

# HAMPSTEAD AND HIGHGATE PRESS

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JORY VINIKOUR  
Fenton House

The setting of a recital by American harpsichordist Jory Vinikour last week was particularly apt. Fenton House is home to the Benton Fletcher collection of early keyboard instruments from which he played a magnificent Shudi and Broadwood harpsichord.

Dating from 1770, this is a late specimen, hence rather sophisticated, and indeed the largest and most elaborate harpsichord ever made in England. Vinikour showed that he well knew how to employ its wide range of resources.

There were various surprises of quickly changing dynamics and timbre for example, in Bach's Italian Concerto, a work that, as its name implies, virtually invites a quasi-orchestral treatment. There were also a few hiccups, or slight hesitations, particularly regarding the ornaments, whereas in a C major Suite, by Gottlieb Muffat all was impressively fluent.

Muffat seems to have been the leading keyboard composer of Vienna in the early 18th century, the last of a long line of Baroque organists and harpsichordists and the only Viennese contemporary of Bach to make a substantial contribution to the keyboard. Despite this, his works are not well known. This is minor music yet very agreeable, especially when performed with the vigour and imagination that Vinikour brought to it.

Far less engaging were the two movements of a Sonata in A Major, by Johann Gottfried Schwanenberger, another shadowy 18th century figure, much praised by Dr. Burney in his musical travels.

The evening's main event, however, was Vinikour's account of Handel's Suite in D minor. Though essentially a sequence of dance movements like the Muffat, this was powerful music eloquently played. As an encore we heard a brace of Scarlatti Sonatas Kk 420/1, these being, if anything, even more brilliant.

Max Harrison