Aspects of Early English Keyboard Music to c.1630, edited by David J. Smith. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019. xvi + 239 pp.; music examples, facsimiles, and photographs. ISBN: 9780367729776. $48.95 (paperback), $160.00 (hardback), $44.05 (ebook).

Byrd: Organ and Keyboard Works: Fantasias and Related Works, edited by Desmond Hunter. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2019. xxix + 68 pp. ISMN 9790006562640. €29.95.

The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, edited by Jon Baxendale and Francis Knights. 3 vols. [Tynset, Norway:] Lyrebird Music, 2020. 1245 (xxxii + 369, viii + 412 , viii + 416) pp. €145.00.

English keyboard music of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras was one of the first early repertories to attract the attention of European scholars and performers. The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, a manuscript anthology of exceptional size, importance and diversity of contents, and physical beauty, appeared in a complete edition before the end of the nineteenth century.[1] Arnold Dolmetsch was probably not the first to give public performances of music from it,[2] but his subsequent recordings, writings, and teaching, which continued well into the twentieth century, certainly helped popularize early English keyboard music while focusing scholarly attention on related issues of music history, music editing, historical performance practice, and organology. Since the 1950s, musicologists have published nearly the entire known repertory in philologically rigorous modern editions, notably in the series *Musica britannica*, and research into the historical performance of this music—particularly with regard to ornaments and fingering—has continued apace. Only study of instruments has somewhat lagged, due no doubt to the low survival rate of any sort of English keyboard instruments from the period.

The present publications demonstrate the continuing enthusiasm of scholars and performers for this repertory. Yet they also illustrate some of the pitfalls of research and publication in a time that has seen great changes in how music and writings about it are edited and disseminated. Only the anthology of essays edited by David Smith is likely to be of lasting usefulness, and then only to specialists. The two editions raise questions about how best to convey this music to present-day players and scholars, and one is so seriously flawed as to make one wonder how the publisher could have released it in the form seen here.

Before getting into substantive matters, a few observations about the physical presentation of these publications are worth noting. The volume edited by David Smith is available both as an expensive hardcover book and in paperbound and electronic forms. Purchasers of what is advertised as an e-book, however, actually buy access to the volume through an electronic portal that resembles Amazon's Kindle-for-PC Reader but is less versatile and user-friendly. The two

[1] *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, ed. John Alexander Fuller Maitland and William Barclay Squire, 2 vols. (orig. 34 fascicules) (London: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1894–1899; reprint, New York: Dover, 1963, available on imslp.org).

[2] On a program shared with Dolmetsch on Jan. 15, 1895, Fuller Maitland played six pieces from the volume that he had edited, on an instrument "made, it was said, about 1550," according to a notice in *Musical News*, vol. 8, no. 203 (Jan. 19, 1895), p. 59. A reviewer ("C. L. G."), while disparaging the use of old instruments generally, described it as a "fine Venetian instrument"; *The Guardian* (Jan 23, 1895), 24.

editions of music are conventional print volumes, issued in landscape format perhaps because the contents are thought to appeal especially to organists, although the original sources are mostly in vertical format.

The Byrd volume, issued by Bärenreiter—well-known for their "Urtext" editions of Bach and other classic composers—is a sturdily bound if slim paperback of the type we expect from its publisher. It is headed by an extensive preface in both English and German translation—so that roughly 15% of the pages are superfluous for most users—with concise textual commentary in English at the back of the volume. A new publisher, Lyrebird, has issued the Fitzwilliam volumes in hardback as well as paper, at the same price. Unfortunately, the spiral binding of the latter is inadequate to the hundreds of shiny heavyweight pages, which will be hard on many eyes and many music racks; on my copies the covers are already tearing off. [was: The new music publisher Lyrebird has also issued the Fitzwilliam volumes in paper, but with a spiral binding that is inadequate to the hundreds of shiny heavy-weight pages. These will be hard on many eyes and many music racks, and on my copies the covers are already tearing off.] One might be prepared to accept this as an acceptable trade-off, given the reasonable pricing for so ambitious a publication, but unfortunately this is the least of the edition's problems.

An anthology of essays

The ten essays edited by David Smith are products chiefly of three conferences held at Delft and Aberdeen between 2004 and 2008. I summarize them at some length because of their relevance to this journal, and because the densely academic prose makes it difficult to extract the essential points from some of the contributions. One essay is essentially unchanged since at least 2006, but the field has always been a slow-moving one.

Smith introduces the volume by surveying the historiography of English keyboard music. He emphasizes the collected keyboard works of various composers included in *Musica britannica* while acknowledging the incompleteness of a history based on a "focus on composer" (p. 5). Indeed, only one of the ten offerings centers on music by a single composer: Peter Dirksen's catalog of keyboard works by John Bull (even there, some of the pieces in question are actually by others). The book's chronological span, from around 1550 to 1630, has been chosen as a period "during which keyboard music was elevated from functional music for church or the home to autonomous music to be shared with professional colleagues and connoisseurs" (p. 10).

Richard Turbet next provides an annotated bibliography of writings on early English keyboard music. This brings up to date (without overlapping) his bibliographies for Byrd and for Tudor music that date back to 1987. He includes two items from 2015 and 2016, respectively, but otherwise the most recent of the twenty-seven entries are from 2013—thus missing, for example, the present author's contribution to this journal from 2017.[3] It may be that this and other matter published during the past few years fails to meet the author's criteria of being "both new and enlightening" (p. 19). Yet the impression of recent scholarship that emerges is of modest, highly specialized research that does not aim at reinterpreting this music for general readers.

