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REVIEWS

Francesco Cera, harpsichord, "Trabaci, Music for Organ and Harpsichord," Brilliant Classics 94897 2 CD. *Reviewed by John Collins*

These two CDs present some 33 pieces taken from the two volumes of keyboard music published in 1603 and 1615 respectively by Giovanni Maria Trabaci. A pupil of de Macque, he became chapelmaster at the court of the Spanish viceroy in Naples; Trabaci also published much sacred vocal music. The two volumes contain music from many of the compositional genres prevalent at the turn of the seventeenth century, including Ricercars, Toccatas, Gagliards, Canzonas, Canto Fermo settings, variations and Versetti for use in the liturgy.

The instruments used in this recording are the single-manual organ in the church of Sant'Antonio, Salandra (Matera-Basilicata), Italy, which dates from 1570, and after some 18th-century rebuilding it was restored by Fratelli Ruffati of Padua in 1998. The Principale chorus extends to 29th, and the Voce Humana has been unison-tuned to the Principale especially for this recording. The 16ft Pedal Contrabassi, playing from the keyboard was silenced for this recording. The harpsichord is a copy of a mid-17th-century Neapolitan instrument, utilising the same special construction techniques of the original.

The first CD features 16 tracks, 12 from the 1603 volume and four from the 1615 volume, recorded on the organ. Compositions of different genres are not played en bloc, but as a carefully chosen variety. We hear four of the Canzonas, all of which feature changes to triple time and a tightly woven four-part texture for most of their length, the CD opening with the seventh, subtitled *cromatica*, based on the ascending chromatic fourth. The first Canzona concludes in a shower of demisemiquavers, while the third and sixth both contain semiquaver passaggi. In the slow *Consonanze stravaganti* and the *Durezze et ligature*, Francesco Cera relishes the dissonances and the interplay between major and minor thirds, while his capacity to display an excitingly improvisatory freedom and a tightly controlled rhythm in different sections of the same piece is clearly evident in the two Toccatas, the earliest printed examples of the departure from the Venetian examples with their scalar divisions. The second and fourth Canto Fermo are based on the tune known as *La Spagna*, presented in breves in the bass and the tenor respectively, the second one having more lively writing than the rather more subdued fourth one. Two Ricercata from the set of 12 are included, that on the ninth Tone including three subjects and being far more sedate than that on the 10th Tone, which is based on just one subject, includes a triple time section and closes with a flourish of demisemiquavers in the treble over held chords.

The four pieces from the second volume include some of the Versetti for the Magnificat, the chant being sung, and the different character of each Verso is immediately apparent. The Toccata Quarta contains a mix of passagi and a more formal closing section in quavers in the four voices. Two Ricercars are included, one on the sixth Tone being subtitled *cromatico* and including a triple-time section, and the one on the first Tone being based on one subject. Both are relatively subdued. The organ's quarter-comma mean-tone tuning at A=400 makes the frequent spiky dissonances, particularly the numerous seconds, sevenths and ninths, even more ear-catching, and still able to arrest the attention. The transparent tone enables the listener to perceive the compositional intricacies of both the strict counterpoint and the virtuosity of the passagi without anything being lost.

The second CD contains 17 tracks comprising 10 pieces from the 1603 volume and seven from the 1615 volume, all played on the harpsichord. From the first volume we hear two Canzonas, including the second with its Toccata-like closing section and the fourth with its virtuosic flamboyant opening and closing sections. The two sets of Partite from the book are included. These comprise a set of 21 short variations on *Fidele*, the majority in

triple-time; and a set of 15 variations on Rugiero, which contains some more concentrated rhythmic writing.

The Canto Fermo on the first Tone also contains some concentrated writing but because of the harpsichord's lack of sustaining power the subject fades before the next note. Three of the eight Gagliards are played, including no. 4, and no.7, which opens imitatively and contains a section in C-time in quavers, and no. 8, the instrument being beautifully suited to the impulsive drive and verve of these dances. Preceding the Partite on *Rugiero,* Cera plays the Ricercar on the eighth Tone, which is also based on *Rugiero* and has three subjects, with a triple-time section and some more lively writing than many of the Ricercars. The final piece from the first volume is the rather more subdued ricercar on the fourth Tone, with three subjects and *"inganni"* (i.e. changes of melodic shape while the hexachord syllables remain the same).

