Harpsichord & fortepiano

Vol. 24, No. 2 Spring, 2020

Musical Instrument Research Catalog
(MIRCat)

Reviews

BOOKS

Mark Kroll (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to the Harpsichord* (Cambridge, 2019), ISBN 978-1-107-15607-4 (hardback) £74.99, 978-1-316-60970-5 (paperback) £21.99, and ebook

With 17 chapters, and 14 contributors including Mark Kroll, the editor, this Cambridge University Press book sets out to cover all aspects of the harpsichord, its history and construction, and repertoire across a very wide spectrum. The general impression I have is of a book which is perhaps trying too hard to be everything, and the editorial oversight and drawing together of material is at times somewhat lacking, giving the impression of rather a 'curate's egg'. It is excellent in many respects but the material presented by so many different writers does not make an entirely successful whole. I will try here to give some idea of the scope of the book, and the strengths and weaknesses as I see them.

Chapter 1 by John Koster is headed 'The History and Construction of the Harpsichord'. Immediately on the first page we find a complicated verbal description of the harpsichord action, which should for clarity have had diagrams – much clearer to understand, and needing far fewer words. This is a recurring omission throughout the book, and this can lead to frustratingly complex verbal descriptions of things which can much better be shown in diagrams or tables. Also in this first chapter, Koster mentions Cristofori making instruments with a thick outer case to take the string tension, and the soundboard on a thinner inner case, but a couple of pages later talking about Dulcken, fails to point out the he used the same basic system of construction. At the end of this chapter, in the section 'Revival', Koster makes no mention at all of the seminal work done by Arnold Dolmetsch in both the USA and Europe. By WW1 Dolmetsch had made around 50 clavichords, many of which were closely based on historical originals, and had made his first 'green' harpsichord with the encouragement of William Morris in 1896. His promotion of the study of old instruments (not just harpsichords) and their performance practice, his making of instruments closely based on originals, which he often owned, and his work in Boston at Chickering's from 1905-11 has no mention at all. Yet he gave the impetus to makers like John Challis, who was apprenticed to Dolmetsch in the UK, then Bill Dowd, who trained with Challis, and with Frank Hubbard set up a workshop in Boston in 1949. Then there is Dolmetsch's subsequent work in France and the UK, and it is not too much to suggest that Dolmetsch was indeed a key founder of the early music movement that was to thrive after WW2. Also not mentioned is the phenomenon of harpsichord kits: Zuckermann's first kit was produced in 1960, and other players in this market were Hubbard in Boston, Bédard in France (I started out with his Italian from a kit), Storrs and the Early Music Shop in the UK, to mention just some. That kit instruments could make first class harpsichords is certain (Hans Steketee of Flentrop made a Hubbard French double), and equally certain is the huge impact they had on making the harpsichord more widely available than ever before. If we are going to talk about the revival of the harpsichord let's at least get the picture complete and correct.

The second chapter, 'The Virginalists', by Pieter Dirksen is excellent, but why only one music example printed? The wealth of music in this area of discussion should have had many more. Also it's odd that only Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have a listing of editions and facsimiles of music discussed. Why not for all chapters? Chapter 3, 'England' by Andrew Woolley gives a good exhaustive overview, but again would have been nice to have more music examples. On the late 18th century the confines of 'harpsichord' are not helpful, as it would have been useful to have had a brief discussion of the touch and response of the early London pianos, which are mentioned just in passing in connection with J. C. Bach and Jacob Kirckman, but not adequately for the reader to understand the context of this prolonged parallel existence of the two types of instrument.

'The Netherlands and Northern Germany' by Ton Koopman (chapter 4) is an invigorating read, with much more encouragement to think in terms of the different instruments that the music might be played on, harpsichord or organ or clavichord, since often music of this period is not specific to the harpsichord. Also nice to see his encouragement to explore less well known composers. Koopman gives particularly useful advice when discussing the music of Georg Böhm, making the point that whilst there are no autographs of his music surviving, it is preferable to play from an authentic source rather than try to guess what Böhm might have wanted. He also discusses the prolific ornamentation in many of Böhm's works, and makes the comment that 'only keyboard players who find them hard to play complain that there are too many ornaments (the solution lies in practice!)'. This very down-to-earth and practical

attitude coming from a seasoned performer and scholar is very refreshing. There are no music examples, but an appendix gives a fulsome listing of editions of music discussed, and a chronology of composers mentioned. 'Southern Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire to 1750', again by Pieter Dirksen, gives an excellent detailed overview of Froberger's music and sources. Amongst the many other composers, Kerll, Pachelbel, Georg Muffat are all given their backgrounds and context with discussion of their music. It is very good to see Gottlieb Muffat given some prominence, as he is a composer of much fine harpsichord music, and deserves to be much better known.

Chapter 6, 'France' by Mark Kroll gives a very good overview of the questions of ornamentation, inegalité, style, and the relationship between the lute and the harpsichord in this particular repertoire. However I would have expected the important material on the pinning of barrels in mechanical organs by Engramelle, reprinted in Dom Bedos *Facteur d'Orgues*, to have been mentioned. There are 15 pages of ornaments given in a table which allows of no doubt as to the placement of particular ornaments, which clarifies many things that are not obvious in other ornament tables or prefaces. I also find it quite extraordinary that he doesn't cite Jane Clark and Derek Connon, *The Mirror of Human Life*, which gives such an insight into the world of François Couperin and the possible meanings of the titles of his *Pièces de Clavecin*. I am pleased to see that he takes Wilfred Mellers to task for writing off the later 18th century composers for harpsichord in France as 'reducing the art to sensory titillation ... they write to please', and points out quite correctly that the later music was reflecting the changing society in which it was written, and is of much greater importance than Mellers acknowledged. In this period Kroll states that Pancrace Royer was 'one of the most eccentric', but fails to even acknowledge the existence of Christophe Moyreau, whose six volumes of *Pièces de Clavecin* where published under the patronage of the Duc d'Orleans mid-century, and are the most technically advanced and demanding, as well as some of the strangest but wonderful music written at the time, and take Rameau's virtuosity to a whole new level! Kroll repeats the idea that Bach's copy of Couperin's *Les bergeries* in the Anna Magdalena notebook was taken from a source other than the original, but doesn't acknowledge that the only difference in notation is that Bach leaves out the meticulously notated over-legato of the Couperin original. He would have done this anyway, and his wife and students would also have known this technique, which has to be applied in so many places in Bach's own output. If you are writing out by hand your whole music library, you take whatever shortcuts you can to make the process as quick as possible!

'Italy', by Rebecca Cypess, uses the titles of rhetorical discourse as the basis for her discussion of Italian repertoire through from the earliest works to the emergence of the early pianos. She gives a great deal of detail here, covering amongst other things the works based on vocal models, the toccata and improvisation, variations and dance pieces, the *Galant* in the 18th century, and one of the earliest known sets of sonatas with dynamic markings for the early Cristofori instruments, those of Lodovico Giustini of 1732. Odd that in discussing the *Durezze e ligature* style of toccata writing she associates the expressiveness of this with humanist ideals, but fails to mention that many of these toccatas are specifically for the Elevation of the Catholic Mass, and that therefore the 'pain' of the extreme chromaticism is reflecting Christ's pain endured on the Cross. Michelangelo Rossi's toccatas are mentioned only in passing, and I would have expected more attention to be paid to these extraordinary works. An example of the problem of many different authors, and a lack of coordination between them is her discussion of the Pasquini *Toccata con lo scherzodel cucco*, which is not cross referenced with Pieter Dirksen's earlier mention of the Kerll *Capricio sopra il cucu* which, given Kerll's studies in Italy, and the close resemblance of these two works, would have been interesting to discuss. All in all though this is an excellent chapter, presented in a way which makes it more interesting to follow through.

Chapter 8, 'Portugal' by João Pedro d'Alvarenga gives a brief and interesting summary, but as there is a separate chapter on Scarlatti, this again tends to dislocate historical contexts, an unfortunate result of editorial decision-making. Chapter 9, 'Spain' by Águeda Pedrero-Encabo is an excellent short chapter, again like Portugal lacking the specific contextual inclusion of Scarlatti. In the first paragraph the important point about multi-instrument possibilities (organ, clavichord, harpsichord, spinet) is made in the context of a discussion about the music of Cabezón. There are plenty of music examples here as well, by Cabezón, Rodriguez, Albero, Soler and de Nebra, which for most readers will be an important glimpse of the musical styles found here. Pertinent to the question of which instrument are the two collections of works by Sebastian Albero, the titles of which are *Obras para clavichordio o piano forte*, and *Sonatas para clavichordio*, emphasising the central importance in Spain of the clavichordio, particularly as a teaching and practice instrument. Next, 'Domenico Scarlatti in Portugal and Spain', is jointly by the authors of the previous

two chapters. This quite brief chapter gives a useful overview of the literature available about Scarlatti, and discusses the problems resulting from so little definitive knowledge about Scarlatti's life. The Spanish part provides an interesting discussion of the sonatas, their chronology and stylistic features.

Chapter 11 on 'Russia' is by Marina Ritzarev. Few will have any knowledge of Russian early music, and indeed it seems as if there was little music for harpsichord until a manuscript collection of 1724, and that now lost. The creation of St Petersburg, and the proximity of Germanic culture saw more harpsichords in Russia, but mainly related to upper class and courtly society. Interesting that the clavichord was more common in the poorer parts of society, maybe because they were so much less expensive. Of the better known names who worked in Russia in the 18th century we find Galuppi and Paisiello amongst others, but by the 1780s the pianoforte is taking over, so the harpsichord and music written for it occupy a small and aristocratic niche in Russian music history.

