Early Music REVIEW

Number 137 August 2010

ISSN 1355-3437 Price £2.50

Early Music Review is published in alternate months
The International Diary is published every month except January

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Annual subscription UK: £22.50 Europe: £27.50
Rest of World: £40.00 (air) £27.50 (surface)
(foreign rates £5 cheaper without Diary)
Sterling cheques payable to
The Early Music Company Ltd

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I was amused by a phrase in a Sunday Times (30 May) review by Hugh Canning of *Billy Budd*: the artistic director and designer 'made the bold decision to play the opera in period'. It isn't clear if the writer is being ironic: judging by the current fashion for opera production, *bold* can be taken at face value. It really is unusual for operas to be staged in the period in which they are set or which the librettist, composer and audience would have thought appropriate. Curiously, only the music has to be placed in its period, now often quite extravagantly so. Theorbos particularly benefit – 'good money while it lasts' confided one of the lucky band who shares my scepticism of the longevity of 'silly pluckers' as ubiquitous continuo instruments (to use the much quoted phrase of Anthony Hicks: see p. 38). It must be intensely frustrating to singers to have to follow ideas dictated by non-musicians who apply half-baked ideas to a story without even making sense of the words, let alone the different sense composers may attach to them. If a director wants to expound his concept of the Orfeo myth, he should get a tame librettist to write something embodying the ideas he wants, then get a composer to set it. Alternatively, if he is more modest, he could aim to present what is in the text and the music. Yanking a story out of its period can sometimes illuminate, but it is tedious when it becomes the norm, especially when it is imposed on the opera Let's hope that the present fashions change and that the next generation of directors read the words and listen to the music.

The latest Royal Music Association Journal is devoted to papers from a conference on listening to music. The opening one is by John Butt (see p 21 & 26 for his recent recording of the B minor Mass). One of his examples attracted my attention: the ritornello to Musica's song in the prologue to *Orfeo*, which is used again to define the locations of Acts I-II and V. It's a poignant little piece, with a mild but haunting false relation near the end, that stuck in my mind the first time I saw it staged. Is its return intended just as an audible scene-change or does it say something more significant? Why does it lose one phrase between the stanzas of the prologue? Might it be purely music (associated as it is with Musica), with no verbal meaning. Discuss! *CB*

MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

FRESCOBALDI

Frescobaldi *Organ and Keyboard Works I.1: Ricercari, et Canzoni franzese (1615, 1618)* Edited by Christopher Stembridge with the collaboration of Kenneth Gilbert. Bärenreiter (BA 8411). lxxxiii + 59pp, £37.50.
I.2: Toccate e Partite d'intavolatura di cimbalo... libre primo (1615, 1616)... Bärenreiter (BA 8412). pp [61] - 198, £42.50.

I wrote a review of vol. I.1 last year, but the editor (a subscriber of and contributor to EMR) requested that we wait until vol. I.2 was published.

I'm old enough to have grown up with the five-volume edition by Pierre Pidoux, still in the Bärenreiter catalogue, which I used as fodder for church voluntaries in the early 1960s. The main difference at a glance is that the new edition pays more respect to the original layout. This particular volume makes one fundamental modernisation: four staves are reduced to two. I can't say that this matters very much, unless you feel that preservation of the clefs is important, want to write an analysis, or play the music with viol or recorder consort. It would be interesting for pieces originally in open score (vol. I.1) to have the compass of each part shown to supplement the original clef and signatures. In I.2 the stave distribution is retained, since Italian *intavolatura* allocates the two staves to separate hands. This, of course, is what we expect from modern editions, as we do the original beaming of shorter notes. That practice is followed too, but after the section in the introduction on beaming (p. xxii), the editor lists the rules the engraver followed and adds 'The musical significance of these features is open to question'. As a cautious editor, Christopher Stembridge retains the original features anyway. I like the way that any empty space is filled with a facsimile.

As is evident from the pagination given in the heading, I.1 is a text-dominated volume, and the balance between words and music favours the former more than it seems, since 12 of the arabic-numbered pages are critical commentary; half the textual space, though, is because it is all in both English and German. I've no complaints at that. Vol. I.2 has more than a hundred pages of music. I.1 has a vast amount of information about the composer, the music, the printing and the instruments, and an extensive bibliography. One tiny point to comment on. Stembridge draws attention to the fact that in the vocal-style *Recercari*, the top A is often particularly noticeable, and that may be because it was the top note on many instruments. (It is the highest point of much other music, such as Giovanni Gabrieli's large-scale pieces, perhaps because it is the comfortable top note on the cornetto.) However, it only occurs in high-clef pieces, and one wonders whether they should be played down a fourth anyway; but that would require a compass from C rather than from F.

The edition itself is easy to read and clear, with sensible page-turns. The only criticism is of Bärenreiter's habit of dividing an oeuvre into a sensible number of volumes, then confusing the user by subdividing them. Why can there not be 6 vols rather than I.1, I.2 and 2-5? It might have been better if the division in vol. I had been music in one volume, text in another. That would have enabled easier cross-reference between music and critical commentary. And it would have been useful for there to have been a short title visible on the covers.

I.2 begins with the two versions of the original introductions expanded from 1615 to 1616. It may or may not be significant that the explicit instruction to play variations in the same tempo throughout (1615) is not quite so explicit in the slightly longer 1616 version (no. 9). This may be intentional, but was perhaps an unintended result of rewriting; it is, however, interesting that he adds that the use of a *tempo largo* also applies to toccatas with *passaggi* and *affetti* as well as variations. It is anyway likely that Frescobaldi has a clear distinction between sections in flexible and sections in strict time.

This edition makes me want to spend more time playing and less writing. I look forward to the remaining five volumes (however subdivided).

WELL-BREWED

Thomas Brewer *Six Fantasias for Four Viols* Edited by Virginia Brookes PRB Productions (PRB VCO078), 2010. iv + 22 pp and 5 parts, $30.00

The complex rhythms of the opening of the first piece show that Brewer was a composer of some originality. The movement is continually active: perhaps this caused him to suggest discrete breaks between some sections by marking pauses, though in No 1, only one of the two parts that need them in bar 26 is marked; it may be that fantasia players often paused at main cadences anyway. Fantasias 2 and 4 have middle sections where movement in crotchets and quavers changes to semibreves and minims: definitely a slowing of the time, not a mensural quirk, since it is all in duple time with no signatures changing. All are scored for two trebles, tenor and a bass going down to C, and there is an organ part. Brewer (1611-c.1660) was educated at Christ's Hospital and returned to be 'song-schoolmaster' in 1638-41; he later became a musician to Nicholas Lestrange. The editor claims that 'the music is suited to experienced players rather than the children of Christ's Hospital'; I wonder if that might be a challenge to the current pupils! To the eye at least, this would seem to be fun to play.

This was handed to me by Peter Ballinger and Leslie Gold in person at the Berkeley Early Music Festival in June. It was good

to meet them again. Peter began PRB 21 years ago, and there is an anniversary catalogue available of their output. They have a high standard for their output: everything is so well produced. Congratulations!
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CORRECTED SONS OF ARTS

Purcell *Come ye Sons of Arts* Reconstructed by Rebecca Herissone Stainer and Bell (D98), 2010. ix + 65pp, £9.95.

Anyone interested in the accuracy of the previously-available editions of this work will have realised that they are based on a rather shaky foundation, a single MS in the Royal College of Music copied by an unknown[1] Peter Pindar in 1765. In *Early Music Performer* 12 (Aug. 2003), Clare Brown and Peter Holman reproduced some 'facsimiles' published in Thomas Busby's *Concert Room and Orchestra Anecdotes of Music and Musicians, Ancient and Modern* (1825). The two systems reproduced from *Come ye Sons of Art*, showing the opening of the solo setting of 'Come ye Sons of Art', suggest that Pindar did more than mix up the trumpet and oboe parts. Whatever the process used and the accuracy of the representation of Purcell's hand-writing in Busby's plates, it is striking that the last two bars of the Symphony which precede the alto solo differ from modern editions based on Pindar. Pindar has six staves for two oboes and strings but the facsimile has three: two trebles (the upper one with the notes miscopied) and bass. So the original scoring of that passage may have been just two violins and bass violin (with continuo). The viola part is presumably by Pindar.

Alerted by this small example, Rebecca Herissone (see *Music & Letters* 88/1, Feb. 2007, pp. 1-48) studied the other Purcell pieces in Pindar's MS (which also survive in more reliable sources) and analysed his treatment of them. He seems to have interfered extensively. It is possible to make guesses at what sections incorporate his added parts (it helps that he wasn't technically very skilled at, for instance, adding viola parts without consecutives); but that doesn't necessarily help to restore exactly what Purcell wrote. So the way is open for reconstructors get to work. This is the first I have come across. It is well argued, with a very detailed critical commentary. I'm sure that, now that the validity of the sole source has been undermined, others will make their own attempts and there will be a choice of solutions, as with Mozart's *Requiem*: to perform what has become familiar or to choose a more imaginative edition with conjectures of what Purcell might have written.[2]

The score is in the Purcell Society format, including the superfluous two-stave keyboard part. The fact that there is no mention of vocal score on the score or accompanying leaflet makes me wonder whether it is to function as score for the singers as well: the price is quite reasonable. But the single-system page layout in the choruses gives too many page-turns for a choir, while without the keyboard part, two nine-stave systems can fit a page without undue squashing (as on p. 29). There's some sense in not following Pindar's notation too pedantically; but rejecting beaming by syllable is because of current house-style, since Pindar would have followed the same principles as Purcell. The title page states that instrumental parts are available, but not specifying if they are for sale. I hope they are: many musicians dislike the hire system, so much so that I can imagine some using my outmoded edition and making their own changes! That would be to waste this excellent edition.

COMPONIMENTI MUSICALI

Gottlieb Muffat *Componimenti Musicali (1739) for Harpsichord* Edited and with an Introduction by Christopher Hogwood Ut Orpheus Edizioni (ES64), 209. xviii + 145pp, €60.00

A 'modern' edition of this has been available since 1896 as vol. V of Chrysander's *Supplemente enhaltend Quellen zu Händel's Werken* and Broude published a facsimile (not in its cheaper PF series, but the price is comparable with this new edition). Handel borrowed extensively from it, especially for the *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, which was composed only a few months after Muffat's publication appeared. The Handel connection has kept Muffat's work alive, aided by the lavishness of his publication, with a title page (much reproduced) displaying his connection with Emperor Charles VI and his family. The volume contains six Suites, followed by a Ciacona con 38 Variazioni on a seven-bar ground ||: G #F E D B C D :|| The final G only occurs at the end of the repeat of the theme at the end. An appendix contains a MS suite (Singakademie4574) that has three movements used for Suite IV. The publication has everything that a user might expect: a clear text with no impossible page-turns, an excellent introduction, lacking only a paragraph on the composer's life (not all keyboard players will be able to distinguish him from his father).

19th- CENTURY BÄRENREITER

Some of the music we review is sent in response to requests, some items just arrive arrive out of the blue, and some publishers have us on their distribution list. We are particularly grateful to the last group, though we do sometimes receive music that it is a bit modern for us. In some cases, 19th century editions relate to works that particularly attract early players or need editions reinstating authentic scoring: the Bizet below is in that category (as well as my having had some involvement).

Cadenzas to Ludwig van Beethoven's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra op. 61 (BA 9020; £18.00) is/are of interest in showing a progression from comparatively restrained examples by Spohr, who had played Beethoven as early as 1804, to Ysaÿe (the volume safely keeps to non-copyright music). It might have been more obviously instructive if the contents had been arranged in chronological rather than alphabetical order. The fact that all are fingered and heavily dynamiced[3] does suggest to me that they are intended for

1. Is it certain that he is not the satirist?
2. The first two paragraphs of this review are based on the note I appended to the edition we first published in 1988, based on Pindar.
3. The word looks wrong, despite being regularly formed by analogy with *ornamented*. But adding a *k* to stop the *c* being softened looks worse.

those who are not experienced enough to be playing the concerto at all. They will be useful for those interested in performance history – playing the work in the style of David or Joachim, for instance, though that needs to be done in conjunction with their editions of the complete concerto. The only way to be 'authentic' is to base something freely on Beethoven's piano cadenzas or be completely original. Examples of the former by Ottokar Nováček supplemented by the editor are shown. These are the only suggestions here for the places where an *Eingang* is needed. This is an interesting supplement to Jonathan Del Mar's edition of the concerto. The title could be much shorter: *Cadenzas to Beethoven's Violin Concerto.* What other Beethoven and what other opus number could it be?

Schubert *Lieder High Voice Edited by Walther Dürr, Vol. 4.* (BA 9104; £32.00); also Medium Voice (BA 9124) and Low Voice (BA 9144). My experience of the new edition of Schubert's songs is limited; it must be several decades since I've accompanied anyone, and for the occasional programme note, I get by with the old Peters edition and the Kalmus miniature reprint of the first Collected Works along with more recent books. I more often need to write about the chamber music, and for that I do use the new edition. When reviewing editions derived from modern Collected Works, I comment on the features of the reprint rather than fundamental editorial issues. It's certainly good that the standard modern edition is more easily available. But there are some areas of confusion. If, for instance, you are looking at a song, there is no easy way to turn to the relevant part of the introduction or the text/translation apart from looking it up in the index to the complete set of four volumes (the contents list only gives the page numbers of the music). The songs all have the D. numbers and mostly an opus number; the individual notes have these but they are not in consecutive order of either number, and the translations have no numbers. Nor can any item be quickly checked back to the *Neue Ausgabe sämtlicher Werke*, since Vol. 4 of the series at hand draws on items in Serie IV Band 5a, 14a and 14b. One good point is that the transposed songs have a note of the original key. Perhaps there should be a note of which songs appear in their original key in the Medium and Low volume. These are fine volumes for the pianist, but are rather heavy for singers to hold (890 gm – 140gm heavier than my Oxford UP *Messiah*, which was criticised for its weight). My recollection of the original editions from which these derive is that they were rather smaller. So a good edition by *the* expert, but the new presentation hasn't been thought through clearly enough. The volume comprises songs from the end of his life, including *Schwanengesang.*

Mendelssohn Bartholdy (another superfluous word) *Elias/ Elijah* (BA 9070a; £16.50) has direct competition with Carus (40.130/03 English & German €16.80 and /04 German only €15.95 – it seems a bit petty to bother about so small a price difference) and Breitkopf (€15.50, derived from the Collected Works). I don't have them for comparison, but can say that the Bärenreiter score looks, as one expects, very legible. There are four pages of introduction each in English and German. What I expected to find there is something about the English text. No translator is credited. I've never sung *Elijah* as a whole, so don't have the words in my memory apart from a few numbers, but from those I assume it is the version in the original English editions. Whether that should be authoritative is a matter for debate, but the advantage of a score with both languages is that unsatisfactory underlay and translation can easily be improved.

Smetana *Early Piano Works* edited by Jan Novotný (BA 9527; £20.00), taken from vols 1 & 2 of the Complete Piano Works, hence an appearance is not typically Bärenreiter-ish. It includes 9 Bagatelles & Impromptus, 6 Characteristic Pieces op. 1, 3 Wedding Scenes and 5 First Polkas. The first piece of op. 1 is, interestingly, a canon: the instruction *il Canone bene pronunz* is presumably to make sure that the listener notices it! Apart from the pieces I mentioned last year, I don't know Smetana's piano music at all: it seems worth investigating.

Latin Settings of Marian Hymns of the 18th to 20th Century for solo voice and organ. Vol. I: Salve Regina. Edited by Peter Wagner (BA 9257; 24.50). This contains a dozen settings, ranging from Matthias Crudelin (mid-18th-century) to J. F. Doppelbauer, who died in 1989. (The brief biographies of the composers don't date the compositions.) They are arranged in alphabetical order, starting with Lennox Berkeley (1903-89). Minimal research reveals that it is actually for unison, not solo voices. I was puzzling why a work with a key signature of D major has most of the F's natural and thought it would have been much better with no signature, then noticed that it was originally in C minor, so perhaps there really was no signature and whoever transposed it must be to blame. The next piece (by Crudeli), has an obbligato right-hand part when the voice isn't singing. It looks very plausible, and the piece is in fact very attractive in a rococo sort of way. But the editor credits himself as responsible for the Basso continuo. If that is just the fill in, his name is hardly worth mentioning. So does it mean that he invented the organ solo passages? I won't go through the other ten pieces – by Fauré, Mendelssohn, Rheinberger, Schubert (D 106 & 676), Suppé, Pietro Terziani and two by Nicola Zingarelli. There's a pageful of biographical information, but nothing about the music. It would be nice to have a little more information: there's a spare page after the preface, which itself is disappointing. As someone more used to earlier settings, I'm surprised that none of these open with the chant incipit DCDG. A further volume is to follow, with settings of the other three Antiphons and *Ave maris stella*. I think this is only for catholics: the music mostly doesn't stretch far enough beyond catholic piety to have the power of the great Renaissance settings.

SCHUMANN PIANO MUSIC

Schumann *Sämtliche Klavierwerke herausgegeben von Ernst Herttrich* Henle (HN 9932). 6 vols, €98.00

I've avoided this year's Chopin and Schumann anniversaries, though part of me wants to update my old editions (the Kalmus miniature reprint of the old Collected Works or a less-Urtext Clara Schumann complete edition in two volumes). One of my other occupations is writing

programme notes for a series of country-hotel concerts, bequeathed to me over 20 years ago by Nicholas Kenyon, and the piano music of those composers has featured extensively. I happened to mention when ordering the Haydn Oratorio box for a conductor (very good value: see *EMR* 131 p. 3, though the price has gone up €15.00 since then) that I was tempted to ask for a review copy of their Schumann piano-music study score, but knew I wouldn't review it. It arrived anyway, as a gift. It's a collection of the independent Henle editions of Schumann's piano music assembled in opus-number order in six volumes. It is big enough to read at the piano, but is more likely to be used for study. Each piece has an introduction, details of sources and a critical commentary, with significant variants noted on the page. It's ideal for people like me, who haven't played any Schumann for decades (and was never up to it anyway). I can now update my notes, thanks to Ulrike's kind donation.

BIZET RESTORED

Bizet *L'Arlésienne... Version originale de 1872 pour ensemble et chœur. Édition critique de Hervé Lacombe* (*Musica Gallica*) Choudens, 2010. 235 pp, £49.50

Rather modern for us. In fact, it's the most modern music I've edited. I'm not really a Bizet fan. *Carmen* was the first opera I saw, around 1957 with a school party. We sat in the back row of the gallery, which then had very hard benches and little leg-room. My chief recollection was that the boy next to me was suddenly sick over the rows in front of him. Some decades later, I heard excerpts of *L'Arlésienne* in a carol concert[4] at the Albert Hall by the Taverner Choir and Players, which made me realise how good it was. Soon after, a conductor who got all his music from me ordered the two *L'Arlésienne* suites. 'Why not do it properly', I suggested. He didn't know what I meant, so I explained that the 2nd suite was arrange by someone else, both suites were for full orchestra whereas the music was written for 27 instruments and a choir, and there was rather more music than the suites contained. So I was asked to find the music for a recording. The only publication was a score with the orchestration expanded to that of the Suites. I knew that the BBC had MS parts and these were lent to me in return for supplying them with the corrected version, based on the autograph. I was thrilled by the sound at the recording sessions. King's Music published it, and I suppose I must have sold about one set a year in the subsequent fifteen years. But the material wasn't ideal – a bolshie orchestra might have caused trouble! – and the checking of the sources had been done at high speed.

Now, at last, there is a freshly-set critical edition, issued rather belatedly by the original publisher.[5] On the grounds that it demands instruments of the period for maximum effect, I am delighted to commend the work and the edition here. The introduction gives a thorough account of the work's history (in French and English). I've two points to add. The editor refers to the two brothers, Frédéri and L'Innocent as 'the existential core of the action'. Taking the definition of *existential* from the nearest dictionary at hand (a philosophical theory emphasizing the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible person determining his own development), that is an unfortunate word, since the play uses the folk idea that a mentally handicapped child brings good luck. So as L'Innocent is cured, Frédéri kills himself for love of the girl from Arles. The other point is trivial, but surely the English translator must have been intrigued that the pianist (on a Pleyel piano) in the 1872 performances was named Dolmetsch. The editor identifies him as Auguste, which makes him a cousin of Arnold. I hadn't realised that there was (ideally) another piano in the wings to support the choir unheard by the audience.[6]

I have no doubt that this is the score that should be used for any performance. It is clear to read, and has some interesting facsimiles (including a staging plan and the sources of the Provençal tunes). I had sketched some critical remarks about the parts, which had a weird format and small staves, and mentioned the matter to Music Sales' managing editor, who replied:

> Yes, you are right about the parts. These were prepared in France before Music Sales acquired the company, clearly without the benefit of the MOLA[7] rules on presentation (e.g. that a staff width of 6mm is unacceptably small). I'll get these fixed, so best not to mention the way they are at present.

So I'll omit the paragraph I had written about them. Once that is remedied, I hope that the complete music will be played more often. I prepared a very cut-down version of the play for a male and female actor to place the music in context, which was knocked into shape by the couple who performed it, Rosalind Shanks and Andrew Sachs; I hope Music Sales will take that on board. The new score has the full text, but unlike the introduction, it is only in French. I'm not sure that Daudet's play is strong enough to stand as a full-length show, but cut to half a concert it works well.

JENKINS LARGE & SMALL

Jenkins *The Five-Part Consort Music* Fretwork, 2010.

This arrived yesterday, so I haven't had time to look at it in any detail. I'm taking it with me to the Beauchamp Summer School today, and hope that I can find five viols among the sackbuts and singers to try it out. Published in association with the Viola da Gamba Society of GB, it responds to comments from some players who have found the previous (Faber) parts a bit small. So this is offered in two sizes – not bigger pages but larger type, so that the parts that fit a single page per piece are also printed on an opening and run some way down the opposite page. The smaller parts look neater: my reading problems come in another repertoire and concern bass figures that are too small. In this sort of music, there is no problem with page-turns, except for the organist – and there is no way of solving that problem; those parts are clearly legible and are in only one size, as is the score. I'll write more in the next issue.

4. The play is set in the summer, but it includes a sung *March of the Magi*..
5. Christopher Hogwood has also prepared material for his own use, but has not, I think, publish it.
6. A bit like the clavichord continuo I was once asked to play to keep the narrator in a Schütz Passion in tune.
7. The (American) Major Orchestra Librarians' Association.

BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

HORACE AGAIN

Stuart Lyons *Music in the Odes of Horace* Aris & Phillips, 2010. [xii] + 204pp, £40.00. ISBN 978 0 85668 844 7

I reviewed the author's previous study on the subject, *Horace's Odes and the Mystery of Do-Re-Mi* (Oxbow Books, 2007) somewhat critically in *EMR* 118 (April 2007, p. 6), having been predisposed in that direction by an unsatisfactory report on Radio 4's *Today*. This new book is far more convincing, even though I'm still not persuaded by the relationship between its two halves. But the argument that Horace was writing to be sung convinces more and more and the study of medieval sources shows that there are a significant number of Horace's Odes that had medieval music settings. One reason for writing a poem with metrically-identical stanzas must surely be so that one tune fits all of them, so singing is as plausible a hypothesis as not singing. The problem is that Roman poetry is so dependent on Greek conventions that Horace may only be carrying over dead verbal conventions. Reading chapters 1 & 2, I'm more inclined to believe that they were sung, though the run-on of sense between stanzas (eg Ode 4.11 *Est mihi nonum* p. 102) is a snag.

A millennium later, there are sources with neums, many reproduced, both in monochrome and in colour. (Keep the cover, since that is better than versions of it in the book itself). Musicologists, however, would be more likely to take this research seriously if the author followed the usual practice of transcribing notation that was not clearly mensural in black blobs with the neums written above. It is essential not to impose a hypothetical rhythm, though the feet of the Latin text could be indicated somehow. The shape of the poems could be made more obvious by laying out the staves sensibly (one or two lines of the poem on a line of music), and other features of the setting are primitive: a publisher based in Oxford could surely find a computer-literate music student to consult. The strangeness of the transcriptions suggests that the author has not examined other medieval monody. I suggest that he tries John Stevens *Words and Music in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge UP, 1986).

THE LAST 250 YEARS

Christopher Page *The Christian West and its Singers: the first thousand years.* Yale University Press, 2010 . xxiv + 692pp, £30.00. ISBN 978 0 300 11257 3

I've at last discovered the ideal place to read this without straining my arm or feeling the need for keeping up with the emails: on a long-distance flight. The table for the food tray was just about the right height, so I finished this somewhere over northern Canada, with still some of the ten hours of the London to San Francisco journey to spare for *44 Scotland Street* before a scary announcement that there were delays at the airport and the plane didn't have enough fuel to circle round it more than a couple of times. Whether I can remember much about it is another matter! I'll quote a couple of examples, and then attempt to sum up.

The first point I noted was on p. 342, with a paragraph devoted to the diet under Bishop Chrodegang of Metz. His Rule (or rather 'little statute') may have been based on that of Saint Benedict, but it was lax on poverty and generous to a fault with food. Page quotes an estimate that on some feasts (in both senses), the monks and clergy consumed something like 9000 calories – even I, who ignore anything connected with dieting, know that is an excessive amount, though was surprised to read that it is nearly four times the modern recommendation for a healthy and moderately active male. But this isn't wanton spice to a dull page: 'Whatever the Franks had adopted from Roman singers, they had absorbed into their own dietary world of beer, meat and fats taken as butter or lard... Far from being disembodied, Gregorian chant at Messine festivals was performed by some of the most carnal singers the world has ever known.' There's an idea for some research on the sort of singer you might become: pasta and wine or bread and beer? Heavy eating and drinking or fasting and abstemiousness'?

A century later, an obscure monk, Aurelian, wrote a treatise called *Musica Disciplina* on how chants were allocated to modes. The chants were probably in existence before there was a theory for them – or before a conscious and formulated one at least. In trying to understand how the mental process worked, Aurelian was working in the dark, since unlike other areas of scholarship, there was little in the classical authors to fall back on: he (and no doubt unknown others like him) were establishing a new discipline, which later was complicated by attempts to accommodate it to the incompatible Greek system as retailed by Boethius (who, presumably not by accident, features little in this book).

I should be rather more serious in either questioning the author's thesis (but that is slippery, since the varied types and extent of information makes a consistent survey of who singers were and that they did impossible) or summarising the conclusions (which takes the author 12 pages). It's a fascinating book to read or to dip into (a chronological table would have been helpful). The documentation is amazing: nearly 50 pages of notes and over 50 of bibliography, covering 1000 years of history, followed by 45 pages of indices. It really is too much to take in as a

1. Though the Victorian nonconformist zest for abstaining from alcohol was unsustainable, in urban areas at least, before the contemporary efforts on hygiene and purified water.

whole. Its most important achievement is, I think, to place music as a central part of the the Latin world and, incidentally, to bring that world more to the centre of contemporary awareness. Perhaps try a chapter at a time rather than feel that reading this beautifully-produced book is a marathon: to a considerable extent, they can be read separately rather then in sequence.

