

# Early Music REVIEW

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I've just come back from a week of Schütz. He is one of those composers who are assumed to be major figures but who are mostly unloved, except perhaps in Germany. It used to be said that programming him was a recipe for financial disaster. When I first encountered him, it was the Passions that were performed – rather an odd choice, I thought. I was asked in one concert to invent a clavichord continuo to keep the evangelist in pitch without the audience hearing the trick! Roger Norrington pioneered the polychoral Schütz with a (perhaps several) massive concerts in St Paul's Cathedral. (His scores were marked with cues NW NE etc, so the layout must have been in the round!) One of the singers/sackbutiers at the Beauchamp Summer School last week could still remember the devastating impact on the audience of the fierce unmeasured pitched speech in the Gloria of *Wie lieblich sind*. On the whole, we worked on large-scale pieces, taking advantage of an ample supply of cornetts, violins, sackbuts and curtals as well as enough voices for soli and double choir.

The *Magnificat* a18 (SWV 468) was probably the highlight among the big pieces, with its scoring for two violins and violone, three sackbuts, four soloists and two SATB choirs (with instrumental doubling) and organs. This had greater contrast between tutti and soli than the other big pieces, with some amazing solo sections. *Ecce enim*, for instance, begins with each voice having four quavers (with no continuo backing) rising up a major chord beginning with each voice entering a fourth lower (C G D A), with a violin following with E before an A minor cadence. Or there's the Monteverdian striding bass at *sicut locutus est*. For rapid declamation, try *fecit potentiam*. So much variety in a comparatively short piece.

But instruments are not always necessary. The eight-part *Vasto mar* that rounded off his study with Gabrieli has an extraordinary subtlety and command of vocal scoring, and much of his output is for choir and continuo. I found it a pleasant change to play from fairly thoroughly figured parts, though it is interesting how many dissonances were not fully figured. Presumably the beginner played the chords specified but more subtle players sensed when 4-3 also meant 6-4 or when 9-8 was being sung.

CB

## NEW EDITIONS

Clifford Bartlett

## PHILIP THE CHANCELLOR

Philip the Chancellor *Motets and Prosulas* Edited by Thomas B. Payne (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, 41) xxxvii + 221pp, \$200.00

Although I knew some of the Latin poems of Philip the Chancellor and was familiar with the Notre-Dame MS F<sup>1</sup> in my last year at Cambridge, I only made the connection between them about 20 years later when I spotted the article on him in *The New Grove* with a list of over 50 monophonic settings of his poems; half are listed as "doubtful works", but these are now accepted in *Grove Online* and there are more modern attributions. The category in this new A-R volume was barely present in the 1980 *Grove*; it runs to 35 pieces, 20 of which are modern attributions. According to Payne's first paragraph, 83 poetic texts have medieval attributions to him, and music survives for 78 of them – an amazingly high proportion. Philip was closely associated with the Notre Dame school: indeed, the editor convincingly argues that he was the leader in the development of texted polyphony.

The fact that the volume is presented under the name of the poet makes the treatment of the poems themselves particularly important. So here the normal A-R conventions are abandoned and the music, texts and commentary for each piece come together rather than split between the introduction, transcription and commentary. The transcription comes first, with the source stated at the beginning of the first stave. The text is next, with translation in the opposite column. This takes a lot of space, since Philip is fond of four-syllable lines. Finally there are separate commentaries on the text and music. A similar practice has been adopted in some *Early English Church Music* volumes; I hope this arrangement is used more widely for editions that need extensive commentary.

Ever since I encountered the repertoire, I wondered whether the notation of modal rhythms – especially for music when only one voice was involved in articulating stress and rhythm – was as metrical as it looks on the page and is normally sung. It makes sense in the Germanic *Carmina burana* (whether original or Orff), but when did French accents become softer? Perhaps singers should think *inégaie* rather than 6/8.

This is an edition that should suit all types of users: those who are not satisfied can check with the facsimiles, since most of the main sources are available thus.

1. Florence Bibl. Medicea-Laurenziana, Pluteus 29.1. I delayed reviewing this edition since I hoped my copies of the facsimiles of this, W1 & W2 would emerge from the barn in which my music has been stored, but they haven't done so yet, so this review is vaguer than I would have wished.