The next chapter covers 'The Nordic and Baltic Countries', and is by Anna Maria McElwain. It is not confidence giving when on the first page we find that 'Buxtehude ... was presumably born and educated in Denmark, in Helsingborg' with no mention of the certain known facts of his early life, nor mention of Helsingør where he attended the Latin school in the monastery buildings of the S Mariae church where he was to be organist for the eight years before he moved to Germany! The influence in Denmark of Schildt and Weckmann is mentioned in passing, but not the crucial point that it was Weckmann who would have been one of the conduits for knowledge of both Italian and French music of the mid 17th century – this due to his being a friend and colleague of Froberger in Dresden. This important link across styles and countries is also not mentioned in the chapter on North Germany, where Weckmann ended his life as organist of the Jacobikirche. The section on Sweden has the background to the Düben family, and the hugely important collection of music which is known under that name. There is also mention of a C minor suite by Christian Ritter in which a movement is described as being 'a Froberger-like lament' but with no explanation of how that influence might have arrived in the north. This is, sadly, another example of the way that important contextual information can be lost between so many area-specific chapters. An interesting part of this chapter is reading about the lesser known composers in the area, and the gradual acknowledgement of the pianoforte in collection titles of the later 18th century.

Chapter 13, 'The Harpsichord in Colonial Spanish and Portuguese America', by Pedro Persone, follows (it makes little sense that this chapter is not placed immediately after those on Spain and Portugal). There is a good overview of the harpsichord and keyboard music in this enormous area, detailing the huge influence of the church, and the Jesuit missionaries in particular. That the Spanish government sent instrument makers to their colonies is testament to how important music was seen to be, and the clavichord in particular. It is a pity that the research done by clavichord maker Peter Bavington into these instruments is not mentioned, as the clavichord based on information gleaned from surviving South American instruments that he made for Derek Adlam is so informative, as it is proof of a long tradition of clavichord making based on Renaissance instruments from Spain, which continued to be copied for a very long time. Once again the restrictive title 'harpsichord' means that context is not always clear. Nevertheless this chapter is a welcome and detailed background to this important but often neglected area of early music and its instruments.

Chapter 14, 'Bach, Handel, and the harpsichord' by Robert L. Marshall, starts with the documentary evidence provided at the time of the deaths of Bach and Handel. Much of this is well documented elsewhere, so this is mainly just a resumé of the facts. Interesting that the *Lautenwercke* mentioned in Bach's estate are often seen as being an example of his inventive nature, yet gut strung harpsichords were known in Italy, and not mentioned here or in the chapter on Italy. A fine example is the c.1710 double manual instrument attributed to Sabbatino in the collection of Alan Rubin. This harpsichord has two metal strung registers on the lower manual, and gut strung upper. That these sort of instruments were once much more common is not in dispute, and the knowledge of these *tiorbino* harpsichords was likely known in Germany. Tuning, temperament and pitch are covered briefly but clearly, but there is no mention of the *chorton* organ pitch of around A465 which would have been a part of Bach's life in church music. There is also no mention of Bach's dislike for the temperament Silbermann used in his organs - Bach liked the organs but not the tuning! Marshall quotes Forkel's well known description of Bach's keyboard playing, and the small and easy motion of the fingers, but doesn't point out that this is a perfect description of clavichord technique. Until the early 19th century, the clavichord was the teaching and practice instrument on which every child would have learned their musical grammar and basic technique, and that includes Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. That this sort of technique

was a natural and inbuilt part of every keyboard player is often not acknowledged today, since so few modern keyboard players have bothered to take the time to learn this way of playing. Forkel's further description of Bach's teaching is also quoted, with the 'isolated exercises for all the fingers of both hands, with constant regard to this clear and clean touch'. This again links directly to the small fretted clavichords on which everyone would have practiced, as the fretting demands a 'clean clear touch'. So the way Bach taught and played was absolutely the norm for his time. There is a useful section on Handel's harpsichord music, but Marshall then states that 'an extensive review of J. S. Bach's stylistic development as a composer of harpsichord music will not be forthcoming. The present author has already published such a survey'. To make a statement like this I find unforgiveable in a book which is setting out to present all aspects of the harpsichord and its music, and I suspect that few readers of this book will go and find Marshall's detailed survey; it would have been good to see at least an overview of this vitally important part of the harpsichord repertoire for those buying this book as a way in to this world.