And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

That would be a barbed compliment, but here the knowledge is understood and digested for both the experts and the more or the less ignorant reader, and is delightfully illuminated from unexpected viewpoints, as sampled in the two paragraphs above.

THE SOUNDS OF VENICE

Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti ***Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice: Architecture, Music, Acoustics*** Yale University Press, 2009. xv + 368pp, £30.00. ISBN 978 0 300 14874 9

This is a fascinating but for me deeply disappointing book. The spacing of music in its location is particularly important in Venetian music from around 1600, the period when its music was most distinctive, and a study of the acoustic possibilities could influence modern performance practice. The book covers the main Venetian churches, and the sections on their architecture and history will make it a useful companion for the tourist.[2] But its attempt to measure the acoustics suffers from the choice of performers and music. It's no criticism of St John's College Choir in itself to say that it is not the most appropriate body to use for testing the sound of Venetian music at its most distinctive period. Using it for such a project in the Cambridge historic churches and college chapels would be fine (though some allowances would have to be made to allow for possibly different vocal priorities). The point of testing in Venice must surely be to investigate sound and space for the music of Giovanni Gabrieli, Monteverdi and their contemporaries, and perhaps Vivaldi (though the relevant building dates from after his death). So why use an English collegiate choir (with no instruments) for Venetian churches? Assuming funds where short, might it not have been better to exploit the groups of amateur singers and cornett-sackbut ensembles who enjoy trips to play in Venice and are immersed in that repertoire? Scholars and performers have reached some consensus on performing Gabrieli,[3] which does not help very much with performing Monteverdi: the musical styles and implied layouts are so different! Are there acoustic reasons for the decline of Gabrieli's sackbut-based sonority?

A particular feature of Gabrieli's large-scale music is the low texture and the absence of the upper part of the compass of the modern boy treble. His overall range is from the B flat below the bass stave to the A above the treble stave, a total of four octaves. But the normal top sung part is E, the top of the stave in a C1 clef with no leger lines. If the part is in the treble clef, it might have a top A, but that means either that the piece is in chiavette so needs transposing down a fourth or fifth (confirmed by C2 C3 and C4/F3 clefs in lower voices) or that it is for cornetto. If there were boys or falsettists who could sing high, there would be solos for them.[4] It *is* possible to find singers who can manage bottom B flat, but again, in pieces where instrumental and vocal parts are labelled, such parts are not vocal. So it is very odd that a piece tested in three places was Gabrieli's *Timor et tremor.* It's an extraordinary work, for only six voices with a particularly lower tessitura than the normal C1 c3 c4 c4 F3 F4 clefs, but hardly one that will tell us much about how the acoustics suited either polychoral music or normal church polyphony.[5]

The chapter on San Marco is interesting. A couple of days before the book arrived, I wrote in a programme note for a Gabrieli concert at the Three Choirs Festival: 'It would have sounded magnificent to anyone placed in the sanctuary, but rather confused in the main body of the church. The music was in honour of God and the Doge and to impress distinguished visitors – its effect on the congregation in the nave may have been imposing, but much of the musical detail will have been lost.' My guess is confirmed. 'In the nave the reverberation was so long that the effect was more atmospheric than musical: the harmonies were blurred and any counterpoint or rhythmic elaboration sounded confused.' (p. 30). But according to the project's acoustic consultant, the sound within the chancel was excellent – and that may have been the consequence of changes made for that purpose within the area during the 16th century. However, it is not at all clear where forces were disposed in big, ceremonial works. There are galleries, but which ones were used?

If you walk out of the west door of San Marco and turn left, past the Campanile and Palazzo Ducale, your eye is soon fixed on the two Palladio churches across the water: San Giorgio Maggiore and the Redentore. These are essential stations in the Venetian public liturgical ceremony, and must have been designed for magnificent music. One motet in particular has been associated with the Redentore,[6] the *Sonate con voce: 'Dulcis Jesu'.* Most of it is for two choirs, one for high tenor solo with violin, [viola] and 4 [sackbuts], the other for low tenor, cornetto, [viola] and 3 [sackbuts]. The voices repeat 'Dulcis Jesu, patris imago'. Three quarters of the way through, a third choir enters: a four-voice capella, two cornetts and a violone. It's an amazing piece, and if the surmise of its function is correct, one longs to know how it might have sounded there.

The location for which most performance information is available is not a church but the Tintoretto'd great hall of

2. But heavy – 1.280 kg – now that the cheap airlines are have tight weight limits for baggage. A way round, reported on Radio 4 *You and Yours* on July 12, was to wear a coat with a large number of capacious pockets!

3. I won't bother with the initial every time, but the apogee of the style is the work of Giovanni .

4. Some post-Gabrielian solo music allocated to tenor or soprano goes a bit higher (eg Monteverdi's *Laudate Dominum*). When I've played it with mezzo Jennie Cassidy, she has always sung it done a tone.

5. One might speculate that it could be a student work from his period in Munich; Lassus set the text notably, and Gabrieli outdoes Lassus in the final section.

6. See the introduction to my edition, which depends on research by David Bryant.

San Rocco, so is not included. The account of the performance in 1608 by the much-quoted Coryat can be matched with the payment figures extant for that and many adjoining years: 1608 wasn't unusual.[7] No works are specified, but Gabrieli was in charge, and provided five of the seven organs. The total suggests a seven-choir piece, like the reconstructed Magnificat a33,[8] while the three violins call for the Sonata for three violins.

What I expected to find in this book was some light on the matching of music and location of the archtypical Venetian style. Instead, the book is most useful for its discussion of the sound of plainsong. The endpapers drop the hint! Particularly in the monastic churches, chant was a way of life, and the acoustics may not have mattered too much: it was the singing, not the sound that was important, with no need to provide a performance for onlookers. We hear strangely little Venetian chant, despite Cattin's magnificant four-volume documentation of the liturgy.[9]

I haven't discussed the scientific details: I'm no acoustician, and I haven't even had a chance to download the recordings – my broadband has been erratically down since July 1st (it's now the 16th). I suspect this issue will be published before I have a chance to listen. If I find it helpful, I'll report back in a later issue. There is useful information here, and the scientific approach is one that should encourage further investigations. But what was done here seems rather hit and miss. Large naves with minimal audiences are not ideal for evaluating the sound of music for major feasts. But buy the book for the descriptions of the churches and the pictures.

THE YOUNGER LAWES

John Cunningham *The Consort Music of William Lawes 1602-1645* The Boydell Press, 2010. xxiv + 350pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 0 95468 097 8

William Lawes's life is dealt with briefly in the preface. The musical establishment at court is described in some detail in Chapter 1, especially the working of Charles I's 'Lutes, Viols and Voices', a group comprising 29 musicians – 18 singer-lutenists, 1 harpist, 2 keyboard players, 4 viol players and 4 violinists (p. 5). The longest chapter is on the sources, which together with material in the appendices takes up over a third of the volume. This is thorough, and the reader is led through it by a narrative: an apparently successful attempt to refine the chronology of the sources and hence of the compositions. Then each of the ensembles for which Lawes wrote is given a chapter. Cunningham begins his conclusion (p. 273): 'Much of the music discussed in this book dates from after Lawes's appointment to the "Lutes, Viols and Voices", and strongly suggests (1) that the music was composed for members of that group and (2) that although Lawes did not hold an official place as a composer, composition was one of his duties.' Most of his music seems difficult and is evidently directed primarily towards professional players. The difficulty is not just technical but stylistic: I imagine that those used to old-fashioned consort playing would find even Lawes's four-, five- and six-part consorts as the end of the road (at least, they did when I was a player, though amateur standards have now improved). The example quoted on p. 153 looks simple, but making audible sense requires an acute awareness of harmony and tuning (though an organ helps).

I spent a couple of days at a summer school a few years ago, and the viol consorts were eager to play Lawes with organ, since they normally played them without, like singers performing Monteverdi *a cappella*. But organs were easily available at court (cf p. 17-18). The author is interested in the relationship between composed divisions and improvisation. It is, however, confusing to improvise if you are playing from a version that already has divisions – like unreading a realisation when playing continuo. Cunningham's detailed discussion of the music is mostly convincing (though I must confess that I read it as a cure for insomnia in a hotel room, and that it failed to send me to sleep may be a compliment to his writing). It needs concentration, and ideally scores and CDs handy – though the music examples are quite extensive. One of them puzzled me (p. 141). The text describes a passage as having a sighing motive, and the example shows this by having a box printed round several long notes followed by a quaver a note lower. This, we are told, 'is similar to the rhetorical figure *ecphonesis* or *exclamatio* '. But that is to distort the pattern. Each long note is followed by two descending quavers and then a crotchet or minim a note above – a standard sequential pattern. There are two pairs of notes boxed in the last bar where the quaver is a fourth below the long note, so has a completely different function.'[10] But at least the evidence is there to enable a reader to question the argument. It is good to have another voice on Lawes; Lefkowitz's book is now 50 years old . So much work has subsequently been done on the sources, and most of the music is now published and recorded. Enthusiasts now can hear and play it, and make their own assessment. The many writings of David Pinto are perhaps more penetrating than Cunningham's, though can ironically and frustratingly veer towards impenetrability. This is definitely a book for those who want to know what the music was for and how it survives. But read the analytic material critically.

BIRCHENSHA ON MUSIC

John Birchensha *Writings on Music* **Edited by Christopher D. S. Field [&] Benjamin Wardhaugh.** Ashgate, 2010. [x] + 331pp, £65.00 ISBN 978 07546 6213 6

I read this at the beginning of the year, but didn't write it up for the February issue, though thought I had , so forgot about it. But I found it recently with some unreviewed books. I'm

7. Jonathan Glixon *Honoring God and the City* Oxford UP 2003, p157-161 & Appendix 3.
8. 10 parts of a Magnificat a33 survive, but the rest can be reconstructed Kings Music published versions of it by Andrew Lawrence-King and Hugh Keyte.
9. *Musica e liturgia a San Marco*, Fondazione Levi, Venice, 1990-92
10. The unboxed second quaver is followed by a quaver a note higher. There are several examples of unboxed sighs (or non-sighs).

relying in memory of my reaction rather than referring to specific details. My first thought was why Christopher Field has spent so much time on this when he can write so well about music. Birchensha was hardly a success as a music theorist: his ideas were neither original enough to be valued in their own right nor successful enough to be useful in showing how the theoretical foundations of his contemporaries could be questioned. His relationship with the new Royal Society didn't get very far. He is to be praised for trying to explain how to write real music, but the rules are far too naïve. For instance, why does he object to the frequency of D in the last example of page 160 (which occurs seven times in 20 notes) when C comes six times? I've just been dipping into a new arrival of a completely different theorist, Florentius de Faxolis (to be reviewed in the next issue); he is amazingly clear and manages to be theoretical and practical in a concise and logical manner.[11] But Birchensha crops up enough in writings on the period to need to be put in his place, with extensive biographical information, introductions to his writings, and complete editions of what survives. The editors sum up his problem: 'Birchensha appears to represent an extreme case of a musical theorist developing his ideas in dissociation from both the realities of music practice and from the mainstream of contemporary scientific thought' (p. 2).

p. 5. I am surprised that information is presented on the evidence of Gratton Flood (note 17), or is his reputation bad only in relation to Dowland?

p. 11. Nice rejection of his rules by Pepys!

p. 35. An example of his naïve confidence in his abilities: 'If Musick be an Art, then it may be contracted and collected into certain Rules which may discover all those Mysteries that are contained in that Science, by which a man may become an excellent Musician, and expert, both in the Theoretical and Practical Parts thereof ' (p. 80). *Art* and *Science* seem to be synonyms, used to avoid word repetition.

p. 206. 'Thus I shall endeavor to reduce all the Parts of Musick to a Regularity and Just order, without too strict a Limitation of the Musitians Fancy or Invention... And by this means I will bring the Philosophical, Mathematical, and Practical parts of Music to analogise and agree in all things.' *Reduce* is a typical give-away word of someone who can write books like *The theory and practice of editing music in six easy lessons.* If you find a book with that title ascribed to me, it's either a forgery or I'm in decline – though I did once try to distil how to play continuo onto a single page, which met with some commendation. So perhaps I'm being too harsh on Birchensha.

STUDIES ON CHARPENTIER

New perspectives on Marc-Antoine Charpentier Edited by **Shirley Thompson** Ashgate, 2010 xxviii + 385pp, £65.00. ISBN 978 0 7546 6579 3

Most research on Charpentier is, of course, conducted in French. Those who find reading it difficult don't have much excuse for complaint – how much Purcell research is there in French. Here, everything is in English, appropriate for a book deriving from a conference *Charpentier and His World* in Birmingham in 2004, organised by the editor though three contributors are French, one German.

Unusually, Charpentier's music is mostly accessible in facsimile rather than modern edition. His hand is clear and the 28 volumes are easy to use. Much of this volume is based on detailed study of the *Meslanges autographes*, as the Minkoff facsimile is entitled, archaising the earlier title *Mélanges de Charpentier.*[12] Patricia Ranum plots his compositional activity year-by-year, separating music that was part of his job from free-lance compositions (which the composer kept in a separate sequence). Graham Sadler discusses a feature of notation that is not preserved in all editions:[13] the use of void (white) notation. Most of us think of it as a French trait, but it seems to have been imported from Rome by Charpentier, and has been thought to mean that the usually pervasive inequality of triple notation should not be applied. Sadler is suspicious of such clear-cut logic. He points to a few examples where black and white sections occur in succession; the black notation is slower. That is perhaps a tendency rather than a rule. It seems that Charpentier felt the two methods of notation differently. He preferred void notation, so it is necessary to think why he should have chosen not to use it rather than vice versa. The solution may be a matter of feeling rather than logic.

A chapter that interested me particularly, since it involved a lot of discussion in connection with a performance Peter Holman organised in the early 1970s, is one by David Ponsford on the *Messe pour plusieurs instruments au lieu des orgues* (H513). A reason for its existence has been proposed by Patricia Ranum: a new organ was not available (for legal reasons) for a major feast at a church near where Charpentier lived, and it is surmised that this mass was written to fill the gap. Ponsford demonstrates that the music imitates when possible what an organist would traditionally have played. The puzzle for performers is the identity of the *cromorne*. The solution, offered by several scholars, is a bass oboe.[14] The main title, 'A Question of Genre', is one of those attempts to make a piece of specific research have wider implications: the subtitle, Charpentier's title for the piece, is explicit and sufficient, Some other titles have the same fashionable fault. Jane Ghosine's 'Repentence, Piety and Praise', for instance, also has a sub-title that needs no preface. Her analysis does not always quite hit the mark. To take her example 4.2 on p. 95, it's an exaggeration to say that the piece 'opens with an outpouring of love and longing': a 4/2 figure with no change of bass is in itself a bit of a cliché, not 'a strong chord', but is slightly spicier with a flat 6, which the organist would probably play at the half bar in anticipation of the E flat on the 6th quaver. In the next bar the diminished fourth between quavers 3 & 4 is de-

11. Florentius de Faxolis *Book on music* edited and translated by Bonnie J. Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens, Harvard UP, 2010.

12. It is surely unnecessary for each contributor to give a full reference to it in their first appropriate footnote: that and Hitchcock's catalogue and its index should have been listed with an abbreviation once only on the 'Conventions and Abbreviations' page.

13. My excuse is that it wasn't available on our computer programme.

14. Most recently, Thomas van Essen 'L'énigme de la basse de cromorne', La lettre du hautboïste, 18 (2006)

emphasised because, thanks to the F sharp on the second bass note, one expects an F sharp before the G: more interesting is the E flat 7/6 on the 3rd/4th beats. There are, however, discordant notes at the ends of bars 1 & 2 that can be leant on. In bar 4, could the singer add an appoggiatura A above the E flat? What one might discuss when working at a performance is more sophisticated than the musicologist's analysis – though the general points being made are fine.

Of particular interest to performers is Anthea Smith's 'Charpentier's Music at Court: The Singer and Instrumentalists of the Chapelle Royale, 1663-1683 and Beyond'. The singers of the period are listed for each half-year. Information is less precise for instruments, but there is enough to be fairly certain of the forces available. In the next chapter, John S. Powell deals with the rather sparser ensembles available for Charpentier's stage music. He suggests that the restriction to six instruments in 1673 might have excluded the continuo, so strings, harpsichord and theorbo may have been included as well as six higher strings.

All the contributions are worth reading and not unapproachable. An appendix gives an accurate transcription of the *Mémoire des ouvrages de musique latine et françoise de défunte M^r. Charpentier* made just before the sale of the Mélanges in 1726 before they were bound. This helps refine the chronology of the contents. Thanks particularly to Les Arts Florissants, Charpentier's music is widely circulated on CD, and anyone performing his music would benefit from investigating this excellent publication. (Scholars won't need the commendation.)

MUSICAL PHILOLOGY

Maria Caraci Vela ***La filologia musicale - Istituzioni, storia, strumenti critici*** *Vol. I* Edizioni LIM, 2005. xi + 248 pp €25.00 ISBN 88-7096-378-0

This, the first of three progressive volumes – vol. I for musicians, II for musicologists, and III for musical philologists – was issued in 2005 but came to my attention together with the second volume (2009). The third is not yet available.

This book gives a reasoned, articulated, introductory explanation of what musical 'philology' is. In Italy the term is over-used and thus abused for approaches, editions, performances or research having little to do with the discipline. Though I regularly benefit from its findings, I discovered I was relatively unaware of its procedures and development. English does not often use the word 'textology', which is in any case restricted mainly to textual bibliography; nor do we say 'variantology' for the critical mapping of a work's genealogy based on comparison of sources. Neither German philology (anchored in Classical and Biblical studies) nor the methodology we apply in Shakespearean research are perfectly transferable to the non-textuality of music. And the word 'musicology' is conspicuously absent, reserved for the point where musical philology leaves off.

Having published various critical performing editions myself and dealt with philological and musicological problems as a musician, I found this meticulous overview clarifying. It is well-written, even maniacally well-organized, and inspired me with the realisation that musical philology is a critical and interpretative activity which often cannot establish conclusive findings.

Caraci-Vela discusses what the objects of musical philology are – texts, sources, and their perpetrators. She covers the history of linguistic philology century by century from ancient times through the 20th century, independently of its applicability to music, and then in the context of musicology. This may be more than the reader bargained for but is interesting and arguably the only way to illustrate the shortcomings of some methods, eventually rejected or refined.

She discusses specific problems, such as dealing with reconstructions or comparisons of works, or of their diffusion or reception, which leads logically to the various types of editions we musicians normally encounter.

There is a Glossary (co-authored with Andrea Massimo Grassi), worth reading on its own, containing only musical-philological terms used in this first volume, with their etymologies, English, German, French, Spanish, and Latin equivalents, and bibliographic pedigrees or cross-references to different entries. As an example, here is a translation of one item: "APLOGRAFIA (Germ. ..., Eng. *haplography*, Fr. ..., Sp. ..., Lat. ...). Polygenetic error (distinguished from *monogenetico* under *errore*) consisting in the omission of one of the elements which are doubled in a word (such as a letter or a syllable) or in a phrase. It is the opposite of *dittografia* (also in the glossary), and in music it occurs when a small portion of text which must be immediately and exactly repeated, e.g. in a theme or group of sounds (or a ligature in mensural notation) is dropped."

May the sleuths among us, be we musicians, musicologists, or students of musical musicology, find musical philology indispensable. *Barbara Sachs*

REVIEWERS WANTED

Mark Ellis *A Chord in Time: The Evolution of the Augmented Sixth from Monteverdi to Mahler.* Ashgate, 2010, xviii + 249pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 6385 0

If any reader feels more at home in the subject than I am, I would happily pass it on. My immediate reaction is that sharpening a leading note at cadences against a flat supertonic (such as C sharp – D above E flat – D) is an issue of part-writing (or even just part-singing/playing) and wouldn't have been considered in the context of chordal structures. It would never occur to me to describe it as an augmented sixth: merely a 6/3 chord with a clashing cadential sharpened leading-note. That may, of course, be the author's thesis: I've merely looked at the examples. (Byrd's *Ne irascaris* is surely not originally in G major.) *CB*

EARLY MUSIC TODAY

Paul McCreesh talking to CB

Clifford Bartlett (CB): where is the early music movement going? Will it survive the current financial crisis?

Paul McCreesh (PM): I don't want to be a prophet of doom, but, at least for UK-based groups, I am sure that the early music business it at a major crossroads. The old way, to cross-subsidise your development of projects by touring and recording profits, is now unworkable; promoter's budgets are in decline, foreign groups get better and better, and the recording industry is no longer able to pay generous fees for recordings. Every time you have an idea for a major project, you are facing a major overdraft. I am not sure the music world at large really notices. The smaller choirs and chamber orchestras can just about survive, although there is generally much less work around, but God help you if you want to perform oratorio, opera (outside the major houses) or even medium-scale orchestral repertoire. Unfortunately that's where my major interests lie, so in spite of generous support from our circle of donors, *Gabrieli* is quite limited in what it can do. I think this is generally the case with all groups; I notice not only fewer concerts, but that more and more ensembles are forced to play very safe.

CB: And yet there are still dozens of CDs arriving here every month. In smaller-scale music, there is still an enormous variety, especially in 17th-century repertoire.

PM: Yes that's true; what is interesting is the level of commitment many artists have to do their own projects, with the growth of 'own labels'. And players themselves seem very motivated to put on their own chamber concerts, often for very little or no money, to follow their own passions. It seems that foreign ensembles are also more able to record their larger projects, I suppose because the core subsidy they receive makes it easier.

There are different ways of squaring the circle. The OAE appears to be relatively healthy, picking up opera projects, and often inviting famous conductors from outside the early music world. The Sixteen, by clever management, seem to have created almost a monopoly of high-profile provision of choral music in the UK. JEG and Co can still pick up some highly prestigious dates. The Gabrielis have been able to perform major oratorios at the Proms, and sometimes at the Barbican – and everyone thinks that's part of our core repertoire; but in fact, such projects only happen every year or so. I'm sure many groups would love to put artistic planning and repertoire development at a higher level in the planning process than mere survival tactics. It would be wonderful if groups were able to play more classical and romantic music on period instruments regularly, not just for certain key projects. I wonder what we might all achieve with collective repertoire experience...

To keep a core income takes masses of manpower to bring in small amounts of money. What worries me is a certain predictability in repertoire and its presentation. There are promoters who will take on the Bach Passions, but no-one will pay for cantatas. The danger we are all facing is that we focus only on a relatively small number of high-reputation pieces that bring in sponsorship and audiences. I have wanted to conduct Schütz for years, but you need an open-ended cheque-book to bring that off.

CB: Do you sense less interest from the younger generation of players?

PM: No, strangely enough the opposite is true: there are so many wonderful players coming through. I think we are now working with the generation that grew up with all those pioneering recordings of the 80s and 90s. For many of them, playing an old instrument is probably less of a personal commitment than it was for the first generation; they accept it as a valid part of the music business. I also notice that more and more players are what we might call 'generalist specialists': people who play a wide range of instruments as called upon to do so, particularly in the brass and strings. It's really encouraging that in the Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, with whom the Gabrielis work frequently, all the young brass players play natural horns and trumpets alongside their 'modern' instruments, and with heartening efficiency. Even the string players are more aware of the HIP issues than some modern orchestras with whom I work, but the sad reality is we don't have dozens of Baroque and Classical instruments knocking around.

CB: Haven't the concepts of early music spread into other areas? It's now far less isolated in its thinking.

PM: I think one of the great success stories of the movement is how so much of the HIP concept has been adopted by the more interesting modern orchestras. It's kind of ironic that whilst the early groups live hand to mouth, many of the conductors we all know, including myself, are on a seemingly endless carousel trying to instil modern bands with the essences of the baroque or classical style (although personally I won't generally do baroque music on modern instruments – I just can't get the colours I want). Many modern bands now play the classical repertoire with a reasonable sense of style. And even when I am working on 19th-century repertoire, I think orchestras accept that a certain amount of historical awareness is part of the interpretative process. I always think the early music idea is more an attitude of mind, than anything to do with a historical period. There should be some sort of dialogue. Some orchestras welcome that challenge, whilst others would rather you merely said good morning and thank-you.

CB: Perhaps it's because the status of the conductor is such that dialogue is impossible? What is the role of the conductor in this process?

PM: I can only say what is important for me: I think I have never quite been a fully paid-up member of the early music club, maybe because I always loved Dvorak and Elgar as much. I hope I have a basic feel for the repertoire I conduct, but I know there are many in the Gabrielis with a more detailed knowledge of, say, French ornamentation or continuo realisation. I understand orchestras that loathe early music conductors who can't really beat, and use the rehearsal room as a musicological debating chamber: no amount of professorial knowledge will make an exciting performance in itself. But the nature of the modern guest conductor's work is to arrive on Monday and work miracles by Friday! I find it quite irritating when 'modern' conductors try to adopt the mantle of specialists, when they have relatively little knowledge of the processes involved in working with historical instruments. It is a pity that so few of those who approach early repertoire take on board these issues at any serious depth; I think too many just like to be seen to be fashionable.

CB: Is it any easier with later repertoire?

PM: Yes and no. For example, I love conducting Dvorak and in an ideal world I would most love to perform his music with a period orchestra with gut strings – but in the current climate this is almost impossible. You either work with a modern band, who will be familiar with the repertoire, but is limited by instruments and available time, or you could try to put together a period band; but what can be really achieved in a week, especially as most period players don't play the standard 19th-century repertoire very often? So welcome to the eternal compromise of the conductor's life.

CB: The early music movement has limited the repertoire of many Symphony Orchestras – very few of them would now play Bach at all.

PM: Yes, in one way that's a pity, because it's harder to do cross-repertoire programming.

CB: It was so nice that at the Gabrieli's 25th anniversary season, the players put down their Stravinsky instruments and took up early baroque ones for a Monteverdi piece.

PM: I am pleased we could do this, and increasingly I have moved away from being the arch reconstructionist to presenting programmes of mixed repertoire; maybe that's a natural progression now the early repertoire has been more defined for all of us by so many recordings.

CB: How about the segregation of early and other music?

PM: So many connections (obvious or recondite) between pieces from across centuries could be brought into juxtaposition; it is ironic that our repertoire knowledge now makes this more viable, but our insistence on performing all music historically makes it harder!

CB: So in your ideal world, where do we go from now?

PM: Well I think the situation in the UK is very serious. Many of us in the early music business have become competition junkies, where we all get a sort of kick from squeezing in a date at the cost of another ensemble. It becomes a sort of macho thing, and too often the business imperative, that is the survival imperative, kicks in above any sense of serious artistic planning. There is a danger in the UK (and this is not to be too critical of the musicians here) of losing the dynamism of the early music movement: it just isn't there any more. I don't understand how the same players can go through constantly changing groups playing the same pieces; I am slightly amused to see a sudden glut of performances like *Acis*, *Aci* and *Il Trionfo*. Wonderful pieces indeed – but it might be something to do with the fact that no chorus is needed.

