

Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCAt)

REVIEWS

RECORDINGS

Title: J.S. Bach, “a 2 clav. Et pedal”: Six Trio Sonatas BWV 525-530 for two harpsichords

Performers: Emer Buckley & Jochewed Schwarz

Recording Company: CD PLUS (2012)

Reviewed by Pamela Hickman

Among Johann Sebastian Bach's extant trios of 19 trio sonatas, six are specified by Bach for “two manuals and pedal”, either to distinguish the three voices of the pieces or referring to their performance on organ, pedal harpsichord or pedal clavichord. The latter two instruments were commonly found in the homes of organists. Bach himself kept a pedal harpsichord at home, enabling him to practice organ works there. Composed 1727-1731 in Leipzig, these Trio Sonatas were used to teach composition and organ-playing to Wilhelm Friedemann Bach.

Played on the organ, the Trio Sonatas give the two melody voices to two different manuals and the basso continuo to the pedals; in first movements, the pedals mostly supply bass support, whereas in last movements they assume greater melodic involvement. The counterpoint is played mainly by the upper voices. Yet, as organ fare, these works do not especially resemble Bach's other organ repertoire in pathos, majesty and power, their grace and joy rather sounding like the traditional Baroque trio sonata. These small-scale sonatas offer some of Bach's most delicate counterpoint; they are Bach's chief works of this description, bearing the stamp of Italian music and adopting the three-movement form of the Vivaldian concerto.

So what are the advantages of playing these works on two harpsichords? With no organ registrations, other elements come to the fore. One prominent quality is tonal freshness; fast passagework can sound blurred in the acoustic of organ venues. Enhanced by Buckley and Schwarz's spirited, crystal-clean execution and internal rhythmic precision, one has a sense that the artists' aim is to present Bach's text as it is. Clean fingerwork and textural transparency are paramount in outstanding teamwork and playing that is vivid, shaped and robust.

With rhythmic flexing and ornamentation used sparingly, Buckley and Schwarz's playing is intelligent and objective, staying well clear of subjectivity and sentimentality. This line of reasoning (and natural temperament) could lead to tempi falling just short

of natural energy. Some listeners may hanker after breakneck speeds and showier playing of outer movements. This is not the performers' style. Clarity and transparency are never sacrificed for flamboyance. Take, for example, the first movement of Sonata no.1 in E-Flat Major, BWV 525. Bach gives no tempo indication here; some performers take it at a very fast pace. Buckley and Schwarz do not lose their heads; their playing is fresh and vital, energetic and well defined. In the *Largo* of Trio Sonata no.5 in C Major the artists strike a fine balance between the movement's introspection, its harmonic and melodic course and its sheer beauty. They lean into key notes and dissonances, their playing inviting the listener's ear to follow them through Bach's fascinating text.

Harpsichords used for the recording were made by Reinhard von Nagel. after a 1730 Blanchet and after a Mietke 1710. The disc, produced by Jochewed Schwarz, was recorded at the von Nagel workshop (Paris) in 2012, the result being that the sound is true, lively, intimate and unhampered. The liner notes are informative without being effusive.

Title: J.S. Bach: Six Partitas for Harpsichord (Clavier Übung 1: BWV 825 – 830)

Performer: Malcolm Proud, Harpsichord

Recording Company: Maya Recordings MCD 131

Reviewed by John Erskine

It is tempting to characterise this performance as restrained. But to do so is by no means to suggest that it is bland: the playing is skilful and the interpretations intelligent and appropriate – but subtle.

Proud lets the music speak for itself, showing his personality unobtrusively. Listening to the first track, for example, one only just notices his particular phrasing of those runs of six demi-semiquavers. Sheer technique is exemplary – with every shake executed perfectly. Admiration deepens on hearing the *Allemande*: taken at a gentle pace, but alive, the fine tone serves the music unadorned; then for the repeat, there is just enough decoration to be interesting. The *Corrente*, a movement that can become a jangle, is played here with meaning and clarity. The beautiful *Sarabande* is a test for any player: Proud passes it admirably. In the minuets he takes a “less is more” approach, holding back on decoration at first in *Menuet 2* rather than increasing it for the repeat; the little graces he adds to *Menuet 1* for the *da capo* are pleasantly inventive. The *Giga* exemplifies the clarity that communicates, not the rush that merely demonstrates.

