

# Harpsichord & *fortepiano*

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## Reviews

### BOOKS

**Peter Bavington, *Clavichord Tuning and Maintenance* (London, 2020), Keyword Press, <https://www.keyword-press.co.uk>, £19.50**

This invaluable book first appeared in 2007, and the new third edition takes account of two particular changes in the musical world since then: the arrival of tuning apps (though the author rightly states that the ability to tune by ear is still important) and the availability of online resources for things like parts supply. Two of the 19 chapters have been replaced with new text, and the whole book revised (there are now five appendices). Most of the bibliography is concerned with tuning, and only two general clavichord publications are listed: Brauchli's 1998 book and the dozen volumes of the Magnano proceedings. Those who do not have access to academic publisher repositories or have deep pockets are unlikely to have access to most of the other book or journal publications Bavington mentions, which is perhaps a pity (note that a bibliographic guide to the clavichord will appear in a future issue of *Harpsichord & Fortepiano*, as part of the Musician's Bookshelf series).

The volume is organized into four sections: Tuning, Maintenance, Tuning Schemes and Further Information. Each has clearly defined sections, so material is easily located, including separate sections for fretted (quadruple, triple and diatonic) and unfretted clavichords. There are no fewer than 20 tuning schemes, from Pythagorean and Meantone (quarter-, fifth-, sixth- and eighth-comma), through Kirnberger III, Vallotti and Young No.2 to Equal Temperament (one must not forget contemporary repertoire!). Given the wide variety of choices, a little more guidance in Chapter 6 and Part Three about the appropriate relationships between actual repertoire (Medieval-Renaissance-Baroque-Classical) and these various tuning schemes would have been welcome.

One other thought: this has developed into a truly thorough and comprehensive work of reference, 271 pages long, but is there now a danger that a beginner in either tuning or maintenance will almost be put off by the sheer expertise apparently required in keeping their instrument in good order? This is a particular concern with respect to temperaments, and it is best to have a way in to this; one approach would be to make a careful study of 'First steps in tuning' (p.13), then of the simple graphic system Bavington uses (p.150), followed by using

just one straightforward tuning process, perhaps that of Bendeler, c.1690 (p.192). As the author says of Bendeler III, 'Not only is it an excellent choice for most baroque music, it is also quite easy to set and forgiving of small errors'. Once that has been mastered, the player can then explore further from a point of some confidence, and explore the refinements that can help a clavichord sound and feel at its best.

Everyone with a clavichord should own this book (and much of the section on tuning will be useful to harpsichordists too); the revisions of the new edition are useful, but those who already have either of the previous versions will probably find those sufficient.

**Francis Knights**

### MUSIC

**Andrew Woolley, Heather Windram and Terence Charlston (eds), *London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 1040, English Keyboard Music c.1650-c.1700, Volume 2* (Oslo, 2021), Norsk Musikforlag N.M.O. 14826, <https://musikkforlagene.no>**

Keyboard music in Britain, from the last works of the virginalists (Tomkins) in the mid-1650s to the arrival of Handel at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, remains rather obscure, despite the work of scholars like Candace Bailey, Robert Klakowich and Andrew Woolley (whose own 2008 PhD covers this ground). Of course, there are pieces by Purcell, Locke and many others from that half-century, but relatively little even of this has become part of the keyboard canon (perhaps performers themselves are not that attracted by it), and indeed many of the composers are not well known, at least for their keyboard music. Of the 31 pieces in this Lambeth manuscript from the 1660s there are works (mostly dances) by William Lawes, Richard Ayleward, Albertus Bryne (very likely) and a few others; Charlston and Windram have already edited the complete Bryne keyboard music (Norsk Musikforlag, 2008), so they are on very familiar ground here. The main copyist is likely Bryne himself, who was organist of Westminster Abbey, but the only attributed music (in a different hand) is by Ayleward, Bryne's exact contemporary at Norwich Cathedral. In other words, this seems to be an interesting secular source of music mainly by church composers. In fact, it is very heavily fingered indeed, and thus likely intended for the use of a pupil or amateur player (the main portion appears to be a progressive sequence



for someone who has passed beyond the beginner stage). Some features of the fingerings repay careful examination: repeated notes usually require changing fingers, and the almost invariable right-hand trill finger is 3. This latter usage is quite rigid, and occasionally leads to some inelegant moments, such as bar 16 of the *Allmaine* (No.7) by the French lutenist Jean Mercure, where an ascending scale is fingered 3-4-5-5; in bar 27 a descending three-note figure is fingered 5-5-5, and (as often the case with original 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century fingering) one is left wondering whether their approach to musical line and articulation was rather different to ours, whether they simply cared less about such details, or (sometimes) about their level of competence. It is also curious that Bryne's Suite in B minor, which poses some interesting fingering issues, leaves some of those challenges unexplained (and the E major Corant and Saraband have no fingering at all), while some simpler music is covered in unnecessary detail.

This edition is the second in a series of six from the publisher Norsk Musikforlag, which includes late 17<sup>th</sup> century keyboard sources now in London, Oxford and Haslemere. The format here is straightforward and sensible: after a detailed Introduction, covering the source, the music and performance practice issues (temperament, instruments, repeats, fingering, ornamentation and so on) there follows a black and white facsimile of the source (at 85% of original size) together with a diplomatic transcription into relatively modern notation (all C-clefs become C3, for example). At the end of the volume is a 16-page Critical Commentary, written for once in prose rather than shorthand, and so very easy to engage with. Clearly written and having relatively little bleed-through, the facsimile original is certainly usable for performance, as the editors suggest - and given sufficient preparation as to reading six-line staves and some additional clefs. Serious players should be encouraged to engage with it as it stands; fortunately, none of the music is difficult.

The series is thorough enough to satisfy the needs of any scholar, but also presents students and performers with a chance to engage with original notation, and to discover repertoire than has to date remained rather unknown. In particular, the Ayleward pieces are well worth exploring.

Francis Knights

Alessandro Scarlatti, ed Francesco Tasini, *15 Fugues for Keyboard* (Bologna, 2020), Ut Orpheus HS282, [www.utorpheus.com](http://www.utorpheus.com)

To keyboard players Alessandro Scarlatti is known for his mercurial toccatas, many of which contain moto perpetuo fugues, but in volume VI of his complete keyboard works we find a large collection of instructions for beginners in harmony in a manuscript in the British Library, and also a set of 15 two-voice fugues, taken from a manuscript in the library of the Conservatorio di Musica S. Pietro a Majella, Naples. The heading of the latter tells us that they were copied with annotations by Nicola Sala, an eminent teacher of and writer on contrapuntal studies during the mid- to late-18<sup>th</sup> century, who used some of the subjects for his own versions in his *Regole del contrappunto pratico* and whose working of the first Fugue is included in the introduction.

Editor Francesco Tasini has arranged these Fugues in ascending order by key from D minor to C major, concluding with D major. Eight are in minor keys, with key signatures not exceeding two flats (C minor) and seven in major keys not exceeding two sharps (D major). Ten are written in the *stile osservato*, five in the innovative 'instrumental' style. Ten are in cut-C time, two in 3/8, the others in 3/4; their length varies from 44 to 100 double bars in cut-C and 65 to 147 bars in the triple time fugues. Some subjects contain jagged chromatic intervals, with further spicy dissonances being features of the editor's workings. Rarely in the cut-C fugues does movement exceed quavers, although shorter note values appear more frequently in the other metres. Many of the pieces contain indications of the contrapuntal device used on its appearance.

Tasini has collected a set of attractive pieces, following Scarlatti's own very loose approach to fugal writing. Some have occasional stretches of a tenth between voices, which will be need to be considered carefully by those with small hands, and No.III has several passages with left-hand octaves in quavers as well as indications for held notes for the pedals. These workings will be full of hints to players feeling minded to tackle the many sets of *partimenti* by Italian composers in particular. The introduction gives valuable information about the classification of the fugues according to the terminology in use during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and their didactic importance, as well as the *modus operandi* of the editor in producing a fully worked out piece in four voices, and should be read and assimilated carefully.

The edition can certainly be used as a stand-alone volume, but a copy of vol.VI (mentioned above), in which the original two-voice pieces are printed, will highlight the changes made to the original treble and bass as the Fugue progresses. These pieces provide an interesting



contrast to the composer's highly virtuosic works, and require a rather different approach to performance.

**John Collins**

*Anne Dawson Her Book* (1716), ed John Baxendale (Tynset, 2021), Lyrebird Music LBMP-015.

This anthology of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century music transcribed for keyboard instruments from a source in Manchester's Henry Watson collection complements the established high standards of the Lyrebird editions. The comprehensive scholarship offers an established Preface, comprising an historical overview of the document, contents and comprehensive notes on performance, plus Critical Commentaries and a Bibliography, the fruits of the editor's twenty-years' acquaintance with this source. It is unfortunate that there is an a lack of biographical information on Anne Dawson herself. Brown and Stratton's *British Musical Biography* lists three musicians with the name Dawson, two 19th century and from the north of England, and a third undated.

Dawson's collection, from the early Georgian era, was copied by three scribes whose work stemmed primarily from works by Italian composers, with a few pieces of English, German, French or anonymous provenance. The predominant genre comprises transcriptions of string concerti, a few solo keyboard pieces, and songs with figured bass, some with an obbligato instrument. There are a total of 39 pieces which follow the original double-ended ordering of the manuscript, with 25 in the forward portion and 14 in the reverse.

