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Editor: Richard Lawrence

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Contents

Note from the Editor:

Once again, *Leading Notes* is late. Our apologies. But I believe it's worth waiting for. After an unavoidable gap, Helen Garrison is back with another interview: the versatile Paul Nicholson, this time. There are also two anniversary contributions: Nicholas Rast brings his analytical skills to bear on the Schubert F minor Fantasia for piano duet (of which, by the way, there's a fine new fortepiano recording by Malcolm Bilson and Robert Levin on DG Archiv 453 491-2); and Fabrice Fitch pays a unique tribute to Ockeghem with an original composition.

Plans are well ahead with the next issue, devoted to Philip II of Spain, who died four hundred years ago. I will risk a hostage to fortune by saying that it will be out, as it should, in the spring. In the meantime, if it's too late to wish you a Merry Christmas, at least I hope you will have a Happy New(ish) Year.

—RICHARD LAWRENCE

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FROM FAZAKERLEY TO FORTEPIANOS

Helen Garrison talks to Paul Nicholson.

A few months ago I was searching for a continuo player to speak on a radio documentary comparing the various styles of keyboard accompaniment. I already had an opera repetiteur and a Lieder accompanist, but a Baroque representative was missing. 'What about Paul Nicholson?' suggested my presenter, David Owen Norris. 'He's a personable chap.' Yes, a name well known on the period instrument circuit, and only that week I had attended a concert at the Wigmore Hall in which the very same Paul Nicholson had been playing chamber organ in an enterprising and unlikely project involving the viol consort Fretwork and the pop singer Elvis Costello. A couple of weeks later I had an excellent interview in the can and possibly the best explanation of figured bass I have ever heard – why was it not made that simple at college? It seemed a natural step to choose Nicholson for my next Leading Notes profile, and so it was agreed that I would provide the drink and the questions, while he provided the venue, the food and some answers.

When you first meet the 44-year-old Nicholson, a noticeable Liverpool accent immediately gives away his origins. Having lived in the Pool myself during the early 70s, I can confirm as truth the myth that every young Scouser harbours adolescent dreams of becoming either a footballer or a pop star. Paul, while sharing a musical talent with his more famous Beatles namesake, chose to forsake the obligatory electric guitar for a more conventionally classical instrument. His earliest musical education came in the form of a Local Education Authority scholarship to study piano.

And what of the other arm of the myth? As we sip an aperitif gin and tonic in the kitchen of my host's North London studio flat, I consider discussing whether or not Robbie Fowler will be called up for the England World Cup team and the sticky problem of Steve McManaman's finishing skills. It is soon clear, however, that my inherited passion for the Reds is not shared, although Mr Nicholson has occasionally been spotted treacherously cheering on Spurs with his two sons at White Hart Lane. It seems that being a footballer or a pop star was not an ambition. The Liverpudlian singing spirit is nevertheless hard to suppress, and as a boy he became a chorister at his local parish church, fondly known as "Fazakerley Abbey". The choir master wasn't a professional, according to Paul, 'but he conjured up an atmosphere and wonderful colours from the modest two-manual organ there. He created an aura of space and infinity, distance and awe, and what he did with the last verses of hymns made my hair stand on end. Somehow this kind of music was more immediate and hands-on than piano playing.' This early interest in the organ was revealed when one day the young choirboy was caught gazing at the console. The organist allowed him to play it and from then on Paul never looked back. The seeds of interest in the harpsichord were also sown at a tender age, but for slightly less romantic reasons, as Paul explains. 'I wanted to play the theme from Danger Man, starring Patrick Magoohan, with that wonderful dirty noise that only an amplified harpsichord can make.'

The Nicholson family loved music, though neither parent was professionally trained, and the Third Programme was a major part of daily life in the household. Paul was encouraged to make his career in music and, with the help of a master at Liverpool Collegiate School, Roger Golder, he won a school scholarship to attend Dartington College of Arts at the age of 16. Many of us have experienced the intoxicating atmosphere of Dartington Summer School, and the effect was no less profound on Paul during his two-year residency. While throwing various unidentifiable substances into a frying pan, he waxes lyrical about the wonders he encountered in this famous Devonshire establishment. Alongside 'A' level studies, harpsichord lessons began with Roy Truby, and organ lessons with John Wellingham. Through the latter Paul learned that an organ, far from being an inexpressive instrument restricted by its mechanism, could breathe, phrase and be a living thing, especially in Baroque music. 'You have to work at phrasing on the organ, it's not like singing, you have to make emphases through articulation. Without this, it's lifeless.'

As Paul had been immersed in church music from an early age, the musical steps taken from Liverpool to Dartington were not tremendously wide. The culture shock was a different question entirely. 'I suppose it was mainly on an emotional, romantic level. I was thrown into a hubbub of exchange, so to speak...let's not go any further...suffice it to say I always remember the hot, sweaty summers, which was a lot for a young gawky kid to take.' With a nostalgic chuckle he adds an alarming amount of curry powder to whatever is simmering in the frying pan. 'I also got hayfever there for the first time, I'd never been confronted by so much pollen. You don't get that in Fazakerley, where the predominant aroma is from the Tate and Lyle factory and the nearest thing to countryside is the Aintree race course.'

From Dartington, Paul went to York University and studied music under Professor Wilfrid Mellers. 'My final degree wasn't stunning,' Paul admits, 'I don't think I was interested in excelling academically although maybe I could have done. My thirst for learning has developed much more since, which I think is a fairly common experience.' York University was and is renowned for contemporary music performance and composition, so even though David Munrow's influence was beginning to be felt around that time, those interested in earlier repertoire were still small in number. 'We were really the first generation at York who did other things than composition and modern music, but I wouldn't describe us as pioneers, we were picking up vibes from things happening elsewhere in the country.' That is not to say the contemporary music scene was ignored. York was a composer's paradise, then strongly rooted in the Berio school. Nicholson took part in new music ensembles there and learned a great deal, but he was never really wedded to it.

At York, Nicholson's organ teacher was Nicholas Danby, who sadly died earlier this year. 'He was a major influence on me technically, but opposite in many ways to Wellingham. Nicholas told me to play super legato, probably for good reasons. I had a bit of a crisis of faith, but it all went into the melting pot and I developed my own style after a time.' One could say exactly the same thing about Paul's cooking. What comes out of the melting pot on this occasion is a combination of fish, leeks and the aforementioned curry, which, rather to my surprise, in fact tastes rather good. We eat in the main room of the flat, which is dominated by a Mark Stevenson double-manual harpsichord, jostling for space with a small dining table, a sofa and shelves full of music and LP records. Clearly the CD age has not made much of an impact on Mr Nicholson. The main course is going down well, and the conversation moves on to life after York University.

Nicholson's first job was as assistant organist at Selby Abbey in Yorkshire, and a further living was made teaching piano and giving recitals. A move to London followed shortly afterwards and Paul was in the market for continuo playing, but it was a long time before he got anywhere. The industry was much smaller then and a few people had most of the playing. He had to make money somehow so he taught in various institutions, accompanied recorder groups and for seven years was "Mr Music" in a Shoreditch primary school. 'I wasn't qualified so I worked in collaboration with the class teacher. It was an old Victorian school and each floor had a piano which I had to wheel into the classroom. Everybody always knew when I was coming as I crashed through the corridor behind an upright. I've even got a scar from when I slipped on the newly polished floor and hit my chin on the piano.' Accidents apart, did this experience inspire him to become a properly qualified teacher? 'No, but I developed a tremendous admiration for the profession. I was very happy at Shoreditch, the kids were canny Eastenders and they liked the phenomenon of having a live musician in school. Their only experience of music was on TV, so I earned popularity playing themes such as Coronation Street by ear. The biggest accolade I received was 'You should go into the pub piano player of the year competition, sir.'

Continuo work gradually began coming in. During the early 80s the Hanover Band was just starting up and Nicholson played in some of their first concerts. Other bands with whom he enjoyed an early association included Peter Holman's Parley of Instruments, a group of which Paul is particularly fond. 'That was a special time, there was some very good music making with Peter Holman and Roy Goodman. Our first recording was of music by Muffat and we managed to create a sumptuous sound.' The association has lasted and Nicholson is still invited to come back as guest director for some projects. Today Paul Nicholson's name is to be seen all over the place and he has played continuo in most groups at one time or another. He is a member of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and the chamber ensemble Le Nouveau Quatour. There is also Fretwork, as I mentioned earlier, another ensemble for which he has a strong affection. 'I love being part of that viol texture, the organ weds that sound and it is quite different from continuo playing.'

A solo career evolved out of continuo playing, and he has recorded various programmes with Hyperion including a new release of Handel organ concertos. However, Paul has never craved stardom. 'I don't tend to blow my own trumpet, I take opportunities such as concertos with Parley and lots of projects have come to me. I suppose I'm a bit passive like that. I never have time or money to invest in promotion although I would like to capitalise on what's happened already. I have always enjoyed the conviviality of chamber music and orchestras. If I think of myself as a soloist I lose that connection from inside – the human contact is important.' That desire to maintain a human contact is partly what persuaded him recently to take on a church job at St John's and St Luke's Clay Hill, Enfield after a long absence from liturgical music. 'It's made me have to change my attitude. Up until now I've had to be completely available for work, now I'm trying to keep Sundays free. I'm sticking my neck out financially and there is a balance, of course, but it means a lot to me and I'm ready to do this after 20 years. It's not a high-profile job and the choir isn't professional, but I'm now happy.' Could not this be seen as a step backwards in his career? Not for him, apparently. 'It gives me a sense of belonging. Before this I was always living out of a suitcase. It's the right time, I couldn't do it if I were new to the profession.'

This part of our conversation is revealing a new side of Paul Nicholson's character. When talking about

playing the organ in church, he is suddenly rather more animated. It is becoming apparent as the dinner plates are cleared away and the coffee is poured, that he is a closet organ enthusiast, not simply as a musician but in the same manner as those anoraked fanatics who trudge around the country with trainspotter-like intensity. I made a radio documentary about this rarefied species only last Christmas and I recognise the signs, although I am glad to say that Paul does not yet show the advanced and obsessive traits of this condition and we have not quite reached the stage of analysing the data in a notebook full of organ stops. It would would not surprise me, though, if there were indeed such a document hidden somewhere in a jacket pocket, and soon the confessions are flowing freely. 'I listen to all my naughty organ records when other people aren't around. For 20 years I've lived with a family which has always hated it and I've had to listen in secret. I can really understand why people get so obsessed. In early music you never play a real organ unless you're a Bach or Buxtehude expert. Even Handel uses pedals in only one concerto. I miss the big romantic pieces although, to be honest, I haven't got time to invest in learning too much.'

It is inevitable that Nicholson should be reassessing his life following the break-up of his marriage three years ago. The flat is a temporary measure while he looks for a new house, and a major advantage is its proximity to his sons, whom Paul describes as being totally different from their parents. 'They're both musical but neither has any intention of pursuing music professionally.' 18-year-old John has just begun a communications course at Leeds University, and Tom, aged 16, maintains a desire to study design technology, to be rich and drive fast cars. 'John often turns pages for my recitals and is very supportive. Tom likes rap and I admit I have difficulties with that. John's taste is more general and ordinary although even he has reservations about the Spice Girls.' After he has proudly showed me photographs and revealed that they both achieved stunning performances in their 'A' levels and GCSEs respectively earlier this year, we move on to more professional subject matters.

There are other new directions to choose, as well as refreshing an interest in church organ playing. Nicholson has recently begun developing his skills at the fortepiano, in particular in partnership with the violinist Elizabeth Wallfisch. In the past, along with Richard Tunnicliffe, they have enjoyed success as the Locatelli Trio, specialising in the Italian Baroque. Wishing now to move away from that repertoire, the group is changing its name to "Convivium". 'It suggests friends getting together which is what we are,' explains Paul, 'It frees us from the Italian music we are known for and we can do later repertoire. Nobody in the commercial sector likes it, but we had reached make or break with that trio and this seemed the best solution.' So now Schubert is on the menu. 'It's not a huge change of direction, really, we've simply extended our brief a little bit and broken away from our perceived pigeon hole. We were all trained in different styles anyway and this is a way of not cutting ourselves off from that background.'

It becomes obvious that this attitude is fairly typical of Nicholson, who has little time for strict classification in music performance. 'When Baroque orchestras first started forming I can remember the hostility between them and their modern counterparts. Symphony orchestras then began to fight shy of doing Bach because they felt out of their depth surrounded by all this authenticity. But it is possible, as conductors like Simon Rattle have proved.'

This is certainly true, and as in the case of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra there are no local period instrument orchestras in the Midlands with which to compete, should local music lovers have to wait for visiting groups to hear their beloved Bach and Mozart? 'I have no time for the attitude,' Nicholson continues, 'that a player feels he can't play a piece because he doesn't have the right instrument. I mean, how many oboes do you need to have to cover all that's written for it? My father used to enjoy all kinds of early music on modern instruments – 78 rpm records of the César Franck symphony, or Bach "piano concertos". Music has stood the test of time and withstood all its historical inaccuracies.'

This is clearly an area about which Paul feels quite strongly. Several cups of coffee are consumed as he goes on, 'Is the only function of music to recreate its first hearing? Music is more organic than that and has a life of its own. The "anoraks" in the early music business often forget the music lovers – creatures who love music for its own sake, whose lives have been changed by it. My father's generation talked of the "three Bs" – Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, ignoring the huge gaps of time between them. Now those three composers are segregated, but music isn't like that. Having said that, I don't want to talk myself out of a job.' Somehow I doubt that will ever be the case, and of course Nicholson is not against the authentic movement in itself and strives himself to find out as much as possible about original methods of performance in order for them to inform his own. However, the balance is important and he feels that sometimes the world in which he circulates can be too elitist. 'I think I'm a bit evangelical about my music, I'm basically a music salesman. I hate the middle class type of preoccupation with authenticity which has not helped other people, who don't listen to classical music normally, to break through the barrier. They just see a ritual where people come to rattle their jewellery and chink glasses. That elitism is still there, despite the accessibility of the CD.'

These feelings do not hinder Nicholson's enthusiasm for research, however, which he sees as a separate

issue. 'It's very exciting to find out how it was done and I'm always making discoveries. For instance, since concentrating on playing the fortepiano, I've become interested in how the pedal was used, I'm sure it would have been much more selectively than we think. In early square pianos, it was treated like a stop which was either on or off all the time. It's stimulating to know more, how performances would have been perceived is fascinating. The difficulty is recreating the freshness of the period, for instance with the striking dissonance in Scarlatti sonatas. You have to play them as if discovering them for the first time.'

