

insights might have arisen from such a comprehensive index of this, and one that would have taken only the same amount of effort to produce as the composer index.

In addition to this, the dust jacket suggests that the book will be useful in enabling us to 'gauge the trends in twentieth-century British musical life, and the role of the BBC in their promotion.' This is certainly true, but would it not have been better to include some of this analysis in a slightly expanded introduction? Even a brief count of the number of works by some of Britain's more prominent composers would have saved the reader from the chore of adding them up from the index.

This resource is undeniably useful, but it is also limited. Further, if, as one suspects, the mammoth task of cross-referencing P-as-B records with other sources has not been carried out in a systematic fashion, the text may also be misleading or, on occasion, simply incorrect. Certainly, while answering some specific questions, it raises many more. It will be a valuable scholarly resource for many—but it should be used with caution.

MEGAN PRICTOR AND PETER CAMPBELL

Geoffrey Wilson. *Handbook for Artsong Accompanists: A Musical and Literary Approach*

Canberra, 1997. Available from the author at 25 Green Street, Narrabundah ACT 2604.

271pp. pb., bibl., index.

Geoffrey Wilson's 'labour of love' will be a valuable resource for the small but increasing number of young Australian musicians who have chosen to enter the profession of piano accompaniment and, to a lesser extent, for those already established and working in the field. This long neglected and often misconceived area of music specialisation is slowly gaining recognition in Australia, particularly with the introduction of tertiary courses of study at some of our major conservatoriums, and the establishment of an important support network of state guilds in NSW, Queensland and South Australia.

However, it is Mr Wilson's obvious enthusiasm for the art form which ironically ensures that his book is, regrettably, not yet the definitive text on the subject. His writing is marred by a severe lack of literary discipline and has been very poorly edited. His rambling, inelegant prose style makes parts of the book almost incomprehensible, with long, convoluted sentences and clumsy grammatical constructions that would challenge even the most avid of readers. The often quite charming and conversational manner adopted in the early pages of the book too often runs the risk of degenerating into trivia. The reader is transported on a stream of consciousness through a labyrinth of fascinating but largely irrelevant material more appropriate for the coffee-table than for a professional library. The author's breadth of knowledge is evident and commendable, but a reference book designed 'to the benefit of those who are anxious to improve as accompanists' (p. 5) should surely offer much more detailed, concise and in-depth information, easily accessed and understood; a symphony rather than a divertissement.

Some indecision about the audience for which the author intended his book is evident from the very start. The tone moves easily between pedantry and condescension, providing

some undefined facts which would be lost on the uninitiated, but also some which should be self-evident to the most inexperienced music student. The amateur enthusiast may need to have concepts like 'appoggiatura' and 'augmentation and diminution' explained; the trained musician may however question the need for a rather subjective definition of 'melody.' Amateur and professional musicians alike would do well to be wary of such generalisations as 'the convincing use of rubato will therefore depend more on feeling and instinct than on rules' (p. 77), or discussing disasters of speech-accentuation, 'discerning and intelligent singers wisely alter the troublesome note values, and they are quite justified in this' (p. 65).

Comments of considerable insight and erudition (and there are many in the text) jostle with personal prejudices on such topics as smoking, the ivory trade and poetry. This brings me to the question of the author himself: Who is he? The book offers us no biography, no academic qualifications or performance credentials. There are many examples of a rather idiosyncratic approach to his subject matter, particularly in areas such as rhythm ('more often felt than seen' p. 67), musical structure ('in the past few decades detailed analysis of music has become something of an academic fetish, but it is extremely doubtful whether this can make any contribution to improvement in performance' p.65) and poetry ('too detailed an analysis, and too much conjecture as to its meaning, tend to deprive a poem of its mystery and fascination' p. 5). Readers may be confused by statements and information provided elsewhere in the book which appear to be totally contradictory. The long factual and historical analyses never offer footnotes or any form of annotation that might have given some academic credibility to the conclusions reached.

Mr Wilson's approach to the performance aspect of the profession is also decidedly old-fashioned, as can be judged for the following excerpts:

Though at times for quality of sound produced, or to satisfy the wishes of a singer, the lid will be kept closed altogether (p. 7).

[N]either seek nor expect any undue share of appreciation (p. 34).

Always be ready and willing to assist with knowledge and experience in the compilation of a recital programme, but only when asked (p. 34).

Perhaps most disappointing for me was that the author has not taken the opportunity of using this public forum to address the lack of recognition both within the profession and in public perception, of the role played by a keyboard accompanist in the rehearsal and performance of Art Song. In fact, his opinion on this matter seems surprisingly ambiguous. The chapter entitled 'Bravissimo Accompagnatore' looked promising, but proved simply to perpetuate the old subservient image which has produced the misleading terms 'associate artist' and 'accompanist' for a performer of a musical score composed for two equally important partners. It would seem to me that the premise on which the whole book is based immediately questions this attitude. The comments that 'it is always a refreshing experience when a recital programme contains at least one song which compliments the person at the keyboard' (p. 270), and 'very few really good pianists ever become good accompanists' (p. 26), alongside far too many other similar statements and implications, sit uneasily with the earlier assertion that 'anyone foolish enough to suggest that the accompanist is inferior in skill and importance to the person accompanied should be disillusioned in polite but positive terms' (p. 28).

