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You were warned that this issue would be a bit late. July was a short month as far as work was concerned, since we had a week's holiday at the beginning of it and at the end I had my usual week at Beauchamp House (we will still call it that, even though the house is renamed, and we only use the outbuildings and field). This was the week of the floods around Gloucester, a couple of miles away. We were cut off for several days and the lights flickered a bit, but we were mercifully spared the absence of mains water, despite a couple of threats. Curiously, we had no floods at home; the Ouse is liable to flood, but despite the attempts of developers, the flood plains have been kept safe from most of them, though we wonder for how long. House-builders seem to have more power over planning officials than fear of flood.

So this will not have plopped on your doormat on August 1st, and there are some deficiencies. Most of the music reviews are held over until the next issue and some of my book and CD reviews may seem a little perfunctory: I read and heard most of them some weeks before writing them. I remember my conclusions, but not necessarily how and why I came to them.

A lesson learnt (or rather reiterated) at Beauchamp is that there is still a wealth of marvellous music that is virtually unknown to performers. Every year, Alan Lumsden edits about thirty pieces, many published in academic tomes but few available separately, and extremely rarely with parts suitable for instruments as well as singers: the fuss about the absence of instruments in the Sistine Chapel must imply that their presence was expected in major ecclesiastical establishments. Each year we discover unknown masterpieces and other works that are only slightly less deserving. There are a few that meet with the thumbs down, but even then minds can change: a three-choir *Stabat mater* by Anerio or Palestrina seemed utterly boring at a sing-through but emerged as only a little below the famous Palestrina double-choir setting after a little work. Don't be too quick to judge! It was also the year in which five began to supplement three as the alternative to two and four. Philip Thorby is notorious for finding more triple patterns in duple time than any other course director; but look out for the fives in Palestrina's *Stabat mater*: they really are there. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

FLORI'S TRICINIA

Jacobus Flori *Motetten en Nederlandse Polyfone Liederen... Leuven, 1573.* (*Monumenta Flandriae Musica*, 11). Leuven, Alamire, 2006. 28 + 139pp, €70.00

Flori's father was a professional musician, as were his three brothers. None achieved great fame, but the names (not always precisely identifiable) occur as musicians in many places in the Netherlands, Germany and sometimes Italy. Jacob was trained as a chorister in Munich under Lassus, but seems not to have had a brilliant career. This is an edition of his first publication, *Modulorum aliquot tam sacrorum quam prophanorum cum tribus vocibus, et tum musicis instrumentis, tum vocibus concinnentium accommodatorum...* Leuven, Petrus Phalesius, 1573. Of the 24 items, seven have Lation texts, the rest are Flemish. The words are printed separately, along with English translations; the introductory material is in both Flemish and English. There are notes on the literary sources and the relationship of the music to previous settings. This could have gone a bit deeper. The one I have at hand to check, *Fratres sobrii estote*, uses basically the same material as Lassus, but is recomposed rather than just rehashed for one fewer voice. It's a pity that the editors (six of them) don't add more substance by discussing the form, and also suggesting how such tricinia were used. I haven't checked the ranges (they are not shown at the beginning of each piece), but it seems to be roughly two octaves, one either side of middle C for those in low clefs (C1 C3 C4), about a fifth higher for those in high clefs (G2 C2 C3).; The pieces are grouped by clef, separately for the Latin and Flemish songs; only one of the Latin songs is in high clefs, but all except four of the Flemish ones are high. Lassus's book of tricinia from two years later avoids clef standardisation and covers a wider range. As domestic music for instruments, the absence of a bass makes some sense, since low instruments tend to be more expensive than high ones so less available. But vocally, neither compass is ideal. Modern children's choirs can manage the high pitch songs, but the clear standardisation of chiave/chiavette clefs could suggest that the lower pitch would be more obvious to the singers. Or perhaps the choice of clef is for modal, not performing reasons and all pieces fit the intended ensemble(s). This is another matter that the six wise men might have reflected upon. Without such scholarly attentions and with its spacious layout and solid binding, the edition seems to give rather homely music a greater import then it deserves, and also cuts it off from the amateur and educational market for which the original print was probably intended. As a non Flem, though, I'm no doubt under-rating the importance of the vernacular texts.

COLLECTION FACSIMUSIC

Fuzeau launched a new series in May – Collection Facsimusic: shortish volumes at a price between €6.50 & €9.00 – I won't bother to quote prices for individual titles, but as examples . G.-L Couperin's *Les incroyables* for piano (1797) has 12 pages (9 of facsimile) for €6.50, Devienne's *Six duos concertants pour deux bassoons* has two partbooks, each with 16 pages, making up 26 pages of facsimile. The blurb gives 5 and 25 pages as the maximum and minimum, though a few are a little longer. Each comes in a transparent bag which might seem to be useful for keeping parts together or single scores clean, but needs handling with care since the sticky edge to the flap can attach itself to the cover, and if carried in a pile, the items slip onto the floor very easily. I reluctantly threw them away. Fuzeau needs to think again. The examples I have seen range through most of the 18th century; French sources (red covers) are naturally most prominent, with a few Germans items in blue and Italian in green. Nothing English yet. The underlying colour is cream.

The only information on the source is the location of the copy used: all are prints. Dates (editorial ones not distinguishable from those in the source) are shown prominently on the covers. The original capitalisation of titles is not followed pedantically. All volumes are A4 (mostly portrait, a few landscape): no indication of the reduction in size that some images have suffered is given. The music is clear, and I doubt whether in sources of this period the Fuzeau cleaning process is likely to have removed anything significant. The paper is good quality but not as heavy as Fuzeau generally uses. One volume, Bizet's *Chants des Pyrenees* (1867 – over half a century later than any other items here), has no original title page and is surely imposed wrongly. Each song takes two pages, with the second containing subsequent verses printed on the reverse of the main page: whether the source (whose pages are unnumbered) printed them thus or not, they were evidently intended to be printed as an opening, both simultaneously visible: if the edition is reprinted, that should be changed. Incidentally, the practice of printing just the voice part underlaid with each verse is one that could be adopted more widely for modern editions of stanzaic songs.

Keyboard. Corrette's *Les Amusements du Parnasse I* (1749) is a good starting point, thanks to its full fingering, apart from the concluding variations on *La Furstenberg*. Fingers 2, 3 & 4 are preferred to 1 & 5, which are used only when necessary. The sheer thoroughness of fingering every note is particularly informative. Pierre Claude Foucquet's *Le Caractères de la Paix* op. 1(1752) begins with a *Méthode* but has no fingering for the pieces, which are too difficult for the sort of player who would need such elementary

instruction, though the table of trills is extensive. It ends with pieces requiring additional instruments. More sophisticated music by Corrette, with less didactic assistance, is his *Premier Livre de Pieces de Clavecin* op. 12 (1734), containing four suites. Almost contemporary are *Pieces de Clavecin* by Charles Joseph van Helmont (1737), with two rather longer Suites, and Charles Alexander Jollage's *Premier Livre de Pieces de Clavecin* (1738), with sets of pieces in A and G, but not described as Suites. Jumping sixty years, we have op. 6 and 7 (1797) by a composer named just Couperin on the original title pages, to which the modern titles add Gervais-François. *Les Incroyables* seems to be based on a song, since a line of text is given from time to time and the music is descriptive. *Les Merveilleuses* is a substantial single movement piece. Both are 'Pour le Piano-Forte'.

With one exception, the German pieces are for keyboard. The print looks more condensed: probably the reduction to fit A4 is greater. The most significant, and more difficult to read if you haven't mastered the C1 clef, are the three parts of Krebs' *Clavier-Übung* (c. 1744); I contains Preludes and Chorales for organ (i.e. Pairs of prelude + chorale-prelude on a single theme). Part II has a Suite in C, beginning with a Prelude and Fugue. Part III has six three-movement Sonatinas. Kirnberger's *Huit Fugues Pour Le Clavecin ou l'Orgue* (1777) are less ambitious than Albrechtsberger's *Six Preludes et Fugues pour le Clavecin ou Piano-Forte* (1795). Neefe's *Fantasia per il Clavicembalo* is unequivocally for piano.

There are two items which offer a choice of treble instruments and continuo, both from early in the period. Johann Fischer's *Musikalisch Divertissement* (1699/1700) boasts the most crowded title page, and comprises 35 pieces in four suites for 'Violen, Hautbois oder Fleutes douces', though despite the plurals they are only given a single line, with an unfigured bass in a separate partbook. (Apart from the sets of clarinets and bassoons, the other duos here are in score.) André Danican Philidor's *I. Livre de Piéces pour la Flute Traversiere, Flute A Bec, Violons et Haut-bois Avec la Basse continuë* concludes with a sonata explicitly 'pour la Flute à bec'. Only two alternatives are needed for Aubert's *Pieces à Deux Flutes Traversieres où à deux Violons* (1723), comprising a single Suite in G.

Turning to strings, Tartini's *L'arte dell' arco* is reproduced from the [1758] edition with 50 variations; the editorial indication (violon seul) is misleading: there is a simple bass printed at the bottom of alternate pages. Charles Dollè's *Pièces de Viole Avec la Basse Continüe* (1737) has three suites requiring a much higher level of technique and musicality than those listed in the previous paragraph. It's a pity that we can no longer take up the composer's invitation to visit him to receive enlightenment on their *goût*. By the time of Henri-Noël Le Pin's op. 2 (1772), *Six Sonates pour le Violoncelle*, the cello had replaced the viol; it's not exactly beginner's music, but the composer offers help with positions. From c.1810 comes the only music for viola here: *Trois Airs Variés* by J. B. Cartier: the only one named is 'Toto carabo'.

This series could well include 100 volumes of Boismortier's urbane output, and they would probably all be worth buying and playing. In this batch are two sets for transverse flute, op. 1 (1724) and op. 9 (1725). From the same decade come two prints for a pair of unaccompanied flutes, 2 Suites op. 10 by Michel de la Barre (1722) and Boismortier's op. 6 (1725). Devienne's *Six duos concertants* for two bassoons are probably from the early 1780s, while three Duos for 2 clarinets by Jacques Jules Bouffil, op. 5 and *Trois duos concertants* for the same ensemble by Joseph Pranzer are probably a couple of decades later.

Finally, one set for cello and continuo in the Green Italian livery, Geminiani's op. 5 sonatas for cello in a French edition of 1746; King's Music uses a copy dated by someone (perhaps me) on the title page as [1739?]. That now seems unlikely. Writing to London from Holland in January 1747, Geminiani assumes that they were not yet available there. They are not identical engravings – the French edition has crosses rather than trills. Fuzeau has bent its normal policy of cleaning up additions and retains a MS note 'Vandome pour Mr Giminiany'; Melle Vandome is credited on the title page with the engraving, not the publishing. There's not much to choose between the facsimiles: with importer's mark-ups, the Fuzeau's will be cheaper and more accessible in France, King's Music in England.

The series is good value, well produced, but concentrating on the secondary figures of the century. All can be played for amusement or practice, but in general be cautious about foisting them on audiences unless the context is suitable or you are convinced that the piece can stand it.

The latest in Fuzeau's collections of *facsimiles* of instruction books is for Germany and Austria, 1600-1860. In fact, vol. 1 begins at 1546 with Hans Gerle's important *Musica und Tablatur*, including some pieces in tablature for Grossgeigen and for Kleingeigen. It then jumps over a century to Matthias Kelz's *Epidigma Harmoniae Novae*, partbooks for violin and gamba of incredibly active music. I haven't heard of him: his presence on the www is minimal, and the publications must have been rediscovered in the last 30 years, since Grove6 states that it hasn't survived. Otherwise, there are Muffat's multilingual prefaces to *Florilegium primum* (1695) and *Selectus Primus* (1701), but not the more extensive *Florilegium Secundum*. Among other obscure items, there are copious examples of how to finger chords by Maurus Buohl (1756). The more famous publication of that year by Leopold Mozart occupies Vol. II. Vol. III has Löhlein (also in Vol. IV), Reichardt and Tauber von Tauberfurt, vol. IV German versions of Geminiani and Tartini, Hiller's *Anweisung* (c.1792), Schweigl's *Grundlehre der Violin I & II* (1794-5).

For the next issue we already have a considerable number of editions from Bärenreiter and Carus, the first batch for some time from Cornetto, and more.

HISTORIC ORGANS SOUND ARCHIVE

ANNE PAGE

Of all the keyboard instruments the pipe organ boasts the longest history, from antiquity to the present day, yet its existence within public spaces, whether places of worship or civic buildings, has placed it pre-eminently at the mercy of forces of change. The history of the organ in the British Isles reads as a catalogue of loss and destruction: the religious upheavals during the Reformation and Commonwealth effectively erased most of the instruments which could claim a date as early as those found today in many continental countries.

The revival of interest in early music, by now itself regarded as an historical phenomenon, has led to the belief in a symbiotic link between instruments and their contemporary repertoire. This is at last leading to a tentative but steady growth of interest in the historical styles of organ: those which may have existed in this country in late medieval times are represented by the Early English organ project's speculative reconstruction of two Tudor organs, and the recent restoration of several important instruments from the 19th century are encouraging signs. New organs are now occasionally built in earlier styles making it possible for players to study repertoire of those times without the adjustments necessary for the generality of modern instruments.

The Historic Organ Sound Archive (HOSA) seeks to make a significant contribution to this revival of interest in our organ history. An initiative of the British Institute of Organ Studies (BIOS) with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project has accomplished its two major objectives:

1. To make recordings on 44 instruments of historic interest and make these available free to the general public via the internet.

2. To hold educational events for local communities at 21 of the venues used for recording, providing an introduction to the pipe organ and to the history of their own instrument for everyone from schoolchildren to adults.

East Anglia was chosen for the project, but it is hoped that this may serve as a pilot for many more regions.

As it is a non-commercial enterprise the HOSA project has been able to include organs with fine musical qualities and interesting historic features but which are not in a good state of repair. Chief among these is the instrument now in Thaxted Parish Church made in 1821 by H .C. Lincoln, now only just playable but according to the foremost authority on the early Victorian organ, Nicholas Thistlethwaite: 'No survivor from this period is more important' (*The Making of the Victorian Organ* p.7). The organ retains original features of compass and construction no longer surviving in any other organ of comparable size (3 manuals and pedals).

The project used its resources on organs not widely known in the public domain and very few of the organs can be found in current recording catalogues. With nearly 20 hours of music specially selected by the players to show the typical features of each instrument, the project is a major new resource for the study of the English organ and its repertoire. The instruments range in date from c.1750 to just before World War 1 and include work by builders of national renown and of those local to the region.

The availability of the recordings via a single access point offers an unparalleled opportunity to trace the development of the organ from the 'long compass' instrument of the Georgian age through the radical changes in compass and sound ideal which formed the Victorian and Edwardian instruments. The type of organ which developed at this time is still familiar to organists today, as no comparable radical changes to the keyboard compasses have occurred since. There is a wealth of very high quality English organ music from the early 19th century (by the Wesleys, Adam, Russell and many others) but this remains insufficiently known because of a shortage of organs which can really do it justice. It is not easy to find good editions (preferably in facsimile of the good and clear printed editions of the time), but library holdings reveal much material waiting to be brought to light.

There still exist significant threats to the protection of our remaining organ heritage as it presently exists in town and country churches across the land: the galloping closure of churches with dwindling congregations and consequent redundancy of instruments, apathy or antipathy towards the role of the organ in worship in some quarters, lack of a framework of legal protection for pipe organs such as exists in many other countries, the gradual corrosion of the interior of organs caused by bat excrement (in this country the bats get the protection of the law!) The HOSA project has tried to record something of this shrinking heritage for future generations and to alert those with ears to hear that these instruments which have proved so durable up until the present day were made with a high degree of artistry and sound simply beautiful.

To find out more about the project and to hear the recordings go to www.bios.org.uk and click on the Historic Organ Sound Archive.

RAVENS VIEW

Simon Ravens

Do you ever use a professional occupation as a pejorative term? I must admit that in one case I do. If I ever describe someone as a journalist, the word on my voice may sound benign enough, but in my mind there is always a bit of a sneer. Perhaps I should qualify this, since there are any number of writers and broadcasters whose work appears in the media who I have real admiration for. These individuals, though, always appear to me as defining the media, rather than being defined by it. A Matthew Parris or a John Simpson may communicate to us through the media, but they do so entirely on their own terms: like Richie Benaud staying powerfully silent through an entire John Emburey maiden over, if nothing is to be said, these people are not afraid of saying precisely nothing.

The journalist who is nothing but a journalist will, in the same situation, always manage to say something. It may be something they don't mean, it may be misinformed, or it may be something they have said many times before, but if their particular media sausage-machine requires a quantity of words feeding in, they will always oblige. What comes out the other end may have no real substance, and it may be distasteful, but with its regulation weight and shape, it will at least justify the existence of the machine.

It is easy to forget that any single channel of the media is, in essence, no more than a medium by which someone who has a message communicates with someone who might be interested. The reality, of course, is that the media is anything but a clean and disinterested conduit. A wealthy opinionated person may well buy a medium to control the communications being sent and, by implication, the messages received. Even when there are no such dark forces at work, the fact remains that everyone involved in the commercial media has bills which need paying. Empty columns and silent air-time don't pay the bills. So if, in an ideal world someone only communicates when they have generated something to say, the media is far from ideal. Well, no news there.

The musical world has a similar predicament. Concert halls and CD pressing plants have one underlying justification, and that is business. Household names are forever being asked by managers and agents to come up with programmes with which blanks on calendars can duly be filled. I always have the highest regard for those artists who have the integrity to remain silent when they feel it appropriate. When the great Russian pianist Arcady Volodos was asked why his recent CD of Liszt was his first recording for a number of years, his disarming reply was that he had not had anything particularly new to say in that period. It takes someone of rare integrity to admit that.

Of course, I am aware that for the early musician there is a paradox here, in that much of the music we perform was not self-generated by a composer's whim, but the fulfilment of an obligation to an employer. In other words, they were filling air-time on demand. Does that make my purist stance – which let's face it calls to mind the Romantic artist starving in a garret – anachronistic? On the face of it, it obviously does, but I'm not sure it is quite so simple. Like it or not, since Beethoven we have lived in an age when every musician has an element of self-determination. I would suggest that, unlike the man who wrote it, the performer who undertakes to direct *Spem in alium* nowadays is unlikely to be under any obligation to a spiritual or temporal hierarchy (and no, a bank manager does not count). Also, unlike earlier musicians who lived on a staple of the here and now, our own musical cafeteria suggests another approach: since we can help ourselves to any music we wish to, my own view is that unless we feel a real hunger for a piece, we should keep on pushing the tray until we find something that really does grab us.

All of which is supposed to explain why, having already entered semi-retirement as a performer, I have suggested to Clifford that this become an occasional column. This was brought about when, a couple of weeks ago, I started to chew my pencil to write something for this particular piece and realised I was in grave danger of becoming a journalist. And I wouldn't want anyone calling me that.

We are very grateful for Simon's wise words for us over the last few years: we hope he will occasionally have some pressing thoughts that he wishes to communicate with us. Perhaps I should have just printed this page black, apart from the title, instead of requesting a farewell. Is it a myth that occasionally, in the early days of the BBC, the reader of the news, no doubt dressed in the customary formality of a dinner jacket, sometimes announced 'There is no news tonight'? CB

MUSIC IN LONDON...

Andrew Benson-Wilson

The 23rd Lufthansa Festival (and the last under the influence of Kate Bolton, artistic director for the past ten years) explored the music of Spain, alongside Bach, Handel and Monteverdi. I was able to get to the last four concerts, starting with Ex Cathedra's *Fire Burning in Snow*, a continuation of their exploration of the Spanish-inspired music in Bolivia (St John's, Smith Square, 19 May). Apart from one piece by Diego José de Salazar and an anonymous processional, all the works were by Juan de Araujo (1646-1712), a Spaniard who emigrated to South America as a youth and eventually became organist of the cathedral in the Bolivian capital. Each half included one of his large scale, eleven-part, triple-choir versions of *Dixit Dominus*, the remaining works being in the popular *villancicos* style. The first *Dixit Dominus* was in the grand manner, with some exciting South-American rhythms cutting through the western-European polyphony. It was a surprise when the Gloria started in a contrasting meditative mood. The second setting included *alternatim* chant sections. The remaining works of Araujo were secular, with each half demonstrating a careful build up of volume and excitement. In practice, some of the quieter pieces risked losing their voices altogether, although the climax of each half made up for this in dramatic content. Each half started and finished with five of the twenty verses of the hypnotic *Hanac pachap cussicuinin*, the oldest example of published polyphony in South America dating from 1631 and written in the Quechua language. The ten singers all had solo roles as well as joining in the choruses. They were accompanied by organ, two theorbos, harp, violin, cornetto, bajon and percussion. I also heard the same programme a few days earlier at Basingstoke's Anvil, where there was an enlarged instrumental group with an extra harp and cornetto and three sackbuts, the latter drawn from the QuintEssential Sackbut & Cornett Ensemble. One particularly striking player in both performances was the stylish and deft percussionist Simone Rebello, who not only demonstrated an impressive sense of commitment and involvement, but also showed us that percussion (which in this case included seed pods and a number of other shaky rattly things) is not just about hitting things.

'A Pilgimage to Santiago' was the title of the concert by Ensemble La Fenice and soprano Arianna Savall (21 May), with music representing a route through France and northern Spain that mid-17th century, post-Thirty Years' War pilgrims might have used on their way to Santiago de Compostela. The first half took us from Strasbourg (with motets for the Feast of St James by Loth and Waldman published in that city) following by Du Caurroy, Chastillon de la Tour and de Bacilly as the pilgrims followed the Rhône towards the Languedoc (Coferati, Moulinié). We crossed the Pyrenees during the interval and followed the pilgrims' route through León and Galicia (Bataille, Falconieri, Escalada) to Santiago (Francisco Soler). Although the programme conceit didn't always stand up to detailed analysis, and the music covered a wide chronological period, including works from a hundred years after the supposed pilgrims' journey, this was a very effectively planned, presented and performed concert. The instrumental works and accompaniments used cornet and recorders (the excellent Jean Tubéry), Dulcian (Mélanie Flahaut), guitar and theorbo (Juan Sebastian Lima) and keyboards (Michaël Hell). Although there was a bit of a late medieval feel to the musical settings that wasn't entirely authentic, they were nonetheless extremely effective. Arianna Savall's voice was excellent in this repertoire and was a fine example of how a voice can be full of resonance and warmth without a trace of applied vibrato.

The Choir of Westminster Abbey, St. James's Baroque and a crowd of several hundred people were kindly allowed to witness what I assume was a night out for senior Lufthansa personnel and their hangers on (Westminster Abbey 22 May). Thoughtfully, the executives had managed to lay on some music (Bach, naturally, making an ideal conclusion to a festival of Spanish music) to entertain the assembled onlookers, but the focus of the evening was clearly the be-suited beings, sitting just in front of me in the front few rows of the Abbey, their shiny black suits in sharp contrast (as in God and Mammon) to the regal red robes of the assembled clergy on the other side of the central gangway who, generously, had also been allowed to witness the executives in their far-from-natural habitat. As the soloists and conductor walked on to entertain the rest of us, all the cameras immediately swung round to capture the moment that the Lufthansa (if that is who they were) executives finally deigned to take their seats. Of course, we were all happy to wait for them to settle, and to put up with repeated camera flashes as the photographers directed their cameras at the front few rows of the audience – I just hope the performers didn't put the photographers off too much. That said, music, like the arts in general, does rely to a huge extent on the patronage of companies like Lufthansa (who have actually been one of the most loyal and long-lasting of all festival promoters) and we have to accept that they will want something in return, even if it is just a photo opportunity.

As to the music, soprano Rebecca Outram made a very impressive replacement for Maria Christina Kiehr. I don't think I have heard hear sing Bach before, but found her voice to be ideally suited to this repertoire. Despite having some fiendish musical lines to get around, she managed a perfect clarity of well-articulated runs and ornaments and equally perfect intonation and diction – and she is another singer who shows that you can sing with warmth and a depth to the voice unhindered by vocal mannerisms such as excessive vibrato. Bass Matthew Brook was another outstanding soloist in the

Domine Deus of the exuberant Lutheran Mass in F. Countertenor Charles Humphries gave more than one member of the executive club the giggles. Although I managed to restrain my own mirth, I did wonder if he was struggling a bit. He had trouble finding space to breath in *Quoniam tu solus sanctus* and sounded rather strained in *Wohl euch, ihr auserwählten Seelen* from the cantata *O ewiges Feuer, o Ursprung der Liebe.* The Abbey choir were on excellent form, as good as, and perhaps better than many of the professional concert choirs that a number of the men belong to. Of the instrumentalists, violinist Sophie Gent was an excellent soloist and leader.

A Westminster Abbey concert usually concludes these Festivals, but there was a coda this year back at St John's Smith Square (24 May) when La Venexiana presented their extremely stylish rather-more-than-semi-staged version of Monteverdi's *Orfeo.* The setting was Memphis Tennessee in the 1970s (more specifically, 28 February 1977) with the glitzy wedding of Orfeo, 'the most eligible bachelor around', not least by being at the 'top of the Hit Parade' (and a figure I seemed to recognize) with Euridice, 'a truly sweet young thing'. And so it went on, with some superb imagery, ending with Orfeo, now referred to as 'The King', dueting with Apollo into golden microphones. La Musica (the excellent Emanuela Galli, who also sang Euridice) was welcomed onto the stage by a Master of Ceremonies who turned out to be the conductor and director, and occasional countertenor singer, Claudio Cavina. His role was particularly striking – it really was more of a Master of Ceremonies than conductor. He was always part of the stage action (which took place around, and included, the instrumentalists) often conducting at the same time as taking part in the action. I rarely comment on the costumes in opera, but these were particularly spectacular – the lead roles had several costume changes and there was even a sense of colour coding, so we always knew whose side the protagonists were on. The only part that didn't work was the photographer who wandered around the stage and audience throughout – the clicks of the camera were far too audible. I wasn't sure if this was really part of the act, or a sneaky way of getting some publicity shots, but it was intrusive. Although this was their second appearance at the Lufthansa Festival, I had not heard them before. They are an impressively imaginative group.