There is grandeur too: the quasi-improvisatory style is handled with aplomb when called for. Proud can produce excitement in a context of gentleness, as in the *Tempo di Minuetta* (V). He takes a conservative line on dotting, but his approach is as valid as any. His gentle liting is attractive; triple rhythms are handled skilfully. He favours a long line, with sub-phrases lightly marked. Sometimes one might prefer more lift – but that is merely taste. Flexibility is kept subtle: just a little lengthening, fractional pausing, emphasising within a gesture – all discrete and appropriate. There is much to admire in the intelligence of the playing, such as the distinction between *corrente* and *courante*: the *Courante* to *Partita* II, for example, is played with real poise. Touch is varied, from a fine *cantabile* in an *allemande* or *sarabande*, to a decided crispness (but without offence to tone) where appropriate (as in the *rondeaux*). Proud can make sense of challenges: those idiosyncratic few bars in the *Capriccio* he gives character without exaggeration.

The instrument (a Ruckers copy) has suitably piquant and mellow registers, which are exploited tastefully. Even when runs of triplets come in both hands, the sound is generous and warm but not overwhelming. The chosen tempi remind us that Bach is music of thought as well as fingerwork: in *Partita* III, for example, after two movements whose main characteristic is liveliness, Proud holds back – and the final piece is all the more effective. Some listeners might wish for more drama, such as in the opening of the *Toccata* (VI), but the approach is convincing on its own terms. How impressive it is to hear every semiquaver in the left hand, even at the point when the right hand is also low on the keyboard. Clarity, of course, does not mean heaviness: there is delicacy too, as, for example, in the *Tempo di Gavotta*. In the final *Gigue* he follows the crotchet based character of the piece and so ends the work, and his whole performance, with appropriate dignity.

Title: *Pensées nocturnes*:

Fantasias and Sonatas by C.P.E. Bach

Performer: Mathieu Dupouy, clavichord by Martin Kather (2002) after C.G. Hubert (1787)

Recording Company: Label Hérisson LH02

Reviewed by Adrian Lenthall

Fantasia I in F (H279, Wq. 59/5), Fantasia II in C (H284, Wq. 59/6), Sonata in E minor (H106, Wq. 65/30), Sonata I in E minor (H281, Wq. 59/1), Sonata in G minor H68, Wq. 65/27), Fantasia "C.P.E. Bachs Empfindungen" (H300, Wq. 67), "Abschied von meinem Silbermannischen Claviere, in einem Rondo" (H272, Wq. 66)

The title ("Night Thoughts") of this CD is borrowed from a work of 1742-48 by the little-remembered English poet

Edward Young, whose febrile imaginative world signals the entire world of *Empfindsamkeit* within which C.P.E. Bach's keyboard works stand so tall. The sleeve notes embody a fine essay by Dupouy himself on this entire sensibility; it would be worth acquiring the CD for this alone.

Three of the works (the two fantasias which open the disc and Sonata I in E Minor) are from Bach's fifth collection "*Für Kenner und Liebhaber*" of 1785, and the disc ends with two other well known late works from the 1780s. In between come two sonatas from the 1750s – much earlier, yet already showing, in their heightened *galant* affectivity, signs of what was to come. The programme works rather better in the hearing than on paper. Bach's sensitised key relations are carried on between pieces, so that the sonatas placed either side of the central one in E Minor (and Major) serve to heighten that work: the first as an extended upbeat, and the second sleep walking into a ruminative G Minor, after the dissolution into astonishing simplicity that concludes – or doesn't – the 1785 work. Somehow the arrangement foregrounds, for me, the interrupted cadences with which Bach introduces a note of hesitancy just before the end of several of these movements.

Dupouy is at his best here in the fantasia style where the responsive flexibilities of the *empfindsamer Stil* are uppermost. He draws on an impressive control of *pianissimo* (for which credit must also be given to the excellent instrument). At times the tone sounds as if projected into the distance in a magical, whispered *lontano*. The performance and recording together present a seamless blend between the natural resonance of the instrument and that of the building (a church where, we are told, the recording was made at a temperature of 8°C: a suitably nocturnal chill, no doubt). Dupouy's continuously evolving response to the overall architecture, especially in the fantasias, stresses pre-Beethoven development rather than post-baroque recurrence. His fine and subtle articulation is fully at one with both style and instrument, and there is no hint of discomfort arising from the fretting; in one place in the second fantasia there is a stylish solution to an unavoidable fretting conflict.

Were I to quibble with playing of such accomplishment I might confess to a sense that the concluding "Farewell to my Silbermann Clavichord" is too slow to retain a rondo feel, and that some of its fortissimos sound over forced, with thumping action and an alteration in pitch. Nevertheless the change of colour which Dupouy achieves in the E Major section of this piece goes a long way to make amends for such very rare moments. And I did miss the second half repeat in the first movement of the central E Minor sonata (whose

omission cannot be justified by an overall CD length of just over 60 minutes).

This disc presents beautiful playing which embodies a profound intellectual engagement with the sensibility of the (mostly) later C.P.E. Bach, and which truly evokes the small sounds and heavy stillness of night.

Title: "Schwammerl"

Schubert, Sonata in B-Flat Major, D960,

"Moments Musicaux," Op. 94, D780

Performer: Kemp English

Recording Company: Presto, 2009

Reviewed by: Charlene Brendler

Schubert embraced the sonata form, enlarging Beethoven's model by length and adding his signature expressive and melodic genius. Schubert's sonatas evolve in highly individualistic ways and in a different direction than his Viennese counterpart. Interestingly, the last three piano sonatas of both Schubert and Beethoven are considered their greatest in this genre.

Near the end of his life, while living with his brother, Schubert finally had access to a large and well-made fortepiano. This superior instrument had a 6-½ octave compass and four pedals which encouraged his new expansiveness. His finest piano sonata, the large scale B-Flat Sonata, was inspired by this piano. Schubert was in dire circumstances, but this work reflects both personal and introspective depths.

The instrument used here is a Graf replica built by Paul Downie, New Zealand, which produces a bright sound with good register contrasts, with the additional pedals for special effects. Leather covered hammers and a light action offer the listener the opportunity to hear sounds Schubert would have recognised. Here, one can imagine Schubert's fine pianistic style in delicate as well as energetic passages.

International touring pianist Kemp English is known to be comfortable with a variety of keyboards and musical styles. This is his second fortepiano recording. English presents Schubert's most acclaimed sonata with an overall sense of integrity. His playing is not sentimental, and individual melodic lines are not exaggerated at the expense of the whole. Especially gratifying is English's treatment of silence and space, the all-important rests in the music. One has the sense that he is listening to the effect he can create with the breathing space. The power of a well-timed pause is much appreciated, as it is all too rarely heard today. Structural and phrasing clarity are important qualities this performance gives the listener, though absent here is the sense of eternal length so often associated with Schubert.

The meditative character of the initial melody unfolds as if English is in a personal conversation with the

composer and the sense of a journey being undertaken draws the listener into the music. The distant harmonic relationships and the unusual exposition in three keys are presented with an appealing sense of exploration as the meditative character unfolds.

English relies heavily on the fortepiano's moderator pedal, using it with special effectiveness in the second movement. This fortepiano, unfortunately, lacks some wanted warmth and resonance, which may be why the moderator is overused (in other movements) to compensate for the piano's basic brightness. English's capable technique gives an adequate performance of the sonata, but it is not a consistently moving experience for the listener in terms of colour and nuance.

Also included with the B-Flat sonata are the six "*Moment Musicaux*", Op.94, D780. Some of these are played pedantically, but the third *Moment* is a highlight. English delivers the music with such engaging spirit and freshness, and he effectively uses the bassoon pedal in this piece. This inspired playing continues in the fourth *Moment*, where the playful middle section is treated with a teasing coyness combined with a playful dance quality. All six deserve to have this imaginative treatment.

This ambitious recording has precision, fire and wonderful arches of sound, making it satisfying on many levels. That said, one could wish for a multi-coloured instrument that allows the performer more possibilities for nuance to bring this beautiful music to life.

SCORES

Work: Donato Cimino, *Toccate per organo di vari Autori* volume IV

Editor: Jolanda Scarpa

Publisher: Edition Walhall EW778

Reviewed by John Collins

This important manuscript was compiled by Cimino in 1675, and contains a varied selection of pieces from the early 17th-century Roman and Neapolitan schools. Venetian composers are conspicuously absent, and there are only two dances, the great majority of the pieces being contrapuntal (*Ricercars* and *Canzonas*), *Toccatas*, and or liturgical. Many of the pieces are ascribed to Cimino in the index, although these could be by Giovanni Salvatore, for whom Cimino was a copyist.

The new edition is published in four volumes, of which the fourth contains three anonymous Organ Masses, with the usual Kyrie, Gloria, Epistle, Offertory, Elevation, Agnus Dei and Postcommunion, although not every element appears in each Mass. After a *Toccat*a-like *Introito per le feste doppie* we find short versos in various forms like *canzona*, *toccat*a or simply,

very few exceeding six bars. The first Mass contains a *Toccata per l'Offertorio* followed by a Fuga, a very rare instance of such a pairing in the Italian repertoire. The first and second masses include an *Elevazione*, the first being in the rare key of F Minor, which must have been interesting in meantone, although without any of the extreme dissonances found in third volume. Other pieces include canzona-like *Doppo l'Epistola* in the first Mass, and the first Kyrie of the third Mass offers a mixture of toccata figuration, short rhythmic figures and a chordal coda. The Gloria in each Mass is followed by 10 versos, the third Mass being supplied with an additional set. The collection concludes with an exciting anonymous Toccata which presents challenges in the provision of an accurate transcription from the manuscript; a facsimile shows the disappearance and appearance of the B-Flat in the key signature. Pedals are required for a few long sustained notes, and can also be used in other places where not obviously intended.

These works offer a fascinating glimpse into what was being played in late 17th-century Naples. The edition is clearly printed with six systems per page, and has a useful introduction in English, although the description of the stops is inaccurate in its pitches; also included is a description of the 17th-century Neapolitan organ. Editorial amendments are noted in the body of the score. This collection offers much to the player prepared to look beyond the notes; there are several pieces where the player must exercise his or her own judgement in adding accidentals and, in the other volumes not reviewed here, sometimes deciding on transposition to a tone or a third from the original. Some knowledge of early registration as given in contemporary sources will enable players to select an appropriately light and transparent registration on modern instruments. The Mass settings are useful -even today- for integration into the liturgy where appropriate. Several Italian manuscripts are available in facsimile editions, but reading these offers major problems to many players; it is to be hoped that Jolando Scarpa will be able to offer some of these in critical modern editions in the future.

Works: Scarlatti, Sonata K. 9; and K.380

Editor: Bengt Johnsson; **Fingering:** Detlef Kraus

Publisher: Henle Verlag HN575 and HN 574

Reviewed by Richard Lester

"Domenico Scarlatti was without doubt, the most original keyboard composer of his time." So wrote Ralph Kirkpatrick, Scarlatti's biographer. Several editions of his 600 odd sonatas are available, and arguably the most important is possibly the *Le Pupitre* edition edited by Kenneth Gilbert, which meticulously follows

the manuscript versions that belonged to Scarlatti's patroness, Queen Maria Barbara of Spain. Between 1752 and 1757, 13 volumes containing 30 sonatas in each were copied out for the Queen. Only volume X contains four extra. To this series of volumes, two others were added numbered XIV and XV and dated 1742 and 1749. These 15 volumes were bound in red morocco and engraved in gold on the front, together with the arms of Spain and Portugal.

The Queen bequeathed these to Farinelli, the famous castrato who carried much favour at the Spanish Court. After his death in 1782, they were bequeathed to the *Biblioteca Marciana* in Venice and are known as the Venice manuscripts. In addition, a further 15 duplicate volumes were copied out mostly by the same copyist, possibly Padre Antonio Soler, and are housed in the *Biblioteca Palatina* in Parma and known as the Parma manuscripts. It is these that most reputable publishers copy, as owing to the high acid concentration in the ink of the Venice manuscripts, many are illegible.

Henle has always represented quality in the more authentic versions of composers' works; especially those from the Baroque era, with meticulous attention paid to detail in the prime sources. Four sonatas (K. 9, 151, 159, and 380) are at present available in single editions from their complete Scarlatti edition taken from the complete volumes HN 395, 451, 476 with a further fourth volume of selected sonatas. The musical text of each separate sonata is identical to those in the complete volumes. The four single sonatas in HN 574, 575, 576, and 577 have become the most popular over the years, hence their publication in this respect. At present there are no plans to publish more single editions, but printing them separately in this way does introduce performers to the imaginary and unique magic of this still underrated composer's world.

The printing is crystal clear and although marked as "piano sonatas" they are thankfully devoid of any dynamic or other editorial markings that often mar the composer's original intention. Scarlatti's own preference was probably the harpsichord, but his patroness owned many instruments including pianofortes, and many sound marvellous on the right sort of piano. Those wishing to explore the delights of Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas would do well to purchase at a modest price, these "taster" volumes from Henle.

Work: Antonio Soler, "*Fandango*", R146

Editor: Aapo Häkkinen

Publisher: Ut Orpheus Edizioni ES67

Reviewed by John Collins

Possibly far better known today than his 100+ sonatas for keyboard instruments, Soler's "*Fandango*" is an exceptionally lengthy example of this open dance which

was forbidden by the authorities for being too sensuous (lesser known examples exist by de Nebra and Marti). Its almost 500 bars of relentless variations unfolding over a set harmonic pattern embrace all manner of pyrotechnical challenges, with increasingly wide leaps and crossed hands, both passagework and single notes adding to the danger in performance – further reasons for it remaining a firm concert favourite.

Since there are already two important modern editions by Rubio and by Marvin one may well ask what this new edition by Häkkinen may offer. In his brief introduction he mentions that although the only authentic source in the *Biblioteca de Catalunya*, Barcelona, is relatively free of obvious errors, there are dozens, if, indeed, not hundreds, of textual questions a performer should consider, including details of melody and tonality, missing or inaccurate accidentals, the question of adding and subtracting bars to adhere to a balanced formal scheme, and how the pieces could actually be ended. He then cites as examples many bars which bear close scrutiny by the player. He believes it impossible to provide a critical edition, since the volume of such notes would be so immense, something also lacking in both the previously cited editions, which incorporated editorial "intervention" to a greater or lesser degree without apparent justification. Häkkinen concludes the piece with the dominant chord in bar 463 and eschews the re-statement of the opening bars concluding in the tonic which were added by Rubio.

The edition, which contains no critical notes or editorial suggestions/assistance whatsoever, is clearly printed with five systems to a page in a generous size font. Its main appeal will probably be to those players who, not being able to access the original manuscript, are nevertheless interested in seeing it in a modern typesetting to compare the original with the editorial decisions made in the older editions, and use this to determine their own text and interpretation – perhaps this will lead to new thoughts and ideas to feature in future performances of this timeless piece.

Work: Anonyme Meister, Pastorell Kindlwiegen II

Editor: Stefan Baier

Publisher: Edition Walhall EW831

Reviewed by John Collins

This selection of 23 dances is taken from an 18th-century manuscript compiled by Vincenz Schmidt in the town of Pasing, and is the second volume of pieces taken from this manuscript; although entitled *Weihnachtliche Orgelmusik*, the dances in this slim volume are ideally suited to stringed keyboard instruments, particularly where the left hand texture contains full chords. The selection comprises four Gigas (mostly in dotted rhythm), two Bourées, two Arias (the

one in 3/8 is marked *affectuosa*), a Rondeau, a March and 13 Minuets, several of which are in da capo form. Keys used are either F (15 pieces) or G.

The brief introduction and critical commentary is in German only, and makes no mention of possible interpretations of the various ornament signs used; whilst the signs for mordent and trill are clearly recognisable, the use of the horizontal dash (-) over notes will require the player to have knowledge and experience. They are attractive pieces, making few technical demands on the player, and make a worthwhile companion to the Anna Magdalena notebook.

Work: Anon: A Ground; J.S. Bach?,

Zwei Concerti BWV Anh. 151 & 152

Editor: Jörg Jacobi

Publisher: Edition Baroque eba4034 and eba4019.

Reviewed by John Collins

The first volume reviewed here presents a Ground which is in MS M21.185 now in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.. The manuscript contains a wealth of pieces from Roman composers of the post-Frescobaldi generation, keyboard suites by Draghi and Forcer and also Kuhnau's "Biblical Sonatas". A facsimile edition was edited by Alexander Silbiger for the unfortunately long out of print series of *Seventeenth Century Keyboard Music* published by Garland.

The collection was probably written by one scribe, maybe English, since the ornament signs correspond to tables in late 17th- and early 18th-century English prints. This extremely lengthy Ground is in A Major (some 438 bars) with a central section in the tonic minor, and is based on the descending tetrachord (A-G#-F#-E). It progresses smoothly with an easily flowing inventiveness, and happily bears comparison with John Blow's great essays in this field. Noteworthy are the many instances of crunchy added notes to chords (particularly seconds) as frequently found in Alessandro Scarlatti's toccatas as well as in the later sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti and Thomas Kelway. Not too demanding, this piece will provide much recreation for the players and recitalists.

