's instrumental music on record!

Froberger:
Keyboard music
David Cates (harpsichord)
Wildboar WLBR9701

This Froberger recital is very much like the ones I reviewed in the Spring 2000 number of HFM, with similar strengths and (to my mind) weaknesses. On its own terms Cates's playing is first-rate, and his two instruments have a most attractive sound. I suppose one can't blame him for following current fashions in Froberger performance, but I do wish someone would re-think the implications of 'avec discrétion'. It does not mean 'over the top', nor is it a license to take extreme liberties with Froberger's precise notation and play everything as if it were a *prelude non mesuré* by Louis Couperin. In any case, there are many pieces, including the Lament for Ferdinand IV? that are not marked 'avec discrétion'.
I'm sorry to be so lukewarm, for Cates is obviously a fine harpsichord player. I look forward to hearing his performances of music better suited to his many talents.

Richard Maunder

J.S.Bach.
Goldberg Variations
Pierre Hantai (harpsichord)
Opus 111 OPS 30 - 84

From whichever perspective you view and hear them, Bach's *Goldberg Variations* continue to remain the pinnacle of virtuoso German keyboard writing during the eighteenth century; for generations of harpsichordists, they also remain the omnipresent and ever-daunting Mount Everest of Baroque keyboard literature - often ventured, but only intermittently conquered. Perhaps this is how it should be: a vast edifice that throws down a mighty challenge to any player, but whose traversal should not be undertaken lightly. Prolonged periods of training are essential and the higher the climber ascends, the more rarified the air. As the journey progresses, so it becomes (almost teasingly) more difficult -*cf*. the second "half", Variations 16 - 30. Pierre Hantai is clearly aware of the obstacles, but he has also done his homework . This is a young man's interpretation, in that he takes risks, invariably copes with them and frequently dazzles us on the way to the summit. (Listen to his urgent yet scintillating, almost jaw-dropping, performance of Variation 26, complete with Bach's appoggiatural emendations) This can, on occasion, lead to raised eyebrows *vis a vis* questions of *tempi* which tend towards the headlong (Variations 3 & 17) but much of this playing is finely attuned and articulated to the demands of the moment, as demonstrated by Variations 4, 10, 16, 21 & 22, for example.
I did find, however, that in the slower, more overtly rhetorical and moving variations (Variations 13, 15 & 25) that the qualities of dignity and noble grace that seem to be required here, were not always sufficiently present. Hantai's playing of the *da capo* Aria gave breadth, but was marred by his tendency to render trills both inexpressively and at speed. I also regretted the absence of repeats in the (admittedly) long twenty-fifth variation - perhaps the CD length of 77:26 would have over run the maximum duration, had the repeats been included - but this most solemn variation does suffer structurally when not heard in its entirety.
Some quibbles, then, but an interpretational journey of both vigour and weight which has undoubtedly gained many admirers. Personally, though, I will still return to favourite performances by Kenneth Gilbert and the much-lamented Scott Ross to give me a periodic dose of that rarified mountain air(!)

The Music of
Armand -Louis Couperin.
Jennifer S. Paul, harpsichord
Klavier KCD 11041.

Originally released in the USA in 1993, this disc presents, in chronological order, the entire contents of Armand-Louis Couperin's single volume of *Pieces de Clavecin*, which was published in 1751 and dedicated to Madame Victoire de France, who was the daughter of Louis XV. We know that Armand-Louis' life was relatively uneventful, at least until the age of twenty-one, when his father died and he inherited his father's post of organist at the church of St. Gervais. At the age of twenty five, the *Pieces de Clavecin* were published, followed the next year by his marriage to the daughter of Blanchet, the famous harpsichord maker.

(Perhaps she had been seduced by the contents of the just-published volume, as much as by the man himself?... His death) like Duphly's, occurred in 1789 but was wholly unexpected - he was trampled by a horse as he dashed across the street to St. Gervais to play for a service.
Miss Paul has undoubtedly done Armand-Louis Couperin a service by recording his works for solo harpsichord - he still tends to remain the member of this large musical dynasty that is pushed to the sidelines, if not forgotten outright. Also, if memory serves me accurately, issues of this often beautiful and criminally-neglected music were not jostling with one another to be purchased by the harpsichord-loving public, either in the USA or here in Britain in 1993.
It is a welcome, if curious, release, which like the curate's egg is good (often very good and brilliantly played) in parts; for example, her playing of pieces such as *La Blanchet, La Turpin* and *La du Breuil* (whose extraordinary harmonies undermine the compound Gigue rhythm) are fresh, intelligent, dexterous and rhythmically incisive.
But therein lies the rub and the puzzling part of the equation. Many of these pieces are, frankly, ill-conceived and too wayward in their execution of *tempi*, rubato and the application of *inégale* . Flexibility and rhythmic licence are, it goes without saying, just some of any harpsichordist's many tools of artful persuasion . But there are boundaries of taste and sheer musical sense and, all too often, Jennifer Paul seems to have misjudged and overstepped the mark in these respects . At these times, her playing is inclined to mannerism - cf. *La Victoire*, for example, which is in no way *Noblement* , or the *Allemande* which has unasked-for desynchronisations between the hands; the *Courante* is not fiery enough and she makes a nonsense of *Les Cacqueteuses* by continually pushing and rushing the approach bars to cadences... I could go on.
All this is a pity, because this represents, perhaps, something of a wasted opportunity. Nonetheless, this CD should lead listeners and performers to the music itself, which would be all to the good.
Therein, they will find much noble beauty and a very Gallic type of warmth and passion.

Richard Leigh Harris

J.S.Bach.
Six Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord, BWV 1014-1019. Lucy van Dael, violin. Bob van Asperen, harpsichord. 2 CD's. Naxos DDD 8-554614 and 8-554783. 2000.
Emlyn Ngai, baroque violin. Peter Watchorn, harpsichord.
3 CD's. Musica Omnia. DDD NoO112. 2001.

It has to be stated at once that these six violin sonatas are magnificent works, and that they so often show Bach's skills in sonata composition at their very best. Players and listeners will no doubt have their favourites, and among these, the three splendid sonatas in major keys - A major, E major and G major - will often be found. The middle one of these seems to make greater demands on the violinist than the more famous concerto in the same key, BWV 1042. In October 1774 C.P.E.Bach wrote to Forkel telling him that these six sonatas were among his father's best compositions. He went on to say that "they sound very good even now, and give me much pleasure....they contain some *Adagios* which could not be written in a more *cantabile* manner if they were composed today." This last comment could form the basis of a substantial study of eighteenth century slow movements composed in Germany, and the differences in mood and style of pieces of c.1720 by J.S.Bach and those of the 1770's by C.P.E. Bach and many others. To what extent did J.S.Bach's slow movements anticipate the *galant* style and the *Empfindsamkeit* of the later eighteenth century?

Bach's violin sonatas do not seem to have been much in focus in recent years, and they are not, apparently, studied and played as much as they used to be. All of them are in four movements, except for No. 6, which has five movements together with some alternative movements that need to be taken into account. Their format is the Italian *chiesa* pattern with slow, quick, slow, quick movements, but the scheme has been enlarged by Bach over that favoured by Corelli and other Italians. The quick movements are much longer, more extensively developed, and generally speaking, are more like concerto movements than those of many violin sonatas of the period. With Bach, of course, fugues and fugal techniques are ever present, and these techniques were treated with much novelty and originality. Only the F minor sonata starts with a large-scale, extended slow movement.
The violin writing in these works has exceptional melodic invention and appeal. Bach relied on a single melodic line for the instrument almost throughout, and there is very little double or multiple stopping. The notable exception is found in the third movement of the F minor sonata, which, in any case, is a most unusual movement for its time.

The keyboard parts of these works were notated more or less in full. The basses are mostly unfigured, and, apparently, there is no call for a viola da gamba player - or is there? On occasions there are movements where the presence of a string bass would be welcome - in the two slow movements of the C minor sonata, and in the opening movement of the F minor sonata. The two slow movements of the E major sonata clearly appealed very deeply to C.P.E.Bach, and on listening to these pieces one is often reminded of the younger composer's work. Perhaps these works have the textual layout of solos involving a full continuo, but were intended as duos in performance.
The two Dutch artists play very well on these new discs. There is no comment on the instrument used, although Lucy van Dael is well known for her baroque violin performances. The playing is clearly articulated and the pair of instruments are well balanced. There is an occasional unsteadiness near the start of one or two of the quick movements, and one or two of the snappy rhythms in the last movement of the A major sonata sound a little scrappy and imprecise. The F sharp minor movement in this work took a long time to come to an end.

The G major sonata, BWV 1019, has an extra movement to the usual four - a solo keyboard piece placed third, as well as two other slow movements, a long one in G major and a short one

in B minor - which are rarely heard nowadays. Questions have arisen as to whether Bach was the composer of this work, but no satisfactory attributions otherwise have been suggested. The second movement, a *Largo* in E minor, has been used sometimes as a slow movement for the third Brandenburg concerto. This is pleasantly convincing, although surely a movement for this purpose would need to be scored for a larger ensemble if the string layout in the rest of the concerto were not used in full.
The playing of the solo keyboard piece here - an *Allegro* in E minor is too fast and sounds rough; a more restrained performance would have been more effective in the context. The *chiesa* pattern is varied here in that the work starts with an Allegro instead of a slow movement. The two quick movements here are given very lively and spirited performances. There are four extra movements here - presenting the relevant alternatives that survive. The first of these is the *Courante* from the sixth Partita, BWV 830/3, and the next is the short Adagio, BWV lO19a/2. The third is an arrangement for violin and harpsichord of the Gavotte (a sort of gigue) from the sixth Partita, BWV 830/6, while the last is the long G major *Cantabile* movement, BWV 1019a/1.

This is a very interesting pair of discs which may well revive interest in these great masterpieces. The clarity and sweetness of the violin tone often gives great pleasure.
The same six sonatas are presented on two CD's by two American musicians. Emlyn Ngai plays a baroque violin based on a Strad model of 1737, while Peter Watchorn plays a harpsichord based on a large Harrass model of c.1710, and made in Melbourne in 1999 by Alastair McAllister.
The violin makes a lovely sound, and the tone is confident and precise. Its sumptuous volume is especially noticeable on the G string, and the slow movements in particular benefit from the player's strong approach.
A contrast of tone is offered in the second slow movement of the A major sonata. In this F sharp minor canon the harp stop on the harpsichord is heard in the perpetual staccato semiquaver pattern. The same appealing limpid flow is also heard in the opening movement of the C minor sonata, whose tempo and style may well be associated with the alto aria, *Have mercy*, in the *St.Matthew Passion*, BWV 244/47. The third movement in the violin sonata, a slow movement in E flat, calls to mind the tenor aria, *See what his love can do*, in Cantata 85. These tender slow movements contrast here very strikingly with the two sturdy C minor fast movements.

The G major sonata, BWV 1019, is given a fuller discussion here in the booklet than was the case with the Naxos booklet. Peter Watchorn lists three versions in his notes. The first, c.1720, had five movements where the last was a repeat of the first. The second, c.1730, introduced two movements from the sixth Partita, BWV 830, which Bach published in 1730, the violin work now having six movements. The third version was probably made in the 1730's, and had five movements. Here a new harpsichord solo, BWV 1019/3, was substituted for the Partita movement. As far as is known, movements four and five were new compositions then as well.
The new harpsichord piece sounds particularly well here, while the *Cantabile* movement, BWV 1019a/1, from the first version of the work is added as a supplement at the end. This receives a very warm and affectionate performance and creates a very leisurely, contented impression. The playing of these American artists will win many new devotees for these sonatas, and their lovely presentations are a pleasure to hear.

The third CD in the *Musica Omnia* set comprises an illustrated talk by Peter Watchorn. This is one of their series 'Beyond the Notes' which *Musica Omnia* are issuing with their CD's. It is rather unfortunate that this talk lasts only for about 25 minutes. It could have lasted as long as the other two CD's, and could have told the listener a good deal more about J.S.Bach and the violin, and his concept of the sonata. Some of the matters mentioned are, in any case, noticed in the extended and very interesting booklet (22pp) that accompanies the discs. The lecture is a welcome feature, with brief excerpts from the performances illustrating the comments made. One may not agree that the opening movement of the B minor sonata is "sad". Serious, yes, but not doleful or dolorous. In the talk the significance of the fully written-out keyboard part is stressed, and the need to balance the two instruments in the performance of contrapuntal music is illustrated. Reference is made to Brandenburg 5 and the concerto element as heard in the sonatas. It is sad that so few solo violin concertos by Bach survive now, but to understand his string concertos and sonatas, reference should be made to the solo keyboard arrangements of concertos by Vivaldi and others, -BWV 972 *et seq*, and the six organ concerto arrangements, BWV 592-70. Perhaps the gorgeous opening movement of the E major sonata could have been part of a violin concerto, or a cantata sinfonia for violin, flute or oboe solo. Further insight is provided into Bach's flexible use of his own music when the supplementary movement for the G major sonata is known to have been used later (c.1728) in Cantata 120 in a movement for soprano solo with violin obbligato and strings, *Heil und Segen soll und muss zu aller Zeit*. What a pity this movement could not have been recorded and presented here alongside the violin sonata movement.

The six violin sonatas reveal an important aspect of Bach's work at Cöthen and later on, and one which has perhaps never been in such strong focus as his achievements with his unaccompanied string sonatas and groups of keyboard suites. Emlyn Ngai and Peter Watchorn have done a good deal to reveal their own pleasures and insights into these fine works, and their performances are very welcome.

An interesting point about the artists on these discs is their attitude to *tempi*. They often agree very closely. Amusingly enough, both performances take three minutes and two seconds to play the opening movement of the A major sonata. At other times there is some divergence! The Dutch are more energetic than the Americans, and their pace is more vigorous. Who would have thought that?

Gwilym Beechey.

Harpsichord *& fortepiano*

The Gustav Leonhardt Edition:
Teldec 3984-21349-2 (21 CDs)

Following up on their complete re-issue of the treasury of recordings by Frans Brueggen, *Teldec* here present, in honour of the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of their influential series, *Das alte Werk*, virtually their entire archive of recordings by the Dutch master, Gustav Leonhardt, arguably one of the most influential musicians of the twentieth (and now through to the twenty-first) century. Leonhardt graduated in 1950 from the *Schola Cantorum* in Basle, where he studied with the Swiss organist and harpsichordist, Eduard Mueller (who appears in the present release with his illustrious former pupil in two of the Bach double concertos as well as the concerto for four harpsichords). After three years as professor at the *Musikakademie* in Vienna (1952-55), where he collaborated with Nikolaus and Alice Harnoncourt (both of whom played in his first chamber group, the *Leonhardt Baroque Ensemble*, along with Leonhardt's wife Marie), Leonhardt returned to Amsterdam in 1955. It is less well known that Leonhardt (and Harnoncourt, for that matter) came under the influence of the wealthy Viennese instrument collector, Erich Fiala (husband of the harpsichordist Isolde Ahlgrimm), who was the first in Vienna to take seriously the use of historic string instruments in original condition for authentic musical performance. Fiala's example as collector and enthusiast helped to inspire the formation of *Concentus Musicus, Wien* and the *Leonhardt-Consort*, both small string ensembles using historical instruments. Impressed by Ahlgrimm's performances on original Viennese fortepianos (at a time when no-one else was interested in them), Leonhardt purchased a 1787 (Walther?) fortepiano from the Ahlgrimm-Fiala collection. After producing a few discs for *Vanguard* during his time in Vienna (including one with countertenor, Alfred Deller, of two solo Bach cantatas - where the instrumental playing reveals how far baroque instrumental performance has progressed since), Leonhardt's recording career really hit its stride after *Telefunken*'s unveiling (in 1958) of the series *Das alte Werk*, under the direction of the Hamburg-based producer, Wolf Erichson, who oversaw virtually all of Leonhardt's recordings for the label.

The present compilation contains virtually all of *Telefunken*'s recordings of Leonhardt's performances as harpsichordist, organist and chamber musician, (sadly, omitting the wonderful recordings of *Quadro Amsterdam*, with Jaap Schroeder, Frans Brueggen, and Anner Bylsma playing modern instruments in Couperin's *Les Nations* and six of Telemann's *Paris* quartets). It is impossible to overstate the role that these recordings played in shaping the musical tastes and expectations among audiences for Baroque and Renaissance music in the 1960's and 1970's. Leonhardt's work as conductor is, of course, documented by *Teldec* in their (still unsurpassed in many respects) series of the complete Bach cantatas, which Leonhardt shared with his friend and colleague, Nikolaus Harnoncourt. Fundamental to the success of this distinguished series of recordings, with their distinctive grey covers, artwork contemporary with the music and lavish format, was producer Wolf Erichson's vision of historically informed musical performances, recorded in realistic, non-studio acoustics. After leaving *Telefunken*, Erichson (along with many of the artists whom he had championed during his *Telefunken* years, including Leonhardt) continued to develop and promote his ideas through his own label *SEON* (short for Studio Erichson), and, later, the ongoing Sony *Vivarte* series, which Erichson continues to produce.

As harpsichordist, Leonhardt was committed to re-introducing to the public the sound of the historical instrument, as opposed to the so-called "revival" harpsichord by Pleyel or the German *Serien-Instrumente* of Neupert, Ammer, Sperrhake and Wittmayer. His own collection included original harpsichords by Andreas Ruckers and Jacobus Kirkman (and later a fine 1755 instrument by Rouen maker, Nicolaus Lefebvre). However it was Leonhardt's long-time collaboration with the contemporary Bremen harpsichord maker, Martin Skowroneck, which enabled him to continue on a regular basis the use of historically-derived instruments for the performance of old music. In 1962 Leonhardt acquired the instrument on which the bulk of the present recordings (and many subsequent ones) were made: a reconstruction by Skowroneck of a somewhat modified large Flemish model by Johannes Daniel Dulcken (actually a composite of two originals from 1745, with further modifications to the action and disposition introduced by Skowroneck). The influence which Skowroneck's Dulcken copy exerted on Leonhardt's own performances is very apparent from the recordings included here: first used in the 1963 Bach sonatas with the Swedish violinist, Lars Fryden, it perhaps came into its own with Leonhardt's landmark 1965 *Goldberg Variations*, the second of Leonhardt's three recordings of this work, included here on one of the twenty one CDs (recorded at modern pitch, a=440). This recording introduced many listeners (and harpsichordists) to the sound of the historical instrument. The complete performances (four of which were also recorded on the Dulcken copy, two on an early 18th century Dutch cabinet organ) of the programmatic (though still surprisingly little-known) *Biblical Sonatas* by Bach's predecessor in Leipzig, Johann Kuhnau, (with German spoken introductions by Leonhardt himself) are also notable achievements from this period.

The highlights of this series continue to astonish - as much through Leonhardt's aristocratic sense of timing and proportion as well as the incredibly beautiful sounds which the harpsichordist draws from the various instruments which he employs. Leonhardt manages to play in what seems today a straightforwardly articulate yet unmannered style, with a depth and degree of subtlety which no other harpsichordists, including Leonhardt's own students, have ever quite been able to match. Above all, it is Leonhardt's profound sense of rhythm and impeccable timing, combined with rhetorical flexibility, which mark him out as one of the greatest exponents of this (or any other, for that matter) instrument. Tracks from some of the original *Das alte Werk* LPs are here divided up among various CDs. One casualty of this relocation occurs with the spectacular 1966 recital of English

virginal music (one of two programmes devoted to this repertoire which Leonhardt recorded. The other, played on the splendid Schloss Ahaus Ruckers harpsichord from 1640 was recorded for *BASF*), where the Byrd d-minor Pavane and Galliard is consigned by mistake to a disc of Byrd's consort music with the *Leonhardt-Consort*. This error remains from a previous compilation - not the first or last time *Teldec* has allowed a fairly serious editing mistake to remain uncorrected from first issue to re-release. Added to the items on the original LP are a few pieces by Tomkins and Farnaby, recorded on Leonhardt's own 1648 instrument by Andreas Ruckers (rebuilt by Frank Hubbard, and seriously compromised tonally as a result - it sounds thin, brittle and hard on this recording - most un-Ruckers like, in fact. Leonhardt sold the instrument many years ago).

Among the Bach releases, the centrepiece is undoubtedly the still unsurpassed set of the Bach harpsichord concertos (complete except for the great D minor, BWV 1052, which was played for *Telefunken* by Herbert Tachezi and *Concentus Musicus*, due to Leonhardt's having already recorded the work with the German ensemble,*Collegium Aureum*, for *BASF*. *Teldec* really should have included it here for the sake of completeness). Never have the strings (led by Marie Leonhardt, and played one to a part) sounded so full or beautiful, while the performances by Leonhardt, his teacher, Eduard Mueller, and his earliest students, Anneke Uittenbosch and Alan Curtis (both outstanding in the concertos for three harpsichords, BWV 1063-4), are exemplary. Although the present booklet notes omit the fact, the triple concertos were played (in 1963) on three matching Dulcken models completed by Martin Skowroneck in the previous year (one destined for Leonhardt, another for Alan Curtis), lending homogeneity to the overall harpsichord sound. All three generations unite (Mueller, Leonhardt, Uittenbosch and the Dutch player, Janny van Wering), in the four harpsichord concerto, BWV 1065, where Leonhardt's moderate tempos make perfect sense of this too-often dismissed late Bach arrangement of Vivaldi's great concerto from *L'Estro Armonico*. Leonhardt modestly plays the second part in this concerto and BWV 1062, leaving the honours to his former teacher, Eduard Mueller. Among the line-up of harpsichords is a 1932 Neupert (almost inaudibly playing the third part - not the fourth as stated here), as well as Leonhardt's 1775 Kirkman (which actually plays the fourth part).

Performances and recording techniques - as well as the quality of the instruments available to Leonhardt - show obvious signs of development and progress throughout the relatively brief period covered by the recordings comprising the present set of Bach concertos (1961-1968). Although the accompanying booklet unconscionably omits most of the recording details (I remembered them from an old LP copy I was able to refer to), those dating from as early as 1961/2 (BWV 1057, 1060, 1062, 1065) sound distinctly more dated than those of just a few years later (the three harpsichord concertos, BWV 1063-4 are from 1963, remaining ones from 1967-8). Curiously, an editing mistake in the A section of the finale of BWV 1053 in E major, in which an extra half measure is inserted, has still not been corrected - it is now almost an historical curiosity in itself, having (incredibly) survived every re-issue of this recording since its original appearance (presumably Leonhardt himself has never heard it). Happily, the inclusion of the wonderful performance of the A minor triple concerto, BWV 1044, with Marie Leonhardt and Frans Brueggen, provides some compensation for the absence of BWV 1052. Another caveat is the cover photo - which depicts Leonhardt sitting at the Skowroneck Ruckers (the photo was taken in Bremen in Skowroneck's house in 1966 during the English virginal music sessions), the image clearly reversed (the harpsichord spine is on the wrong side of the instrument)! Doesn't anyone at *Teldec* proof these things? Clearly not in this case!

The 1963 recording of the Bach violin and harpsichord sonatas with the Swedish pioneer of the baroque violin, Lars Fryden, requires considerable tolerance from the listener. By the standards of the other CDs in this set, it's really a bit of a non-starter, especially compared to the far greater recording with Kuijken of ten years later. Recorded in a particularly dry studio, with unpleasantly artificial balance between the two instruments, as well as often pretty questionable intonation from the violin, these readings now seem stiff, heavy and prosaic (no wonder Leonhardt re-recorded these important works with Sigiswald Kuijken). The set of six sonatas for harpsichord and violin by Mondonville, recorded three years later is more successful (Leonhardt plays a fine Kirkman harpsichord from 1766 - who said that an English instrument can't be used in French music? This one sounds great - focused, rich and powerful). The contribution of violinist Lars Fryden remains, however, problematic. Once again closely recorded (making a mockery of the designation of the sonatas for harpsichord with violin accompaniment), every slight discrepancy in intonation (and there are quite a few) and flaw in tone production is mercilessly revealed. The music is, however, splendid, and the performances are driven along by Leonhardt's wonderful sense of rhythm.

Some of the earliest pre-Skowroneck solo harpsichord recordings (Couperin, Handel, Rameau, Boehm on a 1956 Graebner copy by Dr. Ulrich Rueck of Nuremberg) inevitably lack the flexibility and rhetoric which are a hallmark of Leonhardt's mature style (you'll hear much of this same heavy, literal approach in Leonhardt's earliest *Goldbergs* and *Art of Fugue*, recorded on an Ammer and a Neupert harpsichord in Vienna in the 1950's, and still circulating on *Vanguard*). Of course, they are indispensable as documents of Leonhardt's developing rhetorical approach to music in general and to the harpsichord in particular, a transformation which seems to have been largely complete by 1964 or so. Before we leave Bach, the CD devoted to solo works (Chromatic fantasia and fugue, BWV 903, G major toccata, BWV 916, E minor suite, BWV 996 as well as two arrangements of works for solo violin: in D minor, BWV 964 and G major, BWV 968, should be mentioned, since this issue, recorded between 1968 and 1970, contains some of Leonhardt's most passionate and committed Bach

playing, totally free of the "dryness" of which he is sometimes accused.

Among Leonhardt's greatest achievements have always been his interpretations of 17th century harpsichord and organ music. His (already mentioned) recording of English virginal music (mostly performed on a fine Skowroneck 4-register two-manual Ruckers model, derived from the 1640 Ruckers on which Leonhardt recorded Froberger and English virginal music for *BASF*) was perhaps the first to present this music convincingly, and Leonhardt's approach continues to influence how we interpret this mysterious and elusive repertoire. I believe that no other performer has captured the essential gravity and beauty of this music to quite the same extent since. Leonhardt's 1970 Froberger disc (recorded on both organ - the 1733 Christian Mueller in Amsterdam's Waalse Kerk - and a Skowroneck Italian harpsichord, and produced, once again, by Wolf Erichson) includes suites, canzonas, capriccios and toccatas, providing a fair sample of Froberger's compositional range. It is a fine issue, although it doesn't quite reach the musical (or sonic) heights of Leonhardt's still amazing 1962 *BASF* Froberger recital on the Schloss Ahaus Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord of 1640), which, along with Thurston Dart's clavichord recording on *L'oiseau-Lyre* (reviewed elsewhere) really turned the musical world on to this great and pivotal genius of the early German baroque.

Leonhardt's life-long involvement with the music of Henry Purcell is well documented in a two CD anthology devoted to the composer's chamber and solo harpsichord music (some of Leonhardt's most affectingly simple playing here) plus a collection of verse anthems and songs with the *Leonhardt-Consort* and the choir of King's College, Cambridge, directed by Leonhardt's friend, David Willcocks. Among the solo singers represented on this disc, along with James Bowman and Nigel Rogers (soloists in the anthems), the Dutch baritone, Max van Egmond, Leonhardt's incomparable collaborator in numerous Bach cantatas and passions, is happily further represented in a few Purcell solo songs (taken from van Egmond's wonderful, never re-issued recital disc called *Lieder des Barock*) accompanied by Leonhardt and Bylsma.

Equally worthy of mention is the still unsurpassed recording of Rameau's *Pieces de Clavecin en Concerts* - the first recorded collaboration by Leonhardt with the illustrious members of the Kuijken family from Brussels (Wieland, gamba, and Sigiswald, violin, minus the young Barthold - here the traverso is played by Frans Brueggen). The performances are still remarkable on every level, and not superseded in any way by the Kuijkens' fine later reading with their Belgian compatriot, harpsichordist Robert Kohnen (on *Accent*).

Inclusion of the *Leonhardt-Consort's* recordings of early German and Italian consort music (not to mention their contribution in the Bach concertos and Purcell) reminds us of the importance of Leonhardt's involvement as chamber musician (playing organ, harpsichord and, occasionally, viola da gamba), and also of the key role played by the many specialist Dutch musicians which he gathered around him: Marie Leonhardt, Antoinette van den Hombergh (violins), Wim ten Have, Lodeijk de Boer (violas), Dijck Koster (cello) and Fred Nijenhuis (bass), not to mention the distinguished English bassist, Anthony Woodrow.

Predictably, some of the (now thirty-five year old) pre-digital recordings reveal their sonic limitations, as well as having relatively short playing times (many being straight transcriptions from original *Das alte Werk* LPs). But this collection is of incalculable importance to our understanding of how present-day Baroque performance developed in the way it has. It is of special relevance to the generation(s) of young listeners to Baroque music who didn't personally experience the incredible revolution in musical thought which great and visionary artists such as Gustav and Marie Leonhardt, Nikolaus and Alice Harnoncourt, the Kuijkens, Frans Brueggen, Jaap Schroeder, Max van Egmond and, not least, producer Wolf Erichson, created. It is a revolution which continues to influence every aspect of how we perceive and experience music of all periods down to the present day.
The CD booklets (lacking the rich documentation of many of the original LPs, a sad reminder of the more utilitarian times we now inhabit) are nevertheless enhanced by interesting publicity photos of Leonhardt throughout his fifty year career, and essays by Leonhardt students Bob van Asperen and Ton Koopman praising their former teacher, without whom their own distinguished careers would not have been possible. These recordings should be obligatory for every aspiring harpsichordist's (and baroque music listener's) library. Highest recommendation.

Peter Watchorn

The Clavichord Collection vols. 1 & 2
Clavichord music: Bach, Froberger, Purcell Croft et al.
Thurston Dart, clavichord (from L'oiseau Lyre OL 50075, SOL 60038-60039, Argo RG 83 J Martin Stafford JMSCD 4 & 5

These two CDs contain all of the clavichord recordings made by the English musicologist and performer, Robert Thurston Dart (1921-1971), whose untimely death at the age of 50 robbed English musicology and performance of one of its most dynamic and (at times) controversial figures. Dart, whose 1954 classic *The Interpretation of Music* (Hutchinson, 1954) laid out with devastating clarity (and considerable humour - one of Dart's most endearing qualities as scholar and lecturer) the problems of performing music from different periods, was at the time of his death chairman of the music department of London University. His influence on generations of English performers of early music was profound, and his departure from the scene preceded by a couple of years the firm commitment of English musicians to so-called 'historically-informed' performance on period instruments. One wonders what direction Dart would have taken had he lived longer.

A student of the Belgian musicologist, Charles van den Borren, Thurston Dart was very active from 1948 as a keyboard player (especially as continuo harpsichordist), director (Boyd Neel Orchestra, Philomusica of

London) and, as editor and musicological advisor, was a driving force in the production of the highly important *Musica Britannica* volumes published by Stainer & Bell.

As a solo player of historical keyboard instruments (organ, harpsichord and clavichord) Dart was largely concerned with the resurrection of neglected early English keyboard music, and produced five influential LP recordings for L'Oiseau Lyre (then still overseen by its founder, the Australian, Louise Dyer) devoted entirely to this rich but overlooked music. Dart was most proud, however, of his handful of recordings on the clavichord, and it is good to have all of these conveniently transferred to CD in the present re-issues. Dart was a sensitive player and the Thomas Goff clavichord which he used (a small four octave instrument, not really a copy of any historical instrument) sounded well in its day (far better, for example, than the large two-manual harpsichords which Goff also produced), and still pleases with its silvery sound, the slight tubbiness of its bass betraying its small size and short scaling.

The present issues reproduce Dart's original challenging notes advocating the use of the clavichord for the music of Froberger and Bach. In the case of the Bach *French Suites*, his argument is really unnecessary: there is no doubt that in Germany these works would have often been played on the relatively cheap and accessible clavichord. Of course, as suites in the French (and often, Italian) style, the harpsichord would undoubtedly have been the preferred medium for performance in large venues. For Froberger, too, it seems that his interaction with French musicians would have steered him more towards the harpsichord as the most appropriate vehicle for dance suites (but any instrument might have been used - the point was to play the music). Nevertheless, the expressive nature of the clavichord (and Dart's playing brings out those very qualities well) certainly make it an effective medium for private performance (and recordings provide a good opportunity to listen to a quiet instrument like the clavichord under ideal conditions). Perhaps his frequent use of *bebung*, or finger vibrato, may be more than present taste deems appropriate - on this clavichord it works, nevertheless.

So, there is nothing further to say about the re-releases of these long-time classics beyond welcoming them back into the catalogue and praising the British Clavichord Society, J. Stafford Cape and their subscribers (who include several prominent ex-Dart pupils) for their foresight in bringing this about. Dart's advocacy of Froberger (along with Gustav Leonhardt's magnificent 1962 recital on the finest sounding Ruckers harpsichord heard before or since) led the way to a re-assessment of the role of this profound and important composer's music. Since Dart did not have the benefit of Howard Schott's fine edition, there are some readings of accidentals which seem questionable, notably at the mid-point of the beautiful "Meditation on my future demise" which opens the D major suite XX (Dart used the Austrian Denkmaeler text, the only one then available).

Recommended as an important tribute to one of the most important figures in English early music performance of the 20th century.

Peter Watchorn

J.S.Bach
English Suites, BWV 806-811
Peter Watchorn, harpsichord.
TITANIC Ti-254, rec. 1997 in Methuen, Mass., USA.

When dealing with a performance by such a complete musician as Peter Watchorn, the issues are not technique or good taste - both impeccable here - but style and interpretation. Bach had thoroughly studied the works of famous Italian and French masters and used either style in the different pieces of the English Suites. And Baroque Frenchman based most of their rhythms and articulation in inégalité. Unfortunately we almost no detailed information on Bach as a performer, and no direct evidence has survived on the use of inégalité by him or his circle. We know however that in many occasions he heard performances by French musicians. Also, contemporary sources (e.g. a work by Telemann and a written remark by Georg Muffat, both addressed to the prospective users of their published music) clearly show that the practice of playing inégales in French-style works was common among German-speaking musicians of Bach´s times.

Should we play French Bach inégal? Many distinguished musicians do not think so, Dr. Watchorn amongst them: there are no inégales in this recording. The usual argument is that Bach included diminutions and other complexities that even in a Frenchman precluded inégalité. Back to the English Suites, it may be so for the Italianate Preludes and Sarabandes, and also for some pieces in French style, but others show tell-tale details typical of French music meant to be performed inégal, viz. the Allemandes (except for Suites 4 in F and 6 in d) , the last two Courantes (5 in e and 6 in d) and the Gavottes from Suite 3 in g.

This said, there are many fascinating aspects in Dr. Watchorn´s performance. While others often seem to show how fast they can play, Watchorn here produces Preludes, Courantes and Gigues always at reasonable speeds: the resulting performance is beautifully solid and rich in detail. Harpsichordists that are also distinguished makers acquire a very special knowledge of the instrument, especially so about the choice of stops for performance, and Watchorn is no exception: his registration is most interesting, varied and appropriate.

A most beautiful-sounding French double harpsichord was used: an excellent replica - by Walter Burr - of the Smithsonian's Stehlin 1760, well tuned and better recorded. This pair of CDs is a real pleasure to hear. The box has been issued with a very good booklet including an essay by Dr. Watchorn.

Rameau
Pièces de Clavecin
Sophie Yates, harpsichord.
CHANDOS CHAN 0659, rec. 1999 in Forde Abbey, Somerset, England.

The title of this CD is confusing: it suggests that all of Rameau´s harpsichord works are included. But that would not be possible in only one CD, so one could believe that it is a selection of pieces instead. It is

neither. The record includes - complete - the first two collections issued by the author: the Premier Livre of 1706 and the Pièces de Clavecin of 1724. [It is to be expected that another record will be issued with the Nouvelles Suites of c.1728 and Rameau's arrangements of pieces from Les Indes galantes of 1735.] In a performance of harpsichord Baroque music, it has long been established that non-legato is the basic articulation: the evidence is overwhelming for French inégales. The whole recording unfortunately is marred by an excess of reverberation that makes it very difficult to ascertain articulation details: in a simple scale one often hears three or more notes overlapping! It is clear however that Prof. Yates uses legato very often, in some pieces even as a prevailing articulation, e.g. in the final Menuet of the Premier Livre.

As for inégalité, Prof. Yates uses it with very good taste, but too sparingly for my taste, often avoiding inégalité in non-diatonic passages: thus she plays égal most of the second part of the Allemande in e minor. (This piece was already played - and later recorded - fully inégal in the late sixties by specialists like Kenneth Gilbert and the young Scott Ross). There are of course many attractive aspects in this performance, notably Prof. Yates's very good selection of tempi. Some players take Rameau literally and play Allemandes incredibly slow, while she uses a lively and yet most adequate speed. Her selection of harpsichord stops is also very appropriate. Finally, her playing of the embellishments is impeccable.

The recording was made on a very good copy by Andrew Garlick of the Paris Conservatoire's Goujon harpsichord, a most adequate instrument for Rameau indeed. [I know the original quite well, having regularly played on it in the early seventies. After his restoration of the instrument in 1967, Hubert Bédard voiced it quite loud to show how powerful a Baroque French harpsichord could be, keeping a beautiful tone and being perfectly playable.] All in all, this is really an appealing CD. The booklet includes a short but most interesting essay by Prof. Yates.

Claudio Di Veroli

Boismortier
Suites for Harpsichord and for Flute.
Anne Savignat, Flute, Béatrice Martin, Harpsichord and Christine Plubeau, Viola da gamba.
Naxos DDD 8.554457. 2001.

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier (1689-1755) began publishing his music soon after he settled in Paris in the early 1720's. His first publication appeared in 1724, and in the next twenty years or so he produced about a hundred further opus numbers. Quite a number of these, especially those in between Op 70 and Op 99, do not appear to survive now, and it may be very unfortunate that a good deal of his music has been lost. He composed a great variety of vocal and instrumental music, and it is probably his chamber music that has done most to re-enliven interest in his music in the last few years. Much of his music still remains unknown, and he has not as yet been well served bibliographically.

The works on this new CD come from two collections - a set of six Suites for flute and bass, Op 35 (1731) and the four *Suites de Piéces de Clavecin*, Op 59 (1736). The seven works here are all in four or five movements: these comprise the four suites of 1736 and three of the Op 35 collection (Nos. 4-6).

The keyboard pieces all have titles, e.g. *La Brunette, La Rustique, La Puce, La Belliqueuse*, &c, and the composer probably took some of his ideas from the Couperin *Ordres* in this respect. He himself, however, was no Couperin, and did not have the forceful, large-scale creative mind of the composer who produced 27 substantial *Ordres* for the harpsichord in four volumes. The last of these appeared in 1730. Boismortier, however, was more than a capable composer, and must have been a better player than some writers have alleged. His keyboard writing is very idiomatic, and does not come from someone who does not understand the instrument or play it indifferently. His music is tuneful and well thought-out. *La Rustique*, from the second suite, for instance, is a magnificent movement, reminiscent of Daquin, whose four harpsichord suites appeared in 1735. Did Boismortier see or hear these before or during writing his own pieces? *La Puce*, in the third suite, is delicate and mischievous, while *La Belliqueuse* is an entertaining depiction of a termagant, rather like Socrates's wife, Xanthippe.

These harpsichord suites all receive fine performances here. The case with the works for "flûte traversière avec la basse" is rather different. The booklet that is provided with the CD is very inadequate and insufficiently informative. The provision of a bass part normally implies the inclusion of a harpsichord or other keyboard continuo in the performance, but there is no keyboard instrument to be heard at all here in these works for the flute. The flute is accompanied only by the gamba, thus presenting a rather bleak and thin two-part texture. Surely a harpsichord should be involved as well? The gamba is frequently too loud for the flute, and is intrusive rather than subsidiary and accompanimental. Long sustained notes in the bass sound very stiff and harsh, and do not mix very well with the delicate tones above. In the case of the *Quatrième Suite* for flute there is further mystification, as the work played has no gamba or harpsichord accompaniment at all, in spite of it being announced as a work *avec la basse* on the cover here.

In the *Cinquième Suite* the second movement is a *Bourrée en rondeau*. This is a fine movement, worthy of J.S.Bach, and the lack of a keyboard part here in this performance is particularly unfortunate. The *Rondeau* that follows is a sort of quick minuet. Then comes a little *Fantaisie*, a short and quick solo lasting less than a minute, after which a simple *Gigue* brings the work to a happy end.

Few of the movements in the flute suites have titles. They follow the normal styles of dances cultivated in France in the eighteenth century, and they often make some demands on the soloist. These samples from Boismortier are rewarding works to play and make for very pleasant listening - but *not* without a keyboard continuo.

Gwilym Beechey.

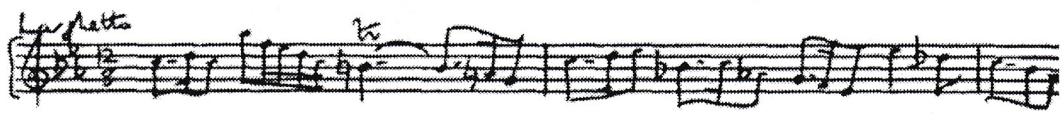
Mr Handel and Mr Smith.
Four Suites.
Jillian Belbin. Harpsichord.
University of Western Australia.
JBCD001. 1998.

This CD presents four harpsichord suites, one by Handel, and three by J.C.Smith (1712-1795), whose father had come with his family to London from Halle about 1720 and who became Handel's copyist, publisher and secretary. The younger Smith was encouraged by Handel with his music, and also studied with Pepusch and Roseingrave. From the later 1740's he acted as Handel's amanuensis and also became prominent in the oratorio seasons at Covent Garden. He retired in 1774 and spent the last twenty years of his life at Bath.

The suites on this disc are Handel's in D minor (No. 3 of the 1720 set), and Smith's in C minor, Op 2 No. 4, in G major, Op 3 No. 5 and again in C minor, Op 3 No. 2. Jillian Belbin's recording has been made on a single manual Kirkman harpsichord of 1760 which is now in the University of Western Australia's School of Music early keyboard collection.

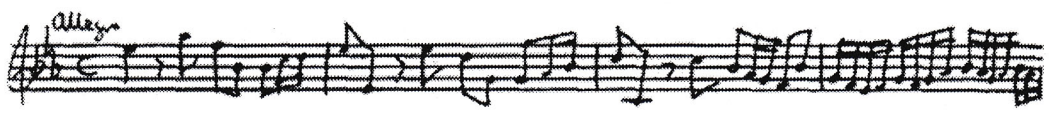
The famous Handel suite sounds well on this instrument, although there has been no attempt to add extra ornaments to the music and few attempts to embellish the text with extra notes. The fugal second movement has received a literal performance of the text, and no extra dotted rhythms have been added to thc fugue subject and comparable later passages where some players have felt that they might be applied. The chosen tempi work well in each movement, the last two, the Air and Variations and the *Presto*, being especially pleasant. Perhaps the *Courante* could have gone a little quicker .

John Christopher Smith published five sets of keyboard works between 1732 and 1765 - four sets of suites, and one set of sonatas, Op 5. He was not a prolific composer, but achieved deserved fame with his Shakespearean operas *The Fairies* (1755) and *The Tempest* (1756) for which he provided songs and other music for the Garrick productions. His set of Six Suites Op 2, appeared in 1737, and the fourth one, in C minor, has six movements. The succession of movements shows a similar miscellany to some of the Handel suites where dance movements were intermixed with other slow and quick movements with no dance affiliations. The movements here are Prelude, *Allemande*, Allegro, *Siciliana* - Larghetto, an untitled movement resembling a minuet, and a Minuet with three variations. It is a great pity that the variations in the last movement have been omitted in this performance, as there is no reason why they should not have been included. There is some fine music in this work, and Smith is revealed here as a capable and lively-minded composer in movements of various types. The music is mostly unknown, except for the *Siciliana*, which has appeared in keyboard anthologies, and which has given great pleasure to pianists. Here it can be heard in its original context in a work where all the movements retain the same key, but where there is great melodic, rhythmic and textural variety. The *Siciliana* starts as follows:
Ex.1.



The other two Smith suites played here come from the Op 3 set that was published nearly twenty years after Op 2, in 1775. These are both shorter works, Op 3 No. 5 in G having four movements, and Op 3 No. 2 in C minor having only three. The former again finishes with a minuet and three variations, and these are included here. The work is odd in that there is no slow movement , the first three movements being marked *Vivace* or *Allegro.* The last movement here is played too slowly for a minuet in 3/8 time: its style and melodic design, in fact, correspond very closely to that of the second movement - an *Allegro* in 3/8 time, whose quaver and semiquaver patterns are very similar.

Ex. 2.



The C minor suite,Op 3 No. 2, is in three movements, as are the first four works in the Op 3 set. The first movement is marked *Andante Allegro* which means an *allegro* on the slow side, but the tempo is too slow here. It needs more pace and more *brio*. The second movement is a fugue in E flat: this provides a contrast in tonality as well as a vigorous example of fugal technique. It is based on a very sturdy subject (see Ex. 2) which is treated resourcefully, if rather briefly. The last movement is a sort of toccata.

This reveals Smith's awareness of the music of Scarlatti, 72 of whose sonatas were published in London in 1739 (see R.Kirkpatrick. Domenico Scarlatti. 1953, pp.401-2). Smith's movement is too slow here: it needs a livelier pace and a more exuberant presentation.

This CD is very welcome in presenting the contrasting keyboard music of two contemporary London musicians, Handel, of course, famous and at the peak of his career for several decades, and J.C.Smith, who revered the older composer, and yet who had a personality of his own which emerges convincingly and often very delightfully in his preferred medium - the harpsichord suite and sonata. These suites and sonatas

deserve to be republished in complete sets, and this recording may go some way in encouraging such an enterprise.1

Gwilym Beechey

1. For a study of J.C.Smith's keyboard works, see my article 'The Keyboard Suites of John Christopher Smith (1712-1795)' in the *Revue Belge de Musiocologie XXIV* (1970), pp. 52-80. This includes a thematic catalogue of the five collections of keyboard works.

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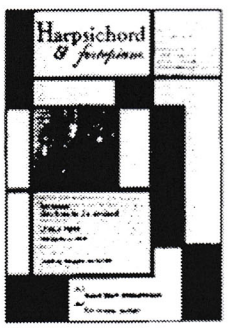

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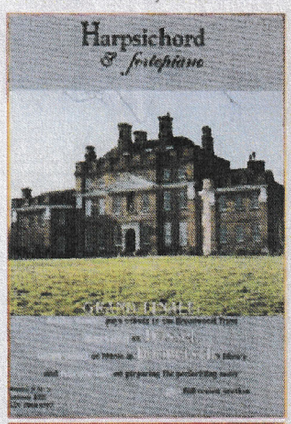

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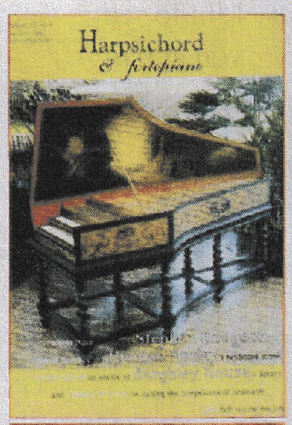

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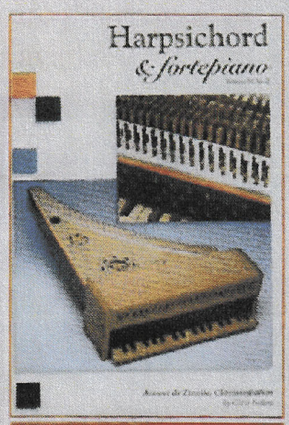

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