

# Early Music REVIEW

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Part 2 CD Reviews

## Undertranch that Porpus!

Jennie Cassidy

So now is come our joyful feast,  
Let every man be jolly.  
Each room with ivy leaves is dressed,  
And every post with holly.  
Though some churls at our mirth repine,  
Round your foreheads garlands twine,  
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,  
And let us all be merry.



Tudor Advent was a time of fasting, but when the celebrations began on Christmas day, it introduced twelve days of excess. A boar's head garnished with herbs was often the Christmas centrepiece in grander houses. This tradition came from Scandinavia, where it was served at the Yule festival to honour the Sun Boar, sacred to the heroes of Valhalla. Another traditional offering was a Christmas Pye, made with ox tongue, chicken, eggs, sugar, raisins, mixed peel, spices and herbs (hmm... maybe next year). The dishes offered were as lavish and diverse as possible. For example, a Tudor bill of fare for new-years day was 'oysters, brawn, capons, turkeys, mutton, geese, boiled meat with ducks, a marrow pudding, roast beef, minced pies, veal, venison, pig roast, capons and custards'. In 1684 Robert May published his *The accomplit cook: or, The art and mystery of cookery*, which includes a guide 'terms of carving' for each animal:

*Break that deer, rear that goose, lift that swan, sauce that capon, spoil that hen, frust that chicken, unbrace that mallard, unlace that coney, dismember that hern, display that crane, disfigure that peacock, unjoynt that bittern, untach that curlew, allay that pheasant, wing that partridge, mince that plover, chine that salmon, string that lamprey, splat that pike, souce that plaice, splay that bream, side that haddock, tusk that barbel, culpon that trout, fin that chivin, transon that eel, tranch that sturgeon, undertranch that porpus, tame that crab, barb that lobster.*

I don't know what it would be for mutton (deflock perhaps?)

This years recipe is a lovely warming winter dish, stewed in its own rich juices and fortified with wine, herbs and spices.



### Pot roast ragout of mutton

Pot roasting is an ancient method of cooking originating in prehistoric times. Pots of clay and later copper or bronze were suspended over an open fire or put in the ashes. Whole fowl or meat joints were stewed with vegetables, herbs and spices. A ragout was a spiced meat stew with a depth of taste. The 17th-century name derives from the French 'ragouter', a word made of the prefix *re-*, meaning again and *-gouter*, meaning to taste. This recipe includes a potato. Popular legend has long suggested that Sir Walter Raleigh introduced potatoes to England, but in fact Sir Francis Drake is more likely to have done so. In 1586 Drake stopped in Colombia to collect provisions including tobacco and potato tubers. He wrote 'These potatoes be the most delicate rootes that may be eaten and doe farre exceed our passeneps or carets. Their pines be of the bignes of two fists, the outside whereof is of the making of a pine-apple, but is soft like the rinde of a cocomber, and the inside eateth like an apple but it is more delicious than any sweet apple sugred.' An interesting description!

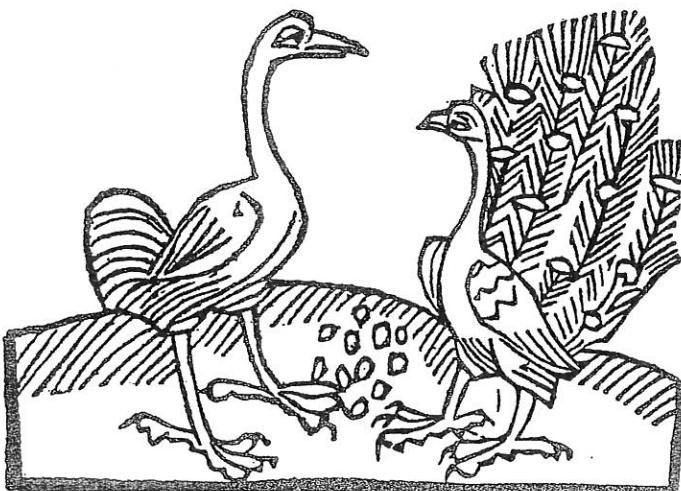
Oven temperature 170 degrees centigrade  
(gas mark 3)

500g boned and rolled lamb joint (I used shoulder)  
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves  
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg  
1/4 teaspoon ground mace  
salt and pepper  
1 onion  
1 potato  
1/2 swede  
bundle of fresh herbs - thyme, bay, oregano, rosemary  
1 anchovy or a squirt of anchovy paste  
500 ml dry white wine or 250 ml wine mixed with 250 ml stock.

Mix the spices and seasoning together and rub into the lamb. Fry in a little oil to brown on all sides and then place in a casserole dish. Cut the vegetable in to big chunks and fry for a while, adding the anchovy at the end. Deglaze the pan with the wine or wine and stock mixture and pour the lot onto the meat. Put a lid on and pop it into the oven for 3 hours.

Then wherefore in these merry days  
Should we, I pray, be duller?  
No, let us sing some roundelay  
To make our mirth the fuller.  
And, whilst thus inspir'd we sing,  
Let all the streets with echoes ring,  
Woods and hills and everything,  
Bear witness we are merry.

The poem is *A Christmas Carol* by George Wither from his *Fair-Virtue, the Mistresse of Philarete*, 1622



## EARLY MUSIC FROM HUNGARY

Brian Clark

We received a boxful of new discs from Hungaroton, so we have reviewed them together rather than scattered among the main sequence of CDs.

*The Voice of Bakfark: vocal works by Desprez, Clemens non Papa, Arcadelt etc & lute intabulations by Valentin Bakfark Voces Aequales, István Györy lute 60' 29"*  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32412  
 + Crequillon, Pathie, Sermisy, Verdelot

*Palestrina Priego alla Beata Vergine della Madrigali spirituali a cinque voci, libro secondo (Roma, 1594)* Corvina Consort, Zoltán Kalmanovits 68' 58"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32497

*S. Rossi Hashirim 'asher lishlomo/The Songs of Solomon*  
 Corvina Consort, Zoltán Kalmanovits 65' 10"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32350

*Johann Pezel, Gottfried Reiche Tower Sonatas* Ewald Brass Quintet (modern) 67' 47"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32451

*A. Scarlatti Cantatas for bass & obbligato instruments*  
 Péter Fried B, Savaria Baroque Orchestra, Pál Németh  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32456 64' 28"

*Richard Jones Suites for the Harpsichord* Judit Péteri  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32454 69' 18"

*Ruhe Sonatas for Viola da Gamba & continuo* Sándor Szászvárosi gamba, Kousay H. Mahdi Kadduri vlc, Angelika Csizmadia hpscd 73' 13"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32412

*Lanzetti Six Solos (Sonatas) after an Easy and Elegant Taste* Dénes Karasszon vlc, Igor Davidovics lutes, gtr; Jeremy Joseph kbd 75' 11"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32455

*Tessarini Introduzioni a 4 Op XI (nos. 4-12)* Aura Musicale, Balázs Maté 63' 07"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32303

*Mozart Two Masterpieces in Contemporary Transcription* Malcolm Bilson, Zvi Meniker fp, Abigail Graham ob, Mónika Tóth vln, László Móré vla, Csilla Vályi vlc 76' 13"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32414

*Gran Partita* K. 361 arr. C F. G. Schwenke for ob, string trio & fp; *String Quintet in G minor* K. 516 arr C. D. Stegmann

*Mozart Piano Concertos in C K. 467, in A K. 488; Rondo in D K. 282* Tamás Érdi, Budapest Chamber Symphony, Tamás Vásáry  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32448

*Wohltemperierte Cymbal* Rósza Farkas cimbalom 71' 20"  
 Hungaroton Classic HCD 32359  
 Music by various Hungarian composers, 1982-2005

The *Voice of Bakfark* is an ingenious CD. Readers will have encountered the name in these pages before – Bálint Bakfark flourished in the middle of the 16th century and is perhaps most celebrated for his lute arrangements of contemporary vocal music. Here, the lutenist István Györi plays Bakfark's intabulations of Josquin, Clemens non Papa, Arcadelt, Sermisy, Verdelot, Pathie and Créquillon, and then *Voces Aequales* (cTTBarB) sing the originals upon which they are based. In addition, they sing music by Mouton and three mass movements, themselves based on some of the chansons. The singing and the playing are first class, and I agree with the booklet writer that both versions of each work are worthy in themselves.

Palestrina's *Priego alla Beata Vergine* is hailed as a world premiere recording. The Corvina Consort (SSmSTTBarB, although only two singers perform on all 32 tracks – one of them the director, Zoltán Kalmanovits) are excellent advocates of Palestrina's spiritual madrigals, with clean lines, impeccable tuning and beautifully shaded phrasing – the tension rises and falls in a natural way, without any sense of external forces acting on the performance. The programme is built around his second book, dating from 1594, as well as two litany settings from Roman manuscript sources. If, after all is said and done, the music is rather unmemorable, it has nothing to do with Palestrina's music – rather, having spent as much time listening to the fabulous 5th Book of madrigals by Monteverdi of just a decade later, with all the passion that he wrings from every phrase, this recording has been in some very tough company. Thoroughly recommended – even if overshadowed by *La Venexiana*.

*The Songs of Solomon* – of Solomon/Salamone Rossi, not King Solomon – features the Corvina Consort again (this time SSSmSTTBarBB). The music (settings of Hebrew versions of some of the Book of Psalms) ranges from three voices to eight, and it is to Rossi's credit that he is equally comfortable with the entire range (and combination) of voices. Once again, the ensemble singing is stylish and beautifully rendered – tuning is excellent, and phrasing seemingly effortless. It is quite extraordinary to imagine Rossi the Jew writing these beautifully baroque

settings for use in synagogues – all the more regretful that there is no similar corpus of Latin settings by him with instruments.

Péter Fried is the soloist in a selection of cantatas for bass by Alessandro Scarlatti. He is accompanied by the Savaria Baroque Orchestra (rather a grandiose name, since it is basically a trio sonata set-up – two violins, cello, harpsichord and strummed instruments), directed by Pál Németh. The works are: *Immagini d'orrore*, *Splendeano in bel sembiante*, *Mentre un Zeffiro*, *Mi torment ail pensiero*, *Cor di Bruto*, *Tiranna ingrate* and *Tra speranza e timore*. The booklet note (definitely the weakest of the set) is mostly about Alessandro Scarlatti in general, only referring to the works in hand in the final paragraph, and the English translation (one excellent feature of all of these discs is that texts and translations of all the works are included) is especially corrupt. Péter Fried's CV is impressive – but you're more likely to find him singing Wagner or Puccini than Scarlatti. Although it's easy to imagine him in such works, this is an impressive excursion into earlier repertoire – and full marks to Hungaroton for giving him that opportunity.

Judit Péteri is the soloist in Jones: *Suites for the Harpsichord* (HCD32454, 69' 18"). To be precise, these are the odd-numbered "sets" from Richard Jones's 1732 book of six. I had never heard any music by this composer before. He was a violinist, and became leader of the Drury Lane Theatre orchestra in 1730. His music, according to the performer (who wrote the booklet notes) betrays his indebtedness to his own instrument through some rather wide-ranging leaps and some of the passagework and figurations. I am not a keyboard player (by any stretch of anyone's imagination) so I cannot comment on the performances (except to say that I enjoyed them), but I must say I was struck by the quality of the music – there's more than a hint of early-onset *Sturm und Drang*; he certainly knows how to create tension. A world away from Handel's suites and Stanley's voluntaries – and you guessed it: these are world premieres, too.

...as is the next disc. Sándor Szászváros (gamba) and Kousay H. Mahadi Kadduri (cello) perform five works by the 18th-century viol player, Johann Friedrich Ruhe, and they are joined in four of them by Angelika Csizmadia (harpsichord). The fifth work is a suite in D for gamba and cello, consisting of eight movements (all, none too surprisingly, with French names), while there are two four-movement sonatas for gamba and continuo (one in G, the other in D minor) and two 'solos' for gamba (also sonatas, but in the three-movement slow-quick-quick pattern, one in C, the other in A minor). The music is entertaining and enjoyable, and the performances first class. Ruhe held important posts at Magdeburg Cathedral, but has long been overshadowed by his contemporaries, father and son Rolle. The discovery of these pieces in the Thuringian State Archives is a welcome one.

After the Ruhe, Salvatore Lanzetti: *SIX SOLOS after an Easy and Elegant Taste for the VIOOLONCELLO* (another world premiere recording) comes as something of a shock. These works may be 'after an easy and elegant taste' but the music itself could scarcely be described in those terms! Balázs Máté is one of the world's leading baroque cellists and he seems to relish Lanzetti's challenges – the high tessitura, and the sweeping bow strokes. He is accompanied by Dénes Karasszon (cello), Igor Davidovics (theorbo, archlute and guitar – I'm not entirely convinced how appropriate these instruments are for music of this period) and Jeremy Joseph (harpsichord and organ). This would make a particularly entertaining Christmas present for any young cellist.

Yet another world premiere recording is the Tessarini: Here Balázs Máté directs *Aura musicale* (consisting of 33211 strings, continuo of harpsichord and/or organ and guitar or archlute, and editorially added wind in two pieces) in exciting accounts of 12 three-movement sinfonias (the print dates from 1748). The ordering of the pieces is slightly odd (10-12, 4-6, 9, 8, 7) but the recital works very well – I listened to it through several times. Máté's editorial horn parts are idiomatic and thoroughly convincing. Although I'm not entirely persuaded that Tessarini is that important a composer, this addition to the CD catalogue is sure to be popular with fans of this repertoire.

Mozart appears in two contemporary transcriptions. In the hands of C. F. G. Schwenke, the *Gran Partita*, K.361, becomes a quintet for fortepiano, oboe, violin, viola and cello, while the *String Quintet in G minor*, K.516, is arranged for fortepiano four-hands (partly by C. D. Stegmann, and partly by the performers, Malcolm Bilson and Zvi Meniker, who had previously made their own version). The group's other members are Abigail Graham (oboe), Mónika Tóth (an excellent violinist), László Móré (viola – equally impressive) and Csilla Vályi. I'm not too familiar with the *Gran Partita*, so Schwenke's subtlety is possibly wasted on me, although this version (with a mysterious extra *Trio*) is pleasing in its own right. I studied the string quintet as a set work at university and, although the fortepiano is surprisingly convincing, I missed the added bite and lyricism that string players can give to some of the more expressive phrases.

Although this disc might normally be omitted from our lists for having been played on modern instruments, *Tower Sonatas* (HCD32451, 67' 47") deserves a write-up for presenting Johann Pezel's *Fünfstimmige blasende Musik* of 1685 and Gottfried Reiche's *Vierundzwanzig neue Quatricinien* of 1696. The Ewald Brass Quintet (two trumpets, horn, trombone and tuba – not, perhaps, what either composer had in mind!) trip lightly through Pezel's *Intradas* and dance movements, and deliver impressive performances of Reiche's 10 sonatinas and 14 fugas. I recall some

of the Pezel from a Philip Jones Ensemble LP I owned in the 1980s, but I don't remember ever hearing this music on period instruments: an opening for someone?

The penultimate disc in the set is Mozart Piano Concertos, in which the Budapest Chamber Symphony, directed by no less a luminary than Tamás Vásáry accompany Tamás Érdi in three works, namely the concertos in C and A (K.467 and 468), as well as the Rondo in D, K.382. It has been many years since I listened to any of these, and I have to admit that I've been deprived of some wonderful music – here beautifully crafted by everyone concerned.

The Well-Tempered Cymbalom is perhaps not an instrument that you've ever considered – certainly, it doesn't always sound well-tempered (in either sense) in this recital of modern works written especially for the instrument. There is, however, absolutely no denying the staggering virtuosity of the soloist (Rózsa Farkas), nor the originality of some of the works she plays.

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## DAS ALTE WERK 50 YEARS

These arrived too late for review in this issue. Many of them are classic recordings, engraved on our memories, and need no recommendation. We invite readers who have lived with them and know them well to send comments (not necessarily formal reviews) on any of them for the next issue (by 15 January). They don't have to be encomia: you may, of course, feel that some deserve oblivion. It doesn't matter if some discs receive several reviews, and you can be as short as a single sentence.

Monteverdi *Madrigali concertate* Viveca Axell, John Potter, Douglas Nasrawi, Harry van der Kamp STTB, Tragicomedia  
2564 69857 1 (1993) 73' 39"

Kapsberger *Arias, villanelle, motets and works for lute* Guillamette Laurens mS, Luca Pianca lute, Enrico Onofrio vln  
64 69858 0 (1995) 57' 20"

*Vanitas vanitatum, Rome 1650* Tragicomedia 74' 02"

2564 698454 6 (1995)

Music by Carissimi, Landi, Marazzoli, Mazzocchi, L. Rossi & anon.