## G. B. RICCIO TERZO LIBRO

Jolando Scarpa has edited G. B. Riccio's *Terzo Libro* (1620) complete in nine volumes. "Volume" is, in fact, a rather grandiose word for practical editions in A4 format, stapled in card covers with parts inserted – practical editions rather than academic publications. I've written about the vocal volumes in *EMR* 135 & 139; the instrumental pieces have now appeared in three volumes as *Frutti Musicali* nos XIV, XII & XV, though, as with the other Edition Walhall items reviewed below, I've decided that it is simpler to give the EW number by which they can be ordered.

The instrumental pieces from his *Terzo Libro* (1620) are far better known than the vocal ones. The original edition (facsimile by SPES) groups the contents by number of parts, instrumental pieces mostly following the vocal items in each group. There are minor differences between the headings for the pieces in each part and in the indexes: the titles here are given a standardised order. The new edition is grouped as follows.

EW 707 (€13.80)

*A una: flautin [recorder] overo corneto [sic]*

*Canzon La Rubina. A 3. Doi Violini overo Corneti e trombon*

EW 705 (€19.80)

*Canzon La Fineta, A 2: Violin e Trombon*

*Canzon La Savoldi, A 2: Violin e Trombon*

*Canzon La Picchi in ecco con il tremolo, A 2: Violin e Trombon*

*Canzon La Rizza, A2 Violini*

*Canzon La Grileta, A 2 Violini In Ecco*

*Canzon La Grimaneta con il Tremolo, A2: Flautin è Fagoto* [this is one of a group of four pieces added out of sequence at the end of the publication]

EW 709 (€24.80) claims on the cover to be for 2 violins (with cornetti and recorders as alternatives) and 2 trombones (or viols or curtals), though none have specific scorings. So it is more sensible to describe the parts by clef, which is the simplest way to indicate range.

*Canzon La Moceniga in Ecco, A4: doe Soprani & Doi Bassi*

Clefs: G2 G2 F3 F3

*Sonata A 4*

Clefs: G2 C2 C3 F3

*Canzon La Zaneta A 4*

Clefs: G2 G2 F3 F3

*Canzon La Rosignola A 4 pian e forte in Ecco* Clefs: G2 G2 C4 F3

Unlike the vocal pieces, which are in soprano clef (C1), the instrumental pieces in the 1620 volume are in treble-clef (G2). The top note is A, the top comfortable note for the cornetto and also for violinists who, being accustomed to use the open strings, probably didn't expect to use their

fourth finger much. If a recorder is used, it needs to be in C. Bass parts are in F<sub>3</sub>, with a range from the G at the bottom of the bass stave to the D above middle C. Were the four-part pieces in EW 709 for voices, the clefs would imply downwards transposition, but instrumental conventions may differ from vocal. But it does indicate that the bass parts are not low – no need for the bass trombones with bottom B flat that Gabrieli needs! The combination of G<sub>2</sub> and F<sub>3</sub> can be usefully transposed a fourth or fifth, using the *chiavette* convention, which makes the top parts suitable for F recorder.

The editor (or perhaps the publisher) tries to attract recorder players by naming the treble instruments on the cover as “Violinen (oder Zinken/Blockflöten)”. Only one piece is scored for recorder, and a glance through Sartori's invaluable *Bibliografia della musica sturmentale italiana* (Olschki, 1952), which reprints the contents pages of Italian prints before 1700, shows that any name like *flauto* is remarkably rare – a special-occasion instrument, perhaps. I'm not averse to recorder players enjoying the pieces here, but it's worth remembering if you are recording the repertoire or doing high-profile concerts that the most likely instruments for this sort of music are cornett and violin, with the latter gradually usurping the former.

The edition consistently makes the mistake of assuming that the *partitura*<sup>2</sup> (other publications use the terms *organo* or *basso continuo*) is intended for a string bass instrument. This makes no aural sense in *canzoni a due* when one of the two parts is a bass instrument and is mostly doubled by the continuo, and it is logical that a separate bass instrument is also superfluous for A<sub>2</sub> pieces that have two treble instruments. At this period, if there were a separate string bass required, it would be included in the numbering of the parts and have a separate part, even if virtually identical with the Bc.