The two concerti tentatively attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach are both to be found in manuscripts now in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek. Anh.151 in C Major is found in three manuscripts, only one of which can safely be dated to the second half of the eighteenth century; it has no title and only the word "Bach" written over the first movement, whereas the second manuscript has the title "Concerto by Bach for Cembalo without accompaniment".

This concerto is in five movements. The first opens

with ascending tonic triads before arpeggiated figures take over, this pattern being repeated sequentially throughout the movement. It is followed by an *Andante* with semiquaver figures against repeated quaver chords, after which follows a further *Allegro* with violinistic semiquaver figures against quavers as well as quaver movement alone. An Aria marked *Vivace* is not a melody-based movement but rather another allegro with oscillating semiquaver figures and sense of built in accelerando through decreasing note values. It is in binary form, as is the final movement headed "*La desesperade*" which is in 2/4 and makes much of arpeggiated diminished sevenths; it is reminiscent of movements in some of Graupner's suites.

The second Concerto, in G, is preserved in only one manuscript, the title stating Concerto by Bach, and is in four movements. The first movement, short and marked *Affetuoso*, opens with a figure of two demi-semiquavers, semiquaver that pervades the rest of the movement. This is followed by an *Allegro* in which semiquaver arpeggiations feature strongly. A short sarabande-like *Adagio* begins in E Minor and closes in D Major, leading into a minuet-like *Vivace* in binary form which includes quaver *Mürky* basses as well as oscillating patterns of quavers in the right hand. Jörg Jacobi has suggested some filling notes, a few of which do not lie comfortably beneath the hand. Neither concerto contains dynamic markings or indications of tutti and solo; These pieces may not have the same overall quality as the authenticated concerto arrangements by the master, but are nevertheless well worth playing and will offer fewer challenges to the technically proficient player, although nimble fingers are required for the fast movements.

The printing quality is high and the font size makes for clear reading. The concise introductions are in German only. Both these volumes are recommended for the player looking for something different.

Work: Sigismund Neukomm, Fantasie Sonata in C Minor (No 1) LM 033

Elegie Harmonique LM 035 For Piano-Forte

Publisher: LMM Press, August 2013

Reviewed by Paul Koronka

I suspect that very few of us have studied Neukomm, either his life or his works. However, both seem of interest to the historian and the pianist looking for pieces written in the early nineteenth century. Sigismund Neukomm (also known as Sigismund von Neukomm) was born in Salzburg in 1778. He was related by marriage to Michael Haydn, Joseph Haydn's brother, and studied extensively with Michael. Both were organists. Through Michael, Neukomm was introduced to Joseph and became almost his adopted son. Later

one of Mozart's sons studied with Neukomm as his fame as pianist, teacher and composer grew.

Neukomm's influence grew exponentially and it was he who gave the main address at the unveiling of the Mozart memorial in Vienna in 1842. By this time, he had conquered Vienna, St Petersburg, Paris and finally, Rio de Janeiro where he spent four happy and prosperous years. He received the *Legion d'Honneur* from King Louis XVIII, and adopted the "von" prefix to his name. In all he composed and published well over 1200 compositions encompassing piano, organ, choral, and some orchestral pieces.

These pieces under review are some of Neukomm's early compositions, particularly interesting if you have ever wondered how things progressed musically from Haydn to Mendelssohn and beyond. They are schizophrenic in a way that the earlier and later masters are not. That is not to denigrate them in the slightest, because played with care and attention they would show off any early piano to perfection. There is a wide dynamic range evident in both pieces and some bold harmonic progressions. The writing can be both thin (two part writing as in Haydn) and, in other parts, thick with heavy chords in contrast. The dynamics change quickly, often in just a few bars. There are definite shades of Haydn, Mendelssohn (Songs Without Words) and also a touch of John Field in the more reflective parts of the writing. He was evidently no genius but it is obvious that he was a craftsman. One can understand both why he was immensely popular and revered in his own time, and equally why he has largely been forgotten.

Both the Fantasie Sonata and the Elegie could give much pleasure as well as musical insight into an interesting period of development. The Fantasie Sonata was written in 1804 when Neukomm was 26. Although categorised as one of his early works, it demonstrates a maturity and boldness of style. It is not as polished as a Beethoven Sonata but it is as dynamic as any from that master when played with conviction.

