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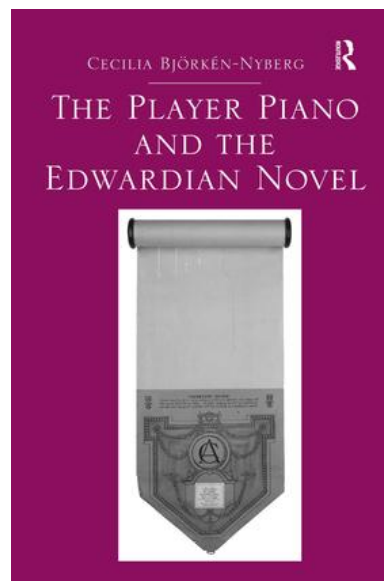
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The Player Piano and the Edwardian Novel. Cecilia Björkén-Nyberg. Abingdon, UK and New York: Routledge, 2016. xii+209 pp. ISBN 978-1-47243-998-7 (hardcover).

Cecilia Björkén-Nyberg's monograph *The Player Piano and the Edwardian Novel* offers an intriguing exploration of the shifting landscape of musical culture at the turn of the twentieth century and its manifestations in Edwardian fiction. The author grounds her argument in musical discussions from such novels as E. M. Forster's *A Room with a View*, Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*, and Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street*. Despite the work's title, the mechanical player piano is—with rare exception—ostensibly absent from these and other fictional pieces that Björkén-Nyberg considers; however, as the author explains, player pianos were increasingly popular during the early twentieth century and “brought about a change in pianistic behaviour” that extended far beyond the realm of mechanical music making (183). Because of their influence on musical culture more broadly, Björkén-Nyberg argues for the value of recognizing the player piano's presence in fictional works that otherwise “appear to be pianistically ‘clean’” of references to the mechanical instruments. Put another way, she claims: “whenever a traditional piano is being played in Edwardian fiction, the music is simultaneously run through the machine” (2).



Björkén-Nyberg's work comprises four main chapters that, along with addressing various pieces of Edwardian fiction, valuably incorporate a diversity of contemporaneous primary sources. These include materials that specifically foreground the player piano, such as printed guidebooks for playing the mechanical instruments; sources that address broader topics of

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piano performance, music pedagogy, and so forth, such as features from music periodicals and industry trade papers; and a miscellany of documents outside of music that touch upon themes addressed in the work. Chapter 1, “Storing Music in Edwardian Fiction,” provides background and introduces theoretical connections between the player piano and literature that Björkén-Nyberg pursues further in subsequent chapters. The author’s brief overview of the new modes of music making and music access that player pianos granted their human operators is angled at the nonexpert, and covers operators’ ability to control tempo and dynamic expression by manipulating their instruments’ pedals and levers. Björkén-Nyberg devotes more attention to player piano rolls, however, including discussion of the impressive catalog of music they represented, the limited types of musical information basic rolls were able to store, and how a player piano operator might interact with them. Throughout the chapter, the author explores various correlations between rolls and fiction as media. Chapter 2, “The Engineer,” turns the focus to the player piano as a musical machine, including fitting it within contemporary scientific interest in energy and muscle fatigue. Björkén-Nyberg connects this with perceptions and representations of musicians and music making. For example, she argues that the ultimate artistic failure of Maurice, from Henry Handel Richardson’s novel *Maurice Guest*, can be understood through repeated characterizations of his energy: as if Maurice himself were a machine, it is his “low-grade energy” and failure to “contribute to the production of useful work” that explains his unexceptional status as a musician (67). In chapter 3, “The Performer,” the author explores conflicting attitudes toward and depictions of virtuosity and the figure of the virtuoso. Here, she connects the player piano’s capacity for flawless, mechanical technique with portrayals of natural talent, mechanical training, “pianistic sincerity,” and deception in various texts (7). Chapter 4, “The Composer,” centers on the particular agency player pianos allowed their operators, who were able to bypass a composer’s original intent by using the machine to control tempo and dynamics or to alter a work’s larger form (by skipping a movement, for example). Björkén-Nyberg places this agency in dialogue with gender and the fulfillment or subversion of performance norms to offer fresh interpretation of fictional scenes, including Lucy Honeychurch’s experiences at the piano in *A Room with a View*.

Some of the examples that Björkén-Nyberg presents of player piano subtexts within these mostly “pianistically ‘clean’ ” works of fiction are more transparent than others, in part because of the abstract nature her argument, and in part because the author employs a rather dense writing style. Even so, a central value of Björkén-Nyberg’s work for scholars across a wide spectrum of disciplines lies in the myriad of fascinating areas and sources it touches upon in the course of literary analysis. Some of these are quite unexpected—such as her exploration of themes of conjuring and deception across such seemingly disparate contexts as live (non-mechanized) piano performances, magic shows, early cinema, and player piano advertisements.

The particular orientation of Björkén-Nyberg’s work, along with the methodology she applies, introduces compelling perspectives on the player piano and musical life of specific interest to music scholars. This includes facets of the player piano’s history that are underemphasized in contemporary scholarship, such as the thoughtful consideration of player piano rolls in Chapter 1. Additionally, whereas player piano research discussions often utilize juxtapositions with phonograph technology, Björkén-Nyberg’s basis in music scenes from Edwardian fiction naturally places the player piano in dialogue with the technology and discursive terrain of the ordinary (non-mechanized) piano. The player piano is rarely given a prominent or significant place in general histories of the piano, and the markedly rich material the author unearths promises to capture the interest of mainstream piano researchers. Points of overlap between the old and new technology addressed in the work have relevance to scholars with interest



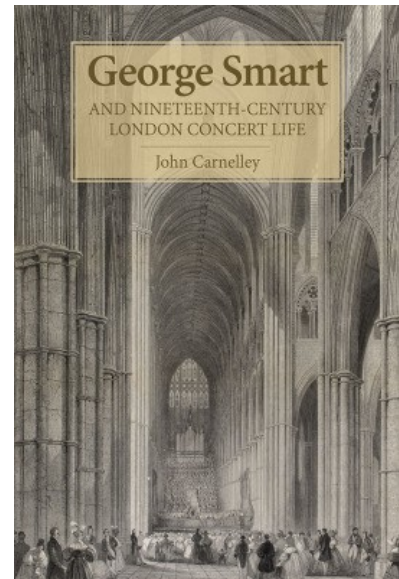
more broadly in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century musical culture, such as the compelling connection Björkén-Nyberg locates between player piano discourse and the “systematic and mass-producing industry” of conservatory music lessons that was well entrenched by the turn of the century (115).