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[3] "Ornaments, Fingerings, and Authorship: Persistent Questions About English Keyboard Music *circa* 1600," in vol. 30 (pp. 27–51), dated 2013 but actually published in 2017.

Two essays on instruments follow, by John Koster on "harpsichords of the virginalists"—a deliberate play on the words—and Dominic Gwynn on the "lost world of the Tudor organ." In fact the world of English stringed keyboard instruments from the period is equally "lost," and both writers, who have been active in instrument-building and restoration as well as scholarship, are engaged largely in reconstruction. Koster traces the history of larger English stringed keyboard instruments through literary and iconographic evidence, as the few surviving examples are likely atypical. He sees virginals overtaking harpsichords in popularity during the sixteenth century, then larger instruments gaining ground again in the 1600s, perhaps in response to a need for continuo harpsichords. Koster affirms that "the basic disposition of English harpsichords might have been two stops an octave apart," pitch being much higher than today, based on the five-foot principal and ten-foot diapason typical of organs of the time—possibly enhanced by "additional distinctive tone colours" such as a bray or a "close-plucked nasal timbre" for an octave stop, both implied by physical evidence (p. 39).[4]

Gwynn surveys surviving Tudor organs (or rather bits of organs) and their modern copies. Although he provides many photos (including several of his own instruments), a reader unfamiliar with early English organs gains little sense of the sonic reality of these instruments. There are references to a few recordings, but those made on genuinely historical instruments or reproductions are rare.[5]

Actual use of such instruments is the subject of essays by John Harper on *alternatim* performance and Magnus Williamson on "playing the organ Tudor-style." Harper identifies the points at which organ music would have been heard in Tudor church services; an extensive table lists titles, composers, sources, and other bibliographic details for a repertory said to comprise 162 pieces. These range from settings of the Te Deum and Magnificat to tiny fragments. Unfortunately, the few surviving relevant documents allow Harper to say little about actual use of these settings—how they alternated with sung verses, whether the latter were always chanted or might also have been heard in written or improvised polyphony.

These uncertainties have not prevented Williamson from creating his own *alternatim* settings in allegedly Tudor style. The *alternatim* repertory—the large body of music that was performed by voices alternating with organ—clearly requires a substantial amount of improvisation (or at least composition in appropriate style) to set the missing verses that would have alternated with those for which we have written music. Their improvisation, based on primary sources surveyed here,

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[4] John Harper (p. 95n. 22) explains that, until the Restoration, "diapason" pitch was nominally based on a bottom F pipe 10 feet in length, with the "principal" sounding an octave above that and an "octave" rank of 2.5 feet above that.

[5] I could find only one brief sample on the author's own commercial webpage (https://www.goetzegwynn.co.uk/organ/the-wingfield-organ/). Online hunting yielded "wonderful improvised verses," as Gwynn describes them (p. 62), played by Magnus Williamson on the author's 2010 Tudor-style organ (https://open.spotify.com/album/7GB4sKQohSsSKv6aFQDrKE). One can also find links to examples played on a similar instrument (at St. Teilo's in Wales) at https://www.orlandogibbonsproject.com/in-chains-of-gold-volume-2.html.

is Williamson's topic—not the fingering, ornamentation, and other parameters of performance discussed by writers from Dolmetsch onward. The results demonstrate how beautifully the alternation of voices and organ could sound,[6] even if one is not quite convinced that what one is hearing is genuinely Tudor in style. Proof might follow from critical analysis of surviving liturgical keyboard pieces by Redford, Preston, and other early Tudor composers, demonstrating what makes these arcane compositions distinctive—and how they differ from modern efforts in more or less period style.

Frauke Jürgensen and Rachelle Taylor aim at something like this sort of analysis in their study of "seven settings of *Clarifica me*." An antiphon for the Passion and Easter seasons, this chant is preserved in multiple keyboard elaborations by Tallis, Byrd, and Tomkins—three generations of teacher and students. Compositions of this type (and their analysis) can seem dry and dutiful, even though they make up a significant fraction of collections such as the Fitzwilliam manuscript. Some reveal elegant counterpoint; a few turn, after apparently unpromising beginnings, into spectacular demonstrations of both compositional and manual skill. Yet this repertory can strike modern listeners as strange and remote, with its obsessive development of odd little motives that may be peppered with peculiar accidentals and medieval-sounding metrical complications.

It is unfortunate that Jürgensen and Taylor reproduce only Tomkins's setting in full; a reader without scores for the other pieces will find it hard to appreciate their demonstration that, whereas Byrd worked in "friendly competition" with his probable teacher and publishing partner Tallis (pp. 138–39), his own pupil Tomkins labored in "friendly emulation" of his master (p. 142). The proof lies in detailed musical analysis of the type that the late Byrd scholar Joseph Kerman probably would have regarded as hopelessly "taxonomic."[7]

The main points seem to be that (1) the first of Tallis's three settings stands out for its reliance on contrapuntal "modules," that is, recurring combinations of two (or more) brief subjects in invertible counterpoint; (2) each of Byrd's three settings tends toward increasing elaboration through thematic variation as well as contrapuntal development of a few motives; and (3) Tomkins's single setting "preserves the formal structure" of the second one of Byrd's (p. 142). This last point is hard to see; even if Tomkins's setting does fall into two roughly equal halves, he does not follow Byrd in introducing triple time in the latter section. Byrd's settings, moreover, reveal his ability to turn even an abstruse composition exercise into something musically engaging, through the incremental acceleration of the surface rhythm, increasing density of imitative entries (a stretto effect), and occasional adoption of brief ostinatos.

