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BOOK REVIEW

Michael Cole, *Broadwood Square Pianos.* (Cheltenham: Tatchley Books, 2005)
Reviewed by Jenny Nex

Many researchers and writers concerned with the history of instruments fall on one side or other of the divide which separates those who analyse data gleaned from surviving instruments from those interested in archives and other written sources. However, Michael Cole's work *Broadwood Square Pianos* draws information from both sides, much as many sociologists now prefer to use both qualitative and quantitative techniques in order to gain a fuller understanding of human activities. This book is a paradigm of the gains which can be made from working in this way, and will be appreciated by those interested not only in music and the instruments of music but also by scholars of industrial and social history.

The slim size of this important volume belies the amount of work that has undoubtedly been dedicated to it by the author. Cole's lament that it can take a day to glean information which results in one small fact in the final text will have been felt by anyone who has spent days in archive centres in search of similar information. However, in this case the efforts are certainly worth while, as the Broadwood Company is one of the few examples of a musical instrument making firm whose foundation dates from the eighteenth century, *and* for which substantial archives survive. The book is carefully illustrated, with surviving instruments shown entire, intact, in detail and in various states of restoration so that the inner structure can be seen. Furthermore, two little known miniatures of John Broadwood and his second wife are included as well as a photograph of the Great Pulteney Street premises, albeit some years after the Broadwoods had vacated them. Diagrams help the reader to understand the more complex aspects of piano actions.

Although this volume can be read as an addition to Wainwright's *Broadwood by Appointment*[1] and to Cole's own previous publications, including *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era*,[2] it can also be enjoyed without having read these earlier publications. The main text of the work is divided into seven chapters. Cole begins with an introduction which covers the foundation of the firm later to become Broadwood's by the Swiss *émigré* Burkat Shudi, followed by the first years of Broadwood's association with the firm. Cole discusses the possible reasons why it was Broadwood, the foreman and later son-in-law, who inherited the company, rather than Shudi's own son or nephew.

Cole also examines the surviving evidence concerning the women in the firm, looking at Shudi's youngest daughter Barbara's account books, begun when she became Mrs John Broadwood, and continued in other hands following her untimely death. Furthermore, Cole presents previously unpublished information concerning Broadwood's second wife, Mary *née* Kitson, who, it appears, worked in some capacity as a servant to her husband's first wife.

Chapters two to five move on through Broadwood's working life, first under and with Shudi, then as an independent maker and later in partnership with his sons, initially James Shudi Broadwood, later joined in due course by Thomas. As well as his work, Cole discusses Broadwood's home life. Indeed, this is fundamental to the research in this book, since during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for many craftsmen and artisans, workplace and domicile coincided in location and often also in personnel. Workshops were situated behind, above or adjacent to the residence of the maker, his family and frequently a number of workmen and apprentices. Thus it is vital for all aspects of life to be examined if a full picture of the dynamics of workshop life is to be constructed.

Chapter six is dedicated to the core subject of the volume, the square pianos themselves, together with how they developed, grew in popularity and later declined into obscurity. In the closing chapter, termed the Epilogue, we hear of a few square pianos which continued to be used and enjoyed in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries, notably including that owned by Edward Elgar and used by him to compose such momentous works as *Sea Pictures* and *The Dream of Gerontius*.

We also hear about the disturbing practice of early 20th-century piano makers who, in an attempt to encourage sales of new instruments, took to burning outdated and "worthless" square pianos. Cole also laments the inappropriate restorations to which many instruments have been subjected and the resulting loss of information to the researcher. Such practices must encourage museums and guardians of collections in private hands to be wary of such work in order to safeguard what original materials remain in their care.

Cole's style is informal and easy for the non-expert to read. He wisely leaves technical details and extended quotes of primary sources out of the main text, including it for interested parties in an extended set of appendices. These useful additions include full transcriptions of both Shudi's and Broadwood's wills, a discussion of a bogus Broadwood but nevertheless interesting square piano, an examination of pianos by the lesser known maker Charles Trute and why they are relevant to Broadwood, and a description of Froeschle's under-dampers. There follows a section of technical data as well as diagrams and descriptions of Broadwood's piano actions. The latter are clearly drawn and succinctly described in such a way that one previously unacquainted with actions can, with a little mental application, follow the basic principles. There is also a "Gallery" of instruments with photographs and details of whatever information was available to the author or is particularly relevant to each example.

This book is to be recommended as an addition to the existing body of work on Broadwood and piano making in Britain. It is also an interesting social history following in the tradition developed by Cyril Ehrlich,[3] and is to be recommended to those interested in musical history as a distinct subject as well as its context among disciplines such as economic history, sociology, prosopography and industrial history.

1 David Wainwright, *Broadwood by Appointment* (London: Quiller Press, 1982).

2 Michael Cole, *The Pianoforte in the Classical Era* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

3 Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), and *The Music Profession in Britain Since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

SCORE REVIEW

Grant Colburn
Six Easy Lessons for the Harpsichord
Published by the author, 2006
http://www.angelfire.com/music7/renaissance/index.html grantco13@netzero.net

Stephen Dodgson
Works for Harpsichord, Volume 1: Sonata-Divisions; Six Inventions, Set One
Edited by Pamela Nash
Cadenza Music, 2006 ISMN 708057-63-5

Reviewed by Rob Haskins

There has been no shortage of 20th-and now 21st-century harpsichord music, but, as Pamela Nash observes in the preface to her edition of Dodgson's harpsichord music, most of what is available functions as "a kind of adjunct to the modern piano repertoire". What are the principal problems? Firstly, thick textures tend not to work so well on the harpsichord. J. S. Bach notwithstanding, two- or three-voice textures are the norm. Since harpsichordists must use note lengths and timing to create any sort of phrasing, they must have a sufficiently lean texture to allow such nuances to be heard; nothing is more irritating to the harpsichordist than an eight note chord with a dynamic marking of *ff* and an accent sign! Secondly, I have always felt that the construction of the harpsichord makes it more amenable to triadically conceived music, preferably in some sort of unequal tuning that allows for at least some pure intervals. Among rare exceptions to this rule, I would name Anthony Newman's *Chimaeras I and II* [Oxford, 1970] due entirely I think, to Newman's profound understanding of harpsichord sonority which was gained from his notable accomplishments as a performer.

Both of these collections are well suited to the harpsichord, and both will appeal to different audiences. Grant Colburn, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, became acquainted with the harpsichord through an Igor Kipnis recording. He began music studies at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay but stopped them for a time to move to Los Angeles and pursue a career in the oddly related world of progressive rock (think of Rick Wakeman or Jethro Tull), and finally returned to his Green Bay roots to finish his degree and devote himself to the composition of what he calls "original Renaissance and

Baroque music for the 21st century". True to his aim, the *Six Easy Lessons* comprise multi-movement pieces in rounded binary form that evoke many familiar figurations and sensibilities from the English Baroque. Colburn's harmonic ear retains the residue of a later functional harmony practice, so a few passages stray from his models, but overall he gets the job done and the results are appealing and enjoyable to play.

Although Colburn intends these works principally to serve the amateur keyboard market, I could imagine them functioning very well to introduce beginning harpsichord players to the principles of articulation, fingering, ornamentation, and occasionally improvisation that help form a solid and reliable technique. For instance, almost every passage can be played with late 17th- or early 18th-century fingering, and both the two part textures and contours of melodic lines offer ample opportunities to apply thoughtful and meaningful articulation patterns. In the *Cibell* from *Lesson IV*, occasional passages for left hand alone seem to cry out for a modest continuo realization, and the bass passage is straightforward enough that beginning students can easily devise several workable solutions. Ultimately, the charm of the music makes the pieces great fun to play; my favourite movement is the French style *Saraband* in *Lesson II*; in spite of the jarring augmented 6th that intrudes in the dance's first half, the piece provides an attractive and convincing introduction to similar sarabandes by Louis Couperin and other 17th-century French composers.

Stephen Dodgson is perhaps best known for his guitar music, but he has also written extensively for the harpsichord (49 pieces to date). With its tendency toward lean but lyrical contrapuntal textures, Dodgson's idiom is admirably suited to the instrument. And of course, the composer's wife, Jane Clark, is a very fine harpsichordist herself; no doubt her virtuosity helped to shape Dodgson's sensibility towards the instrument.

This first volume of a projected three comprises the *Sonata Divisions* (1982) and the first set of *Inventions* (1955). Both works were written for a double manual harpsichord, and Pamela Nash has worked very closely with Dodgson to make the phrasing more sensible and amenable to harpsichordists. The marks are easy to interpret and should gladden any harpsichordist who enjoys contemporary music but also enjoys playing the harpsichord with as much nuance as possible.

Nash claims that all of Dodgson's harpsichord music is idiomatic for the instrument. I disagree slightly with her regarding the early *Inventions*. Here and there I see sonorities and textures that seem more pianistic, and I think the frequent large leaps in such movements as *Invention IV* make good, interesting phrasing very difficult. I find the *Sonata Divisions*, however, thoroughly harpsichordistic; the figurations suit harpsichord technique very well, indeed, quite a bit of it can be played with early fingering and the variety of textures provides contrast but never exceeds the bounds of what is idiomatic. The work itself is attractive, a series of deft variations on a rather angular, mordant theme. Dodgson's commitment to linear writing makes me yearn for more moments when the lush harmony of which the harpsichord is capable come to the fore, but I never doubt his fluency with the instrument, which reveals itself on every page. This work is a fine contribution to the harpsichord repertoire, and is presented in an edition that will make sense to any good harpsichordist.

***Das Partiturbuch*. Compiled by *Jacob Ludwig* Ensemble Echo du Danube, Christian Zinke, director.**
Naxos 8.557679
Reviewed by Fabian Mohr

Das Partiturbuch, which translates as "the score book," is an album of instrumental pieces by various 17th- century German composers compiled by Jacob Ludwig (who himself was a composer) as a birthday present for his former employer Duke August of Wolfenbüttel. For this Naxos CD the *Ensemble Echo du Danube* under the direction of Christian Zinke recorded eleven out of the almost one hundred pieces of the *Partiturbuch*. Judging by the musical quality and variety of the pieces on this CD, the selection process itself must have been an extremely difficult task! The relatively unknown composers whose works feature in this recording can be geographically grouped into North German (Nathanael Schnittelbach), Middle German (Adam Drese, Johann Michael Nikolai, and Samuel Capricornus) and Viennese (Antonio Bertali and Johann Heinrich Schmelzer). The distinctly different musical styles and tastes of these regions can clearly be heard in these pieces.

One of the highlights on this disk is the *Ciaconna* for solo violin, the only surviving solo

violin work of Nathanael Schnittelbach (1633-1667). The solo part, played with extreme delicacy and clarity by Martin Jopp, carries the beautifully tranquil melody over the baseline accompaniment of organ, theorbo and viola da gamba. This contrasts with the much more lively (in spirit and tempo) *Ciaconna* for solo violin by the Viennese court composer Antonio Bertali (1605-1669). The Middle German composers are represented by two sonatas for violin and viola da gamba, another *Ciaconna* for solo violin, and a sonata for the rare combination of violin and bassoon.

The individual voices of the ensemble are well balanced and tempi and phrasing have been well thought out to match the individual character of the pieces. It is clearly evident that much thought and research effort has been put into this recording by the ensemble, which makes it a valuable recording of long forgotten musical gems of 17th-century European chamber music. The beautiful pieces on this CD still today make great background music for any festive dinner party, just as they would have done some four hundred years ago. The accompanying booklet gives a brief description of the composers and their pieces, but details of the fine period instruments used are unfortunately lacking. I can wholeheartedly recommend this fine CD for anyone interested in experiencing something rare and unusual by unknown and neglected composers.

CD REVIEWS

Mozart's 1788 Trios
The Queen's Chamber Trio
Lyrichord LEMS 8054.
Reviewed by Masumi Yamamoto

Claiming to be the first recording to use the harpsichord instead of the fortepiano or the modern piano, The Queen's Chamber Trio's disc of Mozart's 1788 Trios contains the last three trios, K.542 in E Major, K.548 in C major and K.564 in G Major. A cursory survey on the internet does seem to support this, and it seems to work very well as far as the instrumentation is concerned.

Elaine Comparone uses a William Dowd instrument made in 1968 based on a 1720 Blanchet harpsichord and it presumably has a compass of FF to f^3. Mozart seems to have this compass in mind at least for K.542 and K.548. Though the last trio Mozart ever wrote, K.564 makes no use of f^3 and it only very occasionally goes down below CC. Both string instruments played by violinist Robert Zubrycki and cellist Peter Seidenberg are period instruments from around 1700 although they are set up as modern instruments.