Ten keyboard transcriptions of Vivaldi's concerti from his Op.3 and 4 collections figure most prominently in the manuscript. Operatic excerpts include the overture to *Camilla* (Giovanni Bononcini), 'Choeur de Cybele' from *Atys* (Lully), five settings of the 'Aria d' Arminio' (Lotti, Vivaldi, Ziana and anonymous composers), while Handel is represented by two short arias from *Rinaldo* and *Marais* by 'La Fileuse' from his third book of pieces for viol. The solo keyboard music features pieces by English and other European composers including Babbell, Buttstett, Corelli and Handel, plus three anonymous Toccatas.

This edition provides a welcome addition to both the harpsichord and organ repertoires. Informative details and locations of contemporaneous instruments are supplied. Highly recommended.

**Christopher Kent**

**Muzio Clementi, ed Andrea Coen, *Selection of Practical Harmony vols.I and II* (Bologna, 2020), Ut Orpheus MC52.1/MC52.2.**

Muzio Clementi is well known today for his many piano compositions, but in 1801 he also published *Selection of practical harmony for the Organ or Piano Forte* in four volumes, amounting to over 200 pieces, including 'Voluntaries, Fugues, Canons & other Ingenious Pieces by the most Eminent Composers'. Volume 1 contains 62 pieces, mainly fugal and in from two to four voices and of various length and tempi, by some 20 different 18<sup>th</sup> century composers; some of those whose contribution is of just one fairly substantial piece which will probably not be well known - for example, Umstatt, Caresana and Perti.

The opening seven pages are devoted to the 'Epitome of counterpoint', with numerous examples of various simple, florid and double counterpoint from Fux, Palestrina, Kirnberger and Martini. There follow 13 pieces by Johann Kirnberger, several of which are didactic in purpose. Larger-scale pieces follow twelve short ones, including nine artfully constructed Fugues by Johann Albrechtsberger, one of which is based on the ascending and descending hexachord, five of the nine Toccatas and Fugues by Johann Eberlin published in 1747, six Fugues by Porpora taken from violin sonatas and a further five pieces by C. P. E. Bach, including a Voluntary, two Fugues, a free Fantasia and Fugue and the piece in F minor from *Exempel nebst 18 Probestuecken*, followed by a Fugue in F major. J. S. Bach is represented by the *Pièce d'orgue* BWV572 and the French Suite No.5 in G. The Fantasia and Fuga by Ernst Bach is worth exploring, alternating free and stricter, barred sections in the Fantasia followed by a taut fugue. Clementi himself arranged the Fuge from Mozart's *Requiem*. There are also several short Canons and Minuets by various composers.

Volume 2 contains 47 mainly fugal pieces by nine 18<sup>th</sup> century composers, each of whom was represented by pieces in volume 1, and opens with six more attractive Fugues by Albrechtsberger, followed by the remaining four Toccatas (here called 'Voluntary') and Fugues by Eberlin. Nos.1 and 2 are double fugues and No.4 is intensely chromatic. Next is a fascinating arrangement by Clementi himself of Mozart's well-known Fantasia in F minor K608 adapted for the organ or pianoforte; comparison with other arrangements is well worthwhile. Five pieces by C. P. E. Bach follow, including a Fantasia which dissolves into arpeggios and a solid four-part Fuga in C minor, its subject including a descending



major seventh, a Fantasia in C from the sixth collection of *Clavier-Sonaten und freie Fantasien*, the Solfeggio in C minor, a long well-worked Fuga a4 in C minor and a three-movement Sonata in B flat, similar to his 1755 set of four written specifically for the organ (marked here as 'composed expressly for the organ', but entitled *per il cembalo* in the manuscript referred to as the source). J. S. Bach's *manualiter* Toccata in D minor BWV913 is followed by 11 Fugues by Handel, including the set of six originally published in 1735 but taken from a manuscript of 1760 according to the source, and five more taken from the Eight Great Suites for harpsichord of 1720.

Four multi-movement Sonatas, each opening with a prelude – that of No.1 is dramatic, with plenty of demisemiquaver passages – and a rigidly academic fugue, also including dances in Nos.1-3, taken from a set of 12 for organ and harpsichord published in 1742 by Martini, offer quite a test to the performer. The Siciliana in No.1 is plaintive and the Corrente offers an unusual switch from 3/4 to C time in each section. These are followed by a Fuga in F minor by Alessandro Scarlatti, with frequent changes from 6/8 to 3/4, and two loosely contrapuntal Fugas by his son Domenico, including the well-known 'Cat's Fugue' in G minor K30 and another in D minor K41. The volume closes with eight pieces attributed to Frescobaldi, but the three Fugas are actually Canzonas by Gottlieb Muffat, No.44 here being a splendid work in four sections. Genuine pieces by the Roman composer include three Canzonas and the *Toccata di durezza e ligature* from his 1627 publication and a Corrente from his 1615 book.