Björkén-Nyberg refers to her study as an “archeological endeavor of uncovering the player piano discourse”—a fitting description of her resource-rich and literature-centered approach (183). The results of this fruitful archeological dig vary, and the sundry, fascinating pockets of musical and cultural life it reveals give rise to more questions that beg for further research. To be sure, Björkén-Nyberg’s work successfully prompts readers to at least consider how the player piano might be understood to fit within seemingly “pianistically ‘clean’ ” spaces, and more importantly, how probing the possibility of its influence more broadly enriches discussions of literature, music history, and cultural history.

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George Smart and Nineteenth-Century London Concert Life. John Carnelly. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2015. viii + 329. ISBN 987-1-78327-064-4 (hardcover).

Sir George Thomas Smart (1776–1867) was one of the most important musical figures in Great Britain and, arguably, Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century. A conductor and administrator, he was involved in commissioning major works by Ludwig van Beethoven and Carl Maria von Weber, as well as promoting the symphonies of Joseph Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Beethoven to British audiences. While Smart himself was not a composer of merit or note, he conducted most of the major ensembles and institutions in London from the Antient Concerts and the Chapel Royal to Covent Garden, and was the era’s most sought-after conductor and organizer of musical festivals. Like Felix Mendelssohn, he was one of the figures who helped make the musical profession a respectable one in Britain. His legacy to researchers is a trove of archival information held predominantly in the British Library, which includes personal journals, account books, and annotated programs of the many concerts he organized and conducted throughout Britain.



John Carnelly’s *George Smart and Nineteenth-Century London Concert Life* investigates this powerful and important legacy. It is an extremely useful book, and a necessary addition to the library of any student or scholar working on British music in the first half of the nineteenth century. Carnelly’s work is not a biography of Smart, per se: while there are plenty of biographical details within the volume, it is instead a topically-based book that broadly investigates the musical infrastructure of London during this period through the lens of Smart’s



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involvement with the music profession. It is one of two books from 2015 that situate conductors within their musical context. The first is John Goulden's *Michael Costa: England's First Conductor—The Revolution in Musical Performance in England, 1830-1880* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Press, 2015). Carnelly's volume puts the lie to Goulden's first subtitle. Carnelly's book will prove fascinating reading for the scholar-archivist: the author richly supports his text throughout with detailed footnotes, is explicit in presenting how the sources created his fact pattern (and notes clearly where there are lacunae), and both identifies and critiques available archival sources. He is not immune from occasionally falling into old, long-disproved truisms, such as the canard, "At this time [that is, during Smart's working life], operas in English consisted almost entirely of corrupt adaptations of operatic music from abroad, with almost no correlation between the English texts and the 'borrowed' music" (176, n8). But Carnelly's sources and discussions generally rise above such obvious errors of interpretation.

The book includes seven chapters that trace Smart's concertizing in London, arranged roughly chronologically: an overview of his early career and the music profession in London from 1776 to 1825 (chapter 1), a chapter detailing concert life in London from 1805 to 1825 (chapter 2), an examination of Smart's impact on London's concerts from 1800 to 1825 (chapter 3), discussions of Smart at the apogee of his career, and as the most important musician in London, from 1826 to 1830 (chapter 5), and 1830 to 1844 (chapter 6). Chapter 4 is an interlude, detailing Smart's 1825 trip to the Continent, where he met Beethoven, Weber, Ludwig Spohr, and Mendelssohn, among others. Chapter 7 locates Smart in semi-retirement (1844–1867), but still highly sought after as an administrator and member of prestigious committees for musical scholarships, schools, and the like. The work contains five appendices, four of them of great significance, including lists of various concerts conducted by Smart, as well as detailed programs and some reviews. The value of these appendices is that Carnelly draws together diverse materials from Smart's own papers, pages of contemporary music journals such as *The Harmonicon*, the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review*, and the *Musical World*, as well as reviews found in *The Times* and many other newspapers. Carnelly has collected and organized all of this material chronologically, so that the reader will not have to do so. The presence of such meticulously detailed information indicates the origin of the present study as a doctoral dissertation, as does the fifth appendix: a list of Smart's sacred compositions (which are not referred to throughout the volume). It is a good list, but feels like it was included not because it was necessary for the book, but simply due to the fact the author had compiled it.

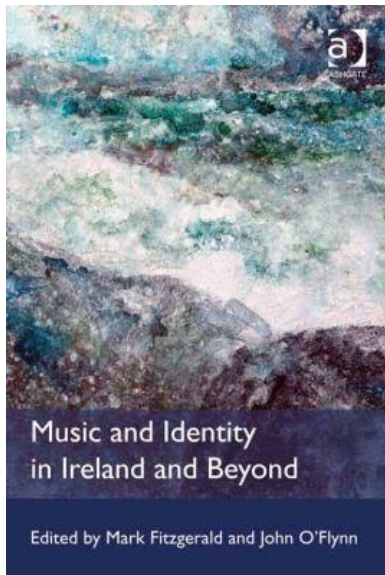
Throughout each chapter, Carnelly breaks his discourse into smaller, mostly overlapping segments. The section in chapter 6 entitled "The Canon and Musical Works" is somewhat typical of the author's method. This short, polished discussion draws on all of the standard secondary musicological sources, including William Weber's "The History of the Musical Canon" in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Fiona M. Palmer's *Vincent Novello (1761-1861): Music for the Masses* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), as well as generous primary sources, including a program from the 1834 Royal Musical Festival and articles from *The Harmonicon*. It is well reasoned, and would be an excellent basis for starting a discussion on the rise of the canon, useful for planning an undergraduate lecture, or as fodder for an in-class graduate seminar discussion. While interesting, the topic seems connected to Smart only tangentially: he is mentioned only on pages 203 and 206, and then briefly, as if the programming of the 1834 festival was a reaction to instead of a coalescence of the growing idea of canon. Since Carnelly limits himself to London, he has missed the opportunity to discuss how Smart prefigured many of these ideas of canon in his festival conducting of the 1820s and early 1830s.



The major fault in the work—if this is indeed a fault—is that Carnelly’s interpretive strategy throughout is designed as a gazetteer of information. This means that the reader is expected to bring a great deal of knowledge to Carnelly’s book, and finding a through-line for the volume is difficult. Carnelly’s mission throughout is to resurrect Smart’s reputation and put him at the forefront of British music in the first four decades of the nineteenth century. By confining himself to Smart’s work in London and short descriptions of his foreign trips, Carnelly does not quite manage to do that. A future, full study of Smart would need to take into consideration the conductor’s many festivals and other concerts outside London. Carnelly’s excellent work within *George Smart and Nineteenth-Century London Concert Life* sets him up well to accomplish this task.

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Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond. Edited by Mark Fitzgerald and John O’Flynn. Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. xiii+340 pp. ISBN 978-1-4724-0966-9 (hardcover).



This collection’s essays deal substantially with the use of the term “Irish” for musics in Ireland, and all address in some way the “Traditional.” Their questioning of the use of “Irish” as a descriptor *exclusively* for “indigenous traditional music of Ireland” is understandable if one is involved in another music form in Ireland, for there are also large numbers of Irish people who perform or are deeply engaged with popular musics, and others who are engaged in contemporary classical composition.

In “Irish Music and Anglo-Irish Identity in the Eighteenth Century,” Barra Boydell notes that “Irish” music has been clearly identifiable for at least three centuries, most visibly through Moore’s *Irish Melodies*, but beyond that as far back as Giraldus Cambrensis’s 1188 *Topographica Hibernia*. He concludes that music we regard as “traditional” (notably, harp music) was, before the 1700s, indulged in by the native bourgeoisie and the Anglo-Irish alike as a matter of taste, but by the end of that century had become bound up with nationality, through association with the United Irish movement, Edward Bunting’s publications, etc. The consequences of this politicization are real issues in classical and contemporary musics, with composers over the last century either falling between two stools (which results in issues in identity assignment, such as with Arnold Bax and E. J. Moeran, who “often seem to occupy an ambivalent position between Ireland and Britain” [11]) or leads to issues with the identification and validity of—and the very existence of—an Irish school of composition.

In indigenous song, Martin Dowling sees a decline in Irishness as being a response to school music, music-hall, Moore’s *Melodies*, and the political songs of Thomas Davis. He tells us that the Great Famine forced a change in social practices that also affected music, as did economic



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issues, emigration, and the mass production of instruments, and that it is among “black-coated workers” (clerks, shop assistants, minor civil servants, teachers, and clergy) that the actual development of the genre “traditional” is located, among those who promote it still. Ruth Stanley highlights the identity issue in an inverse manner, through the BBC’s attempts in Northern Ireland to arrive at a broadcasting policy that would represent its (onetime) two-to-one Protestant to Catholic constituency. This led to the creation of a radio program, *Irish Rhythms*, with Irish tunes played by an orchestra in a *céilí band* manner, which was criticized by Protestants for being unrepresentative and by Catholics for not being the real thing. Yet many Protestants followed the program, as it was acceptable to them since classical composers such as Hamilton Harty were already doing arrangements of traditional tunes. Jennifer McCay deals with this same political arena and its double problem of two sets of national loyalties, examining composer Kevin O’Connell and the complexity of identity against which he has worked: from a nationalist background, but promoted by the British BBC rather than the Irish RTÉ. Kari Veblen picks two distinct moments in the revival period of Traditional music in Ireland: 1951 (when there was tremendous local, community, and family pride in and engagement with the music), and 1996 (when the syncretic modernism of the Afro-Celt Sound System achieved esteem on an international stage). Veblen concludes that new contexts have replaced old, standards and opportunities for playing have improved, and the music is now also an adjunct to tourism, an internationally marketable commodity. This brings into question the editorial challenge of the descriptor “Irish,” for in order to be all these things, the music has to be instantly recognizable.

Language is the main issue in Thérèse Smith’s essay, which draws on the song-collector Tom Munnely’s 1972 diaries. While attempting to collect English-language songs, Munnely was frustrated by an eighty-year-old singer who insisted on singing songs only in the Irish language, as well as about issues relevant to her community, thereby affirming for Smith that language “is uniquely crucial to articulation of identity in song” (213). By contrast, Matteo Cullen addresses the newest ingredient in the Irishness debate, the music and music occasions of African immigrants to Ireland, which mixes identities correlated to economics, social class, and personal needs. This shows adaptation—not unlike “Traditional Irish”—of African old-world culture in new-age settings. Editor O’Flynn himself explores the origins and application of the label “Celtic” in identity and music, his analysis concurring with that of many traditional performers, notably that the “Celtic” genre is a dubious concoction as regards Irishness, otherness, and gender, yet has afforded the “opening up a discourse for Irish musicians in all genres wishing to explore other musical systems and traditions” (257).

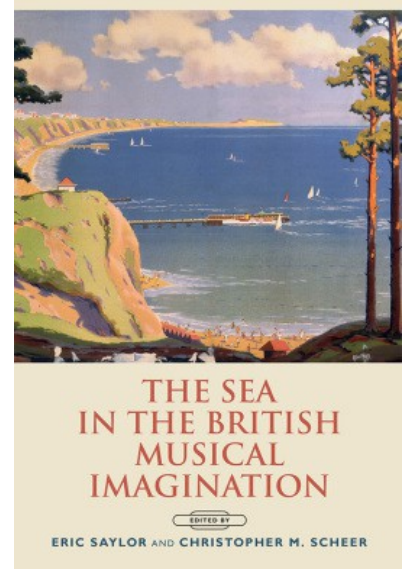
Harry White’s concluding essay, “The Invention of Ethnicity,” closes the collection by addressing “the status and perception of traditional music as a culturally authentic mode of Irish identity.” Like the book overall, this is quite a challenge to the thinking that underpinned the traditional music revival (in which non-professional musicians took on an establishment that was either hostile to indigenous music or patronized it as “table music” [10]). Yet, as White evaluates: “the very taxonomy of Irish musical experience is incomparably richer than before, not least because of a determination to see beyond those old polarities of ethnicity and colonialism that shaped Irish musical history for the better part of two centuries.” In sum, this volume’s illuminating presentation of mixed ideologies is a challenging, provocative, and stimulating contribution to thinking on all music in Ireland.

