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Introduction to the Art of Singing by Johann Friedrich Agricola. Edited and translated by Julianne C. Baird. Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. x, 298 pp. ISBN 0-521-45428-X (hardcover)

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BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

Introduction to the Art of Singing by Johann Friedrich Agricola. Edited and translated by Julianne C. Baird. Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. x, 298 pp. ISBN 0-521-45428-X (hardcover).

Johann Friedrich Agricola, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, and Johann Joachim Quantz were all employed as musicians at the Court of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia (1740–1786). During the 1750s, each of these illustrious composers and performers produced an important treatise on the performance of music. Quantz's *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (On Playing the Flute, 1752) and C. P. E. Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen* (Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments, 1759) are well known and frequently cited by scholars. They are also used by performers of music as reliable guides to the interpretation of ornaments, the improvisation of cadenzas, and many other things, such as tempo. Both treatises offer musicians in general much useful advice about style in the eighteenth century. William Mitchell's translation of Bach's *Versuch* appeared in 1949, and Edward Reilly's translation of Quantz's *Versuch* appeared in 1966. Agricola's treatise, the *Anleitung zur Singkunst* (1757) has now been translated into English by Dr. Julianne Baird. Her fine translation will encourage singers to further investigate the proper performance of eighteenth-century vocal music. Baird's translation is accompanied by a scholarly preface, and by a thought-provoking commentary. The commentary is presented in endnotes so as not to encumber Agricola's text. In her notes Baird identifies the performers and composers mentioned in the treatise, and she explains and elucidates difficult passages in an admirably clear manner. Her command of the German language, and her sensitivity to shades of meaning make this translation a pleasure to read. In addition, Baird's international reputation as a performer gives the translation and commentary an added lustre, for she is explaining matters in which she is a recognised authority.

Agricola's *Introduction to the Art of Singing* is itself a translation, with very extensive commentary, of Pier Francesco Tosi's *Opinioni de' cantori antichi e moderni, o sieno Osservazioni sopra il canto figurato* (Bologna, 1723). Tosi's treatise was greatly admired in the eighteenth century, and Agricola judged it to be of such importance and usefulness that he undertook to translate it for the benefit of German-speaking musicians. Agricola also inserted musical examples to illustrate the matters under discussion—Tosi provided no musical examples—and wrote a running commentary on Tosi's text.

Why is an eighteenth-century treatise on singing of interest to a modern audience? In the *Introduction to the Art of Singing* there is much useful advice

for musicians who are interested in historical performance, and there is advice for musicians in general. The topics considered include voice-quality, care of the voice, the art of practising, the art of breathing, and the art of performing everything well. In addition, there is a thorough discussion of nuance in performance, rhythmic liberties, ornamentation, improvisation, and taste—all of these issues are addressed at length, and in depth.

The book has very few printing errors. On p. 109, line 14, “faulty” has been omitted. On p. 110 the example is reprinted from p. 109 by mistake. On p. 125, the last beat of the example needs another beam. On p. 269, note 30, read “an error.”

Every performer interested in eighteenth-century music will find Julianne Baird’s book to be a welcome and useful reference book.

Erich Schwandt

Curtis Price, ed. *Purcell Studies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. xii, 305 pp. ISBN 0521-44174-9 (hardcover).

Introduction: Curtis Price, “In Search of Purcell’s Character”; 1. Robert Thompson, “Purcell’s Great Autographs”; 2. Robert Shay, “Purcell as Collector of ‘Ancient’ Music: Fitzwilliam MS 88”; 3. Rebecca Herissone, “Purcell’s Revisions of his own Works”; 4. Curtis Price, “New Light on Purcell’s Keyboard Music”; 5. Peter Holman, “Purcell and Roseingrave: A New Autograph”; 6. Bruce Wood, “‘Only Purcell e’re Shall Equal Blow’”; 7. Ian Spink, “Purcell’s Odes: Propaganda and Panegyric”; 8. Martin Adams, “Purcell, Blow, and the English Court Ode”; 9. A. Margaret Laurie, “Continuity and Tempo in Purcell’s Vocal Works”; 10. Katherine Rohrer, “Poetic Metre, Musical Metre, and Dance in Purcell’s Songs”; 11. Andrew Pinnock, “*King Arthur* Expos’d: A Lesson in Anatomy”; 12. Ellen T. Harris, “*King Arthur*’s Journey into the Eighteenth Century”; Afterword: Janet Snowman, “A Portrait of Henry Purcell.”

Purcell Studies is a collection of twelve essays by leading authorities on the music of Henry Purcell (1659–95). Many of the contributors are active as editors for the collected edition of Purcell’s music, and have published important books and articles on the composer. These essays are united by a common search for new information about Purcell’s musical development and compositional techniques, and, taken together, underscore several important facts: (1) the manuscript sources of Purcell’s music, including the three “Great Autograph” volumes, have not been studied as closely as scholars have presumed; (2) the chronology of Purcell’s music is, in many cases, still in question; (3) the influence of Purcell on his contemporaries (and their influence on him) has not yet been thoroughly investigated; and (4) the ordinary music lover is still largely unaware of the extent or quality of Purcell’s music. Curtis Price, the editor, sums up this last point in his Introduction: