

Abstracts

BEVERLY JEROLD, *Equal Temperament and Johann Sebastian Bach's Music*

Can a theoretical subject be made so abstruse that performers simply do as they are told? In most of today's temperament literature, written by mathematicians, theory dominates practice, but it was not always so. For centuries, conflict occurred between the followers of Pythagorus, who wanted some intervals to be mathematically pure at the expense of others, and Aristoxenus, who divided the octave into twelve equal parts to enable all music to be in tune. The matter concerns resolving the acoustic phenomenon in which tuning a circle of mathematically pure fifths leads to an excess of about 22 cents. While equal temperament treats it by removing a barely perceptible two cents from each fifth, this mathematical challenge elicited countless unequal temperament schemes during the long 18th century. These featured various combinations of large and small semitones, with flats pitched higher than sharps. All had unusable notes, and almost all could not have been implemented successfully without modern equipment and our skilled tuners, whose ears have been sharpened by a lifetime of hearing in-tune music every day. Because these temperaments are unsuitable for much of the period's music literature, a 1/6-comma temperament is claimed to represent 18th-century practice, but no evidence indicates that it was more than a theory. Meanwhile, equal temperament, which offers access to the entire keyboard, transposition, and the use of enharmonic notes, always had partisans among elite musicians. From the late seventeenth century onward, Germany's foremost writers and musicians pressed for equal tempering to alleviate the exceedingly poor intonation standards, but most of today's literature has misrepresented or ignored their contributions. A major impetus came from A. Werckmeister and J. G. Neidhardt, whose findings were instrumental in Germany's conversion to equal temperament. Subsequently, they were frequently cited by supporters such as J. Mattheson, G. A. Sorge, J. Adlung, F. W. Marpurg, and many others.

FABRIZIO AMMETTO – FRANCISCO JAVIER LUPIÁÑEZ RUIZ – LUIS MIGUEL PINZÓN ACOSTA, *The Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Works of Johann Georg Pisendel (PW): II. The Orchestral Music*

In the preceding issue of this journal there appeared the article *The Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Works of Johann Georg Pisendel (PW): I. The Chamber Music* (written by the authors of the present essay), where a brief historical description of the catalogues and lists of Pisendel's music that have been created since the middle of the last century was offered (also pointing out their limitations), and the structure and organization of the present catalogue was described. In this second article Pisendel's orchestral compositions will be examined: orchestral music without

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soloists (PW 3) and concertos for solo instrument and orchestra (PW 4). An important question regarding the creation of a catalogue of Pisendel's music arises from the possible 'migration' of the musical content of a movement from one composition to another: clearly, Pisendel often reused the material of a previous composition, updating it in accordance with his new stylistic and instrumental needs. A further aspect considered in this catalogue is alternative versions (subsequent revisions) of the same composition. In such cases, a transcription of the musical incipits including all the instrumental parts helps to identify the different versions. Similarly, even a specification of the number of bars making up individual sections of multi-sectional movements can bring to light a difference between discrete versions that would otherwise go unnoticed. A novelty in this section of the catalogue of Pisendel's orchestral music is that a miscellany source not preserved in Dresden, but – in this instance – in Berlin, is recorded for the first time: this is an extremely important development, as it opens up new possibilities for research into the dissemination of the music of this German violinist and composer.

ALISON SANDERS MCFARLAND, *British Exoticism in Imagination and Experience*

Exoticism in British music is infrequently encountered in the early twentieth century, with the exception of works of Granville Bantock. His numerous exotic titles are extravagant evocations from Ireland to Japan, although mostly centered in the Middle East. But the musical exoticism rarely penetrates beyond the title, and his works are imaginative canvases without reference to authentic musical materials. The orchestral Desert Interlude from his sprawling cantata *Omar Khayyam* contains no musical language not common in Britain ca. 1910. In contrast, Gustav Holst's *Beni Mora* is his reminiscence of his visit to Algeria. The work is based on Arabic tunes that fascinated him, and these tunes in hypnotic ostinato coupled with Algerian dance rhythms are the basis of the work. It is arguably Holst's only work of exoticism and arose not from exotic interest but from direct experience with the music. Several theories of exoticism and Orientalism shed light on how these two works, written within years of each other, can be considered in the same breath. But the most satisfactory analysis is when these Works are considered in the light of Imperialism.

MARK MCFARLAND, *Reflections of Debussy's «Le martyre de Saint-Sébastien» in His Second Book of Preludes*

One of Debussy's less successful scores contains some of his most creative exoticisms and points the way towards his later style. *Le martyre de Saint-Sébastien* had the makings of an ideal collaboration: Michel Fokine, Leon Bakst, Gabriele d'Annunzio, and Ida Rubenstein. Yet the 1911 production, as described by Proust, was a flop for several reasons, including the music. But Debussy's musical evocation of the pagan rites features an otherworldly quality, and the ultimate achieving of Paradise, that most perfect of exotic locations, colors the entire work. Some of Debussy's musical materials are familiar, particularly the octatonic scale, but his harmonic experimentation with it for the needs of this work become critically important when he makes use of these techniques in his second book of Preludes.