music and dance, I find them a particularly thrilling aspect of interpreting Scarlatti. Examples abound but the spirited gypsy *bulerias* are a good starting point and amongst the more rhythmically complex forms. The basic rhythmic pattern of 12 beats with accents falling on 3, 6, 8, 10 and 12 is then frequently overlaid by another with accents on 1, 2, 4 and 5. A variety of percussive effects provide even more cross rhythms and include palmas (handclapping), pitos (finger snapping) and the rapping of fingers and knuckles on the table. K's 45, 56, 96 532, 537 and 521, illustrate the point. If one understands the basic structure of Spanish dance, there's all manner of rhythmic invention that can be introduced and applied to enhance the music. Nor should we forget those elements where the heel stamping of the dancer comes into play. Cross accents also would come into this category.

JS: The ghost at this particular banquet, as at any discussion of Scarlatti's music, is Ralph Kirkpatrick, who unfortunately died many years ago, but whose continuing, resonant authority on the subject derives from the fact that he was not only an eminent scholar and biographer but the leading American harpsichordist of his generation. He knew the subject from every angle. I won't give him *quite* the last word, because I'd be very interested to hear your reactions to what he says on the harpsichord/piano question. He wrote:

'Scarlatti's harpsichord writing is so idiomatic, so intimately connected with the essential fabric of his music, that the relation of his music to harpsichord sound very much needs to be borne in mind by those who play the sonatas on the modern piano. Despite the capacity of the modern piano for nuance, and despite its wide dynamic range, it often minimizes rather than heightens Scarlatti's contrasts of color.

Karl Scheuring

"An ornament has to be a 'flower' on a note. It has to organically grow from it, supporting all the qualities of its melodic and dynamic context as well as its tempo and articulation" ***Konstantin Scherbakov***

The piano conveys most satisfactorily all that is cantabile, that consists of expressive vocal declamation, but it tends to diminish into a general uniformity of color many of Scarlatti's most striking effects of orchestral tutti, of alternations of high and low register, and contrasts of chords and acciaccaturas with his prevailing two-voice writing. For all the flexibility and variety that Scarlatti lends the harpsichord, his entire palette of color is based on the use of a resistant medium, on a relatively unchanging level of sound, or on sectional levels of sound. The flatness of the actual background level is often completely concealed by Scarlatti's brilliant and imaginative writing, yet when the background level becomes too flexible, as it may with instruments capable of unlimited nuance, like the pianoforte or the clavichord, Scarlatti's entire proportion of sound effects is in danger of being upset. Full-voiced passages lose their contrast with two-part writing. Chords may be softened to lose their natural incisiveness, or full-voiced passages reduced to a whisper. The range of dynamic possibilities for each kind of sound becomes so great that certain figures lose their original characteristics, are no longer rooted in the specific sonority of the instrument.'

STAIER: Oh, bravo Mr. Kirkpatrick! I agree with every word.

LESTER: Kirkpatrick's book was written back in 1953 but it's still the most authoritative book in the field. However, it should be understood that interpretations of Scarlatti's sonatas on the piano must be regarded as transcriptions, and therefore require the full resources of that instrument for maximum musical effect and expression. I have no qualms whatsoever about Scarlatti on the piano. In the hands of a real musician, much can be learned by the harpsichordist from the pianist and vice versa. What's important to interpretation has to stem from an informed historical background coupled with an insight into style and interpretation.

SUDBIN: I can't be so measured. I think this excerpt is like a punch below the waist for any pianist. It sounds like a factual statement but is actually no more than a personal preference. I respect Kirkpatrick very greatly and I think his book is a 'must read' for any Scarlattist, whether pianist or harpsichordist, but I strongly disagree with the way this argument is presented. He's not telling us the whole story. There are certainly shortcomings when it comes to both instruments but I feel that focusing on the instrument's strengths and how best to use them to your advantage would be more helpful than focussing on their weaknesses. While it's true that certain characteristics may be lost on the piano, new characteristics, as Mr Katin said earlier, will emerge to compensate. The modern piano is fully capable of capturing a vast variety of moods and snapshots of daily life during that period, no less so than the harpsichord. *How* it's captured, will be down to the performer, who is more often to blame than the instrument. This is a typical scenario where it's easiest to point the finger at the apparent 'shortcomings' of the instrument. But the fact is that the evenness of legato, the variety of articulation, the voicing within chords, the unique sonority within each register and the rich colouristic palette that can be achieved on a modern piano – unobtrusively and without distortion of style – can eloquently and resonantly evoke and celebrate the music and the spirit in which it was written. Scarlatti's preface in that first edition from 1738 summarises very eloquently my own feelings about the open-minded, human approach to the sonatas that Scarlatti had in mind:

Reader, Whether you be Dilettante or Professor, in these Compositions do not expect any profound Learning, but rather an ingenious Jesting with Art, to accommodate you to the Mastery of the Harpsichord. It was not self-interest or ambition which led me to publish them but obedience. Perhaps they may please you, in which case I may more willingly obey further commands to gratify you in a simpler and more varied style. Therefore show yourself more human than critical, and then your Pleasure will increase. Vivi felice.

JS: As Nikolai Demidenko said at the start of this discussion, Scarlatti was a modest man. And in that preface he could be said to have sold himself short. Reader, whether *you* be amateur or professional, may this have emboldened you to explore, or to further explore, the extraordinary treasure house Scarlatti has left us. And to you, my colleagues above, my heartfelt thanks.