

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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REVIEWS

RECORDINGS

Title: Joseph Haydn *Witz und Humour: Dernières Sonates et Variations*
Performer: Mathieu Dupouy
Recording Company: Herrison, 2012
Reviewed by Charlene Brendler

Haydn's finest solo fortepiano works are the late sonatas and the F Minor variations. These pieces are full of unexpected emotional content and require a more challenging technique than the earlier works. Special musical qualities that the fortepiano delivers best are spotlighted in this music, including a quick decay, clarity in the bass, releases that shape a phrase, and special pedal effects. This disc features French harpsichordist/ fortepianist Matthew Dupouy performing on a slightly extended five-octave Jakob Weimes instrument from Prague, c1807. The instrument has some historically forward-sounding characteristics of the larger resonant and triple strung instruments that usher in the romantic style. Although the instrument sounds "tubby" (perhaps because of the recording location, or the technician's choices), its tone is sufficiently clear, yet complex enough to serve both Haydn's late works and Beethoven's oeuvre. Perhaps its best features are heard on the last track, where Dupouy beautifully delivers the theme and variations on *Gott erhalte*.

Dupouy delivers a flawless—if not always engaging—performance with his technical command of the music. In the C Major Sonata, Dupouy's timing makes the famous "open pedal" section genuinely special and it sets the section off beautifully. His rendering of the E-Flat Sonata also has moments of playfulness,

effectively serving the music's intent. At other times, though, virtuosity interferes with the implied wit and the humour is lost; this inconsistency was disappointing. The ability to make dynamic variation was one of the endearing qualities of the "new" fortepiano. A well leathered instrument provides a responsive dynamic range from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo*, and it is the player's job to discover these dynamic boundaries—and exploit them—all the while maintaining good tone quality. Dupouy proves himself capable of lovely *pianissimo* effects, though not often delivered as often or played as carefully as expected. Dynamic contrasts suffer. In fact, a harsh and pushed *forte* is frequently heard instead, causing the listener to miss the other end of the dynamic spectrum. Neither the music nor the piano gains from a boisterous approach. Additionally, the effect of *sfz*, the dynamic nudge so particular to the fortepiano (and not available on the modern piano) is poorly experienced in this recording due to the generally loud dynamics.

Beautiful tone quality is heard intermittently throughout the disc. The expressive unevenness in both the C Major Sonata and the F Minor Variations is disconcerting and surprising. (Dupouy is very responsive to expressive demands in his CPE recordings of the fantasies.) The F Minor Variations especially suffer from lack of involvement. This is disappointing, as the work is emotionally extravagant for Haydn and its deeper qualities go uncommunicated. Opportunities to be more *interior* and to use expressive colours and tonal nuances are infrequently taken. An ornament can be relished or just executed and a special harmony

can bloom with inflected content, or not. Dupouy's expressive "default" is more often a poorly placed *ritardando* or a rhythmic hesitation that breaks the line.

These are important works which deserve the careful consideration heard in this performance. However, more consistent tonal expressiveness and dynamic variety could have made this a great recording instead of an uneven one.

Title: Barocco da Sud a Nord: Italian roots of the German Baroque.

Performer: Francesco Cera, organ

Recording Company: Tactus TC 580001

TT. 63.35

Reviewed by Douglas Hollick

This is an interesting idea for a programme, and within the constraints of the works chosen is very successful. Works by Frescobaldi, Bernardo Pasquini, Zipoli, Georg Muffat, Vivaldi/Bach, Buxtehude and Bach are played on three different organs, all in Rieti. For the Frescobaldi, Pasquini and Zipoli, Cera uses an Italian organ of 1720 by Catarinozzi, for the Muffat an instrument by Austrian organ maker Werle of 1759, and for the remaining works a new instrument based on Schnitger in North German style by Fratelli Pinchi, 2011.

Frescobaldi's *Toccata Ottava* from the first set of 1615 is given dramatic opening and closing sections on a bright principal chorus, with a contrasting single principal 8' in the central section. Dramatic and rhetorical moments in the music are well managed, with clear ornamentation and passage work. Pasquini's *Variazioni capricciose* demonstrate many smaller registrations, and show how such a relatively small single manual organ can provide great variety of colour. Zipoli's Elevation Toccata uses the *Voce Umana* – not a reed in Italian organs, but rather a second treble

rank of principal pipes tuned to beat with the main principal, giving a shimmering, undulating sound; the quarter comma meantone tuning gives further colouration.