The introduction is an all-purpose one to the whole series which concentrates on the voices, with nothing to say about instrumental performance practice. A church organ doesn't need a separate instrument to reinforce the bass; the modern fashion for such is a response to early music groups' portable chamber organ that doesn't have a solid enough bass! Understanding this would make the edition cheaper, which brings commerce and performance practice on the same side! It is interesting that in the *canzonas* A 2, the continuo player is not given any of the *pian* and *forte* indications. No doubt he's already playing the quietest stop on the organ. But in the *canzonas* A 4, he is given them: perhaps his basic sound is loud enough for there to be room for a softer contrast (which can be achieved by varying the thickness of chords on a single manual).

The edition is presented in a format that implies use by the general musician, not just specialists, which presents diffi-

culties for non-specialists. There isn't much point in keeping the continuo part's long bars. (The other parts have, as one expects, no bar-lines.) The idea of having four minims in a bar but dividing the bar with a dash across the top line of each is an unnecessary compromise. The duple signature is C not slashed C and there is enough movement for the shorter, two-minim bars to make sense. 3/1 bars that can have a dozen minims are always tricky to read, so (whatever is done with the duple time) 3 semibreves per bar is much easier to read.<sup>3</sup> There's a facsimile available, so those concerned with original notation should use that – apart from authenticity, it's much cheaper. Facsimiles also avoid the misleading way modern printers give far too much space to triple-time white notes than more-or-less equivalent duple white ones, which may lead the unwary to play tripla too slowly. I'm puzzled that the editors retain the black notation of hemiola cadences: they don't add anything that isn't obvious, their warning that there is a hemiola cadence only being an accident surviving from another system of rhythmic notation. If it is thought important, use the conventional sign for it.

I seem to have been consistently critical of the Riccio edition. This is partly because it is from a period in which I am at home but which most performers are not. I'm not actually convinced that Riccio is among the best composers of the time, but he is more playable than Fontana and Dario Castello and a good introduction to the period. (Frescobaldi looks easy, but is musically rather than technically difficult.) I feel that the mixture of pedantry and old-fashioned performance ideas, combined with the lack of a relevant preface, makes these volumes disappointing. My recommendation to Franz Biersack, who is doing a great job with Walhall, is to get a better balance by questioning his editors whether the introduction and editorial practice is appropriate for all the potential market – and prices could be lower if only the right number of parts were produced. There's no need for a separate score marked *Basso Continuo* with these instrumental pieces. One score is surely enough: this isn't music that needs a conductor – though there may be a need for examinations and competitions, where judges have, in the UK at least, to be supplied with a printed score, not a photocopy. One hopes that the continuo player (organ, harpsichord, chitarrone etc) will prefer to play from a bass part, so a more thorough editorial figuring to that part would be helpful so that an extra score wouldn't be necessary.

#### GREEN MEN...

or rather, one woman and one man. I haven't been disappointed by anything I've heard or reviewed by Barbara Strozzi yet. *L'Astratto*, No 4 of her op. 8, 1664 is edited by Barbara Sachs with her customary care for both text and music. The poem is quite subtle, each section

2. It is not a score, but a lightly-figured single-line part.

3. A complete MS score of Gabrieli's 1597 *Symphoniae Sacrae* copied in 1616 has duple time bars (in slashed C) with four minims, triple with three semibreves.

beginning with a poetic tag which sets the singer off on a different line of complaint to distract him from his torment of love. The whole thing is over the top; Barbara calls it amusing. It could be sung as comedy, or in a more subtle way of the singer trying but failing to assuage his pain by music. It has lots of short sections, a bit like a Purcell mad song. It's certainly a piece that is worth study, and it probably comes over better with a live audience. The original clef was soprano, but it can work for a tenor provided that you accept that people tend to hear the voice as if an octave higher – the accompanist can adjust his octaves when necessary. (Green Man Press Str, 3; £6.00)

