

the activities of the conservation movement following the founding of the Victorian Society in 1958, and lauds national heroes like Hal Goodhart-Rendel, Pevsner, Betjeman and Mark Girouard. The lost battles for the Euston Arch, the Coal Exchange and the Imperial Institute were partly balanced by victory in the case of St Pancras Station, the Foreign Office and Whitehall. The Victorian Society and preservationist champions were increasingly aided in the 1970s by the economic collapse of Britain, which put paid to the extravagant new utopia. More buildings were saved by recession than by sense and sensibility. With luck it will be the same over again with the current economic crash.

The majority of the book is devoted to an illustrated roll call of the lost. The photographs and descriptions of the buildings are grouped in categories: Iron and Glass, Railways, Hotels, Commerce, Industrial, Places of Worship, Public Buildings, Institutions, Urban and Suburban Domestic and Country Houses. As well as the great set pieces like Euston Station and Birmingham Central Library (how can that have been demolished?), there are many lesser-known but architecturally distinguished victims.

The photographs show examples of good Victorian buildings that enhanced the places where they stood and which, had they survived, would today have been

admired. Some, such as Columbia Market, were more eccentric than distinguished, and some were masterpieces, but all were architecturally interesting, including Paxton's Chatsworth conservatory, Preston Town Hall, and New Zealand Chambers in the City.

Stamp does not include the Victorian terraced houses which have been cleared in their thousands, because they were not great architecture and some slum clearance was justified, though many such terraces were perfectly capable of refurbishment. He takes exception to the absurd Robert Furneaux Jordan's 'contention that "the main contribution of the Victorian Age to architecture is the slum", not least because the modernism promoted by his own generation did its best to compete'.

Perhaps the most depressing aspect of this enjoyably depressing book is that the solidly impressive Victorian buildings illustrated were nearly all replaced by cheap modernist structures as functionally inadequate as they were aesthetically repellent, often for reasons that were mendacious as well as misconceived. The pictures demonstrate one of the main reasons for the deep cultural pessimism that pervades and undermines contemporary British life, a pessimism fully justified by visits to the centre of almost any British city.

To order this book for £20, see LR Bookshop on page 10

KEVIN JACKSON

## TREBLES ALL ROUND

A CLOCKWORK COUNTERPOINT: THE MUSIC AND LITERATURE OF ANTHONY BURGESS

★

By Paul Phillips

(Manchester University Press 467pp £65)

GORE VIDAL USED to like telling a story about the first time he met Anthony Burgess, in the mid-Sixties. It was at a posh reception, and the English novelist was accompanied by his difficult first wife, Lynne. She tackled Vidal with an aggression probably fuelled by booze (she died of cirrhosis of the liver a few years later) and bragged about how many books her husband had published: twenty-one. Fingers were produced, calculations made... Vidal had the higher score. Burgess, with exquisite gamesmanship, murmured that he was, of course, primarily a composer. Lynne was furious: 'No, you're not!', she shouted at him.

But yes, he was, though throughout most of his first marriage he had to keep his nasty habit of putting dots on paper a secret, since Lynne thought – no doubt correctly – that he would never make money from music. Burgess survived her by a quarter of a century, married an Italian contessa, and published roughly forty more

books, not to mention thousands of reviews and articles. And throughout the same period, tolerated by his second wife, he composed. Burgess fans have long known this, but there are two things most of them have not known until now. First, how much did he compose? And, more interestingly, is it any good?

You can find the answer to the first query just by looking at the list of compositions at the end of Paul Phillips's *A Clockwork Counterpoint*. In a period of roughly eighteen years, from the mid-Seventies until his death in 1993, Burgess produced some eighty pieces: a ballet suite inspired by Shakespeare, *Mr W S*; a witty musical comedy, *Blooms of Dublin*, adapted from Joyce's *Ulysses*; an oratorio after Hopkins, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*; a series of twenty-four preludes and fugues, after Bach; a musical play of



Burgess: making notes

his novel *A Clockwork Orange*; and a wonderful setting of Thomas Nashe's 'A Litany in Time of Plague', which was sung to heart-rending effect at his memorial service in Covent Garden.