SPITALFIELDS FESTIVAL

I could only make three of this year's Spitalfields Festival concerts, starting with Elizabeth Kenny's *Masque of Moments*, the result of her research into the sources used by 17th century professional musicians, revealing the degree of virtuosity that they applied to their performances (11 June, Shoreditch Church). The focus for these professional musicians was the *antimasque*, often a send–up of the masque itself and the aristocratic amateurs that performed therein. The concert contrasted the styles of the Jacobean with the Caroline period, with a concocted masque drawn from examples by the likes of Thomas Campion and Ben Jonson for the former, and John Milton for the latter period. Elizabeth Kenny's group of musicians certainly lived up to their virtuosic tag, with notable performances from singers Sophie Daneman, James Gilchrist and Roderick Williams and Jacob Heringman, David Miller and Elizabeth Kenny on lutes and cittern. A harp and three bass viols completed the instrumental line up. Much of the virtuosity came from added ornaments and elaborations, a spectacular example being James Gilchrist in *Why stays the bridegroom*, from Ben Jonson's 1608 Haddington Masque. Humour, often of the ribald sort, was obviously a feature of these occasions, and this was very well handled in this performance, notably in *What is't you lack*, from Jonson's 1618 Masque of Mountebanks.

Convivencia is the Spanish word for living together harmoniously and is also used to describe that enlightened period in late medieval Spain when Muslim, Jew and Christian lived together in an atmosphere of (more-or-less) tolerance and cooperation that created a magnificent flowering of science, literature, art and music. It is the title of Catherine Bott's latest CD, most of which was performed in Christ Church Spitalfields on 20 June. Appropriately, the line-up includes the distinguished Arabic oud player and singer, Abdul Salam Kheir, who opened the concert with a mesmeric piece of his own, *Prayer,* and later sang the exotic *Rainfall in Andalusia* by Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib. Alongside various love songs were two depictions of battles between the Moors and Christians, reflecting the destruction of this apparently idyllic co-existence by *los Reyes Católicos.* Curiously both these were sung extremely quietly, in sharp contrast to the words – I wondered at first if I was looking at the words of the wrong song. Some of the love songs were sung with even more reticence, the anonymous *Tres morillas m'enamoran en Jaén* being so much on the edge of the voice as to be only just audible. Catherine Bott adopted a range of interesting vocal styles, all including portamento slithers between practically every note and a slightly metallic edge to her tone. There was also an interesting contrast between the highly ornamented singing of Abdul Salam Kheir and Catherine Bott's much simpler style. The other players were David Miller (vihuela, lute and guitar) and Stephen Henderson (percussion:– tar, tablah, tbilat and douf). If nothing else, I will remember this concert for one of the longest and most bizarre CD plugs ever – what seemed to start out as a well-deserved eulogy for Judith Serota dissolved into a blatant plug, ending up with the extraordinary words: 'How can I thank Judith – by bringing some of my CDs to sell'.

Alongside their outstanding educational work within the local community, the Spitalfields Festival also supports a range of young professional musicians, not least those from the Royal Academy of Music, whose Baroque Orchestra and Chorus closed the Festival with a stirring performance of Bach's B minor Mass, directed by Trevor Pinnock (Christ Church Spitalfields, 22 June). In the battle as to who was the most 'Baroque', the orchestra were very clear leaders, with the choir suffering from an excess of operatic voices with over-blown vibrato. I suppose this is inevitable from a conservatoire when I guess all singers wish for, and are being trained for, an operatic career. But

a great deal of potential employment can come from choir singing, particularly in the early stages of a career (and many of today's top flight soloists have cut their teeth as choir singers), so I don't know why conservatoires don't put more effort into specific training in choral singing techniques. Vocally, the men fared rather better, but their voices are rather less prone to operatic mannerisms anyway. Another aspect of their soloistic training was the slightly forced grins that many of them applied, not always at the most appropriate moments. Of the solo singers, soprano Anna Schwedhelm had the voice and technique closest to what I would think of as appropriate for Bach. The orchestra, though, excelled, with particularly fine contributions from Karin Bjork, violin, Sally Woods, cello, Gabriel Poynton, flute and the three trumpeters, Chris Bunn, James Davies and Emma Pritchard. Incidentally, there were only six men out of a total of 29 players, three of them in the trumpet and timpani section. Why? Trevor Pinnock directed with gusto, clearly relishing the louder choruses, although from my seat his page turns were too audible. He also has the harpsichordist director's habit of randomly disrupting his playing to conduct. This was the last concert of Judith Serota's 19 year tenure as Executive Director. She has achieved remarkably things in Spitalfields and surely deserves all the plaudits she can get, although the rather repetitive eulogies that delayed the start of this concert by more than 15 minutes was perhaps pushing it a bit for many in the audience.

WIGMORE HALL

One of my most tedious and lengthy attempts at driving into London landed me half an hour late at the Wigmore Hall for what was, fortunately, a beautifully relaxing concert by the four recorder players of The Flautadors together with Alison McGillivray, gamba, and David Miller, lute/guitar (7 June). After a bit of a surge in the early stages of the early music revival, recorder groups seem to have gone out of fashion, but The Flautadors showed that there is still room for this combination – and a sizeable, and noticeably more youthful audience that the usual white-haired Wigmore brigade supported this. The recorder has found a new audience or else the group has lots of friends. Either way, they managed to avoid the issues that can dog recorder playing – audible subharmonics, pitch wavering at cadences and eardrum-shredding shrieks. Inevitably, many of the works were transcriptions, including their own surprisingly successful version of Bach's Double Violin Concerto, but they also played a genuine baroque multi-recorder work, one of the fascinating concertos for four recorders and continuo by Johann Christian Schickhardt.

A true contralto is a rare beast, but one was tracked down in the shape of Sara Mingardo at the Radio 3 lunchtime concert at the Wigmore Hall (11 June). She was accompanied by the distinguished harpsichordist and conductor, Rinaldo Alessandrini, in a concert performance of a recent CD, with music by Merula, Legrenzi, Salvatore, Carissimi and Handel. Sara Mingardo has a rich and exotic voice (with a beautifully gentle vibrato) and a commendably consistent timbre throughout a range that takes her well into tenor territory. Whether it was the fact that it was lunchtime, or perhaps a rather specialist programme, but at least one chap slept soundly (and not altogether peacefully, judging by the reaction of those around him) throughout the concert. And a very large lady sitting in the middle of the back row spent the whole time playing rather distractingly with her Blackberry.

AMADIGI

The Handel operatic love-fest continues its lengthy run with the rarely performed *Amadigi di Gaula*, in an equally rare appearance by a UK band (Academy of Ancient Music, reunited with Christopher Hogwood) at the Barbican's Great Performers series (18 May). It was also unusual for these Barbican shows for not being a concert performance of a fully staged opera (bought in, presumably on the cheap) from one of the major European opera houses). One result of this was that the singers used scores, but generally managed to project over them to the audience. And there was more than enough stage action to set the music into a dramatic context, although it got nowhere near the original staging with its spectacular scenery and staging effects, concluding with a cave changing into a beautiful palace as a chariot descends from the clouds. The first star was Christopher Hogwood, one of the most technically correct conductors around. He has a very clear beat, no awkward mannerisms, graceful and flowing movements that help to make him an attractive conductor to watch, and an overall feeling that he is serving the music, rather than attempting to get the music to serve him. What joy! *Amadigi di Gaula* is rare amongst Handel operas in only having five characters, although in this performance the tiny role of Orgando right at the end was sung (confusingly, in the same costume) by Simone Kermes, who for most of the evening had been the sorceress Melissa, the manipulator of the entire plot. Kermes's extraordinary costume, looking rather like a cross between an exotically decorative candle and a birthday cake, made her visually as well as aurally striking, although I found her role rather over-acted and her singing style similarly over-dramatic, not least for her habit of sliding, rather too slowly, up to the pitch of her notes. Patricia Bardon took the far-from-androgynous trouser role of Dardano, with a notably gutsy opening aria. Klara Ek produced a commendably clean tone as Oriana. But, from the start, with his reflective opening aria, the vocal star was countertenor Lawrence Zazzo in the title role.

COVENT GARDEN

The Royal Opera House's new production of *Fidelio* (a buy-in of Metropolitan Opera's 2000 production, directed by Jürgen Flimm) got off to a very shaky musical start with some wayward horn playing and an extraordinary lack of coordination twixt conductor and stage (27 May). Although that was more than remedied by some outstanding singing later on, the equally shaky set and staging persisted throughout. The location was unidentified, but seemed to suggest a relatively recent South American dictatorship, with the prisoners in three tiers of cages

stage left and the first act action taking place from centre or stage right, with very little involvement from the onlooking prisoners. What should have been the highlight of the first act (the release of the prisoners into the daylight) was a damp squid – only those on the lowest tier were released, for example, and they just wandered aimlessly into the central stage area, rather than into the sunlight and open air. The act two prison scene looked very sparse on the large Covent Garden stage and was full of staging inconsistencies – for example, Florestan singing about how dark it was, whilst sitting underneath three floodlights and Rocco fumbling around trying to find a light switch with a torch when there was enough light for him to see without more light, let alone having enough light to see the switch. The concluding scene, where the prisoners are reunited with their womenfolk, looked like an outing to Blackpool. – and, bizzarely, the assembled women seemed to show little interest in their released menfolk.

But the production was saved, for me at least, by an astonishingly powerful performance by Karita Mattila as Leonora/Fidelio in one of the most effective (partial) trouser roles I have ever seen. She didn't just look the part, she absorbed herself into it, wringing every ounce of emotion from her musical lines. Eric Halfvarson also impressed as Rocco, as did, to a lesser extent, Terje Stensvold as the baddy, Don Pizarro (who appeared to be hacked to death at the end) and Endrik Wottrich as Florestan. The Royal Opera House orchestra suffered from an excess of string vibrato, notable at the start of the Quartet, and there was what sounded like some very audible intakes of breath, possibly from conductor Antonio Pappano. Such was the emotional power of last year's Glyndebourne production that it bought tears to my eyes – at times this did as well, but rather different tears.

As well as their 'new' production of Fidelio, the Royal Opera House also revived Francesca Zambello's 2002 production of Don Giovanni. I went on the second night (13 June) and a performance that was shared via a video-link by several thousand people in public spaces around the country, including the Covent Garden Plaza – what they thought of us gazing down on the damp masses during the interval I dread to think. But the singing and acting is this 3rd revival was well worth getting wet for,* notably from the extremely impressive soprano Marina Poplavskaya, on the ROH Young Artists who was scheduled to sing for one performance as Donna Anna but who had to step in to replace the indisposed Anna Netrbko much earlier than expected. She gave a stunning performance, and is clearly a singer to watch out for. Michael Schade made a great deal more of the role of Don Ottavio than is usual and Sarah Fox made for an impressive Zerlina. Conductor Ivor Bolton's spacious interpretation gave more room than is usual for the musical lines to develop. This was particularly appreciated in some of the recitatives which, as is so often the case in Mozart, really do need time for the subtleties of the text to be appreciated. However I did wonder whether all the rehearsals had been conducted at the same steady speeds – there were some inconsistencies twixt pit and stage. The staging itself was excellent until the final scenes and the bizarre portrayal of Commandatore's statue as some sort of wire cage swinging back and forth behind a gap in the stage wall, and therefore only visible to those sitting close to the central axis of the hall. As impressive as the pyrotechnics might have been, they didn't leave room for the moral thrust of the plot to be explored. The plot was similarly unhinged, for those quick enough to spot it, by a very brief glimpse right at the end of the sort of life the naughty Don might be living in hell as he was framed at the back of the stage with a naked young lady draped across his arms. Of course, assuming that this encouraging looking scenario was actually consummated, this would become his only successful seduction of the entire evening. In the original production, it might have ticked the statutory 'nudity' box that seemed to apply to all ENO productions at the time, but it somehow misses the point.

Outdoor Don Giovanni worth getting wet for? As one of a small group of cold, wet and bedraggled Brummies trying to enjoy a city centre relay from the ROH I would dispute this. The rain was the least of our problems. We had to contend with police and ambulance sirens, the museum clock that struck loud and clear every 15 minutes, and lads who decided to gate crash and give us their renditions of opera. After the interval we retreated to the porch of the Library to escape the rain. It was then that we were visited by the Council who were determined to noisily water already sodden plants in boxes above our heads. I wonder if anyone turned up for Tosca two weeks later? Probably very few from the Don Giovanni audience! Jan Wright

COLISEUM

Another revival was English National Opera's return of their 2005 David McVicar production of *La Clemenza di Tito*, a co-production with the Royal Danish Theatre (8 June). One of the most striking things about this production is Yannis Thavoris's set: a series of giant curved screens that moved along their own tracks creating a wealth of spatial possibilities, splendidly lit by Paule Constable. *La Clemenza* is not an easy work to stage, but this production really does work – although I am not sure if the rather camp stick-swinging dance troupe (a typical McVicar device) was supposed to bring giggles to so many of the audience, but it did lighten things up. Paul Nilon and Emma Bell retained their original roles of Tito and Vitella, and made impressive contributions, the latter noticeably with her *Non più di fiori*. Alice Coote sang the role of Sesto, despite a chest infection – indeed, had this not been announced at the start, there was nothing about her singing that suggested that she was poorly. Her *Deh, per questo istante solo* was a highlight of the evening. Sarah-Jane Davies was an attractive Servilia and Anne Marie Gibbons and Andrew Foster-Williams completed the cast. At the end, the guards turn on Tito right at the end, seeming to stab him to death, a twist to the story that rather undermines the earlier plot. So much for clemency!

ORDO VIRTUTUM

Although Hildegard von Bingen has gone out of fashion in recent years, the vocal group Vox Animae have kept her music alive with their performances of her extraordinary

music-drama *Ordo Virtutum* (The Rite of the Virtues). As a prelude to a performance in Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, they presented this work in the rather more intimate and musically appropriate surroundings of Wadhurst Parish Church (3 June). The 17 Virtues (divided amongst nine female voices) are lead by the Queen of the Virtues, sung with an outstanding vocal range and use of musical emotion by Evelyn Tubb. With varying degrees of success, the Virtues attempt to guide the Soul (Ansy Boothroyd, portraying the naïve innocence of the role) toward their life of piety and away from the wiles of the Devil (acted with rather scary perception by John Hancorn) who ensnares the Soul, stripping her of her simple robes to reveal a little black dress, and tempting her away to an aisle and what looking rather like a portrayal of an afternoon in the gardens at Glyndebourne, although perhaps with rather more action in the bushes than I have normally observed there. After this initial setback, the Virtues regain their strength by the 12th-century equivalent of an sales-executive's bonding weekend, reminding each other of their individual strengths and reinforcing each other through supportive choruses. Eventually the Soul returns 'lamenting and penitent', having clearly had a bit of a going over from the Devil. As the former is accepted into the fold of the Virtues, the latter is overcome and chained and they all, apart from the Devil, live virtuously ever after. *Hildegard Music* is not easy to stage – it can easily become rather twee or overly sanctimonious. But Michael Fields' direction, combined with sensitively restrained harp accompaniment, impressive singing (albeit in a range of styles, not all of which could be considered 'professional') and attractive use of gesture and stage movement made for an immensely impressive performance. An earlier performance is available on the DVD 'Hildegard von Bingen in Portrait'.

HANDEL & SCARLATTI CANTATAS

The countertenor Philippe Jaroussky is the French pretender to the Andreas Scholl throne, his handsomely boyish good looks (and, presumably, his beautifully clear tone and engaging stage manner) appealing, it would appear, to both male and female members of the audience. With his Ensemble Artaserse, he gave a programme of cantatas by Handel and Scarlatti (reflecting the goings on of Clori, Tirsi and their ilk) at the Purcell Room (25 May) that deserves an honourable inclusion in the opera section. His voice is in the same broad area as the UK's pretender to the same throne, Robin Blaze, avoiding the overly-operatic or the too feminine or edgy timbre of some of the other big-name countertenors. And he has an impressive grasp of technique to wing his way around the virtuosic melismas that Handel and Scarlatti presented him with, retaining a sense of articulation despite sound breakneck speeds, for example, in the Aria *Fuddi da questo sen* from Handel's *Lungi da me pensier tiranno*. Ensemble Artaserse were generally effective in accompaniments and in their two solo works, with a particularly impressive, but unforgivably un-named, cellist (indeed, the programme note said nothing at all about anyone other the Jaroussky), but they could have done with much more speedier tuning.

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

The much-heralded and very welcome re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall over the weekend of 8/11 June neatly coincided with the 21st anniversary of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, who presented their Birthday Concert on 30 June to a huge, enthusiastic and extremely patient audience (the concert started at 7 and was billed to finish at 9.30, but actually finished at 11). A series of mishaps meant that I missed the first part of the concert, and also ended up sitting close to the back of the balcony, rather than the usual press seats in the front stalls. Although I had heard the OAE rehearsing during the earlier press launch (and also attended the Berio/ Stravinsky concert a few days earlier) this was the first time that I had the chance to really test the new Royal Festival Hall at full pelt and with a full audience. The acoustic transformation of the hall is spectacular – the increase in reverberation time (an issue more to do with changing tastes rather than original acoustician error) has lead to the sound being warmer, richer and fuller. Even with the quietest passages, there is a sense of the sound filling the hall. And, perhaps more importantly, it is now possible to hear the full acoustic range of the instruments, notably the bass instruments who hitherto have been more-or-less inaudible. The balcony seats have often been considered acoustically good (although it is many years since I have actually sat there), and I found the sound perfectly acceptable.

The part of the OAE concert that I missed was Purcell's less-well known Ode for St Cecilia's Day *Welcome to all the pleasures*, directed by Richard Egarr. I heard the Radio 3 broadcast, and was particularly impressed by the singing of Robin Blaze in 'Here the Deities approve'. After the first (for me) of several extremely lengthy stage alterations, Sir Roger Norrington then sauntered on to the stage and smooched around for a bit while an enlarged orchestra played a suite from Rameau's *Dardanus*, a work performed at the OAE's first concert 21 years ago. Norrington's mime-artist approach to conducting gave the impression of painting the sound onto a large and invisible canvas, including at one stage his crouching down behind the desk in a Hoffnung-like depiction of a pianissimo. Putting Richard Egarr and Robert Levin together is frankly asking for trouble, and their jovial double act performance of Mozart's Concerto in E flat for two pianos was certainly not short on humour, after they had finished the mass kiss-in with various violinists as they entered the stage. Fortunately they worked on the basis of collaboration rather than competitiveness, and the result was a reasonably compelling interpretation. Haydn's Symphony 63, *Las Roxelane*, was musically lifted by the insightful direction of Vladimir Jurowski, the only one of their three current Principal Artists to appear (although the two others, Sir Simon Rattle and Ivan Fischer appeared on the giant screen between pieces). The OAE's contribution to opera was acknowledged by a darkly staged version of the "Wolf's Glen" scene from Weber's *Der Freischütz*, conducted by Mark Elder with Philip Langridge, Clive Bayley, David Wilson-Johnson and Peter Sidhom. But even a hour after the concert was supposed to have ended, the audience prize seemed to go to Sir

Charles Mackerras's grand finale performance of the Royal Fireworks with a huge orchestra of full strings, six each of horns, trumpets and oboes, three sets of timpani and three military side-drums. A very fitting conclusion to a long evening and to the extraordinary orchestra's first 21 years of life. It has earned its place amongst the leading orchestras of the world, period or otherwise. And a special mention must go to the orchestra manager, Philippa Brownsword, who, whatever she gets up to behind the scenes, is always very much a presence sorting out the staging of OAE occasions, notably during the complex staging of this five concerts in one occasion.

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... AND IN LÜBECK

Lübeck feiert Buxtehude 2007

Festival Week 5-13 May 2007

The lovely little city of Lübeck is, not surprisingly, devoting an entire year to commemorating the anniversary of its most famous musical son (or, more accurately, it's adoptive son) Dieterich Buxtehude. The highlight of these celebrations was the *Festwoche* from 5 to 13 May, including the 300th anniversary of his death, on 9 May 1707. The Festival encompassed an impressive programme of lunchtime and evening concerts, a series of organ masterclasses (given by Bine Katrine Bryndorf, Michael Radulescu, Harald Vogel and Ton Koopman), an academic symposium, and the presentation of the latest Buxtehude-Prize. This is given at seemingly random intervals (and only three times in the past 17 years) by the City of Lübeck. With the focus on Buxtehude being generally centred around his fame as an organist, and with the huge advances made in the understanding of the North German organ of Buxtehude's period over the past 30 or so years, it was appropriate that the prize (worth 10,000 Euro) went to the distinguished organ builder, Jürgen Ahrend.

Buxtehude was organist at the imposing city-owned Marienkirche whose twin spires dominate the Lübeck skyline. One of the instruments that he knew, together with the church's remarkable interior with its rich Baroque woodwork, survived until the night before Palm Sunday in 1942 when, in one of Britain's less heroic moments, much of the centre of Lübeck was destroyed, all but destroying St Mary's, the Cathedral and several other important city churches, in what history has deemed a completely pointless air raid on a more-or-less defenceless city with few, if any, military targets. However, one church survived to give something of the atmosphere, furnishings, acoustic and organ that Buxtehude might have known there – the delightful St Jacob's. The first of the Festival's evening concerts was given there (5 May) by Cantus Cölln (winners of the previous Buxtehude Prize in 2000). Their programme contrasted the music of Buxtehude with his pupil Nicholas Bruhns and his predecessor in the distinguished North German school of organ composition, the Hamburg organist Matthias Weckmann. The latter's *Wie liegt die Stadt so wüste* was a particularly impressive work, the opening shift between major and minor being the first of many points of harmonic interest in an emotionally intense work. Buxtehude's energetic cantata *Gott hilf mir* was also given a fine performance, particularly the expansive ending. Although the singing and playing was extremely impressive, a number of the singers had a habit of starting notes with a crescendo which, in this generous acoustic, meant that the opening attack of the note was often lost – at times, it even made the vocal entry appear to be late. This was particularly noticeable in Bruhns's *Ich liege und schlafe.*

The muffled boom of the church bells and the tinkling of the *Totentanz* clock was an evocative introduction to the *Festgottesdienst* in St Mary's on Sunday 6 May. It included two cantatas by Buxtehude, starting with the bouncy *Canite Jesu nostro.* Soprano Zsuzsa Bereznai then joined the Lübecker Knabenkantorei and Musica Baltica in *Herr, auf dich traue ich.* Incidentally, one of the most moving War Memorials I know is the broken and collapsed St Mary's bells, which remain, accompanied by a single candle, on the floor of the southwest tower where they fell. The evening concert, also at St Mary's, was the first of two by the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir under Ton Koopman. They started with Buxtehude's joyous *Nun danket alle Gott* with the distinctive use of three instrumental choirs (strings, trumpets/trombones and cornets/ dulcian) and three vocal groups (SS, ATB and chorus) – a possible musical link to the six musicians' balconies sited high up towards the rear where Buxtehude could have directed from the west-end organ. Although *Alles,was ihr tut* was the best known, *Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich, O Herr* was the most interesting of the Buxtehude cantatas. *Ihr lieben Christen, freut euch nun* introduced the distinctive sound of muted trombones. This was a most impressive concert, although readers will know that I find Ton Koopman's over-staccato organ continuo playing (and his 'wandering right hand' counter-melodies) rather overdone – fortunately it was a style that the rest of the continuo group didn't take up. During the Sunday afternoon an impressive exhibition of the life and times of Buxtehude (including many artefacts with direct links to Buxtehude, included his own entries in the church records and a number of musical instruments) was opened in the St Annen-Museum. This included a nice little concert by Musica Poetica, including an impressive young bass, Julian Redlin, who demonstrated a clear and unaffected voice with an impressively clear lower register.

St Aegidien (another church that, unlike the nearby Cathedral, survived the 1942 bombing) was the venue (7 May) for an exploration of European music at the time of Buxtehude (Corelli, Purcell, Couperin, Reincken, Stradella and Buxtehude) given by Gustav Leonhardt and three members of the Kuijken clan (Sigiswald, Sara and Wieland). Leonhardt's performance of harpsichord solos by Buxtehude and Reincken, his Hamburg contemporary, was one of the highlights, along with Sigiswald Kuijken playing two works on the *Violoncello da spalla*, a five-string bass instrument about 25% larger than a viola but of the depth of a cello and played flat across the chest, facing outwards.

The large-scale three-part Oratorium *Wacht! Euch zum Streit gefasset macht!* (which, in a previous incarnation, became known as *Das Jüngste Gericht*) is one of

Buxtehude's most curious works. It is so unlike anything else of his that it is difficult to imagine that he wrote it; current thinking is that it represents an example of the sort of music that might have been performed during the famous *Abendmusik* concerts held in the run-up to Christmas. Its style is almost completely operatic, and clearly designed to appeal to popular taste – indeed, it is one of the few Buxtehude works that you can tap your foot to. There are a number of versions and recordings of this work, of which Roland Wilson's is generally considered to be the best. He presented this with Musica Fiata and La Capella Ducale at the Lübeck Dom (8 May). As well as the usual strings and continuo group (and more muted trombones), Wilson's rich instrumental forces included a gigantic contra-geigen, a 16-foot dulcian such as Buxtehude's own church purchased in 1685 (there is an example in the St Annen-Museum). As at St Mary's, the acoustics of the Cathedral are vastly more resonant now than they would have been in Buxtehude's day. This performance was staged at the west end (below the site of the famous Schnitger organ that was destroyed during the war), but the large open space behind them meant that there was no reflective surface to project the sound towards the audience. That said, the performance made a compelling case for this work to be taken rather more seriously that its rather slight musical context perhaps suggests. There are several very attractive operatic arias, including *Freu dich sehr, o meine seele* (a delightful little virtuosic showpiece for the Hamburg opera singers that we know Buxtehude used for the *Abendmusik*) and the despairing *Ich kann nicht mehr,* acted out in true operatic style. Towards the end came the Choral *Wie bin ich doch so hertzlich froh,* set to the Christmas melody of *Wie schön leuchtet* – just the thing to send a Lübeck audience out into the cold for a mug of glüwein at the Christmas Market.

9 May was the anniversary of Buxtehude's death. He was buried just to the north of the old choir screen in St Mary's, although a rather sparse plaque is all that marks the spot today. The evening concert there was a bit of a let down. *Membra Jesu nostri* was an appropriate choice of work to headline the concert (although I would also have liked to have heard the Klag-Lied on this evening, rather than the following day), but the big-band interpretation (the 32-strong NDR-Chor plus 11 soloists of very varying quality) produced a sound that Buxtehude was unlikely to have intended. Musically (and visually) the performance was enlivened by some very attractive viola da gambe playing from Hille Perl and the bevy of beauties that are Sirius Viols. The rest of the evening was taken up by *Metamorphosen. Uraufführung. Dialogue mit Dieterich Buxtehude*, an extraordinary new work by the current organist for two organs, pairs of trumpets and trombones and timpani, the latter instruments spread around the church, including one trumpeter in a vertigo-inducing position in the clerestory. The reviewer sitting next to me started reading a book almost immediately, and got through several chapters before the work reached the last of its many climactic proto-conclusions. I fear this a work that is unlikely to be celebrated in 300 years time.