These well produced volumes, each with almost 200 pages of music, contain a helpful preface in English describing the purpose of the work, an ornament table from Clementi's *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* and an invaluable table of sources for each piece. Information on the composers, especially the less well-known ones, including dates and place of work, would have been helpful. It is a pity that the volumes are so expensive as they contains an excellent, serviceable selection of pieces, only a few requiring pedals. Many will be invaluable for recitals and teaching. I look forward to reviewing the remaining two volumes in this series.

John Collins

## RECORDINGS

*The Complete Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, Pieter-Jan Belder (harpsichord/virginals/organ), Brilliant Classics 95915 (2020), 15 CDs, 974'

Pieter-Jan Belder needs no special introduction as a performer of distinction. His previous catalogue includes complete surveys of Rameau and Soler as well as the complete sonatas of Scarlatti and Bach's '48', Art of Fugue and Toccatas. He is no stranger, then, to the large-scale. A recording of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book in its entirety, though, is a stern test indeed; the project developed over about a decade as did the varied *instrumentarium* – a most impressive chronicle of acquisitions, gifts, loans and lucky discoveries (the individual CD sleeves detail the several instruments involved). We must be grateful both for Belder's resilience and enthusiasm for such a mighty undertaking, and that Brilliant Classics decided that his one-off miscellany of works from FVB recorded in 2010 and including works by Byrd, Farnaby, Tomkins, Gibbons, Morley and Bull's famous 'Walsingham' variations – the opening piece in the collection – was worth continuing to completion in the present 15-CD set.

The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge Mu MS 168) is the largest manuscript source of keyboard music from Jacobean England. Its contents (297 pieces spanning the period roughly 1550-1612) comprise largely works by English composers (and of English composers working on the continent, such as John Dowland and Peter Philips), along with some works by continental composers such as Striggio, Lassus, Marenzio and Sweelinck. As a physical document, Fitzwilliam falls into two discrete parts: Nos.1-95 (ending with a Toccata); and Nos.96-297 (beginning with a Toccata). Academic controversy has lately surrounded the identity of FVB's copyist. The most recent scholarship tends to the view that it was indeed the work of Francis Tregian the Younger (c.1574-1617), a Catholic recusant and noted scholar who had worked extensively abroad (principally at the English College in Rome, evidently also in Brussels, where he may have encountered Philips). At some point after his return to England in 1606, Tregian incurred a substantial debt, leading to his incarceration in the Fleet Prison, where, between about 1611 and 1616 he worked on assembling the collection (and, indeed, other musical volumes noted in a list of his effects compiled after his death – some of which still survive, providing helpful reference points for documenting his handwriting). The fine, broad-ranging booklet for this recording, authored by Jon



Baxendale (who also edited a complete three-volume FVB edition with Francis Knights for Lyrebird Music in 2020), outlines Tregian's involvement in scrupulous bibliographic detail, setting FVB in a scholarly, historical and musical context that adds significantly to the value of this project. Baxendale's account also introduces us to the composers found in the manuscript, and to the main types of work that Tregian included: dance genres such as the pavan, galliard and alman; variation sets; ground bass compositions; fantasias (contrapuntal works variously entitled 'voluntary', 'verse' or 'fancy'); works based on a Cantus Firmus; keyboard intabulations of vocal works made by Peter Philips and drawn from a variety of published sources from the later 16th and early 17th centuries; and finally toccatas.

How to organise a 15-CD account of this massive collection? Beyond the original miscellany from 2010 (CDs 1-2 of the whole survey), Belder opted for a satisfying sequence largely devoted to particular composers or groups of composers: Byrd (CDs 3-4); Philips and Sweelinck (CDs 5-6); Farnaby and Bull (CDs 7-8); Mundy, Richardson, Tallis, Hooper, Morley and Tomkins (CDs 9-10); Bull again, this time partnered by Tisdall, Parsons, Inglott, Oldfield, Oytermayre, Marchant, Johnson, Peerson and others – including a substantial number of unattributed pieces from FVB (CDs 11-12); the collection turns finally to further works by Farnaby and Byrd, concluding with a handful of anonymous preludes and dances (CDs 13-15).

