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*Anthology of Early Keyboard Methods: Revised, enlarged and translated by Barbara Sachs and Barry Ife.* Peacock Press, 2023. ISBN 978-1-914934-73-5. A4 format. 95pp. Paperback. £25.00

The reissue of this selection of excerpts from keyboard methods of 1520 to 1620 translated into English from German, Spanish and Italian deserves to be warmly welcomed and widely used.

Since it first appeared in 1981 (published by Gamut Publications, an enterprise of the now defunct Cambridge Music Shop) 'Sachs and Ife' quickly established itself as something of a classic in the anglophone historical keyboard world. English translations and commentaries of important texts are conveniently drawn together in a single book, with musical examples in facsimile and modern music typesetting, and critical commentary.

The anthology comprises parts of the vast treatises of Tomás de Santa María and Girolamo Diruta concerning hand position, touch, fingering, ornamentation and playing style. These are supplemented by a fingered piece by Hans Buchner, finger exercises by Elias Nikolaus Ammerbach and Adriano Banchieri, and excerpts from Luis Venegas de Henestrosa and Hernando de Cabezón (the last two taken from introductions to music by the famous Antonio de Cabezón). The colour and appearance of the familiar first edition cover has wisely been retained; its curious woodcut explained.

The editors have updated their material in the light of current research and recent developments, including their own discovery in Arezzo of unreported integral prints of Diruta's *Transilvano*. The commentaries and reference notes of the 1981 edition have been much extended and the entire contents laid out afresh, reordered and completely re-typeset, both words and musical examples – making the book much easier to read and use.

Much of this information entails the correct placement of the fingers on the keys. Generalised instruction on hand position in passage work, chord patterns and suspensions, although often aimed at rudimentary players, offer easily memorized routines for playing from score, improvising or intabulating vocal music. While verbal descriptions of how to play instruments (even when accompanied by musical illustration, as here) remain notoriously difficult to interpret, the underlying principles of these methods provide practical systems for modern players to understand musical context as they play, and thus identify when, and for how long, a particular pattern might be applied, or whether to finger 'as it comes'.

I find Santa María's approach the most convincing and practical when read through the lens of his other writings on composition and improvisation (see A.C. Howell and W.E. Hultberg's 1991 complete translation of *Arte de tañer fantasia*) and measured against repertoire beyond Spain. We get a glimpse of the potential sophistication of a master performer at work (Antonio de Cabezon, for example, who examined and approved Santa María's treatise) as opposed to just the bare bones of their surviving works. Given the political reach of Spain at the time, and the *Trattado de glosas* of Diego Ortiz published in Rome in 1553, Santa María's treatise was likely known to Italian players, perhaps inspiring Diruta and Banchieri to publish complementary didactic works of their own.

Modern finger numbers are adopted throughout, for example, in Buchner's chorale 'Quem terra, pontus' which also has the first 16 bars in facsimile for comparison. The introductions to each method are revised in this new edition with illustrations and further explanation. The facsimile and transcription of Diruta's "How to understand tablature" and his transcription of Antonio Mortaro's canzona are now given in full. The commentary to the editorially fingered toccata by Paolo Quagliati is reworked and the facsimile is new. The production values and print quality are high, and the binding sturdy. Strongly recommended.

Terence Charlston