

## **Gary Cooper: Selected Press Cuttings, 1993 - 2001**

### **1993:**

“Young harpsichordist Gary Cooper shows a superb and very stylish command of the instrument and the period.”

*Sonnerie: Concert in Jerusalem* [Ma'ariv, May 93]

“Gary Cooper excels with transparent ease and elegant playing, overcoming the often complex passages with virtuoso success.”

*Sonnerie: Concert in Tel Aviv* [Davar, May 93]

### **1994:**

“Cooper played solo harpsichord pieces [from *Pygmalion*], giving them taut, crisp renditions that still had plenty of rhythmic flexibility and gusto.”

*Sonnerie: Concert in San Francisco* [San Francisco Chronicle, April 94]

### **1995:**

“Cooper’s performances are imaginative and lively...magical.”

*Solo CD Review* [Early Music, May 95]

“The most airy, penetrating and attractive version yet committed to disc.”

*Solo CD Review* [British Music Society Journal, May 95]

### **1996:**

“Gary Cooper is the hero of the disc...emerging as the accomplished, poised soloist in the harpsichord and organ pieces...Pride of place must go to Cooper’s virtuoso performance of the Harpsichord Suite in C [by Locke], for the colours, resonance and command of complex textures, rhythms and ornamentation.”

*CD Review* [Gramophone, Mar. 96]

“Bach’s Harpsichord Concerto in d minor was particularly remarkable for harpsichordist Cooper’s wild, flamboyant cadenza that was part chromatic fantasia and part Ozzie Osbourne.”

*Soloist, Portland Baroque Orchestra Concert* [Sunday Oregonian, Mar. 96]

“Cooper stole the show with a stunning performance of Bach’s *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue*.”

*Oxford Chamber Concert* [Oxford Times, June 96]

“But it was the keyboard-player, Gary Cooper, who quietly stole the show: his account on the virginals..was quite masterly in execution and pacing.”

*Soloist, The Musician's of the Globe at London's QEH* [Times, Aug. 96]

### **1997:**

“Cooper, an excellent instrumentalist, seemed to have a basic, highly professional skill in this specialised

dimension of music-making [ie. improvisation].”

*Duo Harpsichord Recital (with Bill Porter), Boston Early Music Festival Concert*  
[Boston Globe, June 97]

“Harpsichordist Gary Cooper deserves special mention for ..[his] fine musicianship.”

*Soloist, Virelai/Attaignant CD Review* [BBC Music Magazine, Sept. 97]

“Gary Cooper directs sprightly performances..full of wit and invention.”

*Charpentier CD Review* [Sunday Times, Sept. 97]

## **1998:**

“Under the direction of harpsichordist Gary Cooper, the music [is brought] to life with imagination, humour and a lively, stylish awareness which may be felt especially in matters of rhythm and ornament...Strongly recommended.”

*Charpentier CD Review* [Gramophone, Mar. 98]

“The spinet solos, by Gary Cooper...are to be treasured for their timing and delicacy.”

*Soloist, Virelai/Attaignant CD Review* [Early Music Review, Apr. 98]

“..but it was Gary Cooper’s performance [of Bach’s Hpd Concerto in F] that stole the show with its effortless virtuosity, lively execution and flawless articulation.”

*Soloist/director, The Bach Players/London Concert* [Early Music Review, June 98]

“Directed by harpsichordist Gary Cooper...the performances were stylish and full of poise.”

*Rameau Cantatas CD Review* [Early Music News, June 98]

“Under their director, Gary Cooper, they [the Bach Players] presented wonderfully musical performances...They seemed refreshingly uninhibited in exploring the emotional and romantic depths inherent in Bach’s music...[They] went beyond scholarly intensity and technical virtuosity to that hard-to-define coalescence that makes that makes for musical performances of the highest standard.”

*Soloist/director, The Bach Players/London Concert* [Early Music Review, July 98]

“The concerto [in F, by Bach] was given a stunning performance by Gary Cooper in an outstanding display of playing in which technical virtuosity and emotional strength never over-powered the musical impulse of the piece.”

*Sonnerie/London Concert* [Early Music Review, July 98]

## **1999:**

“Cooper directs from the keyboard..relishing the gently ornate elegance of the music...An excellent disc.”

*Rameau Cantatas CD Review* [Sunday Times, Jan. 99]

“Gary Cooper, who directs from the harpsichord, shapes every phrase with a sure instinct and unflinching elegance, knowing exactly when to push the music onward and when to indulge his listeners.”