Those wearied by intense concentration on musical details will turn with relief to Tihomir Popović's essay on the manuscript collection of Byrd's keyboard music known as My Lady Nevell's Booke, dated 1591. Made possible by John Harley's identification of the dedicatee,[8] this

[6] See the reference to Williamson's recordings in the previous note.

[7] In his famous essay "How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out," *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 312, Kerman criticized the formal analysis of compositions merely as a means toward classifying them.

[8] "'My Ladye Nevell' Revealed," *Music & Letters* 86 (2005): 1–15.

study argues that her husband, Sir Henry Nevell, might have played some role in the "design" of the book, that is, the selection and order of entries. These lead, on the whole, from relatively simple sets of variations to complex contrapuntal fantasias, proceeding in a way that is the "exact opposite" (p. 157) of Thomas Morley's hierarchy of instrumental genres.[9] Instead the order of pieces might reflect the musical progress of the amateur dedicatee. In fact the dances and variations, no less than the fantasias, reveal Byrd's virtuosity in both counterpoint and idiomatic keyboard figuration. It is true, however, that among the earlier entries in the book is a long sequence of simplistic battle pieces, BK 94—musically perhaps Byrd's least interesting work.[10] Their presence, the author suggests, might reflect the fact that Sir Henry Sidney, commander in the Tudor conquest of Ireland apparently commemorated here, was close to Sir Henry Nevell.

An argument such as this, which offers only a plausible hypothesis, cannot be countered. Potentially more useful is the observation that the Voluntary for My Lady Nevell (BK 61), preserved only here, opens like a "modal 'intonazione'" by Giovanni Gabrieli (p. 154), remaining throughout in the Hypomixolydian mode. That Byrd deliberately kept to a given mode in this and other pieces, following the model of certain Italian (especially Venetian) composers and theorists, is a possibility that might be worth pursuing. Certainly there are strong ties to Italy in later Tudor culture, although these have tended to be downplayed in the historiography of its keyboard music, with its emphasis on local biography and patronage.

Actual Venetian music is present, albeit in small doses, in the other major manuscript discussed here. The Fitzwilliam is the subject of what may be the most important essay in the volume; here Smith definitively answers seven questions about this most famous virginal book. These were posed in verse form by Elizabeth Cole, who in 1953 made the first serious codicological study of the manuscript.[11] The difficulty of extracting the same information from the preface of the new edition means that owners of the latter will want the present book as well, if only for this chapter. Smith, doubtless recalling past controversy, is unnecessarily cautious in referring to it only as a "convincing hypothesis" that Francis Tregian the Younger was copyist of the manuscript (p. 179).[12] In fact, the theory that Tregian produced the volume "for his own private satisfaction" is crucial for its interpretation. This explains why so many pieces run inconveniently over page breaks, and why the notation is even harder to read at the keyboard than that of other early seventeenth-century manuscripts: it "was not a volume intended primarily for practical use" (pp. 172–73).

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[9] *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (London, 1597), 181.

[10] Byrd's keyboard compositions are designated by "BK" numbers from the edition by Alan Brown in *Musica britannica*, vols. 27–28 (London: Stainer & Bell, 1969–71, revised 1976 and 1999–2004).

[11] "Seven Problems of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book: An Interim Report," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 79 (1952–53): 51–64. She based her own four-line poem on the hexameter verse "Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando?" (p. 52).

[12] Smith previously argued against the view that the volume was produced professionally in a Flemish scriptorium. See Ruby Reid Thompson, "Francis Tregian the Younger as Music Copyist: A Legend and an Alternative View," *Music & Letters* 82 (2001): 1–31, and the response by David J. Smith, "A Legend? Francis Tregian the Younter as Music Copyist," *Musical Times* 143 (2002): 7–16.

The first of the seven questions, "What was the book?," perhaps requires no answer, although one could make a case for its being *two* books, that is, 95 pieces comprising a "first layer" and the remaining 202 a second.[13] Smith has already given a conclusive answer to Question 2, "Who made it?" Only slightly more doubtful are Questions 3 and 4 of "when" and "where" the copying took place; although it has been hypothesized that Tregian began copying in the Netherlands well before his return to England in 1606, Smith gives good reasons for supposing that work began only "at some point between 1605 and 1607" (p. 170). That would seem to mean 1606, with copying continuing perhaps until shortly before Tregian's death in Fleet Prison in 1617.

Questions 5 and 6, "How made, and with what motive?," prove to be more interesting than they might appear. The fine paper and calligraphic yet compressed handwriting, as well as details of the notation and the numbering of individual entries by certain composers, all point to a book assembled by a collector "primarily for study" (p. 175)—or perhaps chiefly to hold and admire, as anyone fortunate enough to see the still beautiful manuscript at Cambridge might do. Finally, in answer to Question 7, "Who in the book did share?," Smith points to likely personal connections between Tregian and the most important composers represented in the book. Some were Catholic, like Tregian himself: Byrd, Bull, and Peter Philips, possibly Sweelinck, but certainly not Giles Farnaby. Smith nevertheless also notes the "poor" texts that Tregian gives for some of Byrd's pieces (p. 177), as well as some doubtful attributions to that composer, raising questions about the reliability of Tregian's exemplars.

