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REVIEWS

Mark Kroll, Playing the Harpsichord Expressively: A Practical and Historical Guide. (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004). 119pp. *Reviewed by Micaela Schmitz*

Kroll's book is a useful book for introducing the issues facing the harpsichordist. He covers understanding how to play the harpsichord and leads the reader to further reading, original sources, and methods. The book includes some discussion of various topics, as well as exercises and examples. Most chapters include a part with "Historical Sources" quoted. The few choice quotes includes invite the reader to explore more, while a bibliography at the end is more thorough. Therefore, the book can be used as a manual or reference but does not intend to be exhaustive. The book easy to follow and encourages the reader to follow up historical sources later.

The book is divided into two main sections- the first being Techniques, which has detailed descriptions of how to play, plus 13 lessons. The early parts have specific, individual exercises to be carried out, so players build skills gradually and in a logical order. The second section is about style and is organised into lessons. After this are three appendices – a guide to ornaments (not exhaustive but pointing to Neumann's more complete work), a list of terms related to the harpsichord's "anatomy", and a section on contemporary music. Next are full notes (citations of quotes, not too heavy-handed) and an excellent bibliography listing primary and secondary sources and translations thereof, as well as books on performance practice, specific composers, the instruments themselves, dance, contemporary music, and history/ aesthetics.

Kroll launches with a few statements that are helpful for the beginner. He makes clear that there is no "correct" performance, and that even using historical sources can result in misinterpretation or contradiction. He describes the inbuilt problem of the harpsichord – that we are trying to make it sing but that we have to circumvent obstacles through articulation. Many exercises are given to explain posture, finger position, basic touch, and overlegato. Page 1 sets the stage: "The harpsichord is played by the fingers alone."

Kroll defines articulation as "playing notes shorter or longer than the basic touch, and invites the listener to focus on release. Many exercises in articulation are quite systematic — almost mechanical— but are designed to give the player increasing control of the instrument. Variety is essential: "Ideally, the space between every note you play on the harpsichord should be different from its neighbour"(p.17). He gives general procedures for learning a piece, breaking it into its components, singing, etc. An issue that arises with those new to harpsichord is the difference between agogic and articulation accents. This is handled well in Section I, lesson 12 on "Special Techniques". Kroll gives a reasonable explanation of registration and the need to be flexible depending on instrument, performing space and acoustic. He deals with techniques for achieving changes in volume At all times there is an embedded awareness of national styles and era. I might wish for a little more on the variety of instruments that embody these styles.

In the second main section on style, rhythm is covered early. The issue of *inégal* is dealt with lucidly, as well as overdotting and other required flexibility. His lesson on *Style Brisé* is clear and gives a clear method. It is gratifying that he insists players do a complete harmonic analysis of all they play but particularly unmeasured style pieces. Pedagogues will nod enthusiastically to themselves when Kroll encourages players to learn dances and if in doubt about a tempo for a dance movement, "dance it". A section on some of the more misunderstood ornaments is covered. In dealing with the *"port de voix"* he includes any appoggiatura whether upwards or downwards (this caused this reader a slight pause), however the aim is spoken expression. On page 70, he notes "Remember the source of all musical expression is vocal." Novice players would do well to take all the advice included in quote marks in this review to heart. They show

that Kroll's approach is absolutely sound.

This book might run the risk of glossing over the surface, because a blanket statement stating that national styles are important and one needs to learn them is true, but is impossible to fulfil without a good instrument, a good teacher, and lots of practice. However, the truth is that the only way to learn "national styles" is to immerse oneself in repertoire until it becomes second nature. There is simply no way to "teach" solely by a book. Kroll is aware of this and makes this a reference that could be used to play through some of the basic problems, before turning to problems that will require homework and reading on the part of the player. The "lessons" might well be summaries of actual lessons he has taught. Most examples are from real music from the repertoire, and are very good representatives of what they show; clearly he knows his repertoire well, especially where mentioning pieces which are transcriptions or adaptations of other pieces. Exercises are conceptual such that they can be read, and then the book is placed to side so one can try the exercise. Still, one might hope that if it were re-published it could be octavo format so players could set these on the harpsichord desk and try.

It is worth noting that in the third appendix the author makes a compelling case for considering new harpsichord music: if players do not allow the harpsichord to be active in this culture, it may well die a second death. He notes that some contemporary works were written for revival era instruments that are now rare. He then provides a list of contemporary works that are important and work well on the more common historic instrument copies (e.g. not revival).

If a teacher were to quibble with one or more points of detail, Kroll reminds the reader that there are some things nobody will ever know. Our job is to stay in touch with the historical sources and on fresh approaches to them in the research community, whether it's about ornamentation or the meaning of character piece titles. Our most important job is to keep asking questions, as "…great art does not answer questions; it asks them."

Yonit Lea Kosovske, Historical Harpsichord Technique: Developing *La Douceur du toucher*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011. 221pp. *Reviewed by Micaela Schmitz*

This book is clearly concerned with technique itself. It is organised into four main Sections: Preparing to Play, Touching the Instrument, Articulation, and Fingering. It is followed by biographical information on people mentioned (composers, makers, etc.), Notes, Bibliography (10 pages divided into primary and secondary sources) and index (20 pp, quite complete). The actual text therefore is about three quarters of the entire book. In contrast to the Kroll book, it sets out be complete; a check for the term "*tierce coulee*" yields two places where the Kroll book has none. Of course it is a more substantial volume, with twice the number of p ages. A quick flick through shows that primary sources are given in a fuller way. In addition, the typeface is smaller, drawing the eye in; if republished in larger font it might become more expensive, though.

At the start, Kosovske establishes the need to have a basic touch of "*douceur*", which is relaxed, suave and polished. It covers the years 1565-1800. Her approach is to let the primary sources speak. She notes the problem that many keyboard tutors cover a range of keyboard instruments; some things are universal to all instruments while others are not. She also notes that her approach comes from teaching and playing harpsichord, organ, fortepiano, and modern piano. In addition, there are photographs of her hands to illustrate technique, which is a nice feature.

The first chapter covers posture over 39 pages. I mention this as it is *very* thorough. Of course the advice to start at age 6 or 7 will not hearten most readers, as they are usually in their teens to 20's! However, the advice to start with a single strung instrument (or just one 8') with soft even quilling is one all might take to heart, especially if coming from the modern

piano. Position is in the centre of keyboard (higher than Middle C) with an attitude similar to yoga/Alexander Technique – upright yet relaxed and flexible. Couperin suggests turning slightly to the right, feet apart, with the right foot to the side turning slightly toward the audience. She notes that most players have a more supple left hand, because they use their dominant right hand for more tasks. She gives detail about the position of fingers being poised and slightly curved. With arm/elbow position, most sources advocate the forearms to be either slanted slightly downward or parallel to the keys; they vary in positions of elbow close or far from the body. However, Kosokske includes the exceptions to this, so the reader can have a full set of evidence. Wrists must be supple, and can turn outwards for paired fingering or passages. Some sources require a fixed elbow positions; others say the arm guides the hand. Finally, curvature of hands/fingers is covered in great detail, including the quintessential "cat's paw" of the seventeenth century giving way to a more natural curved, cupped hand where fingertips, not fingernails, contact the keys with the goal of connection to the quill. She evaluates the sources and some inconsistencies (The hand at rest is different from the hand at motion).

The second chapter covers touch over 29 pages with the first music notation examples. Warm ups can help focus the mind and ear and inculcate relaxation into basic touch. Quotes about practicing trills and stretching the hand are included by Couperin, Rameau and C.P. E. Bach. The concept of "touch" rather than "strike" for the harpsichord is stressed, so that fingers are in close contact with keys, with advice from Couperin, Diruta and Nasarre. The author reviews a range of advice, including that of balancing a light object on top of the hand to make it less active (although not to the expense of flexibility in the wrist). Students are admonished, through Rameau, Mersenne and Griepenkerl to keep the touch light, not letting gravity take over — never using hand or arm weight.

There is an interesting section on the balance point of the hand and how fingers are withdrawn towards the centre of the hand, whether in regular playing or trills. The issue of dynamics on the harpsichord is raised – in terms of varying tone colour (Couperin, Broderip), illusion (Marpurg, Leonhardt), number of parts (Quantz), a combination of registration and touch (C.P.E. Bach) , or the actual difference in speed of "attack", method of damping, release, and articulation. The key tis to be imaginative. The chapter closes with a discussion of multiple keyboard instruments and what can be learned. Both Löhlein and C.P.E. Bach advocated playing the clavichord as a means to improve harpsichord playing ; it does not work in the opposite order!

The third chapter, on articulation, cautions the player to consider himself an orator who conveys the hierarchy of phrase, harmony, character and much more. The chapter's 40 pages give ample room to a range of opinions and evidence which can be sifted by the reader. Basic touch, *schwer* v. *leicht* touch, legato, and over-legato are covered. Fingering and finger substitution are also mentioned. Articulations supplied by the composer are handled next, including slurs to show grouping or an imitation of strings. Overlapping the notes can help achieve this, with Saint-Lambert advocating holding *all* the notes of a group or the first and the last of a grouping. Arpeggios and staggered playing/ "fringing" where bass strikes before treble are handled well, and the treatment of appoggiaturas and trills. The detached style seems to the subject of complaint, perhaps especially during the early years of the transition from harpsichord to fortepiano. It is useful for the brilliant manner of playing the clavichord as described by G. F. Wolf, who gives it the sound "tnt" as a result of holding the key just a bit before releasing. Certainly too much detaché was associated with poor playing. Various descriptions give a complete picture through time.

The fourth chapter, on fingering, covers 25 pages. It is vital to fit fingering into its appropriate time and national style; use of paired or not, thumb under or not or not at all are never at the expense of the musical expression. The concept of "good" and "bad"

fingers is addressed, with Diruta being an exception in labelling the middle fingers as a "bad" finger. The more normal paired fingering advice is shared by many Spanish writers from the 16-18th centuries. Kososvke advocates a closer look at Alessandro Scarlatti for what can be learned from his notated fingerings. The use of thumb and transitional fingering are also well covered. The chapter concludes with a reminder that every hand is different so that Jacques Ogg's remark to aim for "expressive" fingering is apt. The final conclusion of the book reminds players to observe their own hands in playing. Players require a good instrument, musical training, good posture, frequent practice, relaxation and supple fingers with a connection to the quill. From this the player can achieve mastery of many tools to make the harpsichord expressive.

In comparing the approaches, we see that Kroll is a harpsichordist and fortepianist. Some of his sources touch on the clavichord but what is absent in both books is a real mention of the use of clavichord as a teacher in and of itself. Kosovske teaches and plays everything but clavichord. She does quote Türk's preference for the clavichord, yet contends that one must actually play a harpsichord to learn how to play it.

Kosovke really is leaving nothing to chance. In covering posture she notes how much attention centring oneself in relation to the keyboard was mentioned by historic sources. In covering each topic she is thorough in presenting evidence and including dissenting opinions. She is not afraid to give her own interpretations where primary sources may be ambiguous or conflicting. The book is an excellent repository of ideas from which to gain ideas and to ask questions and serves the player who wants to know "Where does it say that….?" Kroll's is a good starting point for a player who wants concrete exercises to get on and try. Neither is a substitute for a good teacher; both advocate the instrument itself and its player as important teachers. Both writers encourage the reader to read more original sources.

Bertoldo Sperindio,*Toccate, Ricercari et Canzoni Francese.* Ed. Jolando Scarpa. Edition Walhall EW940.
Reviewed by John Collins

This modern edition includes all of the known works for keyboard composed by the composer called here Bertoldo Sperindio, although all other editions and the dictionaries which I have consulted refer to him as Sperindio Bertoldo. Born around 1530, he took up the position of organist at the Duomo, Padua in 1552. In addition to two collections of madrigals published in 1561 and 1562, two volumes of his keyboard compositions were printed in Venice by Giacomo Vincenti, but only in 1591, some 21 years after the composer's death; the sole instrument mentioned for performance is the organ, although such pieces would undoubtedly have also been performed on stringed keyboard instruments.

This new edition opens with the contents of the first print, which includes two Toccatas, three Ricercars and a Canzon Francese. The first Toccata commences in D Minor and finishes in G, and, after an opening in which lengthy trills pass from tenor to bass against held tonic chords, consists of chordal passages, with cadential semiquaver passagework in the form of trills and the occasional quaver scalar links.The second Toccata, in F, opens with held chords and also proceeds in a stately manner with some written out trills in various voices. They were clearly not influenced by the Toccatas of Andrea Gabrieli and Claudio Merulo, which are longer and frequently include imitative sections.The Ricercari, on the sixth, first and third tones, move mainly in minims with some crotchet movement, enlivened by the written out cadential trills. The subject of the Ricercar on the sixth tone (among the earliest examples of monothematic ricercars) with a sequence of ascending fourths, shows a great similarity to Bach's "St. Anne" subject. There is a triple time section in the Ricercar on the first tone. The Ricercar on the third tone employs the flattened second, not

uncommon in pieces on this tone; there are fewer written out ornaments in this piece. Bertoldi's use of material allegedly stolen from Annibale Padovano, a Venetian contemporary, is discussed in the introduction. The vocal model for the Canzon Francese has not been identified; it is almost entirely homophonically chordal with divisions for the right hand in quavers and the usual cadential semiquaver extended trills, with just a couple of these divisions in the tenor, and there are also passages in crotchet chords which can be happily grouped in threes, phrased across the barlines.

The second book consists of just four chansons, *"Un gay berger Hor vienza vien", "Petit fleur"* and *"Frais e gagliard"*, which at 60 bars of 4/2 is quite the longest. All open imitatively, and progress with voices dropping out at will, and include some chordal passages — some requiring re-barring in triple time — and some fast semiquaver divisions and cadential trills, mainly in the treble, with just a few in the tenor and the very occasional instance in the bass. *"Un gai berger"* includes a triple time section. These pieces are less extrovertly ornamented than Andrea Gabrieli's intabulated chanson settings, with only *"Frais et gaillard"* containing divisions in the left hand, but comparison with the first and last with Gabrieli's settings will be an interesting and profitable exercise.

The printing is clear with six systems to a page in portrait format. Original note values have been retained, including the blackened notes in the triple time section of the *Ricecar del Primo Tuono*. Unfortunately a comparison with the recent edition by Luigi Collarile (which includes a facsimile and a very detailed commentary) reveals that a number of notes seemingly misplaced by a tone or more, some omitted, or in rhythmically inaccurate groupings in the original edition have been retained in Scarpa's edition– not always readily identifiable even by an experienced player. The introduction, in Italian, German and English, includes an account of the sources and the compositions. There is no separate critical commentary, editorial amendments being indicated in the score. These pieces will require some dexterity from the player to shape the written-out divisions without losing the impetus. They certainly add to our knowledge of this field, which is still under-represented in recitals.

Froberger, Ausgewählte Werke für Tasteninstrument. Ed. Peter Wollny. G. Henle Verlag. *Reviewed by John Collins*

This slim volume of just 14 pages of music contains four pieces by Johann Jacob Froberger. Wollny writes in the introduction that his aim is to make a small selection accessible to a general public, choosing four pieces from the composer's autograph Libro Secondo of 1649 offering a broad variety of styles - a Toccata, Fantasia, Canzon and the Variations on the Mayerin.

The Toccata in G – the third of six in the autograph – is in five sections, opening and closing with improvisatory writing, with two imitative sections being separated by a further improvisatory passage. The Fantasia in A Minor, the final one of six, is strictly contrapuntal, with two subjects, the opening one being most expressive, including a falling diminished fourth C-G#. The Canzon in G, the fifth of six, is a sectional piece, opening with a lively subject, which is then varied in 12/8 (although marked as 6/4) followed by a final section in C time, each section closing with a toccata-like passage. The Variations in G, the sixth and final piece in the Suites or Partitas, comprises six variations on the folk tune, the sixth being headed Crommatica, followed by a Courant, Double, and Sarabande.

The volume provides a very useful introduction to the different styles employed by Froberger for someone approaching his music for the first time. It is presented in clear printing. The introduction presents some useful comments on the editorial methodology. I would hope that students commencing with this overview would be motivated to progress to the complete modern edition.

Pieces for solo keyboard with accompaniment of another instrument
Pierre Nicholas la Font, Premier livre de pieces de clavecin (1759), ed Jonathan Rhodes Lee, in *Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical era*. A-R Editions, 2016.

Upon opening this volume one does not immediately recognise it as coming from a similar genre. However, a good look at the preface indicates that the original press announcement described it thus: "*Il y a dans ce livre plusieurs Pièces avec accompagenment de violon*."

La Font was organist at St-Germain-en-Laye. The collection is dedicated to the duc d'Ayen, who had impressive musical friends including Carl Stamitz, Guignon, François-Andrew-Danican Philidor, Guillemain (who published a collection in this vein 1745), and Duphly (whose Troisème livre, 1756, is an example). Mozart visited the duke; he met J.C. Bach and the castrato Tenducci (castrato) there and wrote K.8-9 (another accompanied example) for the duke's daughter. It seems clear that the duke liked accompanied sonatas.

The collection here includes ten character portraits, five scenes or tableaux, and several dances. The works are not quite organised as suites but they are given in clear key groupings. A group in F comprises 4 pieces. Next comes a three-movement Sonate in D --the only one that sets out a separate violin part. This is followed by a set of five pieces in g/G and four in C, the latter of which follow the theme of a chase/hunt in honour of the chief huntsman of Louis XV.

It is unclear if the violin might be employed for any of the other collection, but it is clearly set out in the Sonate in D. The violin's role is mainly giving structure to chords with single notes or arpeggios that fit with the right hand of the keyboard. Sometimes there are parallel thirds. Around b. 18 in the first movement, there is a sense that the violin has a little bit more of a leading role, and later in the second half there are some semiquavers giving movement to the phrase. The middle movement is a rondeau honouring another organist. The gigue that ends the third movement is named "La Forqueray".

Stylistically the music straddles the pre-classical and the decorous *bon gout* of the French baroque. The editor of the score notes a great similarity with Duphly, who also favoured character pieces and virtuosity, published his first book in this genre in 1744, and dedicated it to the same duke. In performing, we should follow the recommendation of Guillemain to ensure the violin part is soft so the harpsichord can be heard. There are quite a few rondeaux in the collection with the final one entitled "La Machine de Marly"; instead of a typical musette we have the image of a network of 14 paddle wheels whose continuous motion served to raise the level of the River Seine, supplying water to upland areas. Most dances are binary with "reprise" marked to show a repeat even without a "repeat sign". .

It is interesting music both for its place in history and as a bridge from some of the solo keyboard to more concerted repertoire. It is hoped that someday the second book, originally published in 1773 for forte-piano with ad libitum violin may be found as well. The cost of the current volume is $95 with $6 for the violin part as well.

Georg Christoph Wagenseil, Sonata 1; op.2 (1761) für cembalo, mit begletiung einer violin LMM 039, 2014.Ed. Carsten Niemann.

This sonata is one of a genre of keyboard sonata with the accompaniment of a melody instrument, usually the violin. The repertoire was part of a Parisian and a *public* phenomenon, centring on the Concerts Spirituels (concert series) from the 1730s to 1780s. (It is interesting to consider that it was attended by the well-resourced portion of the bourgeois and lower aristocracy; it was the French Revolution that ended the series in the 1790s).The young Mozart encountered these works when he visited Paris. In Leopold

Mozart's hand we find copies he made for his eight-year-old son of transcriptions and concerto re-workings of pieces like these; their simple charm made them eminently flexible. If Mozart thought them worthwhile, then they are worth our attention.

Well known examples include sets by Joseph Cassanea de Mondonville (op. 3), who made this genre important, Johann Schobert (op. 1, 2, 3, and 17 composed in 1761, 1762, 1763, and 1767 respectively), Eckard (whose op. 2 specifies *clavecin ou pianoforte*), and Abel (the latter giving options for violin or flute in his set of six, published 1764). Others include Honnauer, Armand Louis Couperin and Charpentier. Further information about this genre along with a selection of 12 examples can be found in Eduard Reeser's useful book *De Klaviersonate met Vioolbegeleiding* (Rotterdam, 1939). This transitional repertoire is a bridge between harpsichord and fortepiano. The textures tend to be elegant and *galant* and exhibit a fairly simple two part texture, hallmarks of the so-called "pre-classical" repertoire. The melody instrument parts are not taxing, and make excellent easy repertoire for convivial music making, or the melody doubling can be foregone, making these solo pieces.

This edition's preface sees Wagenseil as a student of the baroque via Muffat and Fux, who transforms the sonata into its Classical counterpart; indeed, during his time, he was said to have elevated the harpsichord itself from a mere accompaniment to a solo instrument. His contemporaries thought him a better harpsichordist than C.P.E. Bach. However, time has shown C.P.E. Bach to be the better composer, and this is probably why it has taken some time for Wagenseil's work to be re-published now.

The harpsichord figuration suits the instrument well and employs broken chords to good effect in a manner not so dissimilar to that of Scarlatti. In the opening *Allegro* there are four crotchets in the violin which are supported by semi-quavers in an Alberti-like texture. The modulation to the dominant is fairly typical and employs some diminished seventh chords, but nothing as daring as C.P.E. Bach. In the menuetto we have a characteristically embroidered texture of triplets with little fills, which lies under the hand easily. The final *Allegro* has some showy arpeggios which are not really very difficult to play, and divides the hands (again somewhat as Scarlatti does) to good effect, allowing the harpsichord middle register to carry an alto line while the soprano bears a series of accompanimental figures.

It would have been nice to have the whole set of six sonatas, but the publishers have chosen to give us just one. The typesetting is clear. It would not appear that there were any difficult editorial choices; presumably the original was a fairly clean, engraving. Performers will also find that the page turns could have been more kindly set out; as it is, most movements require some photocopying in order to have the first repeated section in one spread. For those unfamiliar with this repertoire it is a useful example, although it is hoped that the rest of the set of six sonatas might also be published.

Jean-Luc Ho (Harpsichord and Organ), "William Byrd: Walsingham". Encelade, 2014. *Reviewed by Charlene Brendler*

"Walsingham," featuring the music of William Byrd, is the title of the CD offered by French Harpsichordist Jean-Luc Ho. The title refers to the well-known Byrd composition, but it is misleading to harpsichordists, as the musical performances are shared between a replica Renaissance organ and a small Italian harpsichord. Perhaps using the quote from Byrd's contemporary Hugh Holland would have served as a appropriate title: "The Nightingalls owne brother." The musical selections include familiar Byrd works, including some Fantasias and an *In Nomine*, creating a musically rich tapestry of styles and forms.

One of this recording's strengths is the welcome juxtaposition of quiet pieces with those more active in nature. Another is the

chance to hear some works usually played on the harpsichord rendered instead on the organ. This particular Flemish school organ, a replica of a 1511 Koblentz in the Netherlands, is a source of pride for the Abbey Saint-Amant-de-Boise, where it resides in France. The builder, Quentin Blumenroeder, finished the organ in 2012 and included the additions of 1555, with the added enhancements of a nazard and trumpette from 1709. The peculiar tonal sound of this organ creates a unique sonority with large lead pipes, atypical mouth heights, and the usual mean tone tuning at 465 Hz. The Renaissance style organ with its split sharp keyboard was built thanks to the generosity of the Dom Remi Carrie Association.

The single manual Italian harpsichord, replica of a 1531 Trasuntino Italian instrument, is played for half of the selections. Unfortunately few details are given, merely mentioning it along with some photos and the maker Roy Yoshida's name, saying it was built in 2010.

It requires a substantial effort by several parties to create a new CD and one naturally looks for the central focus or aim of the project as a whole. Is this music especially dear to Jean-Luc Ho? Was playing music that contrasted the two instruments a key reason for making this particular CD? Was it initially to present the new organ and as an afterthought to include some harpsichord music for contrast? Liner notes list sources, libraries, etc., but give no mention of why he chose these particular pieces, or how the instruments reveal special qualities about the music.

Ho often plays to the acoustic of the organ, listening and responding to it with playing that is calm and unfrenzied. One disappointment, however, is hearing "Lady Nevell's Ground" on a muddy sounding organ stop. Figures and musical ideas lack clarity in the acoustic. Ho seems to be an evolving player, as the CD reveals uneven interpretations. A mechanistic approach to figurations results in an emptiness of content. Ho's "Walsingham" performance also reflects this. The work opens with a good tempo that beautifully sets the mood. As one continues to listen, a relentless sense of regularity sets into the playing. Dissonances are not effectively savoured and other aspects need more thought: how chords are treated, how rhythmic figures are varied, and how to make clear character distinctions between groups of variations, to mention a few.

One lovely and special treat is the sensitively played "Susanna Fair," a quiet moment of repose on this CD. Alternatively, the "Queen's Alman" seems heavy-handed with Ho's choice of playing most of the work on two eight-foot registers. The resulting contrast with the sweetness of the middle section, which uses only one eight foot register, emphasizes his heavy approach to the work. Perhaps he intended to communicate majesty with the heaviness? Register choices are often personal, based on the instrument at hand and the performer's conception of the work. Many hours in lessons and master classes are devoted to this topic, as well as that of tempo choices. Mentioning why Ho made his particular choices would have enhanced both the listening and the notes in this CD.

The 15 compositions of William Byrd inconsistently performed on two dissimilar instruments nevertheless comes to a lovely close like a benediction, with the "*Memento salutes actor*."

François Couperin: Les Nations, Sonates et Suites de Symphonies en trio and Other Pieces for Two Harpsichords". Jochewed Schwarz and Emer Buckley, harpsichords. Toccata Classics, 2013. *Reviewed by Pamela Hickman.*

Recorded at the von Nagel Harpsichord Workshop (Paris), the discs offer the listener the chance to hear some of Couperin's major chamber works played on two harpsichords. No contrived concept, in the preface to the published edition of his "Apothéose" Trio Sonata (1725, dedicated to Lully's memory), originally scored typically for two melodic instruments plus bowed string and keyboard continuo, Couperin writes that this work and

his intended complete collection of trios can be played on two harpsichords, as he does with family and students; his informal introduction offers some tips as to performing the works on two harpsichords, also suggesting that this is a more convenient means of playing them than bringing together "four working musicians".

The more substantial works presented on the discs are the four ordres (suites) making up Couperin's vast and ground-breaking project of "Les Nations", each suite constituting a combination of a virtuosic Italianate trio sonata da chiesa (sonade) followed by a large-scale and elaborate French suite of dances. Representing Couperin's paradigm of "les goûts réunis" (union of tastes), "Les Nations" was published in 1726, although three of the trio sonatas were composed in the 1690s. Each of the four ordres celebrates a Catholic power of Europe: France, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire and the Savoy dynasty of Piedmont.

On publishing "Les Nations", Couperin confessed to being "charmed by the sonatas of Signor Corelli and by the French works of M. de Lulli, both of whose compositions I shall love as long as I live". This being the background to the ordres, Schwarz and Buckley's performance of them does not endeavour to layer them with extra-musical conjectures, political, sociological or otherwise. In their playing of the opening movements of each, Schwarz and Buckley present the flamboyance, fast mood changes, piquant dissonances, contrasts and forthright character of Italian music, coupled with some lively, gregarious ornamenting. Moving into the French agenda of each ordre, the artists then offer sympathetic and indeed pleasingly stylistic readings of the dances, also rich in agréments. With Schwarz and Buckley's absolute precision and superb synchronization never sounding pedestrian, they display the noble elegance of this courtly music in playing that is fresh and vigorous, exposing the music's interest, rhetoric and rhythmic ideas.

The disc also includes selected pieces from Couperin's "Pièces de Clavecin" and "Concerts Royaux", most of which were also written as trio compositions. From Book 2 (1717) of the "Pièces de Clavecin", the artists perform "Les Barricades mystérieuses", the rondeau's mesmerizing, otherworldly sound wrought of an intriguingly dovetailed contrapuntal texture. Then they move on to the robust "Allemande à deux Clavecins". From Book 3 of the "Pièces de Clavecin" (1722) the CD includes "La Létiville" and two robust, solidly-anchored musettes - the "Musète de Choisi" and "Musète de Taverni" – their drones referring to early folk music and instruments.

Organist of the Royal Chapel, François Couperin composed his "Concerts Royaux" (Royal Concerts), published in 1722, "for the little chamber concerts where Louis XIV bade me come nearly every Sunday of the year." Buckley and Schwarz offer stylish performances of some of its delightful miniatures, calling attention to their opulence, their sense of joy and wit. In the Forlane Rondeau (4th Concert), the artists highlight the variety and contrasts made possible by the rondo form. The splendid pieces of the "Concerts Royaux" must surely have provided the aging Bourbon monarch with pleasurable entertainment; to today's listener, they represent French Baroque chamber music at its best.

Corresponding to the candid, full touch of both artists, the sound quality of the two CDs is true and engaging, offering the listener a lively listening experience. Written by both players, the liner notes accompanying both CDs are highly informative both musically and biographically. Basing on what Couperin himself wrote, the artists have made a deep enquiry into the works and into the question of playing them on two harpsichords rather than in a mixed consort. Schwarz and Buckley write: "This challenge is one which faces all harpsichordists and, throughout the preparation of our recording, it has been a constant inspiration to us to imagine Couperin playing the music in his own home, surrounded by family, friends and pupils".