



rhetorical rules informing dynamics, from which both singing and declamation in the theatre drew. Finally, faced with 360 vocal numbers, performers would surely welcome guidance on the relative merits and weaknesses of the musical content.

While not wishing to detract from this volume's achievement, I would call for future editors of facsimiles – an economic choice for disseminating a music whose notation is legible and whose print sources are abundant – to consider users of this material whose primary endeavours lie beyond the walls of the academy. Inviting performers, and therefore listeners, to tackle this repertoire might help correct the misguided picture of Britain as *das Land ohne Musik*.

BERTA JONCUS



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RECORDINGS

JOHANN ADOLF HASSE (1699–1783)

FLÖTENKONZERTE

Laurence Dean (flute), Christian Ahrens-Dean (flute)/Hannoversche Hofkapelle

Christophorus CHR 77294, 2008; one disc, 72 minutes

The transverse or 'German' flute seems to have been a relative latecomer to the ranks of concerto soloists. True, *The Guardian* of 24 March 1713 advertised a London concert the next day that would include 'several new Concerto's for the Hautboy, Flute [that is, the recorder], German Flute, Trumpet and other Instruments' by William Corbett; but as far as can be ascertained the first published flute concertos are Nos 7–9 of Robert Woodcock's *XII Concertos in Eight Parts*, which were advertised in *The London Journal* on 18 February 1727 (they beat Vivaldi's Op. 10 by two years). Not inappropriately for the solo instrument, they have a rather Germanic air, especially in the cut of their themes, but what can have been Woodcock's model? One might be inclined to suspect Quantz, were it not that his ten-week visit to London began a month after Woodcock's concertos were published. We do know, however, that several concertos for the 'German Flute' had been performed in London in the years 1718–1724, so perhaps the style was already current.

Hasse is, of course, best known as an opera composer, but wrote a number of flute concertos at around the time he became Kapellmeister to the Dresden court in 1733. This time Quantz, who had returned to Dresden in July 1727, must surely have been the inspiration for these works; he may even have advised Hasse about the layout of some of the solo passages, which are very well tailored to the instrument. The music is highly inventive, in an up-to-date galant style such as one might expect from a German opera composer trained in Naples; the slow movements are particularly beautiful. Unfortunately, the sources for these concertos are scattered and are somewhat unreliable. Op. 1 and Op. 3, two sets published around 1740, appeared in Amsterdam and London respectively, but they include some spurious viola parts: for example, a score of Op. 1 No. 4 (identical to Op. 3 No. 10) copied by the Dresden Konzertmeister Johann Georg Pisendel is headed 'Concerto a Flaut. Traver: Conc: 2 VV e Basso'. There is also a Dresden manuscript set for Op. 3 No. 2 that cannot date from much after 1730, since the copyist has been identified as J. J. Lindner (1653–1734).

The performances of four of Hasse's flute concertos on this recording are excellent. The flute playing is a model of its kind: the tone is even, the intonation is impeccable and the range of dynamics down to the softest of pianissimos is astonishing. But I am puzzled about the size of the band. The publicity photograph of the 'Hannoversche Hofkapelle' in the liner booklet shows no fewer than twenty-six musicians (including some



wind players who do not take part in these performances); on the other hand, the title page of the booklet names just two violinists, a violist and a cellist in addition to the two flautists and the harpsichord player. When I first read this I was delighted, thinking that the concertos would – as I am sure was the composer’s intention – be accompanied by a string quartet (or sometimes a string trio, without a viola) and a harpsichord. But this is not so, for although it is difficult to be certain, there must be at least two violins to a part in the *tutti*s, and there is definitely a double bass as well as a cello. But solo sections appear to be accompanied by single strings, usually just violins 1 and 2.

It is hard to see any justification for this decision, unless perhaps the performers are trying to reproduce the practice of the Dresden *Hofkapelle* under Pisendel, where concertos were often (but by no means always) played by a larger string group that included up to eight violins. Anyone who quotes Dresden numbers in defence of multiple strings in concertos by Vivaldi and others should remember, however, that Pisendel did not simply increase the string section but would rescore pieces more radically, writing parts for oboes and bassoons as well. Nevertheless, the band plays very well indeed, and I particularly like the way they give a shape to repeated quavers, which in less sensitive hands are apt to plod. A good mark, too, for the excellent if redundant bass player, who accompanies with such gentlemanly restraint that it is sometimes hard to tell where he joins in.

In spite of this recording’s title, the programme also includes a solo flute sonata, a rather Telemann-like trio sonata and a ‘Sinfonia’ (a sort of updated French suite for two flutes and strings) alongside the four concertos. Rather oddly, an organ rather than a harpsichord is used for the continuo in the solo sonata, and also in the ‘Sinfonia’, where the violins sound (for once) as if they are single. The dance movements are very nicely phrased, with great attention paid to the correct accentuation of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ notes. In all, this is a most interesting and enjoyable disc.

RICHARD MAUNDER



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GEORG CHRISTOPH WAGENSEIL (1715–1777)

CONCERTS CHOISIS

Echo du Danube/Alexander Weimann

Accent ACC 24186, 2008; one disc, 69 minutes

If a single composer could be said to have founded the Viennese Classical School, that man is undoubtedly Georg Christoph Wagenseil. A native of Vienna and a composition pupil of court Kapellmeister Johann Joseph Fux (1660–1741), he was appointed *Kammerkompositor* to the Imperial Court in 1738. Fux’s opinion in his enthusiastic letter of support for his protégé was that Wagenseil was the man to maintain the ‘correct’ style of composition in the face of the new galant manner, but it quickly became clear that his confidence was misplaced. Although Wagenseil wrote a little church music, his interests soon turned to opera, and his growing reputation in composing for the stage earned him commissions from Venice (*Ariodante*, 1745) and Florence (*Demetrio*, 1746), as well as several more for the Viennese court in the years 1746–1750. However, these works did not meet with universal approval. No less a figure than Metastasio complained that Wagenseil wrote in a manner that was too idiomatically instrumental (a familiar criticism of opera composers, and one that was also levelled at Mozart some decades later).

It was perhaps a result of this censure and a consequence of his appointment as court *Klaviermeister* in 1749 that Wagenseil’s output in the 1750s consisted almost exclusively of keyboard music, symphonies and concertos. His keyboard *Divertimenti*, the first volume of which was advertised in the *Wienerisches Diarium* on 1 August 1753, are obviously the models for Haydn’s early keyboard sonatas, and his symphonies and