Belder's playing is, as one would expect, of a very high order both musically and technically. His articulation is admirably clear, clean, precise – directed towards convincing phrase-shaping and with a careful eye on the broader architectural picture. This is apparent from the very opening track (Bull's magisterial and virtuosic variations on 'Walsingham'), in which the tempi are judiciously chosen to allow both intensity of melodic line and enduring clarity in Bull's complex passagework and textures as the set – over 15 minutes in length – unfolds along its journey. Here, as elsewhere in this multi-volume recording, Belder is well-served by a gloriously vibrant 1999 instrument by Cornelius Bom. 'Walsingham' sets a very high benchmark for the rest of the set, and Belder does not disappoint. Each of the instruments used across the 15 CDs is sensitively recorded in the various locations and acoustics visited. The collaboration between performer, instrument, acoustic and recording engineer results in an admirable consistency across the near-300 pieces of FVB, achieved across several years. This consistency is complemented by the delicious variety of sound. The Bom harpsichord

mentioned above is beautifully partnered here and there with the richer, fruitier tones of Martin Skowronek's 2007 Ruckers copy (already to be heard on CD1). A 1995 Bom virginals lugubriously conveys Phillips' setting of Caccini's 'Amarylli' (CD2, track 7), contrasting nicely with a delicate-toned 1604 Ruckers original from the Accardi Collection (heard on the all-Byrd CD4, tracks 11-20). Belder uses this historic instrument to alluring effect, especially in 'All in a Garden Green', attractively shading off some of the melodic phrase-ends and expertly maintaining the textural clarity throughout. What these Byrd tracks also reveal is how effortlessly the very light-toned treble line carries over the supporting harmonic or polyphonic structures on this virginals.

A review such as this cannot adequately attend to the many delights of this magisterial achievement. There is much to be admired regarding the immediate contrasts of instruments within a CD and the recurrence of a particular instrument at various points within the set. Likewise, Belder's choices of instrument to spotlight the contrasting generic and idiomatic content of FVB is – for me – very convincing; others may have made different choices, of course. The thoughtfulness that has gone into the whole project undoubtedly coheres, though – and remains rewarding on repeat hearings. So if you already know the contents of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, you will find Belder's account leads you to reflect further on this high watermark of early English keyboard music; and if you know it scarcely or not at all, it will offer rich and varied delights of style, idiom, genre and organology all wrapped up in expert performances in an informative and very attractively produced and easy-to-use format from Brilliant Classics. Highly recommended!

John Irving

***Sweelinck: Complete Harpsichord and Organ Music, Daniele Boccaccio (organ/harpsichord), Brilliant Classics 95643 (2020), 6 CDs, 384'***

Sweelinck's 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary passed last autumn more quietly than would have been the case in normal times, but keyboard players at least took the opportunity to explore the repertoire. In preparation for the celebrations, Daniele Boccaccio recorded this complete cycle in 2018/19, on both harpsichord and organ. Each of the six discs is planned as a mixed recital, and although only one harpsichord is used (a copy of a 1679 Couchet single), three beautiful original organs are heard: by Schnitger 1678 (Oederquart), Scherer 1612/13 (Lemgo) and Anon c.1550 (Ostönnen). The Schnitger in particular has a truly delightful tone, as is heard in the opening Chromatic Fantasia, probably Sweelinck's



best-known work (although plausibly also attributed to John Bull). The punchy Scherer reeds, heard in the variations *Onder een linde groen*, remind us that the regal was a favourite Renaissance instrument; elsewhere, some slightly uneven winding of this historic organ seems more of a charm than an irritation.

Sweelinck's keyboard music falls into five main groups: fantasias, toccatas, chorales, variations and dances; only one chorale requires pedal, but some works need two manuals (echo fantasias). The style mixes the German chorale with Italianate counterpoint and the variation technique learned directly from the English virginalists, especially Peter Philips and John Bull, both of whom worked on the continent.

The Italian recitalist Daniele Boccaccio studied in Florence and Vienna, and his last recording for Brilliant Classics was Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier*, entirely on the organ. Having learnt Sweelinck's complete oeuvre, he is entirely inside the style, and this is playing of great maturity and fluency: he makes the strongest possible case for the music, and one can ask for no more.

The economics of record production today mean that a Sweelinck set like Ton Koopman's for Philips (1981), using eight different instruments from around Europe (six of them originals), is hardly any longer viable, but this new recording offers far better sound – and indeed, better-sounding instruments – than Koopman. One might regret the lack of a virginal or a clavichord as well – two instruments the composer would have been very familiar with – but at under £20 for a set of this quality, that is a mere cavil.

**Francis Knights**

*Jean Henry D'Anglebert, Complete Works for Harpsichord, Karen Flint (harpsichord), Plectra Music PL22101 (2021), 3 CDs, 242'*

Parisian organist Jean Henry D'Anglebert (1629-1691) arose from humble beginnings to associations with royalty (organist to Louis XIV's brother and then harpsichordists to the king), and the leading musicians of the day (De la Barre, Roberday, Lully). His elegantly printed 1689 collection, the source of most of his surviving music, notes that many of the pieces were written for the king's daughter, the Princesse de Conti. His music was not much mentioned by French writers, but seems to have been appreciated in Germany, and the 1689 print was likely known to Bach, who copied its ornament table. At his death D'Anglebert owned four harpsichords, including one by Ruckers. This new

recording explores that link by using three original Ruckers instruments, of 1627 (rebuilt by Blanchet in 1701) and 1635 (expanded from a small single in France in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century in at least three stages), and an attributed one of 1620 which may in fact be by Denis c.1690 (again, enlarged several times later, possibly by Blanchet, but incorporating genuine Ruckers fragments). All three were restored by John Phillips, who also tuned them in *temperament ordinaire* at A392 and 409 for this recording.