The Elegie Harmonique is a slightly later work composed in 1812 on the death of a fellow composer and close friend, J.L. Dussek. Johann Dussek had an interesting personality and this perhaps explains the character of the piece. He introduced Neukomm to Talleyrand and died on the battlefield at the Battle of Saalfeld in 1806. Although there is a Marche Funebre at the end of the composition, a mixture of boisterousness interspersed with the occasional elegiac interlude characterises the rest of the piece. The many dotted rhythms, large chords and loud octave scales would show off any piano with a good sonorous tone in the bass octaves.

These editions are very clearly set out and a pleasure

to read and to handle. So clear is the layout and spacing of the musical text that one is almost tempted to believe that one could sight-read them. No editorial fingering is added or necessary. There are many suggestions for dynamics and tempi and, generally, these make sense and are not intrusive. Both volumes come with historical notes in both German and English.

Work: Carl Friedrich Christian Fasch,
Complete Keyboard Works, vol. 2-3

Editor: Christopher Hogwood

Publisher: Edition HH301-2 SOL

Reviewed by John Collins

These two volumes complete the new edition by Christopher Hogwood in three volumes of the surviving keyboard works of Fasch the younger (1736-1800), pupil and colleague of C.P.E. Bach in Hamburg. He left only a few keyboard works for posterity, since on his deathbed he asked his pupil Zelter to burn his manuscripts.

Volume two contains two further sonatas and some 16 character pieces. The sonatas, apparently never printed by Fasch's pupil Rellstab, are each in three movements, with fast virtuoso outer movements enclosing a slow, lyrical central movement. The first sonata is in the rarely encountered key of Bb Minor. The second one in C Major includes crossed hand passages, and the final movement makes much of lengthy single-note writing. Because of their difficulty, it is no surprise that these pieces lacked sufficient subscribers for a projected print.

The character pieces, 14 of which carry French-style names are nearly all bipartite, but there are also several rondeaux with varied numbers of couplets; "*La Gutsch*" is the most extended. The "*Chaconne I Corni di San Martino*" is most effective in its relatively simple writing. Far more accessible than the very demanding sonatas, these delightful pieces contain plenty of stylistic and textural variety. Most are in the light and tuneful galant style, but "*La Louise*" is written in a sharply dotted rhythm, full of *Sturm und Drang*.

Volume three contains four sets of variations: an Arietta with 14, a Minuetto with 12, an Andantino with seven and a Minuet with just four variations (the theme was also used by Kirnberger, as well as a Mlle. Grunow). The first two sets in particular contain highly demanding and varied virtuoso writing with crossed hands, sweeping arpeggios, left hand thumb pivoting, and extended figuration. The far more approachable miscellaneous works consist of a Polonaise and Trio (with much Alberti bass), a short study for the left hand which offers scarcely any technical challenge(!), a short through-composed Allegro in C and finally three marches, probably not intended as keyboard pieces since the third contains suggestions of orchestration.

A wide range of ornaments (the trill with prefix or suffix is frequently indicated) and articulation signs is used, performance of which is covered in a table in the introduction. Although there is not as wide a range of dynamic markings as in the first volume, there are further instances of widely-spaced writing and all of the pieces in these two volumes are still particularly suited to the forte piano (and clavichord). The composer's skill was attested to by several well-informed performers and writers including Burney, Kirnberger and Reichardt, and this is evidenced in several movements; however, perseverance with the trickier passages will reap dividends.

Four facsimiles are a useful addition to each volume. The printing is of the usual clarity associated with Edition HH, and includes a discussion of the pieces and an extensive critical commentary. These pieces will give much pleasure to player and listener, and most are well worthy of inclusion in recitals.

Work: Clementi, *Six Progressive Sonatinas*

Editor: Ernst-Günter Heinemann

Publisher: Henle Verlag, 2010 HN848

Reviewed by John Khouri

Clementi's Sonatinas are simply indestructible. Since their first publication in 1797, they have never been out of print and a glance at currently available editions shows at least nine. Clementi was not the first composer to write sonatinas; he was preceded into print by, among others, James Hook (1746-1827), with two sets of twelve "Sonatinos", Op 12 and 13, from 1776 and 1779 and J.L. Dussek, whose 6 Sonatinas *Pour le Forte Piano ou le Clavecin avec Accompagnement d'une Flutte*, Op. 19 appeared in 1793, published by Longman and Broderip.

Always eager to capitalise on any opportunity to make money, Clementi, had no problem selling his Six Progressive Sonatinas, for he was at this time one of the busiest and most highly paid piano teachers in London. Teaching for sometimes 16 hours a day. As these Sonatinas are succinct, well organized and fun to play, success was assured.