Of the three trios, the performance of K.542 seems to be the most successful. The interplay between the parts was well brought out by the instruments and a clear understanding of motivic connections was apparent in their playing. The lively character of the first movement was conveyed with their buoyant playing, and the occasional *fp* markings were effectively achieved. The harpsichord playing might have had more shadings in dynamics – I felt that the changes in registration were often used as the main source of drawing a range of tonal colours from the instrument.

The second movement *Andante grazioso* started off a little too march-like for my taste, however it settled into a graceful atmosphere and the trio's familiarity and understanding of the work are evident. The balance between the instruments is also well-judged. The last movement has some lovely moments with extended solo passages in a dialogue between the violin and the harpsichord. This again is well thought-out and its elegant melodic shapes are successfully presented. At times, moving forward and focusing more on larger melodic lines may have reflected its 2/2 time signature further and would have added another dimension to an otherwise accomplished playing.

The C Major Trio K.548 seems the least successful of the three works. The Queen's Chamber Trio creates a sturdy feel in the first movement with the harpsichord making use of the 4' register, however the tempo in the first movement seems unsettled and the balance does not seem as effective particularly in "busy" passages. There are also occasional ensemble problems.

The cello solo in the operatic *Andante cantabile* stands out as the most affecting moment in this performance of K.548. It is beautifully shaped and melodic contour is explored for its expressive content. A dance-like rhythmic character would have been welcome in the final *Allegro*. The balance again was slightly problematic. Although the liner note does not specify whether these recordings were made live or in a studio, it does indicate that K.548 was recorded at a different location and this may have contributed to the difference in performance quality between this and the other two trios.

The first movement of K.564 again seems to lack a sense of direction and the overall structure seems obscured by the players trying to magnify motivic shapes. In the following set of variations in the second movement, attempts were made to employ contrasts in articulation especially in the harpsichord part which does succeed in giving it variety to an extent. However I personally felt there is scope for more exploration at the legato end of the spectrum which may have given more variety in timbre as well.

The joyful character of the final *Allegretto* came across well although the first presentation of the theme tended to be a little disjointed. The movement however flowed nicely overall and dialogues were charmingly performed. The section with false entries of the theme in stretto which occurs towards the end of the movement is attractively played.

The recording quality is good and the CD notes give insight into the derivations of the keyboard trio and keyboard instruments, and provide information on Mozart's works from 1788. Overall, this disc is a welcome addition to the existing body of recordings of Mozart's works, not only by its use of the harpsichord but also of the potential this disc has demonstrated for this instrumentation.

Schubert: Poets of Sensibility Vol 5
Lydia Teuscher, soprano, Marcus Ullmann, tenor; Thomas Bauer, baritone; and Ulrich Eisenlohr, fortepiano
Naxos CD 8557373
Schubert's Kosegarten settings
Reviewed by Peter Medhurst

Anyone embarking on the task of recording the complete songs of Schubert – some 600, or so, set to over 115 poets – must do some serious thinking about giving such a project structure, interest, and above all, relevance – particularly if it has been done before. Hyperion, who did it 20 years ago, approached the repertoire thematically - a division that worked well, because it varied the authors and allowed Schubert's humbler settings to gain definition when adjacent to more important ones. Avoiding imitation of Hyperion, Naxos has concentrated on grouping songs according to Schubert's poets, so that this CD concentrates on Ludwig Theobul Kosegarten, a North German writer of a generation before that of the composer's.

Interestingly, Schubert's preoccupation with Kosegarten (with the exception of one song) occurs between his settings of *"Gretchen am Spinnrade"* of 1814 and *"Erlkönig"* of 1816, and shows a markedly different musical response. The *Empfindsamkeit* aspect of Kosegarten's poetry draws from Schubert some charming melodies, and on occasion some imaginative accompaniments, but, as a whole, the settings lack the brilliance and subtlety that occur with a first rate poet. The songs reveal a composer en route to greatness rather than one who has attained it. Therefore a programme devoted exclusively to Kosegarten settings can have its work cut out for it.

Naxos presents us with three singers to vary the tonal colour of a repertoire that is essentially strophic. The pearl of the recording is without doubt the tenor Marcus Ullmann, who despite the occasional lack of focus in the upper register, gives each of his songs a genuine spark, engaging the emotion and drama with obvious sensitivity. The CD is worth having for him alone. The baritone, Thomas Bauer, is allocated only three songs, which is a pity, because his rich baritone has a clear empathy with this type of repertoire. Lydia Teuscher contributes a bright soprano sound to the ensemble, but for my taste, rarely delves beneath the surface of the texts. Also, her lack of vowels in many of the words falling on upbeats is distracting. However, the *Aussprache* of all the three young German singers is exemplary, and it is certainly refreshing to hear German vowels open and unmodified in the higher lying phrases of the music.

This then brings me to Naxos' choice of accompanying instrument. An ideal piano to support Schubert's songs would be a Fritz or a Haschka – though Schubert never had the financial resources to own such Rolls Roycey instruments himself. If the famous sketch of Schubert's life is true, then he limped behind the times with an early Walter or Stein type piano, more suited to the 1780s, than the 1810s. What is it, then, that plays the accompaniments on this recording? The CD notes coyly refer to a *Hammerflügel,* but neglect to mention maker, type, date, or whether the instrument is an original or a copy. This is a curious lack of detail, given the wealth of recent scholarship and public interest in this field. Also, I detect the pitch at 440. Putting all this aside, Ulrich Eisenlohr's accompaniments are musically and beautifully performed, always supporting, but never overshadowing the voices. The recording quality of the CD is first class, and the repertoire interesting, but I was left thirsting for the mature Schubert of later years. Perhaps that is a positive response.

Paradizo
Julien Martin, recorder and
Capricco Stravagante:
Skip Sempé, harpsichord, virginal, organ, director
(CDParadizo PA0001)
Reviewed by Beth Garfinkel

Skip Sempé's new CD, *Paradizo*, from his new label of the same name, is a delightful musical fantasy. Judging from this example, we can expect interesting, bold, and very well made future releases. The mixed consort of violins and viols creates a sound incorporating the virtues of both. The string and wind players all have fantastic technique, amazing control of articulation, and impeccable intonation. All in all, a most effective offering.

That said a purist might look askance at some features of this recording. First of all, there is the liberal use of harpsichord continuo, even for the English music; this despite the fact that there is scant evidence for the use of either basso continuo or harpsichord in chamber music in England much before 1640. Also, the spirits of the dance movements are sometimes pushed to the breaking points. Some of the pavanes (or paduans) seem less like dances than prologues to Monteverdi madrigals; the "Paduan" by John Dowland is made to sound much like a Dario Castello trio sonata by abrupt changes of tempo and mood.

Perhaps this is justified in that it makes this fit in better with some of the other pieces on the disk; the works by Samuel Scheidt and Jacob van Eyck have a more Continental flavor, and Henry Purcell's "Air for the flute" sounds positively eerie and futuristic in this context. The van Eyck pieces are accompanied, apparently a fairly common practice, though also not one intended by the composer.

The two almans by Holborne, "The Honie Suckle" and "The Night Watch," by contrast, carry sprightliness to the point of aggression, and almost sound more like marches than dances. The various galliards cover a full range of tempos and moods, from Thomas Morley's "Frog Galliard" taken at a rollicking speed impossible for anyone larger than a midget to dance to, to the final track, a second rendition of Holborne's "Heigh Ho Holiday," a lush, leisurely lullaby taken more than twice as slow as the first version of it in track 9.

Pedro Avondano: Sonatas
Rosana Lanzelotte, harpsichord
Portugaler 2014-2
Reviewed by John Collins

Only two volumes devoted to keyboard music are known to have been published in Portugal during the eighteenth century, probably in the 1770's: the twelve sonatas by F.X. Baptista and the six sonatas by Gomes da Silva. Much other material (that survived the devastating earthquake in Lisbon in 1755) remains in manuscript in the National Library in Lisbon. Therefore it is with great interest and not a little excitement, that we discover that a new CD from Portugaler, lasting just over an hour, introduces us to some of the harpsichord music of the 18th-century Portuguese composer Pedro António Avondano (1714-82). The seven sonatas played here by the Brazilian harpsichordist Rosana Lanzelotte are to be found in manuscripts in Lisbon and Paris; none of his keyboard works were printed in Portugal during his lifetime, but "A Favourite Lesson" was printed in England c.1775 by C. & S. Thompson. Also printed in England were three sets of Minuets for two melody instruments and continuo, probably through his hosting meetings of a society in Lisbon for the English and other foreigners.

