

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

Vol. 10, No. 2 Spring, 2006

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCat)

Richard Troeger, *Playing Bach on the Keyboard: a Practical Guide*. (Cambridge, MA: Amadeus Press), 2003.
Reviewed by Micaela Schmitz

Troeger introduces his book as a "practical guide for the non-specialist: students, teachers, amateurs, and players of all keyboard instruments, as well as the interested listener." Those who have seen his earlier treatise *Technique and Interpretation on the Harpsichord and Clavichord* will expect another useful item, and they will not be disappointed.

In general the book straddles the amateur and professional worlds, though at times I am unsure of the intended audience. I suppose this is because many of the works referenced are ones I would only have encountered at a conservatory. In offering these items to a wider audience, Troeger provides a useful service, and I think the book will likely become more widely used in lifelong learning/adult education. If the term "amateur" also includes "those studying in the hopes of becoming specialists," then we come closer to the truth, as I have come across many players who are well-read to the point of being specialists despite playing only for their own enjoyment – the true model of the clavichord player! Certainly the book is only accessible to the "interested listener" who reads music, plays and has copies of all Bach's inventions, sinfonias, toccatas, the WTC, and the *Clavierübung IV*. It is not bedside reading, but a careful study that requires one to consult the scores alongside the book. Those consulting

older editions will find some details of the pieces differ from the descriptions in Troeger's text, with regard to movement titles and time signatures.

(By the way, Troeger debunks the *Urtext* concept in a most delightful way!)

Structure

The book includes an opening section on instruments and genres in Bach, before turning to a second section covering subjects such as dynamics, articulation, phrasing, meter, rhythm, ornamentation, fingering, and accompaniment. In a third section "Speculative matters" Troeger covers rhetoric, temperament and musicology. These are areas that are subject to more change than the other topics, so it is sensibly organized. Most chapters conclude with a list of further reading. Most excerpts are short enough to be approachable to the amateur, and foreign texts are referenced in their English translations.

Layout

The layout is mostly fine, but where there are captions, it would be helpful if each subpart 1a, 1b, were stated on a separate line. At times there are examples, where at others one is expected to consult scores. There are more included examples toward the end of the book, and it seems it could be made just a little bit easier at the beginning. However, this may be due to the topic at hand; when discussing huge swathes of repertoire and categorizing them in a helpful way, it would be difficult not to refer to them often and in a general way. The index and bibliography are quite good and it is clear that the material has been well researched.

With the temperament section, some of the circle-type diagrammes might have helped to make it easier for people with different learning styles to grasp the concepts. A few areas could use clarification. On the topic of phrase and scansion (for example, where hemiolas occur in courantes), it would be helpful to have the groupings of two or three marked in some way in the examples.

Viewpoint

Troeger stands between the two worlds of those who firmly want their early music on period instruments and those who want to share the lessons early instruments can teach to a whole generation of modern players. This is very laudable and does, as Troeger hopes, bridge a gap. One gets the sense that Troeger is a strong proponent of the clavichord, a teacher who often explains early keyboards to modern pianists, a person conversant with organ literature, and a harpsichordist who knows the full range of the repertoire. He also comes across as an apologist for early keyboards and historically informed performance as well as for Bach on modern piano. In some cases, it seems clear that Troeger is trying to right a perceived imbalance and set the record straight for a huge range of age groups – at times this make the tone defensive.

Troeger lists several myths in the appendix (which he successfully debunks), one of which is "Bach invented equal temperament." It's very useful to cover this ground, since about two to three times a year, I meet someone who still has this very erroneous impression. It's handy to have a book by an acknowledged

scholar to reference when setting the record straight! However, I wish Troeger had included in his series of myths: "The harpsichord has no dynamics". While Troeger makes reference to the harpsichord's possibility for dynamic contrast through number of notes, method of striking, release and registration, he still states that it lacks touch sensitivity. Although it has less touch sensitivity than clavichord, it is worth noting that good players using good harpsichords can use just their fingers to adjust dynamics by changing the speed (not force) of the pluck.

Troeger states that the clavichord is not "for normal concert use," a surprising statement from a known performer on this instrument. We know that historically this was so, but today, an audience of 60-100 can appreciate the clavichord in performance.

Ornamentation and embellishment is the longest of the short subjects. Troeger notes (p. 199) that it is better to omit a whole movement rather than neglect to play all the repeats. Troeger also suggests methods for improvisation. I find it very rare that amateurs or serious students try improvising doubles, but do hope it becomes more and more widespread. I think earlier generations may have avoided this, but it seems more and more common in music teaching. Perhaps players will begin by writing out their solutions for doubles.