The next chapter, 'The Harpsichord in Ensemble', by Mark Kroll, is mainly excellent, with succinct comment on playing continuo from figured bass, and dealing with the variety of national styles. The further section on accompanied keyboard music is good, but it is strange that Kroll doesn't discuss the Duphly works for harpsichord with violin accompaniment, or the Boismortier sonatas for flute and obligato harpsichord; the latter are not only supreme examples of their type and one of the earliest with a fully written out harpsichord part, but the two instruments, as with Bach, are much more equal.

Chapter 16, 'Contemporary Harpsichord music' by Larry Palmer gives insight into the surprisingly large corpus of work written for harpsichord in the 20th century – not my field, but fascinating nevertheless. Here is also the only mention in the book of the Dolmetsch Chickering instruments, of which Busoni enjoyed the long term loan of one in Berlin. So from Busoni to Falla and Poulenc, with the influence of Mme Landowska, Palmer traces the early uses of the harpsichord. He provides plenty of insight and information in an excellent chapter, with the well known names of Martinů, Carter, Howells and Ligeti joined by a wealth of less familiar composers and works.

Next is 'Tuning and Temperament' by Paul Poletti. This is mostly an excellent chapter, although right at the beginning I would disagree with his assertion that all keyboard instruments have a fixed tuning which cannot be influenced by the player. I know what he means, but if you play a clavichord, you have to learn to play it in tune, as the amount of pressure through the tangent has a marked effect on pitch. There are far too many words here, and no diagrams. With temperaments and tuning it really does need the use of tables and diagrams to clearly understand what is happening, whether in the amount out of tune an interval is, or the circle of fifths for each different temperament discussed. It would be hard for anyone to tune a temperament from his descriptions – back in the mid-1970s when I was having lessons with Leonhardt, I stayed with Hans Steketee of Flentrop in Zaandam, and copied from Dirk Flentrop's own folder his temperament tuning diagrams, which are an object lesson of clarity and simplicity that I have not seen anywhere else. This would have been so much better than a lot of words.

There is a chronology at the front of the book, which is as strange as it is scrappy in its contents - and has a nice misspelling in 1706 with the birth of Benjamin 'Frankiln'. Just a few observations will give a flavour of this odd compilation: Couperin's First and Fourth books of *Pièces de Clavecin* are noted, but not the date for *l'Art de Toucher*. For 1735 Bach's *Clavierübung II* is noted, and the 'birth of Paul Revere' (did this American patriot play the harpsichord, one wonders?). 1789 notes the French Revolution, Washington as first President of the USA - and the mutiny on the Bounty!, but there is nothing for the founding of the Paris Conservatoire in 1795. The birth of Ralph Kirkpatrick is noted (fair enough, and he was Kroll's teacher), but not Leonhardt, Harnoncourt, Hogwood, Pinnock et al. - yet Sir Thomas Beecham appears! Particularly curious given that Beecham famously described the sound of the harpsichord as 'skeletons copulating on a tin roof'.

So in summary, this book has so much of value and contains so much information, but is not ideally organised to make it a satisfactory whole. This is not to say that it shouldn't be bought and read, as the material presented is very valuable and relevant for everyone playing, or wanting to play the harpsichord, just that this could have been such a much better book with more editorial oversight and intervention.

Douglas Hollick

Jane Clark and Derek Connon, *The Mirror of Human Life: Reflections on François Couperin's* Pièces de Clavecin (London, 2020), www.keyword-press.co.uk

Couperin's titles to his 226 harpsichord pieces, comprising 27 *Ordres*, have long proved an enigma.

In this welcome book, originally published in 2002 and now in its third edition, Jane Clark and Derek Connon have continued their researches, based on a wide range of relevant literary, cultural, social, aesthetic and musicological sources that advance the study considerably. Hence the chapters 'Aspects of the Social and Cultural Background', 'Aspects of the Literary Scene' and the 'Catalogue of Movements' have been revised and extended accordingly.

Couperin stated that his titles were based on portraits and ideas that occurred to him. Clark is aware of the dangers of being too positivistic, stressing that solutions to understanding are not definitive, but 'based on the cumulative picture that emerges when the background to Couperin's subjects is explored'. The titles, therefore, can be regarded as a musical autobiography, but full of subtle references and seemingly esoteric meanings. This 'cumulative' background consists of places, aristocrats, singers and actresses, painters, the theatre (both French and Italian) and playwrights. The literary scene is further explored by Connon, and Couperin's relations with Freemasonry are explored in 'The Architecture of the Ordres'. The word 'ordre' itself was evidently a masonic term, and the number 3 was significant at both macro (3 x 3 x 3 = 27 ordres) and micro levels (La Visionaire, 25th *Ordre*, has a symbolic three flat key signature and three opening chords. Clark's notion of an architectural unity for each ordre is important, most obviously evident in the eighth *Ordre*, with its conscious juxtapositions of Italian and French styles. However, I still maintain that the Italian gigue La Morinéte (8th *Ordre*) was placed after the famous Passacaille to mitigate awkward page-turns. Surely, the French and Italian gigues should be contiguous?

The advantage to understanding these titles is the influence it has on interpretation. (imagine the scholarly speculation that would ensue if J. S. Bach had added fanciful titles to every prelude and fugue in the '48'!). Undoubtedly, Clark's and Connon's work has advanced the understanding of Couperin's *Pièces de clavecin* enormously. Reading through the text inspires further engagement, to which we may contribute. Many titles are yet to be fully understood, and certain pieces have the potential for several explanations, but from Couperin's titles all manner of extraordinary persons, theatrical events, social customs, and references are explored. This is the latest stage of fruitful ongoing research, essential reading for harpsichordists and scholars.

David Ponsford

Zuzana Růžičková with Wendy Holden, *One Hundred Miracles. A Memoir of Music and Survival* (London, 2019), www.bloomsbury.com/uk

Only a few days before the death of Zuzana Růžičková in 2017 at the age of 90, author Wendy Holden interviewed her for the last time at her home in Prague. Zuzana wanted her story to be told, and entrusted Wendy with the task of recording her account of a life in which she had perhaps experienced both the best and the worst of which human beings are capable. This book is essential reading for anyone with an interest in the harpsichord, and the 20th century revival of interest in early music and instruments. It is also a book that should be read more widely, for it recounts in the most detailed and extraordinary way the experiences of a young girl who survived the holocaust. The reference in the book's subtitle to 'music and survival' could not be more apposite: that Zuzana survived Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen is remarkable enough. That she recovered sufficiently to become an outstanding keyboard player and inspire the next generation of musicians marks her out as a truly outstanding individual.

The much-loved daughter of a prosperous and cosmopolitan Jewish family, Zuzana spent her early years in Plzěn, now in the Czech Republic, where her musical talent was soon recognised. Her parents supported Zuzana in her determination to devote herself to the piano, and at first it seemed their daughter could look forward to a relatively comfortable life of study and performance. But around them the situation in Europe was changing rapidly, and anti-Semitism was just one element of the deteriorating political landscape. Soon the family was plunged into the misery of wartime, and transported to concentration camps alongside their friends and relatives.

Memory is perhaps at its sharpest when recalling the extremes of human experience. Wendy Holden has chosen to alternate the chapters of the book, between Zuzana's memories of her terrible wartime suffering, and the years after it, when her determination to study and play enabled her to return to her keyboard training, discover the harpsichord, and develop an international career. In some books this is a distracting technique, as the reader is obliged to jump back and forth in time. In this case however, it was a wise decision: the account of life in the concentration camps, told mostly in her own words, is so painful to read that it would be too much to absorb as an uninterrupted narrative. The alternating chapters provide a very necessary reassurance of her survival, and confirm the courage with which she

overcame both the physical and emotional pain of those years.

Even after the war, the political backdrop to her life in the 1950s and 60s was one of oppression and struggle, as Communism took hold in Czechoslovakia. Zuzana's refusal to submit to the new totalitarian regime - as well as her marriage to Viktor Kalabis, a composer with questionable views in the eyes of the authorities – often prevented her from travelling freely. But soon, she was sufficiently famous to be officially acknowledged, and permitted a degree of liberty to perform abroad. Růžičková gained friends and admirers everywhere: her commitment to the music of Bach and the vitality of her recordings meant that she became universally recognised. As a teacher she was equally influential - her many students included Christopher Hogwood, Ketil Haugsand and Mahan Esfahani (who contributes an epilogue to the book) – and her ability to connect with others endeared her to the international music world. When in 1989 the Velvet Revolution heralded the end of communism, Zuzana was in the recording studio, and went straight from playing the 5th Brandenburg Concerto to join the celebrations in Wenceslas Square. Her recordings, made throughout her fifty years as a performer, underline her extraordinary charisma, individuality and resilience.

Paula Woods

MUSIC

William Byrd ed Desmond Hunter, *Organ and Keyboard Works. Fantasias and related works*, Bärenreiter BA10897 (Kassel, 2019), www.baerenreiter.com/en

William Byrd's output for keyboard includes preludes, fantasias and voluntaries, preserved in various manuscripts and in *Parthenia*. This new edition presents 15 pieces – three preludes, five fantasias, three voluntaries, a verse, two hexachord pieces and an Ut mi re, some using different main sources to those used in the modern editions of *Musica Britannica*.

