

Harpsichord & fortepiano

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REVIEWS

Recordings

Performers: The Baroque Muse

Title: Hendrik Bouman, "Five Baroque Concertos for Anna"

Recording Company: Arya H200911

Reviewed by Pamela Hickman

Dutch harpsichordist, fortepianist, conductor and composer Hendrik (Henk) Bouman (b.1951) began his studies in early music at the Amsterdam Conservatory with Ton Koopman and Lucie van Dael. Former principal harpsichordist of *Musica Antiqua Köln*, founder and director of the period orchestra *Les Nations de Montréal* and founder and artistic director of *Haydn Heritage, Arcadia, Concerto Felice and Baroque SaMuse*, Bouman established *The Baroque Muse* in 2009. Bouman is known for his compositions and improvisations in the musical styles of 17th- and 18th century Italy, France, Germany, England and Holland, for his many transcriptions and basso continuo realisations. Bouman has performed in Europe, Canada, India and South Africa. He plays on harpsichords he himself has designed and built. His many recordings have won awards.

Bouman refers to *The Baroque Muse* as "a rendezvous of congenial musician friends". To elaborate on this modest description, one could say it is an international ensemble of soloists, leading players of period orchestras and well-known teachers: the reputed British early music specialist and baroque violinist Simon Standage, French-Canadian composer, writer and (traverso) flautist Grégoire Jaey, Dutch recorder maker and player Heiko ter Schegget, Norwegian cellist and founder of several ensembles Tormod Dalen, Canadian violinist and director Olivier Brault, British violinist, soloist and founder of the *Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment* Alison Bury, German violist and professor of violin at the *Schola Cantorum* (Basel) Hajo Bäss and British viola da gamba player Andrew Kerr of the prestigious *Rose Consort of Viols*.

"Five Baroque Concertos for Anna" is a CD of concertos composed by Bouman and recorded at Firle Place, Sussex Downs (UK) in 2010 for the Arya label ("Anna" being Anna Aravinda Bouman, Hendrik's wife, who requested that her husband write some new baroque-style concertos). In them, Bouman

takes care to use baroque forms such as the ritornello as well as gallant style elements. The first item on the disc, a **Harpsichord Concerto**, was originally a solo harpsichord composition, recorded by Bouman himself in 1997. Based on extra-musical and musical associations, it opens with a fresh, positive *Allegro*, with Bouman's playing articulate, lively, swayed and with plenty of flair. A *Siciliano* is followed by a kind of "Chorale Variation" idea, in which Bouman uses phrases of Hubert Parry's rousing music to "Jerusalem" (text: William Blake). Bouman's use of the song material, however, being reflective rather than triumphant.

The **Flute Concerto** (2009) is light in texture and decidedly French in style. The first movement, in particular, boasts reticence and delicacy. In the second movement – an *Andantino* – the same reticence is less convincing; flautist Grégoire Jaey's playing of the cadenza, however, is artistically crafted. The *Finale*, a "tribute to Telemann, the Vivaldi of the North" in Bouman's words, is both delightful and tasteful in its *joie-de-vivre*, spirit and bravura. Composer and professor at the *Université de Montréal*, Jaey's graceful and stylish playing is most pleasing.

One of the most delightful movements of the recording is the opening *Allegro* of the **Violin Concerto**. It was composed in 2008 for Simon Standage, leader of *The Baroque Muse*. Crisp and bright, it includes interesting development and fine string playing. The *Adagio* is a kind of rondo, the recurring tranquil theme played in octaves; in each episode we hear Standage weaving his melodies into poignant duets with various players. Bouman refers to the third and final movement as "gigue-like". The heavy accents on each half bar, however, weigh it down and do not give the piece the lift and buoyancy of a *Gigue*.

The **Cello Concerto** (2005) strikes a serious note, both by nature of the solo instrument and by the events that inspired the work, with the cello alternating between its solo role and being part of the basso continuo. The opening *Allegro* is a fine piece of writing; Norwegian cellist Tormod Dalen's playing of it is profound, nuanced and subtly flexed. A *Recitativo* provides a transition between the *Allegro* and the lifting, meditative but somewhat predictable *Andante*, the latter followed by a *Molto Allegro* in the ritornello form - a piece

bristling with energy, elegance, dialogue and a good measure of superb cello playing.