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The Sea in the British Musical Imagination. Edited by Eric Saylor and Christopher M. Scheer. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2015. 306 pp. ISBN 9781783270620 (hardcover).

Editors and contributors Eric Saylor and Christopher M. Scheer are joined in this volume by a diverse group of scholars who offer fresh and stimulating perspectives on the sea's role as a locus of musical creativity for Britons both obscure and celebrated, among them forgotten songsmiths of the eighteenth century, fisherman-singers of the twentieth, and canonical figures such as Purcell, Elgar, Britten, Vaughan Williams, and Davies.



The collection's essays are prefaced by Saylor and Scheer's engaging observations about the profound dependencies that have married Britain's culture to the sea, a relationship they find enduringly symbolized by the ritual broadcasts of the UK's national weather service *Shipping Forecast*. The volume concludes with Jenny Doctor's thoughtful contemplation of the sea's characteristic, if melancholy, grip upon Grace Williams, the only woman composer prominent in the volume. (The editors make clear that the volume does not aspire to comprehensive representation, and indeed many major and minor sea-related works and their composers are not covered.) The twelve essays between are divided equally among three topics: "The Sea as Geography," "The Sea as Profession," and "The Sea as Metaphor," which the editors have distilled from the *Shipping Forecast's* cultural significance.

This tripartite division of the volume is serviceable, though the essays themselves clamor for a straightforward chronological arrangement. Amanda Eubanks Winkler, Alyson McLamore, and James Brooks Kuykendall's individual surveys together treat the Restoration through Edwardian periods; essays by Jennifer Oates, Charles Edward McGuire, Eric Saylor, Byron Adams, and Aidan J. Thomson treat mainly the early twentieth century; while Christopher M. Scheer, Justin Vickers, Frances Wilkins, and Louis Niebur write on mid-twentieth-century topics. At very least, Winkler, McLamore, and Kuykendall's essays might beneficially have been grouped together, as these authors sketch four centuries of the evolution of musical representations of Britain's seafarers, a long narrative with persistent topics (such as the persona of Jack Tar) and problems (such as the social and moral status of Britain's sailors) that is here fragmented and burdened with repetition because of the essays' dispersal.

Tables, illustrations, and musical examples are well prepared and neatly reproduced. The volume's helpful index is marred by a few minor omissions and inconsistencies. While Alex Ross (79) is indexed, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, who appears on the same page, is overlooked. Horham in Suffolk (68) is included, but not Ireland's Donegal (227). Henry Wood's *Fantasia on British Sea Songs* (119) is conflated with its manuscript title, appearing both on page 110 of the text and in the index as the more parochial *Fantasia on English Sea Songs*.

Three of the essays, as mentioned, offer a series of period surveys, and provide a foundation for the reader's understanding of later developments. Winkler's " 'Come away, fellow sailors': Musical Characterization of the Nautical Profession in Seventeenth-Century England" investigates characterizations of seventeenth-century British sailors in ballads, masques, plays,



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and operas by Purcell, Campion, and others. Winkler looks closely at contemporary representations of the morally suspect sailor and his role as an agent of conquest and commerce to show how these figures “played an integral role in shaping popular notions of English identity during this period of colonial expansion” (84). With similar procedure and purpose, McLamore’s “ ‘Britannia Rule the Waves’: Maritime Music and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain” illustrates the creation of a British national identity in eighteenth-century song collections, especially in an emergent repertoire of sea songs and instrumental works on nautical subjects. She describes the birth in musical theatre of the “Jack Tar” persona who epitomized the British sailor and whose songs might convey political critique, dissent, and disaffection alongside bravado. Such songs, she demonstrates, explored sailors’ roles as instruments of empire, commerce, defense, and as figures of romance and victims of life’s tribulations. The penetrating analyses and wealth of historical information and repertoire in Winkler and McLamore’s essays suggest directions for further research. For example, McLamore’s distinction between the sea shanties sung by sailors and the sea songs that represented them, and Winkler’s caution that “representational authenticity was secondary to entertainment” (87) invite more exploration of the relationships between actual sailors and the repertoires that purported to depict them, as well the role of balladeers in mediating the ideology of empire among sailors, singers, and rural, coastal, and urban audiences.

While Winkler and McLamore largely construct their studies around genres and tropes, Kuykendall’s “Jolly Jack Tar: Musical Caricature and Characterization of the British Sailor, c. 1875–1925” locates nineteenth- and early twentieth-century musical and poetic treatments of the “sailor” persona in a dialectical progression from an initial phase of nostalgia and burlesque (the broadside tradition through Gilbert and Sullivan’s comedies); through a “multifaceted portrayal” (114) (realistic but, as evidenced by works like Stanford’s sea song cycles, infused with late Victorian and Edwardian sentiment and increasingly mawkish patriotism); and concluding, after World War I, in a satirical, modernist deconstruction of this sedimentary figure in works by Berners and Walton. Kuykendall tracks two iconic musical signifiers of British naval power, the hornpipe and “Rule, Britannia,” whose musical invocations and treatments, together or separately, index the evolving characterizations of Britain’s sailors.

While those essays deal mainly with broad historical issues of representation, other contributions focus more on musical materials and procedures. These include Oates’s “Scotland, the ‘Celtic North,’ and the Sea: Issues of Identity in Bantock’s *Hebridean Symphony* (1915),” in which the author begins provocatively by contrasting what she suggests is the domesticated failure of Mendelssohn’s eponymous overture with Granville Bantock’s more successfully sustained evocation of the “untamed” character of the north-west Scottish coast (31). (I expect Oates’s supposition that Mendelssohn’s sonata form devotes itself to a “mere working out of musical problems” [31] will summon objections.) Oates documents the depth of Bantock’s interest in Scotland’s culture, land, and seascapes, and connects the *Symphony* to his contemporary Yeats and the Celtic Twilight movement. His sprawling single-movement tone poem integrates a selection of Scottish folk songs (as edited by Marjory Kennedy-Fraser) into a Lisztian programmatic cyclic form, and Oates provides a commentary on Bantock’s treatment of the folk themes, especially their “rather Sibelian” (37) accretion and unfolding, as well as the mediant-related key centers underlying his treatment of tonality. While Oates amply documents Bantock’s and the *Symphony*’s Celtic obsessions and resonances, one might have wished her to examine the inescapable musical evidence that Bantock, for all his tacking along the Scottish coast, dropped anchor at Bayreuth: the opening of the *Symphony* is surely modeled on the exordium of the *Parsifal* Prelude; the rest of the *Symphony* is saturated in sounds and gestures from *Tristan*, the *Ring*, and *Parsifal*’s second act. (Curiously, Ernest Newman, whom Oates cites