This volume opens with three short Preludes, of which the third is intended to precede the large-scale Fantasia in A minor. The imitative opening of the Fantasia in D minor is based on the Salve Regina. This is followed by two Fantasias in G, of 183 and 106 bars. The ascending scale which opens the Fantasia in C pervades the work, whether as a subject or as an integral part of the many semiquaver runs. The next three pieces are entitled Voluntary, the first two being taken from the Lady Nevell manuscript. The first is the Voluntary for My Lady Nevell, a slower moving piece. This is followed by the short Voluntary which closes the Nevell book, starting in A minor, progressing through several points of imitation and closing in C major. The longer final Voluntary also has a dense ricercar-like texture. The two section Verse is in two voices until the final chord; imitative writing and semiquaver scales and passage work occur.

Two of the closing three pieces are based on the hexachord Ut Re Mi Fa Sol La. The first has 17 statements of the theme, mainly in semibreves, with additional independent motifs treated imitatively, with the following piece, entitled Ut Re Mi, intended to follow immediately. Its 13 statements of the theme cover the hexachord in skips of a third. The final piece, an Ut Re Mi Fa Sol La, starting in F and closing in C, is a rare instance of two players being required, one to play the statements of the Hexachord on a separate instrument.

The introduction provides information about the sources, each piece being discussed and analysed, an exhaustive description of notation, including beaming and ornaments – both written out and represented by signs for which no precise guide exists - and an essay offering suggestions about ornaments and fingering. The use of blackened notation in triple time sections may cause problems to the player used to modern notation but it will be assimilated quite quickly. A bibliography lists follow-up reading, and a critical commentary lists all the sources and variants for each piece. The Fantasias and Voluntaries offer examples of skilled contrapuntal writing, virtuoso passagework and complex proportional notation. They provide excellent material for both teaching and recitals.

John Collins

Thomas Roseingrave, ed David Patrick, *A celebrated Concerto*, www.impulse-music.co.uk/fitzjohnmusic

This version of Roseingrave's Concerto for the harpsichord was published by C & S Thompson after the composer's death in 1766. It is in three quite short through-composed movements, the opening movement of 69 bars in D major in C time being an Allegro, although not so marked, with dynamic contrasts of forte and piano, followed by a short Adagio of seven bars in the minor, a Phrygian cadence leading into a

closing Allegro of 72 bars in 3/8. It is different in many details from the version in four movements edited by Laura Cerutti for Armelin (her edition has no source details, but it is probably Ms 106F in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, before 1750), which includes an Andante leading back to the opening Allegro, a completely different slow movement, and the final movement in ternary form and with many instances of right-hand thirds and sixths implying trumpets. Whether the piece is a keyboard reduction of a now lost orchestral concerto – perhaps even one of the earliest in the UK - or a work for solo harpsichord like those by, for example, J. S. Bach, Christian Petzold, Michael Scheuenstühl or Matthew Camidge in imitation of an orchestral piece, is open to conjecture. There is a full orchestral reconstruction of the four-movement version in *Musica Britannica* LXXXIV.

Technically not over-demanding, although the repeated right-hand leaps of quaver thirds which occur several times in the first movement need care, this charming version is far removed from the composer's volatile and dissonant *Fugues and Voluntaries* of 1728. The edition has been prepared for the organ (on which it also works very well) and presents an accurate text from the original print, with brief suggestions about interpretation of ornaments taken from contemporary and later sources. As a lighter counterpart to the longer and more detailed manuscript version, it works very well.

John Collins

RECORDINGS

Frescobaldi, Toccate - Capricci - Fiori Musicali, Francesco Cera (harpsichord/organ)
Arcana A463 (2019), recorded 2015-18, 7 CDs, 499'

This set of seven discs comprises the two books of Toccatas, the Capricci and the *Fiori Musicali*, played on nine excellent harpsichords and organs by Francesco Cera. The harpsichords are copies by Roberto Livi, Daniele Maria Giani, Graziano Bandini and Grant O'Brien of 16th and 17th century instruments by Tasuntino, Albana, attrib Guarracino and anon, while the historic organs from Bologna and Rome are by Cipri (1556), Guglielmi (1612) and Bonifazi (1638), plus an 'Antegnati' by Giani (2015). This is the first recording of the Bonifazi, after a recent restoration. The booklet lists the wide variety of pitches that are used (392, 408, 410, 415, 432 and 465), but does not mention anything specific about temperament other than 'meantone' (Frescobaldi certainly pushed at the boundaries of quarter-comma meantone, so the point is worth considering). The variety of sonorities heard is admirable, but by no means comprehensive, considering the range of other keyboard instruments available in early 17th-century Italy: spinet, virginals, ottavino, clavichord and chamber organ.