Giovanni Bononcini Junior wrote some 250 cantatas, of which *Io vi chiedo o selve amene* is edited by Cedric Lee, with help on the Italian by Barbara Sachs. It's main draw is the choice of two recorders as accompanying instruments. The vocal range is quite low, covering a ninth from the B flat below middle C, which is fine for a pastoral scene not requiring dramatic singing; the recorders have a range of a 13<sup>th</sup> from the G above middle C. There are three arias (the middle one with the 2<sup>nd</sup> recorder tacet) and two recits. Attractive music, and not too difficult to bring off, both technically and emotionally. (Bon 1, £6.90)

Both works follow the usual Green Man Press practice of including two scores – one with, one without realisation – as well as necessary parts. They are available from Green Man Press's website (I only quote precise web address when googling the name doesn't put the relevant site in the first few names that appear). They are also available from Edition Walhall – obviously useful for German readers, and perhaps for Euroland in general.

#### PACHELBEL PARTIE A 5

*Pachelbel Partie à 5 [G major] 2 Violini, 2 Braccio con Basso Continuo* edited by Richard Gwilt RG Editions (RG 207), 2011. 7 pp + parts. Distributed by Edition Walhall €14.50.

When I produced my edition of Pachelbel's Canon & Gigue, it was very difficult to pin down what other ensemble music survived. I was kindly lent some very murky microfilms by Reinhard Goebel, but they weren't legible enough to produce an edition;<sup>4</sup> but I did include a list of what instrumental works might have existed, based on an article by Gustav Beckmann in *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 1 (1918-19). This is still the basic document, since one movement printed there gives some idea of the accuracy of the only extant source – an edition by Max Seiffert with the sort of superfluous performance makings that were customary a century ago. The MSS didn't survive the 1939-45 war. Richard has already published the other two extant *Parties* a4 (in F# minor and in G): this completes what currently can be rescued of the list.<sup>5</sup> It's

an attractive, straight-forward piece. Richard might have expunged a few genuine slurs, but the cleaned-up version looks entirely plausible to me. I think if I had been publishing it, I would have added an alternative treble-clef part alternative for the first viola, making it more accessible to non-specialists – school orchestras, for instance. Pachelbel's fame from the *Canon* is so great that there should be at least some curiosity in his other instrumental music, especially since the *Parties* are more amenable to more than one-a-part.

*Incidentally, the two Parties/Suites a4 are also available from Prima la Musica: F# (PAC008) & G (PAC007) each £6.00.*

#### PACHELBEL CANON & GIGUE

*Pachelbel Canon and Gigue in D major for three Violins and Basso continuo...* edited by Norbert Müllemann; Figured Bass realisation by Wolfgang Kostujak Henle (HN 963), 2011. v + 11 pp + parts, €15.00

Thanks, at least as far as my memory goes, to an arrangement by Karl Munchinger, this became very popular in the 1960s, and was adapted for all sorts of forces, many of which were unable to cope with a three-part canon (and I've heard it occasionally without any canon at all!) There's a selection on the Petrucci site, including (alas for hard-copy publishers) a decent score and parts, though without the commentary that the Henle and my editions have. The new edition gives more detailed editorial information than mine<sup>6</sup>, though the only difference in the music text that I can see is an obvious adjustment needed to the rhythm in the Gigue (vln II, bar 16) that I missed. I haven't kept up with other editions. Henle's original feature is the bass part, which cues the vln I part as cue to save the need for counting bars – but it doesn't mark when the fourth note of the ground is 6/3 rather than 5/3, which would be useful if the part was used by the harpsichordist. Henle also includes a keyboard realisation in the score. There is no comment whether the first two bars should have chords: I think the edition should footnote the option of bass only. The realisation is far too thick and gets in the way of the main interest – the violins.

#### SANTIAGO BILLONI

*Santiago Billoni Complete Works* Edited by Drew Edward Davies (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 170) A-R Editions 2011. xxvii + 340pp, \$245.50.

Full marks to anyone who has heard of Billoni! I hadn't, nor has *Grove Online*. Google, however, produces 11,900 strikes, including some informal performances on U-Tube.