Interesting Topics

The majority of areas are covered quite well. Dance is a particular love of mine, and although I felt all the right messages and sources were there, there were a few items

that did not go far enough. The title *loure* is used without a full enough explanation to its resemblance to the gigue. The *canarie* (dotted) style of gigue is not mentioned with regard to the gigue, although it does occur in the glossary. Perhaps there are fewer canaries in Bach's music, but when people look at other national styles and composers, this link can be helpful.

In the chapter on dynamics, I think it would have been useful to include something on registration, which is particular to the harpsichord. There is mention of using 2 x 8' versus 1 x 8', but it would be interesting to have an exploration of where it makes sense to change manuals. Certainly in the section on fingering, Troeger does not warn players not to change manuals just to make so-called "transcribed string crossings" easier.

The section on fingering is interesting and useful, with a balanced approach that I will recommend to my students. It would be interesting to clarify what is specifically meant by "finger crossing" when looking at paired fingering. Perhaps when a video comes out?, we can look at whether there is a tiny lifting of the hands between 34, 34 pairs or if there is a finger crossing akin to what we see on the Dover edition cover of the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*.

On the topic of articulation, it is interesting to see different terms, including "overholding," "overlegato," etc. Some modern interpreters think that detached articulation is the norm. Is that because they realise that when it "sounds" connected it is "actually" detached? Or that they are consciously trying to make detached effects because

they expect this as a result of paired fingerings or slur marks? This is a fascinating subject!

The section on rhetoric is a most welcome inclusion. Given more space (or a future edition), I think a selection of figures could be listed (pick any theorist and show his version), since this is quite accessible to the interested listener. Rhetorical figures can be both visually and aurally clear, and it is a fascinating subject. Those who want to follow it up can doubtless read Dietrich Bartel's *Musica Poetica*, which is, admittedly, more of a specialist book.

The section on time signatures and metres was truly wonderful, and I learned some new things - so I can heartily recommend this. Troeger explains why the number on the bottom of the fraction is crucial to the weight of a piece. Therefore, a work in 12/16 is meant to be a lighter version of the same work in 12/8. Here is a chapter that helps to confirm instincts players may have.

Useful Aids

Troeger has clearly struggled and succeeded in explaining complex concepts to diverse levels of players; his brief section on tuning and temperament is by far one of the most lucid explanations I've seen, with tuning 'recipes' one could almost give a friend over the telephone.

The lists given in the appendix are useful. One of them lists items by topic or style (aria style, *bouRée*, lament, etc.) In addition there is an interesting list (p.48) within the text of Basic Genres used by Bach in keyboard music. This allows for an overview of Bach's keyboard oeuvre, so that when Troeger makes the sensible recommendation that

one should, when learning a new dance or genre, try out others of that type, one can see what else exists in that category.

While there is much more that could be said, I should note that when reading a long item, it is tempting to pick out only the items one expected or hoped might be different. I should state however, that any quibble are truly just exceptions to a very useful book that will interest amateurs through to specialists. There are certainly some interesting concepts worth considering.

I leave the reader with a few **Topics for debate, then:**

1. Troeger (p.165) writes, "Bach's works in the French style are perhaps eligible for the French approach to inequality, though how relevant it actually is to Bach's music remains an open question." *Is French inégale appropriate for Bach's French style works? Which pieces? In what context?*

2. Troeger notes (p.199) that it is better to omit a whole movement rather than neglect to play all the repeats.

Have we changed through time our treatment of repeats? Does this vary from live performance to recording, and why is this so? What do today's audiences expect?

"Keyboard Instruments — Flexibility of Sound and Expression. Proceedings of the *Harmoniques International Congress, Lausanne 2002*" edited by Thomas Steiner. Bern, 2004. Reviewed by Neil Coleman

The *Harmoniques* foundation of Lausanne has the local

pianist and clavichordist Pierre Goy to thank for the theme "Some expressive and sonorous *claviers*, with loud and sustained tone," given to its international congress, which took place in April 2002 as part of an on-going series. Musicians and a large public audience swelled the ranks of organologists and instrument makers, and the event was centred on an exhibition of original keyboard instruments. A series of concerts helped in this exploration of scarcely known sound worlds of keyboard composers from the time of J.S. Bach to Chopin.