The concert the following evening (Cathedral, 10 May) was the one that should have given on the anniversary day, not least because of Andreas Scholl's exquisitely moving singing of all five verses of the elegy *Muß der Tod denn auch entbinden* – the Klag-Lied, written by Buxtehude for the funeral of his father. At the conclusion, what should have been a reverential silence was immediately broken by a loud cough and applause, just one of many rather curious responses from audiences throughout this week. Another example was that what I thought was the beginnings of a standing ovation turned out to be people standing up to take photographs of Herr Scholl. The programme also included *Ach Herr, la deine lieben Engelein* by Buxtehude's predecessor at St Mary's, Franz Tunder, with its moving rising phrase on the words *in Abrahams Schoß* and Johann Christoph Bach's sensuous Lamento: *Ach, daß ich Wassers gnug hätte.* I got the impression that Scholl was not firing on all cylinders, but this was nonetheless a most impressive concert, with some fine playing from the Basel Consort and Concerto di Viole.

Chamber music was an important part of Buxtehude's output, and this was reflected in the concert (in the Scharbausaal of the Lübeck Bibliothek, 11 May) given by the Berliner Barock Compagney with a most impressive soprano, Johannette Zomer, a singer who is not afraid to allow her voice to merge with the instrumental texture and who also showed just how effective vibrato can be when used as an ornament. Their programme started with the desperately repeated pleas of *Erbarm' dich* from Schütz's chorale-like cantata which was followed by the more upbeat *Ich rufe zu Dir* by Nicolaus Adam Strungk. Instrumental works by Reincken, Schein and Buxtehude featured some beautiful playing, notably by Georg Kallweit, whose wistful recitative in Buxtehude's Sonata in C took his violin to the very edge of audibility. Yet again, the audience misbehaved – several times the musicians had to wait in vain, violin bows poised, for enough silence for them to start.

The second of the programmes of cantatas from the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra was in St Jacob's (12 May) and featured some of Buxtehude's more celebratory works with their expansive use of instrumental colours. Koopman's elaborate organ counter melodies were particularly noticeable in the cantata for bass *Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben*, a work which includes one of Buxtehude's characteristically striking little motifs that grab the attention and stay in the memory well after the piece has finished. One unusual work was the rather formulaic *Man singet mit Freuden vom Sieg,* almost certainly not by Buxtehude.

The Festgottesdienst in the Cathedral on the last day of the Festival featured the most gloriously flamboyant of all Buxtehude's choral works, the *Benedicam Dominum*, scored for four soloists, a choir and six groups of instruments (2 trumpets/dulcian, 2 trumpets/trombone, 2 viols/viola da gamba, 2 cornetti/dulcian, 3 trombones, and violin/organ) spaced around the centre and west end of the vast building. Hans-Joachim Lustig directed *I Vocalisti* in a stunning liturgical performance, with the work divided either side of the sermon. It was followed by the round-

table discussion *Faszination Schnitger-Orgel* on the proposal to reconstruct the Cathedral's Schnitger organ – an instrument that Buxtehude knew well and very likely much preferred over the one at his own church. This project is clearly controversial, with a number of active factions involved, and my German wasn't up to picking up too many of the subtleties of the debate. But my own view is that the extraordinary restoration of the St Jacob's organ in Hamburg and recent Schnitger reconstruction in Gothenburg (which is visually based on the old Lübeck case) has set a standard that Lübeck must exceed if it is to attain the credibility it deserves. Lübeck not only deserves an organ that will put it back onto the world stage as an organ city, but that organ also deserves to be housed in an organ case that accurately reflects the important historic example that was so sadly destroyed during the war.

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... AND IN YORK

Early Music Network International Young Artists' Competition – York 2007

The Early Music Network exists to help bring about more professional historically informed performances of early music, to help to develop audiences for such music, and to create opportunities for outstanding young ensembles to establish themselves professionally. As part of this remit, every two years they join with the York Early Music Festival to present the Early Music Network International Young Artists' Competition. The latest of these (the 12th) took place at the National Centre for Early Music at St Margaret's, Walmgate, York between 12-14 July. From the tapes and supporting information submitted from around 40 groups, seven were selected by the artistic advisors of the Festival for the Final. One feature of this competition is that, over the two days preceding the Final, each group gives a short informal concert, hosted this year by Robert Hollingworth, and intended to acclimatise the competitors to the performing space, to introduce the groups to the audience, and to give a chance for discussion between the audience and the performers. The competitors also benefit from meeting and hearing each other. The judges (this year they were Graham Dixon, Ashley Solomon, Bart Demuyt, Ingrid Seifert and Stevie Wishart) were not present at these introductory concerts and the performance of the groups did not count towards their marks in the Final. However, these reviews draw on both concerts.

As in previous years, this was very much an international affair, both in the home base of the groups appearing and in the geographical spread of the individuals within the groups. The overall standard was musically very high and professionally extremely competent. Naturally, various issues arise from the performances in the preliminary concerts and the finals which it might be useful to share with other performers and *EMR* readers. But, as in previous years, I tell the competitors that I will avoid making any direct criticism of individual groups in my review, but will gather any vaguely 'critical' comments anonymously at the end. It is hard enough entering a competition without having the possibility of a critical review hanging over you.

Consortium5 are a group of five recorder players who met at London's Royal Academy of Music. They have already had some success in competitions, and one prestigious award enabled them to buy an impressive set of renaissance recorders. As well as early music, they also commission works from present day composers for their period instruments. Their two programmes gave a very good overview of the range of consort music suitable, if not explicitly written, for recorders. They made excellent contact with the audience, helped by making very good use of the wide stage area available to them. In Tye's In Nomine 'Crye', for example, they sat well apart, each directly facing the audience in an 'everyone for themselves' approach that exactly fitted the mood and virtuosic content of the piece. I particularly liked their willingness to explore the humorous side of the music, notably in concertos by Boismortier. Inga Maria Klaucke gave attractive spoken introductions to the pieces, and the whole group coped very well with some tricky questions from the audience about resultant tones in the preliminary concert. This talented and well-presented young group are just the thing to dispel the myths that seem to surround recorder groups in this country.

Ensemble Amaranthos formed while they were students at the Royal College of Music in London, although individually they represent very different countries and cultures. Their line-up is violin, flute and gamba with cello and keyboard continuo. In their preliminary concert they played a complete Telemann 'Paris' Quartet, displaying a fine sense of melodic line and an awareness of the humour implicit in the music. They have a very attractive sense of physical movement and engagement with the audience. For the final they demonstrated different combinations of instruments, starting with part of a Sonata for viola da gamba, violin and organ by the undeservedly little-known composer Philipp Heinrich Erlebach. They would have earned brownie points from many in the audience by managing to avoid tuning up as soon as they entered the stage – a refreshing start for early music concerts. Claire Bracher and Sara Struntz made very effective use of a gentle vibrato to produce a delightfully singing tone on their instruments. Marta Goncalves (flute) joined the violin and continuo for two movements from a Vivaldi Concerto, and they finished with extracts from another 'Paris' Quartet. They are a very well presented and versatile group with an obvious understanding and empathy with their chosen repertoire.

Le Jardin Secret are all former postgraduates of Basel and The Hague. They make improvisation a feature of their exploration of the 17th and 18th century repertoire for soprano and gamba, theorbo and harpsichord continuo. They used this magnificently in the introduction to their final programme as they explored the contrast between the French and Italian styles, illuminating each key word with very neat harpsichord improvisations from David Blunden which then morphed into the first piece, Orazio Michi's *Spera mi disse amore*. Soprano Elizabeth Dobbin

made very good contact with the widely spaced audience, She has a warm and expressive voice with a fast and shallow vibrato which does not effect her intonation and that she can control well, as she did to great effect in several long-held notes in Carissimi's *Deh, memoria*. Romina Lishka and Sofie Vanden Eynde were very impressive as gamba and theorbo continuo players as well as contributing to the links between the various pieces. Their first programme was of Purcell songs, the first three neatly linked by these instrumental improvisations. Their programme for the Final had eight short pieces, Pierre Guédron's *Aux plaisires, aux délices* being a lovely piece to finish with.

Melopoetica were formed in 2003 and were collectively appointed as English Concert Junior Fellow at London's Trinity College of Music during 2006. Their name reflects the link between rhetoric and music and the baroque doctrine of the *affecktenlehre* and musical pathos. They aim to move and affect their audiences and present an extremely strong stage presence, notably through the contrast between their two violinists, the Portuguese Barbara Barros and the Norwegian Siv Thomassen. Their performances are visually strong and include a large element of drama, with Barbara Barros in particular displaying an enormously energetic and expressive persona through her extraordinary dance-like movements and exaggerated facial gestures. Musically they are capable of exploring the extremes of emotion, with playing that veers from being gorgeously delicate to almost alarmingly punchy and forceful. This style was particularly impressive (and musically appropriate) in their preliminary concert 'A Venetian Rhetoric', where works by Marini and Castello were ideal vehicles for their musical approach. Cellist Iason Ioannoe and harpsichordist Erik Dippenaar are both excellent foils to the musically and physically striking violinists and provide good continuo support - I particularly liked Erik Dippenaar's continuo interpretations in the *Arioso* of Handel's Sonata VI (Op 2) that concluded their Final concert.

The Oboe Band is currently Ensemble in Residence at the London's Royal College of Music, where it promotes historical performance to students. They presented two contrasting programmes, starting with music from the Restoration period in England shortly after the first introduction of the oboe to this country by James Paisible, whose 'Queen's Farewell' (from the first ever oboe tutor) closed the programme. I particularly liked Gottfried Finger's Suite from 'Love makes a Man' (*A Fop's Fortune*), with extracts from the rather complicated plot (involving corpses and cupboards) nicely presented by Rebecca Stockwell between the pieces. Their final programme looked to the continental use of the oboe, including work by Lully from a collection of works for *les grands hautbois* at the Court of Louis XIV. This was contrasted with music by Kreiger and Boismortier and a jovial Concerto Comique by Michel Corrette. Both of their programmes were well chosen and reflected a much wider range of repertoire than might be expected from their instrumental line-up of three oboes (one being a tenor) and a bassoon.

Renaicinq were formed last year specifically for a masterclass at the Copenhagen Renaissance Music Festival. The five singers are all students at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with the common madrigal line-up of two mezzo-sopranos, a countertenor, baritone and bass. They suffered the potentially disastrous event of having one of their mezzos fall ill just before they left Denmark. All credit must go to Philippe Cold for stepping in at very short notice. Their first programme comprised three madrigals by Monteverdi, expressing the omnipresence of 'fleeting love'. In their spoken introduction they span a nice tale around the texts, something which always helps to draw the audience in. In their other programme they presented three Danish composers active in the Court of King Christian IV and the German composer Grabbe, all of whom had been sent to Venice by their patrons to study with Giovanni Gabrieli. They have a very sound sense of working and singing together, and produce an excellent blend of tone. They made very effective use of the wide stage area, notably in the Final programme where they formed into a number of interesting groupings including one where they were grouped in a tight circle, back to back.

The Saraband Consort were formed in 1998 as a vocal and continuo group but have gone through a recent transformation into an instrumental group with the interesting line-up of two violins, two violas, cello, bass, theorbo and keyboards. The two violas makes them particularly suitable for the German repertoire and their rich tonal pallet (helped by the inclusion of the double bass) was shown to very good effect in Sonatas by Biber and Furchheim in the preliminary concert and a Suite by Muffat in the Final. The *Rigaudon pour de Jeunes Païsannes Poitevines* from the latter was given a wonderful vigorous reading. In the Final, all the players lined up in a gentle arc facing slightly in towards each other, apart from the cellist, who sat in the centre of the arc, and the theorbo player, who sat at one end of the arc but faced the audience. The two violins and violas were interspersed with each other, stressing the important consort nature of the music. Their first violinist, George Crawford gave an outstandingly delicate and musical performance throughout, as did the two viola players, Yvali Zilliacus and Malgosia Ziemkiewicz. Another feature of both concerts were Benjamin Bayl's fascinating transcriptions of Bach organ works – the Prelude and Fugue in G for the first concert and the Prelude and 'Wedge' fugue for the final, the latter nearly turning into a Brandenburg 5½ .

Looking back over my reviews of the York competition over the years, there are points which crop again and again. One of the key ones is the tricky issue of dealing with applause. Although contact with the audience can be a key factor while playing, it is when you receive applause that you have the best chance of making direct communication with it. A number of groups seemed a bit embarrassed during their applause, and often demonstrated this by quickly turning away to sort things out for their next piece. But for the audience, this can seem like a bit of a rejection. By spending a bit longer acknowledging applause, not only will the audience feel that you have

respected their enthusiasm, but you will probably gain rather more applause than if you cut the audience short by turning away. I have a feeling that an audience which is allowed to applaud for longer, will end up liking you better.

A related issue is the question of whether, and when, you want the audience to applaud. It should be within the performers' control, and it is particularly important to make it clear when you intend to continue without applause and/or when a piece has ended. By and large, groups were good at the this, but there were one or two occasions where there was a moment of unease within the audience about whether they were supposed to applaud or not. There are many friendly ways to actually tell an audience to save the applause until the end, and this can make a useful addition to the preliminary chat.

As to chat, most groups managed this extremely well, particularly in the Final. There was only one group that did not talk to the audience at all, and a couple of groups that made speech an integral, and very effective, part of their performance. But there were a few occasions where personal enthusiasm for the music led speakers to become rather too expansive or too detailed. This is another thing that does need rehearsal. It is important to memorise what you are going to say or, at best, just glance at notes – reading a text just doesn't work. Incidentally, the programme notes were all excellent – brief, informative and with the right balance between information and mood setting.

All the groups were very professional in their stage appearance, with black continuing to be the colour of choice. Most of the groups had made an effort to coordinate their clothing, some adding small splashes of colour.

The ability to play in consort without any one player seeking to dominate is important in any group of musicians, and this year's competitors were particularly good at this. All the groups seemed to have a strong group ethic, although there was one player who did sound a bit out of kilter with their companions in terms of tone and playing style.

All the groups deserved to be finalists in the competition and, in my view, most of them stood a good chance of winning. There were a number of concert promoters in the audience and I know that a number of groups have already been discussing future concerts. And I am happy to recommend all of them to any other concert promoters reading this. They all have the potential for successful careers as performers, but the next few years are the most critical.

In the end, the winners were Le Jardin Secret. They also won the audience prize, donated by the Friends of the York Early Music Festival – a rare example of competition audiences actually agreeing with the judges.

BIRMINGHAM TEWKESBURY LONDON

Clifford Bartlett

EX CATHEDRA – MONTEVERDI VESPERS

Yes, Jeffrey Skidmore did conclude his 1610 Vespers with an untransposed Magnificat, as I mentioned in my last editorial. But probably for the last time: at least, that's what Jeremy West told me before the concert and Jeffrey himself after it. The theoretical evidence of clef code here aligns with the practical evidence (top D was unprecedented for violins as well as cornetts), and for me a major consideration is the final tutti: untransposed, its centre of gravity is too high, so the conductor is tempted to add 16', which doesn't solve the problem and the solidity that the weight of lower parts gives is still lost.

The concert (20 June) presented me with two problems. First, I wasn't there as critic so, as a late booker (a month or so before the concert), I was placed near the back. Much of the performance was very distant, and I could barely hear the effect of voices and instruments placed antiphonally by the time the sound had echoed down the church (Birmingham's Oratory), and I suspect that quite a lot of it rose into the dome and circulated there for some seconds. The violins were virtually inaudible in their first solo spot in the Magnificat, and not much better responding to the cornetts in 'Deposuit'. The cornetts at least stood up: why didn't the fiddles? (Has anyone researched when and where performers played sitting or on their feet?) Another cause of inaudibility was the way that a cantus firmus sung chorally, even quietly, covers the instruments more than when sung solo. One of the difficulties of the work is the assumption that it is choral: as I've often said before, it is highly desirable for as many people to sing the work as possible but preferably with an audience only non-specialists and with uninformed critics!

How does one listen to music that one knows inside out? The *Vespers* is one of those works that I can hear in my head without a performance. I might enjoy recognising a new and better way of handling a phrase or distributing the forces – I always note, for instance, what the keyboard player does in the ostinato bass bits of 'Laetatus sum' and the continuo-only chords at its end, and whether the violin duet is doubled in the Sonata (I am glad that I can now quote Tim Roberts' example of doubling if anyone objects when I do it). But the bits that overwhelm me when playing – e.g. the magical beginnings of the Glorias of Dixit & Nisi Dominus, 'ut collocet eum' in Laudate pueri, the final section of Audi caelum, the transition from cornets to violins in Deposuit – didn't work their magic, and I'm not saying that as a criticism of the performance as such. When playing, in fact, I think the music is transmitted from the page to my fingers and to my feelings without sound being a major consideration. Tempo and rhythm matter, but not timbre or pitch. I'd be interested in the thoughts of readers.

LOS IMPOSSIBLES

On to another concert in a big church, Tewkesbury Abbey (9 July). I was really enthusiastic about the Christina Pluhar's *Los Impossibles* when I reviewed it last December. Heard live, it was amazing. The music is primarily based on the grounds that underlay much music around 1600. We've heard recordings by such as Jordi Savall, Andrew Lawrence-King and Stephen Stubbs that use them for free improvisation, but Christina Pluhar and L'Arpeggiata go further. I haven't checked any of the pieces named against the scores, but am pretty certain that the essence of what we heard was improvisation. There was hardly a written note to be seen – much better for communicating with the audience. And for some of the players, the communication was part of the act of playing. The violinist was playing the audience visually as well as musically, and I loved the way he rose to his feet while playing an upbeat – movement and music as one. (As in jazz groups, the players stood for solos.) The drum solo was not only a tour de force unlike anything I've heard at an early music concert, but also a juggling act. From my critic's seat in the third row, the balance was odd – I've never heard a theorbo sound so loud (I'm not complaining) – but my informant from the back of the church, Julian Elloway, said that it was was fine there. We agreed that the harpsichord was superfluous, an unnecessary expense for a touring group. It was a pity that the players didn't occasionally wander down among the audience. The psaltery's sound went up and didn't come down near us, but may have travelled further.

As I said in my review of the CD, the Kings Singers didn't fit the ethos of the players. At the concert, they were better, but they moved between the wrong sort of refinement and a knowing parody, whereas the players had none of the singers' self-consciousness. Christina Pluhar directed so rhythmically, with amazingly varied ways of playing the basses of grounds. I found it difficult to take my eyes off her face, so delighted did she seem, especially when a player did something unexpected. I drove well over 200 miles for the event, and it was worth every one of them: if they come within reach of you, don't miss them. (They are at the South Bank Early Music Weekend on 15 September: details in diary.)

I passed Tewkesbury a couple of weeks later, completely surrounded by water yet with none to drink. The media remembered 'Water, water everywhere, But...' and one programme discovered that there are seven possible continuations by the Coleridge, none corresponding with what is usually quoted nor with the version published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798): 'Neany [or Ne any] drop to drink'. The poem apposite for Gloucester is less distinguished: 'Doctor Foster went to...'

BUSKAID ENGLISH BAROQUE SOLOISTS

I've been interested in Buskaid ever since Rosemary Nalden used my stand at an Early Music Exhibition as a basis to keep some of her equipment for collecting money (I deduce, from the history of Buskaid, in 1992). She has kept me informed about this amazing educational project in Soweto, where she runs a string orchestra for children and youths. I've mentioned their CDs in the past, though haven't managed to get to their concerts. On 15 July, they had the unprecedented honour of playing in a Prom, as well as having a pre-Prom session. The latter was impressive. Rosemary conducted the overture to Purcell's *King Arthur*, then, after some chat, the 22 players were led by the solo violin in Geminiani's concert grosso version of Corelli's *La Follia*. The soloist and director, Samson Diamond, first touched a violin when he was ten; a decade later came to study at the Royal Northern College of Music, has just graduated with distinction, and is now playing professionally in Manchester. Coincidentally, I had listened to the Purcell Consort's version in the car on the way to London; the two performances were, while different in many respects, equally skilful and effective, but taste has moved on a bit in 20 years and Buskaid has the greater freedom that characterises modern 'early' playing. That was followed by Biber's *Battalia*, which the orchestra dramatised, dancing while playing: very impressive, both as an idea and in effect! What a shame that the cameras ready for the evening concert were not recording it. Stylistically the players are superb. You don't have to have a baroque violin and bow to make Biber sound effective. The concert itself couldn't show what one can hear from their CDs: that they can play stylishly in other repertories too: their Elgar sounds like Elgar. Rosemary has done an amazing job with her players.

The first half of the main concert was Campra's *Requiem*, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner. My companion, not fully aware of cross-currents in the early-music world, said tentatively at the interval: 'that was very romantic', not wanting to be so bold as to make it clear that her surprise was also a criticism. To me, everything seemed to be so refined that it detensified rather than helped the music, and (in the Albert Hall especially) too much effort to keep the volume down was counterproductive. I don't know if Campra wrote any dynamic marks – I neglected to buy a score for myself when ordering them for the performers – but the music wasn't allowed to sound freely and was also a tad slow (even more so for listeners at home). I suspect that the conductor was trying to control too much, but how does someone who feels that he knows how the music should go stop trying to control every element? The heat didn't help either. A more outgoing Grand Motet might have worked better.

But EB had watched and recorded the TV broadcast, and thought that my account didn't match hers, and she was right: it seemed completely different. Blame the Albert Hall for exaggerating the problems. I suspect that I've heard more concerts there than in any other auditorium, probably attending 20 times a Prom Season season when I was in my teens, either in the arena or, more often, lying on the floor at the back of the top gallery, where the sound was distant but clear. Big orchestras can use a wide dynamic range, but smaller ensembles sound better if there is less dynamic contrast (as do the broadcasts when heard on less than top-range equipment). This was long before the mushrooms first appeared in the roof (I heard the test concert: Bruckner 7th with, I think, Colin Davies.) But since the more recent rejigging, I've only heard Biber's *Missa Bruxellensis* (from a good stalls seat at about 6 o'clock, ie opposite the stage) and *Rheingold* (from 3 o'clock, which was where I was sitting for this concert) and was worried by the distant sound of even the, for early music, large-scale Biber. The Campra seemed much better on TV, with some immediacy and body, and the soloists had more effect. I was also less worried about the conductor's pressure on the music. But in the second half, the cameras concentrated far too much on the dancers; and one was more aware of the musicians in the Hall. Apart from missing the Buskaid players, who were a delight to watch, many shots didn't seem to be catching the dancers properly: I presume that movements were too free for the rehearsal to enable advance planning.

Gardiner and Rameau belong together. Even without the dancing and drums, the second half would have cheered anyone. The English Baroque Soloists were on the main stage, the Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble in the middle of the arena, each with an area for dancing. The Compaignie Roussat-Lubek was bright and witty, matching the music well in their first dance, but otherwise distracting by adding stories that had no relevance to the music. Some were witty (e.g. A coat hanger with dancers inside the coats), but why not get a composer to write something that fitted them? They had poise and style, but part of their style seemed to be parodying classical ballet, which undermines rather than enhances the music. I was more impressed by the vigour of the African group Dance for All, a dance equivalent to Buskaid based in Cape Town provided four dance, joined by two of Buskaid's players. They made occasional references to the neat and stylised movements of the French group, but they danced the music. Turning the TV sound right down, one was left, not just with the rhythm, but the phrasing and varied moods of the music. If I may be so unPC as to use the word, it was Buskaid's fat girl who stole the show: why don't we see dancers of all sizes in normal ballet?

Both orchestras and all the dancers squashed together on the main platform for a final group from *Les Boréades*, Rameau's last opera, the final Contradanses turning the proceedings into something like the Last Night of the Proms, with the clapping of the encore drowning the music. If it really was Rameau's musical envoi, it sends a different message about death than Campra's! Here, the dance did have an explicit African reference. The Buskaiders call it the Gumboot Dance (the dancers were attired accordingly), with reference to the dances their menfolk did after their day's work down the mines. Rameau's dance has crossed to a very different culture. (I remember the effect the music had at Gardener's concert performance at the QEH in 1975; I thought that Alan Hacker

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Telemann in Vienna
A tale of "lost" cantatas

Brian Clark

Media reaction to the discovery of 'lost' works by major composers in recent years has bordered on the near sensationalist. Who can forget the ('oops, they're actually just very good forgeries') Haydn keyboard sonatas, or the 'is it or isn't it? Handel *Gloria* (the jury is still out, it seems), or most recently the multi-versed Bach aria ('possibly part of a lost cantata' – or more likely an aria in the Krieger-Pachelbel-Erlebach tradition?) So I'm wondering if the BBC will come knocking on my door asking for an exclusive interview about my locating seven Telemann cantatas, thought long lost.

I deliberately avoided the word 'discovery'. The truth of the matter is that the works are listed in a catalogue which was published in the 1860s – and not a listing of some obscure convent library, either: the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna! I had gone to St Andrews one day – kind of a regular pilgrimage to my Alma mater – and, having scoured the volumes of RISM and Eitner for the information I was after, discovered that the library there has the Vienna catalogue[1]. Regular EMR readers will know that music in Austria is one of my specialist interests, so this was a golden opportunity to scan over a thousand pages of information about the source material, albeit in Latin. (Ask CB or Anne Graf how good my Latin is!)

My notebook was soon filling up with the usual suspects (Bertali, Schmelzer and son, Sances, Reutter, etc.) when a most unexpected name leapt of the page: Telemann. What? Church music by Telemann in Austria? When the name appeared for a second time, I became even more suspicious. The two volumes in question were listed as: *Cantus sacri per circulum anni, numero 41, pro plurimis dominicis et singulis festis diebus ecclesiae reformatae, una vel pluribus vocibus, comitantibus instrumentis decantandi [41 Motetten auf die Sonn- u. Festtage] (Part.)*[2] which must mean something like 'Sacred songs for an annual cycle, 41 in number, for several Sundays and separate feast days of the Reformed Church, for one or several voices to be sung with accompanying instruments', although the simplified German annotation merely notes '41 motets for Sun- and Feastdays'! I was instantly puzzled, for I dimly remembered reviewing a CD in these pages of Telemann's motets (possibly the complete known motets, in fact?) and was fairly sure that there were none for solo voice and instruments, and equally certain that there certainly weren't as many as 41.

Whenever I'm puzzled by Telemannia, I now instantly call on the services of David Bellinger, whose appreciation and understanding of TWV/TVWV I find astonishing; I felt sure that he'd either gasp aloud at my discovery, or pat me on the head with a 'There, there, old chap' if I was completely wasting my time. After confirming that my hunches about 'motets' and unknown Telemann cantata sources in Vienna were correct, he offered to go off and hunt down possible explanations. The temperature rose a few days later when he reported back that although many of the works had survived in other sources (albeit, it transpires, in slightly different forms), some of the works were listed in Stephen Zohn's *Grove* listing as 'missing', while seven were, in his words, 'completely off the radar'. Now I was getting excited!