*Rameau Cantatas CD Review* [BBC Music Magazine, Mar. 99]

“Gary Cooper’s playing was stunning, with its mature sense of musical line and rhythmic pulse, and a keyboard touch far removed from the aggressively percussive style that seems to be on the increase amongst younger players.”

*Sonnerie/Rameau: Pieces de Clavecins, Wigmore Hall* [Early Music Review, Apr. 99]

“Britten’s exquisite hard-edged sonorities, brought courtesy of Gary Cooper’s split-timed cueings of his orchestra, the admirable Band of Instruments, underlay at intervals, amazing choreographies of vocal counterpoint, each limpid semiquaver perfectly in place.”

*Conducting Britten’s Turn of the Screw* [Oxford Times, July 99]

“As with other recent *Sonnerie* concerts, the focus was on the outstanding keyboard playing of Gary Cooper. He combines seemingly effortless virtuosity with well-honed sense of style - a combination not always to be assumed.”

*Sonnerie/Mozart Piano Quartets at the Wigmore Hall* [Early Music Review, Sept. 99]

“..nifty fingerwork and lively rhythmic impetus at the harpsichord.”

*Sonnerie/Vivaldi Op.1 CD* [Gramophone, Sept. 99]

“Probably the best keyboardist around at the moment.”

*CD reviews* [Early Music Review, Oct. 99]

“His greatest ability, for me, is not the technical gifts of the keyboard player (of which he has an unfa ir share), but his oh-so-fertile imagination as a continuo player. I smiled several times as he turned what I thought was a familiar passage into something quite new and wonderful.”

*Sonnerie concert in Glasgow* [Early Music Review, Nov. 99]

“With meticulous direction from the harpsichord by the versatile Gary Cooper, they [Florilegium] brought a rich and stylish understanding to their specialist repertoire.”

*Conducting Florilegium Baroque Orchestra in Edinburgh* [The Scotsman, Dec. 99]

## **2000:**

“Gary Cooper...devised yet again a programme not just ingenious, but scholarly in the best sense.”

*Conducting The Band of Instruments/Dido concert* [The Oxford Times, Feb. 00]

“..page after page of [this] characterful music driven by the fabulously robust harpsichord playing of Gary Cooper.”

*Sonnerie/Radio 3 lunchtime* [Glasgow Herald, Feb. 00]

“Gary Cooper...is one of the country’s finest young harpsichordists. His reading of this monumental work was distinguished by fluidity of technique which clarified the multi-layered strands of the immensely complex musical structure, and by perfectly-judged registrations..Lasting some ninety minutes in all, he clearly possesses both the physical, and the intellectual qualities such a work makes on the performer..the control of pace and mood was faultless. A memorable evening.”

*The Goldberg Variations at the Tudeley Bach Festival* [Tonbridge Courier, Mar. 00]

“In [Buxtehude’s] *Toccatà in g*..Gary Cooper showed, in the right hands, just how impressive and breathtaking this bold and dramatic music can be.”

*Sonnerie concert, RSAMD* [Glasgow Herald, Apr. 00]

“..meticulous attention to phrasing and texture that was to be the hallmark of the evening...Gary Cooper was a powerful soloist in Bach’s harpsichord concerto in d minor, driving the music of the outer movements with perfectly controlled, yet compelling energy.”

*Soloist/director, Britten Pears Baroque Orchestra/Snape Maltings* [East Anglia Daily Times, Apr. 00]

“The New Chamber Opera ensemble approach these works with unfettered airiness and a pleasing domestic intimacy...the solo keyboard pieces are performed throughout with great originality and skill...A rewarding programme.”

*Soloist/director: Purcell's Gresham Autograph CD* [Gramophone, Apr. 00]

"The New Chamber Opera, directed by Gary Cooper...bring attractive timbres, stylish ornamentation and a necessary depth of feeling to the music, and one could not want livelier or more beautiful playing from the instrumental ensemble."

*Rameau Cantatas CD* [The New York Times, Apr. 00]

"Stylishness and expressive freedom...his solo performance of the great Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue, full of light and shade, had about it an effortless authority which encompassed not only the powerful drama of this extraordinary piece with its many changes of mood, but also all its decorative flourishes - sometimes florid and at other times exquisitely delicate."

*Bach chamber concert, Tudeley Festival* [Tonbridge Courier, July 00]

"...Bach with a twinkle in his eye, with Gary Cooper's free and rhetorical harpsichord playing of the Ricercar a 3...relishing the exploratory nature of the piece and savouring each moment before moving off onto another idea."

*Spitalfields Festival/Sonnerie, Musical Offering* [Early Music Review, Sept. 00]

"Every now and then there is a concert that goes beyond mere critical review. Gary Cooper's triumphant performance of the Goldberg Variations was one such - it was one of the finest I have heard. Like his playing of the Ricercar a 3 a few days before, the opening *Aria* was languid and rhetorical, with an improvisatory feel of exploration. But from the forcefully played first variation onwards, he threw caution to the winds. Living dangerously can be a disaster, but in this instance it worked, as we were propelled through an emotional rollercoaster. Variation 11 was like mice skittling over the keyboard, the twiddles in Variation 14 like pirouetting spiders, Variation 19 like a summer downpour - the snapped ending like a clap of summer lightening. The lengthy and chromatic Variation 25 was a spellbinding climax, in contrast to the vivacious and humorous Variation 23. A fantastic performance. I would like to think Bach played like this."

*Spitalfields Festival/Goldberg Variations* [Early Music Review, Sept. 00]

"When a player has had words like "masterly", "flawless", "unfailing elegance", and "stunning" applied to his performances, as Mr Cooper has...the prospect was enticing to say the least. In the event it proved rewarding beyond expectations. Mr Cooper's performance took place before an enthralled audience...to hear this cornerstone of the keyboard repertory, under Mr Cooper's hands, was a privilege indeed...24 Preludes and Fugues might seem a daunting prospect; not so in Mr Cooper's reading. The clarity of articulation, with sufficient flexibility of tempo to retain life through even the most complex musical structures, made the evening pass quickly, leaving the packed audience eager for next Wednesday's performance of the Second Book...A distinguished evening, even by Tudeley's elevated standards."

*Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier Bk I /Tudeley Bach Festival* [David Inman/Tonbridge Courier, Nov. 00]

"This year's Tudeley [Bach] Festival reached an unforgettable climax and conclusion last week with a performance by the celebrated harpsichordist, Gary Cooper...There is a natural, unmannered elegance about G.C.'s playing which singles him out as one of the finest and most accomplished early keyboard players of our time. His is an art which conceals art [sic!]. He seems not to be concerned with "interpreting" Bach for a new generation but, of course, that is exactly what he achieves with all the resources at his command - flawless technique, superb dynamic control, and an articulation which yields power, clarity and the most delectable tones from Tudeley's beautiful new instrument...the genius of Bach and the artistry of G.C. took us into realms beyond the reach of words, and almost beyond the reach of music itself [sic x2!]."

*Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier Bk II /Tudeley Bach Festival*

[Robert Hardcastle/Tonbridge Courier, Nov. 00]

"There has been a lot of Bach around these past 12 months, but Gary Cooper's recording of the first book of the Forty-Eight Preludes and Fugues makes a strong claim to being one of the finest offerings. Cooper combines the intellectual lucidity of a Leonhardt with an uncanny sense of expressive intensity, never afraid to slow the pace, to shape a phrase, to allow the music to make its point. The textures are kept clear...and there is an honesty about his playing that does not compromise the monumental feeling of the

whole. It feels like a cycle, for Cooper leaves us, at the end of each prelude and fugue, thirsting for the next."

*Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier Bk I* CD review [Sunday Times, Dec. 00]

" There is a real gravitas about Gary Cooper's readings of Bach's first book of preludes and fugues, although this is never achieved at the expense of spontaneity or a sense of forward movement."

*Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier Bk I* CD review [Music Week, Dec. 00]

" *CONDUCTOR'S ENERGY CARRIES "MESSIAH"*..This year's [Messiah], under the baton of English harpsichordist Gary Cooper, is a high point in the ensemble's 14-year work with the piece. Cooper made his memorable PBO debut last year, and some of the hallmarks of that performance - meticulous attention to detail, vivid tonal color and a striking balance of restraint and dramatic excitement - were again in evidence. Even at relatively broad tempos, Cooper maintains a keen sense of energy. He took "He shall purify", for example, more slowly than most conductors, but with precision and a long crescendo..He took the section from a tender, measured opening to a quietly thrilling finish."

*Conducting the Portland Baroque Orchestra/Messiah* [The Oregonian, Dec. 00]

"..GC gives a sublimely spiritual, spacious yet unusually cogent reading of the First Book of Preludes and Fugues."