Muffat's *Toccata Prima* from his *Apparatus Musicus Organisticus* of 1690 uses the second organ. Here the many changes of colour for the different sections of the work call for rapid stop changes (the organ is again single manual) which sometimes cause very audible bangs. Fine in a live concert, but I wonder if someone could have helped to do these rather more quietly? Nevertheless, this is fine playing of this very improvisatory style of music.

The remainder of the disc is played on the organ based on Schnitger, a two manual with *Hauptwerk*, *Rückpositiv* and *Pedal*. It's a fine instrument and acoustic, and the sixth comma tuning works well. The Vivaldi/Bach concerto arrangement is one of a number which can be played on either harpsichord or organ. The slow movement with thick chords may suggest harpsichord, but the sparkle and colour of the first movement is particularly convincing on organ. A nicely judged performance of Buxtehude's *Passacaglia* follows.

Cera suggests that the four sections of this work may represent the elements. (Dutch organist Piet Kee's convincing research suggesting that this work is in fact based on the phases of the moon is not mentioned.) Cera's assertion in the sleeve notes that Italian influence only reached Lübeck (where Buxtehude was organist from 1668) in the 1680s is far too late. Kaspar Förster was in Rome studying with Carissimi in 1633, and then went back a few years later to North Germany and Scandinavia, and Froberger also studied in Italy before bringing ideas to the north; in fact he is also linked with

his Dresden colleague Weckmann, who was in Hamburg from 1655.

Finally two works by Bach – a small chorale prelude on *Liebster Jesu* with a wonderfully ornate and undoubtedly Italianate upper voice, and the great D Minor Toccata and Fugue BWV 538, which was almost certainly inspired by North German organ music. The Toccata has rare authenticated manual changes, here for *Oberwerk* and *Positiv*, probably relating to the organ at Weimar. Cera's performance of this major work is disappointing. The Toccata is too fast, making the detail and complex manual changes less clear than they should be, whilst the Fugue is too slow (and unstable) to give the momentum it requires. Cera begins the Fugue on just principals, and there are then two successive changes of registration towards the end, but these seem contrived within a work which is essentially one continuous movement. Apart from rare specific indications, the only registration ever mentioned for the big preludes, toccatas and fugues is the "*Organo Pleno*", or full choruses with or without reeds.

A shame that the Bach playing is not of the same high standard as the remainder of this disc, as the juxtaposition of music is very interesting. However despite my misgivings about the Bach, this is a recording which organ enthusiasts will certainly enjoy.

Title: Daniel Gottlob Türk,
Keyboard Sonatas. Double CD
Performer: Michael Tsalka,
Clavichord, spinet, harpsichord,
fortepiano and tangent-piano
Recording Company: Grand
Piano GP627/8, recorded 2010
Reviewed by Paul Simmonds

Türk is mostly known through a handful of introductory pieces for beginner pianists. These originate in two graded sets of 60 pieces each which were intended to be studied in tandem with Türk's *Klavierschule* of 1789. This treatise is the most lucid and, next to CPE Bach's treatise of 1753, one of the most important sources of keyboard interpretation of the time. In common with Bach, Türk was no "mere" pedagogue and published eight sets of six sonatas between 1776 and 1790. These sonatas, typical of the time in many respects, and more interesting than the output some of his contemporaries, have not deserved the obscurity which they have endured until now.

Michael Tsalka, whose interest in Türk's music goes back a number of years, clearly feels the same. On this double CD set he presents the first two published sets of sonatas, from 1776 and 1777. Although designated "*für das Clavier*", then almost synonymous with clavichord, the composer would not have excluded many of the other 19 keyboard instruments listed in the introduction to his treatise.

Tsalka uses clavichord, spinet, harpsichord, fortepiano and tangent piano, and matches the characters of the sonatas well to his chosen media. All are originals from the National Music Museum, Vermillion, USA. They have been well recorded and are clearly in optimal playing condition, a tribute to their curator and restorer Dr. John Koster, who tuned them for the recording.