*Musikalische Ergänzung* (1695), available in facsimile and modern edition. Since there are two Parties in G, I'd better quote the numbers in Jean M. Perreault's frustrating *The Thematic Catalogue of the Musical Works of Johann Pachelbel* (Scarecrow Press, 2004). They are listed in the alphabetic sequence under Suite: the F# set is 449, the previously published a4 set in G is 450 and the one a5 reviewed here is 451.

6. King's Music/The Early Music Company, 1990; £5.00.

4. Luckily, the film of the *Canon & Gigue* was clearer.

5. There is also the fully-extant publication of scordatura trio sonatas



Looking up his name led to a more general article by the editor of this edition that I recommend to readers. It condemns the tourist approach to the music of New Spain, and despite the fashionable words in the title, has much good sense – though I would argue that composers, performers and listeners have always been more interested in what exotic places do to European styles than remote continuations of European styles.

Billoni (c. 1700-c.1763) was a Roman violinist, evidently well trained as a composer, who turns up in Mexico City before 1737. From 1748-56 he was at Durango Cathedral, being in charge of the music for most of his time there. All his extant music survives at the Cathedral.<sup>7</sup> His music is very much in the contemporary Italian style, and the limitations of the forces available may well match those of the more remote Italian cathedrals; his contemporary Ignacio Jerusalem, for instance, came from Lecce in Puglia.<sup>8</sup> All the music is sacred. There are four Masses: in B flat and C minor with a couple of violins, in F and G without; all have continuo. There are five vespers psalms and a magnificat, but there is no *Dixit*, so they do not make a liturgical sequence. However, the editor sensibly gets round that by adding alternim verses to a series of short A-major pieces entitled *Fabordones*. The word has no relationship to earlier meanings, and the synonym *Versos* is more suitable. These are followed by *Ave maris stella*, the hymn for Marian vespers, and three *Salve Reginas*, which might also have been sung at vespers.

The opening quarter of the volume contains sacred pieces with Spanish texts: 7 arias, 2 cantadas, 2 villancicos and 2 alabanzas (a new term to me, for simpler pieces rather like villancicos but without estribillos). Three of the items have alternative texts. None of them reflect the multiculturalism which attracts listeners to recordings with the ingenious poetic and musical merging of cultures in the Christmas villancicos: there isn't a hint of percussion in *Venid pastorcillos*, despite the mention of tambourines!

The scorings are interesting. The resources seem to have been slim. There were two soloists, a countertenor (alto clef, and probably a Crump-tenor) and tenor (tenor clef), with treble parts probably sung by a boy. The editor seems a bit surprised that parts called *tiple* are still in the soprano clef, but surely that was normal virtually everywhere till the 19<sup>th</sup> century? C2 clefs are mentioned in the critical report, but are not indicated or their function described. There are no vocal bass parts. This, and other unusual scoring features, are apparently standard for the time and place and not specific to Durango. The figured basso continuo provides an independent bass line. Some pieces have indications for tutti sections, indicated by a second figured bass for ripieno sections; for two pieces it is headed

*bajón* (whether bassoon as well as or instead of organ isn't clear). Ripieno singers, corresponding to the second continuo part, were probably supplied by musical clerics.

Since there is only one complete continuo part, how does the editor's suggestion of cello or bass viol work? One could propose that the organ was played from score, but if so, why was the string part carefully figured? Cellos can read from a harpsichordist's music (there is evidence that it can be done, and I've seen a whole concert where Phoebe Carrai read the same part as Ton Koopman). But it must be more difficult reading from the organist's copy, unless there was a small chamber instrument. So perhaps there was no string bass: there would have been no point in copying out a figured part for a cello. Most of the pieces require two violins, one far more difficult (presumably played by the composer) than the other. Only the *Fabordenes* have a third treble part, for viola written in treble clef, with an alternative indication of oboe, though there are a few notes off the bottom. One psalm, *Credidi*, also has an oboe and trumpet, though I'm suspicious of the latter. The editor translates *corneta* as *trumpet*; but assuming that the instrument is in C, which is the key of the piece, *cornetto* is much more plausible: it would certainly be a challenge for a hole-less player!