**1st Choice, CDs of the Year** [Sunday Times, Dec. 00]

" Gary Cooper, at the harpsichord, beautifully navigated the ebb and flow of the fifth's solo cadenza."

*Sonnerie: Brandenburgs/St John's Smith Square* [The Times, Dec. 00]

## **2001:**

" Gary Cooper's unerring choice of tempo and ear for balance ensured maximum impact and clarity..his direction gave the singers time to make clear their words, whilst losing nothing in terms of excitement; his judgment of tempi, balance and pace would be hard to surpass...G.C.'s direction was, in every sense, most apt. There was a real sense of relaxed music-making among friends, achieving a culminative tension and excitement that added up to a real performance. The Tudeley Festival is fortunate to have such a close relationship with this outstanding and fast-maturing musician...Frankly, it is difficult to imagine a better sung, better played, and better directed *Creation*."

*Conducting the Band of Instruments/Haydn's Creation, Tudeley Festival* [Tonbridge Courier, Jan. 01]

" With Gary Cooper lavishly working out the harmonic implications on the harpsichord, this group sounded full, vibrant - like a well-rehearsed band on modern instruments [sic!], in fact, though with a completely different sound. The final *Passacaille* was superb... A magnificent concert."

*Conducting the Band of Instruments/Charpentier's Circe* [Oxford Times, Jan. 01]

" G.C. projected a large scale structure to both concerts - not an easy task...Cooper produces a remarkably sustained and resonant tone...[he has] an amazing ability to hold the audience spellbound."

*Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier Bk I & II/ Wigmore Hall* [Early Music Review, Feb. 01]

" Gary Cooper's interpretation of Book I is among the more distinguished available, not least because of the clear facility he shares with his chosen instrument and his already quite profound intellectual understanding of the music itself."

*Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier Bk I* CD review [Early Music Review, Feb. 01]

"AN IMPRESSIVE NEW VERSION OF BACH'S CONTRAPUNTAL MASTERPIECE...Cooper's phrasing and articulation are well conceived..and a natural sense of *rubato* removes any trace of stiffness..accomplished with apparent ease. Cooper's overall approach is perhaps a touch more extrovert than Moroney's and unflinchingly musical with it...it is both essentially respectful and refreshing to hear."

Strongly recommended."

*Bach: Well-Tempered Clavier Bk I* CD review [Gramophone, April 01]

"..a rising star in early music." *Concert review* [The Observer, Apr.01]

"AN OUTSTANDING RECORDING..These performances have exceptional musical vitality...I was impressed by the the rich implications the players (pianist Gary Cooper most of all) drew from the textures and the harmonies. The finale of the Eb work, too, is done with great spirit - here the pianist is very much in the driving seat - and there are many happy details of timing and dynamic gradation. Mozart's wit is beautifully captured in K493, yet this is a deeply serious performance, strongly argued, with the mystery and logic of his unusual modulations fully grasped. The first movement here..is particularly successful, with Cooper taking his time over the expression of its ideas."

*Mozart Piano Quartets/Sonnerie* CD review [Gramophone, May 01]

"La musicalité des quatre chanteurs (ainsi que celle des solistes instrumentaux), l'intérêt et l'à-propos stylistique sont parfaits. Car il faut du goût, de l'esprit, de la mesure mais aussi de l'expressivité pour donner vie à ces tableaux qui semblent des "bo! nsais" de tragédie lyrique et ne sont en rien des oeuvres mineures. Le claveciniste Gary Cooper, instigateur et animateur de cette intégrale, y est parvenu." *Rameau Cantatas* CD review [Le Monde: Notre Sélection hebdomadaire de disques, June 01]

"Cooper and his forces make a good case for it." *Music from Ceremonial Oxford* CD review [Gramophone, July 01]

"The stately pomp of Richard Goodson's ode *Ormond's Glory* is vividly evoked by Gary Cooper and his musicians, the instrumental band providing stylish support for the singers' bold declamations...and the distinction of Cooper's playing [in Locke's Suite]..a repertoire that has languished for too long on library shelves." Performance \*\*\*\*\*

*Music from Ceremonial Oxford* CD review [BBC Music Magazine, July 01]

"It's always rather exciting when completely neglected pieces are recorded for the first time. It's even more thrilling when the music turns out to be buried treasure. The New Chamber Opera Ensemble turn in stylish and enthusiastic performances. An enterprising recording which fascinates and delights in equal measure."

*Music from Ceremonial Oxford* CD review [International Record Review, July 01]