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REVIEWS

RECORDINGS

Title: Baroque Masterpieces for Harpsichord
Performer: Trevor Pinnock
Recording Company: Regis RRC 1332
Reviewed by Brian Robins

Arne – Sonata No. 6 in G; Greene – Overture in D; Handel – Suite in E Minor ("Harmonious Blacksmith"), HWV 430; Rameau – *Pièces de clavecin en concerts (1741): La Livri; L'Agacante; La Timide; l'Indiscrète; La Pantomime.* D. Scarlatti – Sonatas in G, K. 124; in B Minor, K. 87; in E, K. 46; in D, K. 490; in D, K. 491; in D, K. 492

This collection has been culled from some of Trevor Pinnock's early CRD recordings. For interested collectors, the Scarlatti sonatas were first issued on LP in 1981 and latterly on CRD3368, the Rameau pieces are taken from a 1976 recording issued on CD as CRD3320, while the Greene and Arne come from CRD 3347, first released on LP in 1978. The Handel was available on CRD3307, a disc entitled "Recital at the Victoria and Albert Museum".

Regrettably, the Regis disc gives no details of the instruments used by Pinnock, providing only basic notes from a writer who seems unaware that the opening Allegro of Maurice Greene's fine Overture in D is in French overture form. The title of the Rameau publication is wrongly given (it is corrected above), while we are given the startling information that Rameau's "greatest contribution was to keyboard music".

As might be expected from a player who has long occupied a pre-eminent position among harpsichordists, the performances are of a generally high order. Throughout one admires Pinnock's exemplary strength of finger work and crystal clear articulation, his virtuosity at times breathtaking. There are occasions when one suspects the Pinnock of later years would have allowed himself a little more leeway in matters such as rubato and nuance; the later variations of the Handel suite do take on a certain relentless quality.

Best of all to my mind are the Scarlatti sonatas, reminding us that Pinnock has always shown a special affinity for this composer. The famous group K.490-492, for example, is superbly played, the slow, solemn processional of K.490, with its second half moving into genuinely tragic territory, succeeded by the joyously colourful carnival atmosphere of K.491, with its fanfare-playing band and stomping dance. The group (and disc) is concluded by the swift imitative exchanges and whirlwind progress of K.492, a fittingly virtuoso climax to the whole.

Rameau is another composer with whom Pinnock has always shown special empathy, and the pieces from the marvellous *Pièces de clavecin* are played in convincingly idiomatic style, though the beautiful *"La Timide"* might perhaps have been allowed a little more poetry. In any event, the set to my mind works better within the chamber music context originally envisaged by the composer, although he did of course allow for solo harpsichord performance.

While this CD is unlikely to be essential listening for specialist collectors, its bargain price could well prove an attractive proposition to anyone looking to start a collection of harpsichord recordings.

Title: Handel, Suites for Harpsichord, vol. 1
Performer: Gilbert Rowland
Recording Company: Divine Art DDA 21219 (2 CDs: 74: 57; 71:34)
Reviewed by Brian Robins

CD 1: Suite in D Minor, HWV 428; Suite in A, HWV 454; Suite in E Minor, HWV 438; Suite in C, HWV 443
CD 2: Suite in G Minor, HWV 439; Suite in G, HWV 441; Suite in E Minor, HWV 429; Suite in E, HWV 430

As we know from his extensive traversal of the keyboard works of Domenico Scarlatti and Soler, Gilbert Rowland is not a man to do things by halves. As the rubric "volume 1" suggests, his recording of the Handel harpsichord suites is obviously going to take us beyond the familiar sets published in London in 1720 and 1733, this one including two early works (HWV 454 and HWV 443) almost certainly composed before Handel left Germany for Italy in 1707. HWV 443 is indeed something of a rarity on record, a six-movement work that opens with a Präludium clearly modelled on the north German organ prelude and fugue of composers such as Buxtehude and concluding with a Chaconne followed by no fewer than 49 brief variations.

Rowland plays the programme on a regrettably unidentified harpsichord, though I suspect it to be the double manual instrument featured in the photo of the performer on the back cover of the booklet. It is attractively toned, with an agreeably mellow upper range and powerful capabilities in the bass. The changes of registration employed for repeats seem to me sensible and rarely obtrusive. Rather more contentious is Rowland's addition of ornamentation, which in repeats is, to say the least, lavish and not always stylish. Such matters are of course a matter of taste, but here I feel the decoration at times obscures the musical sense. An example is the thoughtful opening Allemande of HWV 438, one of the gems of 1720 collection, where the contemplative beauty of the music is disturbed by Rowland's embellishments. I would question, too, the addition of further ornamentation to the initial statement of the opening strain of the Sarabande of HWV 429.

While I have no idea in which order Rowland recorded the suites, I found my enjoyment of his playing for some reason increasing as the set progressed. In the opening Prelude of HWV 428 there is want of expansiveness, while the succeeding fugal Allegro is rather stiff and formal. There is in fact throughout the set a degree of rhythmic inflexibility and want of nuance, as a comparison with, say, the more imaginative performances of the 1720 publication by Ludger Rémy on "CPO Reveals".

Yet there are many fine things, too. The toccata-like Gigue that concludes HWV 439 is splendidly projected, while in the delightful seven-movement G Major Suite, HWV 441 (another early work, despite being included in the 1733 publication) Rowland relaxes to encompass the lighter mood of a work that I suspect may originally have had a didactic function. Both HWV 429 and 430 (respectively the fourth and fifth suites of the 1720 publication) go well, with the superb fugal Allegro that opens the former played with a masterly grasp of contrapuntal complexities. The succeeding Allemande breaths an aura of mature tranquillity, while the corresponding movement of the E Major Suite has an airy grace and poetic sense not always apparent elsewhere. The final Air and Variations (the so-called "Harmonious Blacksmith") are not only

played with virtuosic assurance, but also introduce a nice suggestion of humour.

While not to my mind without their questionable features, these are always honest, musical performances that are likely to provide much pleasure.

Work: J.S. Bach, Goldberg Variations
Performer: David Shemer
Recording Company: JBO, 2008
Reviewed by Pamela Hickman

Another recording of J.S.Bach's "Goldberg Variations"? Yes, indeed. And, with it, all the excitement, mystery and enigma of this flawless, super-human work come to mind once again, beckoning the listener to re-address it and follow the player through its intricate course. David Shemer recorded the "Goldberg Variations" for the JBO label at Christ Church in Jerusalem's Old City in October 2008. He played the work on a Franco-Flemish type harpsichord made by Martin Skowroneck (Bremen, 2001), choosing the pitch of A392, this being one of several used at Bach's time, a pitch lending the instrument a dark, mellow sound.

Harpsichordist, conductor and teacher David Shemer was born in Riga, Latvia, immigrating to Israel at an early age. Upon completing studies at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, he went on to study in England with such illustrious teachers as Christopher Kite, Jill Severs, Trevor Pinnock and Philip Pickett. The degree of Doctor of Musical Arts was conferred on him by the University of New York at Stony Brook. Maestro Shemer is founder and director of the Jerusalem Baroque Orchestra. He appears frequently as solo harpsichord player and is a member of several chamber ensembles, including the Copenhagen Soloists, a collaboration of Danish and Israeli players. As of 1982, Dr. Shemer has been teaching at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance; he has given numerous master classes in England, Germany, Italy, the USA and in Riga – the town of his birth.

The "Goldberg Variations" BWV 988 were published in 1741 in the *Clavierübung*, a collection of pieces of various styles and genres, composed over 15 years, during which time Bach had published no other works. Not a man of financial means, the composer clearly found it important to publish the work, also ensuring its preservation. The title to the first edition of the "Goldberg Variations" was as follows:

Clavierübung/ consisting of/ an Aria/ with Diverse Variations/ for the Harpsichord/ with Two Manuals / Composed for Music Lovers / To refresh their spirits, by / Johann Sebastian Bach:/ Royal Polish and Electoral Saxon Composer, / Capellmeister, and Director Chori Musici in Leipzig.

Though Bach did not specify in more words than those stated above for whom or for what purpose the work was composed, it seems clear that it was not for pedagogical use, despite *Clavierübung* being the German term for "keyboard practice".

What is this performer's personal take on the work? Shemer has spent years thinking this through; he has noted down his thoughts in the liner notes, making for interesting reading, and the ideas behind them are reflected in the extraordinary artwork (Sharon Asis – graphic designer) which shows yarn crocheted into a number of different shapes.

David Shemer sees the "Goldberg Variations" as "a kind of highly complicated game, both of the intellectual and the emotional kind, that of a great artist aware of his own creative powers and enjoying his practically unlimited compositional ability". He talks of Bach's taking on the challenge of

the most stringent limitations of variation form – its many rules, its fixed harmonic progressions, the fixed length of all variations, with all pieces anchored in the same scale – and producing some of the richest, most complex and diversified examples of variations ever written.

In a work exploring the possibilities of a Houdini kind of musical challenge, the above-mentioned rules remain fixed, never to be broken. Discussing composition within "restrictions" of style, Dr. Shemer expresses his belief that in all human actions, and in artistic acts in particular, the game element is ever present. He speaks of virtuosity and the risks it involves as one specific aspect of this game element, quoting the circus tightrope artist as an example of a virtuoso taking risks within the confines of rules. "Would you go to see this act if the tightrope were a mere foot off the ground?" he asks.

David Shemer discusses the pattern of each group of three pieces as including one canon (at progressively larger intervals), one highly virtuosic piece, and one piece of a specific genre — a gigue a fughetta etc., adding that some of these genre pieces do not bear titles, yet they are clearly written in one or other style. Often these styles, as perceived by Shemer, have led him to make various decisions as to speed; for example, the "Polonaise" (Var.12), the "Allemande" (Var.21), the "Pastorale" (Var.24) or the "Sarabande" (Var.26). In the latter, the piece's resemblance to a French Sarabande results in the decision to overdot the accompanying figure. Shemer's references to the Sarabande are not coincidental, with the opening Aria itself being a Sarabande; there are also traces of this dance in Var.13.

As the work progresses, the player (a player in every sense of the word) is asked to take on more and more challenges, and, as in many of the games that we play, these challenges become increasingly more complex. This, explains Shemer, is Bach's creative process in the Goldberg Variations. The Quodlibet (Variation 30), a collage of humorous, earthy folk songs, is, indeed, a game of a different kind, typical of the spontaneous entertainment traditional to the Bach family at its annual gatherings. Shemer, although aware of the droll songs used as its melodic material, gives the movement a majestic reading, despite its lowly beginnings.

Drawing all the above thoughts together in his liner notes, David Shemer refers to Hermann Hesse's "The Glass Bead Game", showing parallels between the game element central to the book's content and Bach's Goldberg Variations. (Hesse frequently mentions Bach's music in the book, although he makes no reference to the Goldberg Variations.)

The game element first appears in Shemer's playing of the opening Sarabande: the left hand is played in the strictest of time, with the right hand role, freer and ornamented, playing hide-and-seek around the tactus. A similar approach – perhaps even more so – can be heard in Var. 25, that most heart-rending of variations. In Shemer's hands, the contrasts between movements and within movements, attesting to Bach's display of keyboard techniques and textures, take on personal expression – Var. 14, for example, comes across as joyful but controlled, the canon of Var.15 is introspective, a little sad and quietly questioning, with the Ouverture of Variation 16 opening with a dose of fresh and spontaneous-sounding assertiveness, its noble and somewhat officious dotted motifs joined by runs; Var. 16's second section, on the other hand,

smoother and free of the former jagged dotted rhythms, is played with simplicity and humility. Shemer takes the game aspect to dizzying heights in Variation 23, highlighting the music's capricious and unpredictable character: now and then it comes across as evasive, at other times pompous. With his characteristic sense of humour, Shemer seems to be asking you what you think of his reading of it!

Then there is always the question of the addition of extra ornaments in Bach's music, especially in a work as rich and dense as the Goldbergs. After all, was it not Scheibe who had criticized Bach for having written out every detail, leaving no room for the artist to use his imagination? Shemer takes a balanced view on this issue. Most of his playing is devoid of extra ornaments but there are, however, some carefully chosen embellishments, as in the opening Aria and, of course, in its final appearance, as well as in a few other variations.

Shemer's soul-centred interpretation of the Goldberg Variations is his way of communicating with the listener, and it is this recording's strength, with the performance bringing out both the specific persona of each piece and the underlying larger musical and emotional agendas taking place throughout the mammoth work. Shemer's playing is intelligent, focused, invigorating and virtuosic; however, reason and good taste prevail throughout as he draws the listener into his mindset of contrasts, strategic timing and articulate and expressive melodic lines, all of these anchored in Bach's rich and bold harmonic language. The Skowroneck harpsichord delights the ear in its timbres and flexibility. The sympathetic acoustic of Christ Church and true quality of the recording create a suitable environment for David Shemer's profound reading of J.S. Bach's Goldberg Variations. This recording will enrich the collection of the most discerning of Bach enthusiasts.

SCORES

Title: Antonio de Cabezón, *Obras de Musica* 1578: Volume II
Editor: Paola Erdas
Publisher: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, ES65 Bologna 2011
Reviewed by John Collins

This is the second volume taken from Antonio de Cabezón's *Obras de Musica*, a collection of some 130 pieces compiled by his son Hernando and published in 1578. By its embracing every compositional genre of the time, it is of signal importance in the history of not only Spanish but also of European keyboard music. Since volume one contains the first 30 pieces from the original, presumably the publisher's intention is to issue the complete contents of the *Obras* in a new (and much needed) modern edition, although there is no indication of such an aim in this volume. As the first volume, which contains the 14 works headed *para principiantes* (for beginners), followed by the sets of versos and fabordones on the eight tones, appeared some ten years ago, hopefully this project will start to pick up speed, otherwise it may well outlast your reviewer at this pace! There is also a change of editor for this volume; whilst this can be beneficial when dealing with different genres of a composer's opus, such as in the Sweelinck edition by Breitkopf and Härtel, there is no such immediately apparent rationale here.

This volume contains eight one-verse settings of four hymns (four of *Ave Maris Stella,* two of *Christe redemptor* and one each of *Veni creator* and *Ut queant laxis*), three *Pange Linguas* and a set of seven

versos (In the original they are entitled "*de Magnificat*" e.g. "for the Magnificat" but for some reason this indication is not included here) on each of the eight tones. The hymns look most austere and bare on the page with movement only rarely exceeding minims and crotchets, but the *Pange Lingua* settings are longer at approximately 100 bars. No. 41 and 42 exhibit a greater amount of quaver movement, sometimes in parallel in two voices; no. 40 concludes with a veritable cascade of semiquavers.

The versos, from 10 to 30 bars in length, are also in four parts, with written-out quaver and very occasionally semiquaver *glosas* appearing in various parts; the great majority present miniature essays in contrapuntal facility combined with homophonic and chordal passages; the sixth verso on the sixth tone contains flowing quaver and triplet movement in the treble throughout. The final chord is not always what we would expect (for example the versos on the second and third tone end in D Major and the fifth tone in A Major). A facsimile of four of the versos is included at the relevant place, and shows the economy, and ambiguity, of the *cifra* notation.

There are some brief notes on the composer's life and compositions, the *cifra* tablature used by the Spanish, and performance practice (including ornaments and rhythmic inequality); the descriptions of ornaments taken from Hernando de Cabezon's own (confusing!) remarks and de Sancta María's exhaustive tome cover only some of the many possible interpretations and situations where *quiebros* and *redoubles* were expected. There are no comments on the individual pieces included here or on their function. There is a detailed critical commentary in Italian only; it is instructive to compare this edition with the Anglés edition and discover the differences, mainly of a change of octave. Those who would like to peruse the original edition will find it online in the *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica* of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

The print is exceedingly clear, of a generous size and spacing, and as they stand on the page, the pieces do not appear to be at all over taxing, but the difficulty for the player who is inexperienced in the Iberian style will be adding the ornaments in a tasteful and accurate manner according to contemporary treatises to make the pieces come alive; this, according to the contemporary and later treatises, was considered absolutely indispensable. The main problem with taking this volume in isolation is that it is difficult to see who, because of the limited possibilities of using most of the contents in a liturgical framework within services today, will buy it apart from those wanting a new complete edition, although its use as teaching material to acquaint newcomers to the Iberian style would be of value.

Work: Johann Sebastian Bach, The Well-Tempered Clavier I: Urtext Edition in Original Clefs from the Autograph Manuscript
Editor: David Aijón Bruno
Publisher: Ut Orpheus Edizioni
Reviewed by John O'Donnell

"This edition...grew out of a personal need to work on these pieces from their original notation..." Thus the editor begins his "justification" of the present publication. He goes on to mention a number of the difficulties in undertaking such a task, and in doing so forestalls (or at least foreshadows) likely criticisms.

In the *Clavier-Büchlein vor Wilhelm Friedemann Bach*, Johann Sebastian

introduced his son to the G clef in one position, the C clef in four positions and the F clef in three positions, a total of eight "clefs" (in common parlance). In the principal source of the *Praeludium* BWV 531/1 the French violin clef (g on the first line, also called G1) made a brief appearance in bar 13, confounding editors from BG to NBA and beyond. While this source is in the hand of Sebastian's brother Johann Christoph, copyists tended to retain the clefs of their sources; and in any case Bach also used this clef on at least one other occasion, in the single-line version of the earlier setting of the augmentation canon of Die *Kunst der Fuge*.

The use of the soprano clef (C1) and bass clef (F4) for keyboard music had become something of a standard in Germany (alongside tablature) by the time of Bach, and he retained this practice until his adoption of the treble clef (G2) for the upper stave shortly after his move to Leipzig. For some musicians, notes are simply dots on a page, and if all music can be notated with a single clef, brass band style, so much the better. Others derive understanding (or at least satisfaction) from reading or performing from original clefs, which may suggest the ambitus of the voice or instrument, and perhaps even the vocal or instrumental timbre that might inspire the line.

It is perhaps appropriate that this reviewer declare that he applauds the use of original clefs in modern publications, and it was consequently with a degree of excitement that he awaited the arrival of this volume. And yet it was not long before his misgivings about the result made him wonder whether it was ultimately an exercise in futility. Even when presenting an edition that is (1) Urtext, (2) in original clefs, and (3) based solely on the autograph manuscript, an editor has to make many decisions about the presentation of the text.

Among the important decisions in a volume such as this one are the physical distance between staves, and the retention or otherwise of original distribution of notes between staves, of original key signatures (with accidentals repeated at the octave), of original use of accidentals, of *custos* preparing the reader for the first note of the next system, of beaming, and of orientation of both beams and stems.

Bach's manuscript of WCI is written on irregularly spaced staves that would allow two to four ledger lines between them. Bruno's edition is printed on staves that would allow six ledger lines between them, and, in some movements, eight. This immediately adds considerable visual distortion to voices (usually alto or tenor) that migrate from stave to stave, at the same time averting the need for much of this migration. The retention of original stem directions results in some unsightly musical typescript. Some of the uglier results are relegated to an appendix while editorial principles are temporarily relaxed in the main text; yet some passages that remain (*e.g.* Fuga 15, bar 71; Fuga 20, bar 26) are arguably no less ungainly than those that were removed.

Bruno laments the inability to reproduce Bach's curved beaming, and indeed this is probably the single most significant factor contributing to the disappointing appearance of much of this edition.

On the positive side, the editor seems to have been successful in delivering the text accurately in all details (even to the inclusion, at the end of bar 4 of Fuga 19, of a superfluous tie). The retention of contemporaneous use of accidentals is also commended. On the other hand, the number "27", written by Bach

beside the final triad of the first fugue, whose length is 27 bars, is omitted.

The editor claims that "reading even from an ideal facsimile of the autograph is fraught with difficulties, many portions of the original being virtually illegible due to decay and damage". Here we part company further. Yes, the autograph is worn in places, and if one were unfamiliar with the work one might have to consult an edition to clarify a few notes, but for no more than a few notes in the whole volume. Even playing from an average facsimile can be an enriching experience.

Work: Lodovico Giustini, Sonaten 1-12 für Klavier, Florenz 1732, 2 vol.
Editor: Jolando Scarpa
Publisher: Edition Walhall Ew642 and 660
Reviewed by John Collins

These two volumes present the 12 sonatas published as for *Cimbalo di piano, e forte, detto volgarmente di martelletti,* which is the first such collection of keyboard pieces not aimed either exclusively at the harpsichord or at unspecified keyboard instruments. It may, indeed, be considered the precursor of all piano sonatas. And its success may be considered, gleaned from a subsequent reprint in Amsterdam.

Each volume in this new edition contains six sonatas, each of which comprises four (no. 3, 4, 6-10) or five movements. These are in binary form with the exception of the Canzone in no. 10 and the Dolce in no. 11, which modulates to the dominant (although repeat signs are present at the end of each movement). There are numerous dances as well as pieces with tempo indications only (e.g. *Andante ma non presto* in no. 2). The opening movements are varied, with alemandas of various tempi, (7 is marked andante and 11 *allegro, ma non presto*, while in no. 10 there are two examples), sarabandas in 8, 9 and 12, with preludes appearing in no. 4-6.

Gigas feature in the sonatas with tempo indications ranging from grave to *prestissimo*, no. 2 including both grave and presto pieces. Minuets, the concluding movements in no. 1, 2 and 12 are equally varied from *affetuoso* in 3/4 in no. 1 to allegro in 3/8 in no. 12. Some of the corrente are in 2/4, but sonatas 5 and 10 include examples in 3/8, the latter marked *allegro assai*. The three canzonas, in C time, including one marked Tempo di Gavotta in no. 10, owe nothing other than repeated notes to the earlier compositions of this genre; any slight nod to fugal writing soon lapses into homophony. The gavotta and siciliana also appear, and rondos are to be found in no, 8, 9 and 11; in 3/8 and in binary form, they have no resemblance to later pieces bearing the name.

A wide range of keys is employed, including up to E Major and F Minor (with the older key signature of three flats). There are some neat chromatic touches, and the Neapolitan sixth is used frequently. Ornament signs include "tr." as well as the appoggiatura and upward slide in small notes but interestingly the downward slide and mordents, are written out fully within the musical text.

The composer has indicated dynamic gradations, including the use of *più piano* and *più forte* as well as abrupt shifts most carefully in these sonatas, which will clearly need the fortepiano to do them justice – the transparent tone will come into its own in the full chords, particularly in the left hand. A performance on clavichord could also yield excellent results. There are some passages with awkward handshifts, but these pieces are not generally overdemanding, and offer very pleasant recreation to both player and listener.

Printing is in a large, easily readable font on six systems to a page. The original note groupings have been retained, although I did notice that the short-long dotted rhythms of the opening of the sarabanda in no. 9 have been reversed. The introduction gives a good general overview of the fortepiano, of the sonatas themselves and of the frequently dissonant chordal style employed, a feature seen in earlier Tuscan pieces as well as in those by Alessandro Scarlatti. This new edition makes these attractive pieces available in a modern edition for those who do not wish to purchase facsimile editions.

Work: Mozart, Piano Sonata in F, K.280 (HN 1040), Piano Sonata in B-Flat K.281 (HN 1053), and Piano Sonata in F Major K.533/494 (HN 1041)
Editor: Ernst Hertrich
Publisher: Henle Verlag
Reviewed by Steven Devine

Of the three Sonatas presented here in individual copies, two (K.280 and K.281) are from 1775 and are part of a set of six and the other, K. 533/494, is from 1786.

Format: the sonatas are presented in Henle's standard "portrait" format with about four pages of preface (in German, English and French) and music of between 15 and 20 pages long. These copies are clearly designed to be used for performance, as opposed to study, and are light and practical to fit on a music desk of a modern piano. It would be very helpful if publishers would revert to a "landscape" publication of such music – the copies would be much more practical on fortepiano music desks.

Editorial policy: "Urtext" is printed in bold on the cover, though this does not appear on the inside title page. Instead are printed the names of the editor, Ernst Herttrich, and the person who created the prolific fingering, Hans-Martin Theopold. The preface is very informative and full of relevant and fascinating information. There is no critical commentary; this has to be downloaded from Henle's website. In the case of K533/494, no mention is made of any editions consulted or used, other than the original version of the rondo, K494, being modified and used as the last movement to an existing Allegro and Andante (K533).

For the sonatas K280 and K281, a Breitkopf edition of 1799 is dismissed as having "very little value" and the almost complete extant autographs are "the most important sources", which strikes me as slightly too obvious to need writing! It is rather difficult to establish what the editor was hoping to create: was it Mozart's final, most "authoritative" version or simply an amalgam of all the available material? The latter seems the most likely and therefore contradicts the "Urtext" marking on the cover.

The numerous fingerings are "modern" in that there are numerous instances of needing to turn the hand – a device that most sources of the period advise against. Why do modern editors feel that pianists of any stylistic persuasion need such markings? Players of the modern instrument will no doubt devise their own fingering; most modern teaching advocates an individual style which will differ from that printed. Players of the historic instrument will, by default, ignore printed fingering, leaving almost nobody benefitting from this editorial intervention. Would it be impossible to produce an edition of piano music without any added fingering?

Less contentious, though equally worthy of comment, is Henle's editorial policy of marking added slurs, for example, with small brackets. As the player reads the music at playing speed, the brackets

are all but invisible and so the player sees the slurs as original. This means that the music has to be "backward" edited by the player in order to see what the composer intended. If the slur/tie/staccato mark is clearly missing as the result of a scribe's oversight, then it would be worth reproducing the mark in normal text with a mention in the critical commentary.

One final point – cost. The complete sonatas are not that expensive – it surely is not good value for money to buy individual copies. Why would anyone choose this?

Piano Concerto in C, K.503 (HN 825) – piano reduction – ed. Ernst Herttrich/ Andras Schiff.

Many of the points raised above with regard to editorial policy hold true here, with the added complication of the "celebrity editor". I have discussed in previous reviews the parallels with 19th-century editions of baroque and classical works edited by Busoni, Thalberg and Liszt (amongst many others) complete with many of their "improvements" to accord with contemporary taste. These are fascinating period pieces of reception history worthy of study in their own right now. However, there was never any question whether this was what the original composers intended or expected. Therefore, they were not marked Urtext. The present travesty of an Urtext edition has completely inauthentic modern fingering – no contemporary fingering advocates turning the whole hand to create a legato arpeggio (3rd movement, b. 281); indeed a number of sources explicitly state that right-hand scalic and arpeggiated passage-work is always started from the thumb (ascending) or little finger (descending) in order to create shaped and articulated figures, rather than smooth legato ones. If this latter is desired, can this not be taught rather than imposed? Under these circumstances, I was surprised not to see pedal markings!

We should be grateful that the editors embrace the concept of ornamentation, but the suggestions, one each in the second and third movements printed as separate staves (footnote in the second movements and above the line in the third) fall down in their banality and in the whole idea of enhancing the phrase's rhetoric. The first movement also contains an overblown and pretentious cadenza featuring a quote from *La Nozze di Figaro.* I dread the day I hear someone reproduce this exactly in public (though I would imagine Mr Schiff plays it beautifully as he is a very fine modern pianist). I just don't want to buy a score of Mozart and see Mr. Schiff's interpretations on the page.

BOOKS

Author: Colin Booth
Title: Did Bach Really Mean That? Deceptive notation in Baroque keyboard music
Publisher: in collaboration between Mark Argent and Soundboard (2010)
Reviewed by John O'Donnell

A curious title, and a no less curious subtitle. Did Bach really mean what? One would argue that Bach wrote what he meant and meant what he wrote. One would argue the same of Josquin, of the composers of the Notre Dame School and of the copyists of the Mozarabic liturgies. The fact that we still struggle to know what accidentals were sung by Josquin's contemporaries, that Notre Dame rhythmic notation remains a debated area, and that we are currently unable to decipher the notation of Mozarabic chant is another matter. One would further argue that

Bach's notation, far from being deceptive, often offers insights into interpretation — but that is beyond the task at hand.

The book examines notational conventions (mainly rhythmic) over a period of centuries: the earliest and latest dated music examples are from 1551 and 1908 respectively, between which extremes excerpts from major composers from Byrd to Brahms are quoted. The writer is also a well-known performer, and the content of the volume is essentially a series of glimpses into his working methods as an interpreter. As such it is often valuable. There is minimum reference to source material and avoidance of recent polemics. At times old ground has been gone over yet again seemingly unnecessarily, as in the contrary teachings of Quantz (1752) and C. P. E. Bach (1753) on the performance of dotted rhythms against triplets, easily dealt with by quoting Agricola's resolution of the matter (1769).

But confusion is also created where no confusion need exist. For example, on page 44, rhythmic alteration of an excerpt of Frescobaldi's *Capriccio sopra La Spagnoletta* is proposed on the grounds that "there was no ideal notational alternative available to Frescobaldi" to indicate the version that the writer finds desirable. This is simply not the case: Frescobaldi would have been able to notate the piece in the way that Booth suggests, had he so desired.

Similarly, on page 69, Bach's Fugue in E Minor BWV 879/2, whose time signature is a barred C (colloquially, cut-common), is re-written in 12/8 time following C. P. E. Bach's suggestion that some pieces with triplets written in 4/4 time could with greater convenience be notated in 12/8 time. In rewriting the passage Booth also takes the liberty of altering rhythmically the semiquaver *circulatio* figures, on the grounds that they "may also be treated flexibly, under the influence of the triplet movement".

There are many problems here, foremost of which is that the piece was not in 4/4 to begin with. Secondly, we have no reason to suspect that this is the sort of movement to which C. P. E. Bach was referring. And thirdly, the alteration of four semiquavers to a quaver rest followed by four semiquavers is as unnecessary as it is unwarranted.

In response to this, one cannot resist quoting a passage from Kirnberger's *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik*. Bach's former pupil is discussing the 9/8 metre: "One errs if one thinks that this metre is the same as a 3/4 metre with triplets: anyone who has only a fair grasp of performance knows that triplets in 3/4 metre are performed differently from quavers in 9/8 metre. The former are performed quite lightly and without the least stress on the last note, the latter more heavily and with some stress on the last note. The former never, or at least seldom, carry a change of harmony on the last note, the latter very often. The former permit no broken semiquaver movement, but the latter quite easily. Were both metres not differentiated from one another by particular qualities, then all gigues in 6/8 could also be set in 2/4, 12/8 would be a C metre, 6/8 a 2/4 metre..." This is food for thought.

For this reviewer, the last three chapters of the book — "Note-Groups, Flourishes, and Trills", "Inconsistency of Notation", and "The Single-note Ornament" — proved to be the most valuable. In these areas, particularly, so much relies on good taste and common sense, and Booth leaves us in no doubt that he possesses both in abundant quantities.

Author: Kenneth Hamilton
Title: After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance
Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2008
Reviewed by Richard Troeger

Anyone who has ever wondered about the peculiar unanimity in the modern concert world, and in mainstream pianism in particular, will find much of interest, and pure gratification, in this well-written and vivacious study of earlier approaches to piano performance.

"What lesson can the historical record teach us that might be applied to modern performance? This book attempts to answer these questions by tracing traditions of piano playing and concert programming from the early romantic era to the early twentieth century, from Chopin and Liszt to Paderewski and Busoni." Thus writes the author in his Preface (p. x). Through eight chapters, he traces, often by means of copious illustrations and anecdotes, several factors in which modern concert behaviour and expectations are different (or radically different) from those of the first generations of what is generally understood by "modern piano playing."

Following a general account of the subject in the first chapter, the next five chapters discuss aspects of the solo piano recital; playing from memory and concert etiquette regarding applause; improvising preludes to pieces played in concert; the frequently adduced "singing tone" of the great Romantic pianists; and the widely differing attitudes between "Then" and "Now" regarding the sanctity of the printed score. A final chapter, "Postlude: Post-Liszt," returns to consideration of the general subject, centring at last on whether the "fundamental question might be: is the composer's voice the only one worth listening to when devising performance approaches?" The chapter and book end with a plea for a more liberal attitude toward what is accepted in modern playing and programming.

This is of course an enormous subject, and Mr. Hamilton has done well to focus this most interesting book as he has. (I could hope for a sequel, in which he treats other aspects of the topic in similar detail: more on actual playing style and less on concert programming etc. Particularly lacking in the present effort is consideration of musical characterization and the programmatic element; and agogics. However, the book as it stands is a well-balanced entity.) His writing is clear, full of information, and yet conversational and engaging. His sense of humour is also evident, as is a sense of proportion. The book never falls into rant, although he clearly feels strongly about some of the topics. Indeed, open the book anywhere and something of interest will catch the reader's eye.

A chapter that might be of particular interest to players of the harpsichord and clavichord, as well as early and modern piano, is that on "A Singing Tone." The author points out that the modern practice of playing chordal members with absolute simultaneity is of 20th-century origin, probably due to Busoni's influence; and he shows that arpeggiation of various kinds and degrees was typical of 19th-century playing. It was also typical of many early 20th-century pianists, as collectors of historical recordings can readily attest. Neither arpeggiation nor asynchronization (often referred to as broken hands or fringing, or "suspension" à la Couperin) were foreign to 19th-century playing. Doubtless even some of today's Liszt specialists would blench to hear the great man himself play his own music. Hamilton points to the modern conservatory addiction to confining

arpeggiation to chords specifically adorned with an arpeggiation sign. This tendency is very real (as is every point covered in the book); and readers of this journal will doubtless have encountered it.

I recall a brilliantly talented piano student (also a fine harpsichordist) in a prominent music school breaking a chord in a Mozart Sonata and promptly being asked why by the (also prominent) piano teacher. Said student replied that it was common with the harpsichord and early piano. The teacher went into a tirade, calling the fortepiano by about 20 opprobrious terms and exclaiming that what might have been appropriate to it is irrelevant to the glorious modern improvement on it, etc., etc. Somehow this was supposed to justify limiting arpeggios to those specified in the score; but of course, it only displayed prejudice, ignorance, and insecurity. Mr. Hamilton's expressed hope for a widened tonal palette is right, both historically and musically.

I might add that modern orchestral practices have also scrubbed away many expressive features of earlier generations of playing style. The situation is entirely analogous to robbing the essentially monochromatic piano of several devices of expression, such as asynchronicity. And of course, those who are familiar with historical recordings and with, also, the vital relationship between infinitely varied arpeggiation and asynchronization on the harpsichord and clavichord, are also aware that post-World War II pianism is out of step with most of keyboard history.

There is unfortunately very little attention specific to the fortepiano, although the author certainly notes that the piano was evolving rapidly through the nineteenth century, and he does realize that some effects are more apt on earlier instruments than on the modern grand.

So-called Urtext editions receive considerable mention. Hamilton's various points about period approaches to performance being reflected in "practical" editions by 19th-century performers are worthwhile, as are his sometimes captious comments on modern-day laziness about editions. In fact, one encounters plain downright obliviousness in what should be unlikely quarters. I know of a doctoral candidate in piano performance who used the Busoni edition of Book 1 of the Well-Tempered Clavier without even realizing that the often copious markings were editorial. "You mean those marks aren't by Bach?" Even the concept of a so-called Urtext versus performing edition was news to this player; and to a good proportion of that department, in fact. How this kind of situation can be remedied, however, is the question, and even if von Bülow could return today to cleanse the conservatories with his acid wit and, doubtless, a broom, one wonders if even he could prevail.

In any case, Hamilton places, for my taste, perhaps a little too much emphasis on the "sterility" supposedly associated with careful playing from the "Urtext." It is of course false to expect that a good edition based on the sources will necessarily inhibit freedom of musical expression. However, his comments may well reflect the degree to which he has found student players rely on editorial crutches —to say nothing of addiction to recordings, while usually avoiding anything that smacks of the "historical."

We must all thank Mr. Hamilton for a book that is a major part of the ongoing conversation about historical versus modern performance tendencies.

Author: Enrico Baiano
Title: Method for the Harpsichord
Publisher: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2009
Reviewed by Charlene Brendler

Enrico Baiano's *Method for the Harpsichord* aims to provide a series of tools for aspiring early keyboard players, to "help them perfect their technical, analytical, expressive and interpretative skills." Written for intermediate to advanced pianists and organists, the book attempts to "take them by the hand" in learning to play earlier keyboards. This is a tall order, and Mr. Baiano fills 221 pages with comments, suggestions and musical examples to encourage the player to approach the score autonomously. The well-known historical keyboard sources are deliberately omitted, as they are deemed too general for the *Method's* careful and detailed approach.

The well-intended, conscientious descriptions of the physical playing of the harpsichord are both thorough and lengthy. The first nine chapters present musical materials and "tools" in a logical and orderly way. Verbiage can be paralyzing, however, and reading about the minutia involved in physical motions to produce particular sounds can make one weary. Previous exposure to the harpsichord would make comprehending the discussions easier. One longs for a teacher's demonstration to replace some of the descriptions. Why not provide a DVD with the book to illustrate what the words so valiantly describe?

Viewing motions and hearing sonorities together can be beneficial, helping to clarify difficult points. The author himself comments on study being more fruitful with a teacher. Here the student must read and absorb a great deal, and then translate it into sound. Thankfully, the musical etudes and compositions (not unlike those the former keyboard giants Couperin, Czerny, and Cortot offered) illuminate and provide practice for a technical movement, thus softening this mental and academic approach to music making. The Forward in Chapter Ten restates the author's intent. This is welcome, as the relationship of words to sonorities and the methods to create them are challenging in the best of circumstances. What follows is basic information about performance issues, such as hemiola, articulation patterns, and treatment of ties, ornaments, notes inégales, agogic accents, etc.

The major strength of this book lies in its providing well chosen musical examples from Renaissance and Baroque literature, along with the author's own composed *etudes* sprinkled through out. Such a resource is a joy to a teacher scrambling for appropriate examples to nourish students. The student gains by having a ready made compendium of technical exercises and repertoire related to the particular challenge at hand. Representative composers include Bull, Tallis, Gibbons, Handel, Scarlatti, and the Bach family. Others are not household names. One criticism is that at a minimum, including dates for composers would put them and the music into a historical context. Chapter Four, which deals with scale fingerings, doesn't even mention the word Renaissance or Baroque. One could be left with the impression that there was no change for 250 years!

That aside, the *Method* is a useful contribution to early keyboard study for teachers and students alike. One may not agree with all of Mr. Baiano's ideas, but the general scope of information is well thought out, and the plethora of examples is most welcome.