Giovanni Ferrini's harpsichord "with quills and hammers" of 1746 is the subject of an article by the Bolognese musicologist and collector, Luigi-Ferdinando Tagliavini. Ferrini was apprenticed to Cristofori and was his main successor. He was said to be the first to use buffalo hide instead of quill, giving the instruments a harp-like sound. The ingenious method of bending the tails of the key levers to the left, used in the combination instrument, in addition to the quills pointing in the opposite direction to what is normal in Italian harpsichords, allows both mechanisms to share the same strings. Kerstin Schwarz demonstrates Cristofori's enduring influence in an article examining the extant instruments from several countries incorporating his hammer mechanism. Schwarz considers that Cristofori's main concern seems to have been to ensure a very light touch and concomitant velocity of the action, which would not however produce a particularly loud instrument, a "defect" for which it was criticised, perhaps unjustly, at

the time. It was, however, ideal for accompanying the voice, being able to mould its tone to the light and shade of the voice, but was intended principally as a solo instrument, although it could "succeed perfectly" in ensembles of moderate size. We should bear in mind that this defence by Maffei was written in 1711.

Andrea Restelli gives an exhaustive account of the three extant fortepianos by Gottfried Silbermann and demonstrates how their construction influenced the harpsichords built by his apprentice P. J. Specken. This author has taken infinite pains to familiarise himself with these instruments. It is interesting to note that here even modern day science has its limits: Restelli used multiple dovetail joints when building his Silbermann copy where radiography could not reveal the original joints. Much else though, is revealed, and we are reminded of C.P.E. Bach's endorsement of the fortepiano "when sturdy and well built." Restelli considers that some of the frame is more than sturdy enough for the required tension. An exceptionally thin soundboard (1.8-2mm), care taken to minimize action noise, and provision for the more massive hammers show, in fact, a refining of Cristofori's methods. This is a most worthwhile appreciation by one builder of another's work and it is particularly gratifying to read of the register mechanisms, not only for lifting dampers, which Silbermann seems to have invented, but also the use of slips of ivory to imitate the harpsichord or pantaloons when the dampers were lifted, as well as a transposing device used to suit varying instrumental pitch or, perhaps as in France, "for the

accommodation of voices."

Derek Adlam gives a suitably elegant account of Haydn's keyboard music. The importance of the tangent-piano is made clear by William Jurgenson and the pantalon's significance by Michael Cole. It is intriguing that the stops of several late-eighteenth-century keyboards seem to reflect the various sounds available on Hebenstreit's dulcimer. The mingled sound of undamped strings was so popular that many instruments fitted with dampers had a device to engage them, such as the sustaining pedal in reverse. There is a most comprehensive description of harpsichord-pianos by Michael Latcham, who, having examined the instruments, concludes that the addition of expressive devices to harpsichords was not merely a last-ditch effort to keep up with the piano, but an altogether more organic development.

Jean-Claude Battault gives a special insight into the early piano in France. Battault, who adheres to the traditional view of the harpsichord as arming itself with gadgetry against the advance of the "rather modern" piano, describes how Pascal Taskin managed to become a member of his guild by virtue of marriage to Blanchet's widow. He then built pianos in addition to harpsichords. Some of these harpsichords were equipped with the touch-sensitive *peau de buffle* and were said, by one rare dissenting voice that has come down to us, to be more expressive than the pianos he had encountered. Contrary to that other canard — the guilds' conservatism holding back the piano's advance — Louis XVI's ministers in fact favoured free enterprise. Many profited from

it, including Sébastien Erard, who was not a guild member. From the 1780s, membership increased apace to include German builders. J.G. Eckhard, who accompanied the builder Stein to Paris in 1758, seems to have started a fashion for the instrument, and the ascendancy of the piano was clear well before the Revolution: a document listing the instruments of *émigrés* aristocracy seized after the fall of the monarchy, shows not only a slight bias towards the piano in numbers, but several organs and a few "organised pianos". These combination instruments are explored in depth by Michael Latcham, and reveal a far richer sound world than we can muster at present.

Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger gives a fine account of Chopin's affinity with Pleyel's pianos, revealing how his passing between the two pedals without transition, particularly during enharmonic modulations, was at its most charming on these instruments. He seems to have used the pedals like registers to colour the sound in an age when they were the only two remaining.