While the *Fiori Musicali* (including alternatim plainchant, here provided by Ensemble Arte Musica) are clearly liturgical in intention - as are the Magnificats and hymns included in the *Second Libro di Toccate* (1627) and a few Toccatas with elementary pedal parts - and therefore organ music, the other collections are suitable for any keyboard instrument. Cera maintains the basic structure of each of the publications, and variety is provided by changing instruments, usually several times per disc. Many of the dance pieces (such as the correntes) are brief, but the toccatas, canzonas and capriccios average about five minutes, providing some natural variety (Frescobaldi would of course never have expected a listener to experience a complete performance of these collections). It may be significant that the two longest works, the *Cento partite* and the *Partita sopra l'aria di Romanesca*, are the finest works here; but even these are rarely heard in recital these days.

This lavishly produced and beautifully recorded set is probably the finest yet of Frescobaldi's harpsichord and organ music; Francesco Cera is an expert and eloquent guide, alive to every nuance in the music, and extracting enormous variety from the scores. Yet, outstanding though this music is, it does not tell the whole story about this composer, and anyone wanting to explore Frescobaldi's other styles, in madrigal, song, polyphonic mass and chamber music, can also look for the 2011 complete works on 15 CDs, from Roberto Loreggian (harpsichord/organ) and others, on Brilliant Classics 94111.

Francis Knights

Johann Mattheson, 12 Suites for Harpsichord, Gilbert Rowland (harpsichord)
Divine Art Athene ath 23201 (2017), recorded 2016, 3 CDs, 173'

Johann Mattheson (1681-1764) was born and died in Hamburg. He was a composer, singer, organist, writer, diplomat and music theorist, and published his twelve suites for harpsichord in London in 1714. He was a good friend of Handel's, although it is said that he nearly killed him in a quarrel during a performance of Mattheson's opera *Cleopatra*.

Despite having written many choral works, including several oratorios, he is still not a very well known composer (unfortunately, much of his music was lost in the bombing of Hamburg during WW2). Besides one oratorio and his only surviving opera *Cleopatra*, some instrumental music has been preserved, including works for two harpsichords and these twelve suites for solo harpsichord. They consist of four, five or six movements: typically preludes or fantasies, allemandes, courantes, sarabandes, menuets, airs, gigues etc. Interestingly, a fugue starts Suite No.11 and other not-so-common forms are also used (for instance, a Tocatine opens Suite No.2, and a Boutade No.9). A striking feature of these works is their melodic richness and subtlety of expression. They are built on a solid harmonic structure with not many surprises, and yet distinctively different from that of his contemporaries. The coherence and stylistic unity of these works attest to Mattheson's personal and unique compositional language, and it is the combination of all these elements that gives a sense of continuity of the musical discourse.

This recording by Gilbert Rowland, on a 2005 French double by Andrew Wooderson, faithfully reflects this conception. His interpretation is both technically and stylistically very correct, yet imaginative and flexible. A most welcome discrete use of ornaments is displayed in the whole collection. Although not the only recording of the set, this three-CD collection is a valuable addition to the harpsichord discography and a useful reference for anyone interested in Johann Mattheson's music. It is highly recommended to listeners and performers (even more so, since the scores are easily available online). Hopefully this recording will help make these works better known to a broader audience.

Pablo Padilla

Robert Schumann, Intermezzi, Op.4, Piano Sonata in F# minor, Op.11, Tullia Melandri (fortepiano) Dynamic CDS7842 (2019), recorded 2018, 55'

Tullia Melandri has recorded Robert Schumann's Intermezzi Op.4 and Piano Sonata in F# minor Op.11 on a Joseph Simon fortepiano (Vienna, c.1830) an instrument built at the time Schumann was composing the works on this recording. This instrument was restored at the Laboratorio di Restauro del Fortepiano in Florence. Born in Faenza in 1976, Melandri's piano studies took place in Rovigo, Siena, Imola and Livorno. In 2002, she graduated from the University of Bologna in Culture and Heritage Conservation with a major in music, and her interest in historically informed performance took her to the Netherlands, where she studied fortepiano with Bart van Oort.

Schumann referred to the Op.4 Intermezzi, composed from April to July 1832 and published in 1833, as 'longer Papillons', but the Intermezzi are different to that Op.2 set in that they include almost no literary allusions. Only in Intermezzo No.2 is there any extra-musical reference, with the marking above the slower middle section being 'Meine Ruh' ist his…' ('My peace of mind has vanished', spoken by Gretchen in Goethe's *Faust*, Part 1). In his diary the 22-year old composer wrote: 'The Intermezzi are going to be something special – each note is going to be weighed up carefully'. Probing his musical world in depth and the influences feeding into it is not within the capability of every pianist. French philosopher Roland Barthes referred to Schumann as 'the musician of solitary images … an amorous and imprisoned soul that speaks to himself'; in 1846, German music critic Eduard Hanslick dismissed Schumann's music as too 'interior and strange' to have a future. Melandri's performance of the Op.4 Intermezzi is quick to involve the listener, as she conjures up the pieces with her generous, unfettered, quick-change artistry - their sense of spontaneity, of urgency, of whimsy, their forays into magical worlds, their lyricism and tenderness, here and there, tinged with just a hint of melancholy. Her technical savoir faire gives expression to Schumann's profuse pianistic textures and his preoccupation with counterpoint at the time. (The composer claimed that he had learned more about counterpoint by reading Jean Paul than he had by taking counterpoint classes.) Melandri wields the Simon fortepiano with mastery and pizzazz, its untamed timbre lending immediacy to the work's unprompted gestures and clarity to its densest textures.