Karen Flint, the owner of a splendid harpsichord collection in Delaware, has been using these instrument for an ongoing series of French clavecin CDs for the label Plectra over the past decade; other performers in the series have included Davitt Moroney and Trevor Pinnock. Her previous recordings include the complete Chambonnières, Louis Couperin, Lèbegue, Hardel and Jacquet de la Guerre, so D'Anglebert was an obvious next step.

The 1689 *Pièces de clavecin* collection comprises 57 pieces grouped into four keys (G, G, D and A, plus six organ works not included here); most are suite dances, prefaced by unmeasured preludes and supplemented by various chaconnes, airs and the like. The longest single work is a set of variations on the Folies d'Espagne, and there are also arrangements of pieces from Lully operas, and a fine 'Tombeau de M. de Chambonnières' in memory of his court harpsichord predecessor. They are played in print order, and supplemented by a number of works manuscript sources.

The recorded sound is slightly on the close side, excellent for clarity but at risk of making the instruments sound a little 'oversize', while the performances focus on a graceful moderation that seems very appropriate for their time and place. Something of the drama and sheer elan in the music is occasionally missing (for example, in those chaconnes), and the Chambonnières tombeau is perhaps also a little prosaic; compare for example the energy Arthur Haas brings to the music on his 1988 Wildboar selection of works. The booklet notes are by leading expert Bruce Gustafson, and praise to the designer for (unusually for a CD) actually using a font large enough to read. Having the complete D'Anglebert clavecin works on three fine original instruments is most welcome, and this is a desirable addition to Plectra's growing catalogue of harpsichord recordings.

**Francis Knights**



**J. S. Bach, *Harpsichord Works*, Vols. 1-3, Richard Lester (harpsichord), Nimbus 5946, 5948, 5950 (2017-2019), three 2-CD sets**

Richard Lester's complete survey of J. S. Bach's keyboard music follows other similar marathon projects of his, such as the complete sonatas of Scarlatti and his much lauded Frescobaldi set. From these first three volumes we can perhaps conjecture that his Bach will be a similar benchmark. Lester's playing – in a recording market where 'new' and 'different' manners of playing Bach (two extremely striking Goldberg sets in the past five years are good examples) – never allows himself to intrude upon the music. Each CD is organised as a recital, drawing on all facets of Bach's oeuvre, including works such as the Inventions and Sinfonias and individual preludes and fugues from the Well-Tempered Clavier. Such programming allows works that are often lumped together and easily passed over to be considered alongside more substantial works, and Lester offers in the Inventions a level of care and consideration not always heard on disc, rather than merely blasting through them as didactic exercises.

The first volume begins with the Goldberg Variations, and Lester's playing of the aria alone warrants purchase of this volume. This particular author did find some of the longer ornaments in later variations (and across other works) to be a little lacking in variety and on the fast side, but that is merely a point of taste, and Lester's ornaments are on the whole judicious and well managed. Whilst his tempi in the more virtuoso variations are perhaps on the steadier side, this merely allows much of the detail to be properly heard and assessed, aided by the superb clarity of the recording. One could perhaps aspire to a little more direction and velocity in some of the Toccatas and the Chromatic Fantasia, but there are plenty of performances in that manner elsewhere. Lester's playing of the English suites is characterised by tasteful ornamentation and a highly convincing use of inequality, and the third English suite stands out as being particularly riveting. Such skill in the French style is naturally at its most obvious in the great Overture in the French style, BWV831. Lester adopts a more full-bloodedly French approach to some of these movements than we are perhaps used to, but it is entirely convincing, and never obfuscates Bach's notated intentions. Perhaps the most enjoyable playing on these discs are the preludes and fugues from Book 1 of the 48, where the full range of his playing is most on display. The G major prelude is wonderfully energetic and well-shaped, the E flat major demonstrates some wonderful contrasts (indeed, the prelude is one of the highlights of the second volume),

and the B flat minor is a masterclass in gently deployed rhetorical gestures.