After a long career accompanying singers and instrumentalist, Mr Wilson appears to have very little to offer the aspiring young accompanists of a practical nature, despite his comment in the introduction to the book that 'experience is always more valuable if it can be shared' (p. 5). Apart from offering a huge amount of information on a myriad of subjects, there is no advice as to how this may be used in the process of developing a personal and musical relationship with one's partner both within and through the music. Wide ranges of experience and opinion have to be understood and accommodated, compromises made on both sides, differences resolved and solutions discovered. The imagination must be inspired by the poetry and then conveyed through the music to the musical partner and to the audience, always remembering that the whole exercise raises the inherent problem of combining two such disparate music instruments as the piano and the human voice.

Many general points are made, but they will lack substance if they are not then illustrated by musical examples drawn from standard repertoire. So much of the space spent on the history of the piano (pp. 12–25) and the list of writers who have been set by art songs composers (pp. 117–257) could have been more valuably used to address these more specific issues and concerns. The careful editing of sometimes peripheral and self-indulgent diversions into areas of history and literature might well have left space for a convincing argument for accompaniment as a fulfilling career option and some detailed guidelines that may be followed to that end. Much of the extra material provided can be fairly easily researched or accessed elsewhere; a handbook needs to focus much more on those matters unique to the study of piano accompaniment, and the author seems very well qualified to have done this.

Mr Wilson comes closest to real success in Section 3, enigmatically headed 'The Accompanists Intellectual Essentials and Role,' and in Section 16, 'How to Study a Song.' Here we are afforded a much better glimpse of what he has to offer, although some reference to studying the song *with* the singer/partner might have made it even more relevant. In Section 10 (the 'Lady of the Lake' songs) we get a few useful observations about the pianist's direct responsibility to the text, but then the reader is offered the original English poems which bear little relationship to their German translation or Schubert's setting of it. A similar surprising choice is made in the rather less successful discussion of the 'Wilhelm Meister' songs (also in Section 10), where rhyming poetic translations by Thomas Carlyle are provided for songs, that are all settings of the original German. There is no discussion of the way in which the poems have been set to music or thoughts on their performance. The introduction states that

Those of us who have conducted master classes and lectured on accompanying to singers and pianists are usually astonished at how few there are who really understand the requirements of Art Song performance (p. 3).

and yet this is the very element that is lacking in this discussion: a clear sense of purpose, supported by relevant musical examples where appropriate.

By far the most useful parts of this book are the well-ordered and comprehensive lists of repertoire with a commendable selection of work by Australian composers. I find particularly pleasing the inclusion of works for piano and 'other instrumental obbligatos' [*sic*] and of vocal duets with piano—an excellent introduction to chamber music for singers. It is also very encouraging to see that the list of 'Songs with Excellent Pianoforte Accompaniments which

Merit Close Study' does not contain exclusively virtuosic piano parts, but a selection of works requiring expressive, colouristic and intellectual pianism from the accompanist. Some explanation for the choice of songs would have been informative.

This book is uneven in quality and suffering a major identity crisis. The honesty and conviction of the author's creation, however, is without question. His failure to write a scholarly handbook is perhaps hampered by his evidently sceptical attitude towards an analytical or academic approach to the study of piano accompaniment and his obviously considered but rather romantic belief that a piano accompaniment is 'a singular experience and ephemeral in nature' (p. 3).

This attitude, coming as it does at the beginning of 371 pages suggesting quite the opposite, is revealed on several occasions throughout the book and I believe could be very misleading for a young pianist hoping to work with singers. A craft it may not be, but hard work it certainly is. In Mr Wilson's own words, 'pianists do not become good accompanists overnight' (p. 3). They do, however, need guidance from expert and experienced teachers to begin to understand the many complex facets of the art form. In this case, an opportunity has been lost, but a wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom has been shared and for this the author deserves our appreciation and gratitude.

DAVID MILLER

Phillip D. Crabtree and Donald H. Foster.

*Sourcebook for Research in Music.*

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993 (pb 1999).

ISBN 0 253 21323 1. xiii + 236pp., pb. indexes.

Avery T. Sharp and James Michael Floyd.

*Choral Music: A Research and Information Guide.*

New York & London: Routledge, 2002.

ISBN 0 8240 5944 1. xiv + 318pp., hb. indexes.

AUS\$169 (Palgrave Macmillan)

Crabtree and Foster's *Sourcebook for Research in Music* is now ten years old, so it was hoped that the paperback edition that arrived in Australia in 2000 would be somewhat updated. Unfortunately, it is merely a reprint of the original in a cheaper binding (although E-Bay still converts its US price to over sixty Australian dollars) and thus fails to rectify any of its original shortcomings. Indeed, the preface states that the 'past decade or so has witnessed an extraordinary expansion of the materials of music, and the field is growing ever more rapidly.' All the more reason, surely, for at least the addition of some new entries before any reprinting. Nonetheless, as a serious and more accessible successor to the great pioneering music bibliographies of the 1960s—*Introduction to Music Research* by Ruth Watanabe (Prentice-Hall, 1967) and *Music Reference and Research Materials: An Annotated Bibliography* by Vincent H. Duckles (Schirmer, 1964; 5th ed., with Ida Reed, 1997)—it still affords the graduate student, at whom it seems to be aimed, a solid coverage of the available printed resources in music.