Schmelzer *Fux Music at the Habsburg Court* Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 96' 34" (2 CDs)  
2564 69852 4 (1970)

Fux Rondeau a7, Serenada a8, Sonata a Quattro

Schmelzer Sonata I, II, IV (1662), Sonata natalitia, Sonatas a3, a4 *La Carioletta*, a5, a3 vlns

Purcell *Dido and Aeneas* Ann Murray *Dido*, Rachal Yakar *Belinda*, Anton Scharinger *Aeneas*, Trudeliese Schmidt *Sorceress*, Arnold Schoenberg Choir, Concertus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 53' 43"

2564 69852 8 (1983)

Corelli, Manfredini, Torelli, Vivaldi *Christmas Concertos* Il giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini 61' 49"  
2564 6983 6 (1991)

Antonacci *Sinfonia pastorale*, Corelli op. 6/8, Manfredini op. 3/12, Pez *Concerto pastorale*, Torelli op. 8/6, Vivaldi op. 13/4, RV279

Dall'Abaco *Concerti Concerto Köln* 78' 19"

2564 69859 8 (1998)

Op. 2/1, 4, 5, 7; op. 5/3, 5, 6; op. 6/5, II

Vivaldi *Concertos for lute and mandolin* Luca Pianca archlute, Duilio Galfetti *mandolin*, Enrico Onofrio *vln, vla d'amore*, Il Giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini 64' 50"  
2564 69854 2 (1993)

Vivaldi *Concerti da camera I* (RV 90, 98, 101, 104, 435, 442) Giovanni Antonini *rec*, Il Giardino Armonico 48' 53"

2564 69854-4 (1991)

Bach *Messe in h-Moll* Rotraud Hansmann, Emiko Iiyama, Helen Watts, Kurt Equilux, Max van Egmond SSATB, Wiener Sängerknaben, Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt  
2564 69853 8 (1968) 106' 39" (2 CDs)

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Gustav Leonhardt 47' 45"

2564 69853 2 (1965)

Bach *Brandenburg Concertos 1-6* Il Giardino Armonico, Giovanni Antonini 92' 41"  
2564 69812 3 (1997) (2 CDs)

Bach *Die Kunst der Fuge* Herbert Tacheck org 72' 39"

2564 69853 4 (1977)

Ignacio de Jerusalem *Matins for the Virgin of Guadalupe* 1764 Chanticleer, Joseph Jennings 68' 49"  
2564 69858 7 (1998)

J. C. Bach, Holzbaer, J. Stamitz, Richter *Music at the Court of Mannheim* Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt  
2564 69852 6 (1963) 53' 50"

Haydn *Missa in angustiis (Nelsonmesse)*, *Te Deum* Luba Oronasova, Elisabeth von Magnus, Deon van der Walt, Alastair Miles SATB, Arnold Schienerberg Choir, Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 51' 21"  
2564 69857 8 (1998)

Boccherini *Cello Concertos* G. 477, 479-481 Anner Bylsma, Concerto Amsterdam, Jaap Schröder 60' 51"  
2564 69853 3 (1965/8)

Mozart *Clarinet Concerto, Oboe Concerto, Concerto for Flute & Harp* Robert Wolf fl, Naoko Yoshino hp, Hans-Peter Westermann ob, Wolfgang Meyer bassoon cl, Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 77' 45"  
2564 69855 6 (2000)

Salieri, Steffan: *Concertos for fortepiano* Andreas Staier fp, Concerto Köln 73' 57"  
2564 69855 2 (1995)

Salieri in Bb & C, Steffan in Bb

Mendelssohn *String Symphonies 8, 9 & 10* Concerto Köln 66' 35"  
2564 69857 3 (1994)

Prices in the low mid-price range

## CD REVIEWS

## CHANT

*Gregorianische Gesänge* Schola der Benedikterabtei Gerleve, Gottfried Meier 52' 38" NCA New Classical Adventure 60173 Propers for Epiphany, Mass in Ordinary Time & Mass for Church Consecration

Whilst not a particularly generous CD at just under 53 minutes this is a very pleasing, well sung series of chants in a pleasantly resonant acoustic. The voices are exceptionally clear, characterful yet well blended (and sounding fine in non-Super Audio), producing a smooth rendition of the music. It is sung mostly in unison except for antiphonal sections and cantored entries.

The chants can be found in the *Graduale Triplex*, except that additional verses have been used appropriately. The booklet notes say that the music, found in the basic repertoire of the mass, was all taken from the earliest age of plainsong which became established in its final shape both textually and melodically around the middle to the end of the eighth century. Whilst following one of the chants, *Factus est Dominus*, in the *Graduale Triplex*, which apart from the Solesmes notation also includes neumes from Laon and Einsiedeln MSS, I noticed small deviations from the Solesmes melody which indicated these, or perhaps other, sources.

The accompanying booklet has notes in English, German and French covering a description and historical context of the music, a description of the monastic community, and the words and source references of the chants. A page from the *Graduale Triplex* is used as a background image on the case and in the notes. The singers are not identified, except in a group photograph, but they are part of a community of 50 monks at the Abbey of St Joseph of Gerleve in Westphalia, close to the Rhine and the Netherlands border. The abbey was founded in 1904 to specialise in education and spiritual retreat. In their religious services, chant can be heard on every day of the year and their priority is not its performance or cultural value but for the glorification of God in shared prayer, which in the words of Holy Benedict stands before all things. But even if their main purpose is not aesthetic, they still give an excellent performance.

Tony Brett

## MEDIEVAL

*Heu, Fortuna: musique au temps de Philippe IV le Bel (1268-1314)* La Rotta (Sarah Barnes S, Tobie Miller rec, hurdy-gurdy, S, Émilie Brûlé vieille, Esteben La Rotta lute, harp, T) 71' 34" Atma Classique ACD2 2561

Usually, medieval CDs, unless they are very broad anthologies, separate monophonic trouvère songs from notated polyphony. Here, however, we have songs from the Chansonnier Cangé by Blondel de Nesle, Gillebert de Berneville and anon from the time of Philip IV's youth mixed with motets from the Montpellier MS (less precisely dated), two motets by de Vitry from the Fauvel MS (c.1316) and retrospective transcriptions of the later Robertsbridge Codex (retranscribed for the disc, since no keyboard instrument is used). The effect is to make what one tends to think as different strands of music sound more related – though that may be in part because of the instrumentation and performance style. There is variety, but it is less dependent on genre than one might expect. This is a well-performed and interesting disc. The young players are confident and skilful, and the lead singer Sarah Barnes is pleasingly unaffected. CB

*Is there a mnemonic for remembering the order of the French kings as there is for English ones (Willie, Willie, Harry, Steve...): I'd find it most useful. Philippe IV was born in 1268 and reigned 1285-1314.*

*Music for the Lion-hearted King* Gothic Voices, Christopher Page 60' 13" Hyperion CDH55292 ££ (rec 1988)

Like the CD reviewed above, this mixes monophony with, if not polyphony, at least homophony. It originally celebrated the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Richard I's coronation at Westminster Abbey in 1189, and must be the only disc associated with Richard that doesn't include his song *Janus hons pris*. It is sad that the Gothic Voices innovations seem to have been ignored: groups like La Rotta have followed a different tradition, one that is easier for the listener, rather than absorbed the Gothic Voices style and moved on from it. The cover bears a quote from a Gramophone reviewer: 'the best record

I have ever reviewed': I don't think I'd go quite so far, but some of the hyperbole is deserved, and I can heartily agree with the quote from The Good CD Guide: 'the singers cannot be applauded too highly'; they are Margaret Philpot, Rogers Covey-Crump, John Mark Ainsley and Leigh Nixon. CB

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Ockeghem Missa cuiusvis toni* Ensemble Musica Nova, Lucien Kandel 115'06" Æon AECD 0753 (2 CDs) all four realisations of the mass + *Intemerata Dei mater*

The fine singing of this Lyon-based vocal ensemble, well tuned, well blended and musically expressive, is in this case only the starting point for a truly groundbreaking contribution to the performance of early polyphony. In reviewing the Clerkes' Group's boxed set of Ockeghem Masses, I cautiously avoided the phrase 'all the Ockeghem you will ever want', and this release proves that decision to have been judicious. On this double CD the Ensemble present four complete versions of Ockeghem's *Missa cuiusvis toni*, a title which would alert Latin readers to the fact that this is a setting with various modal options. In fact the options are four in number, and the group for the first time on CD allows us to compare these alternatives. Essentially they sing the work at the same pitch, but allow different modes to change the order of the tone/semitone steps in the scale they sing in. Thus most obviously to the modern ear two versions are 'in the minor', two 'in the major'. The more perceptive modern listener may also notice differences in the resolution of cadences due to the presence of a minor or major seventh. Extend this variation to all the notes in the scale and you can imagine the degree of difference between the four versions. Gerard Geay's cogent booklet note, slightly marred in translation, makes the case that church composers continued at least partially to think modally until the 17th century, an observation which carries enormous implications for editors who like to pepper their editions with *musica ficta*, although Ockeghem, of course, alters the pitch of individual notes to avoid the dreaded diminished fifth. Geay doesn't speculate as to what factors might determine which version of the mass was to be sung on which occasion. Perhaps the

modality of important chant items in the service might suggest one mode or the other, or perhaps the weather – who knows. In any case, these powerful performances have gone a long way to opening a door on a hitherto largely unexplored dimension of the mediaeval musical mind. *D. James Ross*

*Adieu, naturlic leven mijnen: songs from the Koning MS (Brussels, Royal Library MS II 270) ca. 1500 Aventure 72' 33"*

Fineline Classical FL72111

This is based on a MS whose first section includes 29 polyphonic songs and spiritual Latin and Dutch songs without music. The songs chosen emphasise the sorrows of life and the torments suffered by the martyrs. Curiously, while the texts are so foreign to even current Christian modes of thought, let alone to our generally secular culture, the music itself is rather pleasing: I can perceive no relationship between the expression of words and music, but that must be a more modern concept. Aventure comprise three singers, a viol and three recorders. The performances are excellent, though the music itself may not be quite top rank. I wasn't following the list of works, but the piece that struck me most turned out to be the only ascribed one, Agricola's *Mijns herten troest* CB

*The Gold-String Clavicytherium* David Kinsela  
*Fundamentum Organum* ORO 202 76'55"  
*Keyboard Banquet* ORO 206 79' 11"  
*Harmony-lore* ORO 105 78' 04"

These three CDs give a comprehensive insight into the earliest known keyboard music, with the principal exception of the Faenza Codex. The first is almost totally based on a selection of works from Willi Apel's 1963 publication, *Keyboard Music of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (CEKM 1), including the Robertsbridge Fragment of c1358, and the two earliest known composers for keyboard, Adam Illeborgh (c1420) and the blind Conrad Paumann whose *Fundamentum Organisandi* of c1450 may have been composed as part of his move from his native Nuremberg to the Wittelsbach Court of Albrecht III in Munich. The selection of pieces must have been a difficult process, but it is a shame that only one of the three extraordinarily rhetorical settings of Illeborgh's *Frowo al myn hoffen an dyr lyed* is included. Although the CD cover hints at the use of the chekker, organ, clavichord, clavicymbalum and clavicytherium, it is only the last instrument that is actually used, the others

being Kinsela's own conjecture as to the original instruments for specific groups of pieces. The clavicytherium used on all three CDs is a 1991 copy by David Evans of the 1470 'Ulm' instrument in the Royal College of Music.

The *Keyboard Banquet* CD is devoted to the Buxheim Organ Book, which was probably started, if not mostly composed, by Paumann (c1410-73). The pieces are sensibly grouped into six sections, each opening with one of the fascinating bell-like *Redeuntes* movements. *Harmony-lore* covers the tablature of Amerbach of Basel, a collection of pieces, mostly by Kotter, started in 1513, with works by Kotter, Hofhaimer, Weck, Isaac and Buchner. It might be argued that these pieces could have been performed on a wider range of instruments, but the clavicytherium produces a very attractive sound and is as arguably 'authentic' as any other instrument in many cases. The booklet notes are comprehensive and include many of Kinsela's own theories on the music and instruments of this period. Although this might all seem a bit specialist for the casual listener, each CD includes a wealth of attractive music, with little rhythmic and melodic patterns that crop up time after time adding a degree of coherence to what might otherwise be appear to be daunting. Kinsela's interpretations are thoughtful and insightful, his departures from the published text understandable and acceptable. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

#### 16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Brumel* The Hilliard Ensemble 64' 27"  
*Coro* COR16052 (rec 1997 *Hilliard Live 3*)

It is nice to see the Sixteen's house label Coro playing host to these fine recordings by the Hilliard Ensemble. Previously issued on a subscription basis to relatively few early music anoraks such as myself, these four recordings (and perhaps more from the same Radio 3 treasury?) deserve the wider circulation they will now receive. Anybody who has attended a Hilliard Ensemble concert will know that the term 'live' on these CDs is a promise of excitement rather than an excuse for inaccuracy, and indeed the present recording stands up extremely well by any standards, marked out as live by only a couple of tiny wobbles and a surprise burst of applause at the end from an otherwise completely silent audience. The beautiful music presented here is at the opposite end of the scale from Brumel's enormous 12-part Mass *Et ecce terrae motus*, but

reveals a composer of considerable refinement able to write exquisitely in much smaller dimensions. Sections and entire pieces in relatively few parts usefully remind us that while nowadays performers and listeners generally prefer richer textures, Renaissance composers very happily composed works with transparent textures such as many of the compositions here, and when the singing is of the superlative quality achieved by the Hilliard Ensemble the results are a revelation. *D. James Ross*

*Byrd Clarifica me* Leon Berben (c.1521 organ at Oosthuizen) 74' 06"

Ramée RAM 0704

MB 10, 12, 13, 25, 27, 42, 46, 48, 49, 54, 63, 64, 67, 86

This CD is a revelation! Although Byrd is unlikely to have known anything but comparatively small scale organs without the mixture ranks, 16' stops or sheer volume of most contemporary continental organs, his music does take on far more magisterial quality when performed on such instruments, particularly with a more generous acoustic than is often associated with English 16<sup>th</sup> century organ music. The Oosthuizen organ is usually dated at 1521 (the date of the construction of the church), but it seems to be a conglomeration of pipes from several instruments (some dating from well before the 1520s) put together around 1670. Although it is small, with just seven stops (including a 16 Bourdon, a Mixture, an Octaaf with doubled ranks of pipes in the upper register and a gorgeously sonorous 8' Prestant) it speaks into a generous acoustic. These give Byrd a magisterial quality that is so often missing from performances that are, arguably, slightly more in keeping with his own sound world. Léon Berben's playing is stylish and powerful, with appropriate ornamentation and interpretations. This CD is an important contribution to our understanding of this important period in English musical history. Incidentally, one problem that I know from experience that the performer will have had to grapple with is how to fit the music onto the tiny organ desk. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

*Byrd, Ferrabosco II, Consort Music* Susan Hamilton, James Bowman SA, Ricercar Consort, Philippe Pierlot 130' 08 (2 CDs)  
*Ricercar RIC 256 ff* (rec 1998, 1999)

Normally Ricercar discs can be relied on for excellent repertoire and performances, but I was disappointed by this re-issue. The viol-playing is a bit stolid, and neither singer has quite the clarity and relationship with viols of the young Emma Kirkby.

Susan Hamilton (in the Ferrabosco) is preferable to James Bowman (whose voice I didn't recognise: an off day?) But these are interesting programmes, a disc to each composer, but with several well-known anonymous songs: *O Death rock me asleep*, *My little sweet darling*, *Sweet was the song*, *Daphne*, etc. If you like the repertoire, it's worth taking advantage of the two-discs-for-one price; but if you are one of those readers for whom viol fantasies are nearly as dull as consort songs, I don't think this will convert you.

CB

**C. Festa Lamentatio: Complete Lamentations Ensemble Scandicus 72' 09"**

Pierre Vérany PV707101

If you are looking for some obscure music worth reviving, one way to start is to check out what survived in the repertoire for a long time, and Costanzo Festa's Lamentations remained in use through the 16<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. The booklet also mentions that he appears in Rabelais as a member of a distinguished choir, though some of the names not quoted are less familiar, and the context is erotic, not holy. These Lamentations were certainly worth recording, and come over well in this performance by eight male voices. If I've a criticism, it is one that I often make: that dynamics are sometimes imposed rather than arise from the music. The Guerrero and Senfl discs reviewed below feel more 16th-century to me. I feared at first that there might not be enough variety, but that isn't a problem, though listening to all eight sets in succession would be somewhat against the way the music would originally have been heard. The writer of the excellent notes is a bit hard on poor Gardano for publishing some of the music as by Morales: both composers worked at the Sistene Chapel, and how was he to know that a MS that reached him had the wrong composer's name? The catalogue in the book on Morales reviewed in our last issue accepts Gardano's attribution, though the ascription of the print is rejected elsewhere in it (p. xli & 272).