Each volume contains two discs, together with extensive programme notes by Lester, including a substantial section on dance and French-inspired playing in the second volume. The recordings were made on a double-manual instrument by Colin Booth after a 1710 Fleischer instrument tuned in Niedhardt, which adds wonderful colour in places. The exception to this is the D major toccata, which has been recorded on an Italian single in Werckmeister III. Lester is to be particularly commended for his variety of registrations – the 4' appears often in tutti passages, and the buff stop gets a good outing in the C minor partita. These discs contain measured, careful and crafted playing that is most rewarding to listen to, presenting Bach's music in its pure beauty, rather than using it as a springboard for any self-edifying theatrics. I look forward to hearing the other four volumes.

**Luke Mitchell**

**J. S. Bach: *Goldberg Variations*, Malcolm Archer (harpsichord), Convivium Records CRO 64 (2021), 65'**

It is sometimes hard to qualify the addition of another Goldberg Variations to the hundred or so that are commercially available, and listeners have a host of artists to choose from, with names that are both familiar and unfamiliar to Bach devotees. Harpsichord apparatchiks will undoubtedly move in the direction of a Gustav Leonhardt or Pierre Hantaï, though others might still catch the eye when casting around in want of a purchase. Trevor Pinnock's recording on Archiv is still available through various streaming services and, though over 30 years old, remains a tour-de-force recording that is worthy of re-release. Lovers of the piano might look to Murray Perahia or Glen Gould, and while this review is ostensibly for harpsichordists, there remains much to listen to in theirs as well as a host of other pianists' performances. There are also organ versions, arrangements for harp, and it comes as no surprise to see that a version for accordion has been released on the Naxos label. In fact, there are so many choices today that if one were to ask if a specific performance could be recommended, the answer should be 'no', since much rests on the listeners' tastes and what they expect to gain from any particular recording.

I use 'should' since this new recording by Malcolm Archer on Convivium Records is a convincing rendition that has none of the dryness that might be associated with historically informed performance. Instead, it is one



where knowledge and understanding is combined with a savvy musical instinct to provide a cogent and purposeful interpretation. Archer has taken the music as intended, and there is none of the tendency found in modern performances where listeners are browbeaten with what hipsters today would call 'information overload': the reverence for Bach leads some to take an over-detailed approach in which every note has been parsed, graded and evaluated. But this cannot ever have been Bach's plan, especially for a work that relies as much on its humour as it does its seriousness. Indeed, we might use the analogy of a party at Bach's house to describe the fluctuating *affekt* of the cycle, which the composer's biographer Johann Nikolaus Forkel explains succinctly: 'As soon as they were assembled, a chorale was first struck up. From this devout beginning, they proceeded to jokes which were frequently in strong contrast'. Archer is always one with a lively wit and has done much to convey the spirit of the variations by balancing seriousness with a playful, if not mischievous, sense of humour. Despite this, the playing is elegant and poised, and though I have a few minor quibbles concerning phrasing and articulation, these are of little consequence. Tempi are well-judged. It is not enough to guess speeds in a cycle such as the Goldberg: they should be chosen according to what has (and what is to) come. Indeed, if I have to mention a fault with this performance, it is an error common to every recording I have heard. This is where the ultimate variation is treated as a sombre, quasi-religious ordeal of learned counterpoint rather than the knees-up *Kebräus* intended. Forkel again:

... [T]hey proceeded to sing popular songs partly of comic and also partly of indecent content, all mixed together on the spur of the moment. ... This kind of improvised harmonising they called a *quodlibet*, and not only could they laugh over it quite whole-heartedly themselves, but it also aroused just as hearty and irresistible laughter in all who heard them.

The recording is quality is first-rate: the instrument, an Alan Gotto harpsichord after Christian Zell (1728), is clean but very bright, loud, and has quite a fruity bass. Such a combination can be problematic for engineers, though this has been handled with skill and a good deal of care.

I would still like to hear the Naxos accordion version simply for its novelty value, but if asked to recommend any one recording, I would not hesitate to say that this particular rendition offers more than most.

**Jon Baxendale**

**Leopold Kozeluch, Complete Sonatas, Jenny Soonjin Kim (fortepiano), Brilliant Classics 95984 (2020), 12 CDs, 745'**

**Kozeluch, Complete Music for Piano 4-Hands, Marius Bartocci and Ilario Gregolettto (fortepiano/square piano), Brilliant Classics 96025 (2022), 2 CDs, 85'**

The second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century is unusual in its musical domination by just a few well-known composers. Of course there were dozens more talented and able musicians working throughout Europe and further afield, but the likes of Stamitz, Cannabich, Ordóñez, Pleyel are not the household names that they were at the time. One who has particularly suffered is the Bohemian musician Leopold Kozeluch (or Koželuch) (1747-1818), who some then preferred to Mozart. Based in Vienna from 1778, he promoted the fortepiano over the harpsichord (the title pages of most of his published sonatas, which mention harpsichord, notwithstanding), and Christopher Hogwood's four-volume 2010-2015 Bärenreiter edition of his complete sonatas, and Kemp English's recorded cycle of them for the Grand Piano label (2011-2013), has recently brought his name to the fore, not unrelated to the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary four years ago.