Vienna very kindly supplied print-outs of the first few pages of the first three cantatas, and it was clear that these were fully-fledged cantatas for voices and strings (wind instruments put in a very occasional appearance), so I ordered a microfilm of the whole lot. At this point, Dave also suggested contacting Dr Eric Fiedler in Frankfurt, who is overhauling the present TVWV cantata listings and therefore at the heart of research in this area. He jumped on the list and identified many of them but was equally puzzled by the 'unknown' works. One thing that had already caught my eye was the fact that the mystery works' first vocal number (many are preceded by sinfonias) were recitatives with no underlaid text – so the works had been catalogued using the text of the first aria.

Dave came up with another master stroke at this point – his German contact, Johannes Pausch, might be able to help identify the works, as he had access to several textbooks for cantatas which Telemann had set. Amazingly, a mere two or three days later, I received a complete listing of Hermann Ulrich von Lingen's *Poetische Aufmunterungen Zur Andacht, Anhörung Des Göttlichen Worts, Und Führung Eines Christlichen Lebens*[3], in short a cycle of cantatas performed on Sundays and Feastdays during the church year 1728-29 in Eisenach – with music by Telemann. This surviving textbook helped put most of the jigsaw together, confirming that the 'new' cantatas were, in fact, long-lost ones.

This issue's music is taken from one such cantata (from the Lingen cycle), for the Feast of the Annunciation. Listed in the Vienna catalogue as *Hinweg betrügerische Lüste!*, the correct title is in fact *Des Herrn Ruf.* (Mus.Hs. 15.532. Bd.I, folio. 102a). Like all the works from that cycle, it opens with a Sinfonia (see next page), which is followed by a second aria and a final chorus (which is always a setting of a Biblical text). The arias are slightly curious – one voice sings the A section of the Da Capo structure, while another sings the B section.

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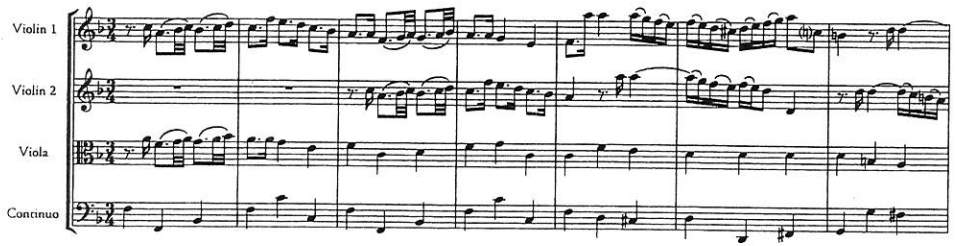
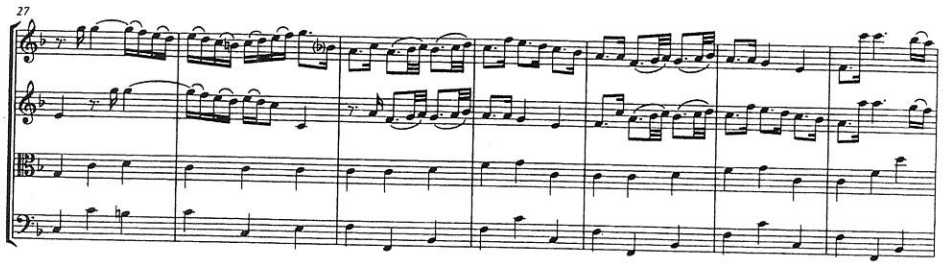
1 *Tabulae Codicum Manu Scriptorum Praeter Graecos et Orientales in Bibliotheca Palatina Vindobonensi Asservatorum*, vol. IX-X.

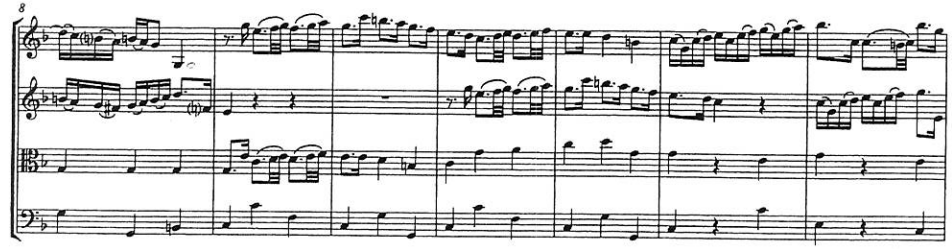
2 A-Wn Mus.Hs. 15.532

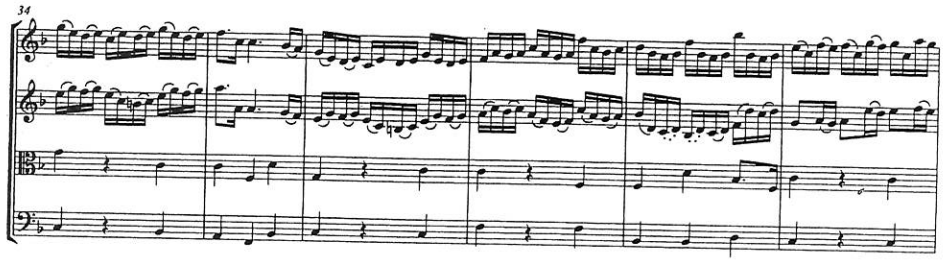
3 Archiv der Georgenkirche Eisenach; Sign. 2345

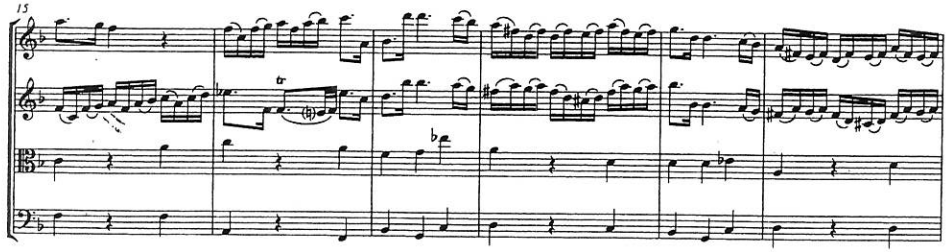
G. Ph. Telemann: Des Herrn Ruf

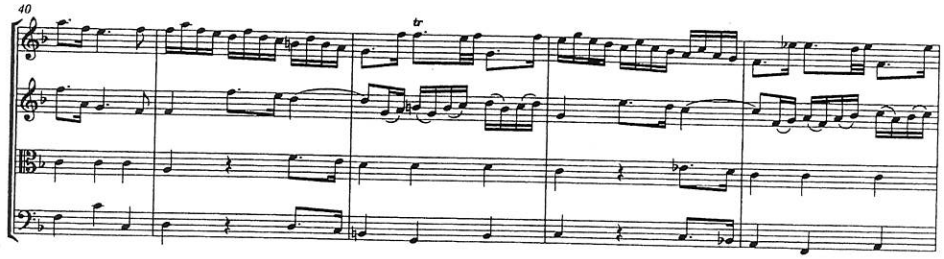


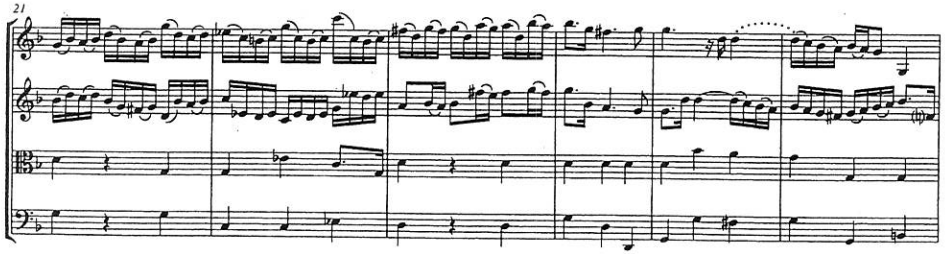


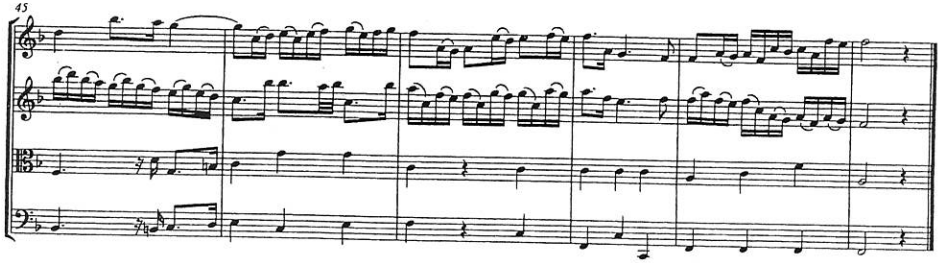












As good fortune would have it, Eric was due to be in Vienna the following week anyway, so he had the opportunity to look at the manuscripts first hand (something I will have to do myself at some stage, too). He noted the watermarks and identified the papermills to locations in Austria-Hungary, suggesting that the manuscripts (though clearly mid-18th century in provenance) had been copied somewhere in the empire. He has written in great detail about his discoveries for the Madgeburg Telemann Society (anyone interested should contact me for more information).

I have decided to publish the 'new' cantatas myself, and hope to get together a group in Scotland to perform them – again, anyone interested should contact me. In fact, I'd then like to go on to perform similar works by Fasch, Stölzel and Erlebach that I've edited already but so long to hear. And then, once the BBC have left, I'll go off and discover some more gems – look out, Harry Potter!

Edinburgh International Festival

Brian Clark

This year's Edinburgh International Festival (10-26 August) has, for the first time, a major early music thread (see the Concert Diary for details). 2007 is the 400th anniversary of the first performance of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and the Festival's Artistic Director, Jonathan Mills, wanted not only to celebrate that event but also to give the work a context by filling concert-goers' ears with music from the preceding centuries.

'Monody,' he told me, 'was essentially a reaction against the decadent corruption of polyphony, in which music had become self-regarding and texts had ceased to have a real meaning.'

The concert listings are impressive, with leading ensembles from Europe and the USA: Anonymous 4 present a programme from 11th-century Provence and a Ladymass, the Orlando Consort perform two concerts (one of Josquin and a second that combines Machaut and Dufay), The Theatre of Voices join forces firstly with the viol ensemble Phantasm in William Byrd's masses, then with Ars Nova for a recital of Taverner. La Venexiana will perform twice: Gesualdo's *Tenebrae* responses one night and some of his madrigals the following morning. The Huelgas Ensemble explore the music of Lassus, while The Tallis Scholars have two dates, one focussing on Palestrina, the other on music from The Spanish Golden Age.

Jordi Savall and Hesperion XXI perform *Orfeo* three times (on two of the three occasions, the Vienna Schauspielhaus modern 'remix, *Poppea* starts 15 minutes later). The performances are scheduled to allow audiences to migrate from the 6pm recitals to later concerts, so Monteverdi addicts can also enjoy Concerto Italiano's madrigals at 6pm (they will give five programmes of works from Books 1-8). The early music thread finishes with Cantus Cölln performing motets by J. S. Bach.

There is also a series of concerts at 11am which includes a gamba recital by Savall, Mark Padmore 'walking to Lübeck', Nachtmusique, the Savall family, and Chiara Banchini's Ensemble 415. On 16th August the Usher Hall will be filled with the sounds of Monteverdi's Vespers, again featuring Savall with La Capella Reial de Catalunya and Hespèrion XXI.

All in all, this is a most enterprising venture and hopefully early music enthusiasts will turn out in large numbers to support the Artistic Director in his quest to include so much early music at the core of a major British music festival for the first time – these are hard commercial times, and such risk taking is to be commended. Ultimately, success will always be judged in terms of takings (it's a sad reality in a country where the state does so very little to support the arts) and it's up to us as the audience to ensure that this is not a flash in the pan – otherwise, we may have to wait twenty years or so for another early music spectacular on this scale.

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For performance dates and times
visit www.eif.co.uk or contact the press office.
There are also listings in the
EMR Concert Diary, pages 28-29.
Hub Tickets: + 44 (0)131 473 2000
Online booking and information www.eif.co.uk

Various series include:

- **Harmony and Humanity**; a new string of concerts in the atmospheric surroundings of Greyfriars Kirk trace the development of European vocal music through the middle ages and the renaissance to illustrate the context in which Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* was composed.

- **Monteverdi's Madrigals**; early evening performances of madrigals from all eight books of Claudio Monteverdi's dramatic miniatures by leading baroque ensemble **Concerto Italiano**.

- **Bank of Scotland Queens Hall Series**; a series of 18 morning concerts across three weeks staged in the intimate surroundings of The Queens Hall, many of which focus on early music repertoire.

- Avant-garde theatre legends **The Wooster Group**, unconventional theatre makers **Vienna Schauspielhaus** and vibrant young dance company **Compagnie Montalvo-Hervieu** use baroque opera and music as inspiration for three very modern, exciting and musical productions, *La Didone, Poppea* and *On Danse.*

BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

EARLY WELSH MUSIC

Sally Harper *Music in Welsh Culture Before 1650: A Study of the Principal Sources* Ashgate, 2007. xix + 441 pp, £60.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 5263 2

This isn't intended as a history of Welsh music, as the subtitle makes clear, but it is probably the nearest we can get to an up-to-date, scholarly one. To a large extent, study of the archival and literary sources *is* the history: there is remarkably little actual music to produce an aural dimension to it. The most significant source of music is the Robert ap Huw MS, from the end of the period covered; a chapter on which concludes the secular third of the book, which is devoted to *cerdd dant* ('the craft of the string' – harp or crwth). That is about the only chapter until much later in the book that refers to a body of notated music, and deals with music that can be heard on CD. (Unlike most scholarly studies, this has a discography, albeit small). Although all Welsh terms and quotations are translated, a bilingual reader would be more relaxed than I was. I'm not an expert on the subject – the only bit of specialised knowledge that I could use to check the thoroughness of the book's content was the three- and four-part singing at Tintern and Abbey Dore in 1217, which is noted on p. 194. But I can usually sense when a book is phoney or slapdash, and this most definitely isn't. So I read as a learner, a lover of scholarship, and with interest in music's past, and found it a very satisfying volume. I only noted one point to question, a quotation from Giraldus Cambrensis *Topographica Hibernica*: why is 'bardi Kambrenses et cantors seu recitatores' (I omit the editorial punctuation) translated as 'Welsh bards, singers and *jongleurs*'? Why not 'Welsh bards, and singers or public readers', i.e. two types of person, not three? 'Jongleur' seems an odd translation as well.

In the second section, devoted to the Latin liturgy in Wales, we might expect more actual music, but the sources that survive contain little distinctive chant. Part III covers the post-Reformation period, when Wales was somewhat superficially infiltrated by the English church and culture: the map of locations mentioned is extremely sparse. Most of the information is institutional, but there are some curious attempts at translations into Welsh: John Case's *Apologia Musices* and a metrical psalter. The main composer of Welsh origin was Philip ap Rhys, preserved by Thomas Tomkins, whose childhood at St David's does not qualify him for acceptance as a Welsh composer himself. The book ends (apart from an appendix of liturgical MSS, bibliography and index) with the surviving music and organ at Chirk Castle. The book is excellent in its way – congratulations on the author for her labours; but one has to have a very scholarly interest in Welsh music to read it through.

WORLD OF BAROQUE

The World of Baroque Music: New Perspectives Edited by George B. Stauffer Indiana UP, 2006. x + 293pp + 2 CDs (151' 21") , $35.00. ISBN 978 0 253 34798 5

This is a sort of *In memoriam* to PGM (Pro Gloriam Musicae) Records and 'in celebration of the life of Gabe M. Weiner [whose label it was] and his love of music'. PGM started in 1993 and by the time he died in 1997 he had issued 19 discs devoted to HIP performances of early repertoire. We reviewed those which reached us. They had interesting repertoire, though some were not quite top-mark as regard to the performances. But it was a magnificent achievement, as the extensive samples on the 2 CDs show. Indeed, at the equivalent of £17.50, the book + two and a half hours of music is very good value.

The title might make us expect a book cobbled together to fill a corner that a publisher sees in the market. But it is probably best to think of it as a mixture of Festschrift and CD booklet, with a dozen writers offering high-quality essays on music included in PCM recordings by writers who are musicologists capable of communicating with the non-specialist reader.

It begins with 'Songs of Shakespeare's England' by Craig Monson and Barbara Russano Hanning on Italian monody, both excellent surveys. Hanning could be a little more subtle about the opening of Caccini's *Amarilli* on p. 31. She points out that that it starts from the top of its ambitus, but rather than just noting that it outlines a descending fourth, she could have mentioned that the obvious sequence of notes (D C | B flat A G | A) is made more interesting as D A | Bflat Fsharp G | A, with a perfect and a diminished fourth added by changing the second and fourth notes. Mary Oleskiewicz covers the whole 17th century of Italian instrumental music to finish with Vivaldi, which is too wide for the amount of space available. It is misleading to state (p. 56) the *In ecclesiis* is scored for two four-voice vocal 'choirs' without explaining that one of them is clearly for soloists while the Capella isn't soloistic though doesn't necessarily need more than four voices. I see little fundamental similarity between the *Sonata sopra Santa Maria* (the title is Italian) and Gabrieli (p. 63). I read Kerala Snyder's chapter on Buxtehude immediately after her revised book (see p. 24), and still found it interesting: it even gave me a piece of information that I had been looking for in the book but couldn't find. The editor gives a broad account of music at the French court. Michael Beckerman's chapter on Salamone Rossi is an interesting questioning of history and how we understand it, but doesn't feel quite right here. Wendy Heller concerns itself with Barbara Strozzi's feminine viewpoint in her monodies. Victor Coelho gives

information about the baroque guitar, probably a more common sound in the period than most of us realise, and David Schulenberg surveys 17th-century keyboard music in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands with fluency. Bach gets two chapters: the editor on his self-borrowings, Daniel R. Melamed on the versions of the St John Passion, written before Carus produced editions that distinguish them a little nore clearly. Finally, Gerard Béhague considers church music in Mexico and Brazil. All chapters have short, useful bibliographies, there are well-chosen illustrations, colour plates and music examples. All-in-all, a book that invites use at several levels.

HUNT – MILITARY – PASTORAL

Raymonde Monelle *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral.* Indiana UP, 2006 [2007]. xi + 304pp $60.00. ISBN 978 0 253 34766 4

One of the most important books I read as a student was Ernst Robert Curtius's *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*. It blew a blast of fresh air through the ways of thinking about literature imposed by the EngLit critics then in fashion, and provided a basis for understanding European literary culture. It was written during the Nazi period: 'When the German catastrophe came, I decided to serve the idea of medievalistic humanism by studying the Latin literature of the Middle Ages... What I have said will have made it clear that my book is not the product of purely scholarly interests, that it grew out of a concern for the preservation of Western culture.' So it is still relevant. Monelle gives him due acknowledgment for his work on topics, and for an understanding of where Monelle's technical term comes from, as well as its background, Chapter 5 of Curtius's book is the place to start.

I wondered whether the Greek *topos* should have been left untranslated: it's a bit Humpty-Dumptyish giving a common word a specialist meaning, though one has then the problem of plurals (*topoi* or topuses) and genitives (*topou*, topus's), but the *Topics* has been around for centuries as an Aristotelian title. For those who haven't met it, in this context it is a musical idea based on a sound from the real world which is quoted or alluded to so as to convey some meaning. Anyone who knows *Tom and Jerry* and other such cartoons will be aware of the frequent musical quotations. In such contexts, it usually just gives a resonance to the action, but in 'abstract' music it can link it to the outside world (whether real or imaginary) and can reinforce, undermine or deepen the emotion the music is expressing.

Monelle surveys three areas in which topics frequently occur. I found that he was more interesting when describing the source of the topics than their use, in the signifier rather than the signified, to use the jargon. In hunting, the difference between myth and reality (especially in Germany) was a surprise. Noble Germans didn't chase stags through the forest on horseback but had the game herded into an enclosure, where they popped them off at point-blank range as they were driven past. Hunting as it was practised in Britain was more in the French style, and the victim at least had a chance. In the romantic, medieval past, horn calls would have been single notes, and Monelle suggests that the sort of horn calls we recognise were based on developments by art musicians, not hunters. I would have welcomed an explanation of why hunting music and music connected with horses was in compound time. I listened to several news bulletins showing excerpts from the Derby, and the sound that came over was more of an upbeat (whose length, as in a French overture, was short but whose exact length did not matter) and a downbeat. I was puzzled at the assumption that the music of *Erlkönig* represents a horse (pp 24-6): I've always assumed that bass indicated urgency, the effort of playing the repeated octaves so quickly making the player (and, one hopes, the listener) feel the tension of the rider, not the horse. The comments on how the topics are used, in fact, don't seem to penetrate very far into the meaning. I'd have welcomed more profound discussion on the extent to which the sombre and magical depth the use of horns can give to romantic German music is dependent on the association of hunting calls with the depth of the forest, and how it relates to the position of the forest in German culture. And is there any particular significance when a prominent horn does NOT suggest hunting. (Brahms' horn trio might be analysed with that in mind.)

It was news to me that armies didn't march in step in Britain and Germany till the 18th century. (This was confirmed by a reader involved in battle re-enactments). Monelle thinks that Arbeau's 1589 description implies that it wasn't very familiar, and suggests that early keyboard marches were not military. As with the hunt, so with the army, the familiar topics are not necessarily ancient and are tied up with a mythology of a noble activity seen through through a romantic, artistic perspective. The actual status of soldiers (of varying ranks) varied enormously, but military music (apart from a few bugle calls) seems related to public displays rather than what happened on the battlefield. The topos refers more to courtly ceremony than life and death. Was the 'last post' played in battle – I've no direct experience; but for most of us its significance is from Armistice Day or the daily sounding at Ypres.

More could be said about the Dead March in *Saul*. It would be interesting to know how soon its use changed from the imaginary stage to real funeral processions. ('Procession' isn't in Monelle's index, but how far do processions and marches overlap?) Handel used the military extra-large drums: what were the big instruments borrowed from the Tower normally used for? The use of the flute calls on a different symbolism, since it has a tradition of representing death and other worlds (perhaps through the relationship with pastoral, a potential link with the book's next section). The trombones, too, might be a further other-world link (cf Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, where they are opposed to the pastoral strings), though in an English context the audience reaction might have been sheer perplexity, since they had long ceased to be part of the musical soundscape.

The section on Pastoral begins with the best short account of the concept that I have seen, well worth reading by

anyone interested in the literary and visual manifestations of Arcadian nostalgia. Apart from the Italian shepherds bagpiping at Christmas and sicilianas, though, its musical presence tends to be text-dependent. Berlioz makes good use of the cor anglais, Debussy of the flute. Vaughan Williams is mentioned, but the author decides that his modal and folky style makes the pastoral so essential a part of his musical language that individual passages can have no topical meaning. A pity he misses links with the military in the fanfares of the *Pastoral Symphony*, and it is noteworthy that *The Lark Ascending* is located, not in the English countryside, but on Flanders fields.

This is an eye-opening book, but I find it disappointing in its lack of sophistication in tracing the topics themselves to the subtlety with which they can be used.

O LET US HOWLE

Amanda Eubanks Winkler: 'O Let Us Howle Some Heavy Note': *Music for Witches, the Melancholic, and the Mad on the Seventeenth-Century English Stage* Indiana UP, 2006. x 232pp, $39.95. ISBN 13 978 0 253 34805 0

I was wondering whether the only person I know to be an expert on English witchcraft of the the period might review this, but Ian Bostridge (whose OUP book is quoted here a couple of times) was rather busy dying in Venice at the time, so I didn't ask him. In fact, the picture on the front exaggerates the topic of witches: melancholy and madness are of equal status and what holds the book together, *Dido and Aeneas*, does not appear in the title.

I can't think of a book about which I made more notes during the course of my reading. This is generally a bad sign, since (as readers will note and as some authors have thought unfair), if the tenor of my review is critical, I try to back it with specific points, whereas approbation can be more general. I will, however, spare the reader the detail. In sum, this is a stimulating book, but one which needs to be read critically. The author stresses that the expression of intense emotion publicly was a sign of madness, but doesn't address the problem that, if such emotions are not expressed by characters on stage, there is no play. In fact, part of the problem with *Dido and Aeneas* is that Aeneas only expresses himself briefly so comes over as a wimp. Winkler gives us useful background ideas, but doesn't use them with enough care. And I am worried about some of the musical comments: I assumed that her background was primarily literary, so was surprised to see that she 'specialises in early music'.

There's a nice example where she likens 'In Our Deep Vaulted Cell' (author's capitals: do your really need them when using a first line as a title?) to a hymn. That word has several meanings, but the normal modern one is least likely to be relevant for Purcell's time. There is then an odd statement: 'Strangely, this type of setting is more similar to that used in Protestant services, given its simplicity. Perhaps these witches are Puritans, not Catholics!' [Elsewhere in the book there is been discussion whether witches were parodies of catholics.] She seems to be using Protestant and Puritans as synonym, which is a case of presenting as comparable a category and a sub-category (I forget the logical term for the error). All brands of non-catholics sang metrical psalms but not hymns (at least, not in church). It was the Catholic liturgy which had hymns, though the extent to which the Office was sung in the England in the 1680s, even when James II was on the throne, must have been minimal. This paragraph (p. 60) should probably have been deleted before the book reached publication stage. It is so easy to fall into a trap when stepping outside one's area of expertise.

The music examples are odd – presumably home set with a primitive programme: I can't imagine a professional accepting such weird layouts. One general feature, relevant to what follows, is the omission of slurs. When I started typesetting, long slurs were fiddly and I omitted them from some of our early Purcell editions, mostly in accordance with the sources, which often slur two or three notes but not long melismas. Winkler doesn't use MS practice as a justification. I was intrigued by the way brief quotes from *Dido & Aeneas* each had a four-line acknowledgment to the Purcell Society edition for bits of vocal lines that I would have thought were the same in every edition. So I checked with the original Purcell Society edition (1889), Dent (1925), Britten (1960/61), the revised Purcell Society (1975), Dent revised by Ellen Harris (1987) and my edition (1995 – the most recent, so on normal academic grounds, if only on the pygmy standing on a giant principle, should have been preferred). One would expect them to agree on 'weighed. But ah! but ah! what language can I' (see p. 141). Despite her acknowledgement, Winkler does not quote the 1975 edition exactly, since she omits its distinctive feature: two editorial suggestions for halving the length of up-beat quavers and the indication *espress.* (When is Purcell's recitative not expressive!) The 1889 edition has an added *p*, and turns the first pair of dotted-quaver + semiquaver into equal quavers (this error not being followed in other editions). 1925 adds hairpins, as does Britten, though the 1987 revision of Dent removes them. The only significant difference is in my edition, which (following the main source) does not tie the crotchet B and D that are the peaks of the two melismas on *ah*! All the other editions print the ties but none acknowledges that they are editorial. I'm not arguing that the notes cannot be tied – they probably should be, though a singer could make a dramatic point by the reiteration; but if I had been writing a book that focuses particularly on one work, I'd have thought that going beyond what is self-evidently a performing edition (and not the latest) was as important as the normal scholarly procedure of citing all the literature, with special concern for the more recent references. And it would have saved bothering to write to Novello. And to allude to another academic limitation, I'd also have referred to the recent recordings of mad songs from the end of the century (Catherine Bott, Evelyn Tubb) and Timothy Roberts' excellent anthology of them for Fretwork Editions.