The sonatas included range from one (no.6 in G) to three movements (No. 1 in F, 2 in D and 3 in C), the others having two (no. 4 in G, 5 in C and 7 in A). The overall style has reminiscences of the brilliance of Scarlatti and Soler, but with much use of Alberti and murky-bass oscillating in octaves, as well as changes within the tempo from semiquavers to triplets, which is occasionally unsettling. Elements of the galant style are also present, and the sensitively lyrical slow movements in the first and third sonatas approach the *Empfindsamkeit* of the C.P.E. Bach tradition. Tremolo effects of thirds appear in the first movement of sonata 1, and there is a typically Iberian interplay between major and minor in the first movement of sonata 4. Of the minuets that close sonatas 1, 2, 4 and 5, the latter is taken at a much slower pace and the buff stop is used, but in all of them triplet motion prevails, the rhythm in no. 4, the longest at some 6 minutes, being decidedly quirky at times. In the fast movements, taken here at a sparkling pace, there is much virtuoso passagework for the player, effortlessly negotiated by Ms. Lanzelotte, but this frequently takes precedence over the development of melodic ideas.

The single manual instrument used is by José Calisto c.1780, and has two 8' stops, one of which is permanently on, and a buff, heard only in the movement mentioned above; being contemporary with Avondano, it is eminently suitable to this repertoire. Unfortunately nothing is known of him (Doderer surmises that he may have been a pupil of the Antuñes brothers), but the instrument has a magnificently powerful bass – just listen to the opening of sonata 3! Rosana Lanzelotte's playing does justice to these splendid pieces and her articulation shows her scrupulously careful attention to detail; fortunately repeats are observed throughout the recording, with tastefully added ornamentation. Portugaler deserve our thanks for making this recording of these pieces available. Overall the effect is one of music that can still be considered as charming today as it was by Avondano's contemporaries – now all that is needed is a good modern edition so that we can all play them!

Playing from Bach's Fancy
Bradley Lehman, harpsichord and organ, Larips 1003
A Joy Forever
Bradley Lehman, organ Larips 1002
Reviewed by Robin Bigwood

The re-appraisal of the Bach squiggle, which rose to such prominence recently thanks to Bradley Lehman's articles in the February and May 2005 issues of *Early Music*, must surely be one of the most intriguing developments of recent times in the harpsichord world. Lehman is clearly passionate about his "discovery" and backs this up with formidable mathematical and historical rigour. Whatever your own take on his interpretation it has certainly provoked plenty of discussion and re-evaluation of eighteenth century temperament in general, and any harpsichordist still content to rely on Werckmeister III or Valotti for all repertoire is these days looking a bit ill informed. Lehman is more than just a theorist though, and these recordings on his own Larips CD label are both a showcase of his talents as a harpsichordist and organist, and a demonstration of the Lehman-Bach temperament in action. The first, *Playing from Bach's Fancy,* is a collection of smaller scale pieces and excerpts from larger works by J.S. Bach and W.F. Bach. *A Joy Forever* is a triple CD of organ-only performances including works by J.S. Bach, Walther, Böhm, Fischer, Froberger, Pachelbel and, somewhat unexpectedly, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Elgar. The harpsichord used is a Ruckers copy by Knight Vernon, and has a clear but unremarkable sound, with a few strangely unfocused bass notes. The organ is by Virginia-based makers Taylor and Boody, at Goshen College Indiana, based on 18th-century North German models. First, the good things. It is refreshing to receive some discs that present a range of pieces in different genres and styles, drawn quite often from less familiar parts of the repertoire. Disc 2 of *A Joy Forever* does have Fischer's *Ariadne musica* in its entirety, but elsewhere the emphasis is on "mix and match", with a fine feeling for continuity and pacing with the programme. As a listener and reviewer whose heart has been known to sink when facing yet another disc of twenty four toccatas by the same composer, this is a welcome feature. For the most part, too, Lehman plays with good attention to detail, and obvious understanding of the music. He is at his best in the more overtly expressive harpsichord pieces, such as the W.F. Bach Polonaises, and also some of the dance movements, such as the BWV 832 Sarabande, and BWV 819a Menuets - these are good readings.But I am less enamoured of many of the other performances, and some general features of the playing. Lehman claims to be a proponent of a "gestural" performance style and in the booklet notes of *Playing From Bach's Fancy* he expands upon this. He states that he is influenced by notions of rhetoric and the natural rhythms and pacing of speech, and aims to "let the music reveal [itself] in its sound, with very little extra assistance from the performer". Laudable aspirations of course, but ones that result here in somewhat conservative and laboured performances, particularly in the organ pieces. Frequent rhythmic hiatus undermines the sense of pulse and drive and, more troubling still, fluency and musical cogency. Surely, if you want to let the music speak for itself, you at the very least play in time? If you haven't guessed it, my personal preference is always for a fundamentally more rhythmic, imaginative and dynamic approach than what is on offer here, and many musicians, as diverse as Gustav Leonhardt and Celine Frisch, prove that real energy, pizzazz, individuality and deep respect for historical performance practice are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, they coexist happily in the very best playing. Lehman does not play badly, but I don't find his style persuasive.Essentially, though, these CDs are less about Lehman as a

performer than as the proprietor of the Lehman-Bach temperament. The programmes are put together to show it off, and the booklet notes describe its virtues and implications. As a premise for a recording this can be seen as fascinating, or nonsensical. Fascinating, because you know you 're hearing carefully selected repertoire played in what is a very interesting temperament exactly as Lehman tunes it; and nonsensical, as it places (inevitably, I suppose) the relative importance of repertoire and temperament in the wrong order. The temperament's contribution is readily audible when you listen out for it - not least in the very bright A and E majors, and unusually smooth remote keys - but whether it provides that magic something that, say, one of the Neidhardt temperaments cannot, will be in the ear of the individual beholder. Whether this is Bach's own temperament, tuned the way he intended — well, that is a different question altogether, and one about which I have no wish to give an opinion!If you are a Lehman-Bach fan, and you are not inclined to set the temperament for yourself, these CDs are an interesting proposition, they are certainly played and produced with care. If you are looking for the very best performances of the pieces they include, and are happy (or perhaps even happier) with a less contentious historical temperament, I would suggest there are other, better options out there.

Bach, The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book I
Wanda Landowska (harpsichord)
Naxos Historical 8.110314-15 re-release

Bach, Clavierübung I-II, Chromatic fantasy and fugue,
Elizabeth de la Porte, harpsichord
(London Independent LIR012).

Freddy Kempf Plays Bach *(D Major and E Minor Partitas)*

Freddy Kempf, piano
BISCD1330

Bach, The Art of Fugue, BWV 1080a
Sébastien Guillot (harpsichord)
Naxos 8.557796

Reviewed by John Weretka

Wanda Landowska, an artist the memory of whom has so dominated discussions of the reinvention of early music in the twentieth century, is the subject of a double CD in Naxos' 'Great Harpsichordists' series. These are recordings made painstakingly over three years from 1949 to 1951 in New York and at Landowska's home in Connecticut, the last of them made when she was 79. The original recordings, on lacquer masters and magnetic tape, have been sensitively remastered by Mark Obert-Thorn.

Landowska remains an icon of the early music revival, but perhaps revered rather more at a distance than from personal acquaintance. On an extended listening, it is clear that the Landowska legacy is difficult to appraise. On the one hand, her recordings make clear that this was a supremely literate artist who cared deeply for the texts that formed the basis of her art. Her performance of the first fugue (BWV 846), for example, is famously characterised by her avoidance of the demisemiquavers of the subject, which she defended through her interpretation of the visual evidence of the Volkmann Autograph. There is no doubt that every note has received its full measure of intellect, and recordings like these are testament to a lifelong engagement with the notes and the milieu in which they were created.

One can't help thinking, though, that regardless of the amount of engagement that is evident in these recordings, the answers reached to the questions posed by the music are somehow deeply flawed. In offering a defence for "her idiosyncrasies of tempo, rhythm, added notes and rubato", the programme note writer for this release quotes a "contemporary reviewer" who wrote, "Those who know the score best should forget their theories and listen to what she has to say." This is a fine quote, but doesn't withstand much critical scrutiny.