The volume closes with two composer studies. Pieter Dirksen, who has previously surveyed the keyboard music attributed to Sweelinck, Philips, and Scheidemann,[14] here does so for John Bull. Crucial for evaluating the "catalogue of the keyboard music" appended to the article are the first two of three conclusions stated just before it: (1) many pieces that have been edited as Bull's are not assuredly his, and (2) one must attach varying degrees of uncertainty to most attributions in the sources. Dirksen divides the Bull repertory into four categories, ranging from "authenticated pieces" to "anonymously transmitted pieces possibly by Bull" (p. 186). The system resembles one that the present reviewer once applied to music ascribed to Byrd.[15] Dirksen, however, defines a "safe" attribution not as one confirmed by multiple independent sources, but rather as one preserved in any "trustworthy" source. Exactly how a manuscript achieves that status is never made entirely clear, despite Dirksen's systematic evaluation of the most important Bull sources.

The fundamental problem, not resolved here, is that even for the most important of these sources

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[13] These sections of the manuscript are separated by four ruled but unused pages that follow no. 95 (a toccata by Giovanni Picchi); thereafter the individual items are not numbered.

[14] See *Heinrich Scheidemann's Keyboard Music: Transmission, Style, and Chronology* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2007). Dirksen included "A Checklist of the Keyboard Music of Peter Philips" as appendix 4 in *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck: Its Style, Significance, and Influence* (Utrecht: Koninklijke Vereniging voor Nederlandse Muziekgeschiedenis, 1997).

[15] "The Keyboard Works of William Byrd: Some Questions of Attribution, Chronology, and Style," *Musica disciplina* 47 (1993): 99–121.

we do not know who copied them or their precise relationship to the composer. For this reason one must bear in mind the author's admission that his is a provisional list, some entries representing a "personal view" (p. 195). In particular, one may doubt his third conclusion: that many anonymous pieces, preserved in manuscripts alongside ones known to be his, are also "attributable to" Bull (p. 195). Alexander Silbiger, among others, has warned against assuming that proximity within a source implies common authorship.[16] Silbiger did also argue for reexamining the possibility that Bull wrote some of the pieces in question.[17] Yet music that is not certainly by Bull can hardly "enrich our picture" of the composer (p. 195). Pieces bearing reliable attributions circulated alongside others that were transmitted anonymously; copyists, players, and perhaps composers themselves had reasons for not attaching names to pieces that might have been arrangements, collaborations, or pastiches. Evidently they were comfortable possessing music that lacked unique or known authors; we should do the same.

The volume closes with David Ledbetter's argument that a "stylistic change" evident in English keyboard music of the early seventeenth century mirrored a somewhat earlier one in lute music. The essay, which dates back to at least 2006, seems to have been sparked by doubts about Orlando Gibbons's authorship of three little dances whose style is characterized here as originating in lute music of around 1605.[18] Ledbetter admits that "there are no known French sources of first-class harpsichord music" from the early seventeenth century, yet he asserts that there is "evidence that an equivalent stylistic shift took place in French harpsichord music around 1630" (p. 209). In fact an earlier shift is evident within the Fitzwilliam book, whose selections grow shorter and simpler, on the whole, in its later pages. Clearly, the seventeenth century saw a shift from polyphonic textures characteristic of the sixteenth century to monodic ones, but how precisely can this be dated in keyboard music? and can its incorporation into the latter be traced to earlier shifts in lute music? However one answers these questions, one may be grateful for the complete transcriptions of six pieces, including the three "Gibbons" corantos in multiple versions.

Two editions of English keyboard music

From these essays it makes sense to turn to the music itself, as edited in two publications of distinctly different size and type. Both nevertheless adopt certain notational features from their

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[16] *Italian Manuscript Sources of 17th Century Keyboard Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), chap. 10, "Attributions," pp. 57–62.

[17] In the introduction to his facsimile edition *London, British Library MS Add. 23623*, 17th-Century Keyboard Music: Sources Central to the Keyboard Art of the Baroque, 18 (New York: Garland, 1987), ix. Dirksen does not acknowledge Silbiger's suggestion—nor my own demonstration that a *Fantazia 3a* in the same source (listed here as "Fantasia a3," p. 200) is a third paraphrase composition on subjects from Palestrina's madrigal "Vestiva i colli," complementing two other fantasias by Bull on the same model. See "What Is a Composer? Problems of Attribution in Keyboard Music from the Circle of Philips and Sweelinck," in *Networks of Music and Culture*, edited by David J. Smith and Rachelle Taylor (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 128–30.

[18] Numbers 38–40 in *Musica brittanica*, vol. 20, edited by Gerald Hendrie (London: Stainer & Bell, 1962, revised 1967, 2010).

sources that will be novel to many present-day users. The sources employ staves of six (or more) lines each. Notes for one hand or the other are strictly divided between the two staves; if a melodic line passes from one hand to the other, the notation likewise moves between staves. Small notes of different values (for instance, an eighth followed by two sixteenths) are never beamed together, but eighths, sixteenths, or thirty-seconds may be beamed in groups of a dozen or more—or not at all, or in seemingly random groups of notes. Clefs change as necessary to avoid ledger lines; barlines, accidentals, and various types of ornament sign are notated seemingly casually and inconsistently.

Arguments have been made for preserving some of these features in modern editions; the publications under review attempt to do just that, and therefore it may seem churlish to report that the results are not entirely successful.[19] Modern five-line staves and clefs are used, but the division of notes between the staves strictly follows their assignment to one hand or the other, as in the sources. This will seem inconvenient only to modern players accustomed to the convention of Bach and other later composers, who typically allow a middle voice to remain on one staff or the other even if it must be divided between the two hands. On the other hand, the decision of the editors not to regularize bar lines (or to insert dotted supplementary ones) makes it inconvenient to compare readings with other editions, or to identify corresponding measures in different variations or versions of a given passage.

More disconcerting are the retention of the original beaming of small note values and the irregular placement of accidentals. The latter is supposed to follow the sources, in which an accidental generally applies only to the immediately following note. Equally problematical is the notation of sections in triple meter through the device known as coloration. Triplet semibreves appear as blackend (filled-in) whole notes, looking like quarter notes without stems. Triplet minims take the form of blackened half notes, identical in appearance to normal quarter notes. The sum of all these decisions is to make the music harder to read than it needs to be; in the Fitzwilliam edition the use of coloration also led to occasional typographical errors.

The tradition of adapting modern printed notation to suit older repertory, especially that of the virginalists, goes back at least to Hilda Andrews's edition of the Nevell book. This used modified forms of notes, ties, and beams to convey some of the appearance of the manuscript.[20] Neither of the present editions, however, can be said to mimic the aesthetic features of the sources; both use standard modern note shapes and the like. Rather, the retention of elements of the original notation is apparently meant to convey clues to performance. Thus the editors of the Fitzwilliam book assert that original beaming "may have implications for articulation or

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[19] This reviewer argued for "reconsidering how we approach repertories such as this one, in which texts and attributions are unstable, and the notation, although deceptively similar to that of today, conveys clues to interpretation that are vitiated when rewritten in modern form." "Editing the Keyboard Music of Bull and Scheidemann," *Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music* (online at https://www.sscm-jscm.org/)11/1 (2005), para. 7.2.

[20] *My Ladye Nevells Booke of Virginal Music by William Byrd*, edited by Hilda Andrews (London: Curwen, 1926; reprint, with an introduction by Blanche Winogron, New York: Dover, 1969).

phrasing."[21] Desmond Hunter, editor of the Byrd volume, suggests that the original notation might sometimes "capture individual gestures under a single beam." Although it is uncertain whether "the application [of original beams] may suggest particular articulations, it at least conveys a sense of freedom in running, decorative figuration" (p. x).

The tentative character of these suppositions about beaming contrasts with what might be concluded from the division of notes between staves. The latter conveys reliable information about original performance practice, with implications for fingering and perhaps ornamentation and articulation (as when one hand is forced to leap or is prevented from playing a particular ornament by the necessity to strike a given key). Yet one must question the relevance to performance or interpretation of other features of the original notation.The sometimes haphazard beaming of small note values and notation of accidentals, like the irregular spelling of the same period, might convey information useful to an interpreter. But it reduces legibility, frustrating even a good sight-reader, especially where long streams of small notes beamed together must be lined up with slower-moving lines appearing simultaneously in other parts. The Fitzwilliam edition, being based on a sole manuscript, incorporates further idiosyncracies of the latter's amateur copyist, in particular the frequent writing of long note values as half notes tied together with what look broken beams, also the addition of extra final chords at the ends of many pieces.[22]

Only the Fitzwilliam edition includes facsimiles from its source, but images of English keyboard manuscripts are readily accessible, and modern editions need not reproduce every feature of the original notation.[23] Clearly, the editors of both editions thought seriously about how to present their material, but neither can be judged a success. The Bärenreiter publication is more professional-looking despite some uncomfortably crowded systems; an apparent reticence to change clef in the middle of some bars leads occasionally to unnecessary ledger lines. This edition is, however, distinctly more readable than the Lyrebird edition. Ornament signs, which mostly take the form of either single or double strokes through the stems of notes, are longer but less heavy than those in the Lyrebird volumes, where they are hard to distinguish from short beams. Another of Tregian's idiosyncracies, the use of a *custos* wherever a part moves from one staff to the other, is represented in the Fitzwilliam edition by a symbol that looks too much like an ornament sign. Tregian perhaps found these *custodes* helpful for understanding the voice leading, but they clutter the page and are wisely omitted from the Byrd edition. The unusual

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[21] From the "Editors' Note" on the first, unnumbered, page of vol. 1.

[22] These final chords, whose relevance to performance has long been debated, are absent from the Byrd edition even in pieces for which the Fitzwilliam is the principal or sole source (nos. 7, 8, 13, 14 = BK 63, 25, 64, 65; these are all major works, of which nos. 7 and 14 are *unica*).

[23] British libraries have been less forthcoming than public collections in Germany and France in making their holdings available online, but one can readily examine the Nevell book on the website of the British Library at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=ms_mus._1591. A high-quality scan of the Fitzwilliam manuscript is available for a fee from the museum at https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/aboutus/imagelibrary/products. For a printed facsimile of an important Bull source, see note 17.

notation of ties in the Fitzwilliam manuscript is part and parcel of its compressed graphic design. In Lyrebird's edition, however, the modern note shapes are necessarily spread further apart on the page, and this makes the beam-like ties harder to interpret than in the original.

A particularly frustrating aspect of the Fitzwilliam edition is the consistently inconvenient placement of page turns. It could be said that this reflects its source, but no musician will want to play from volumes that so often place a single last measure of a section, concluding with a pause or cadence, on a new page. Arguably the original manuscript was *meant* to be hard to read, at a time when notated keyboard music was relatively uncommon. Collectors such as Tregian might have enjoyed puzzling out rhythms or simply admiring the calligraphic shape of a dozen or more sixteenth notes strung together on fluidly swerving parallel beams. But there are reasons rooted in the nature of human perception and information processing that eventually led writers of keyboard music to adopt five-line staves and manageable groupings of beamed notes. An edition needs to interpret and improve on its sources, balancing legibility against preservation of information. Both the present editions swing too far in the latter direction, retaining elements of the original notation whose sense is better conveyed in other ways.[24]

The Byrd edition

The title of the Byrd volume, *Organ and Keyboard Works: Fantasias and Related Works*, seems to promise that it is the first in a new collected edition. If so, these fifteen preludes, fantasias, and cantus firmus variations will be followed by a much greater number of dances (chiefly pavans and galliards), variation sets, and other compositions. If more volumes are to come, they might seek to avoid some of the problems of the present one.