The preceding two paragraphs are disproportionate to the review. Anyone studying or producing *Dido & Aeneas* should read this book, but with a sceptical, perhaps even

suspicious mind. It traces the dramatic use of witches back to *Macbeth* and illuminates the behaviour of both Dido and Aeneas in a way which could affect stage interpretations. And there are amusing quotes from 17th-century experts on the emotions and gender differences.

GALILEO & MONTEVERDI

Edward Muir *The Culture Wars of the Late Renaissance: Skeptics, Libertines, and Opera* Harvard UP, 2007. xiii + 175pp, £16.95. ISBN 978 0 674 92481 6

The Galileo of the headline is the son, not the father, and the first chapter focusses on the skeptical, free-thinking philosophers at the University of Padua, protected from the influence of Rome by being under the control of Venice. There was competition from the Jesuits in the latter part of the 16th century, but the order was banished from Venetian territories between 1607 and 1657. Had Galileo not left Padua, he would have been safe. Muir's first chapter addresses the nature of the debates that questioned the common assumptions of the Church and Aristotle. Chapter Two shows the freethinking tendency reaching greater extremes, following the case of Ferrante Pallavicino, whose attacks on the Church were rather more virulent: he was executed in Avignon in 1644, aged 44. The link with these and the final chapter, The Librettists, is the Accademia degli Incogniti, founded in 1630 within the traditions previously described. The Accademia is musically important since its members were involved in the development of Venetian opera, notably Busenello, librettist of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. The morality of that work is a puzzle. Muir approaches it from the morality of the audience: 'The consequence of Venetian marriage practices was... the systematic production of patrician bachelors and patrician nuns' (p. 119). Male patricians could not marry below their class, so the shortage of suitable ladies made extramarital liaisons rife. A good time to meet a suitable lady in secrecy? During Carnival, when everyone was masked. Winter in Venice is cold, so what public indoor location was convenient? The opera house, especially since the stage enhanced the mood with enticing love and dalliance on stage (where could you hear any thing like Monteverdi's sensual music?) and there were the curtained boxes when privacy was required. No doubt is was widely known who partnered whom, but not officially. That is the background of the work, and understanding it helps us understand why the work is as it is.

Quite how that affects performance now isn't addressed. Monteverdi's music is often inconsistent with the intent of the text. I was taking a singer through Ottavia's parting lament a few days ago. She's a nasty character: can we bring that into the music, do we play it straight and assume that the audience realises that they need to treat her emotions with scepticism or contempt, or is Monteverdi so carried away with Ottavia's immediate pain that he forgets her past? It is possible to produce the libretto as an immoral play with the baddies winning, but that can, I think, only be done if the director has cloth ears. Monteverdi seems to set each scene as powerfully as he can without questioning it.

Muir's small book (hard-covered but paperback in dimensions) set me thinking. It's a remarkably readable, cross-disciplinary study.

BUXTEHUDE REVISED

Kerala Snyder *Dieterich Buxtehude: Organist in Lübeck, revised edition*. University of Rochester Press, 2007. xxiv + 554pp + CD, £45.00. ISBN 13 978 1 58046 253 2

The first edition, published by Schirmer twenty years ago, has been one of the more-used books on my shelves, so this anniversary update is most welcome. I enjoyed reading it again, but was away from home so I didn't have the original edition for comparison. I suspect that much that seemed new was actually what I'd forgotten. The new version is only three pages longer, though its slightly smaller page size is amply compensated for by smaller print. In a way, this is the wrong year for a revision, since the tricentenary celebrations are likely to release new information and editions. (We'll review Ton Koopman's Carus edition and Manfred Cordes' recording of *Das Jüngste Gericht* in the next issue.) Apart from correcting specific points arising from more recent research (by the author herself as well as others), the area of the book that most needed revision (and still does) was the discussion of the music itself. There's nothing specifically wrong with it, but it doesn't engage with what one hears in the way that the best writers in the Master Musicians series, for instance, manage.

The segregation of the chronological discussion of the music from the account of his life and the survey of his music is inevitable given the uneventful nature of his life and the sketchiness of hard information on the dating of the music. But this results in comments on individual pieces being scattered round the book. Using as example the one Buxtehude work I've played this year (which may well be the one most performed), *Membra Jesu nostri*, the source is mentioned on p. 121, with a facsimile of the title page (p. 122) showing an inscription to Gustav Düben dated 1680, though that need not indicate the composition date. The discussion on the music is scattered. The list of works acts as index, though with a series of page numbers for the work as a whole and constituent members that do not direct the reader to any main discussion of the work, This is on pages 198-9, indexed only as 198. There are comments on the form and whether the seven cantatas were intended to be performed as a group of separately, but not on whether the concept was a unity anyway, though that is a question that arises with Bach's music. What is missing is anything to suggest why so many people want to perform the *Membra* and find it such a powerful work. Some cross-referencing within the text would make the reader's task much easier. Perhaps when all the cantatas are recorded, someone will collect together the texts and translations, add a commentary on the sources and expand the booklet notes into a systematic account of the each work.

There are, of course, so many works that any author would have either to select samples or write more

generally about genres: Snyder chooses the latter. Her task is more difficult in that the Collected Works is far from complete, and there are no non-copyright editions that are readily available as cheap reprints or on the www. The chapters on the keyboard music and string sonatas are more helpful, especially since editions and recordings are more readily available

The most obvious difference between editions is in the caption to the frontispiece, Johannes Voorhout's *Musical Party*. In the first edition, Buxtehude is identified as the man sitting pensively with a sheet of music on his lap which bears a canon and a note 'In hon: dit: Buxtehude: et Joh: Adam Reink: fratr[um]' (the text is barely visible in the first edition and just a blur in the second). But with the redating of Reincken's birth, Buxtehude must look older than him, so he now becomes the man on the left holding a gamba and turning round towards the rather sour-looking Reincken in a kimono at the harpsichord (or perhaps across the picture to the lady theorbist beyond). The former Buxtehude now becomes the singer, who is exchanging amorous glances with the theorbist, who seems to be looking at him rather than at Buxtehude. Curiously, though, the gambist looks like a fatter-faced and older version of the singer, so does the picture represent Buxtehude at two stages in his life? That is more a medieval than baroque device, so maybe Voorhout wasn't very good at faces. The more academic alternative (taken from Snyder: the other speculations concerning the singer and the lady are mine) is that the theorbist is *Musica* and the singer *Auditus* (the listener). But why does the listener have the score?

It is good to have the updated Snyder. There is a CD included which provides an anthology of Buxtehude's music in first-class performances. If you are not professionally involved with the composer and have the first edition, you will probably not want to buy the second; but libraries and those with a particular interest in the composer should, and likewise those interested in the composer or period who missed the first edition. There is a vast amount of solid and absolutely sound scholarship and documentation (150 pages of appendices) that I haven't mentioned here at all, but if that sounds off-putting, the book itself is very readable.

BACH'S RHYTHM AND TEMPO

Ido Abravaya *On Bach's Rhythm and Tempo* (*Bochum Arbeiten der Musikwissenschaft*, 4) Bärenreiter (BVK 1602), 2006. x + 232pp, £24.50.

Writers on rhythm and tempo tend to be prescriptive, so it is refreshing that this book is more subtle. Abravaya writes on his penultimate page:

> Modern performance-practice literature is largely based on quoting and interpreting old treatises and performance manuals, often with the same old didactic prescriptive tone even today... This approach, originating in instruction books for beginners, is the least appropriate way of describing the practice itself. Unfortunately, too many works on performance practice from the second half of the 20th century still confuse between describing actual practice and prescribing the "right way" – which in the end is bound to prove wrong. One cannot theorize or philosophize and give orders in the same breath.

(This reads rather like a paraphrase of Philip Thorby telling me the subject of his lecture at the National Early Music Association AGM on 24 Nov.) Some treatises and manuals are based more on actual practice than others, and one can hear what happens musicality is applied to an early work without the information one can glean from musicological research on the 1951 Dido & Aeneas recording to be reviewed in the next issue. But a great merit of this approach is that doctrinaire ideas are avoided, as are simple answers. It demands a careful, reasoned and lengthy appraisal which, had I time, I would like to give it. But like several other books reviewed above, I read this on the decks or in the lounges of a boat cruising round Greece, and had no reference books or scores to check or the means to make extensive notes, so I will leave that task to reviewers in the more academic journals. (I hope Don Franklin has an opportunity: if not, I hope he will send something to *EMR*.) The strength of the argument is its reliance on close study and experience of the music, though I wonder whether his taste depends on the very late-20th-century practice of which he is suspicious.

I like the idea of thinking of tempo in terms the predominate note value, with a faster level above and a slower one below. This fits my theory that the tempo can be established by relating the basic declamatory note value to the speed of someone reading aloud in the building where the performance is taking place But I think that Josquin's *El grillo* and Janequin's battle sounds were special effects, and should be treated as faster than the 'fast' category: the crotchets, minims and semibreves of Palestrina are more appropriate (pp. 11-12), On p. 10, it's wrong to call Latin a 'dead sacred language': it was very much alive until at least the 16th century. Protestants as well as Catholics thought of the sacred texts as holy. Mensuration signatures are not shown for the music examples. True, the point is that the categories are evident from the notation itself, but it lays the author open to the charge of concealing evidence. The chapter on upbeats is interesting. He points out the rarity of this until the 17th century and the difficulty of notating it in the mensural system. Apart from printing opening rests, the effect can be obtained by starting on the beat on an unaccented note and displacing the stress. But the shortish upbeat of the late baroque is remarkably absent. An appendix lists every instance of a verbal tempo indication in Bach, along with the time signature and the predominant fast note value. This will give enthusiasts hours of fun chasing patterns. But the book is worth more than playing games. Read it and ponder: it's full of information and ideas.

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Waiting for the next issue is Richard Wistreich's study of Giulio Cesare Brancaccio: *Warrior, Courtier Singer* (Ashgate, £55.00) ISBN 978 0 7546 5418 8 and a magnificent picture book of a Viennese exhibition on Lorenzo da Ponte from Bärenreiter.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

The Language of Love Duo Trobairitz (Faye Newton *S*, Hazel Brooks *vielle*) 64' 55"
Hyperion CDA67634
Songs by Bornelh, Faidit, Muset, Ventadorn & anon

One can make a fair guess what a disc of troubadour and trouvère songs from a soprano and vielle is likely to sound like. This follows current conventions, and stands out for its quality rather than having any revolutionary ideas. Faye Newton falls between the harsh-edged and the over-beautiful vocal sound and presents the tunes and words in a way that makes you want to listen. Hazel Brooks's accompanimental interludes flow naturally from the melody – the snippet of 'We three kings of orient are' was presumably accidental. Would the poets and composers represented here have recognised these performances or been amazed how different they sounded, and if the latter, would they have been pleased or horrified? I hope they would at least have applauded the conviction and skill of the duo in transmitting such distant music to so foreign a culture. *CB*

15th CENTURY

The Fall of Constantinople Cappella Romana, Alexander Lingas 72' 22"
Cappella Romana CR402 ££
Byzantine Chant & polyphony, Motets by Dufay

Alexander Lingas is fortunate in having so versatile an ensemble of voices to illustrate his wide-ranging scholarly research and in being able now to publish under his own label. Although the music is pleasurable in its own right, this recording is a serious piece of musicology supported by detailed booklet notes. Since he is now exploring through music relations between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, at a time when uniting these culturally and doctrinally divided branches of Christianity at the Council of Ferrara-Florence might have helped them resist invading Ottoman Turks, demands are made upon the ensemble to sing with precision in a range of styles. After several tracks of Byzantine liturgical chant, the transition to Dufay's *Vasilissa ergo gaude* in strong contrast introduces an etherial ornate complexity. Subsequent tracks represent the intermingling of eastern and western styles, with music by Manuel Gazes, John Plousiadenos and Dufay, even Gregorian chant from a manuscript in Byzantine neumes, some of these mutual influences arising from intermarriage or Venetian rule over Greek-speaking people in the Peloponnese and Crete.

Musically one of the most interesting pieces is the ceremonial five-part isorhythmic motet *Ecclesiae militantis* by Dufay with separate texts sung simultaneously by different voices. Listeners might like to compare this rendering with that by Paul Van Nevel's Huelgas Ensemble on the Harmonia Mundi CD 'O gemma lux' (HMC 901700) supported by booklet notes on the structure.

The Cappella Romana CD culminates with two laments for the Fall of Constantinople, by Manuel Chrysaphes and by Dufay, alluding to a different biblical account of the Fall of Jerusalem, and each in its own musical style equally moving and poignant.

What I found reassuring about this presentation was the acknowledgement by Alexander Lingas of the various scholarly controversies as to how Eastern Orthodox chant should be performed. My initial reaction, before I read the notes, was that the vocal technique of Cappella Romana was Western, but Lingas pre-empts criticism on this point; and in any case the Eastern Orthodox Church is now in diaspora, so there are bound to be regional variations. Perhaps it was just my imagination, though, but comparing other recordings of compositions by Dufay, e.g. *Vasilissa ergo gaude*, I thought I detected an Eastern flavour in the Cappella Romana version. *Diana Maynard*

The Garden of Zephirus Gothic Voices: Gill Ross, Margaret Philpot, Rogers Covey-Crump, Andrew King, John Mark Ainsley, Leigh Nixon *SATTTT*, Imogen Barford *harp*, Christopher Page *dir* 49' 53"
Hyperion *Helios* CDH55289 ££ (rec 1984)
Music by Anthonello da Caserta, Briquet, Brollo, Dufay, Francus de Insula, Landini, Mattheus de S. Johanne, Reyneau & anon

The welcome release of another Gothic Voices classic. In the early-music world we tend to expect progress in performance style and expertise, though vehemently rejecting any idea that music itself is getting any better – indeed, some of our readers may well believe that it is getting worse. There is no need to praise this, but it is worth noting the skill with which, like all their other discs, it contains such a well-designed programme. The illustration (almost a cartoon) on p. 9 of the booklet intrigues me: does the posture of the listener indicate rapture, smugness at having his own private musician, or a rejection of secular music as he contemplates heaven? Let's hope the first. *CB*

16th CENTURY

Narváez *Musica del Delphin* Pablo Márquez *gtr* 46' 12"
ECM New Series 1958

The vihuela repertory has long been a happy hunting ground for classical guitarists. By tuning the third course down a semitone, a modern guitar effectively becomes a vihuela. In the booklet notes Pablo Márquez writes that he has long had a special affinity with Luys de Narváez, whose music was published in *Los seys libros del Delfin* in 1538. His enthusiasm is reflected in his expressive playing, which amply does justice to what is consistently fine music. He plays Narváez's intabulation of Jean Richafort's 'Je veulx laysser melancolie' with suitable panache. Particularly noteworthy is his interpretation of *Quarto Tono* (track 9). In the same mournful tone is *Fantasia del Quarto Tono* (track 16), a piece which was published in France by Guillaume Morlaye and which somehow found its way to England; it is the first piece copied into Francis Willoughby's lute book.

One of the problems facing performers of Narváez's music is the question of pitch. Narváez specifies the tone, and gives detailed indications of pitch by means of clefs and references to positions on the fingerboard. Emilio Pujol took these rubrics at face value when he edited his *Monumentos de la música española*, and transcribed the music accordingly. Since then, John M. Ward has argued that Narváez did not expect a player to own half a dozen vihuelas all of different sizes, but that he was talking in terms of nominal pitch. All the music could be played on just one vihuela. Pablo Márquez accepts Pujol's arguments and obtains his six different sizes of instrument by placing a capo on the neck to shorten the vibrating length of the strings. For the piece called *Sesto tono sobre fa ut mi re*, he tunes the guitar a tone lower to d'. The capo positions for each track are as follows (track/ fret): 1/3; 2/5; 3/3; 4/0; 5/1; 6/5; 7/3; 8/3; 9/4; 10/5; 11/3; 12/3; 13/-2; 14/3; 15/5; 16/0; 17/3.

I am inclined to think that John Ward was right to treat Narváez's pitches as only nominal. However, by using a capo Márquez creates a variety of timbre, and a clearer texture for high-pitched pieces, which would sound less well if played at the guitar's normal low pitch. There is the added advantage that by shortening

the string length, some difficult left-hand stretches are made easier. *Stewart McCoy*

Palestrina: *Third Book of Lamentations* The Choir of Westminster Cathedral Martin Baker 78' 47"
Hyperion CDA676110

I am no technical expert, but the engineering of this recording seems to achieve something quite miraculous, giving a wonderful sense of space in the cathedral, while reproducing the vocal sound cleanly and clearly. The quality of the singing might have something to do with it too! Martin Baker is not afraid to use the time as well as the space of the vast building, and his choir soars through the long phrases with little apparent effort and no ugly gasping for breath. The boys on the top line occasionally sound tired, and there is one very 'sad' cadence (in the middle of no. 7) where the upward-pointing finger of the director fails to combat the sinking third. However, the long lines and glorious phrasing more than compensate for the few glitches. The boys' sound is good and strong, particularly noticeable when the trebles are divided. There is one tenor who wobbles too much in the solo sections, spoiling the balance, but only briefly. Dynamics are vivid, growing organically from the music rather than being imposed; feminine endings are soft, and left to hang in the air just long enough.
CB is usually very good at giving me penitential music to review during Lent,* but this time the overall sense is more of victory than of despair. At the beginning of no. 3 (Iod) there is some marvellously uplifting music in the section with tenors singing the bottom line; this illustrates well how Palestrina packs contrast and variety into the music, preventing it from every becoming turgid or moribund. With Martin Baker he is in good hands.
Selene Mills
Selene's email went astray and missed two issues.

Paschal de l'Estocart *Deux cœurs aimants: Sacrae Cantiones (1582)* Ludus Modalis, Bruno Boterf 64' 47"
Ramée RAM 0703

L'Estocart (c.1537 – after 1587) published five volumes of non-ecclesiastical religious music in 1582 (the booklet note treats the two books of *Octonaires* as a single item, so refers to 'four cycles'. The *Sacrae Cantiones* are a mostly in French, but eight are Latin, five of which are recorded here: it is not stated how many of the French items are excluded. The most substantial work is an Ode in 12 stanzas by Jacques Grévin in which Christ 'reminds all Christians of the good they receive through him'. Listening blind, I was puzzled by the opening piece, which sounded rather different from the rest and oddly familiar: second time, I realised that it was a setting of *Susanne un jour*, with cadences as well as melody corresponding with other settings. English cadences recur in greater number in the final piece, *Inter natos* a7. I'm sure the music is enjoyable to sing, but I wasn't fully convinced by the disc as a single listening experience. It's a pity that the full title of the *Sacrae Cantiones* isn't given; it seems to be the sort of collection that was intended (whether the title page says so or not) for general domestic use, with the option of instruments as well as voices. The programme would have benefited from some variety of sound. But the singing is excellent and L'Estocart deserves to be heard. *CB*

Phalèse *Premier Livre de Danseries, Leuven 1571* Peter Van Heyghen *dir* 48' 38"
Passacaille 925 (rec 1998)

This one-off project brings together some excellent and well-known players of recorder, shawm, curtal, cornett, sackbut, crumhorn, violin (all sizes) and continuo, to record the contents of the famous Leuven publication of dances. It is very useful library recording with very fine playing on all instruments. Yet it is not so much of a dance recording, since despite the faultless playing, and irrespective of the rate of notes, it's not a foot-tapper. Too neat perhaps. But for luminosity of the violin band, solidity of the (sadly rare) crumhorn consort and excellence of the mixed brass and shawm ensemble, it is well worth a listen. *Stephen Cassidy*

Taverner *Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas* Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Stephen Darlington *dir* 63' 02
Avie AV 2123
Dum transissert I, Mater Christi, O Wilhemli & chant

I still remember the stir caused by the 1982 ASV recording by these forces of Taverner's *Misss Corona spinea* and the motet *O Wilhelme*, sung using David Wulstan's upward transpositions, and showing that the actual forces this music was written for could cope with the stratospherically high range. A quarter of a century later things have moved on: Wulstan's theories are almost entirely discredited, and this time round the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral sing at 'written' pitch. As the booklet note emphasises, this is the first recording of Taverner's masterpiece using authentic all-male forces, and your response to this CD really relies upon how many allowances you are prepared to make for this sort of authenticity. There are problems with blend among the boys throughout, with one dominant voice, the brave soloist Gregory Bannan, and an army of camp followers. He and his fellow trebles use varying degrees of vibrato, a feature which also pervades some of the lower voices, and there are occasional problems with intonation. Against this, the singing is courageous, full-toned and occasionally inspiring and Taverner's rhythmically tricky solo sections are well handled. My final thought is more of a question than a comment. If as David Wulstan and others have speculated, boy trebles in Renaissance choirs were generally fewer in number and older than their modern equivalents, does this mean that mixed voice specialist early music choirs would sound more like the real thing than modern all-male cathedral choirs?
D. James Ross

Victoria *Motecta 1572* Ensemble La Sestina, Adriano Giardina 64' 44"
Disques Offices DO 65620

This is a very welcome recording of 14 of the 33 motets of Victoria's astonishingly mature first publication, including both well-known and lesser-known pieces. It is beautifully recorded, picking up every nuance and subtlety in the composer's lines. Tuning is excellent and there is a strong sense of commitment to the words from this Swiss group. There is good contrast across the set: roughly half are sung with one singer to a part and these work particularly well, with some subtle and stylistic ornamentation in *Ne timeas, Maria* and *Quam pulchri sunt*. Blend is good in the four-to-a part pieces but they can be a little heavy in tread, especially *O magnum mysterium* which is a bit ponderous here – though the sombre *Senex puerum* does work very well, as does the extended six-voice *Salve Regina*. Overall this is a very appropriate style for Victoria, sung at low pitch and in a lovingly-crafted way. *Noel O'Regan*

Byrdland Lawrence Zazzo *ct*, Paragon Saxophone Quartet 62' 47"
Landor LAN280
Music by Byrd, Danyel, Dowland, Galilei, Holborne, Morley, Purcell *arr* Ian Gammie

I was suspicious on unpacking this: why even more infiltration of early music by the saxophone. But on trying the first track, once I got over the lugubrious sound of low saxes, I was impressed. As the disc progressed, my reaction was generally positive. The playing is suitably expressive; it matches the voices, and in the dances sounds positively exhilarating. The embellishments (presumably written by the arranger) are stimulating, and I reckon that there's a lot worse than well-played saxes in this repertoire. The

singing is good, but somewhat limited. There's a general problem with countertenors: they tend to emphasise line, seem rather serious, and lack the sprezzatura that a soprano singing similar repertoire has. Zazzo also doesn't work out the relative stress of each line carefully enough. The arrangements (by viol-player and *EMR*-subscriber Ian Gammie) work extremely well. In two songs, the saxes go a little far, but the verse of Byrd's Lullaby makes me want to hear it on cornett and sackbuts and some settings are brave attempts to produce a sound that works in an ambience larger than a private room: if the singer expresses his woes with any force, a lute provides too quiet a backing. The only failure is the arrangement of the continuo-only accompaniment of Purcell's 'Now that the sun'. But this is a disk worth trying, and adjusting to the sound doesn't take too long. *CB*

Dezidle al Cavallero: Works for vihuela and renaissance guitar Fernando Espi
Verso VRS 2043 60' 10"
Fuenllana, Le Roy, L. Milàn, F. de Milano, Morlaye, Mudarra, Narváez, Phalèse/Bellère, Pisador

Fernando Espi is described in the booklet as 'one of the finest Spanish guitarists of the moment' and 'one of today's most brilliant players of the six strings'. He certainly plays very nicely.

This interesting CD of 16th-century music for the vihuela and renaissance guitar begins with three well-known pieces from Narváez's *Los Seys Libros del Delphin* (1538): the evergreen divisions on *Guardame las vacas*, a prelude-like rendition of Josquin(?)'s *Mille Regretz*, and a lively *Baxa de Contrapunto*. From Pisador's *Libro de Musica* (1552), comes a setting of *La Gamba*, preceded by a simplified setting, and followed by a more elaborate one, incorporating Espi's own divisions.

The five pieces by Francesco da Milano are played rhapsodically. Espi uses the numbering of Ruggiero Chiesa, so for those who are more familiar with Arthur Ness's edition, I identify the pieces as nos 84 and 81, Appendix no. 22 (lute 1), and nos 31, and 7. With so many short pieces on the CD, it might have been an idea to include one of the longer fantasies instead.

Surprisingly few manuscripts of music for vihuela survive. Espi plays three short pieces from the Simancas manuscript (c. 1560), and the Fantasia de Lopez from the *Ramillete de Flores* (1593). I particularly enjoyed Espi's guitar, which has a sweet tone and which he plays smoothly with panache. There are dances from Adrian Le Roy (1551-5), simple grounds from Guillaume Morlaye (1551-3), and fantasias from Phalèse and Bellère (1570), which give an idea of the wide range of music published in France for the 4-course guitar. He also plays a delightful Pavana and variations on *Guardame las vacas* for guitar by the Spanish composer Mudarra. Espi finishes with three of the Pavanas from Luys Milán's *El Maestro* (1536). All in all a very satisfying CD. *Stewart McCoy*

L'esprit de la Contrareforma: Música religiosa da **Victoria, Kerle, Palestrina, Byrd, Gallus** Lluis Vich Vocalis 56' 03"
La Mà di Guido LMG4005

This CD certainly captures the passion of the counter-reformation with some very committed singing from the eleven gentlemen of Lluís Vich Vocalis. It is also of interest for supplying a complete mass by the Franco-flemish master Jacobus de Kerle. An international figure much published in his own lifetime, Kerle has largely missed out on the revival so many of his contemporaries have enjoyed, although the present thoroughly workmanlike and occasionally inspired setting of the Mass suggests he is worthy of wider attention. If always fired with energy and generally rhythmically unified, the ensemble does struggle occasionally with intonation, although it could be argued that the infectious enthusiasm of the singing and the rarity of much of the recorded material more than outweigh the recording's shortcomings. The fact that the programme notes appear only in Valencian and Castillian Spanish, although there are translations of the sung texts in English, suggests that this label is not seriously looking for an international market. *D. James Ross*

Masterpieces of Portuguese Polyphony The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, James O'Donnell 68' 34" (rec 1991)
Hyperion *Helios* CDH55229 ££
Cardosa *Mulier quae erat, Non mortui, Nos autem gloriari*, Maundy Thursday lamentations; **Aeres Fernandez** *Alma redemptoris mater*; **Petro de Cristo** *Ave Maria, Beata viscera, Hodie nobis, Magnificat, O magnum mysterium*; **Rebelo** *Panis angelicus*

The music here is spanned by Cardoso's long life (1566-1650), which more or less encompasses Pedro de Cristo (c.1550-1618) and Rebelo (1610-1661). The Cardoso pieces come from publications of 1625 and 1648. The music is fine, the performances good examples of a certain style. But I was puzzled by the statement in the booklet that some texts were set 'with meticulous attention to proper accentuation': assuming that we are not dealing with a specific Portuguese pronunciation (it sounds rather English), how come that we hear final weak syllables sung more heavily than the stressed penultimate syllable of a word, especially at cadences. I've spent the last week with Palestrina shaped according to the word stress with some vigour and with far more regard to that than how the words relate to the barline/ tactus, and find the singing here not only inconsistent in this respect but a bit featureless. But many will be happy with more broadly-featured performance style and the fine music. *CB*

Viola Bastarda Roberto Gini + Mara Galassi *double harp*, Giovanni Togni *kbd*, Il Concerto delle Viole (2 CDs)
Olive Music OM 010 ££
Settings by G & O Bassani. Bonizzi, A & H. Cabeçon, Dalla Casa, Notari, F & R Rognoni, Parmeggiano, Virgiliano etc

These two discs will excite many of our readers for some of the time, but most will turn it off after a few tracks. You have to be a bastarda freak to listen to even one of the two discs at a sitting. Nevertheless this is an interesting CD if taken in small doses, containing 26 sets of divisions divided equally between the two discs (perhaps the superstitious should also avoid it). There is some amazingly virtuosic music and playing here, and anyone who wants to experience the full range of music-making around 1600 needs to know at least some of the settings and to be aware of the style. But it comes over better in mixed programmes where the almost grotesque embellishments are mixed with straight versions, and sometimes here the backing piece could be more forward and present. As a library selection of the rich repertoire, this is valuable and stimulating set. *CB*

17th CENTURY

Johann Ludwig Bach *Das ist meine Freude: Mottetten* Ex tempore Gent, Orpheon Consort, Stephan Van Dijck, Dirk Snellings *TB*, Florian Heyerick 77' 36"
Carus 83.187

I enjoyed listening to this, but must confess that I felt no compunction to play it again. However, I did check one piece with the score (an advantage of Carus discs is that scores are always available) and was rather more excited; perhaps I was put off by the distant recording, not made more immediate by turning up the volume control; the singing is stylish and confident, and I recommend this to those seeking to sample JLB to extend their double-choir repertoire. *CB*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
££ = mid-price
Other discs full-price,
as far as we know

Albertus Bryne *Keyboard Music* Terence Charleston *hpscd, org, spinet* 68' 26"
Deux-Elles DXL 1124
music by John Bull, Christopher Gibbons and anon.

I confess that I'd not previously heard of Albertus Bryne (*c.*1621-1668), but it seems that he was organist of (old) St. Paul's for some years, and later of Westminster Abbey in succession to Christopher Gibbons. His French-style keyboard suites are not quite in the same league as the best of Froberger or Louis Couperin, but the pieces are tuneful, effective and well written, if sometimes a little short-breathed. Charlston (who has made a special study of Bryne's music) plays them persuasively and stylishly on some well-chosen instruments, all described and photographed in the booklet. There are two copies of 17th-century Flemish harpsichords and a spinet after the Charles Haward of *c.*1680; most interesting of all is the Renatus Harris organ of 1702-4 in St. Botolph's, Aldgate, which has recently been restored to something like its original condition, complete with G/B short octave. It may be a little later in style than the instruments Bryne knew, but it has a good claim to be the earliest surviving church organ in England. Highly recommended, for the music, the playing and the instruments. *Richard Maunder*

Buxtehude *Opera Omnia III; Organ Works 1* Ton Koopman (Coci/Klapmeyer organ, 1498/1728, St Nicolai Kirche, Altenbruch) 60' 03"
BuxWV 139, 141, 146, 156, 160, 162, 169, 178, 197, 210, 213, 220
Antoine Marchand/Challenge CC72242
Buxtehude *Opera Omnia IV; Organ Works 2* Ton Koopman (Wilde/Schnitger organ, 1599/1682, St Jacobi Kirche, Lüdingworth) 60' 06"
Antoine Marchand/Challenge CC72243
BuxWV 157, 161, 163-4, 170, 173-5, 177, 180-2, 184, 188, 211, 217, 223

In the past I have praised Ton Koopman's organ playing – he has even used my reviews in his publicity material. But I cannot bring myself to be enthusiastic about his first two complete Buxtehude recordings. Thinking of the Trades Descriptions Act, it is probably just as well (if rather telling) that Koopman's own name is printed several times the size of Buxtehude's on the cover, as there are frequent passages with far more notes by Koopman than Buxtehude. Some may be excited by his cavalier approach to text, pulse, articulation and ornamentation – indeed, surprisingly, a few even try to copy it, normally with dire results. But I just find it increasingly tiresome, unmusical and, ultimately, irritating. If I felt that his performances were based on real research into period style I might think differently, but his bizarre Koopmanisms (notably his distinctly personal approach to ornamentation) are applied uniformly to music of any period or style, as his earlier recording of English music demonstrates. There are far too many examples to cover in this short review, but one of the simplest is to ask why Koopman nearly always uses upper-note trills when the musical context in Buxtehude's music usually suggests main-note trills? And why play so fast? It does the music (and the organs) no favours at all. Vol 2 is slightly less bizarre than Vol 1 if you feel you must have one of the these recordings, but I stick to my contention that Bine Bryndorf's current series on DaCapo is the one to buy. There are a couple of technical points. At 60 minutes each, both CDs are rather short by today's standards. If this practice continues for the rest of the series it means that the paying public will need to buy 5 CDs for what could have been contained in just 4. I do hope this is not a marketing/fundraising ploy – we shall see! Secondly, in these green-aware days, why put a perfectly good plastic CD case in a cardboard box? All the information on the box could be fitted on the CD case – indeed, as only the box has the music list, it should anyway have been included on the CD case. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Buxtehude *Opera Omnia V: Vocal Works 2* Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 151' 12" (2 CDs)
Antoine Marchand/Challenge CC72243
BuxWV 2, 10, 12, 19, 20, 40, 43, 50-1, 52, 64, 70, 81, 110, 113-4, 123-4, Anh 1
Deferred till the next issue

Gesualdo *Madrigali Libro IV* The Kassiopeia Quintet 45' 01"
Globe GLO 5244
Deferred till the next issue

Landi *La morte d'Orfeo* Akadêmia, Françoise Lasserre
Zigzag Territoires ZZT070402

For anyone who has been moved by the music of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* – and I presume that includes every reader of *EMR*, in this anniversary year – this is an absolute must. It recounts the sequel to the story of Orpheus's attempts to rescue Euridice from Hades. Celebrating his birthday, Orpheus excludes from his party both women and wine, which upsets Bacchus and his friends so much that they resolve to give him a particularly nasty death. But Orpheus's adventures don't end there...

La Morte d'Orfeo mirrors Monteverdi's opera of twelve years earlier in many ways. Thetis's opening exordium strongly recalls the song of Musica at the start of *Orfeo*. The first act contrasts the moods of celebration and tragedy, as Orpheus's death is foreseen by Thetis amid the revelry of his birthday party. The opera is subtitled a *tragicommedia pastorale*, and is populated by scheming satyrs, languishing shepherds, monsters and Maenads as well as a complement of gods and demi-gods. The story is dramatic, and Landi's treatment of it does it full justice. Moreover, Françoise Lasserre communicates every jot of both tragedy and comedy, so that this two-CD set seems to last no time at all. To mention just two of Landi's musical effects, listen in Act I Scene 3 to the three breezes singing 'a gara gorgheggiate gareggiando' in a fantastic flutter of *trilli*; or the choir of shepherds describing a thunderstorm in madrigalian language which is harmonically static but rhythmically scintillating.

The performers of Akadêmia are marvellous: the singers are full of character, and extremely agile and committed, with a truly noble Orfeo sung by Cyril Auvity contrasting well with the flighty deities. The instrumentalists are quite as dramatic as the singers: the dulcian and sackbuts show fantastic dynamic control, and the combination of lironi backed by a forest of ceteroni, tiorbi, liuti and harp is quite sublime. The continuo playing is highly varied and expressive. The band plays some classy sonatas and canzonas by Usper, Castello, Gabrieli and Marini as *entr'actes*; while these interpolations serve to reinforce the impression that Landi is not the most harmonically adventurous of composers, they provide just the right amount of musical interest to enhance the opera and increase still further the listener's sense of drama. *Selene Mills*

Monteverdi *Orfeo* Emanuela Galli *Musica/Euridice*; Mirko Guadagni *Orfeo*, Marina De Liso *La Messagiera*, Cristina Calzolar *Proserpina*, Matteo Bellotto *Plutone*, Salvo Vitaler *Caronte*, La Venexiana, Claudio Cavina 114' 52" (2 CDs)
Glossa GES 920913-E

I'm not sure whether to classify this as a book or a recording. It is a hard-bound book about the size of a DVD box (so that's probably where to shelve it) with a CD slipped inside each cover. The book includes essays by Stefano Russomanno on 'Orpheus, Vincenzo and the Labyrinth of History', Alberto Bernabé on 'Orpheus, Poetry, Life and Death', and Stefano Aresi on 'Our *Orfeo*', i.e. practical considerations of the performance and recording. Were time not pressing, I'd be writing more spaciously in the book-review pages. But a few comments. It is misleading (p. 14) to call the classical underworld of Acts III & IV 'diabolical':

it is surely a world of shadows, not of torments and tormentors. The comments on the history of musical settings of the story jump from Poliziano to Monteverdi bypassing the Florentine settings of 1600 (p. 24) and we meet a new member of the Bach family, Christian Sebastian, on the next page. The 1609 and 1615 scores of *Orfeo* have no 'marginal notes' in the usual sense of the phrase (p. 45). I'd have welcomed more on Monteverdi's setting and the specific background rather than the wider survey of the Orpheus myth – too much peripheral knowledge only encourages diffusion of what Striggio and Monteverdi actually present us (as one knows from so many stagings!)

The third essay overplays the originality of the thinking behind the instrumentation of this performance: the decisions are mostly standard, and there's nothing I find objectionable. I agree that recorders should only play when specified, cornetts & trombones shouldn't stray from the underworld, and the strings as an ensemble should stay in their pastures. But the Moresca's metaphorical location is ambiguous, and perhaps it preserves a hint of the original ending, so I am happy for the instruments to be mixed. The rubric *con tutti le stromenti* for the opening fanfare, where the name of each part refers to trumpets, is confusing, since an obvious way of playing it is as a call for the audience to assemble, not as part of the *Favola* at all. Assuming it was the Gonzaga fanfare, not one composed for the occasion and reused in 1610, perhaps its function was to integrate the Mantuan signature tune into the work. I would have liked to have seen specific evidence for not adding nakers: it depends whether the trumpet band usually played with them or not. There is no particular reason to avoid a mixed consort, though there are no obvious places where one is required. As for silencing the continuo in choruses when there isn't a stave for it, that's surely merely a matter of economy of writing and printing: the strings don't stop at *Vanne Orfeo* just because there is no specific cue.

This is in nearly all respects a fine performance, one that is well worth hearing, if not necessarily superior to others. It's idiomatic, but what a pity that Musica, the very first voice we hear, has a tight but off-putting vibrato. Orfeo is excellent, completely convincing to the listener, if not to Caronte, in 'Possente spirto'. Tempi are generally OK, though some are slower than I expect, and the singers (all with Italian names, as are most of the players) are stylish. I suppose my problem is that I'd rather play than listen (cf p. [illegible]), but not everyone has that privilege. The singers and players are carefully spaced to enable the listener follow the action: I'm not sure if this helps. Apart from some of the female soloists, this is a fine recording, accompanied by a good translation with notes on some of the classical allusions in the text. *CB*

Pachelbel *Organ Works* Matthew Owens (Ahrend organ, Reid Concert Hall, Edinburgh) 76' 42"
Delphian DCD34021

Deferred till the next issue

Pohle *Wie der Hirsch schreyet Musica sacra* Monika Mauch, David Erler, Hans Jörg Mammel *SAT*, L'arpa festante, Rien Voskuoilen *dir* 64' 31"
Carus 83.413

Deferred till the next issue

Purcell *Phantasies, Ayres & Chaconys* The Flautadors *recorder quartet* with David Miller *theorbo & guitar* 64' 52"
Deux-Elles DXL 1123

In spite of its title, this recording includes suites by Matthew Locke in addition to the Purcell pieces. Locke's Suites 3 and 4 from the *Consort of Four Parts* were originally for viols, and a third *Theatre Suite* has been compiled mainly from a MS source, *The Rare Theatrical*. The Purcell *Theatre Suite* is also an assemblage of pieces from a manuscript anthology of theatre music (MS 1172 in the Royal College of Music) which includes well-known pieces from *Abdelazar* and *Dido and Aeneas*. David Miller adds a welcome variety and depth of sound to the theatre suites as well as to the brisk chaconne from *King Arthur* which opens the programme, and to *Three Parts Upon a Ground* which brings it to a lively conclusion. Four of Purcell's *Fantazias in Four Parts* of 1680 are played by the recorder consort alone, with excellent ensemble and obvious enjoyment of the wonderful dissonances. It's interesting to conjecture whether Purcell himself might have heard any of this music on recorders.

Victoria Helby

Curiously, this includes the Chaconnne from King Arthur & Chaconne: Three parts upon a ground but not the Chacony CB

Purcell *Dido & Aeneas* Irma Kolassi *Dido*, Yvon le Marc'Hadour *Aeneas*, Gisèle Vivarelli *Belinda*, Hughes Cuenod *Spirit*, Choeur d'élèves du Conservatoire de Genève, players from l'Orchestra de la Suisse Romande, Maroussia Le Marc d'Hadour *hpscd*, Pierre Capdevielle *dir*
Cascavelle VEL 3107 (rec 1951) 60' 42"
Purcell *Dido & Aeneas* Kirsten Flagstad *Dido*, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf *Belinda, etc*, Thomas Hemsley *Aeneas*, Arda Mandikian *Sorceress*, The Mermaid Singers & Orchestra, Geraint Jones 77' 04"
Naxos 8.111264 £ (rec 1952)
Flagstad singing **Bach** *Erbarme dich*, (1950), **Handel** *Ombra mà fu* (1948) & **Purcell** *When I am laid in Earth* (1948)

Deferred till the next issue

Con che Soavitá: Italian Lute Music of the Baroque Joachim Held 65' 20"
Hänssler CD98.260
Music by Castaldo, M. Galilei, Kapsberger, Piccinini

Joachim Held continues his series of recordings for Hänssler Classic with Italian music from the first half of the 17th century. The CD begins with a varied selection of pieces for chitarrone by Piccinini from his *Libro Primo* (1623), including extensive variations on La Monica in the *Partite sopra quest'aria francese detta l'Alemana*, a leisurely *Corrente prima*, and finishing a *Toccata cromatica* involving some very odd shifts of harmony. In this early baroque music, there is an overriding feeling of extravagance, of experiment, of exploring the capabilities of the chitarrone, a new and most extraordinary instrument, huge, resonant, with a re-entrant tuning and incredibly deep notes, the very embodiment of the baroque.

Held is joined by Carsten Lohff on the organ for a group of pieces by Kapsberger: a complex and unpredictable toccata, variations on the simple Bergamasca ground, and some jolly dance tunes. The organ is a useful foil to the chitarrone, the former providing sustain to the latter's attack.
Four pieces for archlute are taken from Piccinini's other book, his *Intavolatura di Liuto* printed in 1639. Other pieces on the CD for the archlute are two by Michelangelo Galilei (1620), and a set of seven by Kapsberger (1611). Kapsberger has his own idiosyncratic style, although his Toccata Quinta could almost have been written by Dowland.

Held's expressive playing is well suited to this repertoire: a combination of opposites, of strength and delicacy, simplicity and subtlety. Particularly noteworthy is his interpretation of Castaldi's *Tasteggio Soave*, which is hyperbolically described in the sleeve notes as 'perhaps one of the most exciting chitarrone compositions'.

Held plays a single-strung chitarrone by Andreas von Holst, and an archlute by Klaus Jacobsen. *Stewart McCoy*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
££ = mid-price

More reviews than usual are held over until the next issue, mostly mine. With two weeks in July away from home, it proved impossible to chase missing reviews or write up all the discs that I have heard but needed sampling again to remind me what I thought about them. They are listed in sequence as a temporary substitute. CB

L'Age d'Or du Cornet a Bouquin Le Concert Brise, William Dongois (3 CDs)
K617 K617187/3

One could hardly wish for a better exposition of the golden age of the cornett than this three-CD set. William Dongois sets out to illustrate the instrument's principle flowerings north and south of the Alps. The first disc alternates improvised and written-down divisions by the masters Rognoni and Bovicelli. Also included are sonatas in that vein by Pandolfio Meali and Castello. (The composers are the same as those on Dongois' earlier disc "La Barca d'Amour", but the pieces are different, so your investment will not be wasted.) The second disc is focussed on St Mark's Venice, alternating songs by Grandi with sonatas by Fontana, Castello and Scarani. The final disc moves north (and a generation or so later) to Germany, represented by transcribed sonatas by Buxtehude for cornett and sackbut, as well as organ pieces.

What is immediately apparent, and distinctive, is Dongois' seriousness of purpose in representing the different aesthetics of each style. Backed up by his effortless technique and ability to get the instrument really to sing, Dongois nevertheless puts the sound picture first and uses a wide variety of instruments and sound production approaches to make the music speak. Straight, curved, mute and small sizes of instrument are used to bring out the brightness of the divisions, the fluttering of the ritornelli, the imposing brittle sound of the German music, and much else. This last disc, with the excellent Stefan Legee on sackbut and with Pierre Alain Clerc on the hugely impressive organ of St Paul a Lausanne is the real gem for me. Also included are typically thoughtful and informative notes, reflecting on the styles and issues such as the dilemma imposed on modern performers by the tyranny of the recording studio. A must. *Stephen Cassidy*

Les Grandes Eaux Musicales 2007 du Château de Versailles Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 60' 42"
Glossa GCD 921613
Boismortier, Charpentier. Desmarest. Destouches, Handel, Lully

This is the souvenir CD of the music that backs this year's fountain display at Versailles and will doubtless sell many copies at the on-site shop. The music is drawn from the back catalogue of the featured ensemble and consists almost entirely of extracts. The only complete works are two short marches by Charpentier and a rather lovely *Sonate à Quatre* by Boismortier. In this French company the final item – two movements from Handel's *Water Music* – come as rather a shock, though the performances are enjoyable. The illustrated booklet has plenty of information about the venue and the performers but none about the music. *David Hansell*

LATE BAROQUE

Attilio Ariosti *The Stockholm Sonatas II Recueil de Pieces pour la Viola d'Amour, part 1* Thomas Georgi *viola d'amore*, Lucas Harris *archlute, gtr*, Mime Yamahiro Brinkman *vlc* 56' 53"
BIS-CD 1555

Thomas Georgi has now released the second instalment of his recordings of Attilio Ariosti's Stockholm Sonatas. Ariosti's solos for viola d'amore, the largest single set of baroque works for the instrument survives in two sources: the Lezione, a collection of lessons- recorded by Georgi in his Stockholm Sonatas I, and the *Recueil de Pieces pour le viol d'amour*. The 15 solos of the Recueil survive in a copy by the young Swedish music student Johan Helmich Roman, who copied them during his visit to London in the late 1710s. The MS was preserved by the Swedish Library so the collection became known as Stockholm Sonatas. The word sonata is not used, but the movements fall into groups of 3 and 4 united by key and tuning and contrasting in tempo.
Unlike in his Stockholm Sonatas I recording, where he used three instruments with different stringing, here Georgi has used one twelve-string (6/6) viola d'amore throughout. Moving away from this experimenting with the sound and colour of different instruments, the focus of this second recording is on the ornamentation. Just like Corelli, Ariosti would have considered the source as an outline for further embellishments. For his own ornamentation Georgi used the graces Matthew Dubourg created for Corelli's violin sonatas as a model, which seems especially appropriate as one of Dubourg's sources was Johan Helmich Roman, the copyist of Ariosti's Recueil.
Georgi produces a brilliant yet sweet sound and brings out the characteristic resonance of the viola d'amore, emphasizing its special qualities and unique sound. His playing is full of spirit and the ornamentation supports the music's flow and never becomes an end in itself. The lively ornamentation of the faster movements helps drive the music forward whilst intensifying Ariosti's interesting use of cadences and musical silences in the slow movements.

The continuo playing of Lucas Harris and Mime Yamahiro Brinkman is skilful and endorses Georgi's solo lines. Harris's accomplished solo of the Adagio repeats is inspired by the guitar arrangements by Santiago di Murcia's guitar arrangements of Corelli's violin sonatas, published in Mexico City in 1731.
Georgi's deft interpretation will no doubt contribute to a well-deserved recognition of Attilio Ariosti and we look forward to his third Stockholm Sonatas recording which will conclude the cycle.
Daniela Braun

Bach *Cantatas 71, 87, 128, 176 (Vol. 35)* Yukari Nonoshita, Robin Blaze, Makoto Sakurada, Peter Kooij SATB, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 70' 47"
BIS-SACD-1571
Deferred till the next issue

Bach *Geist und Seele wird verwirret': Cantatas 179, 35, 164, 17* Gerlinde Sämann, Petra Noskaiová, Jan Kobow, Dominik Wörner *SATB*, Ewald Demeyere *org*, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken
Accent ACC 25305 (SACD) 73' 55"

The fifth so far in a most enterprising series, displays a cantata for each Sunday from the 11th to the 14th after Trinity. They make interesting though compact demands of any ensemble, and as usual, the singers and players manage to capture the styles of Bach's spiritual dances, as well as, in Cantata 35, a Concerto, with exactly apt relish. Accent continues to record this Bach series with their characteristic blend of clarity with true sensitivity. Other than to express my own marvel, what more should I write? *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Der Zufriedengestellte Aeolus BWV 205, Unser Mund sei voll Lachens (BWV 110)* Nancy Argenta, Robert Invernizzi, Claudia Itn, Rosa Dominguez, Charles Daniels, Klaus Mertens SSSSTB, Coro della Radio Svizzera, Lugano, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 57' 15"
Arts 47717-8 SACD
Deferred till the next issue

Bach *Tombeau de Sa Majesté la Reine de Pologne* Katherine Fuge, Carlos Mena, Jan Kobow, Stephan MacLeod SATB, Francis Jacob *org*, Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot 78' 19"
Mirare MIR 030
Missa BWV 234, *Trauerode* BWV 198, BWV 544, 727

This music has been assembled to form one complete disc of highly finished music including a Mass in A, three organ solos (BWV 544a, 544b and 727) as well as Bach's setting of Gottsched's funeral Ode known as BWV 198. The true authority for assembling the whole together comes from the composer himself, whose actual title, *Grabmal der I.M. Konigin der Pologne*, was used for the cantata. Ricercar has combined an excellent international choral and instrumental ensemble with, in Francis Jakob, a distinguished solo organ-

ist, to present us with a really resplendent series of performances.

A constant reminder of the quality of the various specialists among these wonderful performers comes up once and again in the individual biographies within the booklet – the recurring citation of study at or connections with the outstanding Schola Cantorum at Basle; so much that I have been lucky enough to credit with really distinguished musicianship has eminated from that foundation over the years. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Motetten* The Hilliard Ensemble 76' 50"
ECM New Series 476 5776 (rec 2002)
BWV 225-230, Anh 159

On this remarkable release the Hilliards – never noted for taking the easy or obvious option – sing these awesomely demanding works with one singer to each part and no instrumental support save Bach's explicit and occasionally independent continuo part for *Lobet den Herrn*. (His equally explicit doubling parts for *Der Geist hilft* are thus ignored, as indeed they usually are.) Even here a minimalist approach is maintained as the part is played only by organ with no additional melodic instruments on the bass. To my ears this courageous (perhaps even controversial) approach works best in the more reflective music such as *Jesu, meine Freude* which was the piece I most enjoyed in its entirety. Elsewhere there are occasional signs of both caution and strain in the singing though the clarity of the counterpoint is much to be welcomed. For reasons of performing practice this cannot be a first choice recommendation, but I shall use it often for reference. On the review copy the list of performers is corrected by means of an over-stuck label on the outer cover, but is still incorrect inside the booklet.

David Hansell

Bach aux Grandes Orgues de la Basilique du Couvent Royal de Saint-Maximin (Vol. 3) Pierre Bardon 79' 37"
Syrius SR 141407
BWV 537-8,542, 564, 582, 711, 715-7

Deferred till the next issue

J S Bach Organ Works Vol. 3 Pierre Bardon (1773 Isnard organ Saint-Maximin, Provence, France)
Syrius SYR 141 394

Pierre Bardon has been organist at the basilica of Saint-Maximin for about 45 years and this series seems to be intended as a celebration of that. Bardon adopts some rather dated neo-baroque notions of articulation, phrasing and registration, the first two particularly noticeable in the Dorian Toccata (track 2) and *Allein Got in der Höh sei her* (track 7) and the latter in the G-minor Fugue (track 6), with its multiple stop changes. In fact, the whole CD has a rather dated feel to it – the booklet notes (written, I gather, by a theologian) use amazingly flowery language, such as likening the Passacaglia to baroque fountains which 'flow, sometimes with powerful jets, sometimes in droplets shining with flashes of light and joy which are unending: this piece makes one think of the Trevise Fountain in Rome and to Maurice Ravel's fountains.' Really? Much as I love fiery French *enchamade* reeds, they are really better served in French music – bringing them on as part of a Bach chorus just doesn't work. And the organ could do with some serious tuning. I fear this CD may be of rather more local than international interest. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Organ Works Vol. 8* Jacques van Oortmerssen (Christian Müller, 1638 organ, St Bavo, Harlem) 60' 06"
Challenge Classics CC72153 ££
BWV 536, 540, 542/1, 593, 662-4

It has been four years since the previous volume of this series appeared, and the latest contribution continues to reinforce my view that Jacques van Oortmerssen is the finest interpreter of Bach's organ music around. His musical insight into these complex works is extraordinary. Unlike many recordings, where the performer feels the need to ladle on his own 'personality' in spades, each piece of this, and all the earlier volumes, repays repeated listening, each time revealing a new insight. What I love about these interpretations is the feeling that I get that this is all about Bach, not about the performer – and this goes beyond mere respect for the text, appropriate period registration, articulation and musical structuring. One perceptive aspect of the textural interpretations is the respect shown for Bach's short final chords – a textual point that is rarely honoured and may therefore sound a little odd to those not used to it.

The St Bavo organ needs no introduction – it is one of the world's most famous, and serves Bach well. Jacques van Oortmerssen makes much use of a very full organ registration (he uses a similar registration for all three of the free works). The Bavo organ at full throttle must be one of the most thrilling sounds on the planet. The registrations are fascinating – for both fugues, the only change from the first movement is that the Hoofdwerk 8' Trumpet is replaced by the 16' Trumpet. And the Fantasia in G minor (BWV542/1) is played with the same registration throughout – something that is very rarely done by present day organists but a choice that is entirely convincing to me. The three preludes on *Allein Gott in der Höh sei her* are given beautifully sensitive interpretations – a lovely contrast to the massive sound of the free works, as is the Vivaldi Concerto, again with very perceptive registrations that are a long way from the neo-baroque tinkles that are so often used for these works. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

J S Bach *Orgelbüchlein etc.* Margaret Phillips (2004 Aubertin organ, St Louis-en-l'Île, Paris) 118' 27" (2 CDs)
Regent REGCD254 ££

The 46 chorales of the *Orgelbüchlein*, some of which are less than a minute long, have been very sensibly divided into their liturgically-based groups by well-chosen free organ works from Bach's early or pre-Weimer days. The chorales are played in the order of the MS, which takes some of the element of programme balance away from the performer but is nonetheless the only real way to do it. The organ is an interesting new instrument by the French builder Bernard Aubertin in the middle of Paris, but designed as a Bach organ (albeit with stop names that Bach would not have come across) based on the 1746 Hildebrandt organ at Naumburg, the organ currently viewed as the closest to a surviving 'Bach organ'. Judging by this recording, it is an impressive instrument and Margaret Phillips makes excellent use of the registration possibilities that it presents. Her playing is methodical and musically sensitive, with a very clear sense of articulation. She eschews hollow gestures or personal mannerisms, and allows Bach's music to speak directly to the listener, without interfering with it on the way. This makes these good reference CDs for repeated listening. If this sounds all rather dull and unexciting, then listen to the passion and energy of the pieces for full organ. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
££ = mid-price

All other discs are full price, as far as we know.

Our apologise for the lateness of this issue. We expected July to be a quietish month for King's Music, but it wasn't! We came home from a week's holiday (where I had lots of reading time) with two weeks to deal with orders, attend three distant concerts and prepare EMR. But we barely kept up with orders before my regular Summer School date, and more orders when I got back on July 28th. October seems terribly near. CB

Bach *Sonatas for Flute and Harpsichord* Mario Forlena, Roberto Loreggian 64' 28" Arts **47612-8 SACD**
BWV 1013, 1020, 1030-2

This is a recording of the four sonatas for flute and obbligato harpsichord by or attributed to JS Bach, and the sonata for solo flute. The fast movements are vigorous and lively, while Mario Folena shows his more expressive side in the solo flute sonata. He makes interesting ornamented repeats in the *Largo e Dolce* of the B minor sonata, and has made his own reconstruction of the missing bars from the first movement of the A major sonata. The clear articulation of the instruments and the balance between the two players is well served by this Super Audio CD, which can be played in multi-channel surround sound on SACD players. Even on a normal CD player the sound is quite immediate, so that it's rather like being in the same room with the performers.

Victoria Helby

Bach *Die Kunst der Fuge (first version)* Pieter Dirksen *hpscd* 75' 19" Et'Cetera **KTC 1348**
A reconstructed early version from c.1742 with later revised versions from c.1747,

Not only is this one of the very finest harpsichord recordings yet to have been issued, on any format at any time; it is the product of some of the very finest of Bach scholarship and reconstruction, mostly by the player himself. The result demands from me complete congratulation, and for once a confession of overwhelming conviction that, if this was not the most accurate route through which *The Art of Fugue* has come down to us, it must be an amazingly close guess as to its origins. If you love the final result, this is un doubtedly the performance to hear. Buy your copy now. *Stephen Daw*

Bach–Telemann *Oboe and Oboe d'amore Concertos* Paul Goodwin, *obs*, The King's Consort, Robert King *dir* 59' 05"(rec 1987) Hyperion Helios **CDH55269** ££
Bach: in F & A; Telemann in G & A

These recordings are 20 years old but already show how even a young Robert King (and, of course, the late Ted Perry) would take chances on less well-known repertoire – a programme of reconstructed Bach and Telemann was pretty unusual for the time, and those expecting the latter to come out of the comparison battered and bruised should buy the disc and make up their own mind – some of the most expressive and harmonically powerful music actually flows from *his* pen. *BC*

Geminiani *La Folia & other concertos & sonatas* The Purcell Quartet, The Purcell Band 51' 48" (rec 1987) Hyperion *Helios* **CDH55234** 51' 48" ££
Op. 1/3 (solo version 1739), op. 1/9, 11, 12 (trio version) op. 7/2, Corelli/Geminiani *op. 5/12 La Follia*

A fine anthology of a composer who is played much more often now than 20 years ago, perhaps in part because we produced facsimiles of op 1- 7 for his anniversary year. This samples his instrumental works in convincing and exciting performances. If you missed it first time round, buy it! *CB*

Handel *Le Cantate per il Marchese Ruspoli, Roma 1707 (Le Cantate Italiane di Handel,* 2) Emanuela Galli, Roberta Invernizzi, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni Glossa **GCD 921522** 74' 03"
HWV 79, 105, 142, 171, 173
Deferred till the next issue

Handel *Neun deutsche Arien* Carolyn Sampson *S*, Alexandra Bellamy *ob*, Stéphanie-Marie Degand *vln*, The King's Consort 70' 33" Hyperion **CDA67627**
+ Oboe Sonatas HWV 357, 363a & 366
Deferred till the next issue

Handel *Jephtha* Paul Agnew *Jephtha*, Lisa Larsson *Iphis*, Guillemette Laurens *Storgè*, Robert Expert *Hamor*, Alain Buet *Zebul*, Christine Rigaud *Angel*, Opera Fuoco, David Stern, Jay Bernfeld 133' 44"(2 CDs) Pierre Vérany **PV70732/3**

Opera Fuoco's previous venture into Handel was a shamefully disfigured *Semele* (*EMR* 104, December 2004, p. 40), and the first impression given by this new set is not good. The timings on the box for the two CDs are given as '1h 18' and '1h 19', i.e. 157M, suggesting an uncut performance, but the actual times are 67' 54" and 66' 21", about 23 minutes shorter than stated. The cuts include the fairly common omissions of the last arias for Zebul, Storgè and Hamor in Act 3, but the Sinfonia introducing the Angel also disappears and (much less happily) the major choruses 'In glory high' and 'Theme sublime of endless praise'. In addition, internal cuts are made to many numbers, some utterly trivial (a single bar, containing the words 'and groveling lies', is snipped out of Storgè's first recitative). Four da capo arias are barbarously reduced to A + B + ritornello. By way of compensation, the Sinfonia introducing Iphis in Act 2 is played twice at leisurely pace, with finger cymbals added to the repeat. Handel's scoring is frequently altered, particularly to give extra work to the flutes (thus devaluing Handel's carefully chosen use of the instrument in just two arias). Their use in the second section of Iphis's 'Farewell, ye limpid springs' is especially debilitating. The most bizarre moment comes in the overture – not the surprise addition of timpani to underpin the repeat of the opening section, but the use of a wind trio of (I think) flute, tenor recorder and bassoon to play the concluding Minuet. Why such it should occur to anyone to indulge in such whimsy is beyond me.

In respect of basic interpretation the most striking feature is the very slow tempo of Jephtha's 'Open thy marble jaws, O tomb', hardly compatible with Handel's marking of *Con spirito, ma non allegro*. (It lasts 9' 49". Nigel Robson under Gardiner takes 4' 35", Werner Hollweg under Harnoncourt 3' 49".) Paul Agnew (generally rather soft-grained in the title role) and the players sustain it with some conviction, but the emotional weight generated weakens what follows, and the build-up of tension through the rest of Act 2 is lost. Lisa Larsson is the most pleasing of the soloists, and I look forward to hearing her Iphis again under less capricious musical direction. A couple of energetically sung choruses can also be singled out for special praise, but otherwise the set confirms the impression given by Opera Fuoco's *Semele* that Stern and Bernfeld have only limited respect for Handel's music and seem primarily concerned with using it to promote some agenda of their own. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel *As steals the morn... arias and scenes for tenor* Mark Padmore with Lucy Crowe *S* & Robin Blaze *A*, The English Concert, Andrew Manze 77' 11" Harmonia Mundi **HMÚ907422**
Excerpts from *Alceste, L'Allegro, Esther, Jephtha, Rodelinda, Samson, Tamerlano, Il Trionfo*

As a distinguished tenor especially esteemed in the baroque repertory, Mark Padmore has no need of a recital disc to advertise his talents, but this selection allows him to apply his fine vocal technique and intelligence to a wider range of Handel's music than perhaps has come his way in live performance. The mention of 'scenes' in the subtitle of the disc refers to the presence of introductory recitatives to some of the arias, and particularly to the inclusion of the whole of Bazajet's remarkable death scene from *Tamerlano*, with Robin Blaze and Lucy Crowe supplying the brief comments of Tamerlano and Asteria. (Blaze has just eleven notes to sing.) Padmore gives it maximum dramatic expression, resorting to *sprechstimme* at the end, but I am not sure it is ideal material for a recital disc: it is very moving as the climax of the opera, but how often will one want to play it on its own for pleasure? The sense of drama comes and goes. In Bajazet's 'Forte e lieto' the idea of fortitude restrained should be immediately apparent from the

carefully marked dynamics of the opening ritornello (*piano* in bar 3, *forte* in bar 5), but Andrew Manze ignores them, and the aria plods along evenly with vague pathos. The first two arias from *Samson* ('Total eclipse' and 'Your charms to ruin led the way') are delivered with striking rhetorical power, but 'As when the sun', sung as Samson goes to his triumphant suicide, is surely too slow and seems only to suggest tiredness. The title track, the duet 'As steals the morn' from *L'Allegro*, sung with Lucy Crowe, is also a shade sleepy, but makes a very pleasant close to a recital with many good things but less exciting than might have been hoped.

Anthony Hicks

Great Handel Ian Bostridge *T*, Kate Royal *S*, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Harry Bicket 65' 54"
EMI Classics 0946 3 892243 2 7

The first time I played this, I wasn't particularly struck by the opening numbers, and and this reaction persisted on two subsequent occasions, so it wasn't just a matter of getting into the mood. Perhaps I was a bit hard on Elin Manahan Thomas in the last issue: 'Wher'er you walk' doesn't have much point out of context, it's too familiar, and there isn't much one can find for the singer or players to make their mark: certainly not by playing a *piano* ritornello. It is an odd aria to start with, and the same problem besets the next piece, the notorious 'Largo'. The opening two vocal movements from *Messiah* left me cold: 'Comfort ye' needs the overture. But things improved during the items from *Acis & Galatea*, and by the time I got to the aria to which some have objected because it is for soprano, I was (perversely) entirely happy, and enjoyed the rest of the recital. If the object of the anthology was to draw attention to Handel as a composer for tenor, why nothing from his greatest tenor role, Tamerlano. Perhaps that is to come. *CB*

Platti *Six Flute Sonatas Op. 3* Paul Wåhlberg *fl*, Knut Erik Sundquist *db*, Hans Knut Sveen *hpscd, clavichord* 78' 43"
Naxos 8.570282 £

Giovanni Benedetto Platti was born and educated in Venice, but in 1722 took up a position at the court of Würzburg as singer, instrumentalist and composer, and spent the rest of his life there. These sonatas, published in 1743, give some idea of why he was the highest paid musician at the court. The style ranges from the late baroque to the early classical, and while it is pleasing and elegant is never dull or predictable. The sixth sonata, the most classical in style, includes an early example of a solo cadenza and ends with an exciting *Arietta con Variazioni*. The performers have clearly given a good deal of thought to characterising the individual sonatas and the movements within them. The flute is played with panache and some occasional enjoyable quirkiness, with stylishly ornamented repeats. It's unusual to hear double bass continuo, but this works really well, driving the music forward where appropriate and supplying a discreet pizzicato in some of the slow movements. The imaginative harpsichord realisation is inspired by Platti's harpsichord sonatas, while the clavichord continuo in the fourth sonata provides a surprising but effective contrast to the richer sound of the other five. This is a budget priced CD, but I would happily pay more for a recording as enjoyable as this one. *Victoria Helby*

Pere Rabassa *Requiem* Harmonia del Parnàs, Marian Rosa Montagut *dir* 53' 58"
La Mà di Guido LMG2076
Lamentació 2ª de la Feria V

Deferred till the next issue

Rameau *Dardanus* Paul Agnew *Dardanus*, Paul Whelan *Anténor*, Kathryn McCusker *Iphise*, Stephen Bennett *Teucer*, Damian Whiteley *Isménor*, Penelope Mills *Venus*, Cantillation, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Antony Walker *cond* 128' 07" (2 CDs)
ABC 476 5844 ££
1739 version minus the Prologue, but with some material from 1744

This recording has been compiled from live performances given in Sydney in Nov/Dec 2005 and a few stage noises – never intrusive – can be heard. These were the first occasions on which *Dardanus* was performed in Australia and the performance was obviously prepared with loving care. Some difficult decisions had to be taken for practical reasons and these included basing the performance on the first, 1739, version which is the obvious musical choice, even though the Prologue is then omitted for reasons of overall length. There are also a few other minor cuts, though there is also a bonus in the shape of Dardanus's prison monologue from the 1744 re-write. These issues alone will mean that the release will not be a first choice for the dedicated *Ramiste* who will want completeness and the integrity of one version or another. But for others there is still plenty to enjoy. Style is very secure, the orchestra is very good in all respects and in the title role Paul Agnew is magisterial. On the down side there are also moments when the timbral incompatibility of a baroque orchestra and the modern opera singer (especially female) is apparent and the decision to include the applause, whoops and cheers of the audience during the final *tambourin* is regrettable. The booklet includes two essays, which do slightly duplicate each other: more importantly it also includes the full libretto and translation. *David Hansell*

Rameau *Zoroastre* Anders J. Dahlin *Zoroastre*, Evgueniy Alexiev *Abramene*, Sine Bundgaard *Amélite*, Anna Maria Panzarella *Erinice*, Lars Arvidson *Zopire*, *La Vengeance*, Markus Schwarz *Narbanor*, Gérard Thérule *Oromases*, *Ariman*, Ditte Andersen *Céphie*, Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset *MD*, Pierre Audi *SD* 227' 2 DVDs (with extras) recorded at Drottningholm, 2006
Opus Arte OA 0973 D *DVD*

Even by Rameau's standards *Zoroastre* is powerful stuff – a conflict between good and evil and an intense love story. And it is a thrill to see it played out in an 18th century theatre with a baroque orchestra and in a production that, most of the time, allows the action to look credibly in period. The exception is the twitchy and angular choreography, which seems to me to be quite at odds with the flow of the costumes and, indeed, the music. There are also some features of the filming that I did not greatly savour. The informal shots of the cast assembling and then dispersing destroy the essential illusion of theatre and the shots of the action from the rear of the stage, the wings and from above (when the machinery and lighting rig are often in the way) are pointless. But at the core is a fine performance recorded live over three evenings. In the pit Christoph Rousset and the band (lovely bassoon playing in particular) are in fine form and if the singing is less consistent it is still very good, with ornaments well integrated into the lines by all singers. I felt that the male principals were a little bland vocally though very effective dramatically: the ladies give more complete performances. The general presentation is patchy. There is no synopsis of the plot for easy reference in the booklet and in some scenes the subtitles are too infrequent for the nuances of the action to be followed. But any efforts needed by a viewer to get to grips with this *tragédie lyrique* will be amply rewarded. *David Hansell*

Stölzel *Seid Willkommen, schöne Stunden (& Alles, was sonst lieblich heißet)* Dorothee Mields, Elisabeth Graf, Knut Schoch, Ekkehard Abele *SATB*, Telemannisches Collegium Michaelstein, Ludger Rémy 103' 19 (2 CDs)
cpo 777 094-2

What an enterprising company cpo is! Not only have they supported projects to

record Stölzel's fabulous setting of the Brockes Passion, a lovely cycle of Christmas cantatas, two volumes of secular cantatas and his richly scored offerings for Whitsun 1736/37, now they have braved that most difficult of genres to promote – the serenata. Little more than a series of set pieces for the four singers and a chorus with a moral, these pieces are miniature operas, stripped of subplots and intrigue. They are also a veritable treasure box – some of the nicest arias I've ever heard are in the first of the two, *Seid willkommen, schöne Stunden*. Let's just say that Stölzel is more than Vivaldi's match at setting texts about nightingales! The second piece has a slightly more modern sound, with lots of slowly moving harmonies over pedals, and the weirdest sound in an 18th-century piece – soprano and tenor soloists (presumably deliberately) singing at the octave! It was a bit Verdi Requiem-esque. All four singers relish Stölzel's beautiful melodic lines (listen to bass Ekkehard Abele sounding like a real Handel villain on Track 10 of the first disc), although Knut Schoch doesn't always sound quite at ease in the higher passages, and there is one star in the firmament outshining all others (appropriately enough, if the text is taken at face value) – soprano Dorothee Mields. I've waxed lyrical about her before, but here she is the nightingale in human form... and not only in her truly memorable arias – her shaping of recitatives and her changes of tone as she so beautifully projects the texts are absolutely exemplary. For an aural delight, listen to Track 12 of the first disc – Ms. Mields with two muted violins, gamba and continuo: pure heaven on Earth! If the Duke of Sondershausen ever had cause to regret not having officially employed Stölzel, this would have rubbed salt in his every wound. *BC*

Telemann *Overtures, Sonatas, Concertos vol. 5* Musica Alta Ripa 65' 33"
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 309 1450-2
TWV 40: 203, 41: e1; 42: d10; 43: A4, G6; 55: g8

There are currently two enterprising series of Telemann's music on the go – we don't seem to get Patrick Peire's quite astonishing undertaking to record the COMPLETE orchestral suites, but MDG have ensured that we have received review copies of their fine exploration of the composer's Concertos and Chamber Music by Musica Alta Ripa, which has now reached Volume 5. Each disc so far has been a combination of music most Telemann fans will know like the backs of their hand and newer works to the catalogue. On this disc, the latter is a G minor Overture suite for two solo violins, two ripieno violins and continuo. While one might expect the lack of viola to result in a thin-sounding texture (at least, that was my worry), in fact, it does nothing of the sort – Telemann is too good a composer to let that happen. Elsewhere we have that sonata in D minor for violin, recorder and continuo, the G major quadro for recorder, oboe, violin and continuo, the C major concerto for four violins without accompaniment (having four excellent violinists on the project being as good a reason as any to include the G minor suite above!), one of the four-part string concertos that "became a Paris quartet" (as some people would have it) and the fifth of Telemann's *Kleine Cammer-Music* Partias, played here on recorder. Much as I enjoy Musica Alta Ripa's playing and Telemann's music, I must confess that their solo pieces in these recitals are always just a little dull – perhaps that's because they work so well as a group that having no sparring partner deprives the performances of some of its energy? The E minor Partia in question was one of my school exam pieces and I hope even I (complete with written-out, of course, piano accompaniment!) made it sound more exciting! *BC*

Telemann *Sonate Metodische* 1728/1732 Barthold Kuijken *fl*, Wieland Kuijken *gamba*, Robert Kohnen *hpscd* 71' 39"
Accent ACC 91404 (rec 1994)
Deferred till the next issue

Veracini *Sonate accademiche* The Locatelli Trio (Elizabeth Wallfisch *vln*, Richard Tunnicliffe *vlc*, Paul Nicholson *hpscd, org*) 175' 42" (3 CDs)
Hyperion CDS44241/3 ££ (rec 1993)

Although we sell the facsimile, I don't think I had heard any of the music, and I was most impressed, by the composer as well as the performers. The texture sounds extraordinary rich for just solo violin and continuo – there really are a lot of notes, but all welcome and all convincing. *CB*

Vinci *Napoli/Madrido: Cantate e intermezzi* Roberta Invernizzi, Cristina Calzolari, Giuseppe de Vittorio, Giuseppe Naviglio *SATB*, Cappella della Pietà de Turchini, Antonio Florio *cond* 71' 35"
Naïve OP 30274
José de Nebra *Tempestad grande amigo*; **Giuseppe Petrini** *Graziello e Nella*; **Vinci** *Adónde fugitive, Cuewnde infeliz destino, Erighetta e Don Chilone, Triste ausente*; Sinfonia for strings

Without the continued championing of the Neapolitan repertoire of Antonio Florio and the cappella della pieta de'turchini, the seven works in this fine recital would never have seen the light of day. Five of them are by Leonardo Vinci, including a fine intermezzo (*Erighetta e Don Chilone*), a sinfonia for strings and three cantatas for voice and strings which have survived in Spanish sources with both sacred and secular texts. The recital is completed by *Graziello e Nella*, another comic intermezzo, this time by the little-known Giuseppe Petrini, and a fandango by de Nebra, apparently to show what music in Madrid at the time was like. What sounds like a hotch-potch of diverse pieces and styles comes over rather better than I had expected. The four solo singers enjoy the many opportunities for humour offered by the intermezzi, and the band accompanies them with style and sparkle. Constantly reminding oneself that this music is contemporary with Handel and Bach is something of an eye-opener. *BC*

Vivaldi *Concerti per violoncello I* Christophe Coin, Il Giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini *dir* 65' 14"
Naïve OP 30426
RV 398, 406, 409, 410, 414, 419, 421

After the violin and the bassoon, Vivaldi wrote more concertos for cello than any other instrument. The soloist in this, the first volume of the naïve Vivaldi Edition's exploration of that repertoire is Christophe Coin. He is accompanied by Il Giardino Armonico, directed by Giovanni Antonini, in seven works, including a *Concerto per violoncello piccolo RV414* (*piccolo* isn't in the non-autograph MS that Ryom catalogued) and the ridiculously named *Concerto per violoncello, fagotto, archi e b. c.* – just because sections have the continuo line marked to be played by a bassoon, the instrument is elevated to solo status. These two quibbles apart, this is a fine disc with excellent and spirited performances from soloist and band alike. The richly varied concertos once more make a nonsense of any idea that Vivaldi simply regurgitated the same work over and over again – the cello/bassoon concerto is a very unusual piece. A must-have for baroque cellists and fans of Vivaldi alike. *BC*

Vivaldi *L'Estro Armonico op. 3. Vol. 1: concertos 1-6* Accademia Byzantini, Ottavio Dantone 45' 26"
Arts 47646-8 SACD
Vivaldi *L'Estro Armonico op. 3. Vol. 2: concertos 7-12* Accademia Byzantini, Ottavio Dantone 54' 02"
Arts 47647-8 SACD

I'm sure I was enthusiastic about this set when it was first released in 2002, and I've been thrilled to hear it again. Some of the ornamentation is freer than normal (some of the original lines are unrecognisable) but they are always tasteful, and sometimes add a delightful touch of add-

itional colour that sets Accademia Bizantina in a league apart in this repertoire. *BC*

Vivaldi *Le Quattro Stagioni* La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 59' 14"
Accent ACC 24179
op. 1/12 *La Follia*; Concerto in D RV 403

This recording is unusual for several reasons. The most obvious to the listener is the fact that the Four Seasons are performed one to a part, with each of the four violinists taking one concerto each. The apparent anomaly of four violinists sharing three violin parts is explained by the fact that two of them (Sigiswald Kuijken and Dmitry Badiarov) also play violoncello da spalla – a cello small enough that even a fiddler can manage it. Frustratingly, although there are notes about the instruments (Badiarov made both) and pretty pictures, there are none of anyone playing it, so how it is held remains a mystery. The sound (deep pitch but bright harmonics) is difficult to describe; as a solo instrument, I confess that I far prefer Christophe Coin's full-sized cello. This is an interesting release, challenging all sorts of pre-conceptions about Vivaldi's music. *BC*

Vivaldi *Virtuoso Impressario (The Rise of the North Italian Violin Concerto 1690-1740*, vol. 2) Mhairi Lawson S, La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler *vln, dir* 76' 38"
Avie AV2128
RV 134, 243, 254, 370, 561, 706, 714

This is a fantastic CD. Not only are we treated to Adrian Chandler's now-expected brilliance in three stunning solo concertos (the D minor concerto 'senza cantin' steals the show!), but there's the gorgeous C major concerto for fiddle and two solo cellos (Vivaldi certainly knew what he was doing when he opted for that scoring!) and five arias beautifully sung by Mhairi Lawson. Her voice couldn't be more different to Dorothee Mields (on whose Stölzel I enthuse above) – Mhairi's is far more powerful and characterful and yet she has equal amounts of vocal dexterity when Vivaldi requires it. Mix all this with the increasingly confident and stylish ripieno playing of La Serenissima, and you have a recital to enjoy over and over again. *BC*

Vivaldi *Musica per mandolino e liuto* Rolf Lislevand & ensemble 59' 56"
Naïve OP 30429
RV 82, 85, 93, 425, 532, 540
Deferred till the next issue

French Baroque Cantatas Taryn Fiebis *S*, Fiona Campbell *mS*, Ensemble Battestin
ABC 476 5941 57' 25"
Montéclair *Ariane et Bacchus, La mort de Didon*; Stuck *Céphale et Aurore, L'amant réconcilié*

This disc is the first of a set of five with the overall title *The Perfection of Music – Masterpieces of the French Baroque*, for which the research and rehearsal has been funded by the Australian Federal Government in association with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. And their money has not been wasted. Here four fine works receive considered and dedicated performances that are also stylistically sound and consistent. French cantatas tend to be miniature one-person operas so the background of both singers in Opera Australia serves then in good stead. However, they do keep vibrato under control and generally produce lovely tone without compromising their commitment to the text. General presentation is also good, with substantial notes by the author of a fine book on French cantatas, David Tunley, (though in English only) and full texts and translations (again to English only). Strongly recommended, especially as an introduction to the *genre*.
David Hansell