The early days of early music could be parodied as the domain of a private, eccentric, intelligent clique. Nowadays, through the professionalisation of early music, that image has faded, but the status quo, in terms of financial support, has never been challenged. I think many in our world take a sort of pride in being commercially-based outfits, but I wonder if there is a half-way house. If the Arts Council early music 'thimble' were even at the level of other countries, so much might be achieved. Certainly the musicians here are amongst the smartest, most talented and flexible with whom I work anywhere in the world. I really think it is about time we put aside petty issues of vanity or competition and collectively lobbied for some core funding, notwithstanding the difficult financial environment of the present day.

CB: And some music organisations operate with an efficiency and economy that big business could learn a lot from!

PM: We have minimal wastage in our early music organisations. Some people marvel how we can survive. Indeed I wish I saw the same level of cost efficiency in the subsidised orchestras!

CB: So what projects from the Gabrielis will excite us over the next few years?

PM: If I am very honest with you, I am something of an emotional see-saw. We have a number of wonderful projects including a large-scale education scheme to involve young musicians singing the core oratorio repertoire. I am determined to try and make these happen and to continue recording some of the great works into the future. On the other hand I am prone to occasional depression when I spend too much of the week looking at alarming red figures! Of course I would like to spend more time thinking about music and less time doing the million things that conductors are expected to do in this business. The easy thing, of course, would be to wind the whole outfit up – but it's hard to kill your own baby! I still think at our best we can do things which other groups can't or won't do, and as long as we can continue to create at least some of the challenging work for which we are renowned I will keep my hand in. (29-6-2010)

TAGE ALTER MUSIK REGENSBURG

21-24 May 2010

Andrew Benson-Wilson

For an intense early music fix in a delightful historic German town, the annual Tage Alter Musik Regensburg festival takes some beating, with 14 concerts in 4 days in the spectacular surroundings of this World Heritage Site by the Danube. This year the music ranged from the early 1400s to Beethoven and Schubert, the latter two in the opening concert featuring the world-famous Regensburger Domspatzen (founded in the year 975) and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin held in the ancient (but later smothered in baroque icing) Basilika St Emmeram next to the palace of the Thurn und Taxis family. The Schubert works included the *Salve Regina* (D676), with a gorgeously floated *O pia* ending, the *Stabat Mater* (D175) and his over-in-a-flash *Magnificat (D486)*, all written between 1815 and 1819. The Beethoven was the 1807 Mass in C, conducted with conviction by the Domkapellmeister Roland Büchner. It was fascinating to hear their distinctive pronunciation of Latin.

It was quickly apparent that a late-night concert meant just that – starting at 10.45, the first one finished at 12.30, in the freezing (but packed) Minoritenkirche! However this proved to be one of the highlights – 15th century music from the Swiss group La Morra and their programme, 'Concentus Angelorum'. Works included Dufay's *Gloria Spiritus et alme,* Nicolaus de Radom's impressive Magnificat, and Johannes Tourout's *O gloriosa regina mundi.* A notable feature of this concert was the tinkling, but powerful sound of the tiny Clavisimbalum, the early form of harpsichord described by Henri Arnaut de Zwolle c1440, played by Corina Marti, notably in three works from the Buxheimer Orgelbuch.

The four Saturday concerts started with Paolo Pandolfo and Mitzi Meyerson and one of the oddest concerts I have ever witnessed. I am not sure if they were sharing some private joke, or deliberately trying to upstage each other, but the effect of their bizarre comedy-act antics was to dismiss the audience as mere onlookers. Their musical styles also raised questions. Pandolfo's gamba playing was expressive to the point of being overtly romantic with scant regard for any sense of pulse, his search for delicacy frequently producing an emaciated sound which often disappeared altogether beneath Meyerson's heavy handed and unyielding harpsichord playing. They made d'Angelbert sound ponderously Germanic, completely lacking the grace and fluidity normally associated with French music, and then went on to make Abel sound French, losing all sense of underlying pulse. The concluding Marais was frankly self-indulgant. The audience, and the music, deserved a great deal better.

In sharp contrast were Gli Incogniti a French group led by violinist Amandine Beyer who, if she is not a dancer, certainly played like one – and she demonstrated just how to play both expressively and to produce a beautiful tone. Their concert of Bach and Vivaldi (in the galleried St Oswaldkirche) included a stunning performance of Bach's Harpsichord Concerto (BWV 1052) from Anna Fontana, with sensitive accompaniment from the surrounding instrumentalists. Flautist Manuel Granatiero played Vivaldi's Concerto *La tempesta di mare*, making effective use of the pitch fluctuations produced by finger vibrato.

The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin came out of their early romantic incarnation for a performance of their take on the Art of Fugue (in the Neuhaussaal), using the full range of strings and woodwind, together with solo harpsichord and organ. The style of interpretation reminded me of a number of recordings in the 1970/80s, with strings giving way to woodwind part way through a piece, and some romantic stylistic features. I suppose it was inevitable that I would much prefer the solo keyboard playing of Raphael Alpermann. This venture was put together by Stephan Mai and Bernhard Forch who, for some reason, kept on swapping their seats as they took turns as lead violinist.

Another of the Festival highlights was Saturday's late-night concert by the Belgian group Graindelavoix, focussed on Nicolas Champion's *Missa de Sancta Maria Magdalena* alongside music reflecting the Marian cult of the 16th century. Their concert was in the Dominikanerkirche, one of the few Regensburg churches free of Baroque frippery. The buzzily earthy (and slightly Arabic) chest voices of the singers took a while to get used to, but projected well into the huge Gothic building – and in their reedy tone were reminiscent of surviving Renaissance *Vox Humana* organ stops. The Arabic influence also included the distinctive catch-in-the-voice ornament. This was another late-night concert that finished well after midnight, with no sign of dissent from the sell-out audience.

Sunday's four concerts started with Capella de la Torre from Germany with their programme of pan-European 16th and 17th century instrumental music, *'Ministriles, Piffari, Waits, Stadtpfeifer'* – producing sounds a bit like the previous concert's voices. They included a version of Correa de Araujo's organ *Tiento para dos tiples* in an arrangement for shawm and cornet, producing sounds that are not too far from that of the distinctive Spanish organ reeds stops. They were led by the schalmei and dulzian player, Katharine Bäuml, and also featured cornettist William Dongois. I was initially surprised to see a lute amongst the 'loud' instruments, but it was perfectly audible in the acoustic of the massive Minoritenkirche (which, incidentally, has a little swallows-nest organ perched above the branches of the Gothic arches).

Regensburg's historically important Reichssaal (the seat of the Perpetual Imperial Diet from 1663 to 1806) was the venue for the Brazilian group Anima and their intriguing concert based on the historical and mythical figure of The Warrior Maiden. Using a wide range of exotic traditional Brazilian instruments, together with some improvised sound-makers (like patting the surface of a bowl of water), the music ranged from Gregorian chant and Hildegard to contemporary pieces – a delightfully evocative meeting of early and ethnic.

Handel's *La Resurrezione* was given by the Czech group, Collegium 1704, crisply directed by Václav Luks. Hana Blazíková sang the role of the Angel, with its extraordinary opening flourish bursting upon the Sonata. Her very sure-footed runs were just what was needed for this tricky role. Jaroslav Brezina and Tobias Berndy also excelled as St John and Lucifer respectively. Helena Zemanová was an excellent concertmaster, and Petr Wagner, gamba, and Luise Haugk, oboe, also impressed. I am not sure what the financial implications [or historical justification *CB*] of bringing the 8-strong singers of Collegium Vocale 1704 along to sing just two choruses were, but they enjoyed their moments of glory. The UK contribution came at 22.45 in the Dominikanerkirche with a stunning concert by Ensemble Plus Ultra and His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, directed by Michael Noone. They focussed on the music of Guerrero, notably his *Missa Super flumina Babylonis*. The 11 singers produced a beautifully focussed and rich sound, projecting well into the vast space. The three sopranos (Amy Haworth, Kate Hawnt and Susan Hamilton), in particular, showed the importance of using clear unforced voices. As well as the Mass, we heard Guerrero's double choir *Regina cæli* and his impressive extended setting of *In exitu Israel*, the latter and the Mass demonstrating a very effective balancing of voices and instruments.

The final day's four concerts started with the four singers and nine players of A Corte Musical from Switzerland and their programme of Portuguese music 'Flores de Lisboa – Canções, Romances e Vilancicos portugueses', performed in the Reichssaal. Their programme included works by de José de Anchieta, Manuel Machado, Felipe da Madre de Deus, Manuel Correa, António Marques Lésbio and works from the Martin y Coll collection. Felipe da Madre de Deus's *Valentão dos meus olhos* was a particularly lively and rhythmically complex piece, with its cries of *"viva a dança de Portugal!"*.

I recently reviewed a CD (*Meyster ob Allen Meystern – Conrad Paumann and the 15th century German keyboard school*) from the group, Tasto Solo. They focus on the keyboard repertoire of the 14th and 15th centuries, using the Clavisimbalum, Portative organ (*Organetto*), harp and, at least on their CD, a reconstruction of a large Gothic Positive organ. Their concert in the Schottenkirche St Jakob had to replace the latter with a continuo box organ. As they mentioned in their introduction, they were performing their repertoire (from the Buxheimer Orgelbuch and the Lochamer Liederbuch) close to its origin – the Buxheimer Orgelbuch is in the Munich Staatsbibliotek, and Paumann himself was born in nearby Nuremburg and is buried in Munich's Frauenkirche. As well as compiling the Buxheimer Orgelbuch, the blind Paumann was a renowned organist. Their concert was based on their CD, but they successfully linked the individual pieces into a couple of unbroken sequences, neatly contrasting and combining the four instruments. Of course, the portative organ allows the player to swell notes, add vibrato, change the tone of a note, add a dying fall to a note and accent individual notes, all by the action of the hand on the bellows. This was used to splendid effect by Guillermo Pérez, the group's director. David Catalunya also excelled on the Clavisimbalum. They made effective use of the space, playing two Portative pieces from the back of the church.

Musica ad Rhenum gave a concert of Telemann (two Paris Quartets), Handel, Couperin and Blavet in the Reichssaal, but never quite managed to lift the musical performance above the workaday. The harpsichord continuo playing was far too loud and emphatic, both helped by a reluctance to break chords.

The final concert in the Festival was Anima Eterna Brugge perfoming Mozart's last three symphonies in the Neuhaussaal, a relatively small concert hall with the feel of an 18th century assembly room and with a warm and immediate acoustic that was very much closer to that known to Mozart than in many modern concert halls. Notable instrumental contributions came from Frank Theuns, flute, and Lisa Klevit-Ziegler, clarinet. Jos van Immerseel conducted with vigour and a sense of personal commitment.

Throughout the weekend, a musical instrument showcase had been housed in the magnificent Salzstadel by the equally impressive Steinernen Brücke. This was my first visit to the Regensburg festival, and I was impressed by the range and, generally, the quality of the music. The audiences were astonishing – every concert was a sell-out.

EARLY CHURCH MUSIC in BUDAPEST

We featured the *Choralis Constantinus* 500 project in *EMR* 134 in April. It's still going on, with performances (some liturgical, some concerts) of vocal liturgical music of the Habsburg Imperial Court according to 15th & 16th-century practices. The main ensemble is that excellent ensemble, Corvina Consort.

Events (more than one a week) are listed at
www.choralisconstantinus.hu
or email
zoltan.kalmanovits@gmail.com

There is far to much to list in our concert diary.

If you are visiting Budapest, it's worth checking what is happening.

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

VENUS at SOUTHAMPTON

I wasn't able to get to theTheatre of the Ayre's Wigmore Hall performance of Blow's masque, *Venus and Adonis*, but caught it the following day at Southampton University's Turner Sims concert hall (4 May). This was preceded by some Blow symphony songs (including some that were the musical equivalent of trains entering tunnels and planes taking off) and a segued sequence of French works by Lambert and de Visée – the latter reminding us that, however French-inspired Restoration music may (or may not) be, it is still very English when compared to the real thing. A Ground in G minor by Blow had been discovered by one of the Southampton University research students a few weeks earlier. The post-interval performance of *Venus and Adonis* was reinforced by a chorus of cupids from a Southampton primary school and a bevy of girls from Salisbury Cathedral school, with 12-year-old Rebecca Lyles singing the principal Cupid role with evident enjoyment and considerable charm. The Cupids' parents and siblings in the audience were a refreshingly youthful addition to the normal age profile of classical music audiences. Sophie Daneman sang the role of Venus, her voice significantly gaining in quality on the occasions when she reined in her vibrato. Giles Underwood was an impressive Adonis. Director Elizabeth Kenny was the inspiration behind the project and both directed (with commendable restraint) and played the theorbo.

JASON at the RAM

The Royal Academy Opera and the Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra presented a fully-staged performance of Cavalli's 1649 opera *Il Giasone* (7 May), conducted by their Director of Opera, Jane Glover, who also prepared a new edition of the work for the occasion. The director was John La Bouchardière, whom readers may recall for his stage and film production of *The Full Monteverdi*. He zoomed in on the humorous aspects of the opera, aided on the evening that I was there by having to stand in for an indisposed singer, acting the generally drunken role of Demo. If his stage antics were anything to go by, it must have been a very difficult role to sing and act. The staging was no less effective for being on an economic scale, with a large trapezoidal sloping deck leaving a couple of sunken side pockets to accommodate various goings on, usually involving Demo. The cast of 11 singers all gave excellent performances, notably tenor Eliot Alderman singing from the pit as the vocal Demo replacement – there was no information about him in the programme, but he is a singer to watch out for. Sadly he wasn't invited on stage to take a well-deserved bow at the end, something I suggest is a breach of performance etiquette. Sopranos Kate Sumonds-Joy (Medea) and Nina Lejderman (Isifile) also impressed. The continuo group of pairs of harpsichords, theorbos and cellos and a violone supported the rhetorical underlay of this recitative-based work, with pairs of violins and violas providing the *ritornello* passages. Jane Glover has reduced the length of the work considerably (which I am certainly not going to complain about), and directed with musical insight and a fine sense of pace.

PROFESSOR PODGER

Rachel Podger is in her second year as (or is it 'in'?) the Micaela Comberti Chair for Baroque Violin at the Royal Academy of Music and showed the result of her work in the Wigmore Hall concert (9 May) by the Royal Academy of Music Baroque Ensemble. Works by Pachelbel, Marcello, Bach and Vivaldi and a wide range of students to show their mettle, including five violinists who were given solo roles alongside her. Of these, George Clifford and Silvio Richter stood out. Leo Duarte was soloist in Marcello's Oboe Concerto, one of the works that gave the programme its title of 'Bach the Arranger'. In the opening movement he demonstrated fluid and expressive playing, with good use of ornament and elaboration, although I found the central Adagio rather languid and luxuriant and the final movement frankly ran away with itself and was far from note perfect. Amongst the supporting orchestral players, cellist Emily Smith stood out. Rachel Podger was, as ever, an inspiring director for the young players, even breaking into a little dance at one point.

MUSICA GARDENIA

Musica Gardenia is a new period instrument group including Isobel Clarke, recorder, Paulina Pluta, violin, Elecktra Miliadou, cello and Jadran Duncomb, theorbo (they would usually also add a harpsichord). By chance, I happened upon their very first public concert (Regent Hall, 14 May), so an overly detailed review is not appropriate. Their programme, 'Musica Drammatica' was a journey through Italy in the company of Castello, Uccellini, Lonati and Vivaldi. As would be expected, this was very much work in progress, but they made an impressive sound and gave interesting and communicative introductions to the pieces to the appreciative audience. As with many young performers, they had the usual tendency to bury their heads in the scores, but will soon gain the confidence to project themselves and their music more directly to the audience. I enjoyed their playing of the two Castello pieces, with their multi-section vignettes.

... bereft of all my critical faculties

Every now and then there is a concert that just blows me away, leaving me bereft of all my critical faculties One such was the Bach B minor Mass given at St John's, Smith

Square by the Dunedin Consort and Players, conducted by John Butt (17 May). Although I know and admire their previous CDs, this was the first time that I heard the Dunedin Consort live. They used the 2006 Joshua Rifkin edition, with 5 solo singers (Susan Hamilton, Cecilia Osmond, Margot Oitzinger, Thomas Hobbs and Matthew Brook) and 5 ripienists. One of the keys to the success of this performance was the total commitment of the performers and the conductor, with his energetic and focussed direction and his evident personal engagement with the music. His pacing and control of the power of the performers was excellent – his direction of the *Crucifixus* was exemplary. All the singers were excellent (the sopranos particularly so when they reined in their vibrato), but two soloists stood out. The Austrian mezzo Margot Oitzinger has an outstandingly clear and focussed voice, completely devoid of intrusive effects, and close to the sound of an (exceptionally good) adolescent boy's voice – ideal for Bach. Bass Matthew Brook was also outstanding, notably in the striding declamatory bass lines of the Sanctus – he is a singer that manages to draw the audience into his music. Of the players, particular mention must go to flautist Katy Bircher for her exquisite solo in the Benedictus, and Anneke Scott for one of the finest horn solos that I have ever heard in *Quoniam tu solus sanctus*. I normally forgive horn players for all sorts of wheezes and auditory oddities, but this was absolute perfection. This was the launch of their Linn recording – the CD is a must-have. (See p. xx for a review of the CD.)

I happened to be at the concert, and can back up every ounce of Andrew's enthusiasm. I too was impressed by the bass, Matthew Brook; once I noticed him, I couldn't keep my eye off him. He has such a relaxed, nonchalant manner – beautiful singing without any apparent effort. It was an amazing concert: so sad that the audience was small: at least they did their best when the time for applause came. CB

TCM COMPETITION

The Final of the Trinity College of Music Early Music Competition took place on 26 May, with Rachel Brown as the adjudicator. A preliminary round had produced five finalists. The evening started with Sine Nomine (Elen Le Foll, recorder, Ruth Fraser, soprano, Petra Hajduchová, harpsicord, Jan Zahourek, violone) and Telemann's *Seele, lerne dich erkennen*, a work intended for smaller churches. Ruth Fraser sang with a commendable lack of vibrato and very assured tuning and there was some excellent recorder playing from Elen Le Foll. Duo Corde (Anna Marie Christenssen, violin, Amélie Addison, cello) played two movements from a Corelli sonata and a sonata by Castrucci, the leader of Handel's opera orchestra and a contender for Hogarth's 'Enraged Musican'. It was interesting hearing these works played without any continuo support, but I wasn't too convinced about the resulting sparse musical texture. The Meridian Consort (Ruth Fraser, soprano, Alastair Ross, counter-tenor, Petra Hajduchová, harpsichord, Jan Zahourek, violone) gave us two Handel arias, *Frondo leggiera e mobile* and *Tanti strali al sen mi scocchi*, demonstrating two well matched voices. The Cantemir Düet (Elen Le Foll, recorders, Christine Letch, percussion) delivered a moment of exoticism to the evening, with their programme of Turkish and Sephardic music, showing Elen Le Foll to be a consummate performer and musical communicator. The final group was Cantum Barbum (Alistair Ross, counter-tenor, Matthew Howard, tenor, Edmund Saddington, bass) who gave a very professional presentation of works by Tomkins, Byrd and Sheppard, their well-matched voices adjusting well to the awkward acoustics of the Peacock Room. Rachel Brown awarded the prize to Duo Corde. Sadly there were very few people there to witness the occasion.

KUIJKEN'S DA SPALLA

In recent years Sigiswald Kuijken has become a champion of the shoulder cello (violoncello da spalla) and he demonstrated his enthusiasm by playing three Bach cello suites at a concert in St James' Church, Abinger Common (5 June). He played Suites 1 and 3 on a four-string instrument and the 6th Suite on a smaller five-string one, the latter producing a very much better sound than the former. And it was the sound that gave me the greatest concern during most of this concert. I am not sure whether to blame the instrument or the performer – or both. There were certainly far more technical issues than I would have expected, and I spent much of the concert trying to work out if this was just below-par playing (we are all capable of an off-day), or something inherently unstable about the instrument and the curious way it is played. The strings are almost vertical, so the bow's pressure on the strings must come entirely from the player, unaided by gravity. It sounded very difficult to control this bow pressure, with notes frequently sounding unstable. The bass notes are played at the top end of the bow sweep, rather than the bottom as in a cello. The instrument was also very much smaller than a traditional cello – and, indeed, smaller than most depictions of original violoncellos da spalla – so the acoustics of the instrument itself sounded rather weedy. My companion made me sit in the front row (which I would never normally do when reviewing), so I caught little of the acoustic bloom of the building – the tone might have sounded more rounded from further back. Internet clips from his CD of the same works give a much more resonant impression.

FENTON HOUSE EARLY KEYBOARD ENSEMBLE COMPETITION

The finals of the 2nd Fenton House Early Keyboard Ensemble Competition (which now alternates every other year with the Harpsichord Competition) featured five young groups, mostly London based. All gave impressive performances and deserved their place in the final. Ensemble Xantippe (Roses Leech-Wilkinson and Isabel Clark recorders, Kate Conway cello, Sean Heath, harpsichord) were a very impressive opening act with their attentive, involved and musical take on Telemann's Trio Sonata in C from *Der getreue Musikmeister*. This included his depiction of their own namesake, the lively and chattering (but also nagging) Xantippe, along with Lucretia, Corinna, Clelia and Dido. Ensemble Musica

Contemplativa (Jennifer Bennett, violin; Hila Katz, harpsichord) gave an expressive performance of Mozart's Sonata in e, seeming to highlight Mozart's look forward to the romantic era. Seconda Prattica (Beatrice Scaldini and Julia Kuhn violins, Carina Drury cello, Nat Mander, harpsichord), despite their name, played Couperin's rather later L'Apothéose de Corelli, adding the French descriptions of each section, the two violins striving for a delicate tone. Tempus Fugus (Emily Baines, recorder; Katie de la Matter, harpsichord) gave us an expressive and communicative reading of Handel's Recorder Sonata in C (1/7). Les Mélomanes (Alexandra Kloss, recorder; Stephen Pedder, violin; Kathleen Ross, cello; Rani Orenstien, harpsichord) concluded with an eloquent performance of Marais' Suite in G minor from his 1692 collection, including a particularly sensuous reading of the *Plainte*. The judges were Stephen Devine, Peter Thresh and Clare Salaman and they awarded the first prize to Seconda Prattica. In addition to a monetary prize, they will get concerts at Fenton House (12 August), Hatchlands, Finchcocks and the Russell Collection. The audience prize went to Les Mélomanes. From amongst the members of the various groups, I particularly liked Kate Conway, cello, Nat Mander and Rani Orenstein, harpsichord, Emily Baines and Alexandra Kloss, recorder and Stephen Pedder, violin.

IDOMENEO

Anybody suffering from sea-sickness or a phobia of office environmentss would have had a troubled evening at English National Opera's production of *Idomeneo* (8 June). The opening video of a choppy sea projected onto the stage drop gave way to an anonymous and characterless office or conference centre setting, with besuited lackeys crossing the stage with great earnestness, but no apparent purpose – presumably the setting for Cretian Enterprises approaching a state of collapse. Unfortunately, this toing and froing completely disrupted Ilia's (Sarah Tynan) moving opening *Padre, germani, addio,* which sets the scene for the whole opera. The scene later changed to the foot of a cliff for Idomeneo's shipwreck and a bustling ferry port terminal for Poseidon's tempest and various corners and corridors of the original setting. As with so many opera performances nowadays, the direction (here from Katie Mitchell) confused rather the enlightened the underlying plot. I had the feeling that the singers were struggling to break through the mist to portray it. Amongst these moments was Idomante staring into the eyes of his father, Idomeneo, without a flicker of recognition. Emma Bell was driven to show Electra as an appalling vamp, oozing sex and sedition, and accosting passing waiters for a bit of relief before finally shooting herself – but I am not convinced that this was what Mozart had in mind in his music. Sarah Tynan excelled in the more sensitive portrayal of Ilia, while Paul Nilon and Robert Murray took the key roles of Idomeneo and Idomante. Conductor Edward Gardner directed the house band and helped to overcome the restrictions of the direction through his pacing of the work. With more viewings, this might have grown on me but, on this first impression, I fear not.

ZAIDE

For reasons that will become apparent, Mozart's *Zaide* is rarely performed. The score was discovered by Constanze in 1799 in a pile of Mozart manuscripts. Until then she had been unaware of its existence, a state shared by many today. It is a curious work. The final act is missing and all the spoken dialogue is lost, apart from a few cue-ins. It seems to have been similar to the text used by Friebert in his *Das Serail* (possible the intended title for Mozart's opera), which was based on Voltaire's tragedy of Sultanic enslavement. It was clearly a forerunner of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, written two years after Zaide in 1782. Mozart experimentation with the melodrama style of spoken quasi-recitative is one of the most striking elements of this work – and in this production the three melodramas were the most successful musically – notably, in this production because of the orchestral contributions. Mozart believed that most recitatives should be treated in this way, although there is only one other tiny example in his works.

Ian Page and the Classical Opera Company have taken the brave step of reconstructing the work, adding the missing third act and a new (English) recitative and spoken text (by Michael Symmons Roberts, Ben Power and Melly Still) which they premiered at Sadler's Wells (24 June) before a short UK tour. During the overture (from *Thamos, König in Ägypten*), a prison break out is brutally put down with a summary execution, a sign of the brutality to come and, I fear, a sign of the directorial and textural oddities to follow. For me, this attempt just didn't work. The new text grated, with a combination of silly rhymes and lack of focussed emotional content. Renaming the opening chorus as 'Bastards, keep your hands off me' gives a flavour. Ian Page's drawing in of pieces from other Mozart works to form Act III was a sound solution, although the decision to end with the Quartet from *Die Entführung* meant that a new character had to be introduced merely to provide the second soprano needed for the finale. She was also given an aria in the first act to justify her existence. Zaide was sung by Pumexa Matshikiza, a South African soprano whose musical talents are manifold but, at least in the way she was allowed to sing in this work (with a huge vibrato and frequent portamento), should be aiming at a very much later repertoire than Mozart. Musically, the highlight was the playing of the orchestra.