The volume opens promisingly with a substantial preface. Yet a brief appreciation of Byrd provides not even basic biographical or bibliographic information, such as the dates of his professional appointments or publications of vocal music. The descriptions of sources in the preface are equally incomplete; readers must consult older literature for even basic codicological information such as physical size, contents, date and place of copying, and so forth. Commentaries on individual pieces are similarly scattershot, mentioning miscellaneous aspects of form and style, such as the division of three of the fantasias into "paragraphs." The basis for the analysis is not explained; the division of the fantasia BK 13 (no. 4 in the volume) into two sections after m. 39, overlooks equally crucial articulations after mm. 78, 133, and 162, the last two marked by changes of meter.

A discussion of performance focuses on the editor's particular sphere of specialization, the mysterious one- and two-stroke signs for ornaments.[25] Unfortunately, neither this discussion nor

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[24] For instance, original beams, where different from those of the edition, could be indicated by horizontal brackets above or below the notes; coloration could be indicated by placing passages originally in blackened notation within small half brackets or quine corners (both procedures are familiar from modern transcriptions of medieval and Renaissance music).

[25] See Desmond Hunter, "The Application of (Ornamental) Strokes in English Virginalist Music: A Brief Chronological Survey," *Performance Practice Review* 9 (1996): 66–77, as well as the present reviewer's "Ornaments, Fingering, and Authorship."

the edition itself and textual commentary adequately reflect the fact that each source or copyist employs ornament signs somewhat differently. This reviewer has pointed to the need for systematic tabulation of all the ornament signs in every source.[26] As tedious as that might be, there is no other way to demonstrate how the signs are used in a given source or piece; on this as on other points of editorial practice, the present edition is no less casual than previous ones. The stated policy regarding accidentals is that "In general, an accidental governs only the note before which it is placed" (p. xi). Exceptions are understood in written-out trills and apparently in other places as well; the editor occasionally adds recommended accidentals above or below notes that lack them, but their provision is hit or miss.[27]

Inevitably one compares this edition with that by Alan Brown in *Musica britannica*, first issued in 1969–71.[28] Reviewing the first volume of the latter, Oliver Neighbour wrote, "Anyone who wants to play or study the greatest of the virginalists will now need to use this edition."[29] Alas, that advice still holds, for the present edition, apart from being incomplete, is simply too difficult to use. In addition, the apparent effort to see Byrd's music unencumbered by prejudices created by previous editions leads the editor to reinvent the wheel needlessly. For instance, the familiar source sigla and numbering of pieces employed for decades in *Musica britannica* are replaced by new ones, without the provision of concordances.

At a more fundamental level, it is unclear whether the musical texts improve over Brown's. Five of the fifteen pieces in the volume are *unica*, but the choices of principal sources for the ten other works are not explained. For the fantasia in C, BK 25 (no. 8), Hunter follows the Fitzwilliam manuscript, not the earlier copy in My Lady Nevell's Book. Apparently the editor presumes the later source to preserve the composer's revised readings—a plausible but unprovable point. In this case, the variants are relatively minor, but for the Fantasia in A minor, BK 13 (no. 4), the Fitzwilliam copy gives a version distinct from that of the only other source, which Hunter follows. That copy, however, was made by Thomas Tomkins, who, although a pupil of Byrd, was himself a composer and therefore might have made his own improvements to the text.[30]

Tregian was not always an accurate copyist, but his omission of a repeated passage (mm. 29–30) must reflect some discrepancy or ambiguity in Byrd's lost original. At another point (after m. 42), it is Tomkins who left out a repetition; here the editor declares subjectively that "Tomkins's more concise version generates greater momentum" (p. 61). That may be so, but if it was

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[26] "Editing the Keyboard Music of Bull and Scheidemann," para. 4.7.

[27] For instance, in the A-minor fantasia, BK 13 (no. 4), the note g1 occurs consecutively in mm. 50, 51, and 56; in each case the first g1 is preceded by a sharp, and in mm. 50 and 56 the second g1 bears an editorial natural. Why not in m. 51? And why in m. 82 is there no editorial sharp on an f1 that immediately follows a g1 with a sharp?

[28] The original publication was based on the editor's Cambridge dissertation; seventeen items in the second volume are said by the publisher to have been "revised significantly" for the third edition (https://stainer.co.uk/shop/mb28/).

[29] "Collected Byrd," *Musical Times* 110 (1969): 965.

[30] Neighbour supposed that these "look like revisions that only Byrd could have thought of," *The Consort and Keyboard Music of William Byrd* (London: Faber, 1978), 239; Hunter, quoting this, evidently agrees.

impossible to arrive at a decision based on strict evaluation of the sources, then it would have been better to give readers the opportunity to decide the matter for themselves, by clearly showing both readings in the main text. As it is, even the critical commentary fails to give a complete account of Tregian's variants at these crucial points.

A more serious instance of the same problem arises with the fantasia or voluntary BK 27 (no. 10). Here Hunter denies us the first half of the piece, which is absent from the Nevell book, his principal source. It is easy, however, to see why John Baldwin, the copyist of Nevell, truncated this piece; it is the last one in the book, and he apparently had to fit it onto two leaves. Hunter evidently agrees with Harley in seeing an "awkward join" and "disparity" between the missing first half of the piece and the fragment printed here.[31] Yet if this is a complete piece, it ends in the wrong key, and in fact the two halves present a coherent unity. Any stylistic disparity between opening and closing sections is far less than in Byrd's other fantasias, which progress from solemn imitative counterpoint in motet style to dance-like *tripla* sections with florid passagework.

It is a shame that readers must turn to Brown's edition for the missing music, which would have taken up at most two more pages of this volume. The portion from the Nevell book printed here starts *in medias res*, its ascending scales inverting an imitative subject introduced near the end of the previous (missing) half. With the inclusion of that slower-moving initial section, the entire piece makes more sense than either half alone. It gradually accelerates, the imitative points entering closer and closer to one another, culminating in a canonic stretto (here mm. 27ff.). The style is more archaic than that of the great fantasias printed earlier in the volume (and copied earlier in Nevell). The basic design, however, is not unlike that of Byrd's plainsong settings (including *Clarifica*, discussed above), which start unassumingly but build to increasing contrapuntal and rhythmic complexity.

The new edition of the Fitzwilliam

Although disaapointing, the Byrd volume seems reliable, reflecting its publisher's long experience issuing serious critical editions. The massive edition of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book is the product of a new venture, Lyrebird Music, grandly announced by a celebratory YouTube video.[32] The publisher's website advertises, as if a point in its favor, that the three volumes are "the result of nearly two years' work" by the editors.[33] In fact this may explain some of the shortcomings of the three volumes, which appear to be products of a hasty and not completely thought out process. Two years might be an adequate time frame for producing a conventional

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[31] John Harley, *William Byrd: Gentleman of the Chapel Royal*, 2d edn. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 199, quoted here, p. viii. The piece is complete only in London, Royal College of Music, MS 2093, a late copy; another source, Oxford, Christ Church, MS 1207, gives only the first twenty-nine bars of the latter half. The first half appears alone in London, British Library, Add. 29996, an anthology that belonged to Tomkins, from which Brown edited that portion of the piece in *Musica britannica*, continuing with the fragment from Nevell.

[32] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kd3zw2D_NQo&t=10s (a shorter "quick tour" is at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1tlSVFJtLM).

[33] https://lyrebirdmusic.com/.

academic book, but editing a huge, problematical manuscript is a larger and more complex project, typically involving multiple contributors and editors. Longer preparation and a greater number of cooks do not necessarily make for better broth, but to match the reliability and durability of publications to whose level this one aspires—including the first edition of the Fitzwilliam—would have required more sustained and more careful work.

The Fitzwilliam manuscript contains 297 entries by at least twenty named composers, plus arrangements of vocal and instrumental works by at least fourteen more. At least thirty-one of the entries for the major composers Byrd and Bull are *unica* preserved nowhere else, as are most of the compositions by Peter Philips and Giles Farnaby. Several minor composers are known only through the copies found here. Yet the Fitzwilliam is a very imperfect source, copied from materials that must have been of widely varying origin and accuracy. Hence, despite its critical importance for the history of English keyboard music, and of European music generally, it is not a source that is well served by the "diplomatic facsimile" or "change as little as possible" approach to editing. For pieces with concordances it is almost never the most accurate or musically coherent source. For *unica*, it often requires emendation of errors in pitch, rhythm, or both—many of these likely results of misunderstandings by its amateur copyist. The perpetuation of numerous doubtful readings in this edition is only one indication that it represents a lost opportunity to present the contents of the manuscript in a satisfactory manner. Fortunately, most of the individual compositions can be consulted in better editions within the volumes of *Musica britannica*.

Many pieces are given accurately, yet there is an astounding number of errors that could have been caught by any musically literate proofreader. Some are due to understandable misreadings of the manuscript, but others, including an embarrassing bar of nonsense in the opening piece, seem to be products of music software gone berserk. The garbling of a measure from Bull's "Walsingham" variations is one of several entries included in a list of errata on the publisher's website, but the latter is woefully incomplete.[34]

The extensive verbal matter contains much useful detail, but this too is poorly edited and somewhat idiosyncratic in both content and presentation; many passages forced this reader to pause and puzzle out their meaning.[35] There are substantial sections on the history of England and the biography of the presumed copyist, but as in the Byrd edition it is hard to find essential information about the source itself. Fortunately this is available in the essay by David Smith summarized above and listed in the editors' bibliography.

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[34] https://lyrebirdmusic.com/fitz-errata/. The error in question occurs in John Bull's famous variations on "Walsingham," m. 97, straddling pages 8 and 9. The nonsensical bar is said to be present "in some early imprints," suggesting that the edition is being printed more or less on demand—which might explain its homemade character, but which also suggests that a thorough revamping of the edition would not be too costly; anything less would be insufficient. The corrected bar still contains errors, showing the first sharp on c2 as editorial when it is present in the manuscript, and omitting the sharp on the last c2 (also written in the source); the beaming of the eighths in the left hand fails to conform with Tregian's.

[35] E.g., Tregian always places the lower stave time signature on the line its clef designates" (1:vii); "Farnaby's reputation is not as deserved as those of Byrd or Bull" (1:xv).