French Cantatas by Rameau and Campra Philippa Hyde, Peter Harvey *SB*, London Baroque 64' 05"
BIS-CD-1495
Campra *Les Femmes*; Rameau *Aquilon et Orothie, Les Amants trahis, Thetis*, Air: *Lucas pour se gausser*

This is a splendid disc, absolutely fulfilling all the expectations that the list of artists would arouse. Peter Harvey is in excellent voice, finding a wide range of vocal colour and blending perfectly with the obbligato bass viol in one of the loveliest movements. Philippa Hyde has less to do but is also on very good form and singers and instrumentalists are absolutely as one stylistically. London Baroque really is a superb ensemble from top to bottom and here it is the bottom that takes the prizes. Charles Medlam's bass viol playing is the perfect blend of poetry and control and Terence Charlston provides a richly textured harpsichord continuo. The note is quite short, though informative and the French texts are given in full with a parallel translation into English only, though the essay and biographies are also in German. Strongly recommended. *David Hansell*

CLASSICAL

Clementi *Early Piano Sonatas, vol. 2* Susan Alexander-Max *fp* 71' 49"
Naxos 8.557695 £
Op ½, op. 7/3, op 9/3, op 10/1, op 11

I know Clementi was admired by Beethoven, but I *wish* I didn't find his music so deadly dull. Mozart can make commonplace ideas take wing and soar, but even the most original of the sonatas on this record (the G minor, op. 7/3) remains earthbound. It's hard to put one's finger on just why this is so, but at least part of the trouble is Clementi's habit of relentlessly repeating almost every phrase. Perhaps these sonatas of the early 1780s would come to life on the instruments Clementi knew when he wrote them. The Rosenberger copy used on this CD has a good sound, but the original surely dates from *c.*1805-1810 (the cover note's '*c.*1798' is wishful thinking for a Viennese fortepiano with 5½ octaves). It is nothing like the pianos of a quarter of a century before, whether a Backers or Stodart English grand, a Stein still with Cristofori-type hollow hammers, or a Walter probably not yet with 'Viennese' action. Alexander-Max is a fine player, and I much enjoyed her crisp articulation and the way she reserves the damper-raising lever for occasional special effects. But I'm less keen on her use of the 'moderator' lever, for example to shade off pianissimo endings. It's not at all like the English *una corda*, and the effect would have been impossible on a Viennese fortepiano contemporary with the music. *Richard Maunder*

Armand-Louis Couperin *Livre de Pieces de Clavecin* Philippe Leroy *hpscd* 76' 38"
Syrius SYR 141401
with alternative 5-channel disc

Armand-Louis's Livre is divided into two sets of pieces, in G and B flat majors respectively. Most have emblematic titles, some are labelled with the underlying dance type and the last four form a suite which portrays in turn the supposed musical tastes of Italy, England, Germany and finally France, which inevitably is represented by a passacaille. The harpsichord is a modern copy of a Ruckers-Hemsch and is sumptuously recorded even in mere stereo: those with the necessary equipment can enjoy the five-channel version presented on an additional disc. Philippe Leroy is a nimble fingered, though not technically flawless, interpreter of these stylistically varied pieces and makes full, though appropriate, use of the instrument's resources. Tempi are well-chosen and ornaments neat and if the performances lack the sheer brio of Jean-Patrice Brosse in this repertoire they still offer much pleasurable listening. The general presentation of the disc needed a sharper editorial eye. *David Hansell*

£ = bargain price (up to £6.00)
££ = mid-price

Haydn *Symphny 63 in C La Roxelande;* Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante in Eb, K. 364* Orchestra Libera Classica, Hidemi Suzuki 96' 33 (2 CDs)
TDK-AD021
+ first version of Symphony 63 finale (Live Concert 17-6-06)

Regular readers of these pages may recall my modified rapture in the April *EMR* at two CDs of music by Haydn and Mozart emanating from the same source as this latest release. Again we are presented with the recording of a concert in Tokyo, this one dating from June 2006, again one with an attractive programme. The audience is mouse-like until the long and deserved applause at the end of the music – which includes as an encore Haydn's original finale to *'La Roxelane'* (the conductor provides a short booklet essay outlining the confusing history of this popular and eclectic piece). Both symphonies are done with polish, yet the main interest is focused on the grand *Sinfonia concertante*, which receives a stylish, affectionate reading from the two soloists (the orchestra's concert masters). An enjoyable issue, well recorded – but these are not obvious top choices among the many versions to be had on CD.

Peter Branscombe

Juncà *Missa en La Major* Olivia Biarnés, Montserrat Pi, Jordi Casnovas, Rafael Muntaner *SATB*, Orquestra de Cambra Catalana, Joan Pàmies 49' 48"
Columna Música1 CM0068 a (rec 1999)

The style of performance on this disc would normally preclude it from space in these pages, but that would be a pity, as the composer is not very well known and the work at hand is actually quite strong – it would easily stand comparison with Haydn and Hummel. It's tuneful, harmonious and well constructed. Perhaps a smaller choir and more appropriate orchestra would like to try Juncà's music? BC

Mozart *Complete Clavier Works Vol. 6* Siegbert Rampe 80, 59"
Dabringhaus und Grimm MDG 341 1602-2
Sonatas K. 13, K. 15, K. 282, Ouverture K. 399, Rondo K. 511, Gigue K. 574, Variations K. 613, Pieces K. 3 and K. 15t

This is the latest instalment in Rampe's survey of Mozart's entire output for solo keyboard, and it has much the same strengths and weaknesses as Vol. 5, which I reviewed in the February *EMR*. Rampe uses harpsichords for the early London sonatas (K. 13 in particular is an astonishingly assured work for an 8-year-old) and, very appropriately, for the Handelian 'Ouverture' K. 399. I thoroughly approve, too, of using a clavichord for K. 282, but I'm increasingly irritated by the knocking noises when Rampe hits the keys too hard in loud passages (it may be a fault of the instrument's regulation, and could be cured, or at least alleviated, by fitting an extra layer of felt under the fronts of the keys). Rampe plays the later K. 511 and K. 613 on what is alleged to be a copy of a Stein of 1788 (though what is it doing with an couple of extra keys at the top?); I still find it a little lacking in resonance compared with original instruments by this maker. There is much added ornamentation on all the repeats: it's pretty convincing in style, and I'm sure Mozart was just as lavish himself, but there is a difficulty: how well would any extemporized variations stand up to repeated hearing? This is an obvious problem with recordings, and there is no easy answer. *Richard Maunder*

Mozart am Stein vis-à-vis Andreas Staier, Christine Schornsheim 63' 20"
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901941 *Prelude K.284a, Prelude and Fugue K.394, Duet Sonatas K.358 and K.381, Variations K.398, 6 German Dances K.509*

Those who went to the *rencontres harmoniques* meeting at Lausanne last spring had the once-in-a-lifetime experience of seeing and hearing Johann Andreas Stein's legendary *vis-à-vis*, a monster instrument combining a two-manual harpsichord at one end with a fortepiano at the other – though the fortepiano can also be played from a third manual at the harpsichord end via an elaborate coupling system. It was used for several concerts, culminating in a superb recital by Staier and Schornsheim, whose flamboyant musicianship and showmanship were truly worthy of Stein and Mozart. Now, almost the same programme has become available on CD: buy it immediately, while you have the chance! *Richard Maunder*

Paisiello *La Passione di Gesù Cristo* Roberta Invernizzi *S* Pietro, Alla Simoni *S* Maddalena, Luca Dordolo *T* Giovanni, José Fardilha *Bar* Giuseppe di Arimatea, Coro della Radio Svizzera, Lugano, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 96' 03" (2 CDs)
cpo 777 257-2

Within weeks of reviewing a fine recording of Paisiello's St John Passion on the Capriccio label (*EMR* 119, p50) I have before me an even more impressive two-CD set of his *Passion of Jesus Christ*, dating from his stay in St Petersburg in 1783. It is a stark, dramatic work, with careful blend of recitative, arioso and fully developed aria. As with Haydn, there is little obvious difference brtween Paisiello's sacred and secular vocal style. There is however fuller choral work, which is both demanding and highly effective. The rich, inventive scoring deserves a sentence to itself: Paisiello makes good use of a full woodwind ensemble (with clarinet and bassoon prominent), and he writes imaginatively but sparingly for brass. This is a fine performance of an important work, with distinguished singing from all four soloists. Diego Fasolis can weave fresh leaves into his laurel crown for yet another major feat of musical archaeology. The booklet contains the oratorio text in Italian, English and German as well as an introductory essay and notes on the artists in (stilted) English. Readers who think of Paisiello as the composer of innumerable operas, serious and buffo, and of effective orchestral music, may come to value his church music with equal admiration.

Peter Branscombe

Rigel *La Sortie d'Egypte, Jephté, La Destruction de Jéricho* Isabelle Poulenard, Philippe Do, Alain Buet *SAB*, Les Chantres du Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, Orchestre des Folies Françoises, Olivier Schneebeli 73' 58"
K617 K617198

This is a very welcome enrichment of the recorded repertoire of French music of the late 18th century. Henri-Joseph Rigel was the most significant of a sizeable family of musicians from Germany who settled in Paris. Rigel's entry into the CD Catalogue is doubly welcome: he is clearly a composer to reckon with; and the genre of *Hiérodrame* (short, dramatic oratorios) is poorly represented. Here are three of the four that he composed between 1774 and 1783. The music is strikingly effective, ranging between distinctive lyrical invention and powerful dramatic touches; Rigel writes well both for solo voices and full choral forces, and he clearly has a fine ear for imaginative orchestration.
The performances were recorded live at Versailles in December 2006. The solo singing ranges from the bold, confident and skilful to the barely adequate; it would have been helpful to have identified the individual cast members. The orchestra and chorus are of consistently high standard. The booklet contains the words of the oratorios in French and English, along with useful complementary essays. Olivier Schneebeli and his musicians deserve great credit for presenting this impressive music and doing so persuasively. *Peter Branscombe*

Geistliche Kantaten Barbara Schlick, Hilke Helling, Hein Meens, Harry van der Kamp *SATB*, Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max 64' 38"
Capriccio 67 192 (rec 1988)
Altnickol *Frohlocket und jauchzet*; CPE Bach *Der Gerechte ob er gleich*; G. Benda *Du wagst es*

This welcome CD was recorded nearly twenty years ago and has presumably been available at least in Germany before now. It helps fill out the picture of German church music in the period between Bach and Haydn. Some of CPE Bach's sacred music is, of course, familiar and readily available; this has not been the case with Benda and Altnickol, and it is good to have examples of their work on record. Johann Christoph Altnickol was Bach's pupil, assistant and son-in-law; few of his works have survived, and *Frohlocket und jauchzet*, an Easter cantata, is well worth hearing. The same can be said of Benda's *Du wagst es*, again a comparatively rare survivor among his church compositions and probably written for the ducal court at Gotha during his service as *Kapelldirektor* there. Its opening chorus, repeated at the close, is marked by jerky rhythms and hectic figuration that is intended to warn of the dangers of blasphemy. The performances are crisp and polished; the Altnickol brings the CD to a rousing conclusion with its crisp rhythms and use of brass and timpani. There is a long note in German, English and French, the English proving as irritating as machine translations can make it. The recorded quality is high. *Peter Branscombe*

Portrait of an English Harpsichord Steven Devine, with Catherine Martin *vln* 72' 41"
Finchcocks Press FPCD 004
James Nares Lesson in G, J.C. Bach Sonata in C minor Op.5 No.6, Thomas Gladwin Sonata in G, Thomas Arne Sonata in F, Joseph Kelway Sonata in C minor, Joseph Gibbs Sonata in A, Handel Suite in E

The harpsichord is a superb Kirckman of 1756 from the Finchcocks Collection, in what sounds like original condition, very well played by Steven Devine in a fine programme combining familiar pieces by Handel and J.C. Bach with lesser known sonatas by Gibbs and Arne and music by composers I hadn't heard of before. It just shows how many fine English composers there were in the middle of the eighteenth century – and they show some surprisingly wide influences, from Arne's convincing Scarlatti clone to Kelway's grand French-style suite (despite the title 'sonata'), complete with an Allemande in the Forqueray manner, a Courante and a slow Sarabande. It's good, too, to hear one of Joseph Gibbs's highly original violin sonatas, beautifully played by Catherine Martin. *Richard Maunder*

19th CENTURY

Beethoven, *Complete Works for Solo Piano, Vol. 4*. Ronald Brautigam, 73' 38"
BIS SACD-1473
Sonatas Op.26, Op.27 No.1, Op.27 No.2, Op.28

I'm delighted to report that I enjoyed this CD very much indeed. Readers may remember that I had some reservations about Brautigam's Haydn and Mozart recordings, but his Beethoven is everything a HIP performance ought to be. The fortepiano (a copy by Paul McNulty of a Walter und Sohn of 'c.1802' – well, probably a few years later) is first rate, and the playing is intelligent and sensitive, by turns tender and exciting. I have nothing but praise for the extremely accurate and clear articulation, something that's almost impossible on a modern piano. All Beethoven's staccato markings are scrupulously observed, and very restrained use is made of the damper-raising lever, so that the composer's rare pedal markings make their full effect. It may seem a bit churlish to quibble over the one place where the articulation is too clear: but shouldn't the first movement of Op. 27 No. 2 (the 'Moonlight Sonata') be played with the dampers off throughout? Brautigam drops the dampers momentarily at every change of harmony, so there is no blurring as Beethoven surely intended. All the same, this is a record I shall treasure for a long time. *Richard Maunder*

20th CENTURY

Elgar *Songs & Piano Music* The Works (Amanda Pitt, Marke Wilde, Peter Savidge *STB*), David Owen Norris *pf*
Avie AV 2129 139' 39" (2 CDs)

I claimed a review copy of this because of the piano, an 1844 Broadwood square which had reached the Elgar family music shop in 1867. He used it at Birchwood Lodge, writing on the soundboard the names of pieces he composed at it: 'Caractacus 1898, Sea Pictures 99, Gerontius 1900'. I used to be suspicious of pianos on which composers were supposed to have written their major compositionse, assuming that composers conceived their music in their heads and wrote it straight onto the page. But for *Gerontius*, and no doubt many other works, the vocal score was printed before the full score existed, and it has such an inviting piano part (I won't call it reduction) that I suspect that much of it dates from an early stage in the composition process. (I don't however, have any information on the sources, so this is just a hunch is).

When I first met the work, I got to know it more from playing it on the piano than from hearing it, though I did know the full score pretty well, since I preferred to use it on the two occasions I've sung it (a decent one with Willcocks in Cambridge c 1960, and a few years later probably the most incompetent performance it has ever had. For a start, there were no violas)! Disc 2 begins with the Prelude and Angel's Farewell (linking beginning and end like the abridged *Tristan*) played on Elgar's piano, and very interesting it sounds, though the dynamic range of the recording is too wide: with my normal volume setting, I could hardly hear it had started. It doesn't entirely convince: I don't have a metronome to check the tempi, but it sounds as if they are not speeded up to suit the instrument. But it is certainly worth hearing, and it is good to sample the instrument alone as well as accompanying songs and the *Sea Pictures*, in another of Elgar's piano 'reductions'. The instrument sounds at first as if it might not be powerful enough to support the voices, but in fact it enables the pianist to play with abandon without drowning them, and it produces sounds that a modern grand cannot match, such as the opening of the first disc. I'd love a piano like this!

I preferred the balance I got on my car player than from my better indoor speakers, where the voice and piano sounded dissociated. And I preferred the men to the soprano – and not just because Peter Savidge worked in my office during the period students now spend as a gap year. The songs won't be to everyone's taste, especially in such quantity, but it's the piano that attracts me. A pity that the short piece from which the cello concerto sprang is so repetitive! *CB*

21st CENTURY

Dominique Vellard *Nox Nostra Resonet: New Music for voices* Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Dominique Vellard *dir* 64' 38"
Glossa GCD P32301

Like Christopher Page (see *EMR* 118, p. 17), Dominique Vellard has come out as a composer. The five pieces here are all liturgical, including a *Stabat mater* and a Mass (with no Credo). They struck me as too modern in the sense that texture was king and rhythm was phrase by phrase rather than carrying the listener on from one to another. Monody and (in a non-technical sense) close harmony were prominent. I felt that the music would sound fine in a church, where the resonance could bring together the short spasms of activity. The signers were fully in command of Vellard's demands. *CB*

VARIOUS

Hopkinson Smith Album lutes, vihuela, baroque guitar 78'
Naïve E 8908
Music by Attaingnant, Bach, Dowland, Gallot, vieulx Gautier, Hagen, Kapsberger, Mouton, Mudarra, Narváez, Sanz, Weiss

This CD is an anthology of renaissance and baroque music for five different lutes (6, 8, 10, 11, and 13 courses), vihuela, and baroque guitar, recorded between 1980 and 2003. It's a "best of Hoppy" compilation. He is undoubtedly a good player with an international reputation, but I would rather not read in the sleeve notes that he is 'without doubt the finest lute player in the world today'.

The programme begins and ends with Bach: the *Tempo de Borrea* from Partita 1 in A minor (BWV 1002), and the Prelude from Partita 3 (BWV 1006). It is followed by a couple of pieces by John Dowland – the Frog Galliard and Lachrimae Pavan. The sound is very echoey, as if it was recorded in a swimming pool, and the player's gasps are clearly audible. The tempo of the pavan is on the fast side, and with jerky rubato which I find rather unsettling. Constant changes of speed are taken to extremes in his interpretation of Weiss' Prelude in D minor.

It is interesting to hear music by Bach and Weiss played in succession. Bach's texture is dense and complex, and can sound a bit of a struggle, whereas Weiss' music is light and airy, and so idiomatic for the lute, that it almost seems to play itself.

There are two contrasting pieces on the baroque guitar by Gaspar Sanz: a reflective, prelude-like *Marizápalos*, and a lively, strummed *Tarantela*. These are followed by Mudarra's setting of *Guarda-me las vacas* and Narvaez's *Conde Claros*. There is certainly much variety: a typically idiosyncratic toccata and galliard by Kapsberger, a canarios for guitar by Guerau, two simple dances with divisions from Pierre Attaingnant, and later French music by Charles Mouton, Ennemond Gaultier, and Jacques de Gallot. Particularly pleasing is the largo from Hagen's Concerto in A minor. *Stewart McCoy*

Orgeln in Österreich Renate Sperger Graola **98806** 77' 50"
Music by Bach (BWV 541, 650, 803), Erbach, Frescobaldi, G. Muffat (Toccata 10) + Brahms, Schische, Stiegleder

This slightly curious CD seems to have been built around a wish to record the four organs works written by Karl Schiske (1916-1969), a composer whom, I fear, has not quite hit the headlines in the UK and is, in any case, a little bit to recent to fall within the normal remit of *EMR*. As with many composers of his era, he fell under the influence of early music, hence the inclusion of works by Steigleder, Frescobaldi, Erbach, Muffat, Bach and, for some reason, Brahms, all played on modern organs, built with no real pretensions to historical style. Although the playing is fine, and the Schiske works are interesting examples of their time, as a whole this CD is unlikely to appeal to *EMR* readers. Incidentally, about one-third of the pieces were recorded in 1986. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

The Road to Paradise Gabrieli Consort, Paul McCreesh 74' 11"
Deutsche Grammophon **00289 477 6605**
Byrd Christe qui lux, **Parsons** *Ave Maria*, **Sheppard** *In pace, Media vita*, **Tallis** Miserere, chant Jacet granum, In paradisum + RR Bennett, Britten, WH Harris, Holst, Howells, Tavener,

Nothing Paul McCreesh does ever sounds routine, and his pilgrimage disc is as unique as John Eliot Gardiner's. We begin with Tallis's marvellous canonic *Miserere*, here sung as slowly as the music will take, setting the scene for a series of performances that one might describe as romantic with 'early' voices. It gives the disc a unity which most 'ancient and modern' church-music anthologies lack, but at the expense of feeling somewhat conductor-dominated. As I mention elsewhere (p. 17), it is difficult for a conductor to know where to stop. My current solution to this particular bee in my bonnet is to suggest that the conductor's role might be to rehearse, then let the singers get on with it. (At the Beauchamp course last week, that technique was tried a couple of times, and worked very well, and that was with a miscellaneous group of amateurs, not the skilled professionals performing here). As I said at Andrew Parrott's symposium, we know so little about HIP direction – though will know more when Andrew's book is published. The magnificent centre-piece of the programme is Sheppard's *Media vitae* in an overwhelming performance, *primus inter pares* in this marvellous programme of music through the pilgrimage of life. If you wonder about an intrusion in the Tavener, be assured that it has the composer's authority. Of the other 'modern' pieces, the teen-age Britten's *Hymn to the Virgin* is a delight and Holst's *Nunc dimittis* is a discovery: I wonder why I had never heard it before. *CB*

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continued from p. 17
Hacker played a high clarinet in it then, but the autograph doesn't confirm my memory.)

Quite why the Soweto children wanted to play strings wasn't clear from the interviews I heard, but they certainly do it with enthusiasm and skill. They may not quite match their professional colleagues in technical skills, but they certainly play with an immense natural understanding and musicality.

An interesting point emerged in the pre-concert talk. Buskaid teaches its players to teach on the basis that each grade is taught by pupils on the grade above. Since students can begin at any age, the teachers can be younger than the pupils: an example was quoted of a rather bossy eight-year-old teaching older children.

I've emphasised the Buskaid contribution to this concert: we can praise the English Baroque Soloists any time! I probably won't get to the Prom with a Venezualan youth orchestra, but look forward to hearing what it can do with *West Side Story*. From the trail they look rather too regimented. The Buskaid players seemed so relaxed and pleasingly informal: their enjoyment was infectious.

Since I mention an excessive acknowledgement of copyright on p. 24, I'll add another here. The concert programme gives an explicit acknowledgment to the source and edition of *Les Boréades*, which was even repeated on air! Yet Carus-Verlag get no mention for their edition of the Campra, nor were the editors of the other Rameau pieces acknowledged. Éditions Stil are somewhat aggressive on their claim to *Les Boréades*, perhaps compensating for buying a goose that hasn't laid a golden egg.

More worthy of publicity would have been Buskaid's sponsor. The event could not have happened without support from the international mining group Xstrata, who covered the cost of bringing the players and dancers to London and lodging them there: I wonder what was the relationship between Stil's copyright fee and what the BBC paid Buskaid.

I mentioned the Severn Floods in my editorial. Since I wrote it, they have seemed somewhat insignificant in relationship to the 20 million people displaced in South Asia. On the other hand, even proximity to the English situation makes it slightly easier to imagine the plight of such a vast number of people. I was surprised how slow the media were to feature it. I read it in an inside page of The Times one morning, so it must have been known about by the BBC the evening before, but it didn't feature (as far as I noticed) on the Radio 4 news summaries until it became the main story in the late afternoon, but the early evening BBC TV news either omitted it or gave it no prominence – presumably because there were no pictures. (I'm a bit vague: I don't make a point of listening to each news broadcast!) Elaine and I may be advancing in years, but we are constantly irritated by headlines in radio news not reaching TV until visual images are available. *CB*

BOWMAN'S DOWLAND

David Hill

Awake, sweet love: songs and lute solos by John Dowland and his contemporaries James Bowman *cT* David Miller *lute* 72' 22" ff
Hyperion CDH 55241 (originally CDA 66447, 1991)

In my one and only lesson with the great man, James Bowman told me that when he first looked at the lute song repertoire, he believed that he was expected to sing them in the predominantly 'high' keys as written. It was after meeting Robert Spencer (with whom he recorded his first solo disc of lute songs) that he discovered the joy of the 'low lute', as heard on this disc. More of this below.

Those who enjoy hearing Elizabethan songs sung by a countertenor need look no farther than this excellent disc, sung by the man who has been, for the past forty years, the finest alto in Britain, dare I say, the world? Many of the usual suspects are rounded up here: 'Can she excuse my wrongs', 'Flow my tears', 'Awake sweet love', 'Say love if ever thou didst find,' 'Author of light', combined with some of the less frequently performed lute song repertoire, including the three examples by the wonderful John Danyel. A few viol consort songs are added for good measure, two of which spring from the (mercifully brief) period when a mania for alliteration in play-songs (parodied in Bottom the Weaver's lines) produced

Come tread the paths of pensive pangs

and

In terror trapp'd with thraldom thrust
There thorny thoughts to taste and try.

The viols also join in as a substitute for the 'chorus' in the final Dowland song: 'Tell me, true Love', to end this excellent and varied programme.

It's a great disc by a great singer. If you didn't buy it first time round (which I did), it's now even more of a bargain at mid-price. One slight blip – it's difficult not to wince at James's two blatantly wrong words (surprisingly, both sung and printed wrongly in the CD's liner notes) in the very first song, both of which alter the meaning of their respective lines. These very noticeable errors are all the more surprising since this is one of Dowland's most well-known songs ('Can she excuse my wrongs'). Did no-one notice at the sessions?

So why am I now seriously disturbed by this style of performance, by one of my absolute favourite and most inspirational singers? Isn't the solo countertenor voice one of the most fundamental and characteristic sounds of Early Music? Er... probably not, actually.

I've recently grown to accept that, enjoyable and moving though interpretations by Scholl, Blaze, Deller, Bowman et al. undoubtedly are, they surely do not conform to the one great criterion that the Early Music Movement has always held most dear – they are performed by a very unlikely 'modern' instrument, i.e. the solo male alto voice. Difficult as it may be for some listeners to accept, there is not the slightest piece of evidence from the early 17th century that male altos existed, as a solo voice, outside of church and chapel, much less that they ever sang this lute song repertoire, since to do so necessitates the transposition of most of the songs down by a third (usually), in order to bring them into a manageable vocal range for an alto – and that suggests either a lutenist armed with a lute tuned lower than notated pitch, or that songs were written out in alternative lower keys. If the latter ever happened, it seems strange that not one example of a downward transposed lute song exists in tablature. 'Lute songs for countertenor' was created by Alfred Deller and Desmond Du Pre circa 1953, and simply did not happen in the 17th century. This transposition 'problem' was first raised publicly by Lynda Sayce iin *EMR* 38 (March 1998), and I hope to expand on this controversial issue another time.

Don't let any of the above stop you owning this enjoyable disc, though!

This is a topic that often crops up in the discursive chats David and I have when discussing possible cartoon subjects. It is one that has long concerned me, as has the wider suspicion of the countertenor as the archtypical early-music voice. It is good that David intends to research the matter further; contributions from readers are welcome. CB

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This is perhaps an appropriate place to congratulate the distinguished performer of untransposed consort songs as well as so much other music, Emma Kirkby, on her promotion to Damehood.

No, son - it doesn't mean she'll be in Pantomime this year.