For better or worse, Landowska's vision of these works is intimately tied to the various choices she makes. These range from the gigantic Pleyel harpsichord she plays to those very details of tempo, rhythm, added notes and rubato that characterise her interpretations. One simply cannot pretend that these

parameters are separate from the music; they are integral to the way Landowska intends the music to be heard. To this reviewer's ears at least, one has to try to listen for the music by ignoring all of these. Her performance of the G Major prelude (BWV 860) for example, rather than the quicksilver, light movement we are now generally accustomed to, sounds here like a bombastic battery, overloaded as it is with heavy registration. The same is true of the fugue in A Major (BWV 864) in which leaves are taken from the organist's book; this is an enormous interpretation in which the music is largely submerged under a welter of noise.

There are also those performance mannerisms that undermine the narrative flow of movements, including the constant arresting of forward momentum that occurs at significant cadence points. Her tempi, most of all in the fugues, tend to be laboured. The fugue in G Minor (BWV 861) takes 4'11" for Landowska to perform but only 2'02" – less than half – for Ton Koopman to perform. The issue here is not a tedious one of enumerating the differences in tempi between one recording and another. Rather, the choice of the tempo specifically determines how the listener will understand the music. This fugue subject is typical of Bach in *Das wohltemperiete Klavier* – a two bar theme, separated into two phrases by strategically placed rests. The model is clearly a vocal one (the rests are obviously breaths) and the music simply must go at a speed in which these two units can be heard as a single phrase and their transformations followed through the texture. One hears this in Koopman, but not in Landowska.

The issue of phrasing haunts Landowska through these recordings. In the C Minor fugue (BWV 847), for example, the three motivic units of the subject are clearly phrased by Koopman, while Landowska pastes over the seams, preferring instead the sonic variety provided by differing registrations. Ultimately, all one hears are the "sharp outlines and muted whispers…fluted tones [and] shifting sonorities of…coupled keyboards" that Landowska loved in her Pleyel. This makes excellent Landowska, but somehow Bach is lost in the translation.

At the other end of the spectrum entirely are Elizabeth de la Porte's recordings of the first and second parts of the *Clavierübung* and Chromatic fantasy and fugue, made in the mid 1970s and remastered with only occasional blemishes. The two instruments used, one after Goujon and the other after the Goermans-Taskin instrument in the Raymond Russell collection, are used sensitively and always with an eye to allowing the music to speak for itself. These are no-nonsense recordings in which the *galant* element of Bach's keyboard suites comes to the fore in the decoration of movements that appears to be a hallmark of de la Porte's style. The weightier Partitas in B Minor (BWV 831) and D Major (BWV 828) are the central achievements of these performances and the contrast of the gravity of the *Overture* and the humour of the *Echo* in the B Minor partita is immensely enjoyable. The least successful work is the Partita in E Minor (BWV 830); somehow, the narrative of the *Toccata* doesn't quite work, and the attempts to force a gigue out of the final movement meet with only intermittent success.

The D Major and E Minor partitas are the subject of Freddy Kempf's Bis disc, recorded in 2005 on a Steinway D. Kempf makes a persuasive case for Bach at the piano, with pedalling that contributes greatly to the success of the allemandes and sarabandes in these suites. Full credit must go to recording engineer Jens Braun for allowing Kempf's wonderful sound to be committed so sensitively to disc. These are rather hands off performances compared to de la Porte's more personalised expressions of the same repertoire; barely an ornament is added, but Kempf is careful to characterise bass lines in a way that eludes de la Porte. The *Toccata* to the E Minor partita is superbly realised, the *Overture* to the D Major partita less so. At 3'12", his gigue to the D Major partita is needlessly breathless, shaving almost two minutes off de la Porte's more sedate but more musical version. The result is a *tour de force* of instrumental virtuosity but almost incomprehensible as a piece of music.

Finally, Naxos has also released Sébastian Guillot's account of the earlier version of Bach's *Die Kunst der Fuge*. Beautifully recorded and played on a beautiful instrument, this disc is an essay in the architectural considerations of Bach's fugal technique. The architecture is respected, but one only rarely hears intimations of contact with the emotional content of the music. Despite the limited risk-taking, Guillot's technique and approach to articulation are clearly wonderfully adapted to this music.