(37), suggested that Bantock adopted the “quality of the Prelude to the third Act of ‘Tristan’,” but that particular scrap of Wagner seems to me unfathomably submerged and undetectable.) A clearer picture of the style and meaning of this music might be drawn by taking into fuller account Bantock’s preoccupation with Wagner (as documented, for example, in Paul Watt’s account of the New Brighton concerts that Bantock oversaw between 1897 and 1900).¹ Moreover, clarifying Wagner’s influence might also give context to Oates’s claim that Bantock “never develops the melodies” of his borrowed Scottish folk tunes (38, n29). Nevertheless, Oates’s sensitive examination of this work helps us understand the peculiar originality of Bantock, who, as she reminds us, set out on an individual—if soon to be overgrown and forsaken—creative path, set apart from the increasingly congested highways of postwar pastoralism and modernism.

Another analytical essay that treats an individual work is Thomson’s “Bax’s ‘Sea Symphony’ ” (Symphony No. 4, composed 1930–31). Thomson explains with admirable clarity Bax’s treatment of sonata form and rotation procedures in the Symphony’s three movements, and aligns motivic characteristics (e.g., attributes such as stepwise motion or motion by thirds) with a hermeneutic dichotomy of “mythological” and “natural” representations of the sea, as well as dichotomies of sea and land, human (“Celtic”) and natural (“Romantic”), and present and past. Thomson connects the musical topics of the Symphony to those Bax had earlier developed in “Celtic” sea- or landscape-inspired works like *The Garden of Fand* and *November Woods* (231). His exposition of the formal and thematic features of the music is among the most lucid and helpful of its kind in the volume, and will greatly assist the reader’s understanding of the constructive principles of Bax’s music. The hermeneutics of Thomson’s interpretation does become murky, however, as his argument proceeds from elemental dichotomies to more free-floating signifiers. Thus, for example, Bax is said to make prolific associations, in different movements, of stepwise intervals with “humanity,” “nature,” and “liminality” (245), unmooring any stable semiotic difference. Thomson’s excellent musical examples and form diagrams would be more easily used by many readers were rehearsal numbers for the very accessible Murdoch and Co. edition of the score referenced along with measure numbers.

Likewise an essay in analysis and hermeneutics is Vickers’s “Amanuensis of the Sea: Peter Maxwell Davies’s Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 and the *Antarctic* [8th] Symphony,” which examines three of Davies’s complex scores to remedy what the author identifies as a need for research into the “fundamental creative stimulus” of Davies’s sea-inspired compositions (153). Vickers’s analyses aim to “understand how Davies evokes seascapes and the sound world of nature,” while “pointing to gestural and compositional rhetoric” that “represents and evokes” the sea (153). In practice, his analyses highlight mimetic gestures in the fore- and middleground of the music that would substantiate Davies’s reflections on wave forms and motions, reflections conveyed mainly in interviews with Paul Griffiths and in program notes. Davies’s own explanation (uttered in connection with the Second Symphony) of the wave types that Vickers highlights is itself opaque, and the further distinction Vickers introduces between “wave types” and “wave shapes” does not appear to have consequences for the larger argument. Musical examples such as his example 8.1 do little, I think, to clarify the meaning of these terms (156). Tangles of terminology—“expositions of micro- and macro-resonance” (157) and “emblematic Ur-wave” (158)—are further obstacles to comprehension. Vickers’s sometimes hasty and

¹ Paul Watt, “A ‘Gigantic and Popular Place of Entertainment’: Granville Bantock and Music-Making at the New Brighton Tower in the Late 1890s,” *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* 42 (2009): 109–64.



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discursive tour of the symphonies' movements leaves much unexamined, and occasional digressions to issues of mode and pitch hierarchies do little to clarify the wave metaphor. Vickers's clearer and more methodical guidance, and perhaps a narrower scope, would better help us to hear Davies's music in light of its sea birth.

Three other essays treat fin-de-siècle topics with hybrid historical and analytical approaches. Saylor's "Political Visions, National Identities, and the Sea Itself: Stanford and Vaughan Williams in 1910" delivers a fine study of the reception of sea-related works by the teacher and student. As Saylor argues, Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet* and Vaughan William's *A Sea Symphony*, both premiered at the same Leeds Festival of 1910, exhibited a stylistic gap opening up between the old guard and an emerging generation of British composers. Saylor proposes moreover that these works represent two different visions of Britain's place in world affairs, and of the real and metaphorical roles of its sailors. Stanford's work celebrated a narrowly British, patriotic vision of seafaring, its worshipful texts by Sir Henry Newbolt having been inspired by awed observation of life aboard a British military vessel. Vaughan Williams, in contrast, set Whitman texts that promoted a humanitarian vision of international solidarity for which seafaring served as a metaphor. Saylor arrives at very incisive conclusions about the critical success of Vaughan William's strange, gargantuan symphony, and the polite, even indifferent reaction to Stanford's conventionally patriotic songs: he argues that Vaughan Williams and Whitman's universalist message could be read by Edwardian audiences against its text, as they could entertain such idealism in the security of a seemingly invulnerable Pax Britannica—international solidarity, commerce, culture, and peace, after all, were the attributes of British imperial power, not its alternatives. Saylor points out too that Vaughan Williams's outlandish symphony was simply a greater, more entertaining spectacle than Stanford's more conventional, restrained song cycle. Augmenting Saylor's points, I would suggest that the elegiac, funereal tone of Stanford's concluding song, "Fare Well," not only lacks the affirmation of Vaughan William's final movement, but discomfits hearers with a reminder of their accountability ("And be thou comforted / Because they died for thee."). In light of the contemporary international anxieties and political frictions that Saylor documents, especially growing tensions between England and Germany, one might speculate that the conclusion of Stanford's cycle chafed listeners content to anticipate new debts for the future sacrifices of its sailors.

A song cycle is also the subject of McGuire's "Three Journeys, Two Paths: Locating the Lyric and Dramatic in Elgar's *Sea Pictures*," which argues for the aesthetic coherence of Elgar's 1899 song cycle based both on textual meanings and on the musical coherence engendered by Elgar's coordination of what McGuire terms "extrinsic motives," "intrinsic motives," and "zones of reminiscence." His three "journeys" unfold in the songs as, first, a physical progression through ever greater distances; second, a metaphorical journey across the stages of life; and, third, a shift from lyric to dramatic and narrative poetry. McGuire's convincing interpretation indeed recovers the cycle from a current of Elgar criticism that has previously ignored or dismissed it, though one might quibble with details: the "questioning arch" (188) at the opening of "Sea-Slumber Song," for instance, seems to me rather an unperplexed pictorial representation of an ocean swell.

Adams's elegant essay "Sea Change: A Meditation upon Frank Bridge's *Lament: To Catherine, Aged 9, 'Lusitania' 1915*" pursues the young Catherine named in the cryptic commemorative inscription of the work's piano score, as well as the composition's place in the tradition of elegiac, commemorative works. Cautioning that previous assertions of Bridge's acquaintance with the Crompton family, whose eight members perished on the *Lusitania* in 1915, have been based on the gossamer intimations of a few concert reviews, Adams offers compelling evidence



identifying “Catherine” as the family’s second eldest daughter. In particular, the ship’s passenger list leaves little doubt of the dedicatee’s identity with the Crompton girl, and Adams further notes that Bridge may very well have encountered her family near their residence in Kensington, where Bridge roamed as a student (57), or have heard of their fate from the singer Parry Jones, a survivor of the disaster (58). In search of the composer’s closely held views on the war, Adams examines works by Bridge that resonate with its experience, such as “Blow Out, You Bugles” (1918) and *Oration* (1930). Adams makes the fine point that *Lament*, like its poetic antecedents and unlike most musical elegies of its time, could serve both collective (orchestral) and private (piano) expressions of grief. He places *Lament* in the context of a body of British music and literature that commemorates the drowned, and thereupon convincingly proposes Milton’s *Lycidas* as a model for the incantatory and declamatory motivic repetitions of Bridge’s composition. One might, however, also take account of how the poetry of Percy Bysshe Shelley fed Bridge’s musical conceptions of elegy and mourning. Bridge’s settings of several of Shelly’s death-obsessed poems—“A Dirge” (1903), “A Dead Violet” (1904), “Remembrance” (1904), the choral setting of “Autumn” (1903), and solo and choral settings of “Music When Soft Voices Die” (1903; 1904)—were early steps in his development of elegiac musical rhetoric. Moreover, themes upon which *Lament* turned haunt Shelley’s *Queen Mab* and *Adonais*. The young dead woman in *Queen Mab*, lanthe (the name was then given to a daughter born to the Shelleys in 1813), was based on Harriet Shelley, who, as Bridge surely knew, drowned herself in 1816 three years after the poem’s writing. *Adonais*, which bitterly commemorates the death of John Keats, is, like *Lycidas*, filled with incantatory repetitions of the deceased’s name (and, strikingly, an insistent invocation of music: “Most musical of mourners, weep again!” [l. 28]). Shelley himself drowned at sea in 1822, and surely joins Milton among the literary tributaries to the creative impulse behind *Lament*.

Two of the collection’s essays are inflected by sociological or ethnographic concerns. Scheer’s “Crosscurrents in the Britten Legacy: Two Visions of Aldeburgh” contemplates Benjamin Britten’s relationship to that coastal town and its overdetermination by cultural and demographic incursions as well as by the forces of nature. Scheer concentrates on two productions from the 2013 Britten centenary celebrations, Aldeburgh’s production of *Peter Grimes* (“Grimes on the Beach”) and Covent Garden’s *Gloriana*, to illustrate how they affect (even deform) the meanings of Britten’s operas and even Aldeburgh itself. In the first instance, “Grimes on the Beach,” which indeed set the opera outdoors on the town’s beach, narrowed the “frame of reference” for the music and constrained it with “concrete associations” in the service of authenticity (73). Scheer argues meanwhile that the London *Gloriana* production, which displaced the Elizabethan action of the opera temporally and spatially to a provincial “Aldeburgh frame,” reflects not only Britten’s own withdrawal from the royal metropole to the coastal periphery, but ironically eviscerates the pungent contradictions (between court and countryside, conformity and difference) embodied in the work’s conception and original production. Although placed in a different section of the volume, Wilkins’s “Fishers of Men: Maritime Radio and Evangelical Hymnody in the Scottish Fishing Industry, 1950–65” deals also with transformations of a region’s cultural practices, artifacts, and their meanings. Her ethnography of the north-east Scottish coast and its evangelical communities draws a picture of the role that broadcast hymn singing played between World War II and 1970 in constructing a sense of community and security, and she explains the factors—economic, commercial, religious, and technological—that led to the practice’s decline. She focuses especially on the Peterhead sailor-singer Jim Mair, whose career, religiosity, and singing exemplify the region’s milieu. (A translation or explanation of the fisherman William Whyte Junior’s testimony about the dusk of that period—transcribed in the essay in all its demotic splendor on page 148—would have been welcome.)



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Wilkins's vivid painting of the erosion of a traditional coastal culture by the undertow of modernity is reflected in the vignettes of disintegration explored in Niebur's " 'Close Your Eyes and Listen to It': Special Sound and the Sea in BBC Radio Drama, 1957–59," which considers two radio plays: James Hanley's *The Ocean* (1958) and Samuel Beckett's *Embers* (1959). These plays used the sea as a sonic and spatial correlative of alienation and disorientation, a purpose assisted by the innovations of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, especially its production of electronically synthesized sounds, and distortions or manipulations of natural sounds. Niebur provides a concise and helpful history of the use of sea sounds in British radio drama and film, and the critical resistance to their more avant-garde realizations, and he highlights how, especially in Beckett's play, the altered, repeated sounds of waves suggest a battering and dissolution of rational experience and, more broadly, the "shortcomings of language" in the modern world (264).

Like the editors, who introduce the volume as "the first to sail forth into these deep waters" (xviii), we might be startled that no collection of this kind has been produced before. In stark contrast, the sea's importance as a creative catalyst has long been recognized in British art criticism: writing a century ago, A. L. Baldry thought it axiomatic that "British artists should give much attention to marine painting. The sea plays a very important part in our national affairs, influences the character of the people, and affects the political policy of the country, so almost as a matter of course it has its place among the sources of inspiration for our native art."² The essays in this volume at last bring this awareness to British music scholarship and its readers, and deliver, as the editors suggest, an admirable overview of a field that will "serve to stimulate future research" (8). Just as the many British musicians examined in these essays found expressive means on the sea's crests and troughs, so too students, scholars, performers, and listeners may now be moved to plumb Blake's "Ocean black thundering / Around the wormy Garments of Albion" for the source and meaning of so great a part of Britain's musical legacy.

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² *British Marine Painting*, ed. Charles Geoffrey Holme (London: The Studio, 1919), 9.

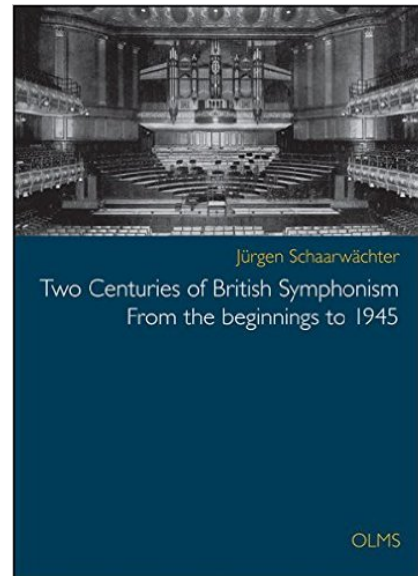
Two Centuries of British Symphonism: From the Beginnings to 1945. 2 vols. Jürgen Schaarwächter. Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlag, 2015. xx + 1201 pp. ISBN 978-3-487-15227-1; 978-3-487-15228-8 (hardcover).

As the author's "Preliminary Notes and Acknowledgments" explain, this lengthy survey of British symphonic music is an outgrowth of his 1995 dissertation, *Die britische Sinfonie 1914-1945*, which was published the same year. Schaarwächter has indeed gone to impressive lengths to track down the numerous symphonic works considered in the pages that follow. The sheer amount of information he offers on this music, supplying analyses for most compositions and citing numerous primary and secondary sources along the way, alone constitutes this study's indispensability not only to the history of the British symphony, but also to the histories of both British music and the symphony genre at large. One gets a good sense of the riches offered



here with the two enormous appendices found at the conclusion. The first consists of an “Alphabetic Catalogue of British Symphonies up to 1945,” supplying (as far as possible) manuscript, publication, location of performing material, first and other performance, recording, duration, dedication, and (where applicable) full text information. The second appendix is actually the master-bibliography. It makes clear, at well over 100 jam-packed pages, that those wishing to master this vast subject have their work cut out for them.

And yet, impressive and indispensable as Schaarwächter’s research is, this volume has some unfortunate shortcomings. First, there is the extent to which the author quotes large swaths of others’ prose. While one appreciates the generous helpings of background and critical information, and how they often richly inform the book’s discussions, these words too frequently stand in for the author’s own thoughts. One notices this especially with treatments of later works, such as that of Lennox Berkeley’s First Symphony (1940), where, after some insightful background information, Schaarwächter provides a short analysis of the music that relies upon quotes from a Peter Dickinson article no less than six times in the space of less than two pages (744–5), including musical examples. This is not atypical. Even where Schaarwächter more satisfactorily uses quotes, usually in the background sections setting up his analyses, he often does so excessively. His discussion of Arnold Bax’s individuality and orchestration is but one example. Rather than merely reference Robin Hull’s 1942 *Music & Letters* article on Bax’s symphonies in a footnote with an accompanying comment or two, Schaarwächter unnecessarily supplies twenty-four lines of it in the body of his text (464). Or consider the section on Erik Chisholm’s career (503–5), which features a similarly extensive *Res Musicae* article quote regarding the composer’s diverse musical background. This tendency toward the tangential surfaces repeatedly, to the point where the words of others make up an uncomfortably large portion of this volume’s high page count.



On the other hand, where Schaarwächter does offer his own insights, I often find them disappointing. First (and by no means is he alone in this), his Beethoven- and German-centric view of the symphony limits his commentaries. After too briefly treating the problem of what is and what is not a symphony in his preliminary notes, Schaarwächter essentially includes in his survey British works for large ensembles featuring somewhere in their titles the terms “symphony,” “sinfonia,” “sinfonietta,” or some identifiable variant. This results in separate treatments of an astonishing array of different compositions according to kind and in roughly chronological order. But it soon becomes clear that Schaarwächter does not quite respect the variety of these works, which their composers in some way or another chose to dub as symphonic, because he conceives the label in a narrow sense. So it is we find recourse to terms such as “coherence,” “logic,” “organicism,” and “sonata principal (*sic*),” while referring to “the form of the symphony” (475) as if it is monolithic. The problem with this approach is encapsulated in Schaarwächter’s discussion of Bax—where he admits the composer’s “imaginative personality” and “melodic invention” (463–5), but downgrades his symphonies for their perceived rhapsodic structures, which he argues do not sufficiently apply “sonata principal” (463) form. He further claims that motifs rather than themes define Bax’s large-scale works. However, assuming that one accepts these premises (and that is generous given the complex issues that they skirt), so what? If the results are appealing or otherwise interesting, and the



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composer saw fit to call these works “symphonies,” why should it matter that they bypass strict adherence to particular forms and techniques? The symphony genre’s history and literature are far too vast and varied to keep privileging reductive formal criteria.

Equally frustrating, Schaarwächter seems all too ready to abandon his otherwise strict symphonic benchmarks when he deems particular works sufficiently impressive or “progressive.” For instance, he begins his discussion of Sorabji by praising his intellect, proceeds to point out that his complex and “highly individual” First Symphony (1922) features motives but no discernible themes or forms (639–646), and yet neglects to criticize the symphonic stature of the work in terms similar to those he did with Bax’s symphonies. Likewise, we read that Havergal Brian introduced “polytonality,” “sharp instrumentation,” and other musical traits that Schaarwächter associates with progressivism and “cosmopolitan features” in his symphonies (761–6). But the “unusual formal procedures” of the Third Symphony (1931–1932), including a sonata scheme in the finale that Schaarwächter describes as “imprecisely structured” (765, 769), not to mention the “weaker internal logic” of the *Gothic Symphony* (1919–1927), may apparently be pardoned as “a completely personal handling of symphonic form” because they are a part of the “discontinuity” that is a “central feature of Brian’s compositional technique” (663). This double standard informs Schaarwächter’s whole enterprise. It could have been avoided if he had committed much more to description than to prescription, as befits a survey.