The F# minor Piano Sonata showcases the complex interrelationship between Schumann's music and his life; his compositional style is wrought of many influences - the writings of Romantic authors Jean Paul Richter and E. T. A. Hoffmann, and the music of Beethoven, Schubert and Bach. No less relevant to the background of the work, however, is that it was begun when the 23-year old Schumann was engaged to marry Ernestine von Fricken, and finished when he became enamoured with the 15-year old virtuoso pianist Clara Wieck, who would become his wife in 1840. Completed in August 1835 and published anonymously, the sonata was dedicated to Clara under the names Florestan and Eusebius, contrasting characters (from Jean Paul's novel *Flegeljahre*, 'The Awkward Age') representing the eternal Dionysian-Apollonian dichotomy and, most pertinently, the two sides of Schumann's own personality - the turbulent and the reflective. As to

his approach to the sonata construction, Schumann reshapes it to serve his personal narrative, interpolating previous works into its weave. Melandri sets the work's immense soundscape before the listener. Its moments of forceful turbulence and insistence never emerge as unchecked or coarse. Her treatment of the second movement - Aria - (based on 'To Anna', a song he composed in 1828) is wistful and luminous, its melodic strands beautifully delineated. As to the enigmatic Scherzo with its polonaise-like Intermezzo and puzzling recitative, Melandri navigates its multipartite agenda with some elasticity, then to entice the listener into the fantasy and sound world of each new episode of the Finale, then to conclude with consummate bravura.

The piano pieces created by Schumann in the 1830s that are exceptionally emotional and intense. Melandri examines their multiplicity, engaging the Joseph Simon fortepiano's darker, slightly gritty but crystalline timbre and reliable mechanical reaction to give both actuality and emotional meaning to these works. The disc's sound quality is buoyant and vigorous, and this CD is a must-for those interested in how historic keyboards and the works originally played on them converge.

Pamela Hickman

20th Century Harpsichord Concertos, Jory Vinikour (harpsichord), Chicago Philharmonic, conducted by Scott Speck
Cedille CDR 90000 188 (2019),
recorded 2016/2018, 76'

This disc is both revelatory and hugely enjoyable, and I anticipate returning to it often. Walter Leigh's Concertino has never really impressed me much before, but Vinikour really finds the work's expressive heart. The slow movement in particular has some lovely moments, and Vinikour is fully alive to the music's lyrical qualities. His rendition of the very brief final Allegro is so engaging that one regrets that the composer did not make it a more extended movement. Not being a particular fan, I was expecting to find Rorem's Concertino (written in 1946 but recorded here for the first time) a curiosity rather than a work of genuine interest, and so it proved to be, with exceptions, such as the appearance of the solo cornet halfway through the first movement and the clusters offering the promise of something different towards its end. The third movement is certainly the most engaging, but the fact that it is technically well written does not for this reviewer compensate for its melodic poverty and lack of textural imagination in comparison with, say, de Falla or Poulenc.

Kalabis is of a very different calibre, and I am delighted to see his Concerto returning to concert programmes. As Vinikour writes in his detailed booklet notes, 'it is difficult to imagine a work, distinctly a product of the 20th century though it is, fitting the harpsichord so perfectly. Keyboard textures are perfectly balanced, avoiding heaviness. The string writing is masterful and allows the harpsichord to shine through at all moments'. All this is true, but it is the composer's own highly personal voice that makes the work what it is, a true giant amongst modern harpsichord concertos. It is extraordinary that this is the first recording of the work since Růžičková's in 1980, but it is an entirely worthy successor: Vinikour responds to every nuance of Kalabis's melodic style, clearly transmitting vast enjoyment of the work, and the Chicago Philharmonic conveys the orchestral textures, alternately delicate and spiky, with conviction.

In his notes, Vinikour describes Nyman's Concerto as 'electrifying and outrageous' and it is difficult to find two more apposite words for this engaging work. Vinikour is every bit as convincing as Chojnacka was in 1997, but the recorded sound here is more generous, allowing the textural detail in both harpsichord and strings to be more clearly heard. The work provides a stunning conclusion to what is an essential purchase for anyone interested in contemporary harpsichord music: a collection of very substantial but rarely heard works, beautifully performed and clearly recorded.

Ivan Moody