Now, a new complete recording of the 50 piano sonatas by Jenny Soonjin Kim of Claremont Graduate University, in California (where the dozen discs were recorded in 2013-2018, all using a 1795 Walther copy made by Michael Walker in 1987) offers a very economical way to sample these works. The sonatas are performed in Hogwood's order, meaning the listener can follow a chronology from 1780 to 1793 (the first 36 sonatas, indicating Kozeluch's high output), followed by some pieces published in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century but possibly written earlier, illness by then having curtailed his activities somewhat. Sonatas No.44 and 45 are likely the earliest works, dating from the 1770s. The Sonata No.6 in C minor of 1780 must surely have been known to Beethoven - compare his *Pathétique* sonata.

Soonjin Kim finds plenty of poetry in the slow movements such as the Poco Adagio of Op.1/2, and the fast movements are nimble and well-paced without being driven - the opening Allegro molto of the E flat Sonata Op.13/1 is a good example. Perhaps some opportunities for drama are missed, as in the first and last movements of Sonata No.15, which are almost too elegant, given their C. P. E. Bach musical underpinnings.



The recording acoustics seem rather more resonant than is optimal for the music in the early discs, while the studio sonority used for the later CDs is compromised by close microphone placing; as an example, the *Allegro agitato* of the F minor Sonata Op.17/1 sounds rather odd, harsh in the treble and boomy in the bass. The tuning on the later discs is also less good. So, while there is excellent playing to be found here, problems with the recorded sound relegates it to second place behind the Kemp English cycle, despite its large price advantage. Regardless, the music is well worth getting to know, and Kozeluch is certainly reclaiming his place in musical history.

As well as the solo keyboard music of Kozeluch, Brilliant Classics have also issued a set containing his complete piano duets, played by Marius Bartocci and Ilario Gregoletto. They use two original instruments, a Schantz grand of c.1805 and a Longman & Broderip square of 1789 – the recording of both is excellent, even if the tuning of the square is not always perfectly stable. The seven sonatas (one is actually called a ‘Duo’) are in two to four movements, and Kozeluch is as likely to start with an Adagio as an Allegro. Although such four-hand repertoire catered to middle-class amateurs (who could only muster one keyboard at home, rather than the two needed for duos), both *primo* and *secundo* are of equal difficulty, and the composer sets each of them technical challenges; some works may indeed have been intended for professional performance, suggests the booklet notes by Bartocci. As with the solo sonatas, the works inhabit the period of Haydn and Mozart without in any way sounding like either, and some striking pre-Romantic hints add to their appeal. The performances convey Bartocci and Gregoletto’s enjoyment of the music, by turns charming, energetic or dramatic, making this a strong recommendation for anyone interested in piano music from the classical period.

Francis Knights

## News and Listings

### OBITUARIES

Organbuilder **Ernest Copeman Hart** (1934-16 January 2022), founder of Copeman Hart & Company Ltd, has died the age of 87.

Organist and conductor **Francis Jackson** (2 October 1917-10 January 2022), Organist of York Minster 1946-82, has died the age of 104.

### CONFERENCES

The meeting **Domenico Scarlatti’s Sonatas on harpsichord and piano: performance praxis and virtuosity** will take place at the Conservatorio di Musica Giovan Battista Martini, Bologna on 1-2 April 2022. Website <http://www.consbo.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/1690>.

The conference **Musicking: Culturally Informed Performance Practices** will take place at the University of Oregon on 18-23 April 2022. Website <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/musicking/call-for-proposals/>

The Galpin Society’s conference **Domestic Music Making and its Instruments** will take place at the University of Edinburgh on 23-25 June 2022. Website <http://www.euchmi.ed.ac.uk/gxtp.html>.

The 50th **Mediaeval and Renaissance International Music Conference** (Med-Ren 2022) will take place at Uppsala University, Sweden, on 4-7 July 2022. Website <https://musik.uu.se/medren-2022-en>

### TEACHERS

Lists of teachers of early keyboard instruments can be found at <https://www.harpischord.org.uk/teachers> (UK) and <https://www.hpschd.nu/teach.html> (Australia and the East Asia).

### MUSICAL INSTRUMENT AUCTIONS

Brompton’s (UK), <https://www.bromptons.co>  
Christie’s (USA), <https://www.christies.com/departments/Musical-Instruments>  
Gardiner Houlgate (UK), <https://www.gardinerhoulgate.co.uk>  
Gorrings’s (UK), <https://www.gorrings.co.uk>  
Ingles Hayday (UK), <https://ingleshayday.com>  
Peter Wilson (UK), <https://www.peterwilson.co.uk>  
Piano Auctions (UK), <http://www.pianoauctions.co.uk>