



(RV431a) and enables the accurate reconstruction, with hardly any difficulty, of its missing second violin part. In turn, the Edinburgh manuscript is of reciprocal benefit to RV431, for its central slow movement offers one plausible solution (among others) for the equivalent movement missing from the autograph, where Vivaldi simply wrote the instruction ‘Grave Sopra il Libro come stà’ (almost certainly meaning ‘base the slow movement on the original as it stands’). Indeed, Woolley’s close study of the readings in both sources establishes that RV431 in E minor is in fact the later of the two versions, adapted from music originally in D minor: that original was presumably a subsequently lost autograph score of RV431a with its title *Il Gran Mogol* intact, and presumably the exemplar from which other copies were derived, including the text that was transmitted to the Edinburgh manuscript. Since the autograph of RV431 is the key that unlocks all the doors, it was wise of the editor and laudable of the publisher to present both RV431a and RV431 together in the one volume. Indeed, this volume respects an important principle that I would recommend as best practice for any publisher to observe: that, where it is practicable to do so, distinct versions of a composition should be published together, not in separate volumes or at separate times, and that alternative versions need to be included as main text rather than merely mentioned in the supplementary content of an edition.

As is the case with the many fine editions of baroque repertoire that have been issued since the 1990s by this excellent publishing house, Edition HH, Woolley’s volume consists of well prepared and carefully proofread text, beautifully presented in a layout convenient to performers and scholars alike. The Introduction, a prefatory essay covering in admirable detail all the issues raised by the sources as well as matters of editorial policy and the methodology for reconstruction, appears in both English and German, with some facsimile illustrations of pages from the two manuscripts. The main text is clean, entirely free from extraneous markings, allowing performers to interpret the music for themselves, and is complemented by the usual kind of rigorous listing of readings in the Textual Notes located at the end of the volume. The publisher’s website lists separate parts for sale or hire, and an arranged version of the score for flute and keyboard reduction, in addition to the full score under review here. The one flaw I would draw attention to is the lack of a specimen written-out realization of the continuo part, for even some professional performers, besides many otherwise very competent amateurs, are not able with adequate fluency to realize extempore without any guidance – especially when the original *basso* part is only sparsely figured (RV431) or not figured at all (RV431a).

PAUL EVERETT



RECORDINGS

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WILHELM FRIEDEMANN BACH (1710–1784)

CLAVIERMUSIK I

Léon Berben

Carus 83.346, 2010; one disc, 69 minutes

Léon Berben’s recording – the first volume of a projected series devoted to Wilhelm Friedemann Bach’s keyboard music – was issued to mark the three hundredth anniversary of the composer’s birth in 2010. Friedemann’s tercentenary also saw the publication of two monographs (by David Schulenberg and Ulrich Kahmann respectively), while a thoroughly revised and updated version of Martin Falck’s thematic catalogue of 1913 was completed by the established Bach scholar Peter Wollny in 2009 (to be published by Carus as volume 2 of the series *Bach-Repertorium*; the numbers are listed in Wollny, ‘Bach, §III: (8) Wilhelm Friedemann Bach’, in *Grove Music Online* <www.oxfordmusiconline.com> (27 February 2012)). The works selected by



Berben for this CD, and performed on harpsichord, comprise an Overture in E flat (numbered by Wollny BR-WFB A59), two fantasias (in E minor, Fk21/BR-WFB A42, and D minor, BR-WFB A105), two sonatas (in D major, Fk3/BR-WFB A4, and F major, BR-WFB A10) and a Minuet in F with variations (BR-WFB A50b), alongside a concerto for solo keyboard (Concerto in G, Fk40/BR-WFB A13b) in the manner of Johann Sebastian Bach's Italian Concerto. Together these works represent both the early and late stages of Friedemann's career; only two (the Sonata in D major and the Fantasia in E minor) have been recorded previously. Berben's recording also complements a new critical edition of the composer's oeuvre, currently in preparation under the direction of Peter Wollny (who completed a doctoral dissertation on Friedemann in 1993). The keyboard works on this disc – transmitted in manuscript copies, apart from the D major sonata – are drawn from the first two volumes of this new complete edition being produced by the Bach-Archiv Leipzig, with support from the Packard Humanities Institute, Los Altos, California, and published by Carus.

Comparisons between the music of Friedemann and that of his father are perhaps inevitable, given that the former's name is most often encountered in connection with the *Clavier-Büchlein vor W. F. Bach* – a manuscript collection of keyboard music compiled for pedagogical purposes by father and son in the 1720s. Friedemann's reputation has not benefited from paternal comparisons of another kind, with regard to his character. Written accounts originating from the elder Bach's first biographer, Johann Nikolaus Forkel, along with anecdotes related by Marpurg and Rochlitz appear to be partly responsible for this image, which has been perpetuated down to the present day. Amongst other failings, Friedemann was faulted for his inability to retain regular employment, and later for selling off autographs of his father's music (including a set of chorale cantatas) to pay personal debts, which has made him appear a villain in the complex history of autograph sources from J. S. Bach's estate.

Berben clearly relishes this music's distinctive features – the unexpected harmonies approaching cadences, abrupt caesuras and sometimes incongruous changes of texture – and draws attention to them, rather than attempting to smooth them out. The final work on the disc, the lengthy one-movement Fantasia in E minor, conveys some impression of the improvisations for which Friedemann was renowned. Berben is alert to the sudden changes of mood and character, capable of a lyrical cantabile tone in the recitative-like passages, and brilliant articulation in the virtuosic bravura sections; these, together with his impeccable sense of timing, bring the music's inherent drama to life. (After hearing this late fantasia it is not surprising to learn that Friedemann, in the 1770s, began work on an opera, which unfortunately remained incomplete.) Tempos are generally well chosen, and judicious manual changes (together with selective use of the lute stop) create a broad timbral range, while also emphasizing significant cadences or setting contrasting phrases in relief. Occasionally, manual changes seem questionable (midway through a phrase in the third movement (Presto) of the Sonata in F, for example), and some tempos sound dangerously fast (a rapid arpeggiated passage in the same Presto movement comes to mind), but even here Berben's risk-taking pays off. The articulation is always artfully and expressively varied; repeated sections are tastefully ornamented, especially the heartfelt second movement (Adagio) of the D major sonata, which marks a departure from the typical *empfindsamer Stil* in its introduction of imitative polyphony.

The harpsichord used for this recording – a copy by Keith Hill of a two-manual Christian Zell instrument from 1728, now in Hamburg's Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe – has a resonant bass and singing treble registers, which Berben exploits to the utmost. Given Berben's extensive experience as a harpsichordist and performer of early repertoire, it is regrettable that only minimal information – in German – is provided on the instrument used for this recording (liner notes are given in German, French and English). The pitch and, more importantly, the chosen temperament (which imparts a certain piquancy to Friedemann's often quirky harmonies) are not specified. Berben's performances leave no doubt that harpsichord is a valid option for this music, though fortepiano could certainly be considered for the later works (and possibly for some earlier ones too), as Robert Hill's recording has demonstrated (Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, *Keyboard Works, Vol. 1*, Naxos 8.557966, 2005; Hill's CD includes the D major sonata BR-WFB A4, alongside the Twelve Polonaises, Fk12/BR-WFB A27–38, and the Fantasia in A minor, Fk23/BR-WFB A26). Wollny, in his Preface to the first volume of the new critical edition, writes that there is no firm evidence to



argue for fortepiano over harpsichord, except where the range used implies the former instrument (Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, *Klaviermusik I: Sonaten und Konzerte für Cembalo solo, Konzert für 2 Cembali*, ed. Peter Wollny (Stuttgart: Carus, 2010), ix). Paul Simmonds has also recorded the Twelve Polonaises on clavichord (W. F. Bach, *Polonaises and Fugues*, LIR Classics 014, 2004), a possibility not mentioned by Wollny. Friedemann had the D major sonata published in Dresden in 1745, the first of an intended set of six (though only two were actually issued); the title, *Sei sonate per il cembalo*, would make harpsichord the most likely choice.

Wollny's liner notes and concise biographical sketch provide a good contextual overview, although the latter strikes an almost apologetic tone with regard to Friedemann's faltering career and temperamental character, examined in more detail in recent studies by Ulrich Kahmann (*Wilhelm Friedemann Bach: Der unterschätzte Sohn* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2010)), who adopts a primarily biographical focus, and David Schulenberg (*The Music of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010)), who concentrates on the compositions themselves (see the review by John Butt in this issue of *Eighteenth-Century Music*). Friedemann's decision to eschew a church or court position after stints in Dresden and Halle (or his failure to secure one) and his attempt to earn a living as a travelling virtuoso are noteworthy, even if he was ultimately unsuccessful.

Friedemann's sonatas find no mention in James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's *Elements of Sonata Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), which features analysis of compositions by his brothers C. P. E. and Johann Christian Bach. His music is likewise absent from Robert O. Gjerdingen's *Music in the Galant Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), although the sonatas and concertos would certainly lend themselves to consideration from the viewpoint of the galant schemata advanced by Gjerdingen. Apart from entries in standard music dictionaries such as *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (second edition, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel and Stuttgart: Bärenreiter and Metzler, 1994–2008), Personteil, 1, columns 1536–1547) and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), volume 2, 382–387), Friedemann is only now beginning to receive a level of scholarly scrutiny comparable to that which his brother Carl Philipp Emanuel has been accorded for several years (as witnessed by the work of Annette Richards, David Schulenberg and Steven Zohn, amongst others, and a complete critical edition – also supported by the Packard Humanities Institute). With a new catalogue of his compositions, a new complete edition under way and recordings of this calibre being issued in parallel (a second CD of keyboard music performed by Léon Berben is due out in 2012), the time seems ripe for a fundamental reappraisal of Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's music.

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SÉBASTIEN DE BROSSARD (1655–1730)
ORATORIOS, LEANDRO

Chantal Santon Jeffery (soprano), Eugénie Warmier (soprano), Isabelle Druet (alto), Jeffery Thompson (tenor), Vincent Bouchot (tenor), Benoît Arnould (bass) / *La Réveuse* / Benjamin Perrot
Mirare MIR 125, 2011; one disc, 64 minutes

Sébastien de Brossard's name is generally referred to only in connection with the celebrated *Dictionnaire de musique* which he published in 1703, the first dictionary devoted entirely to music. From the eighteenth century down to our own time this achievement has overshadowed his musical composition, which remains relatively unknown. On the evidence of this splendid recording it is of supreme quality, and the group *La Réveuse* are to be applauded for bringing it to our attention.

Brossard's ancestry can be traced back to the thirteenth century, and his talents and activities were many and varied: the *New Grove* describes him as a priest, theorist, composer, lexicographer and bibliophile.