CB

**Guerrero Missa Super flumina Babylonis Ensemble Plus Ultra, Schola Antiqua, His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, Michael Noone 78' 58"**

Glossa GCD 922005

*Adios mi amor, Ave virgo sanctissima, Celsi confessoris, Conditor alma siderum, In exitu Israel, Regina caeli, Ut queant laxis & chant Alleluia: In exitu Israel, Super flumina Babylonis*

This derives, like Noone's *Morales in Toledo*

(GCD 922001), from his exciting work on the severely-damaged Toledo Cathedral Codex 25. As well as unknown late Morales, it included three hymns from the time in his late teens when Guerrero was studying in Toledo with him. Fortunate is the scholar to be able to reveal new music and also to record it with the best forces available! The programme is built round the Mass, and is brilliantly performed. As my favourite new release this month it is narrowly topped by Paul Van Nevel's *La quinta essentia* (see next page), partly because I'm less enamoured of Guerrero than Ashewell, Lassus and Palestrina, but partly because, despite my disapproval of excess conductorial intervention, Van Nevel reaches parts of the music that this CD doesn't quite access.

CB

**Senfl Missa L'homme armé The Suspicious Cheese Lords 71' 43"**

May be ordered direct from

<http://cdbaby.com/cd/cheeselords2>

+ *Miserere mei Deus, Quid vitam sine te, Te Deum, Virgo prudentissima*,

This is a marvellous disc. Sacred Senfl is so rarely heard, the music is absolutely first class, and it is sung utterly convincingly. There is no need to write more, especially since the intriguing name of the ensemble should sell it anyway. The copy I received was downloaded from iTunes.com and kindly sent to me by Peter Berg: for a review of the weekend course on Sen(n)fl organised by the Bergs, see p. 19. The only disappointment is the lack of any commentary and texts to download.

*This explanation of the name, no doubt provided by the group itself, is taken from their entry in Wikipedia. The Suspicious Cheese Lords' name is derived from the title of the Tallis motet *Suscipe quæso Domine*. In the process of 'translating' the title, an early Lord observed that 'suscipe' looked rather like 'suspicious', 'quæso' was close to 'queso', the Spanish word for 'cheese', and 'Domine' is legitimately Latin for 'Lord'. Hence, 'Suspicious Cheese Lords'. While the whimsical name has served to draw attention to the group, it belies the group's decidedly serious musical sensibilities.*

CB

**Victoria Tenebrae responsories Ensemble Corund, Stephen Smith 66' 11"**

Dorian DOR-93256

Victoria's powerfully restrained writing in these settings requires singing which is at the same time intense but contained, and this is what the music receives here in readings which are both emotionally

eloquent but at the same time entirely dignified. The group has the slightly unsettling idiosyncrasy of clipping off the ends of more animated phrases, for which I can see some logical justification but which continues to sound a bit odd in practice. Elsewhere, the warm tone and polished blend of the full ensemble is beautifully complemented by the fine focus achieved by the soloists. The use of an organ throughout, elegantly justified by Stephen Smith, is at such a low level as to be almost imperceptible, and yet it effectively unifies the tonal texture and usefully moderates the pitch. I am sure that these are performances of which the pious and modest churchman Tomas Luis de Victoria would have approved.

D. James Ross

**Victoria Requiem Aeternam: Music for All Saints and All Souls** The Ebor Singers, Paul Gameson 61' 04"

Boreas BMCD702

Motet & Mass *O quam gloriosum, Hymn Christe redmptor omnium, Requiem*

These recordings of two of Victoria's great masterpieces, the *Missa O quam gloriosum* and the *Requiem*, by the York-based Ebor Singers are very competently sung, with generally good intonation and a close attention to articulation, with a pleasingly wide range of tempi and vocal colour to create the expressive palette necessary to present Victoria's music to best advantage. Dr Paul Gameson intelligently looks for and finds telling details as well as larger-scale narratives to follow, ensuring that these are readings which constantly have something to say. If the attention to detail is occasionally at the expense of the sheer religious intensity I have heard achieved by other groups with this repertoire, these interpretations are nonetheless genuinely valid alternatives. The rather generous acoustic occasionally takes the edge off some of the unusual moments in both works – the chromatic writing in the Mass is a case in point – and the quality and young tone of the voices suggests that they need no such flattery.

D. James Ross

**De fragilitate: Piae Cantiones. Hymns from medieval Finland** Zefiro Torna, Antwerp Cathedral Choir, Timo Väänänen kantele Et'cetera KTC 4023 58' 22"

There are several discs around that present songs from *Piae Cantiones* in the style of their period or later, and of course a few pieces are ubiquitous at Christmas. But a glance at the complete edition by G. R. Woodward published by the PMMS in 1910

has 60 pages of notes, from which it is clear how retrospective the 1582 anthology was. So the versions here are rather free, but in a way that is inspired by their prehistory as much as by a putative 16th-century manner, but do not pretend to be arranged in any specific historical style. The instruments, though, are mostly 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> century. This will make a good Christmas disc for the household: the contents actually cover the whole year, but there's one spring tune that everyone knows. CB

*El Fuego* Les Sacqueboutiers 66' 25"

Ambroisie AM 129

Flecha *El Fuego, La Guerra, La Justa, LAa Negrina; Vasquez Con qué la lavaré? Por vida de mis ojos* + battle pieces by Aguilera de Heredia & Correa de Arauxo

Dropping the qualifier *de Toulouse* from the name of the group has made way for recordings with more flexible forces. In fact, dropping the final *s* would also be appropriate here, as we are treated to a small and agile ensemble comprising just one sackbut, one cornett, one shawm and one curtal, joined by organ and four voices. The repertoire is the allegorical *ensaladas*, speaking of fire, tournament, love and war, all used to carry one or other part of the Christian message. The pieces are substantial and episodic, and the rather laboured metaphors leave no room for doubt in what must have been a rather cowed contemporary audience. Some of the singing touches the hysterical rather than the powerful, but is at other times beautifully blended and serene. The instrumental playing belies the small forces – the colours, styles and weights are varied to good effect and there is an excellent feeling of independence of rhythm between the parts where appropriate. The recording has the shape of a proper performance, rather than being a 'library disc' and provides a fresh way to hear known composers: Flecha, Arauxo, Vasquez and de Heredia. I was interested that there was so much literal quotation of the Janequin model of the battle, but woven into extended pieces with much new material. *Stephen Cassidy*

*La Quinta essentia: Palestrina, Lassus, Ashewell* Huelgas Ensemble, Paul Van Nevel 77' 19"

Harmonia Mundi HMC 901922

Ashewell *Missa Ave Maria; Lassus Missa Tous les regrets; Palestrina Missa Ut re mi fa sol la*

I've had four CDs in my car player for several weeks: the Guerrero (see the preceding page) and the two anthologies

by the Sixteen (p. 63). Although the Guerrero is in some ways more to my taste in principle, this is the desert island one. Three very different masses; Lassus and Palestrina use the same basic language, but the middle of the sandwich is, for me, far tastier. I've just started reading Theodor Dumitrescu's *The Early Tudor Court and International Musical Relations* (I haven't yet got far enough to review it), which makes a strong case for England not being isolated from the continent musically. But he doesn't attempt 'a compositional/stylistic examination', and Ashewell's mass is a potent reminder that back in 1510, the British did things differently. How come that English composers managed so completely to forget their stiff upper lips and be so exuberant? The Lassus is based on a chanson by Gombert, but being a6 it is quite likely already to be a parody of a setting a4. The alternating fourths and thirds of what is presumably its closing sections are haunting. The scalar basis of the Palestrina is less obtrusive than one might fear. It is much more melismatic than one expects, though more controlled than Ashewell. The conductor imposes on the music rather more than a 16th-century one with no score to study might have managed. I don't know how masses were selected for services, but in a major establishment I presume they were not repeated sufficiently often for details of past performances to be remembered. But the power of the performance convinces more than Noone's less interventionist approach, while Christophers' style is more modern. CB

#### 17<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Bouzignac Motets* Sächsisches Vocalensemble, Matthias Jung 61' 14" Tacet S156 SACD

Bouzignac still seems to be an isolated figure; there is anonymous music that is ascribed to him, but I don't know any music in his dramatic style definitely by someone else. This selection of 22 motets starts with *Dum silentium*, but avoids the well-known Christmas piece *Noé pastores*. The performances are accurate in every respect, but there's something missing (and I don't mean the organ: I've tried adding a continuo to some of the more dramatic pieces, and I agree with the excellent booklet-writer that it doesn't work). The problem is that it all sounds too predictable. The surprising bits don't surprise and it is a bit too smooth and sedate. But worth hearing! CB

Buxtehude *O fröhliche Stunden* Hans Jörg Mammel, La Fenice, Jean Tubéry 56' 26" Alpha 113 BuxWV 37, 38, 49, 71, 84, 92, 98, 164, 175 + Becker Canzon in C

2007 really is turning out to be a true celebration year! With the Carus discs I've written about recently, the dozen *Membra Jesu nostri* recordings, and Ton Koopman's on-going series, you must have been living on another planet if you hadn't realised that it's 300 years since Buxtehude died. One of the most important aspects of this banquet of delights is that the true scope of his output is revealed. This CD (which also includes a rather fine canzona by Dietrich Becker) features music for tenor and instruments, though not necessarily as the composer intended. Taking that great 17th-century licence to play and sing on whatever is available, cornetti replace violins and Hans Jörg Mammel takes on works intended for soprano. I don't have a problem with that approach, especially when the end product is of this calibre. I could happily sit and listen to a whole lot more, so I hope Herr Mammel, La Fenice and M. Tubéry have plans for a follow-up disc. It would be even nicer if they were to devote some time to Johann Philipp Erlebach; he was born 50 years before Buxtehude, so this is his anniversary year too! BC

*Carissimi Jonas & Jephte* The Oxford Chorale, New Trinity Baroque, Predrag Gosta 52' 18"

Edition Lilac 300807-2

This is Oxford, Georgia, USA in whose Emory University these groups are based. These are enthusiastic performances which capture the spirit of the two oratorios very well. Individual singing is a bit variable but the best is very good, particularly Julia Matthews' beautiful *Filia* and Patrick Newell's exciting but controlled 'Fugite'. Ensemble singing is at times a bit disappointing and there are some tuning problems when singers, instruments and organ all combine. Instrumental support is strong. A bonus over other *Jonas* recordings is the inclusion in the storm scene of three short movements from a recently-discovered MS in Kromeriz. This doesn't have the authority or polish of Graham O'Reilly's recording but it does have much to offer, particularly in the tightly-controlled drama of its *Jephte*. *Noel O'Regan*

*I was amused to find on proofreading that I had typed Jones in the heading and Noel had Joah in the text.* CB

*Carissimi Music in Rome circa 1640*  
Ensemble européen William Byrd, Graham O'Reilly 102' 01" (2 CDs in box)

Passacaille 940

*Audite omnes a3, Jephte a6, Vanitas vanitatum a5, Vanitas vanitatum a3 (attrib) + Frescobaldi Aria detto Balletto; Marazzoli Il Predica del Sole a5; Quagliati Canzona, Toccata VIII toni; Rossi Il Predica del Sole a5*

This is a very welcome collection of music composed for the Roman oratory milieu in its early heyday. As well as Carissimi's *Jephte*, in an extremely well-paced and beautifully controlled performance, there are three of his extended dialogue-motets (*Vanitas vanitatum*, *Mottet sur la Vanité des hommes*, *Audite omnes*), as well as settings of *Il Predica del Sole* by Marco Marazzoli and Luigi Rossi, allowing us to compare the styles of two of Carissimi's most important contemporaries. A particular highlight is a stunning three-voice *Salve Regina* by Luigi Rossi. These last three are in editions by the late Jean Lionnet whose influence happily lives on nine years after his unexpected death. There is some splendid singing here, beautifully recorded with much attention to the placing of the musicians. Particularly welcome is the full-sounding 17<sup>th</sup>-century organ, actually in the French parish church of Moutiers au Perche, but very Italianate and full of character. It is more prominent than continuo accompaniment normally is but entirely authentic for this music. Yannick Varlet plays imaginative continuo, revels in the wild chromaticism of Michelangelo Rossi's *Toccata Settima*, and enjoys playing a Canzona and Toccata by Paolo Quagliati and Frescobaldi's *Aria del Balletto*. The whole compilation provides a fascinating compendium of the intense Jesuit- and Oratorian-inspired preaching-music of the papacy of Urban VIII and is very highly recommended. *Noel O'Regan*

*Charpentier Messe de Minuit; Handel Organ Concertos* soloists, The Canterbury Choir, New Trinity Baroque, Predrag Gosta Edition Lilac 100605-2 73' 57"  
Handel op. 4/2, 7/5, *Cuckoo & Nightingale*

The items on this disc 'were recorded live ... in conjunction with the concert performances' (2004). There are places in the Charpentier where I think the composer's rubrics have been slightly misinterpreted but the augmentation of the vocal music by the inclusion of three organ *noels*, an *offertoire* (Couperin, for organ) and a concluding *Nuit* (from H416) is much to be welcomed. As is the use of voice flutes – surely the correct *flûtes* in this repertoire. The choral sound is rather ill-focused for

my taste though the use of a Gallic pronunciation and the general musical style are pleasing features.

The Handel concertos that complete the disc really need a larger body of strings to balance the 'proper' organ used, but again basic style is secure even if Handel would have been surprised by some of the registrations.

New Trinity are a hard-working ensemble who have been blazing a trail in Atlanta for 10 years. The brochure for their current season was enclosed with the November *Diary*. *David Hansell*

**L. Couperin Jovanka Marville hpsc'd 66' 12"**  
Aeon 0751  
+ pieces by Chambonnières & Froberger

Louis Couperin has been well served on disc in recent years, though here he shares top billing with the instrument which was restored to full playing order in 2004/5. (The keyboards, jacks, strings and disposition of registers are new but everything else is original except the stand). Jovanka Marville's programme and playing show it off to its best advantage. She plays with a real feel for the style: tempos are well judged, ornaments crisp and the unmeasured preludes especially convincing. Froberger's *Canzon* is a welcome interloper among the dances both as contrast in texture and because its chromatic themes highlight the temperament. The instrument has a clear and crisp timbre with a rich bass (especially at A392) and is voiced with exceptional evenness throughout the compass. The notes include full information about the restoration and some over-speculative thoughts on the harpsichord's history. Those seeking programme details in the booklet will find them at the very back – printed white on black. *David Hansell*

**J. C. F. Fischer Le Journal du Printemps**  
L'Orfeo Barockorchester, Michi Gaigg  
cpo 666 150-2 (77' 39") *see p. 63*

**Grandi Motetti a cinque voci (1614)**  
Musica Secreta 79' 56"  
Divina Art dda 25062  
*Music from the dramatic presentation Fallen with music by Josquin, Wert etc.*

A real surprise! – I don't usually get anything this early unless I specifically request it. I'm delighted that CB volunteered it as both Grandi's music and the performances are excellent. Some years ago, I was impressed by Andrew Parrott's recording of Vivaldi choral music with

tenor and bass parts transposed up an octave. Although unfamiliar music always seems to work better, it doesn't actually take the human ear very long to get used to 'close harmony' (for want of a better description) and somehow the different voice colours allow the individual lines to ring out, so the octave displacement is of relatively little concern. One of the works in the set (*Deus misereatur nostri*) was published in 1614 with five voices in tenor clef, so clearly Grandi was interested in the *voci simili* idea. *Musica Secreta* can invite me to their convent any day, if they promise to sing me Grandi. The fact that he died of the plague 16 years after the publication of this fine collection is, in my opinion, one of the greatest tragedies of the early Italian baroque. I've concentrated on the first part of the disc as I did not actually enjoy the bonus tracks, taken from a multi-media project called *Fallen*. I really don't understand why the Josquin and de Wert could not have had the same treatment as the Grandi, and the partial instrumentalisation of two pieces of which I am particular fond and random sing-along style just did nothing for me. I appreciate that the music might have fared better in the context of the live performances, but this is not something I'd like to hear repeated. More Grandi? Yes, please! *BC*

*I sent it to Brian, apart from knowing his liking for Grandi, as a handle for mentioning that he has about 50 pieces by Grandi in his Prima la musica catalogue. It now seems that the ladies of the Pietà managed tenor and bass parts at notated pitch. CB.*

**Guerau Marionas Gordon Ferries gtr**  
Delphian DCD34046 64' 06"

Apart from three songs in MSS 3880-1 in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, all of Guerau's extant compositions survive in just one source, his *Poema Harmonico*, published in Madrid in 1694. This is a fine collection of music for the baroque guitar, difficult to play, but enjoyable to listen to.

