

DIETERICH BUXTEHUDE: The Collected Works, Kerala J. Synder and Christoph Wolff, general editors; Volume 15, Keyboard Works, Christoph Wolff, general editor; Part 1, Preludes, Toccatas and Ciaconas for Organ (pedaliter), edited by Michael Belotti. The Broude Trust, 141 White Oaks Rd, Williamstown, MA 01267-0547 (phone: 800-525-8559; fax: 413-458-5242; E-mail: broude@sover.net), 1998. Vol. 15 A (music), 199 pages; Vol. 15 B (commentary), 175 pages; ISBN 0-8540-7515-2. \$200 for the 2 volume set).

Although scholars have recognized Buxtehude's influence and his artistic achievements for more than a century, previous attempts to bring forth a complete works edition have faltered. In recent years, Christoph Wolff and Kerala J. Synder, have accepted the challenging task of revising and completing earlier efforts. This collection will not only contain Buxtehude's better-known organ works, but also an even larger number of vocal and other instrumental compositions awaiting revival.

Three volumes will comprise the keyboard portion: volume 15 contains all the *pedaliter* free works; volume 16 contains the chorale- and chant-based works; and volume 17 contains *manualiter* free works (for harpsichord and organ). Recently, Broude Trust issued volume 15 in two handsome books edited by Michael Belotti. The first book (15A) contains the music and the second (15B), the critical commentary. They cannot be purchased separately for reasons explained later.

The threefold division into *pedaliter*, chorale-based, and *manualiter* seems natural, especially since scholars have been unable to establish a firm chronology and any overall compositional plans. The organ works in volume 15 are easily located by key, but the ordering of compositions in the same key might seem confused since they are organized by their sheer length rather than *Buxtehude Werke Verzeichnis* (BuxWV) numbers. (One can simply use the table of contents.) The three *pedaliter* ostinato works are at the end. Titles follow seventeenth- and eighteenth-century conventions rather than anachronistic titles such as "Prelude and Fugue" found in the Hedar edition.

The preface to volume 15A elaborates on the history of earlier editions, but let it suffice to say that significant differences exist among all editions of Buxtehude's works. Furthermore, no "perfect" edition can be attained because manuscripts in Buxtehude's hand do not exist and the transmission of manuscripts has been haphazard. I strongly recommend that performers consult these critical notes, as many do with the *Neue Bach Ausgabe*. All available manuscripts are described and compared with the scores in volume 15A in the critical notes. The notes are in English, easy to read, and supplied with beautiful facsimiles of tablature and staff notation from source manuscripts.

As a result of the unreliable transmission of manuscripts, all Buxtehude editions require some significant level of interpretation. Buyers should be aware of editorial practices before investing in any score. For the remainder of this review, I will consider the advantages and drawbacks of the Belotti edition in comparison with two other editions that have been familiar to generations of organists: Hedar (1951) and Beckmann (1971-72).

The Hedar and the Beckmann editions incorporated research and sources available immediately

prior to their publication, sometimes overemphasizing new manuscript sources. Although the later Beckmann edition enjoys the benefits of more research than the Hedar, the Beckmann edition also reflects controversial editorial procedures. Beckmann chose to reconstruct works, that is, to infer Buxtehude's intentions from extant sources and musical logic, resulting in convincing interpretations not present in existent manuscripts. Beckmann's experience and musicality certainly benefit the performer; however, his edition can limit performers who wish to make their own choices.

Belotti focused on a primary manuscript that he felt is the least corrupt. Secondary manuscripts inform Belotti's editing, and they are well-documented in the critical notes. Belotti does not hypothesize versions that do not exist in manuscript. This allows and, in fact, compels performers to consult the critical notes in order to make their own decisions. (Remember that the commentary and scores must be bought together.)

For performers who will not pursue this literature in great depth, I recommend the Beckmann edition because of the \$200 price and (or despite) Beckmann's interpretations. But, I also encourage these same performers to consult the Belotti edition. (Visit a university library or obtain materials by interlibrary loan.) Serious performers and scholars of this repertory, however, should buy the Belotti edition. The wealth of up-to-date information about sources and alternative texts will prove invaluable. Often, I was pleasantly surprised while playing familiar compositions from the Belotti edition, and I now hear some works differently.

These magnificent volumes use high-quality paper with a durable hardcover and strong binding that should survive years of heavy use. Although primarily intended for library use, the volumes make a good performing score because of the location of the page turns and a minimum of editorial and analytical marks on the page.

The Belotti edition offers several advantages that the Beckmann and Hedar editions do not offer. The pedal parts coexist with the manuals on two staves. Many points argue for this approach: (1) Traditional staff notation at the time used two staves, but admittedly, Buxtehude most likely used organ tablature instead. (2) More importantly, this notation allows the performer to decide when to use pedaling rather than relying on an editor's suggestions. I find that the flexibility can be good when balancing registrations on different organs or divisions. When manuscripts do indicate pedal, Belotti simply indicates "Ped." (3) The notation is actually easier to read, except in infrequent cases where the pedal part ascends above the tenor or when manual parts get crowded into the upper staff. The 2-3 suspension chains in the first fugue of BuxWV 142, for instance, become visually clear in this edition. (4) This notation requires less space, yielding more music per page — a big advantage for performers.

When a manuscript obviously omits notes from a passage, Belotti inserts them in half-tone ink. This method distinguishes editorial marks from original notes quite simply without extra parenthesis or complications. Thus, in performance, it is easy to ignore or play. (On a photocopy, one could even color in the notes!) I wish the editor had continued this practice for other editorial additions. The abbreviation "Ped" in roman typeface, for instance, indicates that the primary manuscript source specifies pedals while italics indicate an editorial addition. This simple, but important, font distinction is easy to overlook; the half-tone would have been more

obvious.

Similarly, tied notes are indicated with a broken line rather than half-tone ink. In any case, Belotti's editorial suggestions concerning tied notes are conservative, and performers should be aware that other editions use the tie more frequently and in measures other than those indicated by Belotti. The Beckmann edition, for example, handles this detail fairly well for performers.

In the Belotti, footnotes provide brief alternate versions from secondary manuscripts. Longer alternate passages enjoy full, performable sections in the critical notes volume. This is a boon to everyone.

Both Beckmann and Belotti generally follow modern conventions for beaming. Performers should be aware that manuscripts do present conflicting beaming, which tends to unconsciously influence performers' articulation. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of historical beaming, and publishing houses' awareness of it will increase. The opening of the *Praeludium in g*, BuxWV 149, is a striking and famous example. One manuscript presents the sextolets in a 4+2 pattern while another has no sub-groupings. The Beckmann edition follows the modern notational practice of a 3+3 subdivision. Unfortunately, I have heard performances overemphasize such an articulation pattern throughout the opening section. Especially from mm. 11-19, the music works against such groupings. Other patterns can create a fascinating texture above the pedal ostinato throughout.

Since the division of notes has been normalized onto two staves, one cannot rely on the notation to indicate the division of the hands. The editor either drew Buxtehude's works from tablature, or transcribed notes from older clefs to more familiar ones.

To give the reader a sense of how Beckmann and Belotti compare, I will examine BuxWV 142. Many details often differ throughout these editions. Short passages may be displaced by an octave, as one might expect from tablature transcriptions or different source manuscripts. For instance, the last three sixteenth notes of the opening measure can be found starting on E4 or E5. Similarly, rhythms may be altered. Sources disagree in m. 9 and m. 12, for instance. Ties on repeated notes vary widely from edition to edition and are not suggested in the critical notes. Once again, Hedar, Beckmann, and Belotti may agree but frequently disagree on important details of octave, rhythm, and tied notes. In a few instances, the Beckmann may have figures that do not exist in any source manuscript, but nevertheless are convincing.

Performers may appreciate a small point in BuxWV 142 of the Beckmann edition, cautionary accidentals. Furthermore, Beckmann avoids cluttering the score with parentheses to indicate them. (Following a specific manuscript, Beckmann does not apply cautionary accidentals consistently, but the accidentals serve their purpose well.) The Belotti edition contains no cautionary accidentals.

More prominent features disagree. Accidentals occasionally are different. For instance, the cadence at m. 85 ends on a minor chord in the Belotti edition. The Beckmann adds a G#4 to yield a striking major sonority and a leap of a diminished octave while Hedar places the G# an octave higher to yield a descending chromatic scale. In m. 99, the final note of the alto is E4 in

Beckmann, but a piquant E# in Belotti.

At first, the entrance to the final fugue (a gigue) of BuxWV 142 may shock performers only familiar with the Beckmann edition. In one source, the *Codex EB*, the preceding free section stops quietly on a strong half-cadence in m. 113; then, the fugue proceeds vigorously. It is quite easy to change registrations. The other two historical sources, however, delete a measure so that the free section moves immediately and seamlessly into the gigue. Both the Hedar and the Belotti choose this effect. Readers will want to consult the critical notes to discover why!

An even more surprising situation occurs during the gigue. The three existent manuscripts disagree in m. 128 (or m. 129 in Beckmann). In two sources, half a measure of more music exists, thereby displacing the music by two beats from the primary source, the Lindemann manuscript. In m. 144 (145), the Lindemann manuscript supplies two beats to meet up with the other sources and finally cadence on the downbeat. Belotti and Hedar both follow the Lindemann manuscript. Beckmann takes the extra measures from all the sources, resulting in half a measure too much. As a result, his edition requires a 6/8 measure not present in any source to accommodate this problem — a curious solution.¹ Prior to inspecting manuscript sources, I sensed something was curious about the accents in this gigue. Once again, all three original manuscripts can be easily assembled into a performing score from the Belotti edition because the commentary conveniently provides these variant passages.

Pedaling in the Beckmann edition agrees with the “Ped” markings from Belotti’s primary manuscript. The manuscript, however, does not indicate or refute the presence of pedal beyond the second fugue (mm. 48ff) of BuxWV 142, except at the very end. The stretches of the second fugue clearly imply that the pedal plays the bass part. In the free section, mm. 101-112, no manuscript specifies pedal. Here, I usually use pedal as Beckmann arranges it, but a particular registration might require manuals alone, especially if one lacks a registrant on a mechanical stop action organ. The gigue fugue, mm. 117ff, contains passages suggesting some use of pedals, but many can be handled conveniently by manuals instead. Beckmann places much of this fugue in the manuals, yielding a nice contrast. I use pedal nearly throughout because the virtuosity is exhilarating and the passage mm. 142-144 is awkward without them. The manuscripts, however, do indicate pedal reentering at m. 144; so, Beckmann’s reading is probably more correct than mine. For the most part, both the Beckmann and Belotti editions agree on the pedaling in BuxWV 142. In a couple instances, the performer has more flexibility than Beckmann suggests. Fortunately, it is easy to play pedal in a passage written for manuals alone in Beckmann’s edition, but students can have troubles taking a voice written as a pedal part back into their hands. A good example of such an opportunity is mm. 76-78 of the *Praeludium in f#*, BuxWV 146, where one might need to drop out pedal during the echo. (Beckmann does not.) The danger is not thinking of better possibilities with a score that has “it figured out for you”.

In summary, I highly recommend the Belotti edition. It offers features unavailable in less expensive, performance editions. The scores are accompanied by a convenient second volume containing critical notes. Performers and researchers will want to consult these notes when

¹Omitting the second half-measure would have broken an attractive sequence. (Two less reliable manuscript sources actually do this.)

studying the musical scores.

Leon W. Couch III
Assistant Professor of Music
Luther College