Henle's 2010 publication of these works is well up to their usual standard, with good quality paper, bar numbers, scholarly preface and a section commenting on variant readings and sources. Page turns are considerably placed and reading is made easy with the excellent printing. Little editorial intervention is noticed and the first edition is reproduced without added slurs or expression marks. Fingering is included, but who can complain when the fingering is Clementi's own?

However, presenting Clementi's Six Sonatinas is not quite as simple as it seems because c1813, Clementi revisited these works and revised them. There seem

to have been two reasons for this: to bring out a newly revised edition would mean a new lease of publication money as the original opus was, by this time, widely dispersed. Secondly, times had changed and so had the pianos. The Sonatinas in their first version do not exceed a five octave range, but pianos were now routinely being made with six octaves, and the Sonatinas sounded perhaps a little old fashioned. He therefore rewrote them, transposing sections an octave higher and also introducing numerous little and not so little variants to the original text.

This edition includes (in appendix) the first Sonatina in its revised form but not those of the other five and only the first one seems to show the superiority of the original version. Editor Ernst-Gunter Heinemann writes that "certain practical viewpoints also speak in favour of the first version which, thanks to the avoidance of extremes of register, is more pleasing to the ear and easier to play than the later version...." Trying out the revised version of the Sonatinas on four different Broadwood pianos shows this not to be the case, in my opinion. The upwardly transposed sections sound much more colourful and brilliant and Clementi's rewritings are quite charming and inventive. What a shame that we were not given the other five Sonatinas in their revised form so that we could make our minds up as to version that we prefer.

This edition is a good one as far as it goes, but unfortunately it doesn't go far enough. Perhaps in a later printing we will get the other five missing Sonatinas in their revised form.

**Work: Fanny Hensel (geb. Mendelssohn)
1805-1847, *Andante-Klaviersätze und Notturmo napolitano***

Editor: Raimund Schächer

Publisher: Furore-Edition 10074. Band 9.

Reviewed by Charlene Brendler

For over 25 years Furore has made the notable commitment to publish music of women composers both past and present. To date, over 150 of Fanny Hensel's works have been released. One might say we are making up for lost time! Hensel was sophisticated, witty, and an extremely capable musician, but was also sheltered and restrained within a family of privilege that denied her a *public* musical life in performing and composing. Now, over 160 years later, Furore is publishing her compositions.

There are eight piano pieces in the volume 9, which will be welcomed by teachers looking for alternatives to her brother Felix's *Songs Without Words*. Hensel wrote these lyrical pieces between the ages of 15 and 34, and one can see that her cultural and academic education was sound; in the Andante in B Minor, one sees how

she is influenced by her study of J.S. Bach, and voicing patterns allude to those found in the Little Prelude in C Major, BWV 943.

Most of these works are short and moderate in difficulty, however, each piece has particular demands, which include inner voice control, facile ornamental figuration, and unexpected harmonic progressions that make specific requirements on the player. The pieces from her early twenties might well hint at Hensel's own pianistic strengths.

By far, the most accomplished and interesting work in this current set is the *Notturmo napolitano*, written during her happy Italian sojourn with her painter husband Wilhelm Hensel. The warmth and tenderness of the lyric soprano line in the Nocturne is accompanied with active left hand broken chord patterns. This was probably a study for the Serenade for her cycle "*Das Jahr*", a work reflecting her year abroad. It seems clear that the latter part of her life was a time of growth for her, with her father dead and husband supportive of her work; it is unfortunate that she died at the early age of 42.

This edition thankfully provides pianists with new and unexplored pieces. Several aspects of the edition are unfortunately frustrating. For instance, the editorial approach omits fingering, dynamics, and (often) tempo indications. Indeed, the fragment of the manuscript of the F Minor *Klavierstück* (in Hensel's hand on page 23) has none of these features. However, for the level of musical material, the potential player would benefit by some well-presented editorial suggestions. Also, the introductory and critical commentary could be more usefully presented. Only parts of the preliminary notes are translated to English, and to find the *Werkverzeichnis* number one has to refer back to the Preface.

Comprehensive information is always welcome but when not concisely presented it is problematic. Furore's habit of leaving partially empty pages (presumably due to spacing choices) is puzzling. Bars with notes condensed in some, and others spaciouly spread on the page, mar an otherwise clear presentation. Despite the above-mentioned reservations, pianists wanting to expand their repertoire can use this edition as a starting point, adding expressive details within the parameters of the genre.