There is not sufficient space here to adequately address this book’s thin historical narratives, its many unsupported conjectures, and its odd quips. Two especially off-putting examples of the latter may suffice to sample the prose’s overall tone. First, while reading about the text of Bernard van Dieren’s First Symphony (1914), we are told that he “shows, like Havergal Brian did, that many Britons are not too comfortable with learning foreign languages” (636). Equally frown-inducing is this remark on Britten: “The intimate knowledge of the orchestra one gleans as a player is very valuable for conducting a symphony orchestra or writing orchestral compositions. Benjamin Britten never played professionally in an orchestra, which might in part account for his occasional difficulty in managing large forms” (584). Are we to believe that, since Brahms (for example) also never played professionally in an orchestra beyond occasionally serving as a pianist (mainly as soloist and for his own music, as far as I can discover), he was likewise prone to large-scale formal lapses? Would Schaarwächter care to point some out? Better still, maybe this correlation is not reliable enough to posit in earnest. As a counter-example, Malcolm Arnold played professionally in the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and by Schaarwächter’s formal standards, his symphonies would fail miserably. (This seems a good place to point out that, had Schaarwächter’s survey extended past mid-century, his symphonic strictures would be even more noticeably untenable.)

I must reiterate that this survey is still extremely important and worthwhile. If I have dwelt overlong on what I consider to be its negative aspects, it is because I am disappointed by the opportunities it misses and the biases it perpetuates. The author indeed succeeds in extensively chronicling the British symphony and encouraging us to explore its many manifestations. But he does so too much through the lens of tired historiographical assumptions and personal prejudices. While those researching any part of this repertoire must not neglect consulting this book, they should do so warily.

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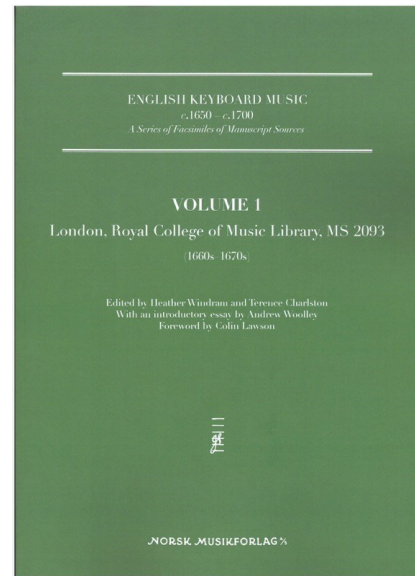


London Royal College of Music Library, MS 2093 (1660s–1670s). English Keyboard Music c.1650–1750, Vol. 1. Edited by Heather Windram and Terence Charlston. Oslo: Norsk Musikforlag, 2015. xxxviii+112 pp. ISBN 9788270937073 (hardcover).

Volume 1 of the series English Keyboard Music c.1650-1750 contains both the facsimile of *London Royal College of Music Library, MS 2093* [Lcm 2093] and transcriptions of each piece. The volume begins with Andrew Woolley’s introductory essay, “A Context for Royal College of Music Library, MS 2093,” in which he suggests that the manuscript was compiled by an amateur for the purpose of self-instruction. He identifies unusual aspects of Lcm 2093, including its status as a partially retrospective collection (more common in the eighteenth century), its organization by genre (predominantly preludes and voluntaries), and its lifespan (it appears to have been compiled in two stages separated by a maximum of forty years). Despite these oddities, Woolley affirms its pedagogical commonality with contemporaneous keyboard manuscripts.

Editors Heather Windram and Terence Charlston devote prefatory material to an in-depth history of the source, its notation, and performance practice. Windram provides a detailed table of concordances for the thirty pieces contained in Lcm 2093. In some cases, concordances enabled the identification of composers, including Bull, Byrd, Gibbons, Dowland, Locke, Blow, and Weelkes. Windram discusses potential exemplars from which pieces in Lcm 2093 were copied, and consistencies and inconsistencies of cleffing, barring, accidentals, ties, dots of addition, beaming, fingering, and ornamentation. She provides a table depicting the layout of major and minor mode pieces, demonstrating that the majority of pieces in the first half of the manuscript are in a major mode, while the remainder are primarily in a minor mode. Windram explains that Lcm 2093 reflects the range of a virginal, bentside spinet, or harpsichord, and therefore appears to pertain to a domestic setting. Her thorough essay anticipates concerns a performer may raise, and provides a clearer understanding of English keyboard style during the 1660s and 1670s.

Charlston discusses how one might interpret fingerings and ornamentation in Lcm 2093. He provides a useful table with ornament symbols and written-out suggestions for their interpretation. As the interpretation of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English keyboard ornaments is often unclear, this additional guidance will be appreciated. Charlston also suggests methods of improvising doubles and varying repeats of binary dances such as those represented here. He mentions that Appendix 1 contains variations to “Farranellas Ground,” as an example of how one could extemporize in the manner of the period. Appendix 2 contains an alternative version of “Dr. Bull’s Ground,” taken from the concordance, also included as a basis for improvisation. Both Windram and Charlston demonstrate an attention to detail and knowledge of other seventeenth-century manuscripts, and their research substantiates the value of this edition.



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Facsimile images are clearly labeled with recto and verso folio numbers. The contents page with bookplate is provided. The transcriptions include fingering and minimal editorial notes, as footnotes, and composer attributions are depicted within brackets. The transcription method is delineated in the critical commentary. One notable difference in this modern edition is the adjustment from the original six-line staves to standardized five-line staves. Stem direction and key signatures are replicated. Extensive critical notes follow, addressing such topics as variants, older style tablature rests, possible corrections by the copyist, and missing pages. The edition concludes with a bibliography containing several performance practice texts. All in all, *London Royal College of Music Library, MS 2093* is an impressive volume, demonstrating how a relatively obscure amateur's music book can lend a wealth of information regarding English compositional style and performance practice.

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