Susanne Wittmayer and Christopher Clarke give in-depth coverage of hammers and their leather, including references, from the fallow deerskin mentioned by Maffei in 1711 to imported Canadian deerskin vaunted in a Neapolitan manufacturer's guide from the 1860s; Stephen Birkett and Paul Poletti provide updates in the field of historical iron wire production, and point out the limits of authenticity in an industry impossible to re-create at present; Poletti continues with an article entitled "Beyond Pythagoras," and considers

that there may be important findings to be made if we do not rely so much on the use of c2 in determining the scaling of instruments.

This collection of essays shows how regrettable it is that we are still so restricted in our choice of keyboard instruments. Many of the instruments mentioned here have been stuck in a no man's land between "Early Keyboard" and "Piano." The work done by these authors should provide a spur to diversification in keyboard instrument building. (In Britain today, for instance, there are no copies of Silbermann's fortepianos, important for the music of J.S. Bach as well as that of his sons, and only one tangent-piano.) We might even become circumspect before dismissing multiple stop combinations as "frivolous toys." Many contributors make some provision for "visual aids," but authors can assume that, in general, the more pictures and diagrams used to illustrate descriptions of instruments, the better. The book is a tribute to the endeavour of the organisers, authors and past makers, some of which have scarcely been mentioned here. All deserve to be more widely known.

Douglas Hollick, 'Revolution: Music Form the Period of the French Revolution'
Riverrun RVRCD71
Reviewed by
Micaela Schmitz

General impressions

The recording purports to demonstrate the transition from harpsichord to fortepiano during the French Revolution starting in 1789, and in Hollick's

words, enables "the listener to appreciate the wide range of styles which co-existed and the great changes which took place."

The programme is organized into sets of four works on a given instrument: organ, harpsichord, square piano, and again organ. This shows the performer's predilection for the organ, and also signifies the presence of the organ through the transition from harpsichord to fortepiano. Styles include simple minuets, military marches, no¹ variations, fugue, recitative, and programme music.

Composers include Lasceux, Boëly, Séjan, and Balbastre. There is a healthy amount of "transitional" music from the Parisian school, which follows transitions begun a few decades earlier by composers like Schobert and Eckard. One realizes that the transitions were underway well before 1789.

The programme notes are helpful in guiding the listener and in introducing the less well-known composers Lasceux and Séjan. The notes highlight the difficulty in perpetuating the organ and religious music after the revolution, something of which I had previously been aware.

The choice of instruments and the recording quality

The change of instruments allows a comparison to made between textures and timbres. Hollick uses the 1990 Organ at the Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh, and a harpsichord he copied from the 1769 Taskin at the Russell Collection, while he uses his own original 1811 Clementi square. Beyond "unequal temperament" we are not told which tuning systems were used.

Recording quality is generally good. The square

piano sounds intimate, and the varied registration (some given by the composers) of the organ is effective and diverse. On the other hand, in some tracks, the harpsichord does not seem to have benefited from a resonant acoustic, as in Balbastre's *La Suzanne*, where the sound is metallic and the bass not quite full enough to my taste. Is it my poor hi-fi or a microphone placed too closely without the benefit of the acoustic?

Not being a full-fledged organist, I am less forgiving of long reverberations. In *Noël Suisse* by Séjan, the delay in the bass speaking and the long reverberation time causes one to hear the treble disconcertingly ahead of the bass, particular during variations with triplets. However, most of the time this is not a problem, and particularly nice was the light and airy registration of the noël *Ou s'en vont* and the reedy bass in *Une jeune fille* by Lasceux.

Some highlights

Though we may think "programme pieces" frivolous today, they were not uncommon in their time. The *Marseillois* setting by Balbastre has cannon effects, similar to a piano piece I once found by Louis Jadin on the Battle of Austerlitz, which features sunrise, advances, retreats, etc. The Boëly work about the passion and death of Christ is even more programmatic. The programme pieces are best represented on the square piano; these were most numerous at the time- being cheaper to construct and easy to fit into a home.

The Balbastre *Prélude* (1777) is a fabulous example of expressive writing. After an opening of arpeggiated

chords, the piece moves to a recitative texture. Here my ears perked up, as I am an unabashed admirer of C.P.E. Bach. The stops and starts, drama, and passion in the work, etc. were arresting. We can analyse some of these as dominant seventh chords in third inversion, followed by diminished 7^{ths}, but it still makes one take notice! Hollick takes a good amount of time to allow the resonance to settle before moving on — a very effective performance.