The first two tracks, *Marionas* and *Marizapalos*, are lengthy sets of variations on a ground bass, often highly ornamented, with triplets, dotted rhythms, and campanella effects. Long sequences of chords are interspersed with extraordinary left-hand roulades, which is a very exciting effect, although the quieter notes produced with just the left hand are sometimes a little too quiet. There is a strong bass line, because Ferries follows Guerau's instruction to have a bourdon on the 4th and 5th courses. This produces a totally different sound from the tuning without bourdons, which Ferries

used on his CD of music by Gaspar Sanz, *La Preciosa*, where bass notes vanish amongst melody notes only notationally an octave higher. Complex polyphony is made possible by the wider range of notes involving bourdons, which Guerau exploits to advantage. There is not as much strumming as with earlier publications like those of Sanz twenty years earlier, although track 3 begins with a strumming passage, followed by more of Guerau's characteristic left-hand roulades. Track 5 also opens with a flourish of strummed chords, and settles into a rhapsodic Galliardas with slow-moving chords (excessively rolled), separated by fast running passages and much sequential repetition.

Ferries plays an instrument made by Martin Haycock, with warm-sounding bass notes, but (for me) too much overall resonance added from the church or the recording engineer. I was interested to read in the sleeve notes that the word *pasacalles* literally means to pass through the street. Standard forms like *La Folia* and *Canarios* may be street music, but the highly sophisticated gloss supplied by Guerau is anything but.

Stewart McCoy

Monteverdi *Quinto Libro dei Madrigali, 1605* La Venexiana 66' 29"  
Glossa GL 920925

This is my favourite of Monteverdi's madrigal books (although the 6th book also contains many gems), and this is now my recording of choice, replacing both the Consort of Musick's version and the more recent Concerto Italiano performances. Having heard this several times through (with the obligatory re-listenings to the three-part *Ch'io t'ami*), I now particularly regret missing La Venexiana's Gesualdo recitals at this year's splendid Edinburgh Festival's early music events – that would have been something worth hearing. Being so confident in themselves and their knowledge of the music, they are able to make minute adjustments to the placing of notes within phrases (impeccably together!) that hold the attention, stress individual words, shape the music and control its impact on the listener – everything, of course, that entertaining singers should do. That they do it so seemingly effortlessly is all the more remarkable. The recorded sound (as always with Glossa) is fabulous. Even if you have other recordings of this set, don't miss this one!

BC

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

Monteverdi *Vespers of 1610* The Rodolphus Choir, Southern Sinfonia, Ralph Allwood  
Signum Classics SIGCD109 90' 06" (2 CDs)

Last Christmas Eve, I had a long phone conversation with Ralph Allwood about his proposed performances and recording of the *Vespers*. After practical matters about our edition, we went on to talk through a wide range of performance matters. I felt embarrassed at offering him advice. He is a very distinguished choral conductor, running a variety of courses and choirs from his Eton College base. But we were not complete strangers, since we had occasionally met at the Smallwood's Epiphany parties. I hoped he hadn't read my review of his *Tallis* disc, which made clear that my view of the appropriate style was completely incompatible with his, and I was afraid that the divergence in our musical preconceptions was such that, when the CD appeared, I would find it uncongenial.

On principle, I found another reviewer (I'm too involved with the work as editor, advisor and performer now to be fair to different ideas), but then I listened to the discs, and felt I needed to say something myself. It is, in fact, one of the best recordings I know, despite the untransposed *Lauda* and *Magnificat*. The choral singing (I have doubts about the need for a choir, of course) is marvellous, the band, led by Maggie Faultless, which is not overused, is brilliant; the soloists are not of the very highest level, and are occasionally trying a bit too hard (and are too closely miked), but fit in with the style of the performance. *Duo Seraphim* is particularly effective: when I first heard the work (nearly 50 years ago), it was that movement that struck me most, and it was nice to feel its power afresh. *Tempi* are fast, and a bit relentless: even in a strict *tactus*, one should be able to feel that there is time; and some of the moments I mentioned in the booklet note as usually particularly affecting when I play the work are not so here: the opening of the *Gloria* of *Dixit Dominus*, for instance. I was fascinated that each voice's *dixit* is interrupted by another entering impatiently a note too early – I think an idea that derives from a description I gave of a performance with Philip Thorby whose effect was completely different.

There are, in addition to the transposition (which annoyed me less than in most performances that retain the *chiavette* pitch), some aspects that I might have suggested would be more effective if done

differently. But this is a fine performance that has a better feel to it than many conducted by early-music specialists. CB

Muffat *Armonico Tributo* (1682): *Sonatas for Strings and Bc* La Stravaganza Köln, Andrew Manze 61' 21"  
Audiomax 705 0459-2 (rec 1992)

*Armonico Tributo* is a significant collection of works for strings that should be in everyone's baroque library. Written by an Austrian, it embodies all that is best in the late 17th-century Italian and French styles, yet with many touches of almost Purcellian harmony in the slow sections. The ensemble has chosen to follow Muffat's tutti/solo indications by performing the set of five *sonatas* (as they are headed) in the full concerto grosso form, with a ripieno band alternating with the trio-sonata ensemble, supported by harpsichord and theorbo continuo. The *tempi* are well chosen, with expressive *Grave* sections exploiting the richness of the French five-part texture contrasting with characteristic dance movements. It was good to have brisk sarabandes, graceful courantes and stately allemandes in the French style, though rarely in this recording exploiting *notes inégales*. What little ornamentation that is added to the composer's indications is always tasteful. The French-style Passacaglia that concludes *Sonata V*, in 25 sections, is the high point of the collection, full of contrast in rhythms, textures and styles. A notable feature of Muffat's individualism is his rhetorical use of silence, which is exploited to the full in this interpretation. This is now the only complete recording of the set, and is thoroughly recommended.

Ian Graham Jones

Pachelbel *Christ lag in Todesbanden* Choeur de Chambre de Namur, Les Agrémens, Jean Tubéry 60' 55"  
Ricercar RIC 255

+ Cantatas: *Jauchzet dem Herrn, Was Gott tut*  
Motets: *Gott ist unser Zuversicht, Jauchzet dem Herrn*

As Jérôme Lejeune writes in the booklet 'the tercentenary of Pachelbel's death in 2006 was celebrated hardly at all'. This very fine recording makes that situation all the more incredible – as I know Peter Holman has many times shown, the influence Pachelbel had on the young J. S. Bach is absolutely irrefutable, and there are exceptional recordings by both Cantus Cölln and Roland Wilson's Capella Ducale/Musica Fiata that confirm his stature

among 17th-century composers. Tubéry's recital consists of two double-choir motets and three cantatas, as well as an organ toccata (which opens the disc) and two organ works based on the same chorales as two of the cantatas. *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan* has been going around and around in my head for days – the cantata version is like an encyclopedia of chorale variation technique, but choosing to follow it with the organ partita is a stroke of genius, as it shows that Pachelbel had by no means exhausted the possibilities of the melody in the vocal work. As the 17th century progresses, it seems to me that many composers lost the art of voice-leading which their Renaissance counterparts had fully understood; but Pachelbel is an absolute master, and none of the participants in his musical texture is mere harmonic padding. If your choir hasn't explored this repertoire, suggest it to your conductor – along with Erlebach, maybe? BC

Pez *Ouvertures – Concerti* Les Muffatti, Peter Van Heyghen 76' 41" Ramée RAM 0705 see p 63

Playford Plus The York Waits 64' 26" Brewhouse BHCD 0701 (rec 1991)

This reissue is released as a memorial to Ian Richardson of the York Waits who died in August. According to the cover of the CD, many of the tunes are of dance length and tempo, so I listened to it with Hazel Fenton, who knows about such things. Her opinion was that only about six of the tracks would be useful for general dancing, while others are more suited to being choreographed by a dance group, either because of the number of repeats or because they are played as a sequence without a break. In spite of these reservations, this is a very enjoyable recording which may make you feel like dancing to it, or at least tapping your feet. The attractive arrangements of tunes from *The English Dancing Master* and other mainly 17th century sources are played on a variety of instruments including recorders, shawms, bagpipes, cittern and hurdy-gurdies. Detailed information about the sources of the tunes is given in the booklet. Victoria Helby

Purcell *Divine Hymns* Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 72' 02 Virgin Classics 0946 3 95144 2 7 Blow *Salvator mundi*; Croft *What art thou*; Humfrey *Lord I have sinned*, Wilt thou forgive

Purcell *Victorious Love* Carolyn Sampson S, Laurence Cummings kbd, Elizabeth

Kenny lutes, Anne-Marie Lasla b.viol, Sarah Sexton, Andrea Morris vlns, Jane Rogers vla 71' 40" BIS-SACD-1536

If there is a reader out there who does not already worship at Purcell's altar, let them rush to the nearest record shop to buy both of these marvellous recordings. The *Evening Hymn* and *Blessed Virgin's Expostulation* are included in both, but otherwise the discs cover different repertoire, and each sheds new light on both favourite songs and lesser known masterpieces. One key to the success of both recordings is the superb continuo teams; and it is no surprise to find Elizabeth Kenny (lutes) and Anne-Marie Lasla (bass viol) sustaining the melody and the emotion on both discs. The styles of the keyboard players, William Christie and Laurence Cummings are quite different: Cummings is more of an active player, unafraid of dramatic gesture, whereas Christie is more discreet and orthodox.

The singers on the Christie disc are excellent. At first I was surprised by the unblending voice of Konstantin Wolff, but later came to understand why he had been chosen – for his splendid low register, put to good use in *Saul and the Witch of Endor*. Paul Agnew is faultless; in *Lord, what is man?* he embodies the full range of emotions with great sincerity and credibility. The vowels of the sopranos (Claire Debono and Hannah Morrison) are not always true, but this does not detract from their sweet, Kirkby-esque voices, or their energy. The combined forces are pretty well perfect for the four- and five-part ensemble pieces, and it is a joy to hear them sung with single voices in this way, particularly *Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei*, with its strong rhythms and English Js.

It is only on listening to the incomparable Carolyn Sampson that one realizes that she inhabits a plane way above most other singers. She commands every emotion to its fullest depths, and leads the listener by the ears from despair to joy, from frivolity to ecstasy, from madness to fury; and the voice is always utterly beautiful. Supported by the continuo players, with whom she seems to have a highly responsive rapport, the rhetoric and drama of her performance do the fullest imaginable justice to Purcell's wonderful music. Every word is treated with respect and intelligence; the phrasing and interpretation are always the servant of the text; the singer's toolkit of dynamics and expressive tricks is used

with immense subtlety, to the extent of abstinence from an expected terminal trill when her glowing sound achieves all that is necessary. Sampson's technical skill is unrivalled, and she understands perfectly how to combine stylistic performance with riveting drama.

Selene Mills

Purcell & Handel *Endless Pleasure* Barbara Hendricks, Drottningholms Barockensemble 74' 06" Arte Verum ARV-003

I'm less enthusiastic about this than Selene about her Purcell discs. I could go into details, but it the problem is not so much any particular detail but an incompatibility of voice and style, which the use of a baroque ensemble exaggerates. I suspect it would work brilliantly with a piano accompaniment; one could then listen to it as a cross-over performance, where traits that here annoy could be part of the 'transcription', like Bach on the piano. A pity. CB

Standard packaging is slipped round 90 degrees so that if kept on a shelf designed specifically for CD size, the title won't be visible. How can the booklet writer not have picked up the consensus that *Dido & Aeneas* was probably written for court, not a girl's school. The composer Handle appears on p. 7.

A. Scarlatti *Concertos pour flûte* Les Boréades, François Colpron rec. dir 61' 08" Atma Baroque ACD2 2521

The works on this CD come from two MS collections in Naples and Münster. There are six concertos for recorder, two violins and continuo (all except one originally called 'sonatas'), a quartet for three recorders and continuo, and a sinfonia for recorder and continuo. These are not late-baroque concertos with alternating solo and tutti sections, and many of the movements are short but attractive examples of Scarlatti's contrapuntal style. There is some speculation that the Naples pieces were composed for Quantz's visit to the city during the last two years of Scarlatti's life, but the music is well suited to the recorder. All the instruments sound good on this recording, which does justice to the stylish and sensitive playing of François Colpron and his period ensemble

Victoria Helby

Schütz *The Christmas Story*; Gabrieli *Christmas Motets* The King's Consort, Robert King 57' 01 (rec 1989) Hyperion CDH55310 ??

G. Gabrieli *Audite principes, O magnum mysterium, Quem vidistis, Salvator noster*

Robert King's recording of Schütz's Christmas Story is distinguished by a fine, well-paced performance by John Mark Ainsley as the Evangelist. The highlight of the disc, though, constitutes the Gabrieli motets, with their rich and resplendent scorings for brass and choirs. A welcome reissue.

Stephen Rose

*I heard a voice: the music of the golden age*  
Choir of King's College Cambridge, Fret-work, Stephen Cleobury 59' 56"  
EMI Classics 0946 3 94430 2 4  
Music by Gibbons, Weelkes,

For me this is a 'Desert Island' disc: that is, if I were stuck on an island with nothing else to listen to, then I would resort to it often. In my present land-locked existence I have no need for this recording, except for the enjoyable *In Nomines* played by Fretwork. This CD is on sale in 'The Shop at King's', opposite King's College, Cambridge, and I suspect its intended audience is the casual tourist rather than the serious listener. Three of England's greatest Renaissance composers, Weelkes, Gibbons and Tomkins, are given desultory performances lacking in vivacity, energy and accuracy. Some of the sounds made by those famous trebles are really unpleasant, and I cannot imagine how they got past the production team. I found it impossible to play this disc on my computer without having to sign up for 'Opendisc' and thereby sending EMI my personal details: this is marketing gone too far.

Selene Mills

*The Lost Art of Wooing* Jeni Melia S, Thomas Dunford lutes, Christopher Goodwin lute, baritone 65' 53"  
Jeni Records JREC002  
Music by Campion, Caccini, Dowland, Guedron, Holborne, Kapsberger, Lanier, Merula, Purcell

*Sister Awake! 17<sup>th</sup> Century Women's Songs & Poems* Jeni Melia, Kathryn Hamilton-Hall, Christopher Goodwin, Alison Kinder, Sebastian Humphreys 59' 29"  
Music by Campion, Dowland, R. Johnson, Morley, Purcell, Wilson & anon  
Discs available from [lutesoc@aol.com](mailto:lutesoc@aol.com); download from [www.magnatune.com](http://www.magnatune.com) (Jeni Melia)

These discs really set me thinking. I'll come straight to the point and say that I think they're splendid. Jeni Melia sings these songs with what appears, at first hearing, to be a 'scaled-down' soprano voice – much less projected than we have become used to hearing in this repertoire, but one which I now feel, after continued listening, uses precisely the correct level of vocal volume, balancing beautifully with

the lute. Melia's tuning and diction are faultless, and Chris Goodwin's sensitive, often understated accompaniments match her expressive phrasing perfectly. The books of lute songs that were published in the late 16th and early 17th centuries were aimed at the intelligent amateur, self-accompanied lutenist/singer, and these recordings vividly evoke the world of such intimate Jacobean home music-making.

I would recommend all lute song enthusiasts to buy these discs as a counterbalance to the full-voiced, 'Lieder' style we regularly hear on discs of Tudor and Stuart song. I certainly wouldn't ever wish to stop listening to larger, projected-voice performances of these ayres, but the 'back to basics' approach here just feels so right, that I hope it will give singers and listeners pause for thought, to reflect that perhaps lute songs shouldn't always be 'belted out' as so many (myself included) have done – voice and lute should be equal partners in true chamber music style. There's no single 'correct' way to perform ayres, of course, but the careful (in the conscientious sense of the word) style of performance found here allows so much more expression and projection of the all-important text, that it clearly demonstrates that less can definitely be more. The solos that punctuate the 'wooing' disc are a delight, especially *Lady Carey's Dompe* re-imagined as a lute duet with divisions.

An enormous amount of care and preparation has gone into both of these intelligently produced programmes, not least in the excellent booklet notes, and these discs deserve a place on the shelves of all lovers of this repertoire, especially students of the art of singing to the lute. Do I dare hope we're witnessing the beginnings of a sea-change in how lute songs are performed into 'something rich and rare'? I certainly hope we will be hearing more of this expressive style of performance from other singers in future, because I enjoyed both of these discs enormously, but don't take my word for it: listen to them before buying and tempt yourself.