The final work is a **Recorder Concerto** (2001). Here again we hear Bouman's use of the ritornello in the outer movements. The attractive opening *Allegro* is fired with energy and joy. Dutch recorder-player Heiko ter Schegget is impressive in the sheer beauty of his playing, his agility and articulacy, all clothed in good taste. In the tranquil *Andante e piano* movement, ter Schegget takes the listener on an aesthetic, Elysian journey through constantly shifting harmonies and colours. The final elegant *Allegro* plays with timbres with the wink of an eye and a sense of well being, reminding the listener that music is a supreme form of entertainment.

It would be superfluous and banal here to claim that the music on the disc is not Bach, Händel or Telemann; Bouman's writing is, however, elegant and well grounded in much knowledge of historic styles and performance practice. His scoring for strings is exemplary. Several movements of the works on the disc have personal, extra-musical programmatic content. I have made a point here of steering clear of any discussion of this, only for the sake of discussing the music itself. Bouman does not compromise when it comes to his choice of players; the disc sparkles with instrumental performance at its best.

Scores

Composer: Rob Keeley

Works: Manouevering and Finessing (2010), Suite for Harpsichord (2010), Two Part Inventions (2011)

Publisher: Cadenza Music

www.cadenza-music.com

Reviewed by Pamela Nash

Rob Keeley is one of an increasingly practical and permissive group of composers who "invite" alternative instrumentation. Of his *Suite for Harpsichord*, he states that performance would also be effective on the piano or clavichord, and that the piano is also possible for his eight *Two Part Inventions*. The earliest of the three volumes, *Manouevering and Finessing*, is by definition only possible on the harpsichord due to the use of two manuals including extensive *croisée writing*.

But with all three works, the composer has taken the unique clarity of harpsichord voicing very much on board and there is very little in the *Inventions* or the *Suite* which would lend itself

to the tonal properties of any other keyboard instrument. I think it would indeed be a shame if they were played by choice on the piano, and/or — more to the point — by someone not versed in harpsichord technique.

When I asked the composer to comment on these works, he revealed a truly modern approach: "Much of my spare time I spend at my (sadly) electronic keyboard, and for me it is an enormous pleasure exploring the music of Bach, Scarlatti, the French clavecinistes and the Elizabethan virginalists. So these three works for harpsichord come from my practical experience: but equally, particularly the *Suite* and the *Inventions* are clearly modelled on earlier music, and for me, a lot of the fun of composing comes in rethinking this earlier music in new ways."

In the *Inventions*, although clearly indebted to the Bachian model, Keeley saw these pieces as a particularly personal compositional challenge. "More and more my music is about setting myself technical challenges, and writing in two parts without breaking my self-imposed rules is one of the most satisfying to 'get right'. I have explored various ways of achieving contrapuntal coherence without recourse to (as in Bach) strictly fugal writing: for example, the use of artificial modes give rise to situations where a canonic 'answer' might recreate the general shape, rather than the exact intervals of the subject." It might be pertinent to point out from a player's or teacher's point of view that the rhythmic challenges which characterise each Invention set them apart from any Baroque counterpart: beware any player expecting uniformity of metre.

For the *Suite*, Keeley acknowledges his allegiance to Bach and the French clavecinistes, with the unmeasured prelude clearly following the Louis Couperin model. He adheres to the Baroque Suite format, but "doubles" of the Courante and Sarabande form "extra" movements to give eight in total.

"Working within closed forms, with literal repeats, gave rise to the *Suite*, especially the idea of the "double": but here, a Gavotte is a "double" of a Courante, and techniques of ornamentation have again been employed to give variety to the music, and I hope, pleasure to the performer (which for me is essential in the kind of music I write). As you would expect, each movement of the *Suite* falls neatly onto a left/right page spread, so page turns would not be an issue.

The earliest of the three pieces, *Manouevering and Finessing*, takes its title from Jane Austen's *Emma*, since the composer

found that Austen's prose style seemed to suggest to him certain musical analogies. "It is written specifically (unlike the other pieces) for a two-manual harpsichord, and is a more obviously 'modern-sounding' work which eschews time signatures, and explores the more percussive, as well as the contrapuntal nature of the instrument."

The second of the two movements is written as a *pièce croisée*, its substantial length enabling much greater immersion in the fascinating *croisée* sonorities than any of the *claveciniste* prototypes!

These are welcome additions to the contemporary harpsichord repertoire and Cadenza is to be congratulated for their handsome presentation. Only a minor point of confusion arises over the notation of ornaments: sometimes lower-note mordents are written out as appoggiature, suggesting performance before the beat (*Invention V*) and elsewhere as signs; in *Invention I* both are used. A footnote to clarify the execution of mordents would have been useful.

All three volumes are extremely well typeset: beautiful to look at, infinitely easy on the eye, and with much attention to layout and consistent note-spacing. These publications do justice to the fine calibre of the musical material.

Composer : Jan Ladislav Dussek
Work: "The Sufferings of the Queen of France, Op. 23 (London 1793)

Editor: Marcia Hadjimarkos

Publisher: Christine Paquelet Edition
Arts www.paquelet-editions.com
Reviewed by Douglas Hollick

Dussek spent his life moving around Europe, as one of the first virtuoso pianists, and a composer of note. His arrival in London followed the French Revolution, where he was in danger as a favourite of Queen Marie-Antoinette. He participated in Salomon's concerts together with Haydn, who wrote to Dussek's father extolling the young man's talent. In London, Dussek married Sophia Corri, a leading harpist whose father owned a music publishing business, and the Corri-Dussek partnership was formed in around 1792. Bankruptcy of the business precipitated Dussek's hasty departure from London in 1799, leaving behind wife and daughter, never to see them again. Whilst in London Dussek worked with John Broadwood to develop his pianos, and in particular the extension of the keyboard compass from five to five and a half and then six octaves. After leaving London he

also acted as an agent for Clementi's pianos whilst touring in Europe, so was intimately acquainted with the English piano sound.

His memorial to the Queen was published in December 1793, barely two months after her execution. Ten sections illustrate the events from the Queen's imprisonment, through the trial and execution, to a final Apotheosis. Much of the writing sounds to us "Beethovenian", but this is probably wrong, as in 1793 Dussek could have known hardly any of Beethoven's piano music, which mostly postdates this work. The key of C Minor in the opening movement, the hand crossing and use of the particular sonorities of the English grand pianofortes, all contribute to a very dark sound – perhaps the influence is the other way round, as Beethoven may well have known this work!

Also foreshadowing Beethoven is the fifth movement in E-Flat Major, "Her resignation to her fate", but here with a more bitter sweet mood; an interesting dissonance occurs in the third bar, where a 4 – 3 resolution is played initially with both the fourth and third simultaneously. Dussek increases the dramatic tension by some fairly startling changes of key – moving for instance rapidly from B-Flat Major to B Major, and into E Major in the course of movements 8 and 9 (the tumult of the rabble, and the Queen's invocation to the Almighty). Other movements are more predictable in style, and not so imaginative, and the rapid downward scale for the guillotine dropping might have been played as a glissando in line with earlier markings in French harpsichord music for such effects. This edition has preserved all the details of the original, which is admirable, and markings seen elsewhere in Dussek's music such as *Pmo* and *ffmo* are not modernised.

Also included in this edition is a little song for soprano and piano by Marie-Antoinette herself. "Amour suis loin de moi" has three verses, and is a pretty example of the salon music of the late eighteenth century.

A worthy edition with an excellent preface, and an interesting work for pianists to consider programming, particularly if on a period piano.

Work: Leopold Mozart, Sonata in Bb Major

Editor: Adriano Cirillo

Publisher: Edition HH, HH292.SOL

Reviewed by John Collins

In addition to being the father of Wolfgang Amadeus, Leopold Mozart is probably best known today for his Violin Method of 1756, which contains important information for players of

keyboard instruments, especially regarding ornamentation and other aspects of 18th century performance practice. He composed three sonatas for keyboard, published in different issues of the Haffner anthologies between c.1756-63.

Even though these publications are headed "pour le clavessin", this sonata, in three binary-form movements headed Allegro assai, Andante and Allegro, will sound well on the organ or clavichord. Only relatively few articulation and phrasing indications and no dynamic markings were included in the original; neither, of course, are there any extra editorial accretions in this faithful modern edition. Alberti basses are absent, but there are several Mürky basses along with repeated chords in the left hand of the first movement. The spacious Andante with its repeated left hand chords is a felicitous counterfoil to the outer fast movements, and the closing Allegro in 3/8 contains enough rhythmic variety to keep the player focussed. Pleasingly tuneful, this sonata will offer pleasant recreation for the player, and also for the listener. A few passages in minor keys notwithstanding, the sonata flows along happily without too many ripples to disturb its light-hearted serenity. There are a few tricky passages in which ornamentation will have to be considered carefully but much of the piece is almost sight-readable to someone with experience of this period.

The edition is well printed, but a discussion of possible interpretations of the ornaments and their placing (i.e. on the beat or, as some figures could have been played, before it), would have been valuable for those players not well versed in their interpretation.

Title: Johann Sebastian Bach, Preludio E-dur BWV 1006/1, Chaconne d-moll BWV 1004/5 for Violin and Piano. Piano Accompaniment by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.
Editor: Anselm Hartinger
Publisher: Breitkopf & Härtel, Pl. No. 8046, 2009.
Reviewed by John O'Donnell

Of the countless adaptations and arrangements to which Bach's music has been subjected over the past two centuries, piano accompaniments to the solo string works are among the least explored. Had these appendages been produced by musical nonentities they may well have remained unknown; but the fact that such composers as Mendelssohn and Schumann involved themselves in such activities has meant that they were bound to surface sooner or later.

Mendelssohn's accompaniments to these two popular movements were conceived for a performance with Ferdinand David in 1840.

The Chaconne subsequently found its way into print, but the *Preludio* is here printed for the first time. Bach's own re-working of the latter in the Cantata *Wir danken dir, Gott* (BWV 29) was clearly known to Mendelssohn, whose piano part sometimes reproduces Bach's notes exactly, while at other times is independent. In general his accompaniment is sparse, providing harmonic support, some rhythmic interplay and occasional countermelody, never venturing beyond what one might expect a musician of his abilities to improvise after a first reading of the violin line. The *Chaconne* is more fully worked out, though the general effect is again largely improvisatory. Two versions of the violin part are provided, one edited from Bach's originals, the other from Ferdinand David's arrangements. Whether Mendelssohn's and David's arrangements will find a place in the 21st-century repertoire only time will tell, but these are essential documents for those interested in 19th-century Bach reception, and interest in them will grow with the publication of other contemporaneous Bach accompaniments, particularly (one would expect) those of Schumann.

Title: Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Rondo capriccioso, Opus 14.
Editor: Ullrich Scheideler; Hans-Martin Theopold, fingering
Publisher: G. Henle Verlag Pl. No. 919, 2009. 8046, 2009.
Reviewed by John O'Donnell

It is easy to suppose that a work of the popularity of Mendelssohn's *Rondo capriccioso* must long have been available in a scholarly edition. But such is not the case. The editor's engaging preface and detailed commentary unravel the textual problems that have arisen from the existence of an 1830 autograph, an 1830 London edition, 1831 Vienna and Paris editions, and early posthumous editions, convincing one that a scholarly edition is now at hand. The text is uncluttered, essential variants given in footnotes, detailed critical matter available at the back.

Title: George Frideric Handel, 8 Suites for Keyboard (1720) "mises dans une autre applicature pour la facilité de la main" by Gottlieb Muffat (1736).
Editor: Christopher Hogwood
Publisher: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2007

Gottlieb Muffat, Componimenti

Musicali (1739).

Editor: Christopher Hogwood

Publisher: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2007
8046, 2009.

Reviewed by John O'Donnell

In the early part of the twentieth century Gottlieb Muffat could be found listed alongside Bach and Handel as one of the three great keyboard composers of the first half of the eighteenth century, but in recent times he has been known to many only by his 72 organ versets, while his father Georg has become the Muffat. In these two volumes Christopher Hogwood gives us an opportunity to reassess Muffat *fils*.

Muffat's reworking of Handel's Eight Suites is a curious volume. Handel's stated reason for having the works printed in 1720 was that "Surreptitious and incorrect copies of them had got abroad" [sic], and most of his contemporaries, one assumes, would have been content to have a copy of the volume containing the composer's imprimatur. One cannot help but feel that Muffat must have been an extreme pedant — or simply had too much time on his hands — to have copied the entire volume simply to clarify the distribution of notes between the two hands. The tradition of placing all the right hand's notes in the upper stave and all the left hand notes in the lower dates at least from Frescobaldi's first book of toccatas, published in 1615.

With staves of six and eight lines respectively, ledger lines between the staves were few, making this a tidy system. Various composers and copyists adopted a similar approach during the seventeenth century, but the universal espousal of five-line staves during that century necessitated more frequent use of ledger lines between the staves, at times resulting in an unwieldy appearance. Nevertheless Georg Muffat applied the system of five line staves in his *Apparatus Musico-Organicus* in 1690, and Gottlieb continued to champion this practice. This is what he means by "mises dans une autre applicature".

What makes the volume interesting is that while Gottlieb Muffat the editor was busily distributing notes to dextra and sinistra, and, on one occasion, choosing an older form

of key signature (the G-Minor suite is notated throughout in one flat), Gottlieb Muffat the keyboard artist and composer could not constrain his inventive mind. Passages are rewritten, and ornaments are sprinkled in abundance or, less commonly, removed. One wonders about Muffat's tempo for the *Aria* (= *Air*) and variations of the E-Major suite (the so-called "Harmonious Blacksmith"); the proliferation of mordents on the even-numbered semiquavers in the second variation and of turns on the middle semiquavers in the third and fourth suggest either that Muffat possessed an extraordinary technique or that he played the movement at a rather more stately tempo than it is usually played today.

Three years after rewriting Handel, Muffat published his *Componimenti musicali per il cembalo*. He may have sent Handel a copy of the work, for within months Handel was helping himself to many of its movements as he set Dryden's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*. Handel was to return to the volume many times for further borrowings, for which reason Muffat's work was reprinted in 1896 by the Deutsche Händelgesellschaft, edited by Friedrich Chrysander, as a supplement to the complete edition of Handel's works. It was Chrysander's assessment of Muffat's volume as inferior only to the harpsichord music of Handel and Bach that led to the reputation Muffat held in the early twentieth century.

The *Componimenti* consists of seven works, identified only by number (avoiding such titles as "ordre" or "suite"). Each of the first six works commences with an instrumental movement (*ouverture*, *prelude* or *fantaisie*), after which there is always an *allemande* and *courante*, usually a *sarabande*, then a variety of other movements (*air*, *adagio*, *menuet*, *rigaudon*, *bouree*, *hornepipe*, *gigue*, *finale*), some of which have descriptive names (*Rigaudon Bizarre*, *La Hardiesse*, *La Coquette*, *Menuet en Cornes de Chasse*). The seventh work is a *Ciaccona* with 38 variations. Muffat's work is rich in invention and meticulous in detail. The writing is often imitative of other instruments: string orchestra in the first section of the *Fantaisie* of no. VI, the two *ouvertures* and elsewhere, solo violin or flute with continuo accompaniment in many of the dances, and horns in the *menuet* so labelled. But there is also much idiomatic keyboard writing, as in the *Prelude* of no. II and the *Fantaisie* of no. IV. The *Sarabande* of no. III, marked "Adagio assai" is a marvellous essay in embellishment, its complexities approaching those of the *Sarabande* of Bach's sixth Partita.

Both Muffat volumes are presented here in outstanding editions with excellent introductory essays, thorough critical commentary and a generous selection of facsimile material.

Title: Luigi Cherubini, Six keyboard sonatas

Editor: Christopher Hogwood

Publisher: Edition HH. HH256.SOL

Reviewed by John Collins

This set of six sonatas, published in Italy in 1783 when Cherubini was 23, and in England in 1786, is an example of the only occasional sets of instrumental music published by a composer far better known for his operatic and sacred music and for his academic work. Each sonata is in two movements, an opening *allegro* or *moderato* in binary form in C-time, apart from no. 4 in 2/4, and no. 5 in 3/4 and a concluding *rondo* (*no tempo* indicated in 1 and 2, *andantino* in no. 3, 4 and 6, and *allegretto* in no.5). Each *rondo* is in 2/4 apart from no. 3 which is in 6/8. The translation of the effusive dedication is included at the back of the volume. Most of the writing is simple two part texture, with occasional runs in thirds or sixths and fuller texture in the left hand. Several movements require considerable dexterity and nimble fingerwork, the technical demands sometimes being greater than the musical quality, with passages for crossed hands; they are generally more demanding than the great majority of sonatas by the earlier Galuppi and Rutini. Alberti and Mürky basses are frequent, as are oscillations at the octave, sometimes in demisemiquavers by step. At their best they exhibit the melodically graceful cantabile singing *allegro* style, but there is also the tendency for the composer to go off on a tangent, particularly in the rondos, and return either via a pause or a string of sudden modulatory arpeggios. However, perseverance will be rewarded by the revelation of some individualistic movements.

Christopher Hogwood's introduction offers assistance in interpreting the placing of the large number of written out turns and also offers some thoughts on the instruments on which these pieces may have been played, reminding us that English square pianos were known in Tuscany in the 1780s. He also comments that an instrument capable of variable dynamics would be helpful in transmitting the melodic lines and also includes the clavichord as a potential candidate, referring to a contemporary painting of Paisiello and Burney's meeting with Galuppi. His editorial suggestions for cadential interpolations

are well thought out and offer model guidance to players who wish to supply their own.

There are some 80 pages of clearly printed music here, with the usual thorough critical commentary, and the two stalwart proofreaders receive due mention. Presented in a spiral binding with an over folding front cover, this new edition will be a revelation to those who may have struggled with earlier over-edited and "enriched" editions of the last century, and should be well received and welcomed by those players who are still hesitant about tackling facsimiles of original 18th-century editions with all their attendant quirks of layout.



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