The remaining tracks on the CD include seven pieces from the second volume published by Trabaci. Cera plays the first and second of the four demandingly difficult Toccatas, the second one being entitled as for the harp, a not uncommon inclusion in published books of keyboard music in the sixteen and early seventeenth centuries. Both follow on the patterns set in the first volume, with fast passagework juxtaposed with sections based on motifs and sequential patterns. The final three of the five Gagliards in five voices are included, of which the third in four sections has two in C-time, the opening section being based on the dactylic rhythm of minim followed by two crotchets (which is associated with the canzona), and the fifth is subtitled *cromatica*, venturing into F#. Cera again displays his rhythmic control admirably in the virtuosic setting of *"Ancidetemi Pur"*, also entitled for the harp, the sweeping rush of passagework in the right hand being very well executed and shaped. The CD closes with the restrained and subdued Ricercar on the fourth Tone with three subjects and their inversions.

The booklet contains a short biography of the composer and some informative notes on the music and its enormous importance in the history and development of Italian keyboard music during the early Baroque; its influence on Frescobaldi will become apparent on careful listening. Through this careful selection of pieces of widely varying styles, Cera shows why he continues to be regarded as one of the leading exponents of early Italian keyboard music; his enthusiasm and love of the music and an understanding of how to apply the rhetorical *affetti* and the added ornaments which it requires shines through his playing, which embraces the dazzlingly virtuosic and rhapsodic in the Toccatas, Canzonas and Gagliards to a more delicately nuanced subtlety in the academic Ricercars, making this recording as a whole so much more than the sum of the individual tracks. A highly persuasive vehicle for much of this repertoire being equally suitable for performance on both organ and harpsichord, this CD is highly recommended as an introduction to the artificial and extravagant world of Neapolitan keyboard music – perhaps even spurring on some listeners to buy the new editions and tackle this music for themselves.

Sophie Yates, harpsichord, "Tombeau": German harpsichord music of the seventeenth century", Chandos 0596 Early Music, 1998.
Reviewed by Charlene Brendler.

Tombeau features an unusual compilation of 17th-century harpsichord music performed by Sophie Yates on two different instruments. Stylistic and aesthetic concerns usually makes this genre less than audience friendly, but the approach here is confident and energetic as well as intimate when appropriate. These performing qualities make for quite pleasurable listening. The German composers here include Kerll, Pachelbel, Muffat, and Böhm, with the musically elusive Froberger interspersed between each of the above.

Rhythmic integrity is a hallmark of this playing and it is captured especially in the sparkling Gigues of the three Froberger suites and the Kerll Passacaglia. Yates possesses technical fluency and this effectively ushered the long Muffat Passacaglia to a glorious conclusion, something

difficult to achieve with the proportions of that piece. Flexibility with rhythm (in good taste) is the other highly valued aspect of Baroque music making. Yates' use of this was especially effective in the lovely opening Allemande of Froberger's G Minor suite, as well as in the searching quality to the opening of Toccata V by the same composer. The unusual Sarabande of the XIX suite of Froberger leaves the listener wanting to savour the dissonances and chromatic motion even more than allowed. The straightforward reading of the dance movements disappoints, as does the pedestrian rendition of Böhm's Suite VIII.

Much of the music chosen for this recording requires a subtle and intimate approach, as well as a sensitive touch to blend sonorities effectively on the harpsichord. Ms. Yates achieves this intermittently. In the G Minor toccata, her fluid playing contrasts beautifully with the stark block chords. Often present is a sensitive touch, producing a fine, delicious blending of sonorities and harmonies. A more rhythmically flexible approach to internal cadences would complement this wash of sound. Unfortunately, the sense of rest lacking at internal cadences tends to leave the listener breathless, and this abruptness is experienced throughout the recording.

This former Bodky competition winner plays on two very different instruments: a French double manual Vaudry replica by Andrew Garlick, and a drier-sounding Italian Grimaldi replica by Hammett and Ransom. They sound closely microphoned, giving a mis-perception to the living room listener of the harpsichord's true dynamic when heard in a concert hall. Although this CD is not recent (1998), it is still available from Chandos Records Ltd., and highly recommended.