An important platform for Nicholson is the London Handel Festival of which he is the associate musical director with its founder Denys Darlow. Although the festival is not financially well off, it does manage to put on a popular series of concerts including a Bach Passion on Good Friday, an opera at the Royal College, chamber recitals, and at least one performance by the London Handel Orchestra and Choir of a Handel work which may have been neglected or newly edited. This year's festival, which took place last spring, highlighted the first London performance of the 1707 version of Handel's *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*. This project will continue in next year's festival with the 1737 version of the piece, the first performance since Handel's own time. The edition is being prepared by Anthony Hicks and it contains some material from the 1707 version but updated. The better known English version – *The triumph of time and truth* – was eventually published in 1757. I was at the concert last April in St George's Church, Hanover Square, one of the main venues for the festival, and I was pleasantly surprised at the freshness and innovation of the piece which contains some strikingly beautiful arias, most of which give the impression of being through-composed and so give a tremendous lively pace to the drama. I am glad to say there are plans for a recording of the piece, which certainly deserves more attention. Another highlight for the forthcoming festival is a performance of Handel's oratorio *Susanna*.

The evening is drawing to a close, the coffee has run out and it is late. A conclusion must be drawn, a final question asked, so what of the future? I am answered with a frown. 'I tend to bounce off stimuli that are given, I don't have a particular ambition, I respond to situations. I suppose I want to do more of the same and develop.' The frown turns into a laugh, 'I'm a jobbing musician and I do jobs as I'm given them, sorry I can't be more dynamic.' For a man who likes to think of himself as a music salesman, selling himself is not one of his strong points. This is refreshing, however, in a small, specialist world which is inhabited by plenty who are full of cold ambition and have enough self congratulatory dynamism to fill a universe. Paul Nicholson possesses the all too rare qualities of gifted musicianship coupled with modesty and a genuine concern for other people, both those with whom he works and those who listen to what he has to offer. David Owen Norris was right in his recommendation: Paul Nicholson is indeed a personable chap. ❖

Discography

As soloist and conductor; all recordings on Hyperion

Handel: organ concertos (CDA67291/2) (new release)

Handel: Harpsichord Suites and other music (CDA66931/2)

The English Orpheus vol 7 – Thomas Arne 'Six Favourite Concertos' (CDA66509)

The English Orpheus vol 9 – Keyboard Music by Thomas Roseingrave (CDA66564)

The English Orpheus vol 14 – A Lyric Ode on the Spirits of Shakespeare (CDA66613)

The English Orpheus vol 22 – English 18th-century Keyboard Concertos (CDA66700)

The English Orpheus vol 25 – Keyboard Music by Peter Philips (CDA66734)

The English Orpheus vol 30 – Theatre Music and Cantatas by Thomas Linley (CDA66767)

Helen Garrison is a producer on Radio 3 and Radio 4, and a professional singer.

'LET YOUR IMAGINARY FORCES WORK'[1]

ANTHONY ROWLAND-JONES

In his inaugural Margot Leigh Milner address[2] Christopher Page referred to the 'authoritative essays by leading scholars' which come in booklets packaged with CDs of classical music, and in particular early music. Through these and other sources of information many performers of early music, and many listeners as well, have become familiar with aspects of baroque and earlier performance practice which a few decades ago would have been regarded as the realm of specialists. Even aesthetic concepts such as the 'theory of the passions', or 'affect(ion)s' are now relatively familiar; few serious performers are unaware of the importance of affects in relation to baroque music.

The idea that the purpose of music was to affect a listener's feelings was re-formulated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by philosophers such as Descartes in *Les passions de l'âme* (1649), musicologists such as Mattheson, who like many before and after him linked the conveying of affects with the art of oratory and the devices of rhetoric,[3] and by composers themselves, such as Geminiani, Quantz[4] and C.P.E. Bach.[5] Geminiani states that 'The Intention of Musick is not only to please the Ear, but to express Sentiments, strike the Imagination, affect the Mind, and command the Passions'.[6] Nowhere is this idea better exemplified than in Dryden's poem 'Alexander's Feast or The Power of Music', where, for example in Handel's setting, two recorders, mainly in parallel thirds and sixths, 'kindle soft desire'. Its best known, but least observed, expression in instrumental music is in Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons'. Vivaldi's accompanying descriptive sonnets range through many unpleasant affects brought about by the force of the elements upon mankind.[7] Only Spring, with its birdsong, is joyful, and even then there is a short storm; in Summer mankind is oppressed by the burning sun, frightening thunderstorms, swarms of insects which prevent repose, and his crops are destroyed by hailstones; Autumn brings joy, including drunken sleep, but not to the hunted beast, who, wounded and bewildered by the great noise of guns and dogs, dies in his attempt to escape; but, except for those drenched with rain, Winter has its compensations if man can come to terms with the cold and the wind.

Vivaldi would surely have expected his concertos to be performed in a manner which communicates their range of affects alongside descriptions of birds, a dog barking while the goatherd sleeps, and sliding on the ice,[8] even though instrumental music was regarded as less well equipped than vocal music to communicate the passions because it could not convey affects in real words.[9] The 'Four Seasons' are exceptional for having the programme written into the music but there are other ways for an instrumentalist to 'divine the intentions of the composer'.[10] David Lasocki and Eva Legêne have shown how several movements of Handel's recorder sonatas are derived from vocal antecedents,[11] which at least suggest that in replicating instrumentally musical patterns associated with words Handel had the affect of those words in mind. Quantz (1752) relates affects to particular musical figures, including the use of dissonances – one immediately thinks of Monteverdi's masterly use of affective dissonances. Morley in 1597, adapting Zarlino (1558), had given remarkably similar advice, for example advocating chromaticism to 'expresse a lamentable passion'.[12]

Admittedly, baroque musicians probably honoured the theory of affects as much in the breach as in the observance, particularly when making a quick penny (and more for their publishers) by turning out a dozen sonatas for the delectation of amateurs, or when devising showpieces for their own appearances. And composers must have realised that music often induces emotions which cannot adequately be expressed in words; fugal music often gives a profound satisfaction that is more intellectual than emotive.[13] Moreover, it would be to a composer's disadvantage if he lost sight of 'The Intention of Musick ... to please the Ear' – Mozart said that even in expressing violent passions music should not excite disgust or offend the ear.[14] But although giving pleasure and providing entertainment must sometimes have been uppermost in a composer's mind, the function of music to express and communicate an affect or idea was as much at the heart of baroque instrumental music as it was of vocal music, especially opera.

Because the theory of affects is so much associated with baroque music, from the period of Caccini's *Le nuove musiche* (1601/2) and Monteverdi's *seconda prattica* onwards, its importance in the *prima prattica* polyphonic music of the late renaissance is often overlooked, to the detriment of many performances of sixteenth-century instrumental music. It is significant that Dryden chose to illustrate the power of music by reference to Timotheus, a 4th-century BC poet and instrumentalist renowned for his expressive style (although he died before Alexander the Great was born), for concepts of the purpose of music were discussed by Aristotle (*Politics*, 8) and other classical writers. In the twelfth century, St Bernard of Clairvaux

wrote that music 'should not empty the words of their meaning, but rather enrich them'.[15] In 1516 Sir Thomas More describes music in *Utopia* as expressing natural affections so that 'it doth wonderfullye move, stirre, pearce and enflame the hearers myndes.'[16] This is by expression of 'a prayer, or els a dytty of gladnes, of patience, of trouble, of mournynge, or of anger', that is to say by musical interpretation of the meaning of words. This art of the renaissance reached its apogee in the madrigal. In sacred music where, to the disapproval of the Council of Trent, inventive composers often obscured well-known texts by complex polyphony, it is unimaginable that, for example, 'Et Resurrexit' should be set to gloomy music.

As communication of music by performance on any instrument was regarded as inferior to singing words, Sylvestro Ganassi in his recorder manual *Fontegara* (Venice, 1535)[17] constantly exhorts players to 'imitate as closely as possible all the capabilities of the human voice'. He was not of course suggesting that the recorder could reproduce the range of sounds available to a singer; he is asking the player to follow the inflections used by a singer in expressing the meaning of words. The recorder is particularly able to do this because, being played at a low breath-pressure, it is responsive to a wide range of complex articulations, so that, as Ganassi puts it, 'it is possible with some players to perceive as it were, words to their music.'[18]

Renaissance music played instrumentally, including keyboard and lute intabulations, could generally derive its mood and style from a vocal original, although this may only be indicated by a title. Even dance forms had affective connotations, but instrumental extemporisation might sometimes have obscured them. Very little sixteenth-century music which might have been primarily conceived vocally was not also amenable to being played on instruments; and much music was presented as 'apt for voices or viols'.[19] Conversely, very little music exists before 1600 which, by reason of the range of a part, frequent awkward intervals, or integrated virtuosic decoration, could not also be sung, even if untexted. But most of the music composed in the sixteenth century *was* texted, and its 'meaning', or affect, was therefore evident.

A madrigal by Morley offers instrumentalists a challenge in imitating vocal affects. This is his miniature 'Four Seasons', 'April is in my Mistress' Face', with its four different affects in 38 bars. To respond to this challenge, recorder players need to deploy the range of articulations suggested by Ganassi[20] – a sprightly 'ti' for April, a warmer 'da' for July, a languid rounded 'lo' for September, and a pairing with 'r' for shivering December ('but in her heart a cold December'). This kind of exercise makes an admirable preparation for handling mood changes within the instrumental fancy. Similarly there is no better way of realising the variety of mood which may be found in many instrumental canzonas than playing their vocal antecedent, the French chanson, instrumentally. Several instrumental canzonas are in fact transcriptions of chansons, and the publisher Attaingnant suggested flute or recorder consorts for playing the chansons in two of his collections;[21] their words certainly give great scope for expressive variety.

Untexted and untitled instrumental music, especially the fancy and canzona with their succession of changing subjects, places particular demands upon the imaginary forces of instrumentalists. Ideally an appropriate pattern of words should be imagined to express the mood of each of the fancy's sections, which need to be identified in a preliminary study of the whole piece. Some section ends may easily be marked off where parts arrive at a cadence together, but other new subjects may need careful disentangling from the polyphonic structure. When the subjects are identified they need to be compared and characterised, and the nature of each communicated by an agreed style of playing, articulation, dynamic, possibly even by slightly pressing forward or dragging the pulse. Without coherent voice-leading at these points, which in a vocal composition would occur at a new verse, sentence or line (with a change in the meaning of the text), a performance of a fancy or canzona is likely to be bland and uninteresting.[22]

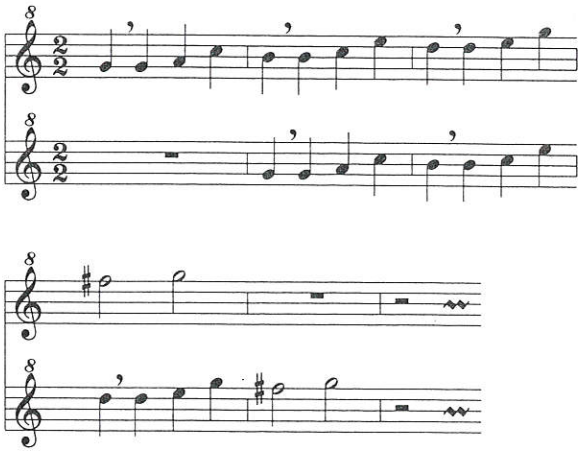
The preparation of an instrumental fancy or canzona, discovering and re-creating to the best of our understanding how the composer has structured his music, including its harmonic scheme, how he achieves variety in the character of succeeding subjects (or ingeniously varies a single idea), how and at what length he develops and then disposes of a subject, is almost as rewarding as communicating the outcome in performance. This process can be helped by a study of the musical patterns which are used to express affects in the vocal music of the same and other composers – a sort of affective language of music.[23] The process is somewhat facilitated as musical texts, especially in madrigals, often have key words which are sufficient in themselves to indicate an intended affect. This helps the performer to exercise his imagination, interpreting and building upon the composer's own invention and inspiration. For example, in the Morley madrigal referred to, the weather associated with each of the four months will suggest an imaginative response, which is then strengthened by the body imagery linked with each season – eyes, lips, bosom, heart, to which imaginative adjectives may also be appended – sparkling, warm, luxuriant, and, in anticlimax (where Morley has himself provided an epithet), cold and harsh. It is noteworthy that despite a gap of 250 years both Morley and Quantz usually describe affects by single words, even though one word might apply to quite an extended passage of music, or even a whole piece; Quantz mentions 'Flattery, melancholy, tenderness ... gaiety and boldness

... the majestic and sublime',[24] and Morley 'grave ... merrie ... hardnesse, crueltie, bitternesse ... dolor, repentance, sighs, teares and such like.'[25] The key words in the cantata aria concordant with the first movement of Handel's A minor recorder sonata are 'weeping' and 'dejection'.[26]

But the characterisation of a subject in a canzona or fancy by mutually deciding upon a word or phrase to describe its affect may not in itself be sufficient to create an imagery strong enough to be communicated to, and to affect, an audience in the same manner. For example, 'boldness' as an affect word needs to be perceived and felt as if the performers were actors on a stage, through imagination of examples of boldness. Very often this visual imagery can be enhanced by recalling a familiar picture, place, or occasion. It can even be summoned up by memory of a long well-known piece of music which sticks in the mind and has the same affect for the performer, or, ideally, for the performers as a group.

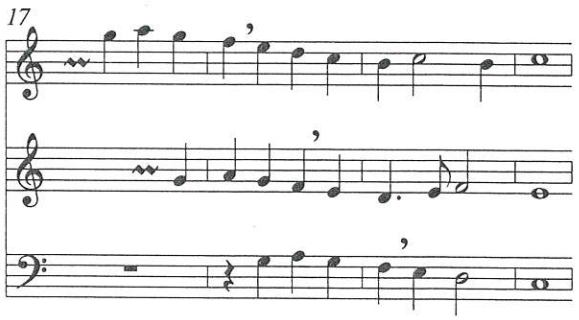
I should like to regale readers of *Leading Notes* with an account of a method I used to help players' imaginary forces to work in this way for a performance of a Gabrieli seven-part canzona at *Recorder Week 96* in New Zealand. The method was somewhat bizarre, but it worked. Without a conductor, and no dominating leader within the group, nine enthusiastic amateur recorder players (the bottom two parts were doubled at the octave below) produced a lively and accurate performance of the canzona, with excellent ensemble, and considerable enjoyment to themselves and applause from their audience. The piece was Giovanni Gabrieli's Ganzona VI a 7 (1615) in Alex Ayre's edition, from which, with his kind permission, I quote.[27]

This canzona opens with five bars for the two upper parts only, in canon a bar apart, followed by a minim rest (phrase marks added by the author):

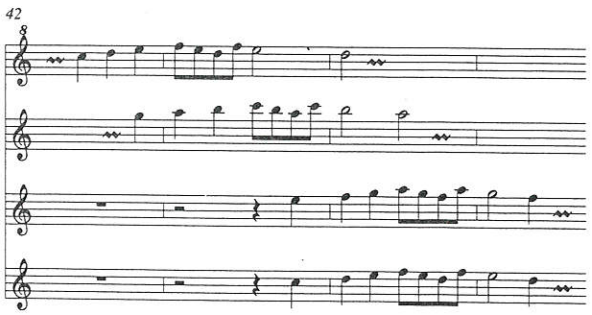


The four-crotchet sequence after the first isolated crotchet suggested to me two people walking, one slightly behind the other; and the feeling is one of expectancy. This reminded me of the promenade that introduces Mussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition', and, imagination now running apace, everything followed from that.

After the minim rest there is a passage for the whole consort in rich block chord harmony, clearly intended to suggest magnificence, like the vast entrance hall one finds in grand art galleries. This is followed by another minim rest for the echo to die away. There are then four slow notes – minims in conjunct motion, first played by the three lower parts and then taken up antiphonally by three upper parts. They come in again as a bridge passage several times later in the canzona. This moment of repose suggests the idea of looking around searching out a subject; it is then repeated in the three lower parts in crotchets, as if in awareness of arriving at the first subject, which is as follows:



With its rows of descending conjunct crotchets, moving together in the parts, this suggests a broad canvas, a peaceful rather static scene, such as a classical landscape by Claude. Appropriately for this spacious first subject, its development is spread over 22 bars (17–38). The bridge passage in slow minims then reappears, searching out the next subject:

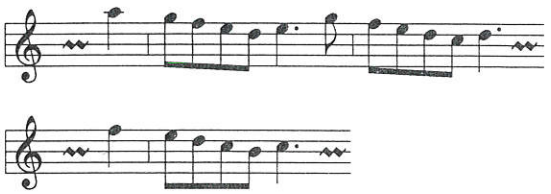


This is a short subject, developed over a shorter number of bars (42–58); it is characterised by its rising crotchets leading into a quaver figure. In the seven-part polyphonic texture it is the quavers that dominate this section, except where it works out into its cadential close – and even there the fifth part has a sprightly conclusion (the only semiquavers in the entire piece). To me the musical configuration suggests a dance idea,[28] perhaps even with a slight speeding up within the overall pulse, calling for a detached style of playing to contrast with the legato first section. It could

even be played, to ensure that the point is not lost on the audience, with staccato articulation, a gossamer lightness. Visual enhancement of the affect in the players' minds would suggest one of the well-known pictures of dancers by Degas. Or even, to use a familiar musical example of a light brittle dance, Mussorgsky's 'Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks' from his 'Pictures'.

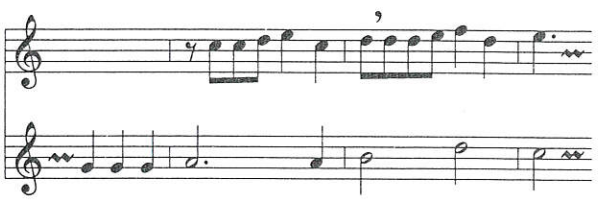
Other sections are amenable to this approach. Bars 58 to 61 consist of repartee between the parts of a brief motive, isolated between rests, of two downward quavers, followed by a minim during which other parts interject their quavers. Gossip? 'The Market Place at Limoges'? A curiously off-beat and eerie passage in descending minims and crotchets (bars 78–89) suggests 'Catacombs'. A lumbering subject at bar 102 could, played with sufficient conviction, suggest the Polish ox-cart 'Bydlo'.

The subject at bars 67 to 69 (first and third parts):



is treated hurriedly with close overlap of entries, and is confined to the high pitch of the three upper parts, the two bottom parts resting from bars 68–74. It is perhaps facile to suggest these falling quavers as a 'cascade', but imagination of a Turner painting, all light and splashes of colour, did seem to help my group to contrast the evanescence of this section with the following 'Catacombs'. Moreover any kind of shared imagination in a consort greatly improves consistency in phrasing and clarity of voice leading.

A section which responded remarkably well to the Mussorgsky treatment was the last 'picture', a long passage (bars 110–136) where Gabrieli develops two contrasted subjects:



One subject opens forcefully (again, assuming one plays it this way) with its three repeated crotchets; the other, played twice in almost breathless succession, gives a shivering impression. This contrast can be played markedly, as if it represented two characters. Could they be imagined as the two Jews of Victor Hartman's drawings[29] – the pictures at the Exhibition, one rich, mean and assertive (Mussorgsky makes him speak slowly in measured lengths), the other poor, whining and shivering, his repeated cries for help rejected, a contrast of the affects of domineering power and of wretchedness? Of course this is taking the interpretation of an Italian canzona to extremes, but the effect is striking, and opulent effects are very much in Gabrieli's manner.

After two rising scales (bars 136–7) Gabrieli returns to the four-minim trio antiphonal bridge passage, but this time then speeds up the antiphony into crotchets (bars 142–3). This leads us into a two-part canonic passage reminding us of the opening duet of the canzona; it steps its way down, unwinding to a cadence on a minim dominant G in both parts. This is followed by a minim rest. But we are now back in the grand entrance hall, shown as before in all its block-chord magnificence, first (in our version) without the doubled basses, and then, *ff*,[30] with them, in a sonorous conclusion.

Footnotes

1 Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Prologue Act I.

2 *Leading Notes*, Autumn 1996, pp.6–8.

3 Frequent references in Mattheson's writings: see George J. Buelow and Hans-Joachim Marx, *New Mattheson Studies* (Cambridge,1983). Buelow's account of the so-called doctrine of the Affections in section 4 of his article 'Rhetoric and music' in *New Grove* is an excellent introduction to the subject.

4 The main Quantz references are cited in my book *Playing Recorder Sonatas* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 4–8 and notes.

5 *ibid.*, p.5.

6 The *Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751), p.1; quoted by Paul Everett, *Vivaldi – The Four Seasons and other concertos, Op.8* (Cambridge 1996), p.50.

7 Discussed by Everett, *ibid.*, quoted with translations, pp.72–5.

8 Birdsongs are imitated in 'Spring' and 'Summer' (cuckoo, turtle-dove and goldfinch); the barking dog is represented by the viola in the slow movement of 'Spring'; sliding on the ice is of course in 'Winter'.

9 A belief perpetuated by the myth of the contest between Apollo and Marsyas, reiterated by Ganassi (1535), Morley (1597), Roger North (1720) and many others.

10 See *Playinq Recorder Sonatas*, p.4. The quotation is from Quantz.

11 David Lasocki and Eva Legêne in the first of three articles 'Learning to Ornament Handel's Sonatas Through the Composer's Ears' in *American Recorder*, 30/1989, pp.9–14. They quote the music and the words of a cantata aria from 1707–8 which has concordances with the first movement of Handel's A minor recorder sonata; this suggests not only the affect of the movement but also nuances of phrasing and style of ornamentation.

12 *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke*, quoted by Robert Donington, *The Interpretation of Early Music* (London, 1963 etc.), p.112. In his section 'The Theory of

Affects' (pp.111–16) Donington quotes writers and musicians from Sir Thomas More (1516) to Mozart (1781).

[13] But perhaps this is what Geminiani meant in his phrase 'affect the Mind' (see note 6 for reference to this and the following Geminiani quote).

[14] Donington, *op.cit.*, p.116.

[15] Quoted by Christopher Page (in a review) in *Early Music*, August 1987, p.391 .

[16] Donington, *op.cit.*, p.111.

[17] ed. Hildemarie Peter, tr. Dorothy Swainson (Berlin-Lichterfelde, 1956). The quotations are from Ganassi's opening 'chapter' (p.9) – only eleven lines. But it is interesting, in relation to what follows in this article, that they include an analogy between music and painting.

[18] Recently I went to a concert where the singer seemed more interested in the quality of his voice than in conveying the meaning of his text. The expression of the words became much more evident when the melody was repeated by the recorder player (Philip Thorby).

[19] Wendy E. Hancock in an article 'To Play or Sing?' in *The Consort* (1986) traces the performing relationship between voices and instruments in the late renaissance in England. Keith Polk has studied performance practice in early renaissance Germany (*German Instrumental Music of the Late Middle Ages (1350–1520)* (Cambridge, 1992); he points out that a chanson was played wholly instrumentally, by the *pifferi* in Ferrara, as early as 1480. Howard Mayer Brown's article on the 'Canzona' in *New Grove* describes its slow development into an entirely independent instrumental form in late sixteenth-century Italy.

[20] *Fontegara*, p.14

[21] See Howard Mayer Brown, 'The recorder in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance', Chapter 1 of *The Cambridge Companion to the Recorder*, ed. John Thomson (Cambridge, 1995), p.18.

[22] The viol consort 'Fretwork' provides a model for instrumental voice-leading and characterisation of subjects.

[23] In his *Plaine and Easie Introduction* Morley advises on 'how to dispose your musicke according to the nature of the words which you are therein to expresse.' See Donington, *op.cit.*, p.112. Buelow in his *New Grove* article (see note 3 above) cites various examples of musical figures associated with particular rhetorical affects.

[24] *On Playing the Flute*, ed. Edward R. Reilly (London, 1966 etc), pp.125–6.

[25] Donington, *op.cit.*, p.112.

[26] See note 11.

[27] Alex Ayre's editions are in very clear manuscript, and have the advantage that bar numbers at the beginning of each line are the same in the parts as in the score, a boon during first rehearsals with a 'scratch' group of amateur players.

[28] It must be emphasised that there are other ways, no less valid, of interpreting this and other subjects. It would be a dull world if all consort groups reached the same conclusions in preparing a performance.

[29] The two pictures, of Samuel Goldenberg, and of 'Schmuÿle' (as Mussorgsky called the poor Jew), are reproduced as Plates 2 and 3 in Michael Russ's Cambridge Music Handbook *Mussorgsky 'Pictures at an Exhibition'* (1992), which provides an excellent commentary and analysis.

[30] Other than the dynamics brought about by the deployment of legato and staccato playing for subject differentiation, deliberate dynamic contrast is not absolutely necessary in interpreting this canzona as Gabrieli has achieved dynamic change by varying the number of parts playing at any one time.

ABOUT CANTUS CANTICI CANTICORUM I

FABRICE FITCH

This short piece arose out of Richard Lawrence's invitation to contribute something to *Leading Notes* for the Ockeghem quincentenary. It was a flattering offer, but his original suggestion of an article put me at a disadvantage. Having recently published a book on the subject, not to mention an article in the *Musical Times* and what feels like a multitude of reviews in the last few years, I was afraid of having exhausted that particular vein – temporarily at least. At the same time I had always hoped to mark the anniversary with a composition, and *Leading Notes*'s accustomed format provided the perfect opportunity. For Richard, my counter-proposal was something of a leap in the dark, so I am all the more grateful that he should have agreed so enthusiastically. His only condition was that a short text accompany the music, and that the link with Ockeghem be explained.

Even a desultory glance will show that I have refrained from any stylistic reference to Ockeghem's music, or *a fortiori* from overt quotation. The latter usually presupposes the audience's familiarity with the original material (alas, not a reasonable assumption in Ockeghem's case), and the former strikes me as especially problematic, being a more generalized instance of the same principle. In defence of both these techniques, one might point out that Ockeghem and his contemporaries borrowed constantly from a received codex of material (plainsong) and from their own polyphonic repertory. But in contrast to the sixteenth century's quasi-exclusive reliance on parody, quotation and reinvention assumed in the fifteenth century a variegated richness which took account of a multitude of possibilities. Quotation and parody were not unknown, but there were subtler ways of reflecting influence, acknowledging affinities and paying homage. The instance of a tenor cantus firmus drawn from a song is a good example: not only is a single line removed from its original context, but its speed is most often slowed down. Both decisions radically change the perception and the potential of the borrowed material; it is incorporated in the new work as a substratum (of all composers, Ockeghem was perhaps most adept at reinterpreting borrowed material by presenting it in a fresh context). A more specific instance of borrowing is Obrecht's wholesale transplantation of the tenor of Busnois's *L'Homme armé* Mass (including rests) in his own cycle; Obrecht is more generally remarkable for the imposition on the cantus firmus of *ad hoc* rationalistic procedures that may completely alter the ordering of its constituent elements. In its capacity to express allegiance, then, the fifteenth century's use of borrowing embraced manifold strategies in the relationship between a work and its model, of which immediate recognizability was only one – and not necessarily the most typical. In choosing not to incorporate surface elements of Ockeghem's music within my own, I invoke not only the modernist canon of stylistic self-sufficiency (with which some readers may disagree), but a specific tendency of Ockeghem's time, one all too often glossed over under the label of 'artifice'.

In the past few years I have been fascinated by the concepts of mensural and canonic transformation, and have sought ways of replicating these meaningfully within my work. This piece presents one possible approach to the transhumation of these concepts. Just as in Ockeghem's *Missa prolationum*, the four voices are divided into two pairs, within which the numbers of bars of silence (rests) and music (notes) are canonically regulated by means of numerical proportions, in this case the Fibonacci series (1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13...) and two of its 'bastards' (1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 18... and 1, 4, 5, 9, 14, 23...). In the spirit of Tinctoris's definition of canon, I will leave the working out of this system to the perspicacity of the reader, adding only that bars containing both rests *and* music (of which there are very few) should be reckoned among the notes rather than the rests.

I have also sought to incorporate elements of a specific formal model, that of the *Et in terra* of the *Missa prolationum*. This movement begins with one pair of voices starting together; of the other pair, one voice begins along with the first two, and the second enters after a short pause. Here the Bassus enters later than the others (though I won't give the game away by saying which of the other three voices it is paired with!). Another specific feature of the *Et in terra* is Ockeghem's contrivance of one single minim's duration (bar 24 of Jaap van Benthem's edition) in which only one voice is active, a moment that has always delighted me; I have replicated this in bar 73. Elsewhere, there are numerous instances of one voice taking over where another leaves off; contriving these was part of the challenge, having regard for the kaleidoscopic shifts in texture that are a prominent feature of Ockeghem's music. Another of the delights of his Mass is the insinuation of canonic relationships between lines which are not so related. In the absence from my piece of any canonic relationships of the traditional 'pitch-and-rhythm' variety, I have sought to replicate the manner in which canonic correspondences are merely suggested; a sort of *trompe l'oreille*. If there is anything resembling a thematic link between

my piece and its model, it is the effect of the block-like chords at the very beginning of certain Mass sections, and their gradual disintegration as the canonic process is set in motion. (The Bassus's minim dissonance at bar 4 of the Credo of *Missa prolationum* has always seemed to me a very poignant moment, the only outward sign of the tectonic plates shifting below the piece's surface.)

I conclude with a few notes on performance. In deference to the spirit of that age, I indicate no dynamics, my only suggestion being that whichever tone and dynamic level are adopted be applied consistently. In order to save space and for the sake of clarity, time signatures are not indicated at the beginning of every bar; instead, the time signatures are indicated at the beginning of the piece. They are either $\frac{3}{16}$, $\frac{4}{16}$ or $\frac{5}{16}$. Square brackets denote the remainder of a word that is enunciated fragmentarily. As to the Latin pronunciation, I venture to suggest the Gallic inflections adopted by the Orlando Consort on their recent Ockeghem CD for Archiv.

It only remains for me to thank Richard Lawrence for indulging my whim; the Orlando Consort, whose voices were in my mind's ear as I wrote, for being my accomplices; Michael Finnissy, Geoff Hannan and Emma Welton for their advice and/or the loan of their gullets at various times; and Brian Ferneyhough for his constant support.

—Durham, 26 October 1997

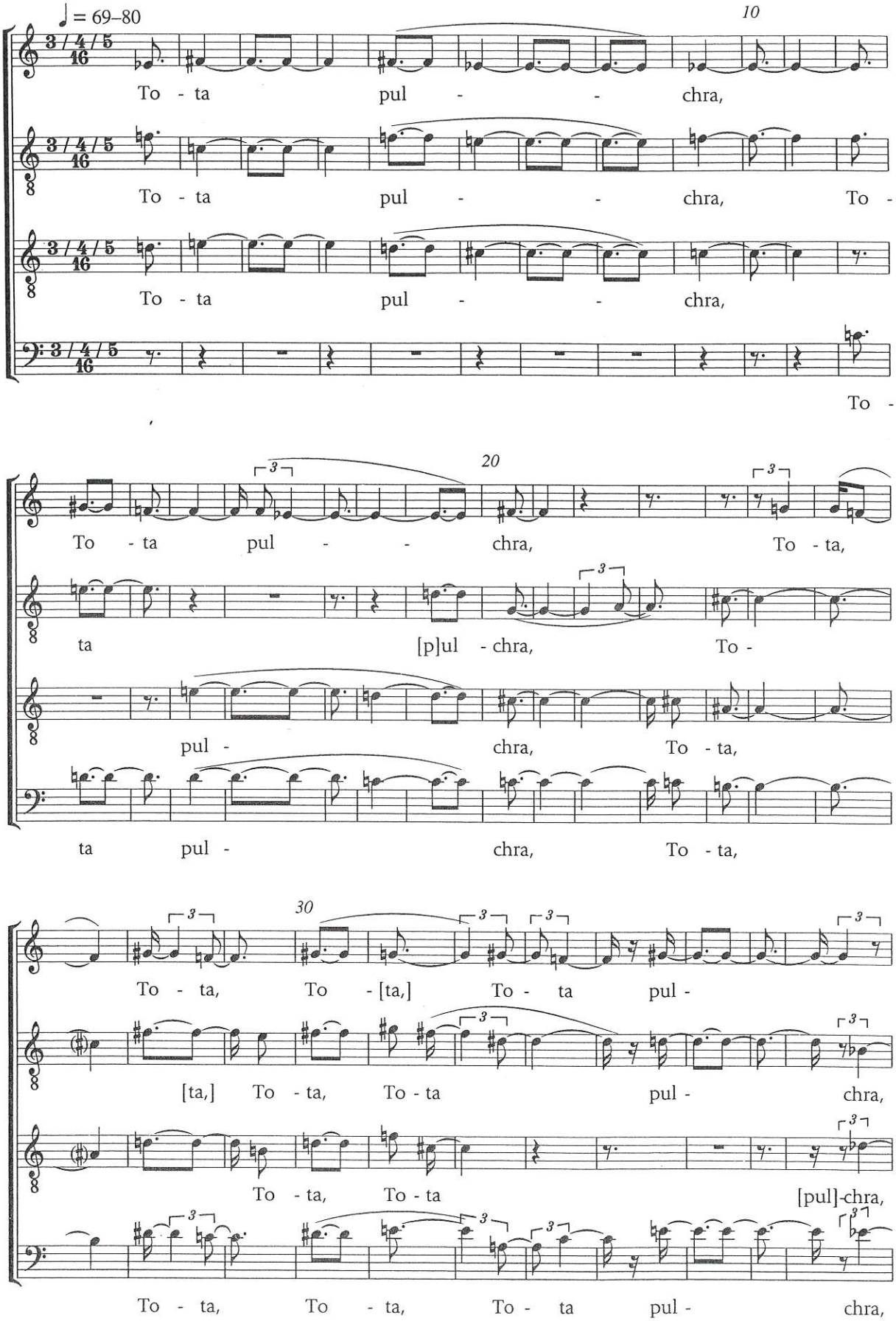
Fabrice Fitch is a composer, and a lecturer in music at the University of Durham. His book Johannes Ockeghem: Masses and Models *(Paris: Champion, 1997) has just been published.*

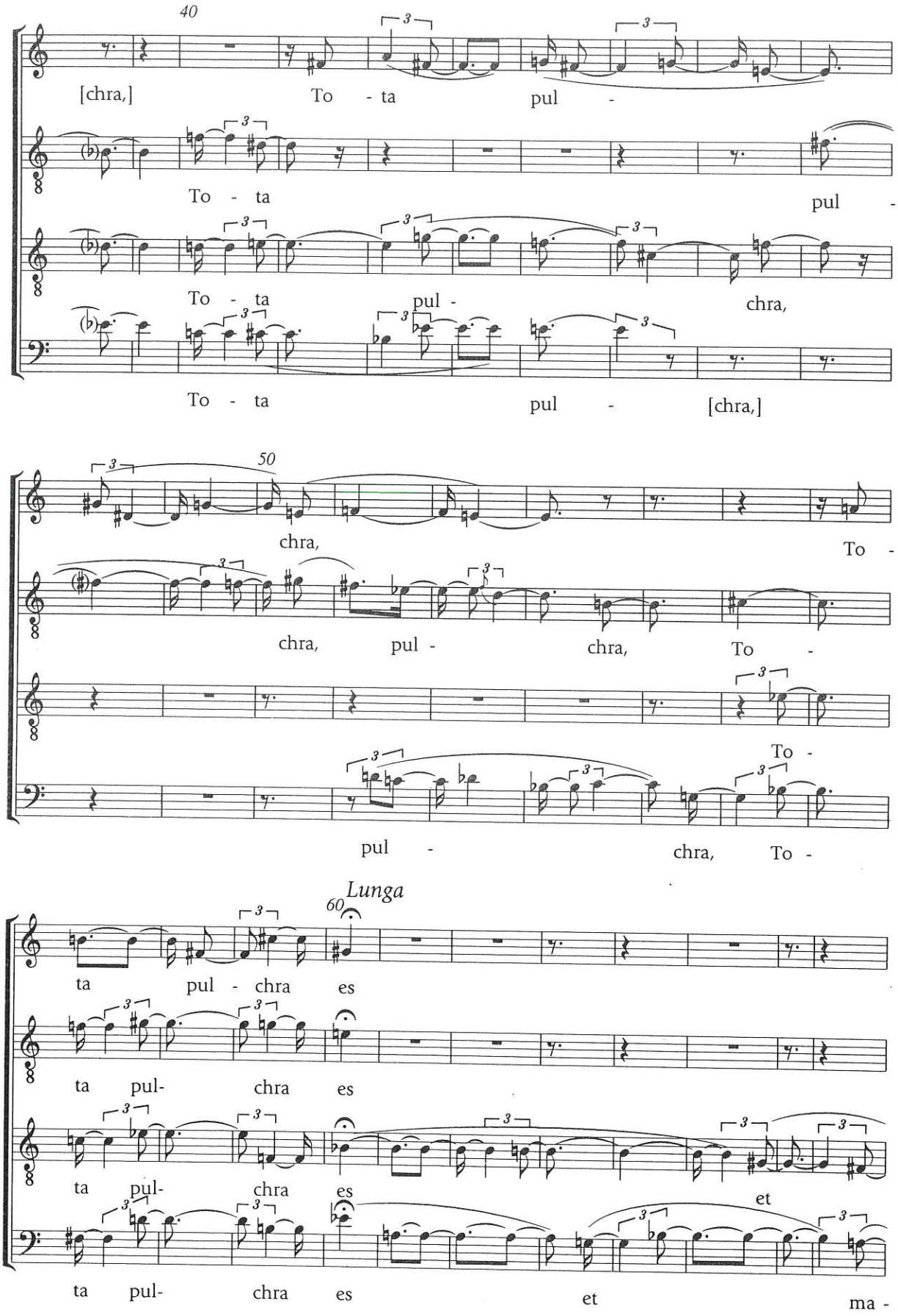
cantus cantici canticorum I

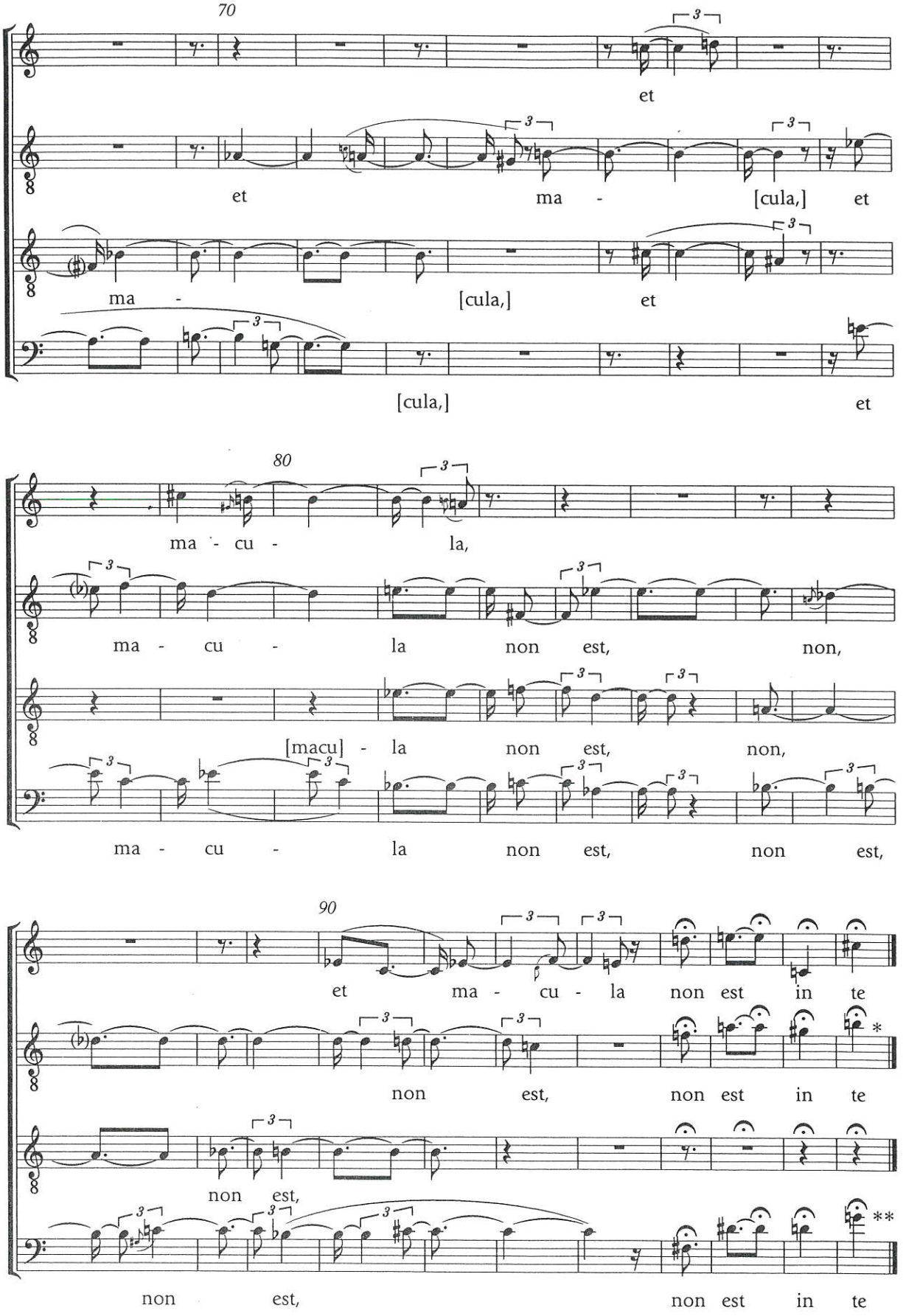
for the Ockeghem quincentenary

to Brian Ferneyhough

Fabrice Fitch
1997




40
[chra,] To - ta pul -
To - ta pul -
To - ta pul - chra,
To - ta pul - [chra,]
50
chra, To -
chra, pul - chra, To -
To -
pul - chra, To -
Lunga
60
ta pul - chra es
ta pul- chra es
ta pul- chra es et
ta pul- chra es et ma -



Poggio Montorio–Durham, July–October 1997

* falsetto

** falsetto; if necessary, this last note may be taken by the second tenor.

SCHUBERT'S F MINOR FANTASY, D940 AND THE COUNTESS CAROLINE ESTERHÁZY – A CODED DECLARATION OF LOVE?[1]

NICHOLAS RAST

The author completed a Doctorate on Schubert's piano duets in 1988 at King's College, London. He has published in numerous journals, including Music Analysis *and* The Musical Times, *and is a regular contributor to* Gramophone *and the* BBC Music Magazine.

> While he was fairly realistic in regard to certain things, Schubert was not without his infatuations. He was in fact, head over heels in love with one of his pupils, a young Countess Esterházy, to whom he also dedicated one of his most beautiful piano pieces, the Fantasy in F minor for pianoforte duet. In addition to his lessons there [Zseliz?], he also visited the Count's home, from time to time, under the aegis of his patron, the singer Vogl...On such occasions Schubert was quite content to take a back seat, to remain quietly by the side of his adored pupil, and to thrust love's arrow ever deeper into his heart.[2]

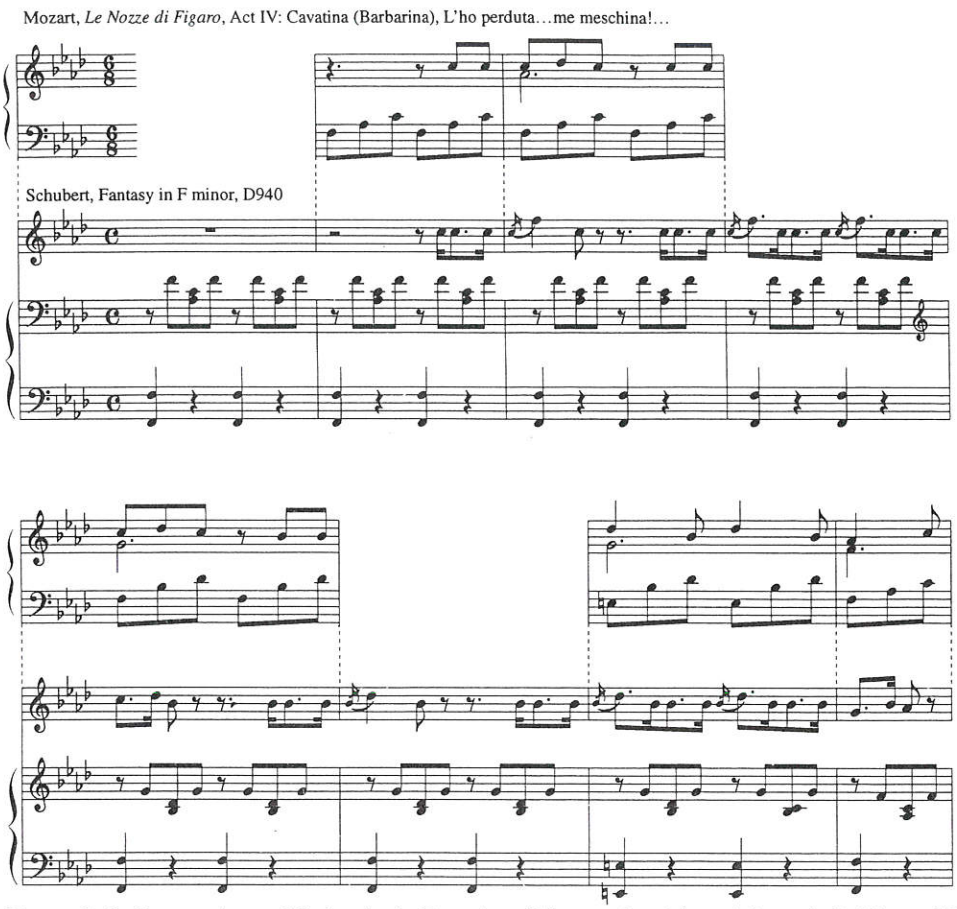
Thus, Eduard von Bauernfeld described Schubert's relationship to the young Countess Caroline Esterházy in a memoir of the composer written in 1869. Schubert first worked as music tutor to the young daughters of Count Johann Carl von Esterházy (Marie and Caroline) in 1818 at their summer residence in Zseliz. The composer had met the Count through the singer Caroline Unger's father. Schubert did not return to Zseliz until the summer of 1824, although he maintained his association with the Esterházys in Vienna during the intervening period and in the last years of his life.

Count Esterházy's friend, the amateur singer Baron Schönstein, records that when Caroline playfully asked Schubert why he had never dedicated anything to her, the composer replied 'What is the point? Everything is dedicated to you anyway.'[3] None the less, in May 1821 Schubert wrote a brief inscription to Caroline on the score of his Op.18 *German dances*, although he later vigorously crossed out this dedication. The F minor Fantasy for the archetypally intimate forces of piano four hands is the only piece Schubert explicitly dedicated to Caroline in print. Moreover, the composer specified this intention to his publisher Schott in a letter offering the Fantasy for publication (21 February 1828); but it remained unpublished until March 1829, when Diabelli issued the first edition, with the dedication to Caroline.

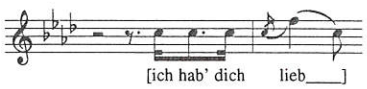
Schubert's four-hand piano music is richly varied in form and texture, and the F minor Fantasy is most notable for its comprehensive, supremely confident display of flexible musical form. Its miraculous synthesis of theme and key underlines Schubert's deep, romanticised love for its dedicatee through a fascinating blend of cyclic and sonata forms. Moreover, close analysis of the score, including comparison of the sketches (made in January 1828) with the fair copy (written the following April), reveals impressive thematic integration between both the two outer F minor movements and the two middle F sharp minor ones[4]. This commentary will discuss how similarities in the Fantasy's thematic details contrast with the element of greatest difference (the *con delicatezza* in the third movement), highlighting the touching devotion behind Schubert's dedication to Caroline Esterházy.

The inspiration for the Fantasy's main theme may originally have come from Mozart. The opening music is strikingly similar to the theme of Barbarina's cavatina in Act IV of *The Marriage of Figaro*, whose text – 'Oh dear me, I've lost it...Oh, wherever can it be' expresses Barbarina's desperation at the loss of her pin (a symbol for lost innocence) – might well have struck Schubert as appropriate to his own feeling of lost innocence in contrast to the virginal purity of the young Countess Caroline[5]. (See Example 1, page 18.)

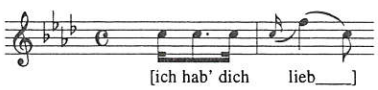
If Schubert did borrow this theme from Mozart, his transformation of it – with increased emphasis on the notes F and C (reminiscent of the way in which a lover might carve the initials of himself and his beloved in a tree) – is wholly personal. The main theme's strong rhythmic character – implying natural speech – enhances the C/F motif, synchronising perfectly with the syllabic pattern and scansion of the phrase 'ich hab' dich lieb', the intimate German expression for 'I love you'. The word *lieb* (love) would occur at the highpoint of the motif, where the notes F and C combine with the C as a decorative element. Moreover, the extra note given to the word *lieb* stresses this event as the theme's emotional climax. The slur – present in both sketch and fair copy – adds further reinforcement. To clinch the argument, the sketch actually begins with the vital 'love' motif (see Example 2 and Plate 1, page 22).



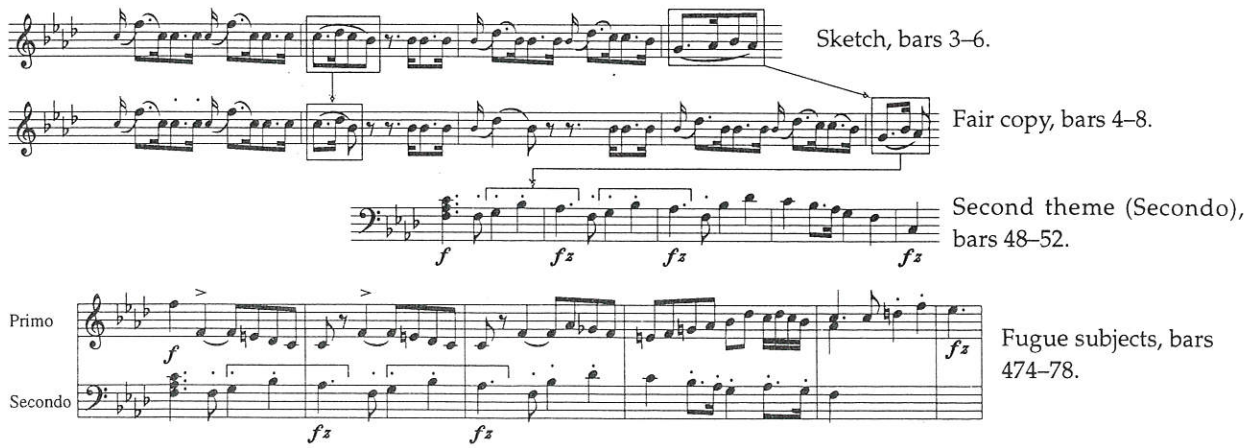
Example 1: Comparison of Barbarina's Cavatina, 'L'ho perduta' from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* with the main theme of Schubert's F minor Fantasy.



Example 2a: D940, the 'love motif' as it appears in the fair copy (Austrian National Library, MHS 19491, bars 2–3).



Example 2b: sketch, bars 1–3 (Frederick R. Koch Collection, The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, MS 214/214a, bars 1–2).

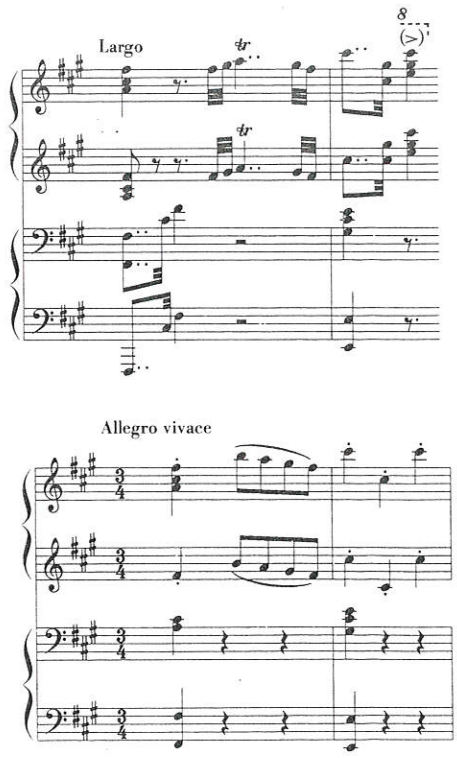


Example 3: Comparison of the F minor Fantasy's main theme as it appears in the sketch (bars 3–6) and the fair copy (bars 4–8). The altered tail to the theme generates the second theme (secondo, bars 48–52) and the Fugue subject (bars 474–78).

Schubert's changes to the end of the theme in the fair copy from a turn shape (in the sketch) to a simpler pattern highlight its function as the source for the contrasting second theme, which returns as the fugal subject in the finale (see Example 3, page 18).

There are also two important motivic elements in the first movement (D flat–C in bars 28–30 and G flat–F in bars 31–38) that have significance for the subsequent course of the piece. The G flat (re-spelled as F sharp) provides the tonal centre for the *Largo* and *Allegro vivace*, and the falling semitone D flat–C makes a dramatic appearance in the Fantasy's remarkable final cadence (see Example 6, page 20)[6].

The two central movements (marked *Largo* and *Allegro vivace* respectively) are likewise closely related. Both unfold three-part forms and are in F sharp minor. The more aggressive rhythmic character of the outer sections of the *Largo* is softened in the central section by triplet accompaniment. The lively *Allegro vivace* resolves the *Largo*'s emotional and rhythmic tension. Despite surface differences, though, the beginnings of these two movements hide a thematic identity, with identical melody and harmonic support. Background similarities between the first movement's two contrasting themes, and those of the *Largo* and *Allegro vivace*, offer a potent symbol for Schubert's and Caroline's spiritual empathy in the context of their unequal social status (see Example 4).



Example 4: The opening bars of *Largo* and *Allegro vivace* demonstrate remarkable thematic similarity at the background.

The resulting picture of overall form in the Fantasy is a large-scale three-part design, in which the two outer movements comprise sections A and A1, and the two central ones section B, as shown in the form table, p. 22.

The uniqueness of the third movement's trio in this scheme – the graceful, D major *con delicatezza* – may seem puzzling. However, I believe this very discontinuity provides a further, crucial clue concerning the Fantasy's public dedication to Caroline. The differences between sketch and fair copy are greatest at this point: Schubert originally scored a 'tempo di marcia'. He was nevertheless drawn to the music of the final version even at this stage in the compositional process, combining material from both the 'tempo di marcia' and 'con delicatezza' at one point in the sketch (see Plate 2).

Schubert used the marking 'con delicatezza' (with delicacy and softness) sparingly and only from 1824 onwards, the first example being in the A flat Variations for piano duet, composed in Zseliz.

Schubert's use of the character indication 'con delicatezza'

May–July	1824	A flat Variations for piano duet, D813 (composed in Zseliz). Variation Three 'Un poco più lento' bars 72–96. 'con delicatezza' marking in secondo-part only.
August	1825	Piano Sonata in D major, D850, bars 77–104.
December	1827	Impromptu, D935, No. 4, the section that begins at bar 131.
January–April	1828	Fantasy in F minor for piano duet, D940. Scherzo marked 'Allegro vivace', trio marked 'con delicatezza'.
May	1828	A minor Allegro ('Lebensstürme') for piano duet, D947. The A major statement of the second theme, beginning at bar 458, 'con delicatezza' marking in primo-part only.
September	1828	Piano Sonata in B flat major, D960, scherzo marked 'Allegro vivace con delicatezza'.

In a letter from this period to his brother, Ferdinand, Schubert declared:

> I am now better able to find happiness and peace in myself...A grand sonata and variations on a theme of my own, both for 4 hands, which I have already written, shall serve you as proof of this. The variations have met with a special success.[7]

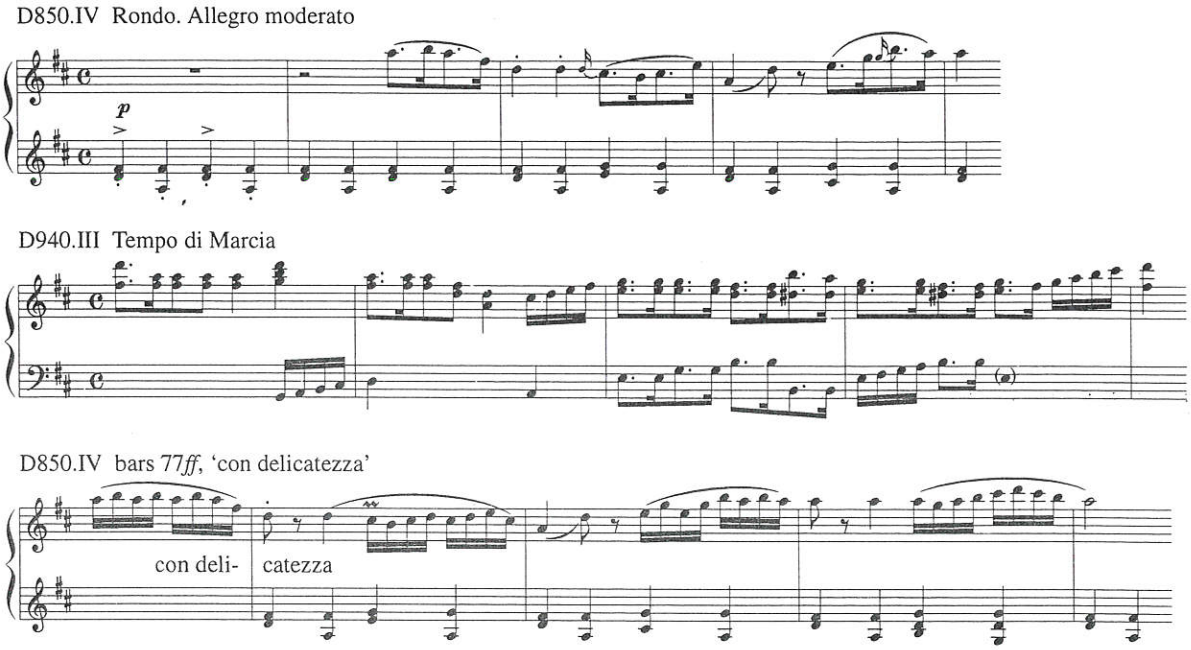
Moreover, MacKay (1996) makes the pertinent observation that:

> ...the sublime and intimate Variations in A flat, D813 in particular [have] an intense emotional expression, exemplified in magical modulations and exquisite musical details, which might be explained by the awakening of Schubert's love for Caroline.

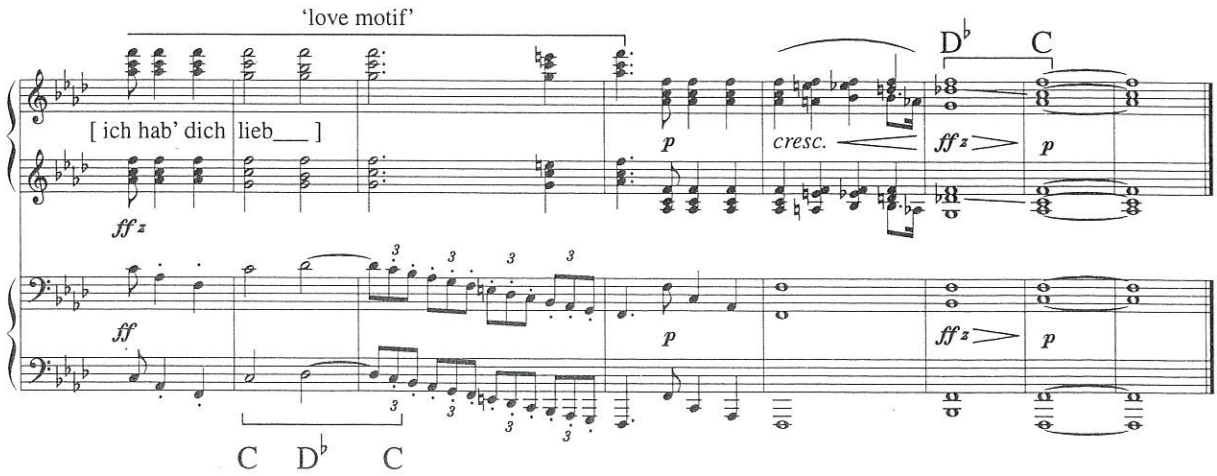
Could 'con delicatezza' – which signals the third variation's slower pace and yearning lyricism – represent a coded reference to Caroline herself? The passage with this marking in the finale of the D major Piano Sonata is highly suggestive. This sonata's main rondo theme shares superficial, yet telling similarities with the Fantasy's discarded 'tempo di marcia'. Schubert writes 'con delicatezza' for a decorated version of the rondo theme (see Example 5).

The programme lists other instances of Schubert's use of this character indication. Among these, the 'con delicatezza' passage in the third movement of the F minor Fantasy stands out as the most vivid manifestation of Schubert's obsession with Caroline as the unattainable object of his love.

One last important alteration in the fair copy deserves mention: the addition of the final, piquant cadence which Maurice Brown described as 'the most remarkable cadence in the whole of Schubert's work.'[8] More recently, in a fascinating essay on Schubert and Caroline Esterházy, Rita Steblin found Jakob Wagner's poetic characterisation of F minor (published in 1823) especially appropriate to the Fantasy's overall tonality. Wagner's poem is as follows[9]:



Example 5: Comparison of the Rondo theme from the D major Piano Sonata, D850, with the theme of the discarded 'Tempo di Marcia' in the F minor Fantasy. The 'con delicatezza' section in the D major Sonata (bars 77ff.) is also shown.



Example 6: D940 final cadence (bars 563–70), which includes both the C–D flat–C motif and the 'love motif'.

F minor
Lo, to him she belongs!
Lo, for him she blooms!
His Arms
Embrace her divine body—
She is his woman—
I was born only to feel her
And her heaven is lost to me.
Woe to me! woe to me! Life without life
Fate mockingly has given to me,
And I fall toward the shadows!—[10]

Steblin convincingly associates this verse with Schubert's own psychological condition in the work here under consideration. Compare the poem's closing line – 'And I fall toward the shadows!' with the Fantasy's alarming conclusion, where the falling semitone D flat–C, originally heard in the opening movement, adds increased intensity. Note, too, the rhythmically augmented and registrally enhanced version of the 'love motif' in the Primo part (see Example 6).

The F minor Fantasy for piano duet offers compelling circumstantial evidence of Schubert's deep affection for Caroline Esterházy. Indeed, this haunting piece enshrines a poignant declaration of love to his young pupil. Its secret, I believe, lies concealed in the contrast between formal unity – with the main theme's ingeniously coded inscription of Schubert's and Caroline's initials as a delicate musical monogram at its heart – and the *con delicatezza*'s graceful evocation of Schubert's love for Caroline Esterházy.

Rita Steblin's recent research on Schubert's prominent role in the 'Unsinnsgesellschaft' – with its heavily coded references to the composer and his friends – presents powerful documentary evidence concerning the Schubert-circle's fascination with codes[11]. Given the richness of imagery in the 'Unsinnsgesellschaft' documents, it seems highly likely that the F minor Fantasy is not an isolated instance of musical encryption in Schubert's oeuvre. Therefore, a more substantial analytical investigation of his music within the context of these important biographical discoveries is now required. ❖

Footnotes

1 This paper is a revised version of a presentation given at a Schubert Day entitled 'Schubert's first love...Schubert's last love' organised by the Schubert Institute UK at Finchcocks, Kent on 20 October 1996.

2 Deutsch (1958:233).

3 Deutsch (1958:100).

4 The sketches (Frederick R. Koch Foundation Collection 214 and 214a: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, and fair copy MHS 19491: Austrian National Library) are published, together with a commentary by Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen. See Hinrichsen (1991).

5 'Whether the glorious first subject is influenced by Barbarina's F minor Cavatina at the beginning of Act Four of *Le nozze di Figaro* is difficult to say, though Schubert's deep admiration of Mozart suggests its possible influence.' Kaiser (1994:8). The translation of the text from Barbarina's aria is by Lionel Salter (DG 2740 139). I am grateful to Richard Lawrence for helping me to focus my ideas more clearly on the possible emotional relationship between Barbarina's cavatina and Schubert's Fantasy.

6 As Maurice Brown points out in his essay on the Fantasy, 'The only idea in the sketched march that he used was the sustained C sharp; this becoming enharmonically D flat, still serves as the link between the Scherzo, in F sharp minor, and the closing section in F minor.' Brown (1966:98).

7 Deutsch (1946:363).

8 Brown (1966:96-97).

9 Steblin (1993:31-32).

10 The original German text is:
F moll
Ja, ihm ward sie!/Ja, ihm blüht sie!/Seine Arme/Umschlingen den himmlischen Leib—/Sie ist sein Weib—/Sie zu fühlen nur ward ich geboren/Und ihr Himmel ist für mich verlohren./Weh mir! weh mir! Leben ohne Leben/Hat das Schicksal spottend mir gegeben,/Und ich sinke den Schatten zu!— The English translation is mine.

11 Dr. Steblin has already presented three important articles on this subject: 'Schubert's "Nina" and the true peacocks', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 138 (March 1997), pp. 13–19, 'Schubert through the Kaleidoscope – The "Unsinnsgesellschaft" and its Illustrious Members' *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, Schubert Special Number, 1997, pp. 52–61 and 'Schubert's Role in the *Unsinnsgesellschaft* as Revealed by Clues from Schiller and *Aschenschlägel*', a paper given at the Internationale Schubert Konferenz – 'Schubert und seine Freunde', Vienna, 22–26 May, 1997. Steblin's book, *Schubert in der Unsinnsgesellschaft* (Vienna, Böhlau), is forthcoming.

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——, 1997[1] 'Schubert's "Nina" and the true peacocks', *The Musical Times*, Vol.138, pp.13–19.

——, 1997[2] 'Schubert through the Kaleidoscope – The "Unsinnsgesellschaft" and its Illustrious Members' *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, Schubert Special Number, pp. 52–61.

——, 1997[3] 'Schubert's Role in the *Unsinnsgesellschaft* as Revealed by Clues from Schiller and *Aschenschlägel*'. A paper given at the Internationale Schubert Konferenz – 'Schubert und seine Freunde', Vienna, 22–26 May, 1997.

——, 1997[4] *Schubert in der Unsinnsgesellschaft* (Vienna, Böhlau), forthcoming.

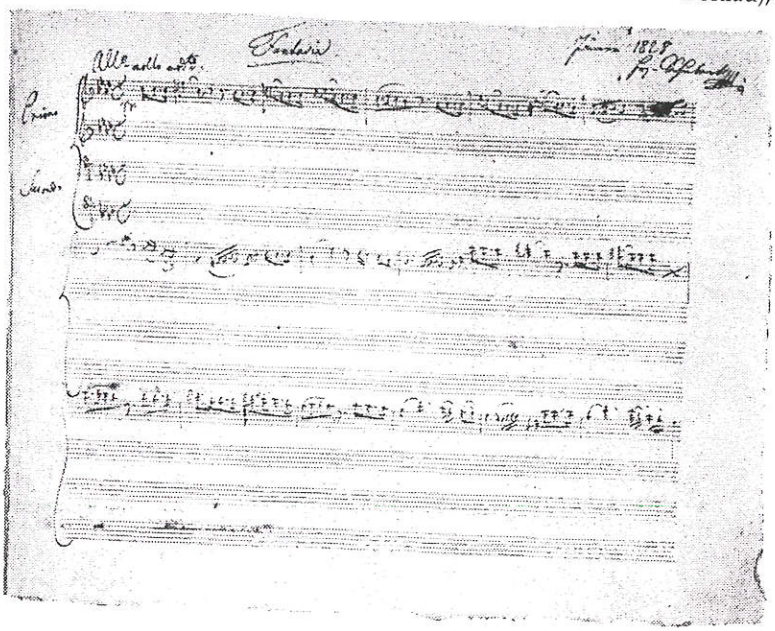

Plate 1: Sketch for the opening of the F minor Fantasy, D940 (The Frederick R. Koch Collection, The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, MS 214/214a, page 1).

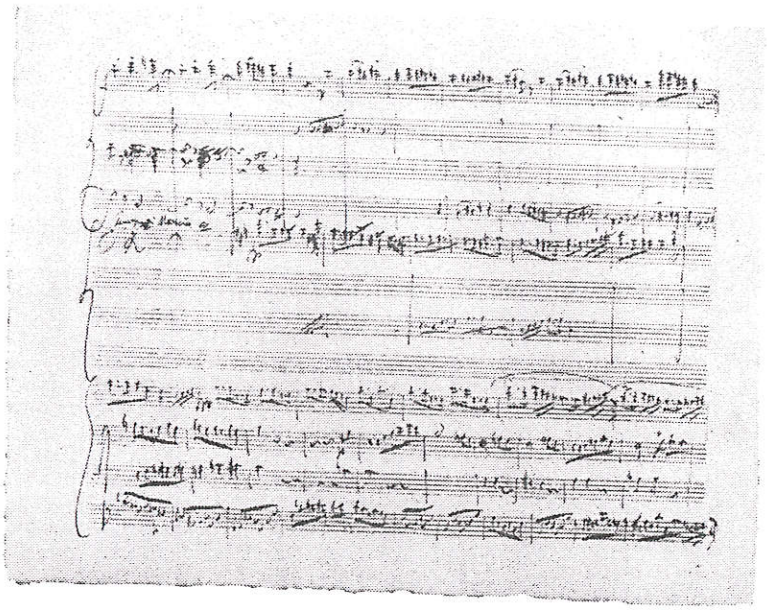

Plate 2: Page 14 of the sketch showing material from the 'Tempo di marcia' and 'con delicatezza' combined on the same system (The Frederick R. Koch Collection, The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, MS 214/214a, page 14).

Form Table

Allegro molto moderato	*Largo*	*Allegro vivace*	[*trio – con delicatezza*]	*Allo vivce*	*Tempo Imo*	[*Fugue*]
Aa/b	B	B1a	B1b	B1a	A1a	A1b
f—F—d flat/a—f/F	[f sharp	f sharp	; D	; f sharp]	f—F	f
i—I—flat vi/v—i/I	[= flat ii	—	; VI	; =flat ii]	i—I	i
A :			B	:	A1	

Reviews

Peter Giles, *The History and Technique of the Counter-Tenor*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995. xxiv + 459 pp. ISBN 0 85967 931 4. £45

The History and Technique of the Mezzo-Soprano would be a title not out of place in a Private Eye 'Book of the Year' list, alongside *The Complete History of the Sponge Cake*. Why, then, should this book be any different? As Percy Buck is reputed to have said, 'It is a subject about which few of us know anything much', but Peter Giles, a professional counter-tenor himself, is one of those (happy?) few. He has evidently made it his life's work to discover and publish all the information he can on this much-misunderstood and indeed, much-maligned voice, and his researches have borne fruit in *The Counter Tenor* (1982), *A Basic Counter-Tenor Method* (1988), *Chime Again, Beautiful Bells* (a CD of historic recordings by counter-tenors, published in 1991) and now in the present work. As James Bowman writes in his Foreword (reprinted verbatim from the 1982 publication), this book could well be subtitled 'Everything you ever wanted to know about counter-tenors, but were afraid to ask' – and then some!

After the Foreword, a 'Preview' and a lengthy (6 page) 'Introduction', the book begins with a chapter entitled 'Status Quo', largely based on the similarly-titled first chapter of *The Counter-Tenor*, in which the author looks at current prejudices against falsetto singing and speculates on the voice's origins in history. The following seven chapters are largely an expansion of chapter 2 of the previous book, the majority of musical examples from which are repeated here. This is particularly the case in the first of these chapters, a superficial survey of the history of music up to the Renaissance, where the carry-over of music examples has occasional unfortunate consequences, as in Example 2, where an illustration of parallel organum purporting to show a 'vox organalis' placed *above* the 'vox principalis' shows in fact the exact opposite. (It goes without saying that all examples and references implicitly assume a pitch standard of a' 440.)

Succeeding chapters concentrate on what is known of the singers, and cover almost all possible references to the voice, beginning with the earliest mentions of 'falsetto', 'counter', etc. (including an etymologically dubious conjecture on the usage of the word 'counter' meaning a prison!). The survey is brought up to date with (selective) listings of current singers and thoughts about trends and training in the UK, USA and elsewhere. Perhaps the most useful section here is in chapter 6, which covers the late 18th and 19th centuries and is very instructive about the gradual decline of the voice in concert life. Peter Giles has found what may be the earliest recorded example of the prejudice against falsetto singing, as early as 1827/8, in the pages of the *West Briton* and the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, whose respective reviewers disagree on the merits of the Truro singer Mr Penphraze. For the former, Penphraze was 'a fine Counter Tenor (of astonishing compass)', while his colleague only perceived 'strange tones and ludicrous gestures...which produced a sensible effect on the risible muscles of the audience' and which he compared unfavourably with the 'manly English voice' of another (presumably tenor?) singer.

Part 2 of the book is headed 'Technique' (although only the first two chapters are concerned with modern falsetto technique – the remainder have more to do with the techniques of previous ages). One of the problems of writing (or speaking) about vocal technique is that, for all the talk of 'separating the arytenoid cartilages' or 'slackening and thickening the vocal ligaments', these processes are not and can never be under the direct control of the singer. They can only be achieved secondarily, as a result of concentration on certain thoughts, images and sensations. This subjective perception of the act of singing means that there are almost as many theories of singing as there are singers – certainly as many as there are singing *teachers*. The earliest teachers of vocal technique, the Italian founders of the *bel canto* school in the late 17th century, probably had little or no idea of how the voice worked physiologically. (Even today, opinions are divided over some areas, the voice being such a complicated mechanism.) Their teaching, handed down through generations almost up to the present day, was based totally on precept and example. It was probably the Spaniard, Manuel Garcia, who first tried to study the mechanics of voice production and then (perhaps fatally) to use this knowledge to teach other singers.

Things would not be so bad if there were an agreed vocabulary for talking about how singing works, but unfortunately we are here in a Humpty Dumpty world, where words mean what their user wishes them to mean. In particular, from our point of view, the terms 'falsetto', 'head voice' and 'chest voice' seem to vary greatly in their usage, with confusing consequences. In writing about counter-tenor technique, a distinction *must* be made between falsetto, which is a

mechanism affecting the mode of vibration of the vocal cords, and the head/chest voice antithesis, which reflects the whole laryngeal set-up and which can be applied to the falsetto mechanism to enable strong falsetto notes even as low as D below middle C.

The falsetto lies approximately an octave above the 'basic' voice (enabling the 'yodel' effect whereby, with a minimum of effort or disturbance of the set-up of the larynx, the voice can be made to jump up an octave). Giles draws the analogy of a stringed instrument, but in terms of finger stopping to raise the pitch. As a falsettist *and* string player, my subjective feeling is that of playing a *harmonic*, where the string still vibrates along its full length but in two halves, at a pitch an octave higher, since its basic mode of vibration is impeded at the central nodal point. The aural difference between this and a stopped note is as distinctive as that between a falsetto and the full head-voice of a tenor. However, as the author points out on page 164, only scientific acoustical analysis will reveal whether there is any real correlation. Why has this never been done?

These problems of terminology are even further compounded when discussing the earliest vocal theorists, as Giles does in chapter 11, since it is tempting to make the assumption not only that words have always meant the same through the ages, but that those meanings coincide with those given to them by the author. When, in 1977, a group of us formed the short-lived Early Music Singers' Forum, this was one of the subjects we were most concerned about. We hoped that one day we would see a dictionary of international vocal terms based on historical principles (along the lines of the Oxford English Dictionary), but this was sadly not to be. It could have been a project for the US-based International Society of Early Music Singers and is possibly still a project that could be taken up by some well-funded research scholar. Until then, we are floundering in the dark.

A prime example of the change of use of words is the word 'falsetto' itself. Leaving aside Garcia's idiosyncratic use of the term, I was interested by the author's reference in his Introduction (p.xxi) to 'differences of opinion about the ancient term falsettist'. I was intrigued to find out if he discussed this further elsewhere, but reference to the lamentable index revealed only 'Falsettists, Spanish in Sistine Chapel Choir' (not much for a book primarily about falsetto singing!). In fact, he does not, although it is my own impression that in 16th and early 17th century Italy, the term 'falsetto' was synonymous with 'soprano', regardless of technique or sex. It could even be applied to instruments – in mid-16th century Venice, 'falseto' was used for the highest member of the violin family (above 'sopran').

In this part of the book, Giles makes much use of the term 'pharyngeal voice', but in spite of promises to discuss it in detail 'later' (page 175) he never really explains what he means by this term. There is, of course, no reference in the index, and it is not mentioned in Charles Cleall's otherwise comprehensive 'Glossary of Terms Pertaining to Voice' included at the end of the book. I have not come across this term in other books on singing, but I understand that it derives solely from the teachings of E. Herbert-Caesari. The nearest we come to an explanation is on page 168, but this does not really give much idea of how this voice is produced. It is only by page 229 that it appears that what he is talking about is falsetto in chest register. This is an important issue, since it is precisely the abandonment of this aspect of technique (used in the past, as Caesari recognised, by male altos) in pursuit of high castrato-like voices that has allowed tenors to fill the void of strong voices able convincingly to sing the low counter-tenor parts of Purcell and his contemporaries.

Chapter 13, possibly the core of the book, is headed 'The Falsetto Family: the Counter-Tenor and the Tenor'. At 68 pages, it represents some 15% of the book, and covers (like most of the other chapters) a wide range of subjects. Most significantly, it deals with the pre-19th century tenor, and contains what must be the most perceptive comment in the whole work: '...the last 150 years are not remarkable for the eclipsing (and uneclipsing) of the counter-tenor so much as for a fundamental change of singing technique for male voices, particularly the bass and the tenor.' Much reference is made to the findings of Roger Fiske (*English Theatre Music of the 18th Century*), showing that, prior to the exploits of singers such as Kelly and Duprez, tenors and baritones regularly went into falsetto for any notes above f'. (Interestingly, Clifford Bartlett (*Early Music Review*, October 1996) came up with a relevant quote from Thackeray's *The Newcomes* (written in 1853, but referring to some twenty years earlier): 'The colonel sang...with a very high voice, using freely the falsetto, after the manner of the tenor-singers of his day.'). Thus, it is not so much a question of the counter-tenor being a high tenor – the tenor himself was no different from a counter-tenor when in the upper part of his register.

Failure to take account of this difference in technique leads to the objections of many current critics to the use of falsettists for Purcell's counter-tenor parts. In his review article on Robert King's recordings of Purcell's church music (*Early Music* XXIII, No.4, November 1995), Eric Van Tassel berates the conductor for using boys' voices instead of female sopranos, since 'their voice production must have been very different from that of today's Anglican choirboys' (p. 687), yet only a couple of paragraphs earlier he condemns the use of falsettists for 'low' countertenor parts (how low is 'low'?) on the grounds of balance with the tenor part when the two share the same range. He conveniently ignores the fact that modern tenors are using a voice production unknown to the singers of Purcell's England.

The final chapter, entitled 'Towards performance', covers an array of topics, including pitch (but, significantly, mainly pitch in England from the mid-16th to the mid-18th centuries), voice ranges, the vexed question of reallocation of alto parts to tenors, vibrato and 'style', while the summing up bemoans the 'lingering prejudice' against the modern counter-tenor which masquerades as 'informed opinion' on the part of 'those who should know better'. There follow no less than 10 Appendices, mostly concerned with details about individual singers. The respective amount of coverage seems more in proportion to the amount of material unearthed by the author than to the relative merits of the singers themselves. Richard Elford, for whom so much great music survives by Handel, Weldon and others, merits three-and-a-half pages while a full 10 pages are devoted to the love life of John Saville of Lichfield. Appendix 10 is a complete photographic reprint (including a glaring typo) of Henry Farmer's 1952 monograph on John Abell (although the only acknowledgement is to Peters Edition for 'substantial quotations'), which could well be brought up to date by the inclusion of Edward Corp's findings about the exiled court at St. Germain-en-Laye (*RMA Journal* 120,ii, 1995, page 220). Incidentally, in the previous Appendix, 'Castrati', the author credits Abell with the ability to sing 'easily to the top of, and beyond, the G-clef treble stave'. He gives no indication where this idea comes from, although from other references he would appear to consider him a high counter-tenor alongside Howell. However, the surviving music sung by him seems to give him a fairly normal counter-tenor range of f–d' (see Draghi's *St. Cecilia Ode* of 1687).

At the end of 436 densely packed 245 × 185 mm pages, I am left wondering precisely at whom this work is aimed. The author appears to disarm all possible criticism in his Introduction, claiming to be 'working outside the established, academic milieu'. He states in his Preview that the book is 'not merely for singers and instrumentalists *who happen to be musicians*' (my emphasis – I assume he knows what he means), but also for 'artists, architects, writers, clerics, politicians and for many others'. I must admit that I cannot see this volume becoming an instant best-seller amongst the chattering classes – it is too packed with minutiae and too discursive in its style, especially given the very small area of music it is dealing with. (If this review seems somewhat diffuse, it is a reflection of the work itself. That I am writing so long after the book's publication is due in part to the difficulty of wading through its density.) However, musicologists and 'those who should know better' (see above) will dismiss it out of hand simply on account of the lack of the academic rigour that the author deliberately eschews.

In the course of reading this book, I was referred by one of the author's footnotes to Watkins Shaw's extensive *Musical Times* review of *The Counter Tenor* (*MT*, March 1983, p.165), and felt that I was reading a critique of the present volume. In a reply to the review, Peter Giles thanked Shaw for his comments, but he does not appear to have taken them on board in any way, since the same problems recur in the later work. His desire to be all-inclusive tends to lead to a lot of sitting on the fence, and even self-contradiction in the face of conflicting evidence. In many cases he makes assertions that are not backed up by evidence at all, and often makes unwarrantable assumptions about the facts he does adduce.

The book is lavishly illustrated, though the illustrations chosen (as in the 1982 work) often bear little relevance to the text. The author's own drawings in the chapters on technique (he is also a professional artist), though beautifully executed, convey little or nothing to this reader.

One of the more frustrating elements of this book is the author's heavy reliance on secondary, even tertiary sources for both material and translations. When handling foreign language texts, the original is occasionally given, but mostly not (with no apparent reason) which makes some of the more polemical translations difficult to evaluate; and why on earth rely solely on a seventeenth-century translation of Aelred of Rievaulx (*c*1109–1166), especially when the 'translation' involves passages such as 'This man sings a base, that a small meane, another a treble...', with all that those terms may have implied to a seventeenth-century reader?

As an example of the author's unwillingness to examine primary sources, one could cite his discussion on pages 65–6 of whether or not Purcell himself sang 'Tis nature's voice' in the 1692 *St Cecila Ode*. He mentions W. H. Cummings' quotation of the title of a single-sheet publication of this piece 'printed in 1692 or 1693' and then indulges in a long flight of fancy hinging on whether the copy was 'printed' or 'written'. He concludes 'A chance to examine the copy to which Cummings refers would be welcome'. Well – Zimmerman, in his *Analytical Catalogue*, mentions two such publications: (1) 'Tis nature's voice. A song set by Mr. Henry Purcell and sung by himself at St. Cecilia's Feast...[London: Tho. Cross, ca.1693] and (2) A Song

Sung by himself at St. Caecilia's Feast. [London: Tho. Cross, ca.1693]. Zimmerman gives no locations for either of these copies, and there is no mention of the second in either RISM or BUCEM. However, there appear to be three copies of (1) extant, in the Rowe Music Library of King's College, Cambridge, in the library of Gresham College (now in the Guildhall) and in the British Library, where its call-number is K.7.i.2 (a bound-up collection of single-sheet songs). Unfortunately, the last time I was in the BL, the volume was unavailable and, thanks to a power cut, I was unable even to inspect the microfilm. However, I think that Zimmerman, RISM, BUCEM and the BL catalogue between them are quite unequivocal – Purcell did, indeed, sing the piece.

While on the subject of Purcell's singers, the author seems to accept unquestioningly Zimmerman's statement on page 241 of his biography that Damascene sang bass and Turner sang tenor in the 1692 *Ode*. Zimmerman gives no indication of his authority for this statement, and I have not had the chance to inspect the autograph score in the Bodleian which contains the original singers' names, but from the editorial notes of the Purcell Society edition it seems that the names of Damascene and Turner are only ever associated with parts in the alto (C3) clef. Giles also states unequivocally (p.260) that, in the 1694 *Birthday Ode*, John Howell 'sang the high first part of "Sound the Trumpet" ', although the only singer named in a contemporary source is Damascene in 'Strike the Viol' (the 'Gresham' manuscript) – Zimmerman (Analytical Catalogue) merely states that Howell 'probably' sang the top part.