David Hill

*Puer nobis nascitur: Christmas Carols* Ton Koopman (Van Peteghem 1778 organ at St Martinuskirk, Haringe, Belgium)  
Challenge CC72234  
Music by Bach, Bull, Buxtehude, Bruna, Daquin, Lebègue, Sweelinck, Zipoli

The 1778 Van Peteghem organ in St Martinuskirk, Haringe is an important example of the Flemish rococo organ and

has survived without any of the usual alterations that historic organs usually suffer. The specification and voicing is essentially French, with three manuals and pull down pedals. The Echo is very much an echo, and doesn't work in dialogue with the Rugpositief, as can be heard in several pieces (although it may have sounded well-balanced from the console, as the Rugpositief is behind the player's back, speaking away from him and the Echo is probably hidden behind the music desk and can sound louder than all the rest of the organ put together). It is used to good (and correct) use in the third piece, Daquin's delightful *Adam fut un pauvre home*. I have been pretty dismissive of Ton Koopman's often eccentric playing, but this CD shows him in rather better light, with sparkling articulation, sensitive touch (unusually for him!), a reduction in the mannerisms that so often mar his playing, and ornamentation that is generally not too far off the appropriate style. Only in the concluding Bach pieces does his love of speed really begin to irritate. That said, for the authentic French organ sound, and more of Daquin's delightful Noëls, I would recommend the Herrick CD reviewed below.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

*Serenissime sonate: Music for strings in the Republic of Venice 1630-1660* Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca 72' 06" (rec 2003)  
Divox Antiqua CDX 70505  
Music by Arrigoni, Cavalli, Ferro, Marini, Merula, Neri & Pesenti

This recital of chamber music from Venice c. 1630-1660 was recorded by Westdeutsche Rundfunk in Cologne – showing that public broadcasters elsewhere in Europe seem more able than here in the UK to support performers exploring less familiar repertoire (while we have to put up with Bach on piano and the same old Telemann ouvertures time after time from the BBC!). As well as sonatas by composers one would expect to hear (Merula, Marini, Cavalli and Neri), there are less well-known names too, such as Marco Ferro and Martino Pesenti. To be honest, there is no easy way to distinguish between them at all. They are all essentially written in a patchwork form, with contrapuntal movements alternating with dances or homophony – in fact, there are quite a few *tremolo* passages. The Sonatori (here with three violins, two violas and continuo) are at their best in the more relaxed music – I found the opening sonata by Arrigoni a little too frantic, and there were other quick movements that were just on the uncomfortable side of

chaotic – the cello finds it difficult to speak quite so speedily. I hope there will be a follow-up disc of music from the next generation, when we'll hear them play Rosenmüller and Legrenzi. BC

*Terra nostra* Constantinople 57' 45"

Atma classique ACD2 2567

Based on Ribayaz etc

Regular readers will know that I am a sucker for improvisations on grounds, and have been enjoying a variety of such CDs. This disappointed me: I'm not quite sure why. Perhaps because it leaned more to modern than 17th-century Mexico (despite the ascriptions of some of the titles), partly because there isn't quite the spring in the bass that the best groups have, partly because the inspiration was less. Fans of Mat Wadsworth (who plays a baroque guitar) will want to hear it. I suspect it works better live. CB

#### LATE BAROQUE

Altnickol *Befiehl du deine Wege; Messe und Motetten* Norddeutscher Figuralkchor, Musica Alta Ripa, Jörg Straube 50' 33"

Carus 83.168

The biography of Johann Christoph Altnickol (1720–59) is intertwined with that of J. S. Bach, who was his teacher and later his father-in-law. Altnickol followed Bach's compositional style closely, resisting the fashion for simpler textures in church music. The opening of his Missa brevis is inspired by the imploring choral interjections at the start of the Kyrie of the B minor Mass BWV 232; yet it is not completely derivative, for Altnickol uses longer phrases and a different harmonic progression. Most of the works on this disc are choral polyphony, with an attractive motet on the chorale 'Befiehl du deine Wege' (the tune better known as the Passion Chorale). The choir produces a well-disciplined, strong sound, supported by buoyant continuo playing in the motets. Altnickol's musical style is not the most original, but the pieces on this disc confirm Bach's opinion that his son-in-law had 'a quite special proficiency in composition'. Stephen Rose

Avison/Geminiani *Sonatas for Violin and Basso Continuo, Op. 1* The Avison Ensemble, Pavlo Beznosiuk 99' 28" (2 CDs) Divine Art dda 21210

Avison's recently rediscovered arrangements of Geminiani's Op. 1 violin sonatas

as seven-part concertos continue an honourable tradition dating back to Geminiani's own arrangements of Corelli's Op. 5 sonatas. They make very convincing concertos and are a welcome addition to the repertoire (Avison omitted Geminiani's Op. 1 No. 11, but Beznosiuk has skilfully remedied the deficiency). This is music of outstanding quality and originality: Geminiani has the rare ability to do the unexpected while making the result sound completely natural, and Avison's ingenious and technically assured versions do much to enhance the appeal of these pieces.

The performances are outstanding. The band (strings 3/3/2/2/1 plus harpsichord) is richly sonorous; the ensemble is faultless; the tempi are seemingly infallibly judged; the phrasing is subtle and expressive; and virtuoso solos are despatched with aplomb. What more could one possibly want? It's a real pleasure to have two absolute winners from The Avison Ensemble to review in the same issue. They must surely be one of the finest baroque ensembles now in existence.

Richard Maunder

Bach *Cantatas 56, 82, 158* Richard Mauersberger Tr., Gotthold Schwarz Bar, La Stagione Frankfurt, Michael Schneider Capriccio 67 190 50' 06"

This disc of Bach cantatas has some arresting features of performance style. In Cantata 82 Luise Baumgartl garnishes the oboe obbligato with extra ornaments, shaping her part with subtle rhythmic freedom. In the chorales at the end of Cantatas 56 and 158 the Leipzig Thomanerchor vigorously articulate every syllable of the text, although they tend to slow at the end of each phrase. Gotthold Schwarz brings conviction to his arias, particularly the twisting lines in the first aria of Cantata 56. It is thought-provoking to hear Bach cantatas being performed in a slightly different way from the styles used on so many other recordings. Stephen Rose

Bach *Christmas Oratorio* Malin Hartelius, Kristina Hammarström, Jörg Dürfmüller, Detlef Roth SATB, Caspella Amsterdam (Daniel Reuss), Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, Jan Willem de Vriend Challenge CC 76607 (2 CDs) CD-sized 76-page hard-cover booklet)

*I neglected to note to whom I sent this, and no-one has sent a review back. Since it is reasonable, the failure to review it is extremely regrettable, unfair to the performers, Challenge and our readers: my apologies.* CB

Bach *Magnificat*; Handel *Dixit Dominus* Natalie Dessay, Katrine Deshayes, Philippe Jaroussky, Toby Spence, Laurent Noouri SSATB, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm 56' 06" Virgin Classics 00946 395241 2 9

Though they make for a short disc by modern standards (there's room for Bach's German Magnificat setting – Cantata 10 – as well) these two extrovert masterpieces make good companions. Bach was at the height of his powers when he revised *Magnificat*; Handel, on the other hand, was in his early twenties and very much out to make an impression when he set this dramatic psalm text. Emmanuelle Haïm opts for a traditional soloists-and-choir performance style. This is in some ways her undoing. Though I am no advocate of the antiseptic blandness that can afflict English choirs I do think that this ensemble does need a better blend and, in places, better accuracy. The conflicting vibratos of the sopranos do not help, but some of the isolated 'Dixit' chords are really quite wild. In general all the *allegro* movements are rather hard-driven: the more tranquil arias come as quite a relief. Philippe Jaroussky impresses the most in *Esurientes*: as with the choir, vibrato that seems excessive given the instrumental timbres is an issue with the sopranos. The booklet offers a serviceable essay (three languages), translations of the Latin texts into English only and a list of performers, though no information about them. David Hansell

Bach *Organ Works Vol. 5* Jacques van Oortmerssen (Van Hagerbeer/Schnitger organ 1646/1725, St Laurenskerk Alkmaar) Challenge Classics CC72080 68' 21" BWV 537, 564, 578, 592, 690-1, 768

I raved about this CD when it was first released (*EMR* Feb. 1999) and am happy to do so again in its re-issue. Oortmerssen has an outstanding musical intelligence, and has musical fluidity and freedom in his playing that puts him at the peak of Bach interpreters. This is playing of the utmost maturity that you will never grow tired of. Particular highlights are the ornaments added to the slow movements of both the Toccata and Concerto, the appropriate promotion of the 'little' g minor Fugue to a powerful pleno piece, the masterly portrayal of the emotional intensity of the c minor Fantasia and Fugue and the meditative and thoughtful interpretation of *Sie gegrüßet*. The magnificent Alkmaar organ, one of the finest of Dutch 'Bach' organs. This CD is a must-buy. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Das wohltemperierte Clavier* Vol. 1 ABC Classics ABC 476 5942  
 Richard Egarr 125' 00" (2 CDs)  
 Harmonia Mundi HMD 907431.32

So much excellent early music for keyboard instruments has spoken with particular authority through special interpretations issued by Richard Egarr that even this exiting one must come as no real surprise. He starts with a proper consideration of the work's elaborate personal, artistic and historical contexts, and having rooted his interpretation surely on Bach as an outstanding teacher, he remains sincerely true to this spirit throughout his playing. Combined with his rich earnestness are the leavenings of brilliance and humour that all real artists have long come to expect of their own superlative teachers; we may, indeed, conclude that we are richly privileged to be able to share in this masterly reading. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Cello Suites* Jean-Guihen Queyras 129' 53" (2 CDs)  
 Harmonia Mundi HMC 901970.71  
*DVD about the making of the recording and complete perf of Suite 3*

This is a recording to challenge one's preconceptions! I listen to it twice through, delighting in the clean lines, the considered but never stylized phrasing, the beautifully paced dances with just the right balance between light bow strokes and carefully outlining Bach's ingeniously suggestive part-writing. Just before writing this, I decided that I should watch the accompanying DVD. I must confess that what I discovered shocked me – Jean-Guihen Queyras chose to record these seminal works on a 1696 cello set up as a modern instrument (complete with spike) and a modern bow. In the booklet notes, we read that he does play baroque cello, but that most of his recent experience with the Bach has involved six newly commissioned works to complement them, so it all makes sense. It just goes to show – if ever it were a serious doubt – that modern instruments can very easily mimic their predecessors and an ability to do so has more to do with what's in the mind of the performer. It was also enlightening to see Queyras discussing aspects of performance with the recording engineer – he describes her in the short film as a magician; frankly, I think they both are! *BC*

Bach *Sonatas for Violin and Keyboard* (BWV 1014-19) Richard Tognetti vln, Neal Peres Da Costa hpscd, org, Daniel Yeadon vlg, vlc 99' 12" (2 CDs)

I suppose it's only right that the cover of a disc featuring a Living National Treasure should be festooned with photographs of him in the outback complete with his name in BIG LETTERS (and Bach's faded in comparison...) I'm not sure that I'd be happy with the designer's conceit (in the artistic sense) if I was Neal Peres Da Costa or Daniel Yeadon, who are reduced to a mere 6-pt type on the back. Now that I've got that off my chest, on to the meat. In the course of these six sonatas, we have harpsichord, organ, viola da gamba and cello. These are not for complete sonatas, you understand – this is very much a mix-and-match set. Exploring the different options Bach gives, you see. Before I go any further, I must say that I enjoyed every minute of the performances (some slight weaknesses in the organ's lower regions notwithstanding), and I heartily recommend the set. Just be ready for the constantly changing soundscape, though! My acid test for these works is BWV 1017/3 and here, resplendent with pizzicato gamba, it almost rivals Monica Huggett and Ton Koopman. (I said *almost...*) At least they play the even quavers quasi-evenly. The recorded sound is beautiful and you'd travel a long way to hear Bach playing at this level. *BC*

Bach *Brandenburg Concertos* European Brandenburg Ensemble, Trevor Pinnock Avie AV 2119 94' 23 (2 CDs)  
*Stephen Rose will review this in the next issue*

Bach *The Art of Fugue* Martin Farrar clav 138' 77" (2 CDs)  
 + Bach *Dies sind die Heil'gen zehn gebot* BWV678, J S Bach Fantasia und Fuga in a BWV561; Buxtehude *La Capriccosa* (32 Partite) BuxWV 250; D. Scarlatti 8 Sonatas available from Music Gallery, 10-12 King's Hedges Road, Cambridge CB4 2PA, tel. 01223 424007 [www.cambridgemusic.net](http://www.cambridgemusic.net)

Martin Farrar is a former pupil of no less a keyboard teacher than Gustav Leonhardt, and this (my only) performance on a clavichord of *The Art of Fugue* is not only completely reliable and dependable, revealing an authoritative player who really understands both his own instrument and his composers, but also all of their contexts. For after the last 4 canons from *The Art...* on disc 2 we also find not only eight unidentified sonatas by J S Bach's contemporary Domenico Scarlatti, but also a dazzling set of variation-partitas

by his forbear Buxtehude and various further items besides. Here, indeed, is a disc bearing true individuality. It's well-produced and recorded too. *Stephen Daw*

Georg von Bertouch *Trio Sonatas with pieces from The Music-Book of Jacob Mestmacher* Bergen Barokk 65' 50" Toccata Classics TOCC 0006

Though German by birth, Georg von Bertouch has been adopted as the first Norwegian composer of any real note by virtue of the fact that he spent years there as military governor at Akershus, overlooking Oslo harbour. Bergen Barokk (two violins, recorder, flute, cello/gamba and harpsichord) perform seven sonatas from his set of 24 (the incomplete manuscript was recently published by A-R Editions), as well as selections from a collection of short dances from a book that belonged to a Bergen merchant. Von Bertouch's music is interesting for its contrapuntal complexities and its use of extreme keys (Bergen Barokk are brave enough to take on the sonata in B flat minor, for example), and the rather more gentle dances provide a nice contrast. There are very few clues to the expected Bertouch's instrumentation, so Bergen Barokk opt to take Quantz's hints for varying the line-up, all to pleasant effect. This is the first CD I've heard by the group – I think they are also involved with Toccata Classic's enterprising series to record the complete *Fortsetzung des Harmonischen-Gottesdienstes*, and we wish them every success. *BC*

Conti David Marijana Micanovi David, Simone Kermes Micol, Sonia Prina Abner, Birgitte Christensen Gionata, Furio Zanasi Saul, Vito Priante Falti, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis 155' 08" (2 CDs in box) Virgin Classics 0946 3 78877 2 1

This is a most welcome discovery. Hermione Weigel Willimas' study of Conti (Ashgate, 1999) made it clear that his music was worth practical investigation, and this disc shows that he is a composer well worth discovering. It does him proud, with brilliant singing (especially from Simone Kermes) and a fine performance altogether. It's an oratorio, first performed in Vienna on Thursday 30 March 1724 at the Hofkapelle Lent service, with a Latin sermon between the two parts. It is a very dramatic piece, with an enterprising scoring: one aria has a theorbo obbligato (no doubt played by the composer, who was a distinguished theorist), another a trombone. David was played by Francesco Borosini,

who later that year came to England and persuaded Handel to create the role of Bajazet for him in *Tamerlano*: he was clearly a singer with great dramatic power. The music is imaginative, both for the voices and the instruments, and whether or not it was staged, it is, on its own terms, highly dramatic. This stunning first recording is highly recommended. We need to hear more late baroque dramatic pieces to place Handel into some sort of context. CB

**Daquin Douze Noëls** Christopher Herrick (Organ of St Rémy, Dieppe) 65' 15" Hyperion Helios CDH55319 (rec 1995)

This is a re-issue of a CD that I first reviewed in *EMR* November 1995 (when it was Hyperion CDA66816). The grand four manual St Rémy organ has survived more or less untouched from the late 1730s and has all the rich and distinctive palette of sounds needed for the French classical repertoire. Daquin's set of Noëls appeared in 1740 (a year after the organ was finished) and features the most dramatic of the many French Noël settings. By then, French organ music had moved far from the chant-based mystical musicality of De Grigny and was more concerned with dazzling display, requiring a keyboard virtuosity that Herrick is well able to produce. Recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Garth Six Concertos for violoncello** Richard Tunnicliffe, The Avison Ensemble, Pavlo Beznosiuk 94' 09" (2 CDs) Divine Art dda25059

John Garth (1721-1810), organist, virtuoso cellist and concert promoter, published these concertos in 1760 but had evidently played one in Durham as early as 1753. The music is attractive, inventive and skilfully crafted, in an up-to-date 'pre-classical' idiom — which might seem surprising for English concertos written in the decade before J. C. Bach's arrival in London. But we are coming to recognize that England wasn't stuck in a Handelian time-warp in the 1750s: the new style had been pioneered by Giuseppe Sammartini (who died in London in 1750), and published concertos by such composers as Johann Stamitz and C. P. E. Bach were widely available. Garth's concertos will bear comparison with anything of the time from Mannheim or Vienna, and are a real gift to cellists. They should be much better known.

The concertos are beautifully played by Richard Tunnicliffe, very stylishly accompanied by a one-to-a-part group — for which three cheers! — who make as full a

sound in the tutti as many a bigger ensemble. It just shows that you don't need anachronistically large forces to do justice to music of this kind. More cheers for Tunnicliffe's excellent cadenzas and some tasteful ornamentation on the repeats. I strongly recommend these highly enjoyable discs.

Richard Maunder

**Handel Le Cantate Italiane di Handel**

**I. Le Cantate per il Cardinale Pamphili** Roberta Invernizzi s, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni. 66' 14" Glossa GCD 921521

**II. Le Cantate per il Marchese Ruspoli** Emanuela Galli s, Roberta Invernizzi s, La Risonanza, Fabio Bonizzoni. 74' 03" Glossa GCD 921522

I: Tra le fiamme (*Il consiglio*) HWV 170; Nel dolce dell'oblio (*Pensieri notturni di Filii*) HWV 134; Da quel giorno fatale (*Delirio amoro*so) HWV 90; Figlio d'alte speranza HWV 113.

II: Dietro l'orme fuggaci (*Armida abbandonata*) HWV 105; Alla caccia (*Diana cacciatrice*) HWV 79; Tu fedel? tu costante? HWV 171; Notte placida e cheta HWV 142; Un' alma innamorata HWV 173

With these discs La Risonanza embark on a series intended to cover all of Handel's Italian cantatas with instrumental accompaniment actually composed in Italy. (The first CD was released last year, but was not sent for review.) Though the titles of the discs are inexact — only two of the four cantatas on the 'Pamphili' disc are connected with the cardinal — they signify a systematic approach, no doubt under the influence of Ellen T. Harris, who provides the booklet essay for vol. 1, and is credited as 'musicological consultant' for vol. 2. That in itself helps to make the project worthwhile, even though all the early instrumental cantatas have been previously recorded, and the quality of the performances exemplified in these first issues make it doubly welcome. Exaggerated tempos are largely avoided, and the fact that the only chord-playing continuo instrument used is the harpsichord is further testimony to faith in the music.

Both Invernizzi and Galli, singing in their native language, combine exceptional clarity of diction with attentiveness to Handel's fleeting harmonic nuances, and provide sparkling virtuosity when required. Their instrumental colleagues, often playing solo, match them in passionate eloquence. There are just a few moments where I felt some deviation from perfection, such as Invernizzi's matter-of-fact treatment of her charac-

ter's imagined entry into Elysium in *Delirio amoro*so, and Bonizzoni's occasional marking of a musical section by an unnecessarily emphatic ritardando. Da capo embellishments sometimes wander too far in the direction of wholesale rewriting. In general, however, Bonizzoni and his colleagues are highly persuasive advocates for these works, especially the lesser known ones.

The unexpectedly slow tempo for the opening aria of *Un'alma innamorata* seemed at first to be unwise, but soon became spellbinding. A bonus on the 'Ruspoli' disc is the inclusion in *Diana cacciatrice* of the minuet-style aria 'Di questa selva', preceded by the newly-discovered recitative 'Tacet, olà tacete' (published in 2004 in *Göttinger Beiträge X*), both absent from the only previous recording with Deborah York on Eufoda (see *EMR* 58, March 2000, p. 19). One final and trivial complaint concerns the printing of the Italian text in the booklets, where the poetic structure of the recitatives is (as often happens) obscured by incorrect line breaks. This is something that a group based in Italy, though recording on a Spanish label, ought to get right and perhaps will do so for future issues in this very promising series. Anthony Hicks

**Handel Flaming Rose** Julianne Baird S, *Tempesta di Mare* 69' 14" Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0743 Nine German arias (HWV 202-209); trio sonatas Op. 2/1 & 4 (HWV 386, 389)

**Handel Neun deutsche Arien** Carolyn Sampson S, Alexandra Bellamy ob, Stéphanie-Marie Degand vln, The King's Consort Hyperion CDA67627 70' 33" Oboe Sonatas in Bb, c & F (HWV 357, 363a, 366)

The nine extant arias that Handel composed to texts extracted from B. H. Brockes' poetic collection *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* are scored for soprano and an unnamed treble instrument with continuo. The absence of a name implies violin, as is confirmed by the range of the line in some arias and (in one case) the presence of chords, but in recordings of the complete set, flute and oboe are often used in some arias. For Julianne Baird, *Tempesta da Mare* use violin in five arias and flute for the other four, and with the flute they also sometimes choose a continuo of theorbo or harpsichord without string bass, creating a transparent texture but one in which the music loses the vital engagement of the treble and bass lines. In *Süsse stille* the problem of the low C's in the 'flute' part is solved by transposing the aria up a tone.

The approach is consistent with Baird's vocal delicacy, often sweet and luminous, but always on the light side even where (as in *Die ihr aus dunkeln Gräften*) more weight is needed. The two trio sonatas from Handel's Opus 2 (the two with the upper treble suitable for flute) are given fresh and spirited performances.

On the Hyperion disc the King's Consort use violin and string bass for all the arias (instrumental variety is achieved by interspersing them with Handel's three oboe sonatas, eloquently phrased and embellished by Alexandra Bellamy), with discreet harmonies from harpsichord or organ (Robert King, making what is presumably his last recording for some time) or theorbo. There is a real sense of dialogue between violin and cello throughout (though the violin is a shade grey in tone), giving excellent support to Carolyn Sampson, who is more responsive than Baird to the varying moods of the arias. Strength is added to sweetness, and she brings a special raptness to *Süsse stille*, and gentle ecstasy to *Süsser Blumen Ambräflocken*.

There is, however, formidable competition to both these new recordings in Dorothea Röschmann's version on *Harmonia Mundi*. Despite the 'strange instrumental combinations' in the continuo noted by BC reviewing the issue in *EMR* 60 (May 2000), she brings an intensity of expression to the arias that the new contenders cannot quite match. Sampson's account is nevertheless also worth having for its less flamboyant authority.

Anthony Hicks

**Handel *Tamerlano* (1724 version)** Mata Katsouli *Asteria*, Mary-Ellen Nesi *Andronico*, Nicholas Spanos *Tamerlano*, Irini Karaianini *Irene*, Tassis Christoyannis *Bajazet*, Petros Magoulas *Leone*, Orchestra of Patras, George Petrou 192' 32" (3 CDs in box)  
MD&G MDG 609 1457-2

George Petrou and his talented Greek company follow up their pioneer recordings of Handel's *Oreste* and *Arianna in Creta* with a *Tamerlano* that also breaks new ground by presenting for the first time the complete text of the opera as originally performed in 1724, avoiding the cuts, reorderings and restorations adopted in the four previous recordings. (The superb bass aria 'Nel mondo e nell'abisso', composed for the 1731 revival of the opera, is sensibly added, with its introductory recitative, in an appendix.) It is therefore very welcome, but for reasons I find difficult to explain precisely, does not quite achieve the ideal that might have been hoped. I had the

sense, especially in the first two acts, that the performers had embarked on the venture of recording the complete score because they felt it ought to be done, while not being fully convinced it was the right thing to do. The uncut recitatives are 'kept moving' with a vengeance, not without moments of rhetorical emphasis, but often missing chances to bring out dramatic tension. Several arias are taken with tempos a shade faster than seems necessary, and the breakneck speed of the final aria of Act 2, *Asteria's 'Se potessi un di placare'*, is especially regrettable. This aria is something of a crux, since it has become the fashion to omit it and put *Asteria's 'Cor di padre'* in its place (as had been Handel's first intention); but 'Se potessi', taken at a moderate, flowing pace, is a wonderful expression of the mix of *Asteria's* relief and anxiety at this point. (The aria has no tempo mark in the autograph, but other sources indicate *Allegro* or *Andante Allegro*, the former being adopted, perhaps unwisely, in the Halle edition.)

A more consistent sense of drama comes to the fore in Act 3, with Mata Katsouli bringing great intensity to 'Cor di padre' in its final position as the first aria of the act, and Tassis Christoyannis finding all the rage and pathos needed for *Bajazet's* flamboyant suicide. He is a baritone in a role ostensibly for tenor, but is quite equal to the range of the part, which Handel had to lower for the original singer, Francesco Borosini, after composing his first draft. Mary-Ellen Nesi, in the *Senesino* role of *Andronico*, does not produce those heart-stopping touches that we hope for in the finest mezzos, but is nevertheless very acceptable, as is countertenor Nicholas Spanos in the title role, though a little too keen to break into a chest voice when expressing rage. Petrou's direction, when not too hard pressed, is considered and stylish. Despite my reservations, which may well diminish on further hearings, this is a fine achievement.

Anthony Hicks

*A reader paying his subscription noted that he enjoyed the reviews by Anthony Hicks in particular, adding: 'Mr Hicks is a National Treasure.'*

**Handel *Saul*** Kirsten Blaise, Elizabeth Keusch, Daniel Taylor, Norman Shankle, Markus Eiche SSATB, Gächinger Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling 130' 43" (2 CDs in box)  
Hänssler Classic CD 98.280

'Good in parts' is the general verdict; in fact, very good in some sections. But the amazing drama in the score isn't fully realised, and there are silly changes to the instrumentation (e.g. the oboe or organ part in the third movement of the opening *Sinfonia*) that I'm sure Rilling wouldn't dare to adopt with Bach. Most of the cuts (twelve numbers) would be acceptable at a concert – but not 'In sweetest harmony', but not on a CD: if the conductor thinks a movement is superfluous, he could at least include it as an appendix. In most respects the playing, on modern instruments, is convincing, and the singing is pretty good. But this doesn't reach the level of either of the Solomon recordings reviewed below. CB

**Handel *Semele*** Rosemary Joshua *Semele*, Gail Pearson *Ino*, Hilary Summers *Ino, Juno*, Stephen Wallace *Athamus*, Richard Croft *Jupiter*, Brindley Sherratt *Cadmus, Somnus*, Early Opera Company, Christian Curnyn 169' 35" (3 CDs in box)  
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0745(3)

Anthony Hicks will review this in the next issue.

**Handel *Solomon*** Tim Mead *Solomon*, Dominique Labelle, Claron McFadden, Michael Slattery, Roderick Williams SSTB, Winchester Cathedral Choir, Festspiel-Orchester Göttingen, Nicholas McGegan 156' 41" (3 CDs)  
Carus 83.242 SACD

**Handel *Solomon*** Sarah Connolly *Solomon*, Susan Gritton *Solomon's Queen*, Carolyn Sampson *Queen of Sheba*, Mark Padmore *Zadok*, David Wilson-Johnson *Levite*, RIAS Kammerchor, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Daniel Reuss 155' (2 CDs)  
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901949.50

I played Act I of the McGegan disc first. It should have been fine: the directing was lively, the singing mostly good, the playing very good. But surely it was possible to add just a little weight to the double-dottings of the Overture, and why did the work seem lesser than I had remembered. Moving to Reuss, I heard double dots that were still stylish but not passed over, and choruses that preserved (or rediscovered) just enough of the power of pre-HIP performances to invest the music with a greater significance without overloading it. In another mood, I might prefer McGegan: in fact, as my hearing progressed, the differences seemed less. But Reuss's soloists are a better bunch, and he creates a better dramatic flow.

A difference that may be important to some is that Reuss moves the penultimate

chorus ('Praise the Lord') from its proper place and substitutes it for the final chorus ('The name of the wicked'), which is omitted. It is a common alteration. 'Praise the Lord' is a far more impressive climax, and a magnificent construction in itself. It runs to 110 bars of limited thematic variety but it is beautifully spaced, enlivened by virtually continuous semiquavers from violins and oboes (which could be a bit more prominent in both performances). The brass doesn't enter until over half-way through and the contrasting vocal theme is delayed till bar 79; it is in minims and gives almost a modal feel by harmonising the leading note as the fifth of minor chord (or in terms of the period, the chord on the third is figured 5, not the expected 6). Simple genius: it's been runjing round my head for days, as I feared it would 'The name of the wicked' is less impressive verbally and musically; and neither that cut nor the omission of Zadok's aria 'Indulge thy faith' in Act I worries me unduly. So the balance seems to favour Reuss, unless you prefer McGegan's lighter approach. CB

Handel *Ah! Mio cor: arias* Magdalena Kožená, Venice Baroque Orchestra, Andrea Marcon 76' 33"  
Archiv 477 6547

In some ways, absolutely brilliant. There's no need to substantiate that: every review I've seen agrees and is enthusiastic, and I've supplied two words of quotable praise. I found, however, that the disc as a whole didn't work. In a real baroque opera, except in a few, well-planned situations, arias are separated by secco recitative. You may not understand a word of it, but it is necessary to separate the arias. Furthermore, part of planning a libretto was to create a variety of moods so that consecutive arias contrasted. Here, the intensity of one aria is given no space for recovery, yet the succeeding piece doesn't follow on emotionally. Perhaps such solo recitals would be better with two singers; a librettist could create an ingenious plot linking the selected arias, which could then be set as recit. But buy this anyway. CB

Purcell & Handel *Endless Pleasure*  
Barbara Hendricks, Drottningholms  
Barockensemble

see under Purcell, p. 52

William Hayes *Concerti, Ouverture & Sinfonia* Capriccio Basel 61' 56"  
Capriccio 71 135 SACD  
Concerti in D & d; Ouverture to *The Passions*,  
Organ concerto in G, Sinfonia in d

William Hayes (1708-1777), friend, disciple and performer of Handel, was University Organist and Professor of Music at Oxford from 1741. The overture is taken from an oratorio of 1750, but the dates of the other works on this CD are not known. Not surprisingly, the music is pretty Handelian in style (though there are occasional 'galant' touches), but Hayes has plenty of ideas of his own and the pieces are always full of interest. Judging by the music recorded here, he must be counted among the best English composers of his generation.

But I have much the same reservations about the performances by Capriccio Basel as I did in my review of their Gregori disc in the October 2006 *EMR*. I very much doubt whether Oxford ensembles of the mid-18th century made such a massive sound or used quite so many aggressive accents, reinforced by an array of plucked instruments whacking out every chord (in addition to the organ and harpsichord). The Holywell Music Room, where Hayes directed weekly concerts, is not a vast Roman church or a Neapolitan opera-house. I suppose the style is meant to create excitement, but to my ear the effect quickly palls, and it lacks subtlety. A pity: the music deserves more sympathetic performance. Richard Maunder

Porpora *Notturni per i Defunti* Monica Piccinini, Romina Basso SA, La Stagione Armonico, Dolce & Tempesta, Stefano Demicheli 69' 21"  
Fuga Libera FUG526  
Fiorenza Sinfonie in f & F

The three *Notturni* are a series of lessons and responses – the former for solo voice, the latter for choir, both accompanied by strings with, in two of the *Notturni*, two horns in some movements. Typically Neapolitan in style, many movements feature the standard chromatic harmonies of the period. The two soloists are well suited to the period performance style and blend admirably with the instrumental ensemble. These works are contrasted with two sinfonias by another contemporary Neapolitan (and another Nicola), Fiorenza. These are chamber works for strings, reminiscent of Alessandro Scarlatti, but with more harmonic interest. The first is a triosonata, but performed with cello and violone on the basso line with organ continuo, and the second a more substantial work featuring a solo cello. Both are virtuosic works, and their obvious musical worth is an indication that

Fiorenza's relatively few instrumental compositions deserve to be better known. This recording offers a stylish and polished performance of some interesting and unusual Italian repertoire. Ian Graham Jones

G. Sammartini *Sonate per flauto e basso continuo* Maurice Steger rec etc 72' 39"  
Harmonia Mundi HMC 905266  
op. 2/3, 4; op. 13/1, 4, 5; nos. 21, 23

Apart from the two well-known recorder sonatas from a manuscript in the Sibley library in New York, the music on this CD comes from collections published for flute in 1736 and for flute, violin and oboe in 1760. Maurice Steger uses four different sizes of recorder, from voice flute to soprano, to accommodate the range of the music in its original keys. According to Burney, quoted in the booklet notes, Sammartini's music was 'full of science, originality, and fire', and the last two words might well describe the performances on this CD. Perhaps the continuo section, based on the instruments available in Handel's theatre orchestra in which Sammartini was employed to play the oboe, is rather large at times. The harpsichord is paired with organ or harp, and sometimes both, in most of the sonatas, with added theorbo or guitar, bassoon or cello in some movements. I'm not usually very keen on changes of instrumentation between movements, but here they add colour to Sammartini's sometimes not particularly interesting bass lines and the balance with the recorder is always maintained. One or two of the more unusual ideas, such as the organ introduction to the slow movement of Sibley 21, may cause the odd raised eyebrow, but there are wonderful changes of mood and a great feeling for the drama of the music. Maurice Steger's characterful playing is by turns expressive and brilliant, and this is a recording I shall go on listening to with enjoyment. It's one of the most exciting recorder CDs I've heard for some time.

Victoria Helby

Tartini *The Devil's Trill and other violin sonatas* Elizabeth Wallfisch vln, Richard Tuunncliffe vlc, Paul Nicholson hpscd  
Hyperion Dyad CDD22061 140' 42" ??

