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***Guitar Technique – Intermediate to Advanced* by Hector Quine. Oxford: University Press, 1990. £7.95, 105 pp.**

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encourage, and it is certainly a sub-text of Farrell's book. Otherwise he sets out to explain North Indian classical music as authentically as possible, and guide the reader-listener through its stages so that the complexities can be grasped at a basic level and used as the basis for individual creativity.

Without conceding to oversimplification, he produces an admirably structured and paced guide, with a series of assignments. These vary from highly specific tasks to one or two which may cause a certain anxiety, such as 'improvise with these notes, making sure they keep their melodic identity' (p. 17). This comes early in the book, but by the end, and having listened a few times to the cassette (which really is an essential companion), the reader should have a clearer idea of how to set about such a task.

Much thought and care and above all, experience, have gone into this beautifully-presented package. It is factually reliable and any niggles are minor ones, the biggest perhaps being in the extended performance on side two of the cassette, where, on two occasions, the *Tablā* player swaps the *khālī* and *sum* of the *Tāl*, which could easily confuse the listener since they are important landmarks in the cycle. Some will no doubt wonder why, with such a wealth of *Rāgs* and strange scales, Farrell has confined the whole presentation to just one *Rāg* (*Yaman*). Here he is again showing his pedigree, and the answer is simple: until you know one *Rāg* well you cannot learn any others and, conversely, when you know how one *Rāg* works you have the key to understanding all the others (a nice lesson in both music and life). This kind of concentration and focus is inevitably one of the great strengths of both book and cassette. As a resource for the teacher who is prepared to give the time and thought that

this noble tradition demands, Farrell's important contribution will be extremely valuable.

NEIL SORRELL

Guitar Technique –

Intermediate to Advanced
by Hector Quine. Oxford:
University Press, 1990. £7.95,
105 pp.

In many respects, the technique involved in playing an instrument is a continually developing and evolving process. With the guitar, it may be argued that this evolution has taken somewhat longer than for many other instruments and it is therefore particularly welcome when the basic and fundamental principles of playing are set out and made available. The Hector Quine book on guitar technique most certainly does this and while I have sympathy with anyone who puts their technical thoughts 'on the line' in a guitar-world which so often loses a sense of proportion, the book strikes a fine balance between what is inevitably a personal view and what could be thought of as 'generally agreed principles'. From both points of view it is a well-written book with a style that is precise and firm in places where it would have been tempting to be evasive.

In the introduction Quine understandably states his view on what technique is. 'Technique, in the true sense of the word, is neither the ability to struggle through a lengthy or difficult work – like scaling a high mountain – nor does it imply an athletic contest intended to demonstrate the facility to play a particular passage faster than, or at least as fast as, a well-known performer regardless of musical sense. Technique is essentially control: control of tone, volume, rhythm and tempo, legato and staccato, dynamics and registration, phrasing and articulation; always consciously directed by musical intelligence'. Although

the years of teaching at music college level by the author occasionally result in a gentle jibe, it is only right to acknowledge that the very best playing has certain common features – fluency, tone production and accuracy rating amongst the highest. These are, however, directed by many more basic aspects of technique and the book therefore begins with *The Physiology of Technique and Posture* before moving on to major sections on *The Left Arm and Hand* and *The Right Arm and Hand*.

In *The Physiology of Technique*, discussion is provided on the body as a machine, the working of the hands, and in particular the muscles. One of the most important points made here concerns ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ movements, described to the reader as the difference between clenching the fingers to make a fist (primary) and after straightening the fingers, spreading them (secondary). ‘It is obvious that the first action has far more power and scope of movement than the second, which is both restricted and relatively weak. A technique which relied on the secondary function would be incapable of being developed to a high level’.

In general, it is the performance of the right hand which lets down the majority of players, most often because of tone rather than error. It is perhaps no coincidence therefore that most disagreement amongst guitarists tends to revolve around the right hand – that used for sound production. Here, Quine takes the reader through the different actions of the fingers, in particular distinguishing between the negative aspects of a ‘pluck’ and the positive nature of a ‘strike’. All well and good, although during the discussion of wrist and finger angles, the flexing of joints, and the use of nails as

opposed to flesh and nail, he needs to be his most uncompromising.

The gentler waters of the left arm and hand are precisely discussed and there are many points which will be of value to the intermediate and advanced player. The same may be said for the next major section, *Techniques of Interpretation*. These are separated by an all-too-brief section on *Co-ordination* (1 page), so little for such an important aspect of guitar-playing. However, mention is made elsewhere.

Two appendices are included, one by Stephen Dodgson and one on repertoire. A somewhat pessimistic end to the book results from a comment by Smith-Brindle who relates a current decline in the guitar and audiences for guitar concerts to the repertoire. This in indeed a simplification and surely denies a myriad of issues concerned with education and the arts. However, this is a minor point and does not detract from the fact that the book is thoroughly recommendable to all teachers and students of the classical guitar.

MICHAEL STIMPSON

Guidelines to Piano

Interpretation by Siglind Bruhn. Penang: Penerbit Muzikal, 1990. No price given, 184 pp.

This well produced book would be a valuable addition to the library of any pianist and piano teacher. Divided into four sections, each a complete book in itself, it offers a detailed survey of the main areas of performance, practice and repertoire, and is obviously the result of much in-depth study of these aspects of piano playing.

If there is any criticism, it lies in the immense detail which the writer packs into her chapters. Much concentrated comprehension is needed for all that she has to say and