

mentarerne til Hartmann-pladen er unødigt vidtløftige og bestemt ikke alle relevante for pladens værker. Til gengæld er her de engelske noter beskåret til langt under et informativt minimum. Også den sto-

partede idé med at lade Ejnar Johansson skrive et par ord om de valgte pladeomslag (malerier af Købke og Edv. Lehmann) kan kun komme danskkyndige til gode. En rigtig dårlig disposition.

*Bo Marschner.*

*De Danske Madrigalister. Dansk Musik Antologi 015. Helle Hinz, Bodil Kongsted, Jørn Jørkov, Arne Berg, Jørgen Laursen, Ulrik Cold, Gunhild Deckert Knudsen, Lena Bust Nielsen, Jette Fredsborg, Andy Sundstrøm, Torben Lave, Holger Eichhorn, Ture Bergstrøm, Jacob Knudsen, Willi Østerberg, Johan Poulsen, Jesper Bøje Christensen, 3 drenge fra Københavns Drengekor, Camerata, Per Enevold. EMI 6C 063-38124.*

*Hofdans fra Christian IV's tid. Dansk Musik Antologi 016. Jette Fredborg, Gunhild Deckert Knudsen, Lena Bust Nielsen, Anthony Rooley, Ian Harwood, Jørn Jørkov. EMI 6C 063-38125.*

*Mogens Pedersøns Kirkemusik. Dansk Musik Antologi 017. Københavns Drengekor, Niels Møller. EMI 6C 063-38126.*

Though the reign of Christian IV is not the earliest period of Danish history from which a substantial repertoire of music has survived, it was the time during which music was cultivated and encouraged in such a way as, for the first time, to establish Denmark as a participant on the international European musical scene. The musical importance of this period, in many respects the equivalent of the Golden Age of the first Elizabeth in England, has long been recognized and, though in quantity far from commensurate with its brilliance and vigour, the bulk of the surviving music has long been available in modern editions, *the vocal music in the Danish national edition Dania Sonans* vols. 1-3 (1933, 1966, 1967) and the instrumental music in Bernhard Engelke's *Musik und Musiker am Gottorfer Hof* (1930). A representative selection of recorded performances illustrative of this period of national pride and international interest has therefore for many years been felt as an obvious need the

satisfaction of which has been awaited with impatience. It was entirely appropriate that *Dansk Musik Antologi* (Anthology of Danish Music) should accept this as their responsibility and the issuing of a set of three records: »De Danske Madrigalister« (The Danish Madrigalists) (D. M. A. 015), »Hofdans fra Christian IV's Tid« (Court Dances from the Time of Christian IV) (D. M. A. 016) and »Mogens Pedersøns Kirkemusik« (Mogens Pedersøn's Church Music) (D. M. A. 017), under the common heading »Musical Life in Denmark during the reign of Christian IV«, would seem a reasonable attempt to fulfill an obligation to this period of musical history, the earliest so far treated by this ambitious series.

At first sight it would appear that we have every reason to rejoice in the way the undertaking has been carried out. In all external respects the three recordings appear promising indeed: they are handsomely produced and packaged: the double

sleeves are both decorative, bearing attractive reproductions of paintings contemporary with the music by Christian IV's court painter Peter Isaacz and his son Isaac, and capacious enough to allow space for extensive notes in Danish and English on the genre represented by each record as well as on the composers and music recorded. In addition a separate insert contains an historical introduction to the period by Gunhild Deckert Knudsen who has apparently been the primary promoter of the project – in the case of the two records of secular music functioning in the multiple capacities of planner, arranger and instrumental performer. But what about the musical contents?

Our knowledge of the way in which music was performed in the 16th and 17th centuries unquestionably leaves much to be desired, so it is with sympathy that we read in the notes to the first record («The Danish Madrigalists») that »the practical musician about to perform the music, possibly to make gramophone recordings, has got to take a stand and make a choice. It is a question of knowledge, feeling for style, sense of sound, and taste.« This is all right as far as it goes, but what one would like to know is what principles inform such subjective factors as »feeling«, »sense« and »taste« as a guarantee that they mean something more than simply expressions of personal likes and dislikes? Surely it is stating the obvious that the guiding principle for all performers in general should be to realize the intentions of the composer, yet it must be said that on these recordings one is repeatedly confronted with performances which seem to go to a good deal of trouble to avoid doing just that.

After asserting that madrigals must surely have been sung by both small ensembles of soloists and larger choirs, the record notes inform us that »more frequently the madri-

gals have been both sung and played«. We are not told the evidence for this statement but let us accept that it may be true – just as one may accept that there have been more bad performances than good ones, or that until recently Beethoven's symphonies were on the whole more often performed as duets on the piano than by symphony orchestras. But whatever may have been the practice in the case of other music – the consort songs of Byrd and Gibbons, the Italian *intermedi* or the late madrigals of Monteverdi and Luzzaschi – I can see nothing either in the music or the texts of these pieces to suggest that they are anything other than vocal polyphony. Of course in the absence of one or more singers they may have been performed with instrumental assistance but the coherence of the vocal texture and the interrelationship of music and text lead one to believe that such occasions would have been »faute de mieux« and that is no basis for giving this manner of performance preference. Samuel Sebastian Wesley once visited the cathedral at Christ Church in Oxford on a Sunday morning and was appalled to see only one man in the choir. The fact that this sad event actually occurred, and was perhaps not unique, can never be used to justify recording a performance of an anthem by Byrd or a motet by Tallis using one bass singer with organ accompaniment supplying the other vocal parts – unless the intention should be to illustrate the wretched state of church music in England in the early part of the 19th century. What intention then is being realized by the performance here of Hans Nielsen's »Occhi miei« in which only the bass line is sung, the other parts being played by instruments? Is this to recreate an historical occasion when Christian IV's chapel was reduced to one bass, or can anyone seriously believe that this is the way Hans Nielsen

wanted to hear his 5-voice madrigal performed? Of the 20 madrigals on this record 15 have been arranged to substitute an instrumental ensemble for various voice parts. Not only has the intimate relationship of the music and words been obliterated and the interplay of parts in a balanced and homogeneous texture destroyed, but the vocal parts which have been allowed to remain are often confluents of several parts so that even the integrity of the melodic line has been abandoned. The remaining five madrigals are performed by the excellent Camerata Choir conducted by Per Enevold. Even though one may have a conception of madrigals as vocal chamber music and prefer to hear them performed by a small ensemble of one or two voices per part rather than by a larger choir, the purely vocal performances are so superior to all others on this record that it is difficult to comprehend why the »experiments« with instruments were not ruled out as unacceptable before being given the permanence of a recording. That they were not shows how uncertain a criterion »taste« can be. Mine tells me that the five madrigals (four by Mogens Pedersen and one by Truid Aagesen) sung by the Camerata Choir will have to preserve the reputation of the Danish madrigalists until another recording can be produced.

The second record of the set is surely exceptional in an anthology of Danish music inasmuch as none of the composers represented on it is strictly speaking a Dane, though Melchior Borchgrevinck is usually accepted as such by virtue of his life-time of service to Christian IV. The title of the record, »Court Dances from the time of Christian IV«, is therefore carefully correct and demonstrates an important aspect of Christian IV's court – namely, its international character, not least with regard to

music. This being so one may wonder why the most distinguished of all Christian IV's international stars, the English lutenist John Dowland, composer of some of the most famous court dances of the time (including a Galliard for King Christian himself), should not have been included. He is even represented in the first of the three printed collections from which all the music performed here is drawn: Füllsack and Hildebrandt *Ausserlesener Paduanen und Galliarden Erster Theil* (1607), Hildebrandt *Ander Theil ausserlesener Liebl. Paduanen und ... Galliarden* (1609) and W. Brade *Newe ausserl. Paduanen* (etc.) (1609), all published in Hamburg. (Incidentally, not all the music recorded is identified on the record since there are nine bands but only eight titles.)

However, a more fundamental question than that of the selection of pieces is, once again, as in the case of the madrigals, the choice of performing medium. For this recording Gunhild Deckert Knudsen has arranged all the pieces for »broken consort«, that is, a combination of instruments of different types. There is plenty of precedent for performing instrumental music of the late 16th and early 17th centuries with the ensemble she has chosen, most notably Thomas Morley's publication *The First Book of Consort Lessons* (1599 and 1611), on Sidney Beck's excellent and informative edition of which she has obviously relied heavily. But the question must be asked: how appropriate is it to the repertoire recorded here?

In the first place, Morley's publications, and Philip Rosseter's *Lessons for Consorts* of 1609, are unusual for their time precisely in this respect that they stipulate a particular instrumentation and are therefore regarded as important evidence of a developing interest in the musical possibi-

lities of a controlled manipulation of instrumental sounds – orchestration, in fact. Many of the pieces Morley published seem to have been especially composed for the occasion, and it cannot be taken for granted that they thus can be adopted as models for rewriting or »orchestrating« the rest of the instrumental repertoire of the period.

Secondly, the use of this particular ensemble of instruments was generally recognized as something peculiar to English music, unlike anything found elsewhere. Indeed, Michael Praetorius called it »the English consort« in his *Syntagma Musicum* (Part III, Wolfenbüttel 1619) and since he is not known ever to have been in England it is supposed that his knowledge of it came from contact with the popular travelling companies of English actors who used an ensemble of this kind for musical accompaniment to their plays. For it is generally accepted that this particular grouping of instruments originated in connection with theatrical productions of plays and masques, with which the English were occupied while others were discovering opera. It is, of course, possible that some of the present instrumental dances had been used in masques, but as far as I can see there is nothing to indicate it, nor to suggest that their publication in Hamburg was either prompted by or intended for use in the performance of masques. This applies also to William Brade; though English, he had made his career on the continent at least since 1594 at Copenhagen, Berlin, Bückeburg, Gottorp and Hamburg and is not known to have composed specifically for masques. In fact, it may be questioned whether these dances were intended for dancing at all. If they were, the use of plucked string instruments might be justified to assist the dancers with their emphatic rhythmic drive, but by this time such

dances as the pavane and galliard were passing out of use as »Gebrauchsmusik«. This seems particularly apparent in the dances of William Brade which show features of great musical interest some of which, such as changes of metre in the course of a movement would make them unsuitable for dancing, and others, such as motivic relationships and contrapuntal refinement, which favour attentive listening rather than physical activity. It may be observed that on this record the musicians – consciously or unconsciously – also seem to doubt the functional nature of this music since their performances often fail to establish the individual characters of the dances, tending towards monotony and dullness. To my mind the pieces would have been more interesting and their qualities as musical compositions shown off to better advantage had they been played by a consort of viols.

That brings me to my third point: the two publications by Füllsack and Hildebrandt (1607) and by Hildebrandt alone (1609), while allowing performances by all or any instruments – a common and understandable formula to encourage sales – specifically and unequivocally recommend performance by viols. In other words, they say that ideally, to realize their full potential, these pieces should be performed by viols – which is as much as to say that they were composed for viols, that it was the intention of their composers that they should be heard played by viols. Why then are we not allowed to hear these pieces as they were intended to be heard? The answer is once again misguided musicology: the obvious is rejected in favour of an alternative more tortuous and precious. Aware of the undoubted influence of English music at the court of Christian IV and observing that William Brade's publication

of 1609 neglects to specify a preference for performance by a consort of viols, Gunhild Deckert Knudsen concludes it is because he is familiar with the way in which this music is performed at Copenhagen and Gottorp, that is to say, the English way, which must mean by »English« or »broken« consort – *ergo*: all this music, regardless of what it says on the title pages, must be reworked in imitation of Thomas Morley's publication because of what William Brade *doesn't* say on his title page of 1609. The error of this line of reasoning would have been apparent if it had not stopped there but had proceeded a little further to discover that Brade's next publication, *Neue ausserlesene Paduanen und Galliarden* (1614), published at Hamburg while Brade was serving the court at Gottorp, uses on its title page the same prescription as Füllsack and Hildebrandt used, expressing his preference for performance by viols. Had he suddenly, while serving at Gottorp, forgotten the supposed English tradition at Gottorp, or can we assume, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that when the composers or editors say they want the music played on viols if possible an effort should be made to play it on viols?

We have made reference up to now to three distinct types of music: music for small vocal ensemble, music for a small ensemble of like instruments, such as a consort of viols, and »stage« music for plays and masques, for which a »broken« consort was favoured. These three are of different kinds: the first and second are primarily chamber music for private or domestic use whereas the third is music for public performance. Depictions of all three can be seen as separate scenes on a mural painted c. 1596 for Sir Henry Unton. Gunhild Deckert Knudsen must have seen them, since the mural is reproduced as frontis-

piece in Beck's edition of Morley's *First Book of Consort Lessons*, yet it is the fault – and a serious fault – of these two records, in my opinion, to have treated music of the first and second kinds with the musical resources intended for the third.

Fortunately the same cannot be said of the third of this set of recordings. Here we have a fourth kind of music, music for the church, and it is performed with a sense of style and tradition that distinguishes the Copenhagen Boys Choir, begun by Mogens Wöldike and continued by Niels Møller. This is much the most satisfactory musical performance (and recording) of the set and, shown off to such advantage, one is inclined to think also the finest music. It is, furthermore, music of exceptional historical interest. Unlike the secular music, this church music represents a stage in a continuous and unbroken tradition which it would have been useful to have had explained in an essay corresponding to those on the other two records. Instead two full sides of the record sleeve have been used to print the texts and a chance to give the public information which would make this important aspect of Danish musical life understandable – information which it is almost impossible for most non-Danes to obtain – has been lost. For example, what is the uninformed listener to make of the introduction of the first verse of the Danish hymn »Krist stod op af døde« between verses of the Latin sequence »Victimae paschali laudes«? Even if his scholarly curiosity causes him to turn to the source of the music, Mogens Pedersen's *Pratum Spirituale*, he will find nothing under »Victimae paschali« to account for the interjection of the Danish hymn. And if he looks up »Nu bede vi den Helligånd« he will find nothing to connect it with the singing of the sequence »Veni

Sancte Spiritus«. Would it not have been reasonable here to have explained how the Danish Lutheran church justified the retention of three great Latin sequences for Christmas, Easter and Whitsun by coupling to them the congregational singing of their Danish chorale versions – respectively »Grates nunc omnes« and »Nu lader os alle«, »Victimae paschali« and »Krist stod op fra døde«, »Veni Sancte Spiritus« and »Nu bede vi den Helligånd«?

There are a number of other questions about details of the performances for which the record notes should have provided answers: why are the texts sung not the same as those for which Mogens Pedersen provided musical settings? Even if Niels Møller would not use them in Copenhagen Cathedral today, is it defensible on an historical recording not to give us the original texts of *Pratum Spirituale*? Why is Mogens Pedersen's Latin mass described as »incomplete«? Proper notes would have explained that it is only incomplete with regard to Catholic practice but lacks nothing in the context of Lutheran practice in Denmark at the beginning of the 17th century. It is also unfortunate that »frie kompositioner«, by which is meant composi-

tions which do not make use of a *cantus prius factus* in the form of a Gregorian or Lutheran chorale melody, has been translated as »independent compositions« so that the impression is given that only the six of the 37 items in *Pratum Spirituale* which are not based on a pre-existent melody can really be said to be by Mogens Pedersen.

On the whole, though the initiative was well taken to illustrate the rich musical life of the reign of Christian IV with three recordings such as these, the results fall far short of what we have a right to expect of a national historical anthology. In the case of two of the three records it is a matter of deep regret to have to conclude that the performances for the most part do less than justice to the composers who made the period one of the most glorious in Danish musical history. One must be grateful that, thanks to the choral performances of the Camerata Choir under Per Enevold and the Copenhagen Boys Choir conducted by Niels Møller, Mogens Pedersen at least survives as a worthy representative of Danish music at the close of the Renaissance period.

John Bergsagel

*Vagn Holmboe: 7. symfoni, op. 50. Danmarks Radios Symfoniorkester; dirigent: John Frandsen. Per Nørgård: »Luna« per orchestra. Danmarks Radios Symfoniorkester; dirigent: Herbert Blomstedt. Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen: »Tricolore« IV. Danmarks Radios Symfoniorkester; dirigent: Ole Schmidt. Dansk Musikantologi 018. DGG.*

Det er en plade man umiddelbart bliver glad for, og værkudvalget er sådan, at det også kan anbefales den samler som blot af nysgerrighed vil have nogle smagsprøver på nyere dansk musik: Her har vi tre af de betydeligste nulevende danske komponister fordelt på generationer og alle repræsenteret med centrale og karakteristiske

værker. Mere end én samler af den nævnte type vil antagelig få skærpet appetitten på dansk musik.

Holmboes 7. symfoni er komponeret i 1950 og hører nok hjemme i hans frodigste og mest vitale periode. Trådene tilbage til Carl Nielsen er endnu klart hørbare, i melodityper, i de tre intermezzis blide natur-