This list alone would be adequate to justify the alarming price of Phillips's book to Burgess scholars. But there is plenty here for the general reader, too, provided that said reader is not too put off by pages of musical notation and can take the occasional chunk of technical analysis ('an episodic rondo-like movement in sober Hindemithian style alternates between time signatures of 3/4 and 5/8 ...'). It offers a terse, lively biography of the man, from his humble origins in Manchester to his final years as a millionaire in Monaco. Burgess had no formal musical training, though he grew up surrounded by the pop of his day: his father was a pub pianist, his mother a former music-hall singer.

Something of a solitary, the young Burgess found in music a means of escape from his depressing adolescent life; Phillips argues, persuasively, that it remained a psychological necessity for the man – not just something he could swank about at receptions, but a means of staying sane no matter how many humiliations came his way. Phillips also points out that almost all of Burgess's novels, and not just the obvious ones such as *The Pianoplayers*, are steeped in musical form and musical lore. This is hardly a new thing to say: Burgess himself went out of his way to nudge readers into recognising that, for instance, his novel *Napoleon Symphony* was an attempt, probably foolhardy, to mirror the structure of Beethoven's *Eroica*. What is new about Phillips's reading is its depth and range. The author, who is an academic musicologist as well as a conductor and composer, is the world's most energetic and influential champion of Burgess's music, which he has conducted many times, most recently at a Burgess conference in Angers in November 2010.

*A Clockwork Counterpoint*, towards which he has been working for almost two decades, is a labour of love that outdoes every previous account of Burgess's other art. His knowledge of Burgess's writings rivals his technical knowledge of music, so that he is better qualified than any previous writer on Burgess to take the full measure of the man's accomplishments. Consider the little book that Burgess grew to loathe: *A Clockwork Orange*. Almost everyone goes on here; Phillips also sees, or hears, Mozart (Symphonies 38 and 40), Bach (Brandenburg 6), Debussy (Quartet in G Minor), Handel, Mendelssohn, Benjamin Britten, and a whole slew of fictitious composers, the names and works of whom incorporate madly recondite puns and jokes.

The big question, then: is Burgess's music any good? Phillips is careful not to overstate his case. Burgess was no Stravinsky, no Schoenberg. On the other hand, he insists that Burgess was a musical amateur only in the

older and more benign sense of the word. Though his musical sensibility remained stalled in the mid-1930s, he was very well versed in, as it were, the grammar and vocabulary of his art, and Phillips is often moved to remark on the ingenuity or verve of Burgess's pieces. Phillips modestly proposes that, if enough of Burgess's music becomes available for listeners, he may one day come to be seen as the peer of Finzi, or Elgar, or Holst. To have a claim to such status would be achievement enough for most professional composers. For a man who was forced to write most of his scores in hotel lobbies, in motel bedrooms, or on planes – and who had a full-time job being Anthony Burgess – it borders on the astonishing. If Burgess is watching from Heaven, like the celestial composers in *Mozart and the Wolf Gang*, he will be nodding his approving thanks. □

DOMINIC SANDBROOK

## THE BEAT GOES ON

HOT STUFF: DISCO AND THE REMAKING OF AMERICAN CULTURE

★

By Alice Echols  
(W W Norton 338pp £19.99)

IN THE SUMMER of 1979, the Chicago White Sox were one of the worst teams in the National Baseball League. So team officials were startled when, on 12 July, an estimated 70,000 people descended on Comiskey Park for a Thursday night double-header against the Detroit Tigers – an occasion that would normally attract just 15,000. In fact, most of them had come not for the baseball, but for something very different: a 'Disco Demolition Night', heavily advertised by the local shock-jock Steve Dahl, who had promised that any fans who brought disco records to the stadium would be able to see them publicly destroyed. The evening air was heavy with the smell of dope and the sound of hundreds of drunken teenagers chanting 'Disco sucks'. Many, bored by the game, started tossing their records like Frisbees onto the field or lobbing firecrackers onto the fans below.

But Dahl was as good as his word. After the White Sox lost the first game, he took to the field, clad prudently in military fatigues and a helmet, and to dope-fuelled baying from the crowd he proceeded to blow up a box containing over 10,000 records, ripping an enormous hole in the turf. As if responding to some general's call, several thousand enraged fans then poured onto the field, tearing up the grass, demolishing the batting cage and pitcher's mound, starting fires in the outfield and generally behaving like Crusaders at the sack of Constantinople. Needless to say, the White Sox forfeited the second game.