Tsalka is working on a new edition of the sonatas, and has accordingly been examining all available sources. He has rightly ignored manuscript copies in favour of the first printed editions and the later revised and corrected editions supervised by the composer. The recorded versions presumably take into account the decisions made during this process.

Tsalka's readings deviate from the sources at my disposal (respectively the first editions of 1776 and 1777) in small details of rhythm and pitch, probably taking the later revised editions into account. That three bars have been omitted from near the end of the *Largo* of the second 1776 Sonata I find more difficult to account for, as the version in my first edition, incorporating a delightful interrupted cadence is, in my opinion, better, and I find it hard to believe that Türk would have made such a radical change after one year of publication. No doubt this will be clarified when the new edition appears.

In his notes to the recordings Tsalka rightly emphasises the importance of Türk's treatise of 1789, which gives clear and detailed instructions on the correct and stylistic performance of these sonatas, and indeed those of his contemporaries. All the more surprising, therefore, that Tsalka has chosen to ignore most of the instructions on executing the essential ornaments. Most of his ornaments (*appoggiaturas*, trills) are played before the beat, and one of the most characteristic ones, the trilled turn (*Prallende Doppelschlag*) is rarely executed or is replaced with a simple trill. Some quite agonised distortions of the melodic line are the unfortunate result. It is akin to someone speaking a foreign language with the accents misplaced. This is a great pity, as the recordings contain some otherwise enjoyable playing. I do hope that if this is the first of a projected complete recording of Türk's sonatas, Tsalka spends more time with the composer's treatise before returning to the studio.

The Cds make the claim of "world premiere recordings" which is probably justified (with the exception of the fifth 1776 Sonata which is still available in a recording of 1995) and as such

fulfil the very welcome function of introducing listeners to the output of a much neglected composer.

**Title: Franz Schubert,
Sonatas & Dances,**

Performer: Marcia Hadjimarkos

Recording Company: Arabesque Z6830

Reviewed by Charlene Brendler

There is much to commend in this fortepiano recording. The playing delivers Schubert's extroverted grandeur, light-hearted delight, and gentle melodies with Viennese grace and charm.

The central work is the virtuosic and technically demanding D Major Sonata D850, full of repetitive passagework that demands vision to deliver. Surrounding the Sonata are two sets of Dances: The 16 German Dances, D783, and the Six German Dances, D820. The lovely and appropriate fortepiano is a replica by Christopher Clarke of an 1814 Viennese model by Anton Fritz. Schubert provides ample opportunity to show off the clear, resonant treble register and beautiful tone, often rare in pianos of this era. The instrument comes to the party complete with its rhythm section options of bassoon, drum, cymbal and bell!

The accompanying notes are poetically delivered, with many cross-references that reflect comprehensive reading and thought. Specific descriptions and details of form are absent, in favour of describing the shifting musical moods and emotions in the music. This is refreshing to those not wanting or needing excessive technical explanation.

Hadjimarkos is a facile and exuberant player who knows her instrument well. She chooses to use the Janissary sounds quite early in the recording (b. 2). Employment of these special "stops" is at the player's discretion, and we are treated to the

drum and cymbal to emphasize a *sforzando* within a double forte. This immediately challenges the listener's sensibilities (as well as the player's co-ordination of hands and feet). The shorter set of German Dances —played with a sensitive approach and lovely spirit — might have been a preferable opening.

The more delicate dances are to be savoured. Beautiful sonorities that caress the ear are created with damper, *due corde*, and moderator pedals. One hears lovely phrased arcs in dances 10 and 13. However, other dances sound forced. In the longer set of 16 dances, D783, it might have been effective to group dances by character, contrast, or key, rather than presenting them de-facto.

Hadjimarkos plays shimmering triplets in the brilliant and dramatic first movement of the Sonata, but sometimes the passagework is mechanical; it is difficult to maintain the magic with so many notes at that tempo and without some gestural freedom. Pianistically, her releases allow space, and the chords are beautifully shaped, with a precise left hand adding clarity. However, the rhythmic reading of the opening to the second movement undermines the sense of four and eight bar phrases. This is fortunately remedied in the re-cap before the coda. Overall, dynamics are enthusiastically loud and dynamic range is left wanting, with the soft pedal or moderator being called upon for dynamic change, rather than colour or inflection from the fingers. This is problematic throughout the recording. Perhaps it is a problem caused by the engineering or microphone placement; the bass register generally sounds muffled and unclear.

The highlight of the sonata is the *Scherzo* movement, which opens with just the right tempo for the wonderfully energetic rhythms. Dynamic and sectional

contrasts, harmonic emphasis, and sense of timing are also convincing. The spontaneous, "just created" sense is at its strongest here as well. One wants the same to be consistently present in all movements. Overall, this is a valuable recording that represents the sensibilities of Schubert's music, played on an instrument reflecting the Viennese tonal ideals of the times, by a fortepianist sympathetic to the parameters of the genre.

SCORES

Work: Donato Cimino (Naples 1675),
Toccate per Organo di varj Autori
Volumes I and II of four
Editor: Jolanda Scarpa
Publisher: Edition Walhall, Frutti
Musicali EW 767 & 772
Reviewed by Douglas Hollick

These volumes present the contents of a 17th-century manuscript *Toccate per Organo di varj Autori Anno 1675 Miscellanea del Sig. Donato Cimino*, held at the Biblioteca del Conservatorio in Naples. Little is known about the compiler, and there has been much debate over whether he was the composer of all the anonymous works, or simply the copyist.

The Preface, in German, English and Italian, is common to both these first two volumes (so I assume common to all four); surprisingly, there is no critical commentary. The first two volumes have no attributions linked to individual works, so I assume they are all anonymous. Although some of these are discussed, it would have been much better to have a general preface repeated for all the volumes, with an individual, more detailed one for each volume. The composers given in a list from a later date are Cimino, Boerio, Giovanni Salvatore,

Frescobaldi, Giovanni De Macque, Giacinto Ansalone and Ercole Pasquini.

The rather less than scholarly approach seems to have also made its way into the musical texts. Under “editorial criteria” it states that obvious errors have been corrected and indicated in the score. So what is one to make of a chord made up of F-natural, B-natural, C#, F# found in bar 71 of *Maestà* in volume 2? And there are plenty of other similar examples of impossible chords or voice leading – in the same piece a cadence in E has an F-natural clearly and specifically marked as part of the dominant chord of B Major! These may very well be original but then this would indicate that “obvious errors” have been not been corrected!

Whilst organ is the most obvious instrument for much of the music – for instance where there are long held bass notes requiring organ pedals – there is much here which will work admirably on the harpsichord. Indeed, one of the characteristics of much of the music is the use of block chords which sometimes do not have particularly elegant voice leading, and this works better on the less sustaining sound of a harpsichord (particularly the Italian instruments of this period). In the anonymous pieces, handling of voice parts does suggest to me an amateur, and certainly could not have been written by any of the composers of note whose music appears in the collection – the infelicities of musical grammar are too great to have simply been copyists’ errors.

A pity that the presentation is not more rigorous, as there is much of interest here to further our knowledge of Neapolitan keyboard music. The print is nice and clear, and for anyone with a particular interest in Italian keyboard music of this period it will give a perspective on southern Italian practices.

Work: Handel’s celebrated “Oboe” Concertos. An anonymous late 18th century adaptation for Organ, Harpsichord or Piano Forte of Handel’s Six Concerti Grossi op. 3
Editor: Gerald Gifford
Publisher: Edition HH, HH288.SOL
Reviewed by John Collins

This is the first modern edition of these arrangements for keyboard of Handel’s six oboe concertos, the primary source for which is the Samuel Butler Collection of St. John’s College, Cambridge. Arrangements of vocal and chamber music have long been staples of keyboard repertoire; in England there was a particular vogue for arranging Handel’s music, from William Babel c1715 right through W. Callcot’s late 19th-century editions.

After Walsh, one of the most prolific publishers of Handel arrangements was H. Wright, who produced not only a collection of the choruses and opera / oratorio overtures but also these arrangements of the oboe concertos, possibly published c1785. Interestingly no. 1 in B-Flat Major concludes in G Minor, and in no. 6 the opening *allegro* is in D Major, the second and concluding movement in the tonic minor. No. 4 opens with a massive French overture, the opening with its florid runs is followed by a fugal central movement with a syncopated subject, the movement concluding with a return to the style of the opening. No. 5 opens with a prelude and fugue, which also appear in other keyboard adaptations of Handel works. The Gavotte-like movements that conclude concertos no. 2 and 5 are most attractive.

The allegros and vivaces are full of Italianate vitality and exuberance, the slow movements displaying a controlled warmth. Two of the allegros are based

on fugues that had appeared in the 1735 Walsh publication of *Six Fugues or Voluntaries* for the organ or harpsichord, but a close comparison of these with the versions included in the collection under review will be rewarding.

Other movements are also to be found in the set of Eight Suites for Harpsichord published c1720; the fugal allegro of concerto no. 5 (here transposed from F# Minor to D Minor) is a reworking of the third movement of the sixth suite. The binary form *allegro* in D Minor that concludes concerto no. 6 is a revised version of the last movement of the third suite; again, comparison with the originals will prove interesting.

A few movements were supplied with a figured bass in the original print, faithfully reproduced in this modern edition, but filling out the already well-realised texture is largely unnecessary. Dynamics occur occasionally, mainly in the second concerto, and are almost certainly just a nod to the expressive potential of the fortepiano.

As we have come to expect from Edition HH, the printing is very clearly laid out. There is an informative preface which is essential reading prior to actually playing the music; the singularly comprehensive textual notes covering editorial method and sources, and a full critical commentary will also assist the performer interpreting difficult passages. Several facsimile pages are included.

Although we have no concrete information as to the arranger's identity, these arrangements were probably made by a performer of some standing, and the imaginatively enterprising results display a far more accomplished awareness of the keyboard than some of the other contemporary publications of Handel's pieces. These pieces are technically demanding, with several

tricky handshifts and jumps, and some of the semiquaver passages in thirds, and especially those in sixths, will pose a considerable challenge; Dr. Gifford's eminently practical suggestions for performance of these are a bonus.

The suggested elaboration of the slow movement in Concerto 3 is extremely helpful; similar suggestions for other *adagio* passages would have been equally useful to those performers who are new to gracing them. These works are ideally suited to performance on organ, harpsichord and fortepiano and fully deserve to be heard today in recitals.

BOOKS

Author: John R. Shannon
Title: The Evolution of Organ Music in the 17th Century: A Study of European Styles
Publishers: McFarland & Company, Inc., S/B 2012
Reviewed by Douglas Hollick

This book has the laudable aim of tracing the development of organ music during the seventeenth century, and is an updated version of Shannon's original book of 1978. The author states, "In the earlier version of this book I studiously avoided a discussion of the organs appropriate to the literature. In this version, I have reversed myself. Each chapter contains a short discussion and at least one specification of a representative organ for that national style." As one might expect of such a second edition, much is the same, whilst much has been completely rewritten. The biggest difference is the inclusion of a new chapter on Iberian organ music, contributed by an expert in this field, Dr. André Lash.

The book contains seven chapters: Organ Music in the Late Renaissance; Italy; France; England; The Iberian Peninsula; The Netherlands and North Germany; South and Middle Germany; an Appendix on the notation of 17th-century keyboard music; plus a Glossary, Chapter Notes, Bibliography and Index. Each chapter is headed by a list of representative composers whose music is discussed, together with their dates. There are copious music examples throughout the book, and the printing quality is generally good – although somehow the lower two lines of a music example stave have been cut off at the bottom of page 124.

This last is an unfortunate symptom of a more general lack of good proof reading – the book has dozens of mistakes which should have been picked up and corrected at some point. The worst of these are several music examples which have serious errors. On p.40, Ex. 44, Mayone's *Toccata quinta per il cimbalo cromatico* at the beginning of bar 10 has a sharp for the tenor B rather than the alto E. On p.60, Ex. 73 gives part of the opening of Rossi's *Toccata Settima* with an E-Flat Major chord instead of E Major at bar 15 (made even more confusing for the uninitiated as the text accompanying this example correctly states that the chord is E Major!). On p.108, Ex. 124, Gibbons' *Fantasia 9* gives a B-flat instead of a B-natural at bar 29. On p.239 Ex. 326 of *Murschhauser's Fuga seconda* has three bars of the bass line with the sequence a tone too low. These are the worst of the proof reading errors; these are misleading for a reader who does not already know in depth the music being discussed.

The author's change from the earlier edition to include some information about the organs is welcome, but I do wonder what potential market he is targeting, as there are few comments on questions

of performance practice, and whilst the discussion of musical style is often very interesting and important, it would be doubly so if the music discussed were to be seen in a wider context. The classification of music for organ is not always helpful, since so much of the repertoire discussed can be variously organ or harpsichord or clavichord – the dividing lines are often vague or non-existent here. This can be seen in the Mayone *Toccata* already mentioned above in connection with an error in Ex 44. Shannon says about this (very chromatic) example, "Just how such experiments could be possible in the tempered tunings of the day is an open question." The title of this work gives the answer – the *Cimbalo Cromatico* was a harpsichord with 19 keys to the octave enabling correct tuning of all tonalities. The sharps are divided back to front (as one also sees in the so called sub-semitones of some 17th-century North German organs), and a half key between B and C and between E and F. The earliest organ known which had some of these "extra" keys is that of Cesena Cathedral of 1468. The chromatic harpsichords were relatively common in Italy up to the 1640s, and I am surprised that Shannon seems unaware of this, as Christopher Stenbridge's researches in this area give all this information, and his edition of Mayone is listed in the Bibliography!

This lack of awareness also impacts on the handling of facts of musical history. Shannon states on p.199, "we should discuss two concepts, both of modern origin. Neither of these concepts, the *Stylus Phantasticus* and the *Figurenlehre* were applied to north German compositions by writers in the 17th or 18th centuries. Instead, both concepts have appeared relatively recently in attempts to define the works of this school more completely." How can he be unaware of Athanasius

Kircher's monumental and hugely influential *Musurgia universalis* of 1650, where the *Stylus Phantasticus* is discussed in book seven, part three, chapter five – Kircher doesn't even appear in the Index! – and then what about Mattheson, the great composer, singer and theorist of 18th-century Hamburg who writes about the style in his works of 1717 and 1739? Mattheson is also conspicuous by his absence. Then there is the anecdote quoted in Snyder's book on Buxtehude about the meeting of the Collegium Musicum in Bernhard's house in Hamburg in 1666, when the assembled musicians "each had eight measures to play his free improvisations, according to the *Stylo phantastico*". This book is in the Bibliography, but Paul Collins' excellent Ashgate book *The Stylus Phantasticus and Free Keyboard Music of the North German Baroque* is not, and certainly should be. *Figurenlehre* is also not a recent doctrine, as Peter Williams points out in Volume 3 of his trilogy *The Organ Music of J S Bach*, and J. G. Walther in his *Praecepta* of 1708 lists the common figures which could be used by composers for filling out long notes or setting a text appropriately.

Other significant omissions include no acknowledgement of work by Pieter Dirksen on Sweelinck and Scheidemann; no mention of the new Breitkopf edition of Sweelinck's keyboard music edited by Dirksen and Harald Vogel – this is the only edition to my knowledge which follows the original notation and beaming of groups of notes, and has a splendid article by Vogel on performance as an appendix to the volume of Toccatas; Harald Vogel is also the editor of the complete three volumes of *Scheidt's Tabulatora Nova* again published by Breitkopf, and again with important essays on the music and performance included – another first class edition not included in the Bibliography.

Had Shannon read the preface to Harald Vogel's new edition of the Bruhns organ works published by Breitkopf in 2008 (also not mentioned) he would not have made the statement on p.220 with reference to the Chorale Fantasia on *Nun komm' der Heiden Heiland*: "This composition also represents an early appearance of the vocabulary of French *agréments* in German organ literature." Vogel points out that the ornamented version comes from the Agricola MS from after 1741, and that Walther's earlier copy of around 1712 does not have the ornaments.

This book promises so much, the idea of an overview of the period is excellent, and there is much in it which deserves to be read by students and teachers alike. The chapter on Iberian organ music, for instance, is a particularly good introduction to an area of repertoire which should certainly be better known and more often performed. The Appendix on notation is very useful, and for those not familiar with tablature it gives a good guide to how this system of notation worked. However, the number of mistakes in examples and text, and the apparent lack of awareness of recent research and publications mean that, sadly, I cannot recommend this book.