Performer: Sam Haywood, piano
Title: "Chopin's Own Piano", Cobbe Collection Trust, CFC 104, 2010. ***Reviewed by Richard Troeger***

This is a lovely recording and I urge anyone interested in fine Chopin playing to acquire it. The programme consists of very well-known repertoire, which allows a ready comparison between what the Pleyel piano can tell the listener (and the player) about the music, and what is retained in the mind from often hearing these same works on the modern piano. If there is any contest, the Pleyel wins, and so does Mr.Haywood. If he is not accustomed to Pleyels (as his brief commentary on the CD leaflet implies) he certainly made a rapid assimilation. The performances are assured, poised, and elegant; fiery and delicate by turn. Even in *fortissimo* the piano's tone is never strained (as can happen with Pleyels) and the very precise dynamic shading that the action affords is utilised with fine control and sensibility. Timing is fairly "straight," on the whole, but never constricted, and agogic stresses emerge tellingly. Every work unfolds with complete naturalness; in addition to fine detail, Haywood carries the listener through from beginning to end with no slackening of the overall line. Although his playing technique is obviously first-class (and here he is dealing with an unforgiving type of instrument), there is never an impression of fireworks for its own sake, but of unflagging musical projection.

The accompanying leaflet offers a short commentary by Haywood about playing the instrument, and a brief note by Alec Cobbe about the piano itself: "Chopin's own piano." This is the instrument the composer acquired in January, 1848, probably used in a public concert that February, and took to the UK for his concert tour in 1848. Chopin sold it to the mother of one of his pupils before returning to Paris. The piano seems to have stayed with the family for many years; was sold at auction in the late 1970s; and was acquired by Mr. Cobbe in 1988. Its relationship with Chopin was only recently identified (through the serial number) by the Chopin scholar Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger. (Home again, Chopin obtained another instrument from Pleyel: his last, No. 14810 [1848], purchased from Pleyel after his death by Jane Stirling and sent to Chopin's family in Poland. It now resides in the Fryderyk Chopin Museum, Warsaw.) The CD leaflet also presents photographs of the piano's action, the stamped serial number, the Pleyel ledger entry for

No. 13819, a small reproduction of Chopin's last Parisian concert programme, and images of Sam Haywood and Camille Pleyel.

It would be pleasant if a fuller booklet had been included, with more details concerning both player and instrument. An outline of the history and restoration of the latter would be interesting; the restorer is not identified, let alone choices made in the restoration, condition when found, etc. The tone is very mellow, to the point where I have wondered if the highs were "rolled off" a bit in post-production. The sound of the recording *per se* gives the impression of being a mix of close and distant microphone placement, perhaps making the best of a rather live, close acoustic. The final result is clear and direct, if a bit "close."

Assi Karttunen, harpsichord, "Beyond the River God", Divine Art DDA 24120, 2015.
Reviewed by Pamela Hickman

This disc has chosen to alternate harpsichord works of François Couperin with recordings of mostly newly recorded works by contemporary English composer Graham Lynch. Born in London, Lynch had an early musical experience which included classical piano lessons and playing keyboards in rock bands. He also studied jazz but his interest in composition took him to university and music college; he took private lessons with Oliver Knussen and studied at the Royal College of Music, graduating with a Ph.D. from Kings College, London. His compositions – orchestral, chamber, solo and keyboard - include both classical and tango pieces; they have been performed and recorded in over 30 countries.

Assi Karttunen studied at the Sibelius Academy, where she specialised in harpsichord, graduating in 1996. As a Nordplus student, she studied under Lars Ulrik Mortensen in Denmark and has had lessons with Pierre Hantaï. Her 2008 Ph.D. thesis explores the aesthetic and philosophical background of the early 18th-century cantata. From 1995 to 1996, Karttunen played harpsichord and organ with the European Union Baroque Orchestra. In Finland, she regularly performs with the 6th Floor Baroque Orchestra and has played with the Vox Artis Ensemble, the Finlandia Sinonietta and the Tampere- and Lahti City Orchestras.