SAUL REHEARSED

I wasn't able to get to any of this year's Spitalfields Festival because of clashes with other events, but I did spend some time at the open rehearsal for the Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra and Chorus's performance of Saul (Christ Church, Spitalfields, 25 June). A few days earlier I had read that the Royal Academy of Music had, for the second year running, topped *The Guardian*'s university education tables for music with 100% on its scoring system (the Guildhall School came 2nd, with Trinity and the Royal College of Music 8th and 9th)[1] On the

1. www.guardian.co.uk/education/table/2010/jun/04/university-guide-music

basis of my brief hearing, their ranking was well justified. I heard the chorus, a few of the secondary characters drawn from the choir and the enormous orchestra (including the carillon) in full flow, under the exuberant and inspiring direction of Laurence Cummings, the RAM's Head of Historical Performance. I only heard one of the soloists (soprano Clare Lloyd) and was extremely impressed. In fairness to the other soloists that I didn't hear, they were Laurence Meikle, Aoife Miskelly, Stuart Jackson and Roderick Morris. My spies tell me that the evening performance was as impressive as the rehearsal.

QUEENHITHE to CHELSEA

The 1799 organ of St Michael's, Queenhithe was moved to Christ Church, Chelsea in 1876 when St Michael's was demolished. After the usual round of rebuilds, it has now been reincarnated in a new organ housed in a partial reconstruction of the 18th-century case. Eight of the 1799 stops, and three from a later rebuild, have been incorporated into the 25-stop, two manual organ by Flentrop Orgelbouw of Zaandam in the Netherlands. The opening recital was given by their fellow-countryman Ton Koopman (20 June) with a programme concentrating on the pan-European pre-Bach repertoire, all dating from at least 50 years before the original date of the organ. He opened appropriately with Sweelinck, the Master of Amsterdam. Koopman relished the rhythmic complexity of a Byrd Fantasia and attempted works by Cabanilles and Bruna, intended for organs about as far removed from the English 18th century as you can get. A similar comment could be made about Buxtehude, but my issue here was the extraordinarily ramshackle playing of the two major Preludia. As well as his quirky ornamentation and ornaments Koopman played at speeds so excessive as to make nonsense of the structure, These works deserved a great deal more respect. However he was far more restrained in the Buxtehude chorale preludes and in the concluding works by Bach. The only work that came close to being appropriate for the historical roots of this organ was Stanley's Voluntary in D, using the Trumpet and Cremona stops. This is not the place for a review of the instrument, but it certainly sounded impressive.

CITY OF LONDON FESTIVAL

My selection of events from the huge programme of the City of London Festival started in St Paul's Cathedral with the Monteverdi *Vespers*, (22 June) given by Choir of St Paul's Cathedral, His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts (expanded to include two violins, and continuo strings, theorbos and organ) conducted by Andrew Carwood. The three principal soloists were sopranos Cecilia Osmond and Rebecca Outram and tenor Mark Wilde, but there were also several very fine but unnamed soloists drawn from the choir (including an alto with the irritating habit of peering round the audience for friends to grin at). Carwood sensibly sat out the smaller works, leaving the performers to get on with it – these featured brilliant contributions from the theorbo players, David Miller and Paula Chateauneuf. Mark Wilde had the major vocal contribution and was excellent. The musicians were positioned under the chancel end of the dome, with the echos sung from the far corner of the south transept, sounding fine from my privileged position a few rows from the front, but perhaps rather distant from the back. *Duo Seraphim* was performed with the first two singers standing at opposite ends of the stage, with the third joining from the middle. The boys and men of the choir produced a cohesive and powerful sound, notably in *Lauda Jerusalem*. Andrew Carwood conducted with characteristic vigour, giving a firm and precise lead.

A CAPELLA PORTUGUESA

The glorious surrounding of St Bartholomew-the-Great was the venue for the concert (25 June) by the Oxford-based group A Capella Portuguesa with their programme, 'Music for the Portuguese Monarchy from the 16th & 17th Centuries', reflecting the focus of this year's festival on the Portuguese speaking countries. Their director, Owen Rees, is a acknowledged expert on this repertoire, and he gave a fascinating lecture at Gresham College just before the concert. This focussed on the music of Duarte Lobo and the impression that it made in 18th century London - where he was frequently misnamed. Highlights of the first half included Cardoso's gorgeous *Sitivit anima mea*, the anonymous *Si pie Domine* (a lament for Alfonso, the first King of Portugal) and the five-part *Exurge, quare obdormis* by de Magalhães, receiving its first performance for four centuries. The 19th century Parisian forgery, *Crux fidelis*, that purported to have been by King João IV, moved us into a musical world of almost Bruchnerian harmonic intensity. The links between England and Portugal were particularly strong in the 17th century, with the marriage of Catherine of Braganza, João IV's daughter, to Charles II (bringing with her Bombay and its local brew – tea). The second half of the concert featured examples of the 'Ancient Music' heard in 18th century London, including Byrd's *Civitas sancti tui*, Purcell's *Miserer mei* and works by Lobo, notably his 8 part *Requiem* and *Audivi vocem de cælo*, a popular work in 18th century London. Owen Rees directed his young 10-strong choir with musical sensitivity and they produced an extremely attractive blend of clean and unaffected voices.

MAHAN ESFAHANI

In his harpsichord recital in St Margaret Pattens (29 June), BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist Mahan Esfahani focussed on music that might have been known at the 18th century Portuguese court of João V. The entire royal library was destroyed in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake so the choice of music was conjectural – it included Storace, A Scarlatti, de Seixas and Cabanilles. Esfahani didn't make life particularly easy for himself, picking a programme of unremitting virtuosity and power that must have been as tiring to play as it was, at times, to listen to. He capped this by announcing that his encore would be "the hardest sonata that Scarlatti ever wrote". The only slight relief was Carvalho's *Andante con gran espressione*. Much as I admired his technical ability, I would rather it wasn't

slapped around my face (or forced into my ears) quite so emphatically. The concert was also the London début for an interesting 1763 Migliai Italian single-manual harpsichord that has recently appeared on the scene – a very impressive instrument that sounded much better live than on the subsequent boomy and percussive Radio 3 broadcast.

THE CREATION

Acoustically, St Paul's Cathedral is a more appropriate venue for Haydn's Creation than the Monteverdi Vespers, as was demonstrated by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the BBC National Chorus of Wales under Thierry Fischer (29 June). I do find elements of this work a bit hard to take seriously. Like much opera, it can sound very much better when the words are not understood, but this was sung in its awkward English version. Apparently influenced by Haydn's experience of hearing one of the monumental Handel celebrations in Westminster Abbey, I am sure he would have approved of the acoustic setting of St Paul's. The fabulous trio of soloists were Julia Doyle (I hope it is not inappropriate to mention that she appeared to be in an advanced stage of creation herself), James Gilchrist and Matthew Brook, the latter outrageously milking the expressive aspects of the text, musically and facially – or perhaps I was just sitting too close. Thierry Fischer is an exceptional interpreter of a wide range of music, and he gave an insightful view of Haydn. One extraordinary aspect of the concerts in St Paul's Cathedral is that the earthly powers in control there felt it was appropriate to subject the audience to a Christian prayer, but refused to let any of their guests use their lavatories – an interesting reflection of their priorities.

LUFTHANSA FESTIVAL

This year's Lufthansa Festival, now in its 26th year, focused on 'Italian Pioneers from Monteverdi to Vivaldi', under the banner of 'Fountain of the Baroque'. The festival opened, appropriately, with Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers performed by the Italian group La Venexiana (St John's, Smith Square, 13 May). Eschewing the acoustics effects that St John's offers, La Venexiana produced a concentrated and well-balanced realisation of the musical text, more accurately reflecting the Mantuan setting than a so-tempting but stylistically implausible St Mark's manner. The 11 singers stood in tight formation behind the three theorbo players, with the other 14 arranged to the sides. Claudio Cavina's direction was similarly focussed and concise, with his exploration of detail stopping just short of being fussy. He focused on the more intense moments included some delightful lingering on the harmonic clashes in *Nigra Sum* and on *Maria* in *Audi coelum*. Excellent contributions came from tenor Makoto Sakurada and soprano Roberta Mameli and the cornet players Doron David Sherwin and Jamie Savan, and violinists Renata Spotti and Efix Puleo.

The two concerts the following evening started with 'The Beating Heart', with La Risonanza, directed by Fabio Bonizzoni. Compared to many Italian groups, this was relatively restrained playing, both in the solo works and the cantatas by A Scarlatti and Handel. The illness of the billed soprano meant a change of programme, and the short notice appearance of soprano Emanuela Galli. I try to be a kind as I can to stand-in singers, and often find them very impressive, but on the occasion there were too many vocal distractions for me to remain in kind mode. As well as frequent portamento, losing definition in runs, her habit of swelling on and off notes meant that the start of the note often sounded at best unclear, and sometimes noticeably late. To this was added persistent vibrato of the shallow, and rather nervous-sounding variety. This was particularly unfortunate in the opening of Handel's *Mi palpita il cor* when it was unclear whether it was the *palpitas* of her *cor*, or her voice that was at issue. Normally I would assume this was a case of the right singer in the wrong role, but her CV suggests that this is her mainstream repertoire.

'The Wandering Viol' was the apt title of the late night concert (14 May), an entirely improvised performance by gamba player, Paolo Pandolfo. He told the audience that this was the first time he had ever attempted this (a claim which has surprised some other festival promoters). Wandering through an array of 'standards' (including *La Spagna, La Folia, Canario, Chaconne*) in an unbroken sequence, this was an amazing display of virtuosity that thrilled the many gamba players and fans in the audience.

The sequence of three Saturday concerts (15 May) started with the Danish-based group Baroque Fever and their programme 'The Birth of the Trio Sonata'. This entertaining group was led by violinist Bjarte Elke – 'a bit of a character', is probably the technical term to describe him. They started with jazz-style group introductions in the middle of the opening piece. Neatly segueing works from Uccelini, Vitali, Frescobaldi and Buonamente alongside isolated pieces by Falconieri, Castello, Rossi and Marini, they explored the varying emotions of the early instrumental sonata form, leading to Purcell's late-flowing offering and Castello's concluding mini-opera, Sonata 12.

The 2nd annual Lufthansa Lecture, "Monteverdi the Modern Man" was given by Robert Hollingworth, who reflected on his personal response to Monteverdi's music within its historical and musical-analytical context, noting in particular the influence of Monteverdi's emotional power, use of musical texture, intense lyricism and the acoustic effect of his use of part writing. The full text can be read at
http://www.lufthansafestival.org.uk/index.php?id=lecture-2010.

After the Italian groups La Venexiana and La Risonanza, we had our homegrown La Serenissima with their evening concert (15 May), 'Gods, Emperors and Angels'. This started with one of the oddest Vivaldi works I have ever heard – his 'Conca' Concerto. I found the final work (L'amoroso) rather bland, but there were some gems in between, notably Pamela Thorby's sopranino playing in Concerto RV445 and Peter Whelan's athletic bassoon playing in RV500, although there were balance problems in the latter, not least from the far too dominant continuo harpsichord. Adrian Chandler and Sara Struntz excelled

in the double violin concerto (RV530). The audience were invited to do our bit for the national debt via the VAT portion of the sale of the CD of this programme. Nice one, Adrian!

In his introduction to his 1738 *Essercizi per gravicembalo*, Domenico Scarlatti wrote "Do not expect, whether you are an amateur or a professional, to find any profound intention in these compositions, but rather an ingenious jesting with art by means of which you may attain freedom in harpsichord playing". Pierre Hantaï demonstrated this 'Ingenious Jesting with Art' in his stunning harpsichord recital in St Peter's, Eaton Square (16 May) – an unbroken sequence of Scarlatti sonatas that compared in mood with Pandolfo's earlier gamba concert. With memories of a Dudley Moore sketch, he seemed uncertain when to stop, bringing his watch out after about 30 minutes, and sending concerned glances towards the officials at the back as the hour approached.

Later that evening, and back in the Lufthansa home of St John's, Smith Square, I Fagiolini turned 'Madrigal into Opera' via works from Monteverdi, Rore, Wert, Marenzio, Gesualdo and Rossi, with director Robert Hollingworth continuing in lecturing mode to outline that link between the pre-*Seconda Prattica* madrigals of Rore and Wert and the early Italian opera of Monteverdi. The programme was bookcased by Monteverdi's *Orfeo* Prologue and his extraordinary, and appallingly non-PC *Ballo delle ingrate.*

I was unable to get to the final few concerts of the Festival, so it ended for me with the 18 May concert in Westminster Abbey – 'Praises from Venice and Rome' – with the Choir of Westminster Abbey, St. James's Baroque and conductor James O'Donnell. After a terribly well-behaved performance of Vivaldi's bubbly Concerto for strings (RV156) we were able to compare Vivaldi's Gloria in D with Handel's more substantial *Dixit Dominus.* Julia Doyle and Charlotte Mobbs sopranos and Clare Wilkinson mezzo were the excellent soloists, with Julia Doyle showing just how to project her voice in such a large acoustic (floating, rather than forcing) and Clare Wilkinson demonstrating excellent breath control in *Virgam virtutis.* The boys of the Abbey choir came to the fore in *Dominus a dextris tuis,* the portrayal of a grumpy God rather underplayed, with the 'leaders of many lands' subjected to a polite tap on the head rather than a biblical crushing.

Early Music Review

published by
The Early Music Company Ltd
The New House, The Fen
Fenstanton, Huntingdon, Cambs
PE28 9JT UK

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Reprinted from Musical Pointers:
www.musicalpointers.co.uk/reviews

BUXTEHUDE & BEFORE
17th Century German Organ Music

Andrew Benson-Wilson (organ)
St John's, Smith Square 3 June 2010

Tunder Praeludium In G Minor,
Chorale Fantasia: In Dich hab ich Gehoffet
Praetorius Hymnus: Te lucis ante terminum
Scheidemann Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore
Weckmann Praeambulum primi toni A 5
Ach wir Armen sunder
Buxtehude Te Deum laudamus

This lunchtime concert was perhaps the first on St John's Sainsbury Concert Organ (Klais of Bonn, 1993) to explore the possibilities to simulate early organ sound, an enthralling experience. My previous memory of that instrument had been a concert including the Reubke sonata, its climaxes so loud that I had to cover my ears for relief!

Andrew Benson-Wilson provided scholarly notes, reminding us that German organs of the period were "of monumental size" – Weckmann played one in Hamburg with 71 stops, about 50% more than St John's in London, its pedal division twice the latter's size. The judicious registrations applied today were based on contemporary references and known specifications of those organs, and embraced a kaleidoscope of colours, with the sound full when appropriate but never ear-hurting.

Andrew played with secure authority and rhythmic command, aided by using the organ's electronic synthesiser for precise changes of registration. The climax of the recital was Buxtehude's longest keyboard work, lasting about a quarter of an hour, ranging widely within North German Chorale Fantasia and *stylus phantasticus* traditions.

For listeners fairly near the front of St John's, pleasure was enhanced by following Benson-Wilson's hands projected on a smallish screen. The black & white image was not quite as clear as one might reasonably hope with today's technology; it showed his knees moving, but not the feet!

The distancing of player from listeners in many churches probably militates against the popularity of organ recitals in London's City churches, given regularly but often poorly attended. Andrew should be invited back to St John's next season to continue exploring his specialised repertoire there. *Peter Grahame Woolf*

Obviously, Andrew cannot review himself; but he is an exponent of stylistic early organ playing. so we should occasionally report on his concerts.

MONTEVERDI

Clifford Bartlett

OLD & NEW RECORDINGS

Monteverdi *Orfeo* Wiener Symphoniker, Paul Hindemith *dir* (rec 1954) 108' 9" (2 CDs)
Music & Arts CD1237
+ Gabrieli *Nunc dimittis, Virtute magna & Sonata VIII toni*
Monteverdi *L'Orfeo*; Beethoven *Symphony No 1 in C*
Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Paul Hindemith
Andromeda ANDRCD 9069 (rec 1954 & 1955)

Extraordinarily, two separate versions of a pioneering performance of *Orfeo* on 3 June 1954 at the Grosser Saal des Wiener Konzerthauses have been issued virtually simultaneously.[1] I have not made a close comparison: an audiophil would need comments based on better equipment than I have. The musical choice is whether you want it accompanied by a Beethoven symphony or three pieces by Giovanni Gabrieli. I'd go for the Gabrieli: there are plenty of old performances of Beethoven. The vocal pieces are as one might expect: very much of their time, but extremely musical. The Sonata is rather impressive: maybe not the right instruments, but oozing vitality!

There is, I think, a tendency for composers to like their music to move on: Britten and Stravinsky are examples. I don't know Hindmith's recordings of his own works, but he definitely has that approach. The title of the Music & Arts CD (in German on the front, in English inside the cover) is 'Attempt to reconstruct the first performance' with 'the Vienna Symphony Orchestra playing ancient instruments' on the discs themselves. There is a list of players (including Nikolaus Harnoncourt) but not of what they played.[2] The sound is interesting, very bright with lots of high sounds, perhaps imitating the higher octaves of an early organ and the bright harmonics of the harpsichord. The expertise of playing continuo on the theorbo was not developed then and we now expect a less percussive basic sound. There is a major editorial failure: the assumption that the rubric at the bottom of the page that contains the Sinfonia a7 'Qui entrano il Trom[boni], Corn[etti] & Regali. & taciono le Viole da braccio, & Organi di legno[,] Clavicem[balo]. & si muta a Sena' is intended to refer to the music above it. Since it recurs later in Act III, and has a different ensemble from Act I & II, is seems obvious (and has been universally accepted for as long as I have known the work) that the change happens between the recurrence of the Prologue ritornello and the Sinfonia a7. The failure to treat the scoring of Acts III & IV as different results in a continuation of the top-heavy sound of the previous acts. In general, though, the sound and technique are often impressive, though there are some strange noises.

The singers are quite full-blooded, manage the difficult bits with surprising skill, and are far less unsuitable that I expected. But they seem to work a bit too hard and/or sound too closely miked, so become a strain, especially in the longer recitatives. The overall feel of the performance conveys the music much more than (after 50 years) my memory of the Archiv/Wenzinger recording from 1955.[3] The touchstone for me is the Messagiera; here, while not matching my favourite,[4] Anna Maria Iriarte is intensely moving. The choruses are bigger than we now expect, but very effective (the Act IV and V ones making rather more sense than usual). As usual, I find the Prologue and Acts I & II more effective, thanks to their stronger structure and lesser dependence on recitative – though it is delivered extremely well. Despite the old instruments, this needs a significant reallignment of current expectations of early-music performance, but it is strong enough to be worth hearing on its own terms and not as a curiosity.

Either of these reissues is worth investigating. If anyone cares to translate the Music & Arts introductions, we'd be happy to publish them (with the company's permission).

Monteverdi *Vespro della Beatra Virgine da concerto, Missa In illo tempore senis vocibus (1610)* Ensemble Concerto, Ensemble La Pifarescha, Concerto Palatino, Coro D. S. G., Gruppo Vocale Laurence Feininger, Roberto Gini 181' 26" (3 CDs in box)
Dynamic CDS 656/1-3

The information in the booklet is confusing. For a start, the Mass (the opening item in Monteverdi's 1610 publication but on disc 3) gives the singers as the Coro D.S.G. (presumably *Deo Soli Gloria*), 3.3.2.3.3.3. with four indicated as solists for the Crucifixus) and the Feininger group (seven names, including Roberto Gianiotti 'conductor and soloist', though the conductor of the Mass is Robert Gini.) For the Vespers, a larger Coro D.S.G. is used (9, 5, 11, 9) with the same Feiningers. The main singers are the Ensemble Concerto, with ten voices (the number the work requires) plus rather more strings than one might expect, 3 cornetts and sackbuts (Ensemble La Pifarescha) and the famous Concerto Palatino (2 cornetts and 4

1. Both sets have a spoken introduction by Hindemith, famous for his interest in performancing early music; the Andromeda disc also includes a radio announcement, but no information except cast and track list in a minimal booklet. .The Music & Arts set is more informative, though German material is not translated; the reprint of the Wikipedia *Orfeo* article is hardly a substitute.
2. The Music & Arts notes are not specific about the various performances of Hindemith's edition between 1943 and 1960.
3. My broadband (in fact, extremely narrow!) was out of action from July 1-16, so I have only just found that it has been reissued, and that there is a track of .'Possente spirto' sung by Helmut Krebs on You Tube that sounds more like a current rather than historic performance; so my memory of hearing it soon after its issue may be fallible or a sign that I didn't get Monteverdi then.
4. Which I won't praise as a whole since the conductor still owes me over £1000 in connection with the event.

sackbuts) who appear to play only *Deus ad adiuvandum*. (So the full marks for the high-spot of the performance, the cornetting in *Deposuit* go to William Dongois and Frithjof Smith rather than Bruce Dickie and Gawain – not Gwain – Glenton.)

A crucial issue here is tempo: not just the use of slow triple relationships, but duple ones as well. My wife, overhearing it from the far end of the room, was reminded of the effect of everything feeling slow till the first coffee of the day had began to take effect. It all sounds a bit too careful. I'm not convinced by the slow triple relationships; it found no supports among the Monteverdians at the Berkeley Conference (see below). Some do make sense, but *Dixit Dominus* suffers, especially when the tempo is already slow. The falso bordone bits sound so forced!

The ensemble singing could be shaped better, but with singers who realise how the words themselves shape the phrases; here the careful phrasing is ineffective because artificially superimposed.

The reader would be bored if I went through the three discs in detail, so I'll pick out a few examples that make general points.

Laetatus sum. I've been thinking a lot about this psalm since Philip Thorby's lecture (see *EMR* 132 p. 7). Here, the music is tamed to sound holy.[5] The stalking bass doesn't stalk (and the added cello is superfluous; a theorbo would be useful – the curtal too often anticipates the humorous nature of the bassoon) and the *Romanesca* isn't audible. Indeed, the crotchet-minim-crotchet *Ie-ru-sa-(lem)*' seem, as far as they are stressed at all, are sung with the stress on the first crotchet rather than the second (*IeRUsalem*). I haven't yet worked out what the music is representing, but perhaps it is linking Rome with Mary, daughter of Jerusalem/Zion.

Audi coelum. There is a problem in ornamenting music that has fully-notated patches of ornamentation. Why does the composer choose some places and not others? It seems very arrogant for a singer to impose his ideas from the first bar, and undermines what Monteverdi has printed.

Ave maris stella. Good solid sound for the opening double choir verses, though the music doesn't have to come to a full stop at the end of every line. Why is verse 7 more subdued than verse 1? That's not how Monteverdi treats the other Glorias. It's a bit slow, as are (consequently?) the other verses, and the phrasing of the ritornelli is far too careful.

Magnificat a6. Good to hear a more substantial organ than usual, but it seems to be playing a composed rather than a continuo part. The booklet indicates 'Organ tablatures: Roberto Gini' which presumably means 'written-out'. Its volume isn't always appropriate: the *Sicut erat*, for instance, doesn't have enough support. That also applies to the Magnificat a7; In the Amen, I love to play (and no-one has objected) really full chords on each alternate minim (starting on the E minor), taking the chord off soon after the change on the beat. Although it doesn't match the shape of all the parts, it gives the movement a semibreve rather than a minim pulse and a little more weight – it can sound rather rushed.

I note that Roberto Gini is directing an international seminar of 17th century music in Tel Aviv from 22-29 September: I'm tempted to go and ask questions!

Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea* Emanuela Galli *Poppea*, Roberta Mameli *Nerone*, Josè Maria Lo Moncao *Ottone*, Xenia Meijer *Ottavia*, Ian Honeyman *Arnalta*, Makoto Sakaruda *nutrice*, Raffaele Costantini *Seneca*, Francesca Cassarini *Drusilla*,La Venexiana, Claudio Cavina 204' 40" Glossa GCD 920916 (3 CDs in a box)

The reputation of La Venexiana and Claudio Cavina being what it is, this is an obvious recommendation. There is much that is good about it. The singing is idiomatic, the accompaniment appropriate and brilliant, and the shaping of the music generally effective. It is based on a series of stage performances, so has dramatic flow. I suspect that this has led to a slight exaggeration of rallentandi, which wouldn't have been worrying in a theatre but annoy at repeated hearings. One extreme example (the opening of I, 4) seems to miss the point. The sequence is

Ritornello
Poppea *Speranza tu mi vai?*
Il cor accarezzando.
Ritornello
Poppea (virtually the same music)
Speranza tu mi vai?
Il genio lucingando...
[further text, no ritornello]

To me, it would be effective to linger of one of the phrase ends, but countereffective to treat both the same way: my musical inclination would be to keep the first statement in tempo with the Ritornello (which has the same rhythm) and delay the tempo variation to surprise at the second time, though the other way suits the words better. The same effect doesn't work so well twice. The chief weakness is revealed in the previous scene, the first appearance of Poppea and Nerone together. It probably works on stage, but to the listener, the voices are too similar. I wouldn't even be too worried about a tenor Nerone, though they are now unfashionable: it's basses singing alto parts (a low voice replacing a high one) that doesn't work.[6] Irrespective of that, Poppea doesn't sound sexy enough: actually, she should probably exaggerate her sexiness, dropping the hint that she isn't primarily after love but power.

The booklet introduction by Stefano Aresi is curious. The case for doubts on the authenticity of the opera as a work of Monteverdi is pushed to the extreme. The balance of

5. Monteverdi's church music, while different from his madrigals, seems utterly free of religiosity or anything approaching it.

6. Aresi is sarcastic about modern producers wanting a male voice for historical credibility, but they are happy to have female emperors in Handel.

the title on the box, with Monteverdi in larger print than the collaborators and *Nerone* as title in much smaller print than *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, undermines his thesis but seems right to me: *Nerone* because that is the title of the Naples MS which the recording follows, but the usual title, since it has the authority of the librettist in his publication of it as a literary work – Aresi mentions the publication but not the title. There's no doubt that other hands were involved. The Prologue and much if the last scene is clearly not Monteverdi: an 'objective' way of arguing that is to figure the bass – it's difficult and awkward, while Monteverdi's basses are always obvious to play. I suspect that he was not interested in the philosophical paraphernalia at the beginning[7] and the end, though the fact that III, 8 is dubious from the start might suggest that he had given up by then. The other problem is the part of Ottone. A far stronger case can be made for Monteverdi having considerable involvement in the work.

The other main emphasis in the note is on performance practice, which is mostly stating what is obvious to anyone seriously engaged with the work. Most of the ideas were adopted in the performance for which I was editor and advisor in 1988 (including a female Nerone who sounded very different from Poppea).[8] One minor misprint: the cast list uses English names for the characters, except that *Otho* has a redundanct final *n*.

The selling point of the recording is the fact that it is based explicitly on the Naples MS. Of the two musical sources, the Venice one dates from sometime between the premiere (1642/3) and the death of Mrs Cavalli (the copyist of parts of it) in 1652: 1646 is the usual guess. The Naples MS is presumably related to a 1651 Naples visit of a Venetian touring production. The Venice MS is messy, obviously related to a performance; Naples is a library copy. What gave me a rationale when working on my edition was the likelihood that the Naples MS showed an attempt to restore the original libretto. Minor cuts and changes in Venice are likely to have been the result of either the composer or the performers making changes, which someone (perhaps Busenello himself) insisted on restoring. The idea of performing Naples complete is slightly undermined by the imposition of cuts, while some additional instrumental music is borrowed from Cavalli. The latter are listed, but not the cuts, for which the interested purchaser will have to consult a score.[9]

Those who have been collecting La Venexiana's reordings of Monteverdi (and other) madrigals will have bought this already. If not, I certainly recommend hearing it; but it will probably appeal chiefly to scholars, Monteverdi enthusiasts, and those who went to the live performance and want a souvenir.

7. much beloved by directors, who preserve it while cutting much better music.

8. Della Joneas and Arleen Auger;directed by Richard Hickox (VCT 7 90775-2).. Stylistically, La Venexiana are much more in accord with current taste, and the Hickox performance got a bit slapdash rhythmically during the 'stage' run (at Christ Church, Spitalfields) and could not be tightened up at the recording because so much time was wasted by passing aircraft.

9. Both versions are included in the Alan Curtis edition (Novello) and mine.

400 YEARS OF VESPERS
Early Music America at Berkeley

I was very flattered to be invited to participate in a conference on Vespers (June 10-12) organised by Early Music America in the context of the Berkeley Early Music Festival. What was, I think, the first such Festival, in 1990, began with the 1610 *Vespers* from my edition (just before it was typeset, I think), conducted by Philip Brett. I was invited then by John Butt, and stayed with him and Sally. Curiously, twenty years later, members of the Music Department were barely visible; the academics present mostly seemed to be from other branches of the University of California.

The conference comprised three days with papers in the morning and workshop sessions in the afternoon. It began in 1210. My chief recollection isn't tied to so specific a date but is of Susan Hellauer's absolutely simple but brilliantly effective way of learning the modes, with not a note of music in sight and very few words. Rebecca Baltzer (long familiar to me as a name in Notre-Dame studies) provided the more overtly musicological input with a lecture on Vespers at Notre Dame c. 1210. I sampled part of the instrumental session in the afternoon, where Margriet Tindmans was tactfully and encouragingly enticing players to improvise above a tenor. The following day moved rather nearer to 1610, via Dufay and later renaissance Spain. Bill Mahrt seems to be a leading early-choir expert in the area, and in the workshop session on Victoria managed, without being particularly demonstrative, to get good results from a mixed bag of singers; Alejandro Planchart was slightly more dynamic with Dufay.

The Monteverdi day began with a general lecture from me (which went rather better than its trial run in Cambridge) and Herb Myers on the use of instruments. The spoken part finished with a general discussion – but six people who on the whole agreed with each other were too many for each to have his own say on each point and remain interesting. No fighting and death threats (as were rumoured to have arisen at a 1993 Monteverdian discussion!) We all accepted the down-a-fourth transpositions but none accepted slow tripla (it is comforting that Planchart, who as a Dufay expert knows the theory better than any Monteverdian, was one of the six.) Three of the panel (Gwen Toth, Warren Stewart and and Jeffrey Thomas) shared the afternoon workshop. I turned up to play organ continuo, but instead had to use a Steinway: it took a while to work out what to do with it, but I settled on playing the big, solid chords I would have done on a smallish organ. The succession of three different styles of conducting in an afternoon was a bit like an audition or competition, but I'm not going to award prizes.

There were several people I was pleased to meet. I mention the PRB couple on p. 2: thanks for the meal. Having exchanged words on the previous days, I joined the Honolulu musicians who are using our Vespers edition later in the year for a drink and chat, partly Vesperal, chiefly social. I spent a lot of time with Alejandro Planchart, a fascinating man with some good stories

(though they were repeated to other people in my presence, so I got to know some of them quite well). It was a pity that I did not meet Herb Myers till the last day: we had lots to talk about, which emerged in an exchange of emails when I got home. He claimed to have played the Vespers 200 times (and is apparently not yet bored by it). I hope our chats continue: perhaps they should be public and incorporate other instrumentalists' views. I attended an Early Music America business meeting. It is very different from any of the UK early music organisations, as I briefly tried to explain at it. I was very grateful that Maria Caldwell invited me (and enabled EMA cover the costs). I had met her before in Seattle and at last year's York vocal conference, but it was nice to have the sort of relaxed chat one can have over breakfast.

BERKELEY EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

The formal Festival programme seemed smaller than I remembered from 1990 and 1992. I had to miss the final concert on the Sunday to catch my plane, and I made no attempt to chase the fringe. The choir I overheard in the hotel wasn't up to Taverner's Western Wind mass; I remarked to someone that the conductor might have given the music some shape without beating so hard, but was told that it wouldn't have helped. It seems that the quality varied enormously. Judging by a CD Peter Ballinger gave me, Wildcat Viols would certainly have been worth hearing, and some of the programme looked interesting and included names of performers that suggested quality.

With a busy daytime schedule, I decided to attend only the main evening concert, not the early one, on the three days I was there. The first, *¡Sacabuche!*, was, despite the Spanish exclamation mark, primarily Gabrieli and Monteverdi, with perhaps too hackneyed a programme for a specialist festival (though I suppose I do know that repertoire better than most). The headlined performers were two English musicians I've known since the 1970s – Paul Elliott and Nigel North, both professors at the Early Music School at Bloomington. But it was a team event directed by sackbutter Linda Pearse, who also teaches there. The sequence worked well, with stylish playing, though sometimes the music seemed too fast for the notes to register. That may have been an acoustic problem. The First Congregational Church is much nearer square than the traditional concert-hall shoebox and that may have been the reason.

My second concert, by Warren Stewart's Magnificat, was outstanding. Five ladies, a theorbo and an organ performed a selection from Cozzolani's *Concerto Sacri* (1642) with utter brilliance and conviction (despite one singer being a last-minute replacement). Cozzolani's music really can stand an undiluted programme, and I'm sure that many in the audience will haste to buy the completion of Magnificat's complete works. (Warren did say that he'd send me a review copy, but it hasn't arrived yet.) It was a nice accident that, when my bedside radio came on next morning (I hadn't set it to any particular station), it was with Cozzolani.

My final concert was Artek, directed by Gwendolyn Toth. I had a problem with this. I had a doze and woke up ten minutes before the concert started. Then I couldn't find my ticket, and was baled out by Fred Gable, who had a spare one (if you read this, I'm sorry: I'd have loved to have had time to chat about Hamburg and Hieronymous Praetorius). I had also lost my programme and realised that I didn't know Monteverdi's fifth book of madrigals as well as I thought, so missed the texts and translations. I wasn't really in the mood for the music until near the end. I'd love to write enthusiastically about Gwen's concert: she was the first person I met on my first visit to the USA – she and her husband put me up in New York on my way to Berkeley in 1990 (a route that diminishes jet lag if you've time) and we've met several times since. I can say that my powers of reception improved as the concert progressed. The original order wasn't followed so that the opening and closing items could be adorned with such a marvellously rich instrumentation. The singing was fine, but despite sitting in the front row of the gallery, I was still worried about the sound. The acoustics also diminished the otherwise brilliant idea of interspersing the madrigals with quotations from Zarlino, Artusi, Monteverdi and his brother: one had to strain the ear to hear them. I wanted to ask Robert Mealy afterwards what he was playing on his lira da braccio: it looked quite small, and I wondered whether he was contributing a sort of figured treble. Unfortunately, I didn't catch him. My apologies to Gwen for not being able to write a sensible review (and also to the participants of the other two concerts for not having my notes, which were in the lost programme: hence the restriction to only general remarks). I was on the plane home by the time of the final event.

Two general points. The big events seem to cover a fairly similar area of early music. The fringe certainly provided variety, as did the concerts earlier in the day, but 17th-century music isn't a particularly neglected period now. And the web presence of the event was very poor. We kept on trying to find what the events were to list them in our *Early Music Review* concert diary, with minimal success. The idea of a conference and festival overlapping is excellent. The exhibition seemed popular, and it was good to have it in the same building as the concerts – though a pity that the singing sessions were not there as well. I'm glad I went: it was nice meeting people after 20 years. But the event does seem a little parochial.

One notable feature is still there: the record shop/cafe. It's a good place to meet musicians. No-one knew the one person I wanted to see: Anne Basart. She was a familiar name long before I met in 1990 since, as a member of the music faculty library staff, she assembled a simply-produced magazine (*Cum notis variarum*) that was in theory just an internal document but was filled with useful information and circulated around the world. This was in part the inspiration for *Early Music Review*. Her house was extraordinary, with wall paintings rather than wallpaper. Dinner with her had been a particularly memorable event in my 1990 visit.

CD REVIEWS

CHANT

Music and Poetry in St. Gallen: Sequences and Tropes (9th Century) Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Dominique Vellard 58' 43"
Glossa GCD 922503 (rec 1996)

This CD is based on early MSS at one of the leading centres of clearly-notated chant with tropes and sequences by Notker and others supplementing the chant from around AD 900. The disc begins with the sequence for the monastery's eponymous saint, then runs with sequences etc of the church year from Christmas to Whitsun. The singing is closely based on the neumatic notation – more informative than later chant, provided one can work out the actual notes. Whether the sound has any relationship to that of the time is unknowable. This is a worthwhile reissue, with an excellent booklet and texts in four languages. But if the Latin is set out in lines like verse (though one might question whether the early sequences really are poems), the translations should match. *CB*

MEDIEVAL

Le Roman de la Rose: Love Songs to the Romance of the Rose Per-sonat 65' 32"
Christophorus CHR 77325
Music by Jacques de Cysoing, Machaut, Solage and anon

The Roman de la Rose exemplifies and influenced the concept of courtly love in the 13th and 14th centuries.* Sabine Lutzenberger sings attractively and skilfully. She is accompanied by Tobie Miller (hurdy-gurdy and recorder), Baptiste Romain (vielle & bagpipes) and Elizabeth Rumsey (vielle). I don't detect anything startlingly original, but the performances are pleasing, with the voice clearly enunciating the text and the instruments blending well. The hockets in the *En vergier* (Cyprus MS) are extraordinarily (perhaps anachronistically?) expressive Sadly, the texts are printed only in old French and modern German. *CB*

** I was amused that the title of the classic 20th-century English exposition is well enough known to be the title of an Oxford-based TV detective story recently; curiously, unlike the programme's title and leading character, his namesake was a scholar who seems not to have experienced romantic love himself until a couple of decades after writing the book.*

16th CENTURY

Merulo *Missa Apostolorum* Schola Gregoriana Scriptora, Dom Nicola Bellinazzo OSB, Roberto Loreggian *org* 57'34"
Tactus TC 533803

Claudio Merulo (1533-1604) was one of the finest of the late Renaissance Italian organist composers. He became principal organist at St Marks Venice at 24, pushing Andrea Gabrieli into second place,* and later moved to Parma. This CD incorporates four of his free organ works into the context of his alternatim organ mass Missa Apostolorum, based on the Cunctipotens genitor Deus chant, with the Propers of the Feast of St John the Evangelist. Unfortunately there is no reference to the organ used. Although it could be an historical instrument, the upperwork does sound rather brittle at times, without the blend that is usual in the finest historic Italian instruments. I also wonder about the acoustic placement – the organ sounds close, with the plainchant choir rather distant. In most Italian churches, the organ(s) are placed in the choir, on galleries above (and often on either side of) the stalls. This means that the acoustic distance should be similar – or, if anything, with the organ a little bit more distant than the singers. There also seems to be a very slight pitch difference between the organ and singers – no recording dates are given, so it might be that the two were recorded separately. These points aside, Roberto Loreggian's playing is mature and musical, with the advanced manual dexterity demanded by some of Merulo's music. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

** or was second organist the better job?* CB

Madrigali per Laura Peperara Silvia Frigato, Miho Kamiya *SS*, Silvia Rambaldi *hpscd*
Tactus 530001 61' 24"
Agostini, Frescobaldi, Luzzaschi, Virchi, Wert

This could not be more of a contrast with the fantastic Contarini CD reviewed below. Take two wobbly aspiring sopranos and a plonky harpsichordist, stick them in a room with an unfavourable acoustic and let them screech away... it is the kind of thing one might expect of students on first discovering early music. The singers show little affinity with or understanding of the music, and use far too much vibrato but virtually none of the other *affetti* displayed so admirably by Marta Infante; the tuning is suspect in many places. The words are not well projected, and convey little sense. Silvia Frigato has some skill in Caccinian ornamentation (*Ch'io non t'ami cor mio*), but that alone is not enough to save the CD from awfulness. The harpsichordist Silvia Rambaldi seems to want to play as many notes as possible at a time, and has little sense of line or pulse. Some research has gone into making the CD, and it probably made an attractive local concert; but for a CD these days far more effort at varied presentation and sympathetic accompaniment is needed. Stay away! *Selene Mills*

Philips *Cantiones Sacrae* Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge, Richard Marlow
Chaconne CHAN 0770 77' 55"

Peter Philips is a composer who, I feel, sometimes falls between two stools. An Englishman who spent much of his creative life abroad, he is given scant attention by continental groups who regard him as English but also by English groups, by whom he is treated as essentially continental. This disc confirms his distinctive talent as a polyphonist, but also confirms the continental sound of his music. While he was churning out Catholic service music just as Byrd was in England, Philips' idiom is influenced exclusively by music of Catholic Europe, while Byrd remains a recusant English Catholic. Listening to this almost bewildering variety of sacred pieces, one is struck simultaneously by the sheer range of Philips' influences and the originality of his compositional gift. The performances by the Trinity College Choir are superbly detailed and bursting with energy, bringing out Philips' instantly attractive accessibility. *D. James Ross*

Victoria *18* Musica Ficta, Raul Mallavibarrena
Enchiriadis EN2029 58' 00"

Victoria 18 turns out to be a performance of Victoria's 18 Tenebrae Responses. The readings are suitably intense, with the dynamism and occasional blemish of a live performance, although the acoustic is sometimes uncomfortably close. From the photos in the booklet it looks as if the recording was made in a wine cellar, and the fact that the singers appear to be singing directly into a wall would account for the rather unflattering acoustic, and perhaps also the occasional slight popping of the recorded sound (e.g. track 5). This aspect makes the complete recording rather unrelenting, and strangely at odds with the mystical tone adopted by the booklet notes. It is hard to tell whether their pretentious rhetorical style was there at the start or came in with translation, but please reserve a place in pseuds' corner for nonsense such as 'shadows illuminated his soul'. It is a pity that these powerful performances are not better served by their recording and supporting literature. *D. James Ross*

Willaert *Missa Mente tota & Motets*
Cinquecento Renaissance Vokal 70' 47"
Hyperion CDA 67749

A disc which combines one of the finest vocal ensembles in Europe currently at the height of its powers with the richly scored and constantly inventive music of Adrian Willaert promises to be a revelation. At its heart is the six-part *Missa Mente tota*, possibly an early work, but music which already demonstrates his complete mastery of polyphony. Built upon a series of double canons, the piece is dynamic and sinuous, betraying little of the more muscular richer polyphonic writing which characterizes his later Venetian style and which proved so influential on the next generation of Venetian masters. The motets demonstrate the full range of Willaert's compositional genius from a couple of melodically daring early works to some weighty works from his Venetian prime. The disc concludes with Cipriano de Rore's tribute to Willaert, a celebration of his contribution to San Marco and of their shared native Flanders The singing throughout is superbly blended, nuanced, tuned and expressive.

D. James Ross

Coeperunt loqui Cheltenham College Chamber Choir, Alexander Ffinch 57' 48"
Herald HAVPCD351
Lassus *Missa Venatorum*+ motets by Lassus, Morales, Philips, Hieronymus Praetorius, Sheppard & Tallis

When the chips are down, for all the committed singing on this disc, the Cheltenham College Chamber Choir seems to perform at a decidedly amateur level, with a rather opaque sound, fluffy entries and occasional wobbly pitch. In a crowded scene occupied by superlative professional singers, this sort of mixed disc of greatest hits doesn't really serve any useful purpose other than to provide the choir with something to sell at their own concerts. While I don't know of another recording of the Lassus *Missa Venatorum*, the other works are all very familiar, and sadly available elsewhere in superior performances. *D. James Ross*

The Imperial Composers of Charles V and Philip II Musica reservata de Barcelona, Peter Phillips 65' 51"
La ma de guido LMG 2092

These works by the courtly composers of perhaps the most powerful men in Europe at the time are surprisingly modest in scope, particularly so in these performances by eight vocalists supported by baixo and organ. As one might expect with this melancholy family, *regretz* abound, with the original *Mille regretz* chanson by Josquin and the Kyrie of Morales' *Missa Mille regretz* rubbing shoulders with the Gloria of Gombert's coronation Mass for Charles V, *Sur tous regretz*. Although the different vocal complements required for each choral piece provide variety, further contrast is achieved by the inclusion of charming organ solos by Antonio de Cabezon. The performances are neatly tailored, although I felt that sometimes the music needed a little more expression to bring it fully to life. *D. James Ross*

Merry Melancholy: English Lute Music of the 16th Century Joachim Held *lute* 65' 39"
Hänssler Classic CD 98.600
Allison, Cutting, Dowland, Johnson, Lushier, Rosseter & Robinson

This latest CD by Joachm Held is a refreshing venture into the world of English lute music, with a representative range of composers and genres. The CD begins with a rather nice Almain by the shadowy composer, Lusher (or Lushier), followed by four pieces by Thomas Robinson from *The Schoole of Musicke* (1603): *Go from my window*, a couple of jolly Gigues, and *My Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home*. The return of the valiant Lord is played as if the poor chap was defeated by the Spanish, not returning after a glorious triumph. It is followed by an upbeat Spanish Pavan, so perhaps they won after all. Richard Allison is represented by an unhurried Fantasia (an old favourite of mine), and a Passymeasures Pavan and Galliard pair. The five pieces by John Dowland include the evergreen *Lachrimae*, and the utterly gloomy *Forlorn Hope Fancy* built on a succession of slow, descending chromatic notes. *The Frog Galliard* is played as if the Duc d'Alençon was sad to leave Queen Elizabeth and return to France, yet I would have preferred a livelier interpretation for what were presumably only crocodile tears. The five pieces by Francis Cutting include his beautiful variations on *Walsingham*, a reminder to English Catholics aggrieved by the destruction of the shrine. "Almain 2:51" is Cutting's well-known Almain, here in the version from Dd.2.11, with a misplaced timing. John Johnson was lutenist to Queen Elizabeth, and is represented with his ever-popular Delight Pavan and Galliard, followed by a Passamezzo Galliard. The CD ends with a couple of pieces by Philip Rosseter: *The First Galliard for the Countess of Sussex*, and an extraordinary Fancy with descending chromatic notes similar to Dowland's *Forlorn Hope*.

I like Held's playing. It is unfussy, subtly expressive, and without excessive rubato. The tone quality is spot on. If there were fewer rolled chords and more ornaments, it would be even better. He plays a lute in G at A=415. *Stewart McCoy*

Of Polish Kings Canor Anticus *viols*, Martin Zalewski *dir* 57' 50"
Dux 0761
Bakfark, Cato, Drusiński, Haussman, Klabon, Koń, Sówka, Wartecki & anon

For their collection of music associated with four Polish kings (Sigismund the Old, Sigismund Augustus, Stefan Batory, and Sigismund III Vasa), the viol consort Canor Anticus have turned to lesser known works found in sources of lute and keyboard tablature, some of which were lost during the Second world War but survive in microfilms. Although most of the tracks last less than a couple of minutes, together they form an unusual and interesting collection. The three dance pieces by Valentin Haussman are pleasant enough, with one of them played pizzicato for variety. More substantial are the five tracks of music by Valentin Bakfark, which comprise nearly half the total playing time (25 out of 57 minutes). Bakfark was born in Hungary, and worked as a lutenist at the Polish court. His collection of fantasies and vocal intabulations, *Harmoniarum Musicarum*, was published in Krakow in 1565. There is a modern edition by Homolya István and Dániel Benkö published in Budapest in 1979, which provides the original Italian tablature together with an excellent polyphonic transcription showing voice-leading and part-crossing. Bakfark's fantasias and vocal intabulations are in strict counterpoint, so it is easy enough to re-write the music for viols. Fantasia V has an opening theme similar to that of the well-known Adrianus Fantasie from York Minster M.91(S). For the most part Canor Anticus stick to Bakfark's text, including his various cadential figurations, but they occasionally make what appear to be unnecessary changes, adding passing notes between notes a third apart, and in bar 22 creating an extraordinary cadence involving an augmented sixth (Eb, c'#, and g'). The advantage of lute tablature is that accidentals are unambiguous, so why change E natural to E flat for a chord alien to the 16th century? To Bakfark's intabulation of *Czarna krowa* (Black cow), some elaborate divisions are added by Canor Anticus in the upper part, but why pick just bars 19-20 for this special treatment? Unusual are the four pieces by Piotr Drusiński, which include a Preambulum where the solo bass viol is accompanied by slow held chords on the other viols, and a setting of *Resonet in laudibus* with occasional frantic divisions. Canor Anticus make a good sound, with gently arched phrasing, and their ensemble is exceptionally tight. *Stewart McCoy*

17th CENTURY

Carissimi *Oratorios* Les Voix Baroque, Matthew White, Alexander Weimann *dirs*
Atma ACD\22622

This excellent disc comprises four of Carissimi's oratorios – *Jonas*, *Jephte*, *Ezechia* and *Job*. It's one of the most complete collections of them on record, and the performance is lovely. The band is just strings (plus harpsichord and organ), but the continuo is quite varied throughout. The tempi and continuity are carefully chosen. The singing is of a consistently high standard. This is highly recommendable to Carissimi novices and experts alike.
Katie Hawks

Mr Corelli in London: Recorder Concertos, La Follia Maurice Steger *rec*, The English Concert, Laurence Cummings 71'
harmonia mundi USA HMU 907523

The extended title of this CD, 'Arcangelo Corelli's Opus 5 in the orchestral edition by Francesco Xaverio Geminiani (1687-1762) and ornamented versions of severall Eminent Masters', sums up its contents but gives little idea of the breathtaking display of musical fireworks to come. Corelli's violin sonatas arrived in London soon after publication in Rome in 1700 and rapidly became so popular that in 1710 Roger North wrote: 'Nothing will relish but Corelli'. They soon became the mainstay of the music societies which spread around the country during the first half of the century, particularly in the form of concerti grossi arranged by Geminiani and others. Musicians of the day made their own virtuoso arrangements of the sonatas, and as professional musicians were employed to play along with the amateurs at these music societies it follows that they would have performed embellished versions of the solo parts. Maurice Steger has made his own performing editions, combining the Geminiani concerti grossi with embellished solos taken from 18th century MSS and printed editions, all of which are fully listed in the booklet. The result is an astonishing virtuoso performance by Steger, particularly in the *Gavotta* of concerto no. 10 with embellishments by the French flute player Michel Blavet, and the *Gigg* from no. 5 with variations by Cateni and Robert Valentine. As a contrast, the English Concert performs on its own the Geminiani concerto grosso based on Corelli's *La Follia* sonata, and the disc ends with a beautiful Ground, possibly by Mattheson, based on the *Sarabanda* of the seventh sonata. *Victoria Helby*

L. Couperin Christophe Rousset 108' 29"
Aparté AP006 (2 CDs)
Suites in F, g, C, c, d & a; Pavanne in f#

This is not a Louis Couperin intégrale, more a selection from the sources to create suites of manageable length in contrasting keys, to which the Pavanne has been added as an encore/appendix. I actually started listening here and was not disappointed by the playing, the temperament or the instrument. This is a gloriously restored Louis Denis from 1658 which has been recorded before and which may be played by appointment with the owner. Christophe Rousset is now so active as a conductor that it is easy to forget that he is one of the rare winners of a first prize in the Bruges Harpsichord Competition (1983) and has recorded the complete works of the major French clavecinistes. It doesn't really need me to say that he's brilliant, though I'm happy to do so and add that this is the best of the several Louis Couperin recordings I have reviewed for *EMR*. *David Hansell*

Demantius *St John Passion and six motets* KammerChor Saarbrucken, Georg Grun
Christophorus CHE 0149-2

An exact contemporary of Monteverdi, the Bohemian composer Christoph Demantius spent his entire creative life in Freiberg in Saxony where he worked as Cathedral Kantor. At a time when the *stile concertato* was pervading music throughout Europe, the conservative Demantius preferred the more traditional polyphonic approach of his German predecessors such as Lassus, and the five- and six-part works recorded here are generally in this backward-looking style. However, his fiercely original musical imagination avoids any impression of stodginess. The strikingly original evocation of stillness at the start of his motet *Es ward eine Stille* (track 4) is a particularly powerful example. Although not a specialist early music ensemble, the Saarbrucken Chamber Choir present his music idiomatically and dramatically, and this CD contains a sufficiently varied selection of his compositions to add valuably to our picture of this important German composer. *D. James Ross*

Dowland *Lachrimae or Seaven Teares* The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman *dir*, Paul O'Dette *lute* 68' 33"
Hyperion Helios CDH55339

The music of Dowland's collection of 21 dance pieces, *Lachrimae*, will be familiar to most early music buffs, but it may sound strangely unfamiliar in this recording by The Parley of Instruments (unless they bought the original 1992). Instead of the usual viols, it is played by a consort of violins (violin, two violas, and two basses) with lute. Peter Holman argues in the accompanying booklet that for the pieces to be effective on violins, the seven Lachrimae pavans have been transposed up a fourth, and John Langton's Pavan up a tone. He may well be right that violinists sometimes transposed music to accommodate their instruments, but to me, violins at such a high pitch (up a fourth and at A=440) lack the gravitas of a consort of viols at written pitch and a shade lower than A=440. The galliards, on the other hand, are not transposed, and are very convincing on violins. Nicholas Gryffith and Giles Hobie bounce along nicely, as do the two almands. Unfortunately Paul O'Dette's lute is barely audible, out-Topped as it is by The Scoulding Violins, and its high, tinkly notes can be discerned clearly only as independent passing notes or final-note fill-ins. There are some lovely home-made lute divisions in Sir John Souch's Galliard, and others gleaned from the broken consort in Captaine Digorie Piper his Galliard.