The no¹ *Chantons je vous prie* by Séjan is an appropriate work for the square piano. It takes advantage of the timbre change in the upper register, and relies on the player to achieve finger-controlled /touch-sensitive tone. 'Muddy' left hand octaves are fine on this type of piano, as are undamped notes in the treble. These effects are unachievable on the modern piano; the features that might seem a fault in a modern piano are exactly the right thing on the square piano! Like the clavichord, the small scale and simplicity of the square piano is fitting to many works that are easy on the ear rather than intricate.

Hollick's CD is a useful document of a massive change in style and thought, and it does which it sets out to do.

W. A. Mozart – Complete sonatas for keyboard & violin, Volume 2:

Gary Cooper (fortepiano).

Rachel Podger (violin)

Channel Classics

CCS SA 22805

Reviewed by Penelope Cave

I must admit, at the outset, that I have not heard the

highly acclaimed Volume One of this series of complete sonatas for keyboard and violin with Gary Cooper and Rachel Podger but I would be surprised if this second disc does not live up to it. The playing is superlative, as is the give and take between the duo. There is such a difference in the performance sparkle of Mozart when the players come from an understanding of the musical style that preceded him. The recording quality is excellent and the choice of the 1739 Pesarinus fiddle with a copy of a Viennese fortepiano works well, even if it is Walter and not Mozart's favourite Stein.

When complete, the collection of these sonatas will showcase the span of Mozart's work. The early pieces, with a dominating keyboard part to which Leopold's violin was the accompaniment, lead through to the four late Viennese works that can stand beside the last three symphonies. This disc also gives us a representative selection, neatly juxtaposed to make an attractive programme. The sonata chosen to open proceedings is the two-movement K 303; K301 is also included and both were written in Mannheim in 1778 but published in Paris. K.30 boasts a passionate adagio and was published in 1766 in Amsterdam. The very fine late sonata, K481, finished at the end of 1785 in Vienna, with its synthesis of the final theme from the Jupiter symphony in the first movement and a delightful set of variations for the last, combines a delicate humour, *joie de vivre* and virtuosity.

There need be no apology for including the youthful K7 as it is so persuasively played, with its energetic opening

allegro and extraordinarily mature second movement; Mozart himself noticed early on that "it is much easier to play a thing quickly than slowly" but is that beautiful music? This is indeed a beautiful piano solo with interspersed two-note sighs falling sympathetically from the violin. It finishes with a stylish pair of minuets. I would buy the CD for this sonata alone.

Buxtehude at the Harpsichord
Jacqueline Ogeil
Move Records MD 3191
[Available from Move Records, Box 226, Carlton South 3053, Australia]
n.d., n.p., 1997. available outside AU online only at www.move.com.au
Reviewed by Gerald Gifford

Programme
 (NB: *BuxWV* numbers are not given on the liner information):
 Praeludium in G minor;
 Suite in D minor; Canzona in C; Suite in G minor; Aria: *More Palatino*; Toccata in G; Suite in E minor; Canzona in D minor; Suite in C; Aria: *Rofillis* (3 variations); Fuga in C

Jacqueline Ogeil clearly enjoys this music, and has an evident understanding of its principal stylistic attributes. Always rewarding to play, the keyboard music of Buxtehude, whilst never overtly challenging from a technical point of view, nevertheless poses various conceptual issues for the performer, ranging from the nature of the 'studied' improvisatory style that is necessary in some of the more rhetorical music, to the need for precise and contoured part-playing in the contrapuntal movements and textures. Along the way one

also encounters a range of genially stylised dance forms and some pleasing examples of variation technique.

The performances here recorded are, in the main, nicely responsive to these criteria, and moreover display an instinctive natural musicianship. The harpsichord sound had been quite closely balanced and there is a pleasant ambient surround to the tone, though there is also a little action 'thumping' audible in some of the faster music. The performances convey a welcome feeling of spontaneity, though I did sometimes feel that the interpretations might have been a little more imaginative in the amount and nature of the improvised ornamentation. Buxtehude's styling of several of the slower movements, for example, certainly envisaged it. Just occasionally, the phrasing seemed a little inconsistent (for example, in the articulation of the fugue subject of the Praeludium in G minor), and a few of the Correntes seemed rather rushed and lacking in poise – that of the E minor suite in particular.