Recorded in 1990 and 1991, these two discs include ten sonatas by one of the major violinist-composers of the 18th century – and it is shameful that his output is so little recorded. The first disc has five of the Op. 1 published set of 1732 (including the one sub-titled *Didone abbandonata*) and the

work that is the composer's most famous (and, of course, the title of the compilation) *The Devil's Trill*. The second includes three works from MSS (including a piece in the style of 'the priest who plays the Portuguese guitar') and one of his Op. 5 from the late 1740s. The performers need absolutely no recommendation from me; suffice it to say that they are in spectacular form and, if you missed these discs first time around, don't repeat your mistake! BC

Telemann *Overtures Capella Coloniensis*,  
Hans-Martin Linde 61' 56"  
Capriccio 71 120 SACD (rec 1985/6)  
TWV 55: C3, 35, F11

This re-release includes two pot-boilers (the aquatic themed *Hamburger Ebb und Fluth* and *Alster-Echo*) separated by the less well-known orchestral suite in E minor which concludes with a *Forlane*. Recorded in 1985/86, these are fine performances and the recital definitely benefits at a single sitting by the re-ordering of the works for this SACD version. BC

Telemann *Musique de Table* The King's Consort, Robert King 67' 02"  
Hyperion Helios CDH55278 (rec 1987) ??  
Suite in D (production II) and in B flat (III)

We don't normally devote a lot of space to reissues but this enjoyable 20-year-old recording of the orchestral suites from the 2nd and 3rd installments of Telemann's subscription *Musique de Table* shows that, even when he was really just starting out in the business, Robert King was not afraid to step off the beaten track and explore some less well-known repertoire, and the Early Music world is very much a less interesting place during his enforced absence. BC

Vivaldi *Il Cimento dell'Armonia e dell'Invenzione* op. 8/1-6 Stefano Montanari vln, Accademia Bizantina, Ottavio Dantone Arts 47564-8 SACD 57' 07"  
... op. 8/7-12 55' 42"  
Arts 47565-8 SACD

These performances were recorded in 1999. Stefano Montanari is the violin soloist in ten of the concertos and, as usual, he makes the music his own, which is a deliberately ambiguous statement. Of course every performance should be as much about the performers as about the composer, but some things really didn't work for me. After a tutti ritornello, the solo violin enters in the same note values... At least, that's what the printed sources tell

us. Somehow, it's more dramatic for the soloist to modify that – and, don't misunderstand me, it is. But I wonder why the composer never thought of the idea. The two concertos (Nos. 9 and 12) with oboe solo on the second disc are actually more literal if certainly no less virtuosic. If you don't already have a set of Op. 8, this one won't disappoint. BC

Vivaldi *Concerti per violin II 'Di sfida'*  
Anton Steck, Modo Antiquo, Federico Maria Sardelli 55' 06"  
Naïve (Tesi del Piemonte 35), OP 30427  
RV 232, 243, 264, 325, 353, 368

I'm not sure where the 'di sfida' (=challenging) comes from – possibly a marketing whim?. What is beyond doubt is the simple fact that the six concertos which have been selected for Anton Steck and Modo Antiquo are among the most virtuosic that the Red Priest produced, and all the eye-witness reports of his breath-taking virtuosity suddenly seem a little less exaggerated. I read through the booklet notes and was very aware of my eyebrows arching at the thought of Vivaldi using all of the techniques described, but it transpires that, even if such things weren't in the notation, there is no other way to play music of such gargantuan demand other than by playing in ninth position across the strings or with ricochet bowing. If you have not previously heard Steck in Pisendel, Benda and Geminiani, you're in for something of a white knuckle ride through the world of the virtuoso violinist. Adrian Chandler will give him a run for his money in this repertoire. There isn't much to choose between the two, and I'd like to be the first to suggest that naïve sign both of them up to record the two-violin concertos. BC

Vivaldi *Concerti per viola d'amore* Fabio Biondi, Europa Galante 77' 13"  
Virgin Classics 0946 3 95146 2 5  
RV 97, 392-7, 540

My heart sank when this CD arrived. In the first place, it's not the first such programme I've had to review, and the very notion to listening to well over an hour of viola d'amore was just about enough to send me to bed early. Secondly, I'm (notoriously) not a great fan of Fabio Biondi. However, I am delighted to report that I was totally wrong on both counts. Despite the fact that the music is either in F major and D or A (major and minor), I thoroughly enjoyed the pro-

gramme – so much so, in fact, that it had played through twice without me noticing: only the re-appearance of the horns, oboes and bassoon in RV97 (which I don't think I had ever heard before) drew my attention to the fact that I'd listened to more than an hour and a half of Vivaldi (non stop!). The one-to-a-part band is excellent, and Fabio Biondi's Milanese viola d'amore (complete with a carved blind-folded head) has a beautiful tone that is never over-powered by the violins. If you don't know this repertoire, let me recommend this as the disc to get. BC

Vivaldi *Atenaide* Sandrine Piau, Vivica Genaux, Guillemette Laurens, Romina Basso, Nathalie Stutzmann, Paul Agnew, Stefano Ferrari SSSATB, Modo Antiquo, Federico Maria Sardelli 219' 55" (3 CDs in box)

Naïve (Tesi del Piemonte 36), OP 30438

I must confess that this is an opera I'd never even heard of. Written for the opera house in Florence (and recorded in the very same theatre for this Vivaldi Edition volume), it tells an all-too-familiar tale of unrequited love and a generous helping of courtly intrigue. All is well (for most of the cast) by the end and there has been some fantastic music along the way, so it sounds like a treat. All that scheming and loving needs time to explain itself when the plot is as complicated as this one, and secco recit just isn't a great way to spend a night at the CD player. In fact, and to be fair to the very illustrious cast, there is some fine characterisation in this set, including the opening scene. Director Federico Maria Sardelli has made a careful study of the sources of Vivaldi's operas and declares in his note that just because the composer uses pizzicato here and mutes there doesn't mean to say that these devices can be applied willy-nilly just for dramatic effect. He deduces from the presence in one aria of recorder parts that the players would have judiciously joined the violins during ritornelli on oboe, and possibly by extension that there would have been a bassoonist, too. All of this would sit more comfortably if the very first page of the booklet didn't tell us that he wrote all the variations for the Da Capo repeats. Surely that is the singers' responsibility – and if not, surely anyone who does help them should first establish what the voices are capable of. We surely know now that Vivaldi (like any 18th-century composer worth his salt) wrote for the particular strengths of his singers and I'm afraid there

are a few moments of all-around discomfort when I would have been happy with a few trills and passing notes, especially when surely at least part of the reasoning behind this set is that these performances will somehow become a reference for the future? If you're able to hear past the frills (and spills), there is much excellent singing from all of the cast. The orchestra, as always, is first rate.

BC

**Zelenka [Church Music]** Grace Davidson, James Bowman, Benjamin Hulett, Simon Whiteley SATB, Fiori Musicali, Penelope Rapson 66' 16"  
Metronome MET CD 1082  
*Lamentatio pro die veneris sancto* ZWV 53, *Miserere in c* ZWV 57, *Requiem in c* ZWV 45

With relatively few recordings available of Zelenka's choral music, it is (I think) a pity that Penelope Rapson has opted not to explore some of his masses; not only is it slightly unadventurous, but it means that the recording will inevitably be compared with whatever is already in the marketplace and, I regret to say, this will not always be a comfortable situation. Paul Dombrecht has laid down wonderful performances (and includes an Offertorium in the Requiem!) with more warmth in both the recorded and the choral sound – the Dresden chapel choir cannot possibly have sounded anything like a product of the English collegiate system. James Bowman and his instrumental colleagues do a good job of his Lamentation (with solo oboe, violin and bassoon), but Michael Chance's recording on Hyperion will remain my favourite. I've no doubt this will prove popular with the group's loyal supporters – they are a fine ensemble; but I would have preferred to hear a new mass or two!

BC

**Carestini: the Story of a Castrato** Philippe Jaroussky cT, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm 72' 06"  
Virgin Classics 00946 3 95242 2 8  
Music by Capelli, Gluck, Graun, Handel, Hasse, Leo, Porpora

It's difficult to know whom to be more impressed by here – Giovanni Carestini (the original *Ariodante*) or Philippe Jaroussky, his modern re-creator. Carestini enjoyed a stellar career, sometimes in direct opposition to the great Farinelli, which is here outlined in twelve well-chosen arias from his most notable roles. Jaroussky's performances are quite amazing. No note seems too high or too low for him, no tempo too fast, no

melisma too long, no emotion inex-pressible. My one caveat on the singing is that, as with all falsettists, his sound is very individual and you might not like it. He receives robust support from Emmanuelle Haïm and her ensemble (sometimes too robust and the engineers have to help him out) among whom the continuo organ and lute are probably out of place in this repertoire. The booklet includes a very useful biographical essay on Carestini and translations of the sung texts but the arias have to speak for themselves as there is no hint of their dramatic context. And I do find it odd that such a recital disc should offer no information about the soloist.

David Hansell

*Jaroussky can be seen in action on YouTube.*

**French and Italian Flute Music** Barthold & Wieland Kuijken, Robert Kohnen hpscd

Accent ACC 30009 (2 CDs) ??  
CD1 (53'02"; rec 1979) Blavet 1732/2, Boismortier 1741 in g, Guignon op.1/8, Leclair 1738/7, Monteclair 1724/1  
CD2 (75'20"; rec 1991) Albinoni (in a), Corelli op.5/8, Geminiani op.1/10, Locatelli op.2/1, Platti op. 3 in G, Veracini op.1/6, Vivaldi RV58

This set, advertised as 'two for the price of one', is a reissue of two completely unrelated recordings. The French music on the first CD was all written for the transverse flute. Even the Leclair sonata from his 1738 set of violin sonatas has the composer's own flute version of the third movement. All the pieces chosen for this recording appeared in Paris between 1724 and 1741 and demonstrate the gradual influence of Italian style on French composers. I particularly enjoyed the Monteclair suite which opens the programme, a truly French work, elegantly played and exploiting all the expressive possibilities of the French style. The majority of sonatas on the second CD were written for violin, and only the Locatelli in C major from op.2 and Platti in G major from op.3 were originally published for flute. The Geminiani op.1 violin sonatas (1716) were published in a flute version in 1723 and this is used here, incorporating Geminiani's own ornaments from his 1739 and 1740 reprints of op.1. The Albinoni sonata is from an 18<sup>th</sup> century MS arrangement for flute/recorder of his violin sonatas op.6; the continuo part on this recording is based on a version by one of Bach's students, Heinrich Nikolaus Gerber, with a few corrections in Bach's own hand. The sonata attributed to

Vivaldi is from Chedeville's *Il Pastor Fido*. The last movement is an arrangement of the first movement of Vivaldi's violin concerto op.4 no.6 which itself was arranged by Bach as a keyboard sonata BWV 975, and Bach's ornaments are used here.

This is an interesting selection of music, very attractively and stylishly played. The booklet notes are informative about the music but there is no mention of the performers or what instruments they play.

Victoria Helby

**Trio Sonatas** Nova Hollandia (Trevor Howe archlute, Takeshi Sudo gamba, John Ma vln, Victoria Nair-Price rec) 62' 08"  
available from [www.novahollandia](http://www.novahollandia)  
Music by Bach, Handel, Quantz, Telemann, Weiss

This has been one of my favourite discs this month. The programme includes trio sonatas by Telemann (TWV 42: a1, d7 and g9), Handel (the C minor version of the B minor sonata for flute and violin) and Quantz (QV 2.Anh.i) as well as bleeding chunks by C. F. Abel, Weiss and Bach. The latter give each of the members of the group a chance to shine individually – which they do in each of the solos. The trio sonatas are equally enjoyable. I'm surprised (but delighted) that they chose less well-known works by Telemann for a debut CD, though these stylish and enjoyable performances (they really get stuck into the rustic inspired movements!) are sure to win many admirers. I might perhaps have re-ordered the recital to have Telemann at the beginning, middle and end rather than have three sonatas in a row (even with the solo interludes), and it seems slightly odd (though certainly not an anticlimax) to end with two solo tracks. This is an excellent ensemble (and their group photo reveals a sense of humour, which is all too often lacking in this world) and I look forward to hearing lots more from them

BC

## CLASSICAL

**Mr Abel's Fine Airs: 24 pieces for solo viola da gamba** Susanne Heinrich 77' 48"  
Hyperion CDA67628

Abel's status as the last great composer for the bass viol has been questioned in recent years by the researches into the Berlin School of Graun, Hasse, J. C. Bach and others and the publication of their music. That he is of more than historical interest is made very clear by this marvellous recording which features flawless playing of music of great quality. While it doesn't

make the demands or achieve the density of thought of J. S. Bach, it makes very enjoyable listening. It needs an exceptional control of articulation, chord-playing and tone to do it well. Susanne Heinrich proves herself here to be a very fine player. She makes a beautiful sound throughout the range, and, despite the close recording, there are no extraneous finger sounds, no false attacks, just playing of great poise and continuously satisfying musical intelligence. This music demands no less, even when it is comparatively simple. If that seems like faint praise, there is much to enjoy, ranging from straightforward dances to a virtuosic fugue, and the well-known, very beautiful *Arpeggio*. The 24 pieces include the Suite in G major, published many years ago by Schott, and a total of over 70 minutes of music. Highly recommended.

Robert Oliver

C. P. E. Bach Organ Concertos Roland Münch (Migend organ of Princess Anna-Amalia of Prussia, 1755), Kammerorchester 'Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach', Hartmut Haenchen 54'73"

Capriccio 71 123 SACD (rec 1985)  
Concerto in G, & Eb H444 & 446; Fantasie & Fugue H103, Prelude H. 107

There is a loose contact between the works included here through the 1755 organ, which was originally built for the studies of Princess Anna Amalie of Prussia, the sister of Frederick the Great and an enthusiastic patroness of music, for whom CPE Bach composed his Six Sonatas for an organ for two manuals, but no necessary pedals. All of the works featured require pedals, and they are played with good style by Roland Muench. This music assembles a new miscellany of interesting lesser works.

Stephen Daw

J. C. Bach *Die Bach-Söhne* IV Freiburger Barockorchester, Karl Kaiser fl, Anne Katherina Schreiber vln, Gottfried von der Goltz vln, dir 60'59"

Carus 83.307

Fl Concerto in D, Overture *Il tutore e la pupilla*; Sinfonias op.; 6/1 & 8/4, Sinfonia concertante (2 vlns) in D

Despite the title, only two concertos are included on this CD, along with a couple of symphonies and a three-movement overture. All the music is from the 1760s, which seems a rather odd choice to represent Johann Christian in a series called 'The Sons of Bach': perhaps further recordings will include some of his later symphonies and concertos. Nevertheless

the disc is packed with highly attractive music by a composer who still tends to be underrated. The band use 'baroque' instruments, which might seem slightly anachronistic, but they are far more suitable than the all-purpose 'classical' instruments (usually dating from around 1800) that are often used nowadays for anything from early Haydn to late Beethoven. In particular, the Quantz-style flute works very well in the concerto. The playing is vigorous, spirited and refined, and the ensemble is impeccable. A couple of quibbles, though: the band is too big for the flute concerto, where Bach would have expected no more than pairs of violins, and the first-movement cadenza is much too long. But a bonus mark for not subscribing to the myth that one or two bassoons should always be added to the bass-line. And another for the excellent programme-note by the leading Bach scholar Ulrich Leisinger; it was he who rediscovered the slow movement of the flute concerto, recorded here for the first time. (Just one correction: the Symphony Op. 8 No. 4 is C 15 in Warburton's catalogue, not C 14.) Warmly recommended.

Richard Maunder

W. F. Bach *Polonaises & Fugues* Paul Simmonds clavichord 79'54"  
London Independent Records LIR014

Although WFB's Polonaises for solo keyboard rank among his greatest works, and even although clavichord recordings of this sound-quality are at best, highly unusual, I have to admit that this turned out for me to be something of a disappointment. The instrument featured, formerly the prized possession of the late specialist John Barnes and kindly lent through the good offices of his widow, Sheila, is of an unusually large and sensitive kind, popular until the very end of the 18th century in Sweden, and because of that late flowering, of an aristocratic pedigree. Much though Paul Simmonds has shown his genuine affection for this clavichord in its meticulous preparation and scrupulous tuning of it, I'm afraid that I can detect little of this real sympathy in his interpretations of Friedemann Bach's music. I have to report that these well-meant interpretations leave me impressed, but rather cold.