For his two solos – the Pavan by Moritz, Landgrave of Hessen, and *The King of Denmarke, his Galliard* (both from Robert Dowland's *Varietie*) – O'Dette plays a G lute at A=440. There are no ornaments in *Varietie*, but according to Besard's 'Necessarie Observations', they would have been added by 'a cunning player'. O'Dette adds none to the Pavan, but adds many (with good effect) to the Galliard. The same galliard is played by the consort with some exciting divisions on violin from Judy Tarling, but the piece sounds remarkably short played just the once through at a fast tempo, unlike O'Dette's four times through at a slower speed. *Captaine Digorie Piper his Pavan*, taken from Kassel 4° MS mus. 125, is included as a 22nd consort item. The interpretation of Dowland's consort music by The Parley of Instruments is excellent, with vigour in the galliards and pathos in the pavans. *Stewart McCoy*

Lully *Les premiers operas français* La Simphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne
Accord 480 2871 (10 CDs)
Amadis, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus, Isis

This is a re-packaged re-release of live recordings made between 2001 and 2005. The ten CDs are in paper sleeves and each opera is colour-coded. Lists of performers and the French libretti are included though there are no translations. Lully's often short-winded style is not to all tastes, though he does achieve great pathos when this is required and when he does launch himself at a set piece chaconne or a finale of any kind the effect is tremendous. For Hugo Reyne and his team their extended Lully series has truly been a labour of love. All their per-

formances are thoroughly prepared, are both fluid and fluent and have made good summer listening. *David Hansell*

Monterverdi *Orfeo* Paul Hindemith *dir*
Music & Arts C1235 (rec 1954)
Andromeda ANDRCD 9-09
2 issues of the same recording *see p. 37*
Monteverdi *Vespro della Beatra Virgine da concerto, Missa In illo tempore senis vocibus (1610)* Variosu ensembles, Roberto Gini 181' 26"
Dynamic CDS 656/1-3 *see p. 37*
Monteverdi L'incoronazione di Poppea La Venexiana, Claudio Cavina 204' 40"
Glossa GCD 920916 *see p. 37*

Rothe *Matthäus-Passion* Cantus Thuringia, Capella Thuringia, Bernhard Klapprott
cpo 777 55-2 (2 CDs in a box) 97' 12"

This recording belongs to a cpo series "The Musical Legacy of Thuringia": in other words, funding has come from the regional government for a project exploring, editing, performing and recording music that was produced in that area. I would be surprised if Johann Christoph Rothe's name was familiar to any of our readers (with due apologies to any experts who happen to be reading), but I would be equally surprised if anyone interested in German church music were disappointed by hearing his St Matthew Passion. Dating from 1697, it is his only known work, and even contemporary lexicons seem confused – one gives his date of death as 20 years after the church records state! The source is full of later alternations and markings, which suggest that the work was popular. It is scored for voices, two violins, four gambas and continuo, and consists of a sequence of recitatives, arias and choruses – the last movement is especially moving, with its imitative, chromatic vocal writing and string tremolos. The performers approach the music on its own terms – the singing and playing are excellent, and I hope to hear more from this very fine ensemble. *BC*

Schein *Opella Nova, Fontana d' Israel* Sagittarius, Michel Laplenie 66' 05"
Hortus 075

This selection of sacred vocal concertos is from *Opella Nova 1* of 1618 and *Fontana d' Israel* of 1623, the former combining a small number of vocal soloists with instruments, the latter doubling five voices with instruments. The clearly Baroque texture of these works was ground-breaking in the first quarter of the 17th century, and Schein's easy facility with these new textures clearly justifies his reputation in his own lifetime as the equal of Schütz and Scheidt. Sagittarius, who have made a name for themselves in the music of this period and in the works of Sagittarius (i.e. Schütz) himself in particular, demonstrate an easy facility with this music, with idioatic ornamentation and thoroughly convincing readings. If I found myself just occasionally looking for a little more drama and passion from these performers, but their technical assurance is never in doubt. *D. James Ross*

Selle *Die Auferstehung Christi* Weser Renaissance, Manfred Cordes 72' 14"
cpo777 396-2

This excellent German ensemble of voices and instruments continues its exploration of some of the less familiar corners of early Baroque German music with this recording of Thomas Selle's *History of the Resurrection* and motets in Latin and German for Easter. As director of the church and city music for Hamburg in the mid-17th century, Selle had considerable resources at his disposal, which he exploits fully in these varied and individual works. A student of Schein, Selle is particularly aware of the range of sonorities available and in the *Historia* an eight-voice texture allows him particularly wide scope for textural variety. Particular combinations of instruments are associated with particular roles, with the full texture only appearing at start and finish. Weser Renaissance's extensive experience of this sort of repertoire leads to a confident and beautifully balanced performance.
D. James Ross

Selma y Salaverde Anthonello, Yoshimichi Hamada 63' 35"
Enchiriadis EN 2025

In this programme of pieces by Bartholomeo de Selma y Salaverde, Yoshamichi Hamada puts aside his famous cornetto to concentrate on the recorder. What is immediately distinctive is his use of breath as a musical feature. The feeling of "inspiration" ever imbues life, notes appear from the void with no noticeable start, and equally fade, and the rhythms produced by breath technique are sometimes displaced from the notes creating a near-duet from one instrument. This helps give the Spanish repertoire a distinctive flavour and mitigates the danger that always lurks around the solo recorder – that of compensating for a lack of weight with an excess of speed, producing musical chaff. True, there is the occasional impetuous dame sweeping up and down staircases amidst yards of pleated taffeta, but there are some very bold counterweights. The fellow members of the ensemble have their moments too – a set of viol divisions given a contemplative treatment by Kaori Ishikawa, a rolling "paloteado" on baroque guitar by Rafael Bonavita, and an extraordinary harpsichord improvisation by Marie Nishiyama which starts melodically, with wafts of oriental perfume, from which the chromatic ground bass eventually drops in a marvellous conceit. In all a welcome new input to the performance of this repertoire.
Stephen Cassidy

La Chasse Royale Keyboard Music of Antoine Selosse Terence Charlston *hpscd, clav, org (St Botolph's, Aldgate)* 92' (2CDs)
Deux-Elles DXL1148
Noel O'Regan

This recording tells a fascinating story, starting with the discovery by Peter Leech in a London second-hand book shop of a 17th-century keyboard MS, through the establishment of a provenance in the English Jesuit College of St. Omer and its music-master Selosse, to this recording of the complete contents. (Peter has also produced an edition: HH 077.) The process is well described in the comprehensive booklet notes by Leech while Charlston provides illuminating comments on the individual pieces. The music is all unattributed but John Bull's 'King's Hunt' appears, as well as music which has elsewhere been associated with John Roberts. The repertory includes five suites, a variety of dance movements, chaconnes, toccatas, variations on La Folia and other items typical of the period. Charlston is a highly persuasive advocate and has chosen his instruments well, including the nearly contemporary organ of St. Botolph's Aldgate which sounds great here. This is thoroughly recommended, not just for its historical importance as a record of the neglected area of English baroque Catholic music, but for the high quality of the music, the playing and the recording. *Noel O'Regan*

The Developing Sonata: Sonate Italiane Tripla Concordia (Lorenzo Cavasanti *rec*, Caroline Boersma *vlc*, Sergio Ciomei *hpscd*)
Stradivarius STR 33847 64' 35"
Dall' Abaco, Castello, Corelli, Fontana, Mealli, de Selma, D. Scarlatti & F. M. Veracini

It seems a bit odd that, with this title, the first four pieces on this disc were all published in the 18th century but the second four date from the 17th. Perhaps the performers wanted to have something more mainstream at the beginning to attract the general audience. The programme starts with Walsh's recorder version of Corelli's opus 5 no. 7 violin sonata. Dall' Abaco's sonata opus 1 no. 5. is the performers' own arrangement of a sonata published in Bavaria in 1708, while the Veracini sonata is an 18th century arrangement of a mixture of two sonatas from his opus 1. Between these last two come three harpsichord sonatas K 213, 64

and 56 by Domenico Scarlatti. It might have been better to put these at the end of the group of 18th century pieces to reduce the slight culture shock felt as the programme leaps backwards from Veracini to Mealli's opus 1 no. 1 sonata published in Innsbruck in 1660. After Fontana's *Sonata seconda*, the cello takes the solo role for Bartolomeo de Selma y Salaverde's *Fantasia a basso solo*, and the programme ends with Castello's *Sonata ottava*.

Not much of this music was originally for recorder but it all transfers very well and Cavasanti uses a selection of instruments appropriate to the period of the individual pieces. All the players are evidently so at home in the styles of the period that I can only wonder why they didn't make this into two separate CDs with some added material. I hope next time they will find someone who can provide a better translation of the otherwise useful notes. Aside from these minor reservations, this is a CD of enjoyable music guaranteed to lift your mood. which I am happy to recommend.

Victoria Helby

Felix Austria Works for Viola da Gamba Consort Klaus Mertens, Hamburger Ratsmusik, Simone Eckert 66' 02"
CPO 777 451-2
Ferdinand III, Froberger, Legrenzi, Leopold I, Valentini & anon.

I had looked forward eagerly to hearing this CD. As most readers will know, I enjoy editing music from 17th-century Vienna. Indeed, I directed a concert in Edinburgh some years ago which featured a gamba consort, as well as singers, and myself on violin. As the booklet notes, the gamba consort did play a central role in many Viennese works – including compositions by the Hapsburg emperors. While I enjoyed most of the performances here, I was slightly surprised that the group appear to have chosen to play the two Legrenzi sonatas without continuo (unless my ears are failing me!). This gives them an altogether different air to the remaining repertoire, where the chamber organ adds colour and, more importantly, fills in the harmony. Since Legrenzi supplied a figured bass part for both, it seems strange not to use it. By far the most striking piece in the recital is Valentini's *Sonata Enharmonica*: the juxtaposed phrases must have been quite alarming in their time. *BC*

Odi Euterpe Italian monody from the early 17th century Rosa Domínguez *mS*, Mónica Pustilnik *archlute, renaissance guitar & organ*, Dolores Costoyas *theorbo & baroque guitar* 57' 18"
Glossa GCD 922502
Caccini, Ferrara, Frescobaldi, d'India, Kapsberger, Pellegrini & Piccinini

I would have passed this on to Stewart McCoy had he not been away, on the grounds that, since its distinguishing feature was the use of two pluckers and one voice, it was far more suited to him. I now can't find it, so perhaps I did. I'm happy to commend it. Voice and the sometimes-duetting, sometimes-solo accompanying pluckers make a very good sound, and relate intimately to the fine singing. The use of an organ for D'India's *Piange Madonna* perhaps makes the chord changes a little too 'in your face', but it works and I'll use it as a precedent for accompanying this repertoire thus! *CB*

LATE BAROQUE

Albinoni *Homage to a Spanish Grandee.*
Simon Standage *vln*, Collegium Musicum 90
Chandos CHAN 0769 69'15"
Concertos, Op. 10 Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12

Albinoni's Op. 10 concertos, published in the mid-1730s, constitute an extraordinarily varied, inventive and up-to-date collection by the doyen of Venetian instrumental composers (he was born in 1671, before Vivaldi and the Marcello brothers, not to mention Bach and Handel). The idiom is distinctly galant, with repeated-quaver basses, occasional sudden shifts to the tonic minor, and complex surface detail including many appoggiaturas and triplet semiquavers. Several of the 'concertos' recorded here have no solo violin passages at all: they are, in fact, 'proto-symphonies' in the same sense as Giuseppe Valentini's pioneering Op. 9 set of 1724 and the G. B. Sammartini pieces from the 1720s and 30s which I reviewed in the June 2008 *EMR* – although Albinoni's music is considerably more polished than that of his younger rivals. First movements are in at least an approximation to sonata form, and there is even a contrasting second subject in No. 1, presented in the dominant but later recapitulated in the tonic. In two others (Nos. 2 and 3) there are occasional solo passages for violin or cello, but only for variation of texture, as a later symphonist might have used wind instruments. Nos. 8 and 12 are 'proper' violin concertos in the latest style, full of original ideas and ingeniously varied accompaniment textures, some involving only a pair of violins besides the virtuoso soloist.

As was usual at the time, Op. 10 was published as a set of six part-books, for 'Violino Principale', two more violins, viola, cello and 'Organo', although the suspicion that the latter is really intended for the harpsichord is confirmed by a cue in No. 1 that reads 'Cimbalo Senza Contrabasso' -- which also implies that a double bass should share the part in at least this piece. The string parts were certainly intended for single players in the solo concertos, which is indeed how they are played on this disc (with a 'violone' doubling the bass-line at written pitch - an interesting and acceptable solution). In the 'symphonic' works, however, more players are used, mostly with a string band of 4/3/2/2/1 including a 16' bass. It's an ingenious and not implausible idea, so long as one is prepared to accept that Albinoni may have intended different numbers of performers for different pieces in the set – though I think it's stretching things a bit to expect three players each to share the (single) violin 1 and violin 2 parts.

Having had this little grouse, I'm delighted to report that everything is as beautifully and satisfyingly played as one has come to expect from Simon Standage and Collegium Musicum 90. It's very good to have this remarkable and forward-looking music on CD at last, and one can only hope that the other four pieces in the set will follow before too long. Very strongly recommended.

Richard Maunder

Albinoni and Vivaldi *Oboe Concertos*
Paul Goodwin *ob*,, The King's Consort, Robert King *dir* 68'47"
Hyperion Helios CDH55349 (rec. 1990)
Albinoni Op. 9/2, 6, 9; Vivaldi RV 455, 559, 560; anon. (attrib. Albinoni) for trumpet, three oboes, bassoon and continuo.

In fact there are only two solo oboe concertos on this CD, one each by Albinoni and Vivaldi. We are also given two of Albinoni's concertos for two oboes and two of Vivaldi's for two oboes and two clarinets (but the other piece attributed to Albinoni is undoubtedly spurious, being in a style quite unlike his: to my ear it sounds rather Germanic). The recording is twenty years old, but shows little sign of age and is a most welcome reissue. The music is very well played, capturing both Vivaldi's quirkiness and Albinoni's elegance. Three cheers for one-to-a-part strings, too: my only quibble would be that a double bass is automatically included throughout, although it's much more sensitively played than on some recent German recordings. A highly enjoyable disc. *Richard Maunder*

Bach *Cantatas Vol. 13* Joanne Lunn, Brigitte Geller, William Towers, Michael Chance, Jan Kobow, Dietrich Henschel *SSAATB*, The English Baroque Soloists, The Monteverdi Choir, John Eliot Gardiner
SDG 162 134' 22"
Cantatas 36, 61, 62, 70, 132 & 147

The stars of John Eliot Gardiner's Bach Pilgrimage are not only the performers listed in the CD booklet but also the venues chosen. These two concerts of Advent cantatas were held in the basilica

of St Maria im Kapitol, Cologne, and the Michaeliskirche in Lüneburg (where Bach sung as a teenager). The recording captures each church as a large space that can be filled with a rich festal sound, yet also gives a warm glow to more intimate arias. Both programmes are full of delicious variety, with well-known cantatas such as BWV 61 alongside less-frequently performed pieces such as BWV 62 and BWV 132. There are mellifluous movements such as those in BWV 147, juxtaposed against the whipped drama of BWV 70. Each concert includes an early Weimar cantata alongside two Leipzig ones, and Gardiner opts to perform the Weimar pieces at the lower pitch used at Leipzig, so as to maintain a consistent pitch throughout the performance. In the case of one of these Weimar cantatas, BWV 132, the choice of a lower pitch requires the oboe part to be played by an oboe d'amore (pitched a minor third below a normal oboe). This transposition, however, is justified by the double-clef with which the oboe part is notated in Bach's autograph score. Throughout each cantata, the sense of commitment and continuity that comes from live performance is evident. A rewarding and memorable release. *Stephen Rose*

Bach *Cantatas 46* Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 76' 24"
BIS-SACD-1851
BWV 17, 19, 45, 102

A quick look at the cover filled me with excitement – I didn't recognize any of the titles, and if there's one thing I just love about 'complete recordings' is hearing works that I haven't heard before. But I was in for a surprise, since Bach re-cycled movements for his Lutheran masses. I was also in for a treat, as this (the first volume of the Suzuki set that I have heard for months) has all the qualities I remember: glorious singing and playing, beautifully poised, tempi judged to perfection and a strong sense of architecture as well as of devotional engagement. I was especially pleased to hear Hana Blazíková – whose contributions to several fabulous Czech recordings I have praised lavishly in previous issues – sing Bach for the first time. Clearly she is the latest in a line of fantastic exports from that country, and I hope this will be the beginning of broader exposure of her outstanding talents. Not that I would object to hearing any of these performers (or, indeed, all of them) tackle music by Bach's contemporaries – until we know their church music, we cannot fully appreciate his. *BC*

Bach *Cantatas Vol. 10 Himmelfahrts-Oratorium* Siri Thornhill, Petra Noskaiová, Christoph Genz, Jan Van der Crabben *SATB*, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken *dir*
Accent ACC 25310
BWV 11, 44, 86, 108

Where Suzuki opts for a modestly sized choir and orchestra, Sigiswald Kuijken's Bach recordings are quite minimal – only the violin parts are doubled. According to the booklet notes, Kuijken was initially sceptical of Rifkin and Parrott's arguments for such an approach, but his own assessment of the source materials confirmed the minimal approach. So much of the success of such performances and recordings depends on one's response to the choice of solo voices. Although the instrumental colouring is different (aside from the individual instruments and their players, there is the issue of the forces used), it will generally be from consideration of the voices most listeners will make their choice. The striking singer here is Alto, Petra Noskaiová: there is something of a choirboy in the lower regions especially, but where some boys struggle with lower notes, she retains her marvellous tone across her wide range. All of the singers craft the music with love and care, and they combine to produce a convincing choral sound – which, after all, is the central tenet of the one-to-a-part approach. *BC*

Bach *Tenore & Traverso Arias for tenor, transverse flute and bc* Daniel Johannsen *T*, Annie Laflamme *fl*, Lucia Krommer *vlc*, Matthias Krampe *org & hpscd* 73' 46"
Coviello COV 20909

This disc isolates a sub-set of Bach's cantata arias – those for tenor and transverse flute. Many of these date from his 1724-25 cantata cycle and show a remarkably similar style, with fast, leaping and often staccato flute parts. Yet any risk of musical sameness on this disc is dissolved by the addition of movements in different styles, including the Flute Sonata in E minor BWV 1034 with its cantabile Andante, and manualiter movements from *Clavierübung III*. The tenor (Daniel Johannsen) and flautist (Annie Laflamme) impress not only for their superb breath control, but also their ability to shape and characterise each movement. *Stephen Rose*

Bach *Matthäus-Passion* Christoph Genz *Evangelist*, Jan Van der Crabben *Jesus*, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 157' 38"
Challenge Classics CC72357 (C3 in box)

This is not the first minimal St Matthew Passion I've heard, but it's one of the very few such recordings on the market. No performance that involves Sigiswald Kuijken needs any recommendation from me. With only a soprano to sing the chorale lines that float above the opening and closing choruses of the first half, and a couple of singers to take some of the minor roles, this otherwise minimal performance (so much so that Kuijken also plays the gamba part) was characterized for me at least by a distinctive care over the phrasing in the vocal parts – not so much that the tempi were slow, but rather that everything seemed relaxed. The opening chorus felt full of awe, rather than a sense of impending doom that some other versions have. The choice of singers for the Evangelist and Christus often dominate such projects, but here they are among equals: of course, both give fabulous accounts of themselves, as, needless to say, do the entire Petite Bande. If there is something missing, it is, perhaps, a sense of drama – yes, the singing and playing are excellent, but there is a story being told here, and I didn't sense any narrative pace. *BC*

Bach *Mass in B minor* Susan Hamilton, Cecilia Osmond, Margot Oitzinger, Thomas Hobbs, Matthew Brook *SSATB*
Dunedin Consort & Players, John Butt, 102' 03" (2CDs)
Linn CKD354

Bach *Mass in B minor,* Dorothee Mields, Johanette Zomer, Patrick van Goethem, Jan Kobow, Peter Kooij, Capella Amsterdam, Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Frans Brüggen (Live in Warsaw) 106' 21" (2 CDs)
Glossa GCD 921112

My first experience of the B minor mass was hearing Joshua Rifkin's groundbreaking 'one to a part' recording, when I worked in the CD shop that is now a lift at Covent Garden Underground station. Shortly afterwards, I allowed myself to be talked into attempting a similar feat at St Paul's in Covent Garden – the ensuing concert was eventful for all sorts of reasons (not least of which was the original horn player declaring on the eve of the event that he simply couldn't play the big solo!). The two recordings under review here could hardly be more unlike one another. Frans Brüggen's comes from a live concert in Warsaw and uses a string orchestra (7,9,4,4,2 according to the booklet) and choir (5,5,5,6,6) and an impressive line-up of soloist, The Dunedin Consort in contrast is minimally scored (the band is 2,2,1,1,1 and the "choir" has five soloists and five ripienists.

There are not huge discrepancies between the two in terms of the length of individual movements (although Butt takes the Benedictus more slowly, but chooses a brisker tempo for the Agnus Dei). Cappella Amsterdam is a full-on chorus, and the large instrumental forces mean that you get the full effect of Bach's wonderful writing. The Dunedins, always singing one-to-a-part, have more clarity –

not only on account of the singing, I must say; the wonderful Linn production team must take some of the credit – but it will ultimately boil down to whether or not you *like* the solo voices you're hearing. There have been many recordings of the B minor mass since Rifkin's version, but in my opinion the Dunedin is the first to come anywhere near challenging it. *BC*

See also p. 21

Bach *Favourite Arias and Choruses* Soloists, Dresden Chamber Choir, Cologne Chamber Orcehstra, Helmut Müller-Brühl
Naxos 8.572541
BWV 51/1, 56/1, 170/1, 82/1; selections from *B-minor Mass* & *St Matthew Passion*.

This probably isn't a disc for our readers. It lacks the bite of recent performances, especially from the chorus, which sounds as if it was recorded to avoid getting in the way of the instruments. If you want Bach as background music, it works very well: if it was more demanding, selections like this wouldn't work. I enjoyed having it around the house, using it as an aid to summon the music from my memory. (One may scorn listening to the Matthew Passion in snippets, but that's how most of us must remember it.) I may be damning with faint praise, but I'm happy (indeed, would prefer) to take 19th-century Italian opera in selections, so am not going to scorn a disc that might well please those for whom Bach isn't their cup of coffee. *CB*

Bach *Organ Masterworks Vol. 1* Kei Koito (Martinikerk organ, Groningen) 75' 25"
Claves 50-2908
BWV 536/536a, 543, 548, 654, 731, 743, 768, 1016 (Koito) & 1027/1027a

The Groningen Martinikerk organ has pipes dating back to Gothic times, but survives as a conglomerate of late 16th, 17th and 18th century work (including both Schnitgers) with additions from the Ahrend restoration in the 1980s. Although it was organs like this that were key to the revival of Bach organ playing from the 1970s to around 2000, the focus for 'Bach organs' has quite rightly shifted to the Thuringian and Saxon instruments of Bach's homelands. Nonetheless, the Martinkerk organ makes an impressive sound, although I am not convinced that the articulation and phrasing brings out the best in the music or the organ. The over-detached articulation of the opening *Praeludium & Fuge* in e, for example, sounds rather plodding and fragmented, and there are a number of other occasions where the articulation seems to be at odds with the musical line. Koito includes a couple of transcriptions of her own, including an *Adagio* from a Violin Sonata which she compromises with a very heavy handed registration in her stated attempt to turn it into "a trumpet concerto". Tuba more like!

Andrew Benson-Wilson

J.S. Bach *Goldberg Variations, Canonic Variations* Peter Dirksen, *hpscd and organ*
Et'Cetera KTC 1400 104' 44"(2 CDs)

Dirksen shows an intimate knowledge of both these works and plays with great clarity, bringing out all the contrapuntal details. He plays on a Sebastián Nunez copy of a 1638 Ruckers and on the 1733 Hinsz organ in Leens. The recording quality is excellent. His aim, as expressed in the booklet notes, is to respect Bach's intentions as much as possible, especially in the type of harpsichord used and in the choice of tempi, where he avoids extremes. In the Goldberg variations I find the end result worthy but a bit dull, as if the weight of doing justice to the music has killed spontaneity. The opening aria is played very slowly and everything feels too deliberate, with no variation or ornamentation on repeats for instance. I found myself missing the lightness of touch, swing and slight unpredictability of Matthew Halls' recent recording on Linn (CKD356). The Canonic variations worked better for me – Dirksen's style of playing is perhaps better suited to the organ, where variety of registration and more defined articulation help avoid monotony. A good recording but it wouldn't be my first choice. *Noel O'Regan*

Copies were sent to two reviewers by mistake, but both are worth printing. Andrew Benson-Wilson's is included in the June issue. CB

Bach *Fantasia & Fugue* Léon Berben *hpscd*
Myrios Classics MYR001 60' 31"
BWV 903, 904, 906, 917, 918, 922, 944, 951a, 959, 1121 & deest

This collection of fantasias with and without fugues provides a useful context for the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue, also included here. The 'fantasia' umbrella covers a wide variety of works and Berben (formerly of Musica Antiqua Köln) makes the most of them, luxuriating in resonant arpeggiated chords on the one hand and clarifying the more imitative textures on the other. Articulation in fugal movements is excellent and overall there is great energy in his playing on a Keith Hill copy of a 1728 Christian Zell harpsichord which is very well recorded. The performance of the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in particular shows a great sweep from beginning to end which takes the listener along with it. Even when some of the music is not so inspired, Berben always manages to make it convincing within its own terms. *Noel O'Regan*

J. S. Bach *Violin Concertos BWV 1041-3* Monica Huggett, Alison Bury, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Ton Koopman 44' 49"
Apex 2564 68243-2

It is impossible that anyone could expect this recording to be anything other than excellent. Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra provide a wonderful backdrop for Monica Huggett (and Alison Bury in BWV1043). The packaging is minimal to say the least – the booklet note merely reproduces the information on the back of the CD box, with a few extra lines of technical information about the recording. While most of our readers will know at least something about the music, any unsuspecting member of the public would be left with nothing. Still, the focus should rightly be on this typically fine versions – nowadays I expect we'd get at least one more concerto on the disc though. *BC*

Bach *Keyboard Concerto No. 1, Partitas Nos. 5 and 6* Glenn Gould, Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein
Naxos Historical 8.112049 65' 09"

I confess I was expecting not to like this, being allergic to the whole Glenn Gould thing, but I was pleasantly surprised by the concerto (recorded 1957) where both the young Gould and Bernstein show real insight into the structure. The rhythm is tight but not inflexible, showing lots of subtlety while free of mannerism. Apart from the string tone and the over prominence of the piano in concertino passages, this performance stands up well. The partitas (also from 1957) show a big contrast: the E minor keeps the subtlety and intelligence of the concerto performance, with some really beautiful playing in the Sarabande; there is the expected vocal obbligato in the strongly-articulated Gigue. The G major partita, however, mostly sounds like a runaway sewing machine and displays little if any musicality, with Gould treating it mainly as a set of finger exercises. The recording finishes with a couple of fugues (F# minor and E major) from WTC II which I'm afraid confirmed all my prejudices! The quality of the recording is excellent, though, and it is certainly interesting as a historical document. *Noel O'Regan*

The Bach Album Diana Doherty *ob, ob d'am*, Ironwood 71' 14" (+ Bonus DVD)
ABC Classics 476 3673
BWV 1030b, 1053R, 1055R & 1059R; Sinfonias to BWV 12 & 21

First things first: if you're a modern oboe player, you'll love this. Equally, if you're a music-lover, you should love this. An outstanding soloist, accompanied by a one-to-a-part band, beautifully recorded

(and videoed for the accompanying behind-the-scenes DVD), and – it goes with saying – fabulous music. Personally, though I take my hat off to the talent of all concerned, I found it slightly odd that specialists in baroque music (the band) should re-string modern instruments with gut and play with baroque bows rather than actually use their normal tools for the job of playing Bach. The DVD was enlightening in all sorts of ways – not least of all showing how the soloist was completely taken by the different language used by HIPsters, who rather than planning layered dynamics talked about "challenging" and "reflective", and there were peals of laughter at the (new?) concept of a "happy minor". So a positive experience for sure, but not really my ideal Bach oboe. *BC*

Boyce *Trio Sonatas* The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman 122' 58" (2CDs)
Hyperion dyad **CDD22063**

With a Boyce (*b*1711) anniversary almost upon us this is a timely re-release in Hyperion's two-for-the-price-of-one series. I've played a lot of these pieces and can thus vouch for the music's quality from the inside: it may lack true profundity but it is so much more than merely delightful. Peter Holman is, of course, alive to all the potential nuances of performance practice, so a number of the works are played orchestrally – he makes the case in an interesting note spiced with quotations and stirred with great learning. If you missed this first time around, don't make the same mistake again. *David Hansell*

J. G. Graun *Trios for 2 Violins & Basso* Les Amis de Philippe 75' 40"
CPO 777 423-2
GraunWV A:XV:13, Av:XV:19. 23 & 27, Cv:XV:100

In a good month for chamber music releases, this still stands out for the inventiveness of the music and the tasteful virtuosity of the playing. It is also a joy to hear a baroque ensemble which has enough confidence in itself and its repertoire to stay with one scoring throughout the programme, even when this involves the perhaps controversial use of the Hammerflügel for the continuo. In fact, this suits the music – neither Baroque nor Classical, yet still stylistically unified and convincing – very well, and Ludger Rémy judges perfectly his little flights of melodic fancy, changes of texture and dynamic variation. I am happy to agree with no less a figure than Quantz that these trios are all that trios should be and I think he'd have enjoyed the playing as well. *David Hansell*

Handel *Berenice*: Klara Ek, Ingela Bohlin, Romina Basso, Franco Fagioli, Mary-Ellen Nesi, Vito Priante, Anicio Zorzi Giustiniani, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis (3 CDs)
EMI / Virgin 50999 62853620

There are lots of underheard Handel operas; some are potboilers which are nice but nothing special. Berenice, however, really ought to be on the mainstream Handel list. It was one of a number of operas written for his disastrous 1736-7 season, so didn't get off to a good start; but it has a decent plot (not particularly ridiculous) and cracking arias. This recording is only the second, the first being undistinguished. It is well served by its cast – Klara Ek lends Berenice girl power; Ingela Bohlin captures both the suave confidence and awe-struck helplessness of her suitor Alessandro. Franco Fagioli and Romina Basso are rich contrasts to the lightness of the principal voices, and fit nicely together as lovers. Il Complesso Barocco are a good and sympathetic band. If only they had a better conductor. I'd love to rave about Alan Curtis, as he has done lots for the promotion of Handel over the years, but he never manages to reach anywhere above the very ordinary. ('Gelo avvampo' in Act I lacks emotional conflict, for example; Demetrio's jealous outburst in Act II is nowhere near as fiery as it could be; Selene's reprimand to Arsace at the close of Act II is without any of the sarcasm, goading or annoyance infused it by Handel – it's just pretty-pretty; and the recitatives are too regularly paced.) This is a good recording, and worth having on your shelves, but ultimately Berenice deserves more charismatic direction: this will never be a definitive recording. *Katie Hawks*

Handel *Concerti Grossi Opus 6* The Avison Ensemble, Pavlo Beznosiuk 160' 38" (3 CDs in fold-out wallet)
Linn **CKD362**

I have always preferred the Op. 3 concerti grossi to the much more substantial Op. 6 works. I don't know if it all boils down to the fact that the earlier set also uses wind instruments (there are none of the optional oboes in this fine recording), or if it is the music itself that is somehow more youthful, more energizing. In any case, The Avison Ensemble, while not entirely convincing me of the error of my ways, has certainly given me food for thought. Their line-up is relatively small: eight violins, two each of violas and cellos, and a single bass. This means that the soloists are not swamped when the tutti join in. Those soloists are, needless to say, first rate – Pavlo Beznosiuk, Caroline Balding and Richard Tunnicliffe. As I commented above in some of the Bach reviews, there seems to be a tendency these days just to take a little more time over phrasing. That is not to say that *rubato* is making a come-back; rather that some tempi are relaxing slightly to allow more expression, without disrupting the flow of the music. I'm puzzled that the three discs don't each have four concertos, but there may be some technical explanation. The Avison Ensemble have made something of a reputation with their eponymous recordings – it's good to know that music-making in Newcastle is spreading its wings. Can we expect Geminiani soon? I, for one, certainly hope so. *BC*

Handel *Sonatas for flute* Jan de Winne *fl*, Lorenzo Ghielmi *hpscd*, Marco Testori *vc* 62'45"
Evil Penguin Records *Classic* **EPRC 006**
HWV 359B, 363B, 367B, 374-376, 561, 570, 573 & 574

The flute sonatas performed here are the three from Walsh's 1732 revised edition of Handel's opus 1, and the three so-called Halle sonatas published by Walsh in 1730. Jan de Winne plays sensitively but with a good full sound on a copy of a Rottenburg flute made by himself and is well supported by the stylish continuo. The fast movements are lively and there is nicely paced Italian style ornamentation in the slow movements. As there are only six flute sonatas by, or claimed to be by, Handel, they would make rather a short CD on their own. Whether it was for this or for musical reasons, it was a good idea to interpose four keyboard preludes, some transposed to match the key of the sonata which follows, between the flute sonatas. *Victoria Helby*

Handel *Eight Great Harpsichord Suites HWV 426-433* Laurence Cummings *hpscd*
Somm **SOMMCD 095-2.** 55'

This has been something of a labour of love by Cummings, recorded at night in the Handel House Museum on the resident instrument, a Bruce Kennedy Ruckers copy similar to that owned by Handel. The playing is clear and intelligent, mostly eschewing surface virtuosity in favour of a reflective restraint, though Cummings does let go in some of the finales. The recording quality is excellent, if also a bit under-stated. I missed some of the flamboyance and panache of the recent recording by Jory Vinikour on Delos, for example in the French-style Courantes which Cummings plays rather slowly and without much swing. Vinikour stressed the more extrovert qualities of the music while Cummings brings out the introvert features: both have their place

but I think Handel needs more of the extrovert to really come off. *Noel O'Regan*

Jacquet de la Guerre *Sonates pour violon, viole obligée & basse-continue* La Rêveuse 66' 23"
Mirare MIR 105

Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (1665-1729) was Francois Couperin's cousin and highly regarded as a harpsichordist and composer, both at Versailles and in wider Parisian society. Her keyboard music has been recorded several times but this the first time any of the chamber music has come my way. She was one of the pioneers of the sonata in France and these pieces show her fluency as a composer in both melodic and contrapuntal styles. Further variety in the programme is provided by solos for bass viol and theorbo. All the playing is as stylish and shapely as one might wish: my only frustration is the common one of the over-elaborate scoring of the continuo. I just do not think the chordal instrument should change for each movement, still less at the double bar. And why, when the phrase *con organo* is part of a sonata's title, does the instrument disappear after the opening *grave*? Apart from this issue, there is a lot to enjoy here. *David Hansell*

Keiser *Passion Music* Eeva Tenkanen, Doerte Maria Sandmann, Olivia Vermeulen, Knut Schoch, Julian Podger, Raimondis Spogis, Matthias Jahrmärker, Capella Orlandi Bremen, Thomas Ihlenfeldt 79' 24"
cpo 999 821-2

If nothing else, this CD will confirm Keiser's reputation as a fine dramatic composer. Though only one of the three pieces is complete (one because the source is a fragment, the other because of the limitations of space on the disc), there is more than enough evidence in these excellent performances of a composer who takes not only the words, but also the sentiments behind them and tries to convey both in as dramatic a fashion as he can manage. The motet *Ich liege und schlafe* sets parts of Psalm 4 as a sequence of solos and choruses. The St Luke Passion fragment runs from the Mount of Olives scene to the moment the scribes ask Jesus if he is the Son of God. The most richly scored work here is the *Seelige Erlösungs-Gedancken* after the printed source of 1715 – there is a fabulous aria for tenor, three oboes, strings and continuo. There is another in the Passion fragment, *Rinnet ihr beträntен Augen*, that could easily have been penned by a certain Mr Handel. *BC*

Rathgeber *Missa St Benedicti* Monteverdi Ensemble Würzburg, Matthias Beckert
CPO 777 425-2 70' 53"

This is a marvellous CD and I hope it is very popular. It contains 11 delightful sacred works lasting anything between one and a half minutes and a little over eight, a three-movement concerto and the mass that gives the disc its title, which lasts 24 minutes – tuneful, with simple harmonies, and beautifully performed by all concerned. A monk for most of his life, Rathgeber was obviously immersed in religious music-making. His settings of hymn texts were apparently intended as a counter to the increasingly popular practice of replacing them by symphonies (which should perhaps be understood in the sense of instrumental music, rather than a three movement symphonic work). Adding a devotional dimension certainly did not detract from the entertaining element – I could happily listen to his hymns all evening. *BC*

Roman *Drottningholmsmusiken: Music for a royal wedding* Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Manze 70' 04"
BIS-CD-1602

This is an interesting release, and I look forward to comparing it with a forthcoming CD from cpo on period instruments. Andrew Manze will be familiar to all of our readers: a first-rate baroque fiddler, he seems to have given up the bow for the baton, and it seems he is rather good at conducting. I enjoyed an earlier recording of his (devoted to the orchestral music of Eybler) and, if this repertoire is not quite as obscure, the performances he draws from the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra are suitably light and airy. The overall sound, though, is unmistakably 'modern', no matter how open the musicians' minds to HIP. An exemplary recording (as we expect from BIS), but I'd hang on until I'd heard the new cpo before deciding finally which version I'd have in my collection. *BC*

Scarlatti *Sonates 04* Mathieu Dupouy *hpscd* 64' 33"
Hérisson LH04
K. 64, 87, 113, 121, 124, 138, 141, 157, 175, 178, 193, 204, 213-4, 273, 284, 409, 419, 423, 431, 490-492, 513

This recording takes the opportunity to show off an unusual Neapolitan two-manual harpsichord most likely constructed by Gasparre Sabbatino and recently restored by Olivier Fadini, which has a *tiorbino* stop strung in gut and two sets of brass strings. These are all used to good purpose by Dupouy in a selection of sonatas which covers the full spectrum of Scarlatti's invention. There is a quirky and even mischievous streak in his playing at times which keeps the listener guessing and exploits tempo changes when they occur (especially in K204a and K273). At the same time there is great clarity of articulation and a strong sense of direction. This is a very successful match of instrument and repertory and well-worth hearing for the insight it brings to Scarlatti's music. *Noel O'Regan*

Vivaldi *Concertos for recorder, violin, bassoon and strings* La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler *dir* 69'00"
AVIE AV 2201
Concertos RV 163, 271, 312 (reconstr. Chandler), 445, 482 (fragment), 500, 526 (reconstr. Chandler), 530; Sonata RV 86

I have mixed feelings about these performances. On the one hand the soloists are first-rate (and the two solo violinists are beautifully matched); the band play with energy and precision; and I particularly applaud the use of something like Venetian pitch instead of the usual A = 415Hz that passes for standard 'baroque pitch' nowadays. Chandler's reconstructions of one or two missing parts, too, are most convincing. On the other hand I am disturbed by the use throughout of a string line-up of 4/4/3/2/1, even in the two concertos from the unpublished *La Cetra* collection, where the evidence of Vivaldi's autograph set of manuscript parts for Emperor Karl VI points unequivocally to single strings: in No. 6 (RV 526), for example, just the two solo violins with one more violin, a viola and a continuo part labelled 'Basso per il Cembalo'. It seems perverse to use an organ instead of a harpsichord when Vivaldi is so explicit; and there is no apparent justification, either, for the addition of a theorbo and double bass. Despite these reservations, however, there is much to enjoy on this CD, especially for those who like 'big-band' Vivaldi. *Richard Maunder*

Vivaldi *Concertos & Sonata* The Skálholt Bach Consort, Jaap Schröder 52' 20"
Smekkleysa SMC4
RV 130, 166, 202, 418, 535 & 550

My main complaint about this CD would be the length – there is space on it for at least two more pieces by the Red Priest and, given that The Skálholt Bach Consort has gone off the beaten track when it came to selecting the works for the recording, that is a particular shame. The small group faces that eternal problem – how to balance two violins per part. For most of the time, they manage very well, but there are moments (in the ritornello of the last movement of the otherwise wonderful A minor concerto with solo cello, RV418, for example) when things could have been tighter. The most substantial work is the C minor violin concerto, RV202, featuring the group's director Jaap Schröder as soloist – for my tastes, he overdoes the *non molto* of the outer Allegros, thereby losing some of

their drama. On the whole, though, this is an interesting and worthwhile release. *BC*
The label name is the Icelandic for bad taste

Vivaldi [arr. Bach & the organist] *Six Concertos* Gunther Rost (Hildebrandt Organ, St Wenzel, Naumburg/Saale) 72' Oehms Classics OC642

The concept of this CD is sound – adding three more Vivaldi transcriptions to three well-known Bach ones. And the organ is one of the finest in the world – the Hildebrant organ in St Wenzel, Naumburg (Saale), tested by Bach and Silbermann. But I really do not understand why some organists feel the need to play with the extraordinary degree of mannered self-indulgence that Gunther Rost demonstrates in this bizarre playing. At times it sounds like a youngster sight-reading and slowing down for the tricky bits. There is no sense of pulse or rhythmic integrity. Rost has won some major organ competitions but, I really hope, not by playing like this. He also teaches and lectures, with the attendant risk that students might wish to copy his playing style (as a few have attempted with Ton Koopman). He is a young man, with an undoubted ability at playing the notes – I just hope that this is a phase that he will soon grow out of. By all means listen to extracts, for entertainment purposes, but do not buy or be influenced by this sort of playing.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Autour de Vivaldi. Marco Pedrona *vln*, Ensemble Guidantus 62'00"
Solstice SOCD 257
Violin concertos by G. M. Alberti, Razetti, Rotondi, G. B. Somis, Tessarini and Zani

An interesting selection of little-known Italian violin concertos from the *Fonds Blancheton*, a collection of fifty such works copied around 1740 for the aristocratic French amateur musician Pierre Philibert de Blancheton. They are well worth reviving, and this CD makes a persuasive case for them. Ensemble Guidantus use single strings with no double bass, and convincingly demonstrate that, in an appropriate acoustic, such a group can make just as full a sound as a larger band. They play stylishly and satisfyingly, with no gimmicks such as extremes of tempo or extravagant dynamics: just good musicianship. *Richard Maunder*

Zelenka *Missa votiva* Joanne Lunn, Daniel Taylor, Johannes Kaleschke, Thomas E. Bauer *SATB*, Kammerchor Stuttgart, Barockorchester Stuttgart, Frieder Bernius
Carus 83.223 69' 15"

Even before I listened to this CD, I knew I would rave about it. There is something about Zelenka's church music that really excites me. I'm aware that some people think his music is much of a muchness and (like my own opinion of Mahler, for example) think he only wrote a couple of melodies that he recycled ad nauseam, but I feel that there is a great profundity to Zelenka's faith that I rarely hear in other church composers' music. There is also something special about any Zelenka recording that involves Frieder Bernius – perhaps he shares my passion for the music? Most impressive of many pleasures was the voice of Joanne Lunn: here is a full-blooded soprano voice that can both project the melismas, add tasteful ornaments, and warm individual notes where appropriate. She is not alone, though – the other soloists, the wonderfully disciplined choir and the fabulous orchestra combine to bring life to another fine mass by Zelenka that deserves to be better known. *BC*

Baroque around the world: Daphne sur les ailes du vent XVIII-21, Le Baroque Nomade, Jean-Christoph Frisch 141'12"
(Arion ARN268810 (2 CDs)
The easiest way to summarise this painstakingly and imaginatively assembled programme is to say that it is a cross-section of the music (both instrumental and vocal) a young Venetian woman called Daphne might have heard had she circumnavigated the globe in the mid-17th century. Continuity and unity are provided both by the narrative and re-appearances of the tune that bears our heroine's name, and if the large ensemble (5 singers and 15 players) from time to time take some pretty speculative leaps ('Our knowledge of Baroque music in Ethiopia is also fragmentary') at least they do it with conviction. There are some bewitching sounds here, including those of traditional Chinese and Indian instruments, from which you may conclude that this is not really an 'early music' disc and it is a weakness that one has to download texts and translations. But in the best early music tradition, the programme does ask intriguing questions and I found myself fascinated, if not always convinced, by the answers. Try it through headphones in the late evening.
David Hansell

Concertos for corno da caccia Ludwig Güttler, Virtuosi Saxoniae 53' 43"
Barlin Classics reference gold 0300041BC
Fasch, Rathgeber, Sperger, Vivaldi & Zelenka

This is a re-release, featuring Ludwig Güttler (better-known perhaps as a trumpeter) and what was effectively *his* band, the Virtuosi Saxoniae. Five works – three of them with direct links to the Dresden court orchestra (Fasch, Vivaldi and Zelenka) – reveal Güttler to be as virtuosic on the horn as he is on trumpet. The playing is, though, of its time and a little too homogenised for my taste. Interesting to hear another take on Rathgeber, though. *BC*

Giro d'Italia Musica Alta Ripa 68' 38"
MDG Gold MDG 309 1617-2
Boccherini Cello Concerto 3; Galuppi Concerto a4 in c; Locatelli Op. 8/8; Mancini Sonatas in d & G. Sammartini Concerto in F; Vivaldi RV434

This musical tour of Italy is a concert of well-chosen contrasting works from the high baroque and early classical periods. A varying continuo group, including double bass, harpsichord, organ and baroque guitar, supports the single strings of the north German group Musica Alta Ripa, and the result is a rich and attractive sound. Sammartini's sparkling recorder concerto, soloist Danya Segal, is followed by Galuppi's emotionally charged concerto for two violins, viola and continuo. Then comes Boccherini's charming third cello concerto, a technically advanced work for its day with some high solo writing, sensitively played by Albert Brüggen. After Vivaldi's well-known recorder concerto in F with muted strings and some nice ornamentation in the slow movement, the gentle first movement of the Locatelli trio sonata for two violins and continuo makes a deceptively simple introduction to the virtuosic second movement. The programme ends with probably the best of Mancini's many sonatas for recorder, two violins and continuo, another work of strongly contrasting movements, with its lyrical first and excitingly fugal second movement. *Victoria Helby*

Music for St Paul's: St Paul's Cathedral Choir, Parley of Instruments, John Scott
Helios CDH55359

Hyperion's Helios label is a great budget series, and at the cost of a pint-and-a-half one can buy some really interesting CDs. *Music for St Paul's* is one such compilation. The performance of the *Utrecht Te Deum* and *Jubilate* is not the most inspiring ('To thee angels' is a little limp, 'When thou tookst' perfunctory), but it's not bad, and, anyway, it is nice to hear it in the acoustic it was written for. Its companions on the disc are more worth buying it for. Blow's *I was glad*, written to commemorate both another truce, the Peace of Ryswick, and the re-opening of St Paul's, is more spirited than the Handel, and captures the grandeur of the new cathedral; the counter-tenor duet 'One thing I have desired' is particularly gorgeous, and one is always in safe pair of hands with Rogers Covey Crump ('The king shall rejoice). Boyce's *Lord, thou hast been our refuge* makes its premier here. Why has it fallen off the repertoire? It is charming Boyce – the tenor duet 'Our fathers hoped in thee' is lovely,

as is the treble trio 'Remember, o Lord' (very fine trebles they are, too). This is a disc that any enthusiast of English music or cathedrals should possess, especially since it is only a fiver. *Katie Hawks*

The Nightingale and the Butterfly Pamela Thorby *recs*, Elizabeth Kenny *lutes* 76' 41"
Linn CKD-341
Caix d'Hervelois, Couperin, Dieupart, A-D Philidor & De Visée

The title of this disc is derived from three of the French baroque pieces included on it, the fourth movement of the Deuxième Suite in A, *Papillon*, by Louis Caix d'Hervelois and François Couperin's Le *Rossignol-en-amour* and *Le Rossignol Vainqueur* and is appropriate for a collection of sometimes lightweight but always charming pieces. The repertoire of French solo recorder music is quite small, but the Caix d'Hervelois suite no. 2 in G, originally for transverse flute, works well on the soprano recorder. Charles Dieupart actually specified the size of recorder to be used in each of the pieces in his revised 1702 edition of *Six suittes de clavecin*, published just before he left France for a career in London, the voice flute (tenor recorder in D) for his Suite no. 1 in A and the fourth flute (in B flat) for no. 6 in F minor. Anne-Danican Philidor's *Sonate pour la flûte à bec* in D minor was published in Paris in 1712. Elizabeth Kenny's sensitive plucked accompaniment balances the recorder very well. In between the recorder pieces she plays two on theorbo by the French court composer Robert de Visée, a short passacaille and the Suite in D minor, both from the late 17th century *Vaudry de Saizenay* manuscript. *Victoria Helby*

Sonatas from the Dresden Pisendel Collection Batzdorfer Hofkapelle 70' 35"
Accent ACC 24222

It is nice to know that the on-going digitization of the contents of the Saxon State Library's "Schranck No. II" is not purely of interest to musicologists. Here the Batzdorfer Hofkapelle present six works from the massive music collection there, chosen specifically for their connection to the Dresden *Konzertmeister* Pisendel. Quite apart from his efforts in maintaining what became widely acknowledged as the best orchestra in Europe, he spent large amounts of his time copying (as well as composing) music. Just how he came upon some material remains a mystery (a trio sonata by François Couperin, for example), and it is becoming more and more evident that he sometimes did more than merely copy – he inserted his own short movements into a Handel sonata, for instance. The playing throughout the disc is first class. There are two trio sonatas for oboe and violin (the former played by oboist of the moment, Xenia Löffler), two for a pair of fiddles, and a fifth for violin, cello and continuo (by Torelli, one of Pisendel's early mentors). In addition, three movements are played on two lutes (an arrangement of J. S. Bach's arrangement of an original lute piece by Weiss, if you follow) – enjoyable though they are, I think I would rather have had more from Schranck No. II... the Handel sonata I mentioned earlier. *BC*

Viola d'amore Hélène Plouffe *et al* 71'36"
Analekta AN 2 9959
Bach, Biber, Graupner, Milandre, Petzold & Telemann

First of all, congratulations to whoever conceived and executed the front of the booklet. When I opened the package containing this month's discs this was the first I chose to pick up, so whoever you are – it worked. Other aspects of the presentation do not earn quite such high marks. It is becoming irritating that texts/translations often have to be downloaded – with no obvious compensation in the price of the disc – and while it is enjoyable to read a note that reveals the artist's commitment to and enthusasm for the project the thanks involved here do take on an air of Oscaresque gush. But what of the music? Quite frankly, I loved every bowed note (see below for a suspect singer.) The programme aims to present a survey of the viola d'amore's Baroque repertoire and begins with a Telemann trio sonata that fixes and captivates in equal measure. Biber then proves that the only sound nicer than one is two before Graupner bids to join the list of music's most exotically scored chamber ensembles (topped in this house by Debussy – flute, harp and viola and CPE Bach – bass recorder, viola and bc) with a trio for harpsichord, viola d'amore and – wait for it – bass chalumeau. ('It is hard to find a bass chalumeau in North America.') After this only Bach will do. It's a real shame that the intensity of the players in the recit and aria from *St John Passion* is undermined by a baritone whose contribution simply should not have been accepted. The succeeding tenor is very much better. To conclude we hear works by Milandre and Petzold for solo d'amore which show the character and piquant resonanance of the instrument to the very best effect. Despite the Bach, this is my disc of the month by several country miles. *David Hansell*

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach ***Keyboard Music, Vol. 20*** Miklós Spányi (clavichord), 80'47"
BIS CD-1623
Sonatas Wq 65/34 (H 152), Wq 65/40 (H 177), Wq 62/23 (H 210), Wq 65/41 (H 178), Wq 65/45 (H 212)

Spányi's latest instalment of C. P. E. Bach's solo keyboard music consists of five sonatas from the 1760s (as well as an alternative finale for Wq 65/45) in a distinctly 'early classical' style, while still featuring the composer's characteristic energy and unpredictability. As always, the music is superbly played; the very fine clavichord by Potvlieghe is a copy of an original by J. G. Horn of Dresden, dated 1785. It is a remarkably well balanced instrument with a beautiful singing tone in all registers and an astonishing range of dynamics. If you already have the earlier discs in this series, you don't need me to tell you to buy this one as well; if you haven't, I can only say that you are missing a magisterial survey of the very best of the eighteenth-century clavichord and its music. *Richard Maunder*

Haydn ***Symphonies 99-104*** London Classical Players, Roger Norrington 158' 34" (2 CDs)
Virgin *Veritas* 50999 6 28487 2 5

The re-issue of Norrington's 1994 recording of the second set of Haydn's London symphonies – two hours twenty minutes worth of outstanding music – must surely be very good value. The question is: how dated are these performances 16 years after they were recorded? As a comparison, I looked out my Collegium Musicum 90 recordings of some of them, conducted by Richard Hickox in 1999-2000. The detailed phrasing and the intensity of the music struck me immediately in Norrington's set, which were less evident with Hickox. The genius of Haydn's "surprises" – his harmonic twists, his sudden dynamic changes, that were so remarked upon in Haydn's time but have become too well known to us after 200 odd years, retain their immediacy with the London Classical Players. What is obviously different are the tempi of the second movements – the term "slow movement" is 19th century terminology – over a minute shorter in nearly all cases with Norrington, whereas Hickox's tempi are no different from the conventional. "The profound, airy, affecting and original" (to quote a contemporary report of one of these symphonies) comes through in this recording. If you haven't already got this set and are not too concerned about recording quality, then do get it. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Haydn ***Cello Concertos*** Sergei Istomin, Apollo ensemble, David Rabinovich
Passacaille 960 58'07"
Concertos in C &-& D, Symphony 16

What an interestingly minimal Haydn recording! Istomin is accompanied by four violins, solo viola and bass, and the requisite number of winds. Like the

Vivaldi CD I reviewed above, my main complaint about this is the lack of another piece to fill the disc – with at least 20 minutes to play with, surely they could have come up with something? I have long been a fan of the two concertos, but the symphony was much less familiar. It is interesting when the soloist is also the only cello in the band, as (obviously) the microphones continue to pick up his sound above the others, and it was curious (on only one of the machines I listened to the disc on) to hear the way he phrases groups of four quavers – which can be the death of many a modern instrument performance of this music. I do hope we will hear more Haydn from the Apollo Ensemble – this is a thoroughly enjoyable recording. *BC*

Haydn *Nikolaimesse & Nelson Mass* Trinity Choir, Rebel Baroque Orchestra, J Owen Burdick 64' 32"
Naxos 8.572123

I reviewed with considerable enthusiasm two discs from this Haydn Mass series from Trinity Church, Lower Manhattan in *EMR* 136. The disc now to hand features the delectable *Missa Sancti Nicolai*, probably composed for the name day of Prince Nikolaus Esterházy in 1772, and the *Missa in angustiis* ('Nelson' Mass) of 1798, one of the most imposing of the late Masses. One of the striking features of this Naxos cycle is Burdick's employment of a wide range of soloists, all drawn from his hugely accomplished professional choir. Only the angelic purity of Ann Hoyt's soprano is common to both performances, the only disappointment being the grainy-voiced bass in the 'Nelson' Mass, although he is not helped by the conductor's portentous handling of 'Qui tollis' (Gloria). But that is a rare miscalculation on the part of Burdick, whose inspired, blazing performance of the 'Nelson' Mass in particular crackles throughout with nervous energy and dramatic intensity – listen, for example, to his powerful handling of Haydn's extraordinary originality at Benedictus or the understated, but barely contained drama of 'Crucifixus' (Credo). This series could well be the best thing ever to come out of Wall Street! *Brian Robins*

Mozart *Complete Church Sonatas* Daniel Chorzempa, Deutsche Bachsolisten, Helmut Winschermann 89' 57" (2 SACDs)
PentaTone classics PTC 5186 150

If the sumptuous CD cover gave no clues, the very first notes from the orchestra made me search for the recording date. While this style of string playing might have been acceptable, even attractive, in 1972, it certainly isn't in these HIP days. The organ is the little 1746 choir organ in the Stiftkirche, Wilhering (nr Linz), in a Rococo case opposite, and matching, the pulpit. You can hear it solo in the Andante for Mechanical Organ that concludes the disc, albeit with some charming action rattle and an alarming background hum that should not have survived the remastering process.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Salieri *Il mondo alla rovescia* Maria Laura Martorana *La Marchesa*, Marco Filippo Romano *La Generala*, Patrizia Cigna *La Colonella*, Rosa Bove *L'Aiutanta Maggiore*, Emanuele D'Aguanno *Amaranto*, Maurizio Lo Piccolo *Il Conte* et al, Orchestra and Chorus of the Arena di Verona, Federico Maria Sardelli 139' 08" (2 CDs)
Dynamic CDS 655/1-2

First given at the Burgtheater on 13 January 1795, *Il mondo alla rovescia* was one of Salieri's later Viennese operas. The libretto by Caterino Mazzolà, best known to musical history for his reworking of Metastasio's *La clemenza di Tito* for Mozart, concerns itself with the goings on in an 'upside down world' in which women have taken over the role of men and vice versa. If that sounds familiar, Mazzolà's book stems loosely from an older libretto by Goldoni, set by Galuppi nearly 50 years earlier, a work memorably recorded by Diego Fasolis for Chandos. If the wicked satire of the Goldoni is lacking in Mazzolà's version, the later poet nevertheless fashioned a clever and often witty conceit that presented Salieri with the opportunity to write a *dramma giocoso* encompassing a wide variety of emotions and situations, the latter including a second-act finale incorporating a spectacular on-stage battle, in addition to many typical felicitous touches of orchestration.

In spite of the presence of Sardelli in the pit, this live recording (the opera's first) from Verona makes few concessions to HIP, the orchestra's strings at times also displaying less than perfect unanimity. It would, too, have been helpful if someone had told the chorus it was not singing Verdi. Notwithstanding such drawbacks there is much to enjoy, particularly Sardelli's characteristically lively direction and the singing of some of the principals: Lo Piccolo's Count is excellent, while Martorana copes well with the difficult coloratura role of the Marquise, and baritone Romano sings effectively as the woman General in charge of the mythical island. The live sound is reasonable, although I wish the intrusive applause at the end of most arias had been edited out. The Italian/English libretto is available as a download from Dynamic, but doesn't always exactly accord with what we hear. An agreeable addition to the catalogue that can only further enhance Salieri's ever-improving reputation. *Brian Robins*

Salieri *Requiem in C minor* Arianna Zukerman, Simona Ivas, Adam Zdunikowski, Luís Rodrigues, *SATB* Coro & Orquestra Gulbenkian, Lawrence Foster
Pentatone PTC 5186 359 (SACD) 56'22"
Beethoven *Meeresstille und Glückliche Fahrt*, op. 112 Schubert *Intende voci*, D 963

Salieri's operas have received a fair amount of attention in recent years, his 100 or so sacred works remain largely neglected. The present Requiem dates from 1804, being unusual in that the composer wrote it for his own funeral, that would in the event not take place for another quarter of a century. In common with most of Salieri's church music, the Requiem conforms closely with Josephinean precepts, employing simple, largely homophonic textures in which clarity is aided by a strong rhetorical element. The role given to the soloists, who work only as a quartet, is peripheral. It seems to me a work of decidedly modest achievement, an impression that is perhaps at least in part attributable to the present performance, given at a live concert in Lisbon in 2009. Honest and workmanlike, it suffers from a poor solo quartet (oceans of vibrato), four-square rhythms and a chorus long on enthusiasm but short on finesse. The addition of the Beethoven and Schubert, the latter of which suffers from a strained and inaccurate tenor (not the one listed above), makes small difference to an issue that is likely to hold few attractions for readers of *EMR*. *Brian Robins*

19th CENTURY

Clementi *Early Piano Sonatas* Vol. 3 Susan Alexander-Max *fp* 77' 46"
Naxos 8.570475

Once again Susan Alexander-Max shows that there is much more to Clementi than his student pieces. The five works she has chosen for the third instalment of her series reveal a virtuoso performer (by which I mean both the composer *and* his advocate here) seeking as much to impress in the expressive Adagios as by the showy fireworks of the Prestos. She plays a fortepiano after an instrument by Michael Rosenberger (c. 1798), which she believes allows this expressivity to blossom. I enjoyed the recital several times. *BC*

Ries *Piano Sonatas and Sonatinas 3* Susan Kagan, piano 64' 07"
Naxos 8.572204

Once again, I asked for a review copy of this CD purely out of curiosity – if Beethoven esteemed young Ries, why is he so little known these days? Susan

Kagan's fine renditions of two contrasting sonatas and a single movement work *The Dream* (which, at nearly 19 minutes, last longer than one of the sonatas) certainly confirm Ries's reputation of having been a real virtuoso, and suggest that his compositional legacy deserves revision. Perhaps a period pianist will take up the challenge? *BC*

Schumann *Complete works for violin and orchestra* Lena Neudauer *vln*, Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Pablo González
Hänssler Classic CD 93.258 79' 15"

This is another disc that, were it not a Schumann anniversary year, we would surely have passed over. Amazingly, though, it includes two world premiere recordings – arrangements rather than true works of Schumann, to be fair, but one is by no less an important figure than Joseph Joachim, so comes with a degree of clout, and the disc as a whole is important in assembling all of Schumann's output for violin and orchestra in one place. But much more than that, Lena Neudauer produces a glorious sound from her violin, as she deftly negotiates the technically difficult passages and radiantly projects Schumann's gorgeous melodies over the richly supportive Deutsche Radio Philharmonie. This is definitely a recording that has proved enlightening for me. *BC*

Schumann *Der Rose Pilgerfahrt* Anna Lucia Richter, Christoph Prégardien, Michael Dahmen *STB*, Michael Gees *pf*, Süddeutsches Kammerchor, Gerhard Jenemann 62' 33"
Carus 83.450

This is a new recording of the original version of Schumann's idyll, dating from 1851. The piano accompaniment is played on a modern instrument, but the soloists and choir are obviously well-versed in period practice. The fairy tale at the heart of the work will perhaps not have much resonance with a 21st-century audience, but there is much to be enjoyed here – the Forest Chorus became the composer's best-known work for male voices with good reason. I listened with my eyes closed, trying to imagine the original performance in the Schumann drawing room, with Mrs S. at the piano. *BC*

Schumann *Eine Kunst der Fuge* Pierre Farago (1859 Philipp Furtwängler organ in St Peter's, Buxtehude) 54' 47"
Calliope CAL 9754
6 Fugues on BACH, op. 60 + **Brahms:** *3 preludes and fugues, fugue in A flat minor*

Schumann *Complete Works for Pedal Piano/Organ* Andreas Rothkopf (1846 Walcker-Orgel, Hoffenheim) 61' 56"
Audite 97.411
op. 56, 58 & 60

Schumann is perhaps pushing the boundaries of *EMR*'s normal remit, but his 200th anniversary gives a chance for a peek into the world of romantic organ music. Both these CDs are recorded on appropriate historic instruments, dating from 1846, a year after Schumann's works for pedal piano were written, and 1859. Although a lover of Bach from his youth, a period of intense crisis in his life in 1844/5 focused Schumann's attention again on the works of the Master, resulting in three major collections of pieces. Although the pedal piano had long since replaced the pedal clavichord as a practice instrument for organists in, for example, Leipzig Conservatory, it wasn't until Schumann took delivery of a pedal attachment in April 1845 that any composer took the instrument seriously. The 'Six Fugues on the name of Bach' were written for organ as well as the pedal piano, and are far more suitable for the organ than the other pedal piano works. Along with Mendelssohn's Organ Sonatas, they are one of the foundation of the Romantic organ movement. Although the Studies and Sketches are closer to the piano idiom, they work well on the organ. With two recordings to make a direct comparison with, I come down in favour of the Rothkopf recording on a number of counts, including the quality of the organ, the clarity and attractivness of the performance, and the inclusion the Studies and Sketches alongside the BACH pieces. The 1859 organ in Buxtehude gives a noticeably boomy and indistinct sound, at least in this recording.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

The Circle of Robert Schumann Gudrun Schaumann *vn*, Christoph Hammer *fp*
Capriccio 5040 (2 CDs)
Bargiel Sonata, Op. 10; Joachim Romanze in C; C. Schumann Three Romances, Op. 22; R. Schumann Op. 94, 105, 121 & WoO 2

These two CDs are among the most original that will be released in the anniversary year, juxtaposing as they do music by Schumann with that of his contemporaries – not just any old composers, either, but his wife, her half-brother, and one of the most important violinists of the day, Joachim. And they are all the more significant for being played on period instruments by two fine performers. Christoph Hammer's 1836 Streicher *Hammerflügel* has a slightly dark tone, but that helps accentuate the bright sound of Gudrun Schaumann's 1731 Strad. I remain unconvinced by Schumann's violin sonatas, I'm afraid – that's more my failing that his – but I full-heartedly recommend this excellent set to anyone who enjoys music of this period. *BC*

TIMELESS/21st CENTURY

Late-Night Sessions: live at the Edinburgh International Festval Concerto Caladonia, David McGuinness 62' 51"
Delphian DCD34093

The word 'fun' came to my mind before I read the introduction. It's not a knees-up, but one feels that the 13 tracks show the musicians in relaxed enjoyment – perhaps like a series of encores. But the music is emotionally and technically extremely varied, showing Scottish folk-based music at its most approachable. One can often hear Scottish songs in impenetrable accents, but here all words are comprehensible. The programme is made up from live (undoctored) recordings from a series of late-night concerts at the Edinburgh Festival last year. The basic quartet (David McGuinness, David Greenberg, Chris Norman and Alison McGillivray) is supplemented by six more players (Bill Taylor, Liz Kenny, Steve Player, Patsy Seddon, Sarah Bevan-Baker and Nicolette Moonen) and four singers (Alasdair Roberts, Michael Marra, Martin Carthy and Katherine Fuge) – a fair number of familiar names there! A lot of the music is folk (one might class the first track as that), but it isn't a programme that requires classification. There are informative notes on each piece: there's a nice commendation of Oswald by Benjamin Franklin! *CB*

LETTER

In "Byrd on a wire", *EMR* 125 (June 2008), page 18, I specified which of Byrd's keyboard preludes had been published as early as 1818, even before the modern revival of his music got under way over twenty years later. The prelude numbered IIII in *Parthenia* (BK 24) in C was paired with *The carman's whistle* in a single publication which was in turn reissued in 1833. For details see *EMR* 125. All writings mentioning the revival of early keyboard music in general and Byrd's in particular have overlooked a third appearance of this pair of pieces. They are Byrd's representatives in *Les maitres du clavecin (Clavier-Musik aus alter Zeit) cahier 13. Arne - Bull - Byrd - Gibbons*, edited by Louis Koehler. Edition Litolff, 283. Braunschweig: Litoff, [1873], pp. 12-17 of the volume, pp. 214-19 of the series. The other pieces are the third sonata by Arne, *The king's hunt* by Bull, and the prelude and galliard by Gibbons, MB xx nos 2 and 25. The date of publication is from Hofmeister XIX. *Richard Turbet*

We no longer give price information. Any price information we receive from the record companies is a for dealers. What they charge is up to them.

Anthony Hicks

26 June 1943 – 26 May 2010

As a non-Handelian I would like to offer a tribute to Tony Hicks. His last act of kindness to me and my chamber group Janiculum was to send photocopies of Handel arias for one of the Foundling Museum's Handel festivities last year. He was not well enough to come to the concert. Also last year, his help to Gilbert Rowland and me in organising the performance of the complete Handel keyboard works at the Handel House Museum was invaluable. I had believed Tony played the harpsichord, and indeed he may have, but when I asked him if he would like to contribute his answer was: 'I hope this is not indicative of the standard you expect'.

But apart from Handel, which is of course recognised, his other interests were extensive and his generosity in sharing his enormous knowledge was rare. With painstaking thoroughness he transcribed the music in several paintings, some Handel and some Bononcini, identifying not only which opera and which aria but which performance and which version. One of these portraits, by Trevisani of the Jacobite Duchess of Mar, now hangs for all to see at Alloa Tower. Quite by chance I stumbled on it last summer and thanks to Tony I was able to tell them, to their delight, what the music was. His interest in the sitters' background was infectious. This is the tip of a huge iceberg as I am sure everyone knows. Just as I still miss Malcolm Boyd's wise council, so I shall miss Tony's.

Jane Clark

I've often wondered whether Tony and I worked in the same building in the 1960s: he might have attended the lunch-time concert in London University Senate House at which The Senate House Singers performed Act II of *Semele* under my naïve direction. (Tony spent most of his working life on computers there.) I first heard his name in 1969, when I came across a brilliantly devastating review of the HHA *Saul*.[1] This led to a long series of reviews of editions, performances and recordings where he unapologetically set the record straight about false decisions that those who should know better had made. Those who were wise approached him before they could fall into errors, and found him selflessly helpful in all sorts of ways and incredibly generous. Several of my editions have been helped by his contributions. He once complained that one of my Handel reviews in *EMR* was too kind, so he kindly relieved me of that burden for several years, until his health declined. His best piece of us was a long review of a recording of Monteverdi's *Poppea* which hit all the weaknesses in a project that failed to succeed in its aim of presenting the Naples version. I think he launched the phrase 'silly pluckers' for superfluous theorbos in Handel in *EMR*. (Readers will know that I'm a great admirer of theorbists, but share Tony's scepticism for their continued use in large-scale Handel works.)

1. Tony laboured over an edition of it for many years, and it may eventually appear with Novello – though it would be a pity if they didn't make a full score available.

For many years I found Tony a rather formidable figure, and only recently have I been aware of his humour. The last time I chatted to him showed him at his best: at the Barber Institute *Agrippina*. My seat happened to be next to his, so we chatted quite freely. He laughed and joked, and seemed really to enjoy the staging which, not without some modernisms and rather more explicit sexual romping than the Venetian stage probably permitted, represented what the opera was about brilliantly.

There is an excellent obituary by David Vickers for *Gramophone*. Since Tony retired, he was working on the updating and expansion of the documentary biography of Handel, which was almost completed. It will be a fine memorial to a someone who loved Handel all his life, and was accepted as one of the leading experts on him for decades before he was able to devote himself to his subject full-time. All Handelians will miss him, even if they don't know why! *CB*

Charles Mackerras

17 November 1924 – 14 July 2010

Charles was rather more in the public eye than Tony; obituaries were published in the main newspapers, and his name has been prominent in the press for more than half a century. I'll be more personal, and recall how he influenced, mostly indirectly, my musical development.

I first heard his name in connection with his Sullivan selection *Pineapple Poll*, which didn't commend him, since I have never been a G&S fan. During the late 1950s and 1960s, I regularly attended opera at Sadlers Wells, where the main conductors were Colin Davies and Charles Mackerras. Charles particularly concentrated on Mozart and Janacek. I remember the famous *Marriage of Figaro*, to which he added appoggiaturas and made the general musical public aware (some years before authentic performance became fashionable) that accuracy of note didn't just depend on reproducing the notes that were written. Some critics were shocked (and indeed, the practice still isn't always adequately observed). One could at least hear and see Mozart operas elsewhere, but Janacek was almost completely unknown. Curiously, I don't think I encountered *Jenufa* till much later. It was *The House of the Dead* that had the greatest effect on me. I remember a *Peter Grimes* for the trivial reason that, during the passage when the chorus is trying to find Peter and keeps shouting his name, the keys or money in his pocket rattled as he raised his arms for each shout. In the later 1960s, he conducted for Radio 3 a series of Handel oratorios, of which the one I remember particularly was *Saul*. I taped it, and played it over and over again. (I've still got the tape, but it probably isn't much use now, and anyway, however good the sound, it would seem terribly dated.)

I first encountered Charles in person at Dartington around 1965. He conducted the summer school choir in Handels' Funeral Anthem and a student orchestra in Beethoven's first symphony. I don't remember much about the Anthem

(apart from a lot of worrying about dots),[2] but was impressed by what he did with the Symphony. The rehearsal was detailed but low-key (not synonymous with flat pitch!) But with the performance, everything came to life – though with minimal histrionics. I was struck by Janacek's *Children's Rhymes*, and conducted a performance with the same choir as I mention in Tony's obituary.[3]

I had a few direct dealings with him during my time as deputy Music Librarian at the BBC, when he realised we were on the same wavelength. When he conducted *Alcina* at the Coliseum, he took my score and used it as a basis for his markings. We agreed that he'd copyright it as a joint edition and we'd share the fees (though as far as I know nothing happened). I mentioned my most recent meeting in last November's issue. We were told that he was ill and had cancelled performances earlier that week, so we were not to bother him. But after the performance of *Acis and Galatea*, he sat at a table holding forth, seeming very relaxed. He reminisced with me for a while. He was appalled to hear what had happened to us and offered us general permission to use his name when we need to appeal for the future of our children.

The earliest musical event with which I associate him is the recording of Handel's Firework Music with, if not authentic instruments, the specified number of them. (A fine choice for an oboist!) This took place at night in BBC Maida Vale Studio 1. I was hoping to reproduce the documentation of the event, but I've searched high and low for the HHA score within which I kept it, and can't find it. (It's presumably with the facsimile.) I wish I had had a chance to know him better – and, indeed, to hear him conduct more often since the 1960s.[4] *CB*

MOZART ON LINE

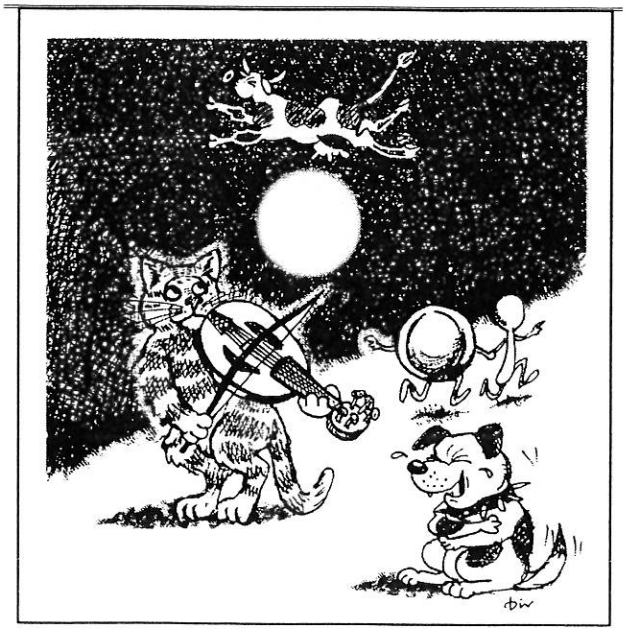
This is an appropriate topic to follow an obituary of Sir Charles. He had already began his conducting career when the Neue Mozart Ausgabe issued its first volume in 1956 and still had nearly 20 more years of conducting when it was completed in 1991. It circulated more widely when published in study-score form. This is probably the first major modern collected works to achieve circulation on-line. Several of the older Gesamtausgaben are available (e.g. the *Bach-Gesellschaft* and *Händel's Werke*); but these are editions produced through the second half of the 19th century and completed over a century ago. They have the advantage of producing a fairly accurate Urtext and have each received several hard-copy reproductions. But the on-line image is generally not as good as direct photocopies such as The Early Music Company sells (£20 for an opera, £30 for most oratorios), and they are rather easier to perform from than single-sheet print-outs. But no publisher so-far had been bold enough to issue copy-right editions thus. The decision may have something to do with the American contention that 'scientific editions' (to translate the German, though it has never seemed plausible English to me) cannot in themselves have a copyright outside that of the composer, since by definition they have no added value. The same point has been argued here over performances, but the rights of a printed edition are covered by the existence of a 25-year graphic right.

If you check www.dme.mozarteum.at you will find entry to the Digital Mozart Edition. It is easy to be led astray and go round and round in circles, but persevere! You can get clear images on the site of all the NMA volumes, together with critical commentaries (which are always omitted from reprints), with other material to follow. There is a condition that it can only be printed for private use, which is reasonable, and I hope users will respect it. If this works (and people are honest), there is more chance of other such editions becoming available. But I'm not going to throw away my hard copy.

The project appears under the auspices of the Internationale Stifftung Mozarteum and The Packard Humanities Institute (which is also behind the new CPE and WF Bach editions) and printed facsimiles of Mozart's opera autographs).

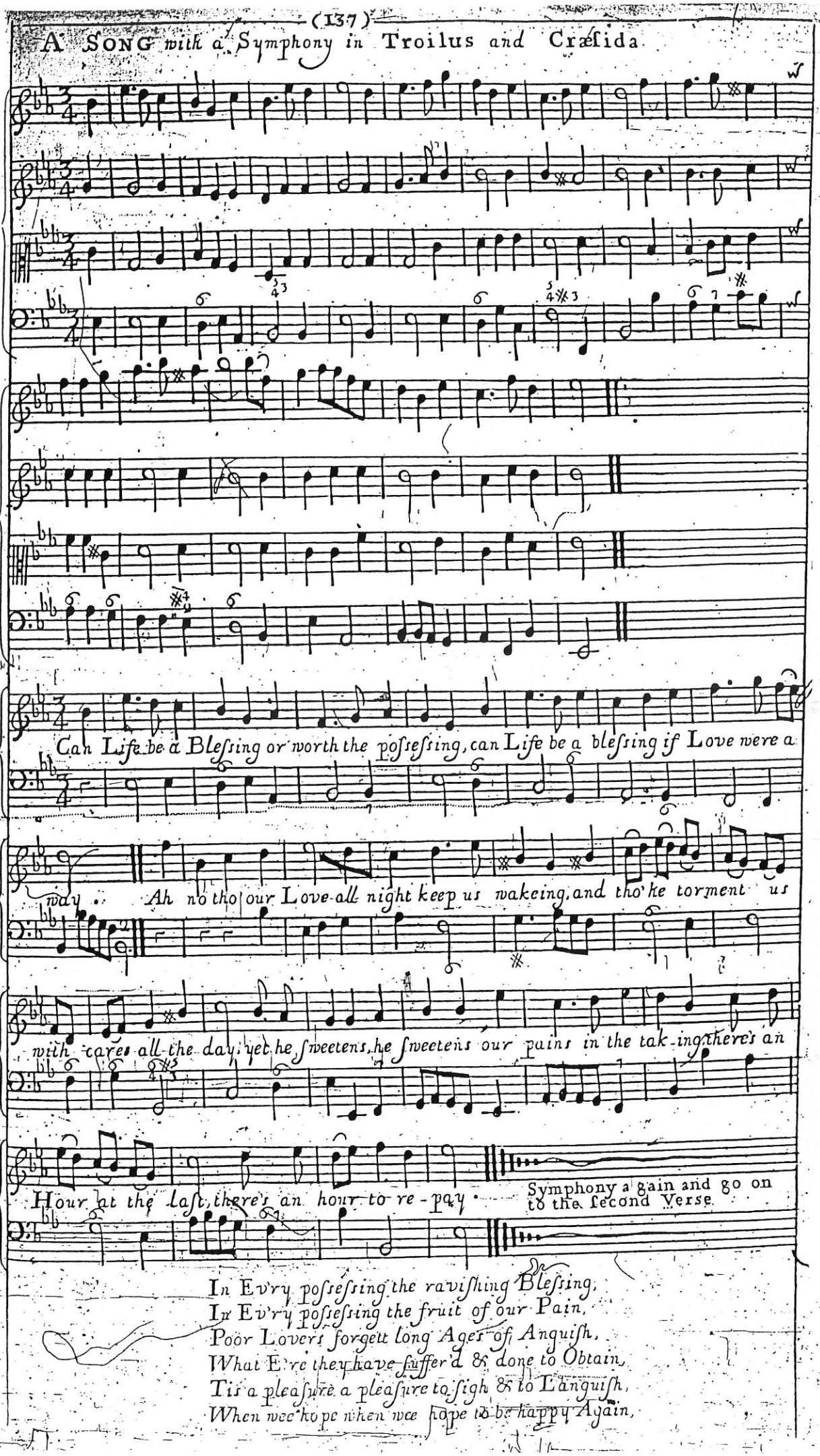
This is one of ten useful sites listed in *Classical Music* 17 July 2010. Some others are :–

www.abrsm.org (The Associated Board)
www.rism.org.uk (UK Music MSS)
www.newclassicalreleases.co.uk
www.classicasl.net.com (downloads)
www.classical.net
www2.cpdl.org (Choral Public Domain Library– be critical!)
www.hyperion-records.co.uk (model record-company site)



2. In some movements, high-speed composition with inconsistent notation presents enormous problems of coordination. In one chorus (which was also used in the Foundling Hospital anthem) I've wrestled with this problem for three editions, and my suggestions have differed in all three.
3. A friend of mine who heard the Dartington performance had her choir in a fairly tough comprehensive school sing it.
4. He would, I believe, have fully supported this month's editorial.

A SONG with a Symphony in Troilus and Cræsida



Text by John Dryden, inserted in his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, 1679
Music: a later setting by William Eccles from A Collection of SONGS... [1704]
(165 pages of 96 songs; facsimile from The Early Music Company £20.00)