So what connections can be found between the French Baroque keyboard style of Couperin and Lynch's harpsichord works? First of all, and on the technical-compositional level, both engage in the repetitiveness of the rondeau form. Talking of the largest work of his on the disc, Lynch says: " 'Beyond the River God' is the work that comes closest to having a dialogue with the French clavecinistes of the eighteenth century, especially Couperin. Although the style of music is very different…the form of the piece consists of a five-movement structure that is built around the rondeau couplet idea."

Lynch has a clear sound concept of the harpsichord, its action and its potential for producing bright, incisive and well-defined sounds, and he uses a variety of arpeggiation and other traditional harpsichord techniques. Then there is the freedom offered to the player by the instrument and its traditional style of playing: as in the French genre of the unmeasured prelude, of which Couperin includes eight in his didactic manual "*L'art de toucher le clavecin*" (1716), Lynch incorporates "rests, pauses, commas, decays, unexpected breaks, omissions, fragmentations and interruptions" (Karttunen) in his writing for harpsichord.

Both Couperin and Lynch are inspired by extra-musical ideas, as suggested by their titles. This disc includes Couperin's "*Les idées heureuses*" (Happy Thoughts), "*Les gondoles de Délos*" (The Gondolas), the serene allemande "*L'exquise*" (The Exquisite) and "*Les pavots*" (The Poppies). The recording includes three of Lynch's large-scale works, each bearing its own source of inspiration: "Beyond the River God" is based on nature-mythology; "Petenera" is inspired by poems of Federico García Lorca, its music somewhat infused with Spanish flavour and the sound of the guitar; "Present-Past-Future-Present" takes the listener into an introspective world influenced by Japanese scenery and mindset. Of the smaller works on the

disc, the meditational "Admiring Yoro Waterfall" also finds its origins in Japanese landscape and mannerisms. Lynch's works reflect the intensity of his impressions of the world and of concepts; often originating as visual impressions, they make their course into the language of the senses. These processes translate into superbly written, intriguing and sonorous harpsichord pieces, as worth listening to for their musical ideas and invention as for their extra-musical content. Assi Karttunen is with Lynch all the way, exploring his works with total involvement and conviction; her playing identifies wholly with Lynch's images and ideas, as she lives the music gesture by gesture.

As to the selection of pieces of François Couperin chosen by Karttunen for the disc, the first comes from "*L'art de toucher le claveçin*" (1716, 1717), while the others are taken from what were originally elegantly engraved publications of his "*ordres*" in which the composer collated his "*pièces de caractère*". Assi Karttunen is a masterful artist. Her performance of them is bold, secure, finely shaped, elegant, warm and articulate; the pieces breathe spontaneity of the kind that draws the listener into the creative process and innate beauty of these gems.

Do Couperin le Grand's pieces work well with those of Lynch on the same bill? Perhaps they do, perhaps not. It really does not matter: each person will choose the order in which he listens to the works presented on the disc. Recorded in June 2014 in the Östersundom Church, Helsinki, on a German-style two-manual harpsichord, the quality of sound of this recording is true, offering the listener a close-up experience of the authentic harpsichord timbre. The CD's liner notes mostly inform the listener of the ideas and concepts behind Graham Lynch's compositions.

BOOKS

Frank Mento, *Harpsichord Method volume 1 and 2,* published by the author at methode-clavecin.fr. *Reviewed by Kasia Tomczak-Feltrin*

Teaching keyboard skills on the harpsichord to a complete beginner is not something very common in the English speaking world. This beautiful instrument tends to be discovered by more mature players often coming from organ or piano background with some keyboard experience. In fact there are very few beginners' harpsichord methods in English (the main independent music online store in the UK suggests wonderful materials by Maria Boxall which are still very much in use but published quite long time ago now). This is quite different in France where most of the conservatoires have harpsichord classes open to children as little as 6 years old and this noble, historical, somewhat elitist instrument is treated as just another, ordinary keyboard instrument. As if this tradition has never died and the harpsichord has never been pushed out by the piano...

Frank Mento, American harpsichordist and organist based in Paris, uses his wealth of teaching experience in France, the UK and the USA to provide us with a complete online Harpsichord Method in ten volumes (five volumes have been published so far) designed for ten years of training. All in English and available in a PDF format from Frank Mento's website. Great news!