Stephen Daw

Dittersdorf *Symphonies, Concerto* 57'08"  
Capriccio 71 121 SACD (rec 1986-92)  
Symphony in C *La Prise de la Bastille*  
Concerto Köln, Werner Erhardt

Harp (orig hpscd) *Concerto in A* Andrea Vigh, Budapest Strings, Karoly Botvay  
Symphony in C *The Four Ages of Man* Cappella Coloniensis, Hans-Martin Linde

This compilation will delight readers old enough to cherish the memory of the game 'Dittersdorf', invented by one of the authors of *The Record Guide*, in which this composer is suggested as the likely composer of an unrecognized piece of music heard on the radio or gramophone. These three works present both Ditters' strengths and his weaknesses: charming (but evanescent) ideas and imaginative orchestration, yet limited skill at constructing a symphonic argument. The harp concerto is an arrangement of a work originally written for piano and orchestra; it's fun. The two symphonies would be given a better chance to make their effect if the booklet note contained more solid information about their programmatic content. But the performances are polished and assured, and the recorded quality is more than adequate.

Peter Branscombe

Haydn *String Quartets op. 9* The London Haydn Quartet 133'03" (2 CDs)  
Hyperion CDA67611

Since The London Haydn Quartet is not as yet widely known, its talented individual players deserve to be named. They are: Catherine Manson and Margaret Faultless (violins), James Boyd (viola) and Jonathan Cohen (cello). They use gut strings and play period instruments (not identified), and do so with fine insight and spirit as well as rich tone. They make a splendid team, with the give and take of natural Haydn players, selecting tempos carefully, and with a convincing grasp of shape and structure. They play the works in the order 4, 1, 3, 2, 5 and 6, which tallies with Haydn's entry in his *Entwurf-Katalog* and, the team plausibly argues, the order of composition. They favour the edition published by Longman & Broderip in 1790, with correction of occasional errors, and taking cognizance of the differences between it and other contemporary sources. The set dates from the late 1760s and proclaims Haydn's absolute mastery of the new medium. Slow tempos predominate, and in these affectionate and stylish readings the players relish their seemingly timeless qualities; minuets are affectionately phrased, and the fastest movements positively scurry along, with no lack of wit. The whole undertaking is admirable – as is the forward, lively recording and Richard Wigmore's introductory essay.

Peter Branscombe

Mozart Essential Symphonies Vol. 1 (Nos. 1, 25, 41) Radio-Sinfonieorchester des SWR, Roger Norrington 74' 07" Hänsler Classic CD 93.211

These performances were taken live at the European Music Festival, Stuttgart, in 2006. In them, Roger Norrington reveals his felicitous ability to combine his experience as a pioneer of the early music movement with his current preference for the modern symphony orchestra. He has chosen the very first essay in the genre by the eight-year-old visitor to London, an impressive little symphony in Eb, followed by the urgent and powerful G-minor symphony of 1773, and then, awe-inspiring as ever, the 'Jupiter' – last of them all, written when Mozart was 32. These readings are full of character and individuality (without eccentricities), sonorously played, with excellent balance, and warmly recorded. The audience is understandably enthusiastic; so am I! I'm already looking forward to its successors. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart [Piano music] Michel Kiener fp  
Passacaille 941 57' 20"  
Rondo in a K 511, Fantasia in c, Sonatas in D K 457 & c 576

I was put off at first by the programme booklet's insufferably pretentious 'Interview with an Artist', with its preposterous suggestions that K. 457 and K. 475 express Mozart's unrequited passion for the dedicatee Theresia von Trattner (Constanze having 'lost her role as an inspiring muse'), and that K. 511 marks 'a new break-up, this time with Nancy Storace', who was a 'source of strongest emotions for Mozart'. Perhaps the idea that K. 576 was influenced by the music of J. S. Bach is a little more plausible, if facile, but to say that in 1789 'Mozart dives with endeavour into the study of the fugue and devotes himself to counterpoint exercises' is sheer poppycock.

That said, however, the instrument is a fine copy by Christopher Clarke of a Walter variously dated '1790' on the cover and 'post Mozart period, 1790-1800' in the text (the photos show that the original is almost certainly the 'Dorotheer-Flügel' in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, which Michael Latcham dates c.1800). And the playing is excellent, with subtle phrasing, scrupulous attention to Mozart's detailed articulation (with almost no use of the knee-levers), and a fine sense of drama. It's definitely in the same league as the Tilney recordings I reviewed in the November 2006 and October 2007 issues of

*EMR*, and it's difficult to make a choice – although I still marginally prefer Tilney, if only because his fortepiano is modelled on a Walter from Mozart's lifetime and has a more appropriate sound for the music. My best advice is to buy both Tilney and Kiener, or at least listen to both before deciding which you prefer.

*Richard Maunder*

*Destination London: Music for the Earl of Abingdon* William Hazelzet, Marion Moonen fl, Bernadette Verhagen vla, Barbara Kernig vlc 68' 20" Berlin Classics 0017982BC Abel op. 16/4; JC Bach op. 19/1 & 2; Haydn Trios Hob IV: 1 & 2; C Stamitz Trio in G

With such a programme, this promised to be little more than entertainment music; and so it proved, only lifting to a more musical plane with the first of the Haydn trios. The fact that all the works are in major keys, and hardly any have slow movements in the minor mode, adds to the sameness of the disc. The two works by the Earl, intriguingly titled *A cure for the spleen* and *Much ado about nothing*, flitted past, each lasting under a minute, the title of the latter aptly summing up their musical worth. Performed on period instruments, the works are neatly executed, though perhaps the addition of a keyboard continuo in the Stamitz and Abel trios might have added some variety to the texture. *Ian Graham Jones*

*Meister der Goethe Zeit* Staatskapelle Weimar, Peter Gölke 72' 10" Capriccio 71 128 SACD Anna Amalia *Erwin und Elmire* (Ouverture & Entre Acte); Destouches Symphony in D; Eberwein *Entreates und Gesänge zu Faust* (Introduzione); Reichardt *Erwin und Elmire* (Ouverture); Wolf Symphonies in e & G

'Masters of the Goethe Era' is a fascinating and important new release. One may raise an eyebrow at the choice of the word 'Master', as none of these forgotten composers is in the top rank. But they were all significant in their time, and there is not one work here that will disappoint the lover of late 18th- and early 19th-century German music. From the solemn and austere music written by Eberwein for Goethe's *Faust* on through a couple of nicely varied symphonies by Wolf, to a striking, even majestic one by Destouches, there are ambitious and thoroughly enjoyable larger-scale compositions. Worthy of note too is Reichardt's overture to Goethe's *Erwin und Elmire*, and especially the pieces composed by the

gifted Duchess Anna Amalia in her setting of the same libretto: an attractive three-part overture, and an entr'acte with taxing solo violin obbligato. Peter Gölke, a superbly talented conductor and musicologist, all too little known in GB, has assembled the programme, and he directs lively and well-rounded performances from the excellent Weimar orchestra, which shines collectively as well as with sparkling violin and wind obbligatos. The attractiveness of this finely-recorded CD is enhanced by a model booklet, which has full details of the music sources as well as useful three-language essays on the music and the performers. This would make an admirable Christmas present. *Peter Branscombe*

## 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Beethoven Piano Concertos Nos. 4 and 5*. Arthur Schoonderwoerd fp, Cristofori, Alpha 079 69' 50"

This has to be my Record of the Year, despite some stiff competition in this month's bumper crop. Schoonderwoerd plays an absolutely first-rate fortepiano by Johann Fritz (Vienna, c.1807-10) with an astonishing range of sound, from the pianissimo of the true *una corda* to some incredibly powerful fortissimos. And Cristofori is of about the size of the orchestra that played at the première of No. 4 in March 1807 at the Lobkowitz palace in Vienna. Its music-room had places for just 24 musicians which, allowing for full woodwind, brass and drums, would accommodate only about ten string players. In fact Cristofori use only seven, with one-to-a-part violins, pairs of violas and cellos, and a single bass. It works remarkably well, and the balance is excellent even in big tutti with full wind. My only criticism is that very occasionally a solo violin sounds slightly incongruous, and I suspect Beethoven is more likely to have used pairs of first and second violins. It would bring the band up to a total of only 22, and would be more in line with the practice in Mozart's concertos of twenty years earlier (there's some evidence that K. 466 even had four violins to a part, reducing to two in the solo sections).

However, having had my small grouse I'm delighted to report that the playing, by everyone involved, is superb. The performances grab your attention right from the first note, and keep you on the edge of your seat throughout. The sound is ravishing, and the clarity is amazing: you can hear every detail of Beethoven's

astonishingly inventive orchestration. I'm reminded of Leopold Mozart's reaction to hearing his son play K. 456 in Vienna in 1785: 'I... had the pleasure of hearing all the exchanges of the instruments so clearly that tears of joy sprang to my eyes'. Never again do I want to hear the muddy sound of a big orchestra in these concertos.

Richard Maunder

**Schubert Piano Works 3** Trudelies Leonhardt fp 75' 53" (2 CDs)  
Globe GLO 6061  
D 566, 960 + drafts  
Allegretto in E D. 566, Scherzo in A-flat D. 566,  
Sonata in B-flat D. 960, drafts for D. 960

The fortepiano (by Seidner of Vienna, c.1815-20) has a beautiful sustained sound, well balanced throughout its six-octave compass, with crisp dampers and a wide range of dynamics. All these qualities are fully exploited in very satisfying performances by Trudelies Leonhardt (sister of Gustav). I particularly admire her ability to bring out all the parts in a complex texture with great clarity, each with its own individual voice, and to maintain a strong sense of the overall structure of a movement while vividly capturing its wide range of emotions. It is absolutely fascinating, too, to hear some of Schubert's preliminary drafts for the first two movements of D. 960; my only criticism (which has nothing to do with Leonhardt's playing) is that they occupy a little less than nine minutes on a second CD, when everything could easily have been put on one disc. This is, without doubt, the best recording of Schubert on a fortepiano that I've yet heard.

Richard Maunder

#### VARIOUS

**The Battle of Killiecrankie** Meredith Hall, Matthew White S cT, La Nef 62' 45"  
Atma Classique ACD2 2510

This is a collection of extremely catchy renditions of music associated with Scotland in the early 18th century, some of it written in Scotland, some by Scottish composers in exile such as James Oswald, but most of it 'traditional'. La Nef employ authentic instruments such as those which would have been played in the richer households in Scotland at the time, while Meredith Hall and Matthew White sing tastefully and persuasively. HOWEVER, the traditional music and indeed much of the 'composed' music has undergone considerable arrangement, and I found myself asking what context, social or historical,

the performers imagined that the music would have appeared in anything like these guises. Encrustations of counter-melodies, altered harmonies, cross-rhythms and intrusive percussion and sound effects at times practically obscure the original melodies, while further implausibility is introduced by the persistent but not consistent anglicisation of the Scots texts. The subtitle 'Love and war songs in free Scotland' suggests that this is a very misty-eyed view of Scottish culture on the part of our musical diaspora. I don't want to dismiss these enthusiastic and engaging attempts to bring some lovely repertoire to a wider audience, and much of the playing on this CD is at least pleasing and often convincing; but it is almost as if we need a new category for traditional/early crossover performances such as these. To my mind, they break too many of the basic rules of scholarship to be billed as truly authentic early music performances, but deserve more serious attention than the celtie-weltie fantasy world inhabited by much 'traditional' music. 'Auld Scottish braw-roque'? '18th-century music with a just a hint of other periods - additives listed'? I throw the floor open for suggestions...

D. James Ross

*I didn't play the disc before sending it, so I am only commenting generally. In the end, it comes down to the how convincingly the performers are. The Suzie Leblanc disc I reviewed last month (whose Scottish input was, David McGuinness tells me, inherent in the project before his involvement) similarly inhabits a world that interprets the past in a modern way: indeed, my favourite CD and concert from the last year, L'Arpeggiata's Los Impossibles, operates in the same area. Folk and popular music thrives on re-creation, and early-music sensibility is an effective way of rehearsing it.*

**A Mother's Love: Music for Mary** The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 73. 12" UCJ (Universal) 476 6295

Music by Britten, Bruckner, Cornysh, Duruflé, Elgar, Fauré, Grieg, Josquin, Lassus, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Obrecht, Palestrina, Rizza, Saint-Saëns & anon

I have often written (and more often thought) that mixed-period discs are spoiled by a consistency of style that diminishes the individuality of the various items included. I'm not sure if this avoids the problem completely, but the sound is far more suited to the earlier repertory than most Anglican collections. For me

the high point was not anything early, but Bruckner's *Tota pulchra es* — a texture as bare as Janáček, simple diatonic melodies and harmony, and bold (not apologetic) use of the organ. Sadly, Saint-Saëns pretty *Ave Maria* that follows doesn't stand the comparison. Britten's *A Hymn to the Virgin* must be the best music written by an English teen-ager since Purcell. The early music is fine too. In musical households, it would be worth using it as a 'guess the composer' quiz at Christmas, offering as well a rewarding musical experience. CB

**Venetian Treasures** The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 69' 43" COR COR16053 (rec 1991-2)

Caldara *Crucifixus* a16, *Stabat mater*; Cavalli *Salve Regina*; A. Gabrieli *De profundis*; G. Gabrieli; *Hodie completi sunt*; Lassus *Missa Bell' amfitrit' alter*, *Tui sunt coeli*; Monteverdi *Domine in furore*

This is topped and tailed by Caldara, who left Venice around 1700 when he was about 30; most of his music dates from after that, and the passionate *Stabat mater* was written for Vienna. The whole programme is rather odd: there's no shortage of Venetian music in existence, but the main work is Lassus's overworked *Missa Bell'Amfitrit' altera*: I've nothing against the piece — was very impressed by it when I was involved in a performance in 1970; but why does one hear this so much more than the other Lassus masses? (Perhaps because it's one of the few that Barenreiter publishes separately.) It couldn't have been sung in Venice, since the handing of the bass parts shows that it isn't for separated double choirs while Venetian polychoral music has the choirs harmonically self-sufficient. So there's actually about 20 minutes of Venetian music on the disc. There's legislation about false description of goods! That apart, though, it is an enjoyable anthology, the Mass is well done, and it's worth buying for the *Stabat Mater* anyway. CB

#### CHRISTMAS

No Christmas CDs this year, apart from a few listed in sequence above and a bargain four-disc box of Andrew Parrott and the Taverners two Carol Albums together with other seasonal music: see p. 64. I did notice a couple of discs that I suspect we would have reviewed with approval: *In nativitate Domini* (Berlin Classics 001624 BC) with Emma Kirkby and Susanne Rydén, and New York Polyphony's *I sing the birth* (Avie AV2141). CB

## CHRISTMAS WITH TAVERNER

*Christmas Carols* The Taverner Consort, Andrew Parrott  
Virgin Classics 50999 503680 2 0 250' 35" (4 CDs) £

As noted on page 63, there has been a dearth of 'early' carol recordings available this year. But this is a notable exception. It wasn't out in time to have received much (any?) publicity yet — perhaps I should have been a bit prompter with my booklet note. That isn't my main interest in the collection, since much of the repertoire comes from the New Oxford Book of Carols, in which I was involved, and a fair number of other pieces came from me. I wasn't involved in selection or performance, but I'm not going to pretend to write an impartial review.

CDs 1 and 2 have various items which I recognise mixed with some that I don't. Some of the recordings (not individually identified) are BBC copyright, so perhaps they come from 'Not the Nine Lessons and Carols' which was broadcast for a couple of years. CD1 includes the original of John Foster setting with orchestra sung to *While shepherds watched* (still sung, transformed by oral tradition, in some Yorkshire pubs), Cererols' *Serafin*, a haunting double-choir setting of a popular song, Michael Praetorius's Christmas *Magnificat*, (based on Lassus's motet *Angelus ad pastores* with carols as alternatim verses), Charpentier's three-soprano setting of *Frigidae noctis umbra* (H. 421), Pascha's rustic *Gloria* and a couple of Billings Christmas hymns. CD2 is framed by the massive *In dulci jubilo* setting with trumpets and drums by Praetorius. In between are mostly short pieces (apart from G. Gabrieli's Christmas-day piece *Audite principes*) with a wide chronological range, by Bruno, Daquin, Hildegard, Liszt, Merula (the two-note ground lullaby), Muler, Schoenberg, Tallis, Webern & anon.

CDs 3 & 4 are reissues of The Carol Album I & II, originally issued by EMI, but rather inadequately promoted. Complaints to EMI produced the response that the same amount of money promoting Nigel Kennedy produced far more sales (so one wonders why they produced the recordings at all). These are selections from the New Oxford Book of Carols, which became an integral part of our household for a couple of years, with one of the editors and his cats occupying a caravan in our garden (we did allow him into the house to work — indeed, the use of my books was one reason for him being here, so don't think of Alan Bennett and his eccentric lady!)

I know I'm biased, but it is Elaine who has been playing the set as background music since they arrived, and it will be our sound of Christmas this year.

I did ask Virgin Classics if they wanted us to advertise it, but had no response. It is available at the amazingly cheap price of £10.99 including post from HMV.com, so is worth buying even if you have the two Carol Albums — though keep the originals for the documentation: these reissues just have the titles, names of performers and my 1000-word note — allowing 15 words per item! CB

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