A good example of the frustrations encountered in this book is provided by Appendix 1 – 'The Nicholas Morgan mystery'. Morgan was a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in the mid-sixteenth century who seems to have left the Chapel by the 1680s but who appears to turn up in France in 1683 singing as an *haute-contre*. Giles relates the copious findings of Gratton Flood and Thurston Dart concerning the continental career of this Catholic exile, singer, subversive and possible spy, but cannot quite reconcile these with the unequivocal statement in the Chapel Royal register now in the Bodleian (MS Rawlinson D318) '1581. Mr morgan died the 9th of maye...'. Undaunted by this, however, he manages to find yet another Nicholas Morgan who built a house in Rochester – could this be the same person? In spite of all this, the undoubted identification of Nicolas Mauregan, *haute-contre*, with the Nicholas Morgan of the English Chapel Royal would be clinching evidence for the identity of the haute-contre with the English counter-tenor (at least in the 16th century), were it not for one major flaw in his argument – his opening statement that 'Nicholas Morgan was a Chapel Royal counter-tenor...'. As far as I am aware, there are only six references to Morgan in any of the court records published so far, and none of them mentions what voice he sang. While it is tempting to assume that he was a counter-tenor, there is nothing to suggest that he might not have been a tenor or even a bass who found a new lease of life in France as an *haute-contre*. The exchange of singers between France and England shown by cases such as Morgan and Damascene is certainly a fruitful ground for trying to establish the nature of the *haute-contre*, but it needs far more rigorous examination than this.

As the only major work in its field, this book will of necessity be the standard reference for many years to come – indeed, it is difficult to imagine the need for another similar work for at least 50–100 years! Inevitably, new nuggets of information will continue to surface and will form the subject of further letters and articles in *Musical Times* and other organs, but the problem is that anyone working in this field and wishing to use Peter Giles' work as a starting point will have a hard job on his hands. Firstly, as a reference work it has two major drawbacks. The lack of a decent professional index has already been mentioned; this is compounded by the total absence of a bibliography. That one was originally intended by the author is evident from a reference to it on page 369 – presumably it was cut by the publishers at the last minute. The situation would not be quite so bad if the author's copious footnotes gave adequate bibliographical references, but what is one to make of, for example, '*Vita* (The early life of St. Dunstan), p.417' (p.9)? Evidently not the original manuscript, but what edition? On the other hand, a footnote on page 168, referring to another book, gives not only the (US) publisher but also his complete (1987) UK address! A second drawback for future toilers in the field will be simply trying to sort out from the mass of information provided how much is established fact and how much is unwarranted assumption or even plain wishful thinking, and there will be no alternative but to recover all the ground so rigorously delved already by the author.

This is sad, because Peter Giles' heart is clearly in the right place, and it is to be hoped that his basic message comes through clear and undimmed. There seem to be two 'heresies' prevalent at the moment: (a) that a counter-tenor is *anyone* who sings in falsetto, regardless of range, and (b) that the counter-tenor is not a falsettist at all! It cannot be stressed often enough that a counter-tenor is a singer whose voice lies naturally in the alto range – this is not the same as a tenor singing at the top end of his register. However beautifully he performs 'Tis nature's voice' and one or two other solo numbers in a Purcell ode, if the next night he is singing the Evangelist in the St. John Passion, he is a tenor, not a counter-tenor. Purcell's original counter-tenor soloists would also have sung the counter-tenor (i.e., alto) part in all the choruses, and then the next day would have been back in the choir stalls at the Chapel Royal, Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral, where they would have sung the alto part twice a day, seven days a week, not just in verse anthems and services but in all

the choral items in the service. This would have included the less elaborate items such as responses and psalms, the latter of which, as any cathedral singer knows, can occupy anything from 15 to 20 minutes of the service. The alto parts of Restoration psalm chants lie in the range a–g', while their reciting notes (which account for most of the psalm-singing) lie in the more restricted range of c'–g'. Any tenors around who fancy doing that for the rest of their working lives? (Peter Giles makes a similar point on page 319 of his book.)

What this book makes clear to all but the most prejudiced of readers is that, since at least the late 16th century, the terms contratenor (altus), countertenor, haute-contre, contr'alto and alto have been used interchangeably to refer firstly to a part lying between soprano and tenor, and then, by extension, to the person who sings that part. In England today, when not sung by women, that part is sung by male falsettists. The only issue of contention (which has occupied so much space in journals such as *Musical Times*) is how much falsettists occupied this role in the past. In this country, there is an unbroken tradition of male alto singing going back over 400 years. The onus is surely on those who would claim that the alto/counter-tenor role was once taken by high tenors (using modern, post-bel-canto techniques) to demonstrate when, where and why the change occurred?

SIMON R HILL

John Harley, *William Byrd, Gentleman of the Chapel Royal*. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997. Hardback, £45, ISBN 1 85928 165 1.

What is it about Renaissance composers that makes them such uncommon subjects for monographs? Imagine a world with no biographical and critical study of Monteverdi or Purcell, Handel or Mozart. Unthinkable. But now look to the library for readable books on Josquin or Willaert, Palestrina or Victoria, and you will find the shelves almost empty. These are composers of major stature. Where are the studies that place them and their music in context?

Given that lack, any new book that gives a balanced, rounded and serious account of a sixteenth-century composer is bound to be welcome. John Harley's full-length study of William Byrd is all of those things. In its coverage of Byrd's life it is more substantial and comprehensive than any previous biography of the composer, and it includes many new documents, several of which lead Harley to draw startling conclusions. As for the music, the author valiantly sets out not only to represent the many sides of Byrd's multifacteted output, but also to connect the compositional chronology to the facts of Byrd's biography. All told, the book represents a significant achievement, a conclusion that must hold true despite the various misgivings one might have about it.

First the biography. Here, the most radical revisions are concerned with Byrd's family and early years. As Harley himself admits, the name 'Byrd' was common in late Tudor England, to the extent that confident identification of the composer and his relatives in the midst of a large and mixed flock is often difficult. By Harley's reckoning, 'our' William Byrd was born in 1539–40, not in 1543 as previously thought. That interpretation has already been called into question. In his insert notes to volume one of a new recorded 'Byrd Edition' (Gaudeamus, CD GAU 170), David Skinner throws out new ideas that could push back Byrd's date of birth as early as *c*1534/5. Meanwhile, Harley is said to have new documents on the Byrd family, discovered since the book went to press. With the birth-date disputed, the family still emerging from the shadows, and the critical issue of Byrd's musical upbringing unresolved – was he a chorister at Westminster Abbey, as Skinner speculates? – it is clear that we have not yet heard the last word on at least the early years of Byrd's biography.

As for the music, Harley has both the advantage and the difficulty of being the most recent in a line of unusually shrewd commentators. Although his book is the first for fifty years to cover everything – Byrd's life, and all of Byrd's works – nonetheless it follows three decades of very active and significant research into specific aspects of Byrd's output. Cumulatively, the critical

writings of Joseph Kerman, Philip Brett, Oliver Neighbour, Craig Monson and Alan Brown (to name only the key players) add up to a formidable and penetrating critical literature. Arguably they constitute the finest body of writings ever to have been directed towards the works of a sixteenth-century composer of any nationality. Small wonder, then, if Harley's account sometimes reads more like a synthesis of their work (with copious acknowledgement) than a re-evaluation, a valuable supplement rather than a replacement. Small wonder, too, if the comprehensive synthesis, helpful as it is , sometimes makes less enticing reading than the more focussed pioneer studies on which it draws.

Finally, the book has not been checked carefully enough for error. In particular the music examples are full of slips. Some are obvious, but others seem credible and will be accepted by the unwary reader. Titles of works are prone to mis-spelling, especially in tables. A single reference to 'Miserere' as 'Misere' might be excused, but repeated, the error causes concern. Since Tallis's death is incorrectly given as 1583 in the opening outline chronology, one might justifiably ask what other less conspicuous mistakes have also been allowed to stand. In a book that has obviously been so scrupulously researched, these and other lapses sound an unexpectedly jarring note. Perhaps in a second edition we can be given a cleaner text, and at the same time be brought up to date with the controversy over Byrd's formative years.

JOHN MILSOM
(Professor of Music at Middlebury College, Vermont)

letter

Dear Sir:
You will remember that you invited me to write for the last issue an obituary of Carl Dolmetsch, but I declined and suggested you should ask Margaret Campbell who, with her close knowledge of the Dolmetsch family, was far better qualified than me to do this. In the event the *Guardian* got in first, and the official obituary which she had then written was reprinted in the last *Leading Notes* (p. 28). My acquaintance with Carl Dolmetsch had been very spasmodic, spread over some fifty years and often with long gaps; it was nevertheless unforgettable.

My earliest reminiscence of Carl Dolmetsch is of his school talks, to which, to his great credit, he devoted considerable time even during the busiest periods of his life. He was wonderful with children, capturing their imagination from the outset. Perhaps he was most in his element in this aspect of his work.

My second recollection is less happy. I had saved up the huge sum of £6 in order to have a really good descant recorder to replace my German-fingering Adler instrument. When the recorder at last arrived I was deeply disappointed. It had an unpleasant nasal tone-quality, and the octaves were out of tune (I didn't then realise how much recorders need coaxing). So I sent it back asking if I could try another. Carl angrily refused, saying that all his instruments were perfect – I know of only one other person who has made this impossible claim, for all hand-crafted pieces of wood are different. But I got my money back, and in due course bought a second-hand descant – a Dolmetsch. I still play it when I want to make a lot of noise.

Now for another extreme. When I was writing what was to become the chapter on 'High Notes' in my *Recorder Technique* book, I remembered being very impressed that Carl, at one of his lecture-recitals, had been able to play three complete octaves on his bass recorder. I wrote to him asking if he would tell me the fingerings he used, but expected that, quite reasonably, he would not be keen to give away a 'trade secret' which he had every reason to reserve until his own book on advanced technique came to be written. Far from it. He invited me to Haslemere, showed me the tricks, and wrote down the fingerings, saying he would be very happy for me to publish them. It was an act of considerable generosity, and a great encouragement to me. But this generosity, a deep desire to communicate his knowledge and enthusiasm, was an important part of his complex personality.

I have met various people who have at one time or another worked for Carl Dolmetsch. He must have been a very demanding task-master. Some said that although their time at Haslemere had inevitably been exhaustingly instructive, they were relieved to move away. But I also think of Joe Saxby, and remember especially at a post-concert party at Newcastle hearing the recording of the concert and watching Joe weeping with emotion in listening to the slow movement of the Bach F minor harpsichord concerto, oblivious to the fact that it was he who was playing it. Yet this sensitive man was quite prepared to devote his life to a musical partnership with Carl.

Carl came to the two Society of Recorder Players Annual Festivals which were held in Cambridge, and as President of the Branch I genuinely felt that his presence raised the quality of the whole occasion. He had that sort of aura about him. In his later years, every time he recounted the same thing he oddly made it sound as if he was telling it for the first time, including the story of the Bressan recorder lost at Waterloo station. Even though recovering from illness, he determinedly played a full part in the 1995 SRP Festival organised by the Guildford branch at Haslemere. Nothing would stop him conducting a session as well as giving a lecture on the recorder revival, with a twin daughter on each side of him handing him the right instrument at exactly the right time. It was a charming occasion; although we all knew we would inevitably

hear the story of the lost recorder yet again, a large audience came along.

Carl was not a man to be crossed. He knew he was always right, and often was. Compromise was not a word in his book. To an outsider like me, however, his power to exasperate was exceeded by his power to charm. And that charm was not deliberately put on. It was in every way natural.

Perhaps his inflexibility was partly the result of the drilling he received from his father. Carl once told me how as a child he had been taught – cajoled or threatened – into playing a Purcell violin sonata exactly by rote, including every note of decoration (most of which would now be regarded as not authentic). His recorder version of the sonata reproduced Arnold's decorations exactly – so much for improvisation! Despite his fame, Carl was not a great recorder player. In particular, he used to speed up difficult passages (where most of us tend to slow down). He was not alone among recorder players in relying on agility and brilliant ornamentation for effect. As a result I found his playing of descant, and, in particular, sopranino recorders, more enjoyable than his solos with treble. On the other hand, for me his most moving performance was of Rubbra's *Meditazioni sopra 'Coeurs Désolés'* for treble recorder and harpsichord at a Wigmore Hall concert, played as an extra item just after Rubbra's death. Recorder players should be eternally grateful to Carl Dolmetsch for almost single-handedly persuading major UK composers of the mid-twentieth century to produce a repertoire for the recorder unequalled in any other other country at the time.

My last reminiscence comes into the exasperation category, but also shows Carl's almost incredible enthusiasm and thoroughness, as well as his immense loyalty to his father's memory. While I was writing my book *Playing Recorder Sonatas* I asked Carl if he would in principle be willing, subject of course to seeing the final version, to write three or four sentences of 'blurb' for the dust-cover, and he incautiously agreed. So when the book was in page-proof and ready for production, my publishers (Oxford University Press) sent him a copy, and asked for the few sentences, hopefully of commendation. Carl was about to go on holiday, but took the book with him and spent a large part of his holiday virtually proof-reading it – and, I am ashamed to say, spotting a few typos I had overlooked. He then wrote asking me to make quite a number of alterations without which he would not feel disposed to recommend the book. Many of them related to his father's rôle in the recorder revival. It was of course far too late to make changes affecting pagination and the index. And too late to seek for 'blurb' elsewhere. But by good fortune some space was available at the end of my text, and under such pressure, my Oxford editor reluctantly agreed that a summary of Carl's points might be added within this space. I leave readers to imagine, with publication deadlines to be met, how precarious this process was. But the crucial four sentences were forthcoming.

Exasperating – yes; an uncompromising perfectionist – yes; a showman (but in a good cause) – yes. Carl Dolmetsch's faults were obvious, so that they could be accepted as part of him, even tolerated. But his enthusiasm and his achievements, his tenacity, and his personal charm, inherited by his daughters, will in my memory be uppermost. He was assiduous in everything he undertook, including his support of 'NEMA'. Dr Carl Dolmetsch, CBE, was an extraordinary man, and we shall certainly never look upon his like again.

ANTHONY ROWLAND-JONES, Grantchester