From an editing point of view, I suspect that many listeners would have preferred slightly longer gaps between certain of the movements; this is especially desirable before the commencement of several of the Sarabandes, and between certain of the variations. At these points now, the sound appears to 'burst' in on the note, rather than slightly in advance of it, which would have enabled the sound to be properly 'placed' by the player. As intimated above, the accompanying programme listing does not include *BuxWV* numbers, a regrettable omission in view of

the number of Suites that Buxtehude wrote in certain keys, and in observing the limited amount of space available in a single-fold liner, I really wonder whether two whole pages should be devoted to the artist's biography and a selection of press and other comments about her playing, especially as little of the latter is specifically relevant to this present recording. The result is that only a single page is left for any description of the music, and sadly, even then much of the stated information is rather more concerned with Buxtehude's life and times than his music. The author of the programme note is unidentified, though if it is the work of the performer, we may regret that this valuable opportunity to further develop her interpretative ideologies on paper was not taken.

Marc Nobel's 1988 copy of a 17th-century Couchet harpsichord provides characterful sound, and is tuned to a well-tempered system which we are told (without further qualification) 'was used by Buxtehude in his later years'. This may perhaps be true, though Kerala J Snyder, in her landmark book *Dieterich Buxtehude, Organist in Lübeck* (Schirmer, New York 1987), implies that much of the harpsichord music might well have been written during Buxtehude's earlier years, 'the lack of harmonic boldness in the harpsichord pieces as a group could indicate that Buxtehude composed them rather early...' the assumption here being that the 'lack of harmonic boldness' could have facilitated use of a mean-tone temperament.

These reservations aside,

overall this is certainly a welcome and imaginatively planned issue. It presents some delightful music in unaffected yet apt performances, and is limited only by an apparent reticence to explore more fully the potential of improvised ornamentation. From a technical point of view it otherwise has much to commend it.

**Richard Troeger,
Bach, *The Art of Fugue*
Lyricord, LEMS 8048
Reviewed by Bridget
Cunningham**

The first disc contains the contrapunctus from *the Art of Fugue* (BWV 1080). This was Bach's last major keyboard work and according to watermark studies and handwriting, he started it around 1742 and completed it in 1746. Therefore the start of this probably links in with the period of the *Well Tempered Clavier*, Part II (c 1739-42) and the *Goldberg Variations* (1741). These two major keyboard works may have sparked an idea to use three main ideas together — fugue, canon and variation — in a new and fresh approach. *The Art of Fugue* is a series of contrapuntal variations upon a single theme, played *rectus* and *inversus*, based on a fugue or canon as its main form. It has been described by C. P. E. Bach as being "the most perfect practical fugal work" where "everything... has been arranged for use at the harpsichord or organ," although the open score notation does not specify an instrument. The theme of the *Musical Offering* (1747) is like an expanded elaboration of the main theme of the *Art of*

Fugue, which was underway for publication at this time.

Richard Troeger's approach to *The Art of Fugue* on the clavichord is unique and a real treat for the listener. Each contrapunctus is played clearly and expressively and the theme is distinctly stated each time with clear articulation; over all they work beautifully on the clavichord. As they continue step by step to become more complicated, and multiple forms of variation occur at the same time, Troeger still elegantly brings out the theme clearly and masters these effectively, musically and sensitively. The counter-fugues (contrapuncta 5-7) form a distinct group and are performed with much clarity. The lightness and dance-like quality of the "Stylo Francese" has a lot of direction and shape and is particularly effective. The double and triple fugues (contra 8-11) are all equally well poised and characteristic with great dialogue between the parts. 12a-b and 13a-b are skillfully presented with Paulette Grunden playing as well. Troeger's completion of the Unfinished Fugue (No. 14) shows his mastery of this music as scholar and performer and is highly effective.

The second disc is a wonderful selection with lots of highlights starting with four canons from *the Art of Fugue* (2 *Ottava*, 3 *Decima*, 4 *Duodecima* and 1 *per Augmentation in Contrario Motu*), which grow increasingly more complex. Again, all work extremely well and are articulated clearly, with light and shade between phrases. The *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* (BWV 903) works fantastically well and has been recorded several times before

on the clavichord, which naturally lends itself to showing the emotions of the recitative sections. The keyboard versions of the Sonata in D Minor and the Adagio in G survive in a copy by Bach's pupil, Johann Christoph Altnikol, so it is unclear whether these arrangements were made by Bach or Altnikol. They could possibly have been by Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, CPE Bach or Muthel. Firstly the arrangement of the *Adagio in G* (BWV 968), from the violin sonata in C, which has a rich sonorous, pulsating bass, works extremely well on the clavichord in this recording. Then there is an arrangement of the violin sonata in A Minor, which is taken from the *Sonata in D minor* (BWV 964) and this again works brilliantly. The *Adagio* has a great sense of line and the lively *Allegro* theme is followed by the stunningly played *Andante*, which has a wonderful vocal quality about it. The last movement, the *Allegro*, has a good speed and mood.

The *Partita in E* (BWV 1006a) is performed with colourful dance movements and again good speeds and articulation. The *Praeludium* is played lightly and lyrically, followed by the stylish *Loure*, and the *Gavotte en Rondeau*. The *bourée* has a fantastic and punchy bass followed by the lively gigue. The final piece is the *Fantasia in A minor* (BWV 922), in which Troeger displays a whirlwind of colours, as the music ripples along at a good pace. The variety of speed in spread chords is good and the dynamic contrasts work well. — A strong and triumphant piece to end the CD leaving you wanting more.

This recording is fantastic and a must for lovers of the clavichord and J S Bach.

Troeger makes excellent use of the clavichord, playing Bach's extremely complex music sensitively, with a fantastic ability to create light and shade in the music and good dialogue between the parts. The recording quality is excellent and the clavichord has a beautiful sound. The clavichord used was built by Ronald Hass and is modelled on originals by Johann Heinrich Silbermann. The second clavichord used for no.12a - b is by Lyndon Taylor and is based on an instrument in Markneukirchen now attributed to Gottfried Silbermann. The CD notes are very informative and include sections on the order of movements, choice of instrument, an analysis of the *Art of Fugue* and much more. Over all two very enjoyable CDs.

Kenneth Mobbs
Twenty Early Keyboards
KensoundCD01
Four English Early Grands
KensoundCD02
Reviewed by Giulia Nuti,
Italy.

The Mobbs collection of Early Keyboard Instruments contains rare and beautiful instruments, in playing condition; they are played on these CDs and it is a joy to hear them all in performances of music so finely chosen to display their strengths and, at times, their idiosyncrasies, while demonstrating the constancy of attention to sounds available to the composers as they worked to use the maximum of their instruments' capacities.

Twenty Early Keyboards is a varied programme. The music played ranges from Couperin

to Chopin; each track consists of a short extract from a larger work and each composer is matched with the appropriate instrument from the same years. It is very rare to have the opportunity to hear such a vast array of different timbres and to be immediately able to compare instruments that differ by only a few years, yet are of a completely different sound world – listening to the CD gives a chronological account of the development of keyboard instruments from 1785 to 1844, and for this reason alone it is very precious.

Some of this material is duplicated in *Four English Early Grands* where Kenneth Mobbs performs the works in their entirety, allowing the listener to gain greater familiarity with these extraordinary instruments.

I was particularly fascinated by the sound of the Ganer square piano (c.1785) – all the more interesting after hearing the Longman & Broderip harpsichord of the same date; it has a most unusual sound, yet is very delicate, especially in the high notes. The Rolfe square piano (c.1812) and Fritz fortepiano (c.1813) sound particularly beautiful; the first for its silvery tone, the second for its completely contrasting warm and mellow sound. It is also interesting to hear three Clementi instruments (an 1806 upright grand, an 1822 square piano, and a 1828 cabinet piano), and I particularly enjoyed the Broadwood instruments (an 1808 grand, a c.1817 upright grand, an 1835 square and a 1844 grand). While to write extensively on the instruments when there are CDs available to hear them is to some degree extraneous, Kenneth Mobbs' use of instruments he clearly knows intimately, using all their

colours to their full potential according to what is most appropriate in the music, creates many different and interesting sonorities.