As in the Byrd edition, editorial accidentals (here described imprecisely as *ficta*) are supplied inconsistently—often, it would seem, in order to create cross-relations where there is no particular reason to believe they were intended.[36] Nor can one trust the editors to indicate which accidentals are actually in the manuscript. For instance, in Byrd's Passamezzo galliard, BK 2b (no. 57), Tregian indeed notated the somewhat unusual accidentals modernized as naturals in mm. 13 and 15 (right hand). Yet the natural and flat in mm. 21 and 22, respectively, are editorial.[37] Even more than in the Byrd volume, I found myself constantly writing in accidentals, as well as "3" and "6" to indicate triplets and sextuplets—not to mention checking the scan of the manuscript upon encountering dubious readings (many of which, however, are present in the source).

The mass of information in the preface includes a tabulation of the total number of notes and rests in the manuscript (409,088; we are not told how this figure was arrived at), as well as an over-zealous classification of Tregian's own corrections into nine categories. It does not, however, identify or tabulate concordances (nor does the "Critical Apparatus" at the back of each volume). Other essential information is also lacking; although the commentary gives page numbers in *Musica britannica* for pieces also edited there, it does not give the the same edition's item numbers for those pieces, which are the usual means by which scholars refer to them. Fingering numerals are included, where present, but they are not modernized, so "1" in the upper staff means the right-hand thumb, but for the left hand it means the little finger.

It would be superfluous to continue. To demonstrate the inconsistent quality of the editing, it will suffice to list a sampling of various types of errors not (yet) listed in the online errata. Measure numbers below are as in the edition; "r.h." = right hand (upper staff), "l.h." = left hand (lower staff).

Byrd, Sellinger's Round, BK 84 (no. 64):
- m. 16: l.h., lower voice, half rest on downbeat missing
- m. 51: l.h., sharp on f omitted
- m. 63: l.h., note 6, read d1 in place of b
- m. 92: l.h., d misplaced, belongs immediately after half rest (Nevell has a second d after it in the middle of the bar)
- m. 146: r.h., first and last notes in treble should be blackened semibreves, not minims; in place of last bass note d, read blackened crotchets d–c

Byrd, O Mistress mine, BK 83 (no. 66):
- m. 57: garbled in the manuscript and further garbled here, displacing the original *custos* one beat to the right, inserting tenor quarter rest (not marked as editorial) where the *custos* belongs, and substituting b for tenor g, which leaves the middle part nonsensical (Brown found a brilliant solution in *Musica britannica*, vol. 28)

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[36] As in the fantasia by Stroger[s], no. 89 (mm. 8, 20), which despite its archaic, not quite competent Tudor opening reveals Venetian influence in its second half.

[37] In m. 28, however, the flat on the downbeat is real, despite the natural just before it; one must suspect, however, that the latter (written as a sharp in the manuscript) was a mistake for a two-stroke ornament sign.

m. 67: also garbled in the manuscript; the editors make one minor emendation but fail to fix the leap of the middle voice to a dissonant g1 at the midpoint of the bar (Brown made a clever emendation here, but the simplest solution is merely to change g1 to f1)

Byrd, Walsingham, BK 8 (no. 68)

m. 44: second two-stroke sign erased in manuscript

m. 96: no need for editorial rest, which causes treble to leap to an unprepared fourth (Nevell gives a different version for this bar, which evidently underwent revision, leading to ambiguity in the lost autograph)

Byrd, Hexachord fantasia, BK 64 (no. 101)

m. 8: bass G on beat 3 missing

Byrd, Ut mi re, BK 65 (no. 102)

m. 5: *custos* should be on e not c

m. 106: read e not f (which creates chromatic step f–f#)

Philips, Fece da voi (no. 73)

mm. 46, 48: editorial "3" in brackets should be centered over first half of bar

Philips, Paget galliard (no. 75)

m. 31: alto on downbeat should read d1, not f1 (this is an error by the copyist, who failed to see the imitation of the treble by the alto)

m. 32: delete natural on b1 (not in source)

Philips, Passamezzo galliard (no. 77)

m. 16: delete flat on e, absent from source (this error is also in the old Breitkopf edition; the manuscript seems to show a flat at the beginning of the measure, but it cannot apply to this note, where it would produce an ugly and uncharacteristic cross relation)

m. 62: bass, last five notes are a third too high, forming octaves with alto

Phlips, Doloroso pavan (no. 80)

m. 28: r.h., note 2, read b not a

m. 33: sharp on f2 is in the manuscript but probably a later addition or an error for a two-stroke ornament sign (not present in concordances)

m. 35: sharp on g1 is in the manuscript, not editorial

m. 76: l.h., second f (quarter) should be f–g (8ths)

m. 87: r.h., read f1/c2, then a1 (the notes are printed as if in baritone clef, an octave higher), then delete superfluous treble clef at the following barline

m. 94: r.h., notes 5–8 are shown a third lower than in the manuscript (probably an error, meant to read one step lower, i.e., e1–f1–g1–e1, as indicated in the commentary)

m. 111: r.h., unstylistic sharp on g1 probably misplaced, meant for f in l.h. (which lacks an accidental in the manuscript, contrary to what the edition indicates)

m. 117: right hand, final chord includes c1

Philips, Amarilli (no. 82, after Caccini)

m. 10: l.h., last sharp on c1 not in the manuscript, should be natural (but the following note bears a sharp and should be b-natural, without an editorial accidental)

Philips, Margot labourez (no. 83, after Lassus)

m. 48: r.h., note 5, read b not a

Philips, Fantasia (no. 84)

m. 95: r.h., first note in treble, read b1 not d2

Philips, Fantasia (no. 88, after Crequillon, Si me tenez)

mm. 19–20: r.h., for c1/e1 read a/c1 (and add *custos* on a in l.h.)

m. 21: r.h., for b (quarter) read b–a (8ths)

David Schulenberg
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