The first volume starts with the basics of learning and localizing notes, as well as the first steps in touch, hand coordination and displacement, motor skills and articulation. First pieces are composed by the author who carefully paces the difficulties. He always indicates fingerings and hand position to begin with and gives tips about any new rhythms or concepts. He complements the pieces with various technical exercises and scales with early fingerings. Half way through the first volume some traditional tunes and original baroque pieces for both hands appear. Towards the end of the first volume the

ornaments, *notes inégales* and more complex rhythms are introduced as well as some sight-reading exercises.

Volume II contains many fewer pages, but tasks and pieces are much more complex and take more time to prepare from page to page. The skills acquired in Volume I are reinforced here; we get a chance to study English virginalists and their ornamentation, major scales in historical fingerings, and first historical exercises by Marpurg, Jacques Hotteterre le Romain, and François Couperin. The author also begins a study of Basso Continuo and Diminutions. His approach to basso continuo learning is through starting from mastering individual intervals and realizing two part textures first (we are even given a small chamber music exercise by Daniel Speer at this stage). This is followed by introducing root triads at the end of this Volume leading to richer textures in Volumes IV and V.

The price of each volume is €18, however Volume II (at 27 pages) has more than half the pages of Volume I (72 pages), and I feel the price could reflect this. It is hard not to compare Frank Mento's method with *"Apprendre a toucher le Clavecin"* by Richard Siegel; another American in Paris, his book, published by Heugel in four languages including English, is widely used in France. The latter is much more expensive but has more text, lithographs and photos and contains a CD. On the other hand Mento's material is easily accessible by downloading and paying online from any place in the world.

I think Frank Mento's *Harpsichord Method* is fantastic material for any beginner from age 10-11 onwards. The tasks are very clear and well paced, comments are very friendly and concise, and the pieces are attractive and very carefully selected. Great importance is attached to developing motor skills through varied exercises. For small children I would probably search for more colourful, fun layout and bigger print as well as perhaps some teacher's accompaniments to make very first notes and pieces sound more rich.

Overall this is definitely a very valuable teaching material for young beginners and adults, giving a solid frame to weekly lessons on this beautiful, noble instrument.

Anne Cuneo, *Tregian's Ground: the Life and Sometimes Secret Adventures of Francis Tregian, Gentleman and Musician,* published by And Other Stories (London, New York, 2015); Translated by Roland Glasser and Louise Rogers Lalaurie from *Trajet d'une rivière,* Bernard Campiche Editeur, 1993. *Reviewed by Micaela Schmitz.*

On encountering the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, one is often staggered by the sheer number of pieces it contains. On closer inspection, there are some pieces which occur in more than one version, which makes the musician wonder if they were forgotten the first time, or included the second time because of a difference. However, there's no mistaking the vast amount of music and huge deposit of virginalist repertoire we owe its collector. Music here is by many famous as well as anonymous composers and gives a great opportunity for comparisons. Who could have compiled such a big collection and how did it survive intact? The name Francis Tregian is given, but the information is vague, especially since both a father and a son bore that name.

Anne Cuneo's novel serves to create a "back story" to the Francis Tregian who penned (not composed) the contents of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. She sets up a plausible background for this man, giving him the background of a "Renaissance man" who speaks several languages, can defend himself with a sword and ride a horse well, who has reasons to leave England and travel the world, and yet who ends up imprisoned for a good part of his life before fading out of historical record.

Those used to historical novels are used to having the female viewpoint. This book is refreshing because it is written from a male point of view, and it lacks the prevalence of sex scenes we often encounter in this genre. More than that, it clearly has historical underpinnings, as one can see by the lengthy list of sources in the back of the book.

Before each chapter, a quote is given,

usually from a "pop song" of the day, such as "Walsingham". As a budding harpsichordist I often enjoyed playing folk tunes and dances in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book but tracking down the original folk tune and words was often difficult – here is a great collection of lyrics that would have been quite useful to me then!

The Catholic content of the book is unmistakable. It contains an insight into the experience of recusant Catholics and a sense of the struggle Queen Elizabeth I faced in trying to consolidate her reign. Francis Tregian is placed in our story as having Plantagenet blood. He is the grandson of Catherine Tregian, who was married into the Arundell line. The entire family suffers through the elder Francis being a bit too diligent in his recusancy; unlike Sir John Arundell, he makes no accommodations and is used as an example to other Catholics. He is housed semi-permanently in the Fleet Prison, and his family lands are given to other noble families, while his family has no inheritance to believe in. The pressure falls to his son Francis (the eponymous Tregian of the book's title) to restore the family's honour. Will he swear allegiance to the Queen as head of the Anglican Church and monarch or follow his faith? Throughout the book we see him straddling the two camps.

While his father is under house arrest, our hero is educated in London under the patronage of the more accommodating Arundell, but eventually things go sour, and he must be transported to Douai, where he can be educated in an openly Catholic way. From here the story becomes a bit more fanciful. The list of celebrities Tregian meets is impressive. In England he meets Queen Elizabeth I, studies with William Byrd and Thomas Morley, and meets Giles Farnaby. On the continent, he understandably encounters Robert Parsons. That he then meets Henri, King of Navarre and France while taking a message to the enemy Duke of Mayenne – despite the fact that France was not quite as big or important then – does seem far-fetched. I do also find it odd that he is madly in love with his new wife, but then leaves her for a long journey. He goes on to serves Cardinal Allen in Rome and become embroiled in Jesuit intrigues there. Later on a return trip to England he meets Shakespeare (understandable) and observes rehearsals of his plays – and not just any, but *Hamlet*. Later he meets Monteverdi and Giaches de Wert in Mantua. Further, his own son Francis is taken to the King of France's court. Taking singly, all these things are possible; taken together they seem a little implausible, but isn't it delightful to imagine?

Cuneo's research does pay off. She paints the picture of Elizabethan London, including market cries, bear baiting and the theatre. She does a very good job of making clear the odd politics of the time, the court intrigues, and the tensions between various parts of the Huguenot Empire and France's position. She also portrays Cornish customs and life (such as the harvest) in a way that makes the reader feel it is quite authentic. She places his eventual home of exile in Echallens, a place where there is a record of Catholic and Protestant church services taking place in the same church building. Tregian spends time in Amsterdam, meeting Sweelinck, Peter Phillips (himself a recusant Englishman), Merulo, the printer Phalèse, etc. Her dealing with his imprisonment at the Fleet and the intrigue around his death is handled quite well. (The story reminds one of Dickens' *Little Dorrit*, where the father is erroneously found to be in debt and almost rots away in the famous debtors' prison, Marshalsea.) Cuneo's afterword regarding her research substantiates the rather porous nature of the Fleet Prison. Without giving more detail of this gripping plot, let's just say that most details have been thought through.

I thought it puzzling that so much was made of the piece"Lady Wyknfyld's Rounde" as a catalyst for Tregian's interest in music. I had to look it up and found it to be such an ordinary piece in musical terms; one wonders if Cuneo could have chosen a more inspiring work to motivate our hero.

Cuneo's book is quite remarkable, and the translators have done their job so well, that they have left no tell-tale signs; one has to be reminded that this was firstly written in French. The speech and spelling are plausibly of the time period given.

The characterisation of many personages, such as Old Thomas, Jane, the faithful servant Giuliano, his man-servant, Jack, and Philipps, are believably and lovingly portrayed.This book is an achievement to be appreciated and enjoyed. Cuneo excels at building the story-line; that sense of arrival when a plot twist or character is revealed makes the reader feel that he/she has been there and had all that information all along, when in fact Cuneo has cunningly held back just that one nugget that makes it all come together.

Mark Macdonald, *Prelude: An introduction to Stringed Keyboard Instruments for Performance Studies and Music Makers*, published by Early Music Workshop, 2013 emworkshop@slingshot.co.nz. *Reviewed by Micaela Schmitz with David Law*

It's unusual for us to have more than one reviewer, but this review started with David Law (a maker and restorer of historic instruments and especially for the Bate Collection, Oxford) emailing me some comments he had sent the author. They were intriguing enough that I decided to review the book. This is therefore an amalgam of my review with Law's comments added in italics. While some of his comments are not strictly just about reviewing the book, they offer some insights worth considering in connection to a book like this.

This is an important book taking stock of our progress, placing the development of organology as a field and its interaction with historically informed performance (HIP). It takes the instruments as its focus, not the music. In reviewing, I consider my role to be one of giving a flavour of the book, assessing if it fits its intended audience, evaluating if it represents the field of early keyboards in an appropriate light, sharing some insights it can offer, and assessing its editorial polish and value for money.

DL: I have read Prelude *a few times now. In my view it does exactly what you set out in the introduction, is very well written, and will illuminate those areas seemingly not taught in your schools and universities. Often establishments in the UK have the same problems as you seem to have in New Zealand. This book should be in every music library everywhere.*

This is a small (slightly larger than A5 book) of 135 pages with a helpful glossary and bibliography, with photos and figures contained, organised into a mainly chronological account of early keyboard instruments (including a chapter on the violin family). It would do well as a reference text as the sections are clearly laid out. The explanations of difficult concepts are quite well handled and do fit the intended audience of students starting professional careers as well as performers who want a better sense of instruments and organology. It explains its terms without being too laboursome to read. Strictly speaking, perhaps the section on the violin family has no place here, but as a gentle introduction to organology it can be useful, as it explains the changes which affected keyboards as well, especially the fact that instruments that were good were altered by contemporary makers and therefore somewhat muddied the historical record. It then covers clavichords, the harpsichord family, fortepianos, and modern pianos.

This book stands up to the test of representing our field. In the introductory chapter, on page 8, the author writes, "It is not just early instruments that reveal their limitations, but also contemporary ones." This is a very balanced view indeed. He also acknowledges pioneers such as Landowska, Woodhouse, Hubbard, Dolmetsch and Rosamund Harding. The book portrays a proper view of evolution of instruments, not as a Darwinian development, but as a response to social, economic and cultural factors. I found a really interesting explanation of why academies, conservatories and graded exams are not good for culture or for open-mindedness to what original instruments can teach us. This is because these institutions codify and entrench ideas, therefore resisting change, and through competitiveness, over-focus performers' minds on technical prowess rather than expression. (I would add that radio programming is also affected by this.) I wouldn't say this book is anti-establishment, but it is daring!

Some details of the individual chapters contained great insights, and at the risk of a spoiler alert, are worth mentioning.

DL: The tuning section is very well put, as is the part that references the clavichord.

The clavichord section really explains the clavichord's function as an economical (and quiet) instrument for organ practice, as an historic record for understanding the development of tuning, as an expressive instrument *par excellence*, and as the one instrument that can be "tuned" by the player while playing it. There is an obvious understanding of the clavichord's virtues here. I found the case for Bach's 48 Preludes and Fugues being *primarily* clavichord music extremely compelling — on its own, enough reason to recommend the book (Hear that, Associated Board!). Law and I both disagreed with the author as we have seen the clavichord indeed used in public performance:

DL: Clavichords are often used in public performance (Derek Adlam usually asks that applause be limited to the rustling of programmes until after the recital so the hearing can remain at its clavichord level throughout) but the venue must be in a quiet location. Gustav Leonhardt played to a packed audience in the Holywell Music Room (capacity 250); the sound of the clavichords were heard everywhere. The Hass is regularly used in the Bate Collection, Oxford.

In the harpsichord section there are good explanations of their constructions and resultant merit and colours of the different types, and a clear sense that it is a family of instruments with a great deal of variety. Macdonald also explains why the "thumb under" technique is a very late one with regard to the evidence from keyboard lengths. Again, we have the difficulty of the muddy historical record with regard to Italian harpsichords.

DL: It is now generally understood that many earlier Italian harpsichords began life as 1 x 8', 1 x 4', later altered to 2 x 8'.

Some comments Law made due to his experience restoring the Tisseran harpsichord, a unique English original at the Bate collection, Oxford.

DL: The Tisseran is dated 1700, making it the earliest double manual made in England that we know of. There is concrete evidence that the date was altered (It's in pencil on the baseboards, seen when keyboards are removed). It was altered to 1710, when the instrument was changed to the then new dogleg configuration. The coupler dogs were simply cut off. We have letters regarding its sale and removal from London to Woollas Hall in Pershore in 1712.Tisseran, Smith, Hitchcock and Coston all seem to have made one harpsichord, and all were probably working in the prolific spinet industry, hence these harpsichords all having soundboard grain at an angle to the spine. (The Willbrook now in Edinburgh is from1730).

The section detailing the rise of the piano in England really pulled together the social and economic issues in a clear and easy-to-read way, detailing the 30- and 7- years wars, which brought the skills of German émigrés to Britain, and portraying the beginnings of domestic music making in the middle classes. Macdonald is careful to explain that only later with Beethoven does the composer drive the development of the piano, and he lucidly explains how you can tell that the *galant* textures of J.C. Bach really fit the early square piano's features. The explanation of why the piano enjoyed massive industrial production in America is very clear as well.

It seems clear that perhaps the author feels the state of affairs in New Zealand is behind, however change is already afoot, as the Kenneth Mobbs collection is now housed there. Certainly this magazine has covered many recent developments of Pleyel copies, Chopin pianos, and other late originals being restored or copied in Europe.

DL: [Although the author contends that copies are rare], At least as many Viennese pianos are made in Europe now as harpsichords; there are a number of recordings made on Viennese pianos; and there

are a large number on well restored originals too.

The question of when equal temperament became common is up for discussion.

DL: I'm sure equal temperament was not common until at least the 1850's. It only made sense to tune to equal temperament when piano hammers became large. Fat hammers block all but fundamental and the lowest harmonics by design, so the detrimental effects of this tuning were reduced.

Nowadays certainly in Europe, Asia and the US, players rarely play on an instrument tuned to equal temperament; Vallotti seems to be the favoured alternative. In the Bate Collection, we try to keep the two earliest instruments (Tisseran of 1700, and the Slade spinet of 1715) in Werckmeister III at A415; The Smith, the Goermans of 1750 are kept in Vallotti at A415; the modern Johnson is at A440 usually, again Vallotti. The big Shudi-Broadwood is kept at A425 and tuned to a later temperament. Some students and visitors notice. If you were to visit Bruge in competition weeks, competitors are quite choosy about how the instruments are tuned, and the exhibitors are likewise. No one would dream of tuning a copy of an 1830s piano to equal temperament.

We did an experiment in the London College of Furniture in the 1970s. Albert Chatterley, who was running schools music broadcasts for the BBC (and for whom I built a clavichord), wished to put equal temperament to the test. We arranged a practice room with two identical upright pianos and an Italian harpsichord; one piano was tuned normally. The other was tuned to an unequal temperament, probably Vallotti; the harpsichord at A440 was tuned with one register in equal temperament, the other in the unequal temperament to match the second piano. The same piece of Bach was played and recorded four times. The normal piano first, sounded as one expected; then the other piano which sounded dreadful; then the harpsichord in equal temperament which sounded OK; but the piece played on the harpsichord in unequal temperament took us all by surprise. It was as if the net curtain had been withdrawn from the window. None of us expected such a large difference. I wonder if they kept the recording?

With a view to editorial polish, I have a few comments, probably because we expect a high degree of polish in a book. The citation style is a little odd, although it passes the test of being trackable by anyone. Sources in the bibliography are numbered thus (1). The reader has to work out that a citation of a source in the bibliography given thus (5, page 65), means "bibliographic reference 5, on page 65 of that source". In the text of the book, we have these citations as well as normal footnotes appearing at the bottom of the page (for comments that are asides but not citations of sources). The book could have used more proofing. Sometimes hyphens appear within a word, where clearly a carriage return has not taken place as first planned; small spelling mistakes/ typos occur at regular intervals; and a few figures appear so much later in the text that it would have been helpful to reference the page numbers upon which they eventually appear. Also, the mislabelling of Figure IV and V in the fortepiano chapter, thereby swapping the up-striking and down-striking piano designs, was particularly irritating as I felt rather confused for a time. I would heartily welcome a second edition of this book where these matters could then be easily addressed, as the book's content is superb.

Final conclusions:

An interesting read that fits the need of a student to answer the question: "Why explore original keyboards?"

DL: I think the book, notwithstanding my comments, is a triumph and should do a great deal of good; it deserves a wide audience.