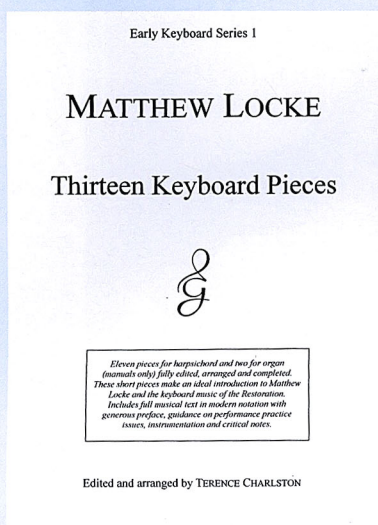
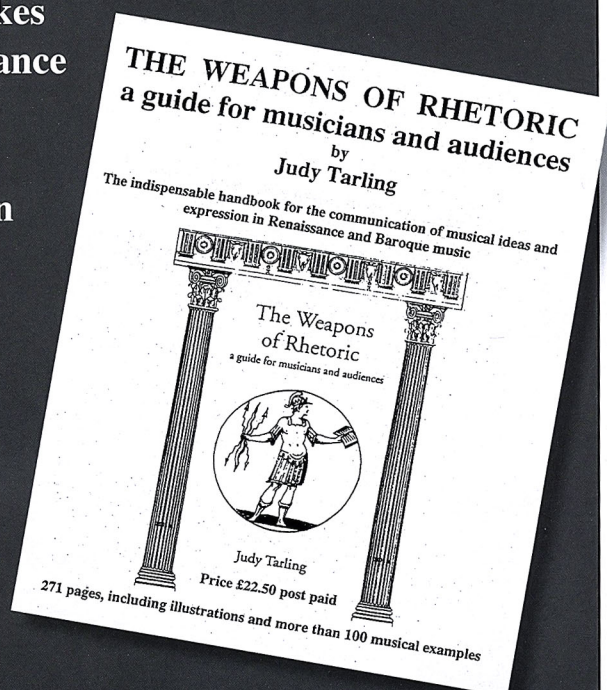
The interpretation tends towards a slightly hard sound which sometimes hinders the singability of the melodies; the touch could perhaps be more varied, especially in the softer passages; consequently the more brilliant pieces are, the more successful they sound. The Rondo from Field's Sonata in E flat is particularly enjoyable, and the spirit of Mozart's "Alla Turca" is most wonderfully captured. The use of the Venetian Swell, together with the *una corda* pedal, in the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* on the 1808 Broadwood may also have been a choice made to display sonorities and characteristics of the instrument by an extremely accomplished player of great experience in playing historical instruments.

These CDs are essential to any performer of keyboard works from the 18th to the 19th century, whether performance is on period or modern instruments.

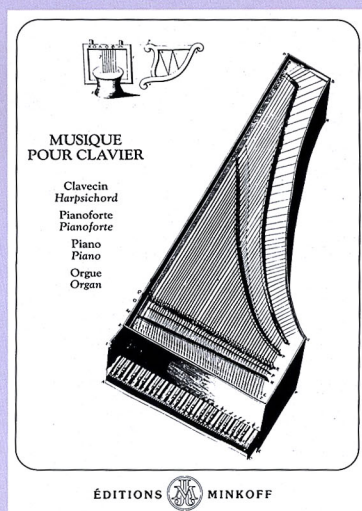
Judy Tarling's second book strikes at the heart of musical performance with a study of the relationship between music and rhetoric, which was much remarked upon during the Renaissance and Baroque periods

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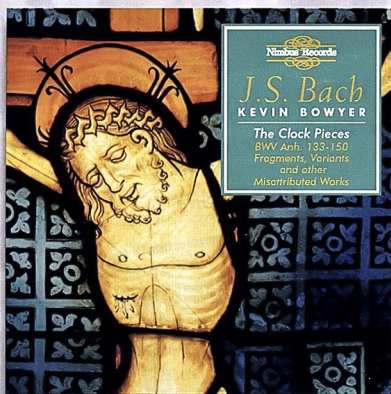
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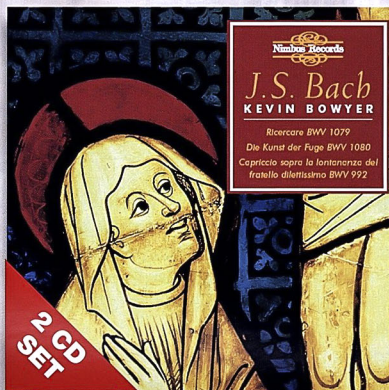
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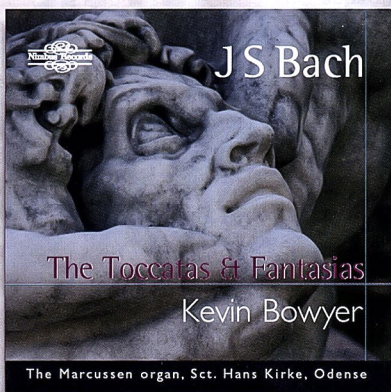
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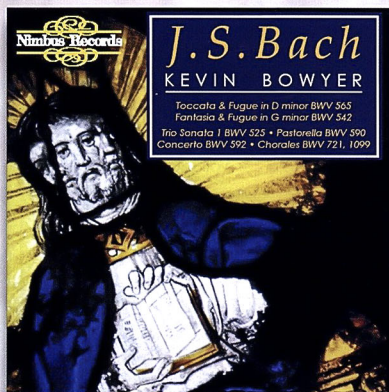
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