This scoring could be very useful for female choirs, since the tenor parts are not particularly low so could be sung by altos. It is a pity that the editor doesn't show the compass of each part. The different level of difficulty of the violin parts could be used as an opportunity for the teacher to be the star and while pupil takes second fiddle: the teacher's job is done when they can swap parts!

The music itself is in no way provincial. It is poised on the cusp of late baroque and rococo/early classical, and shows considerable invention. One curious bit of notation is an Aria in E flat minor as an independent choice, not as part of a systematic key progression. This is not a volume that should remain on the library shelf: it definitely deserves performance, and material is available from A-R. The editor's introduction is excellent, and I look forward to the forthcoming book.<sup>9</sup>

#### WALHALL EDITIONS

These are available from Edition Walhall, Richard-Wagner-Straße 3, D-39106 Magdeburg, GERMANY.  
[info-edition-walhall@freenet.de](mailto:info-edition-walhall@freenet.de)  
[www.edition-walhall.de](http://www.edition-walhall.de)

#### Voce Divina

There are two items by Stradella, which I'll mention in liturgical order, though their series numbers are xv & xiv.

7. Durango is the capital of the state of Durango in NW Mexico.

8. Despite some fine churches, searching *Grove Online* produces few composers from Lecce (in the heel of Italy). Jerusalem being the most interesting.

9. One tiny grouse: I'd find this volume (and the Philip the Chancellor edition reviewed on p. 2) easier to use if there were a single numbering sequence covering all the pieces.

First, the Wednesday of Holy Week: *Lamentatione per il Mercordi* (EW 779; €13.80) The setting is for alto, with compass roughly between the Cs, and continuo. The editor, Jolando Scarpa, points out that organs were banned during Holy Week, though by a perverse following of the letter rather than the spirit, the secular harpsichord was acceptable. The setting is of the second set of readings of that day – *Vau* to *Teth*. The music is mostly recitative, with occasional breaks into semiquavers. The last section (*Thet*, running into *Jerusalem convertere*) seems to lose touch with the mood of the text, unless the 3/2 is taken untypically slowly. *Plaudite vocibus* (EW 781; €13.80) is a non-liturgical Easter motet for soprano and continuo with a range from the note above middle C to top A. It is an exuberant piece, much in triple time – mostly 3/4, but 3/2 for the *Alleluia*. For each volume, you get a score with introductions (German, English & French), facsimiles and text.

Legrenzi's *Quam amarum* (EW 366; €13.80) is a Latin text based on the Easter dialogue between Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary". It's a duet for two sopranos and continuo, with F as the top note, presenting a more subtle approach to the emergence of what happened on Easter Sunday. The score of each of the series allows a separate copy for each singer and a bass part that has the advantage of no page-turns but the disadvantage of no visible vocal part.

#### Collegium Musicum

Cousser's *La Cicala della cetra D'Eunomio* was, as I wrote with regard to Suite 1 in *EMR* 135, a work that deserves publication, and Suite 2 has now appeared (EW 747; €29.80). There is a thorough introduction, and more information on the composer and context is available in his book (see *EMR* 132). Despite the Italian title, these are French suites, with two oboes in unison except in trio sections, bassoon and five-part strings (violin, without division for any trios, 3 violas and a string bass, whose part is missing but easily adapted from the bassoon part: in Cousser's other two publications of the year, it is called *Basse de Violon*. I reiterate the suggestion that there should be a treble-clef alternative for the top viola, originally in C1 clef: it should encourage use by school and amateur ensembles. The Overture is followed by 15 shorter movements, some generic dances, others with titles suggesting more specific staging. They are certainly attractive pieces, but for performance some selection is needed.

*Durham Ground* (EW 838; €15.50) is editorially titled *Variationen über ein Thema von Corelli op. 5/7* from Durham Cathedral Library Ms Mus 25. "Theme" is rather pretentious for an eight-bar D-minor ground ending on the dominant. The interesting feature is that it begins, as one would expect, on two staves with a violin part and a bass, but at the 19<sup>th</sup> statement of the bass, an elaborate keyboard part appears for ten statements, disappearing for the final statement. The editor, Michael Schneider, recorded it on recorder (Capriccio 10573), but the music, with double,

triple and quadruple stops, can only be for violin. The problem with the piece is what the harpsichord plays with the right hand until bar 145. My inclination is to play normal continuo, making the change of role a surprise – the violin is silent for the first half of the ground where the harpsichord's change of role begins. The edition, however, provides a more interesting part for the opening 144 bars. It's a fascinating piece. As well as a score, you get a violin part (with a loose sheet to facilitate page-turns) and a bass part with the ground repeated 29 times, once on each line, with the figures adjusted where necessary. But the melodic bass player doesn't need figures, and the Playford grounds manage with just one statement of the bass: it's better to listen to the other players than concentrate on which of the identical staves you've got to! (Who cares if you miss one note in bar 17!)

Henry Eccles is famous (or perhaps infamous) in the double-bass and viola world for what started life as no. 11 of his *Premier livre de sonates a violon seule et la basse* (Paris 1720). Walhall published a recorder arrangement last year (EW 787: see *EMR* 139). This viola version (EW 819; €13.80) also includes a facsimile of the original, which is in the same key as the viola version: one might expect it to be transposed down a fifth, but that would involve the bass being put up a fourth in some places and getting too close to the viola. The second movement is a fairly accurate borrowing from Bonporti's op. 10/4. (Many movements elsewhere in the set were taken from Valentini). The absence of viola solos suggests that there was no demand for them at the time: if you played a solo, you played a violin! The keyboard realisation is a bit thick and high.

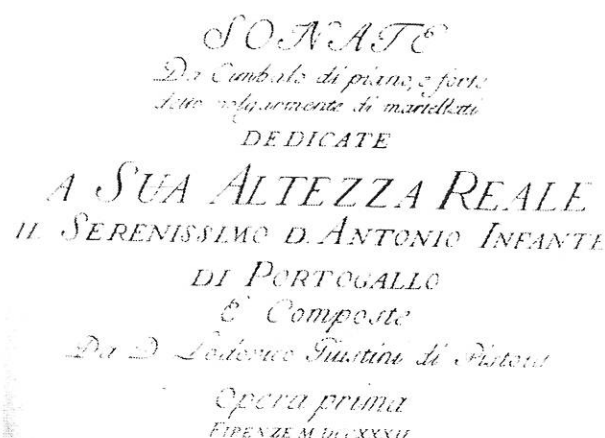
G. B. Platti spent the second half of his life at the Würzburg court. Count Rudolf Franz Erwein von Schönborn was particularly fond of the cello, and some 50 works involving cello survive in his library. A new edition of *Ricerata* 1-4 replaces the old-style Hortus Musicus 87-88. The parts are headed *Ricerata à Violino, e Violoncello*, with no suggestion that a keyboard is required. The title may relate Degli Antoni's *Ricerate*, published half a century previously in 1687, though they are for cello and continuo (unless the MS violin part is genuine). The link with the use of the term in Bach's *Musical Offering* is the fact that the writing is far more contrapuntal than one usually finds in sonatas with figured basses. They look rewarding to play. (EW 824; €17.80 for two copies.)

*A Concerto per il Flauto* [in G] *da me Hertel* (score EW 722; €18.50, parts EW 723, piano reduction, presumably with separate flute part, EW 724) with accompaniment for strings is one of three flute concertos in his hand in the Brussels Conservatoire library. I'm not sure when soloists stopped playing the tutti sections, but it's obvious from the opening bars that the flute waits for the solo section, and the other two movements are likely to be played similarly, even when Hertel includes eight bars of a full section in the finale in the solo part that go out of range.

Hertel's trumpet and bassoon concertos have had some success: I hope this does too.

### Frutti Musicali

Lodovico Giustini published a set of *Sonate Da Cimbalo di piano, e forte detto volgarmente di martelletti* in Florence in 1732 (1-6 EW 642 €19.50; EW 680 €19.80). They are the first sonatas for forte-piano, available in facsimile from SPES and on-line. This edition is the first publication to take advantage of Christofori's new instrument, though examples had existed for thirty years previously. The edition is fine as far as it goes, but it's rather squashed and there is no attention paid to sensible page turns. The music doesn't demand a forte-piano, since only rarely are more than two dynamics required – the editor and writers in general do make a bit too much fuss over the dynamics. The music is worth playing on any keyboard, though I reckon that it would sound better on a two-manual harpsichord than a modern piano.



### Sacri Concentus Ratisbonenses

Anonymous *Pastorell Kindlwiegen* (EW 831; €11.00) were copied by Vincenz Schmitd in an 18th-century MS now in the Proske Collection (BH 6723) in Regensburg. Like most of the Giustini, the brief first piece (based on DBGBDED – Joseph Lieber...) marks *piano* and *forte*; the other eight have no dynamics. Hardly concert pieces, they can be used to fill gaps in Christmas services.

Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* by Franz Heinrich Ehrenfried is a curiosity (EW 806, €29.80; parts EW 828). I've enjoyed the wind-ensemble versions of the operas as background music, but I can't imagine that this will be of any interest except to flautists who can persuade a violin, viola and cello to try something fresh. Ehrenfried was a prolific arranger of operas, but later in life wrote what the editor calls "grosser Orchestermessen", which is translated as "great orchestral masses", which in English has a qualitative implication whereas the German term implies

"large-scale".<sup>10</sup> Ehrenfried was an oboist, and some movements might work with that as alternative. The editors, Claire Genewein and Martina Hochreiter, quote an anonymous Italian of 1784/5 on the idea that players should pay attention to the phrasing of the words. On that principle, the words should have been underlaid. But their next paragraph comments on how Ehrenfried's articulation marks deviate from Mozart's original. This seems to be a very thorough edition, but there must still be genuine flute quartets by other composers that deserve precedence.

### DILETTO MUSICALI

Gottlieb Muffat *Pastorellas for Organ* edited by Erich Benedikt Doblinger (DM 1438), 2010. 23pp, £14.95.

Muffat Jr is best known for his 72 *Versetten und Toccaten* (1726) for organ and, thanks to Handel's quarrying from it, his *Componimenti Musicali* (1736?) for harpsichord. This pastoral (i.e. Christmas) anthology takes six of the 1726 *Versetten* and four pieces from MS, a *Canzon Pastorella* in G for harpsichord, a *Pastoralla* in C for organ (da capo format with a manual B section), a five-movement *Pastorella* in D (on two staves, but with editorial indications for pedals) and a *Sonata pastorale a tre* in C. The music here is far more sophisticated than the *Pastorell Kindlwiegen* reviewed above. One could argue that the more unsophisticated the better, but drones do get boring, and Muffat writes proper music, not an aural calendar. The *Sonata pastorale* looks rather uncharacteristic for Viennese organ music, with three independent parts obviously for two manuals and pedal. Infact, the small print shows that it is for two violins and cello, but with extant parts – 2 for each violin with continuo for cello, violone, bassoon and organ, published as such in DM 470. I think I'd prefer the ensemble version. I suspect this would not be an obvious choice for a British organ loft unless it is required to play a lot of Christmas services; the *Canzona*, however, isn't particularly obviously pastoral and is a fine contrapuntal piece that any keyboard player would enjoy playing at any time.

Albrechtsberger *Ausgewählten Fugen... for Organ (Piano/Harpsichord)* edited by Erich Benedikt Doblinger (DM 1413), 2010. 60pp, £21.95

Johann Georg Albrechtsberger spent most of his life primarily as a church musician. Mozart arranged that Albrechtsberger should succeed him in 1791 as assistant Kapellmeister at Vienna's St Stephen's Cathedral, and he was appointed to the senior job in 1793, which he held till his death in 1809. He was famous as an organist, and was particularly famous for his fugues. He was a respected teacher, particularly of fugue; Beethoven studied with him in 1794-5 and the influence seems to have returned much later in his life in the late quartets. This selection contains 16 fugues, mostly published in the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup>

10. Another mistranslation is "the vocal part" rather than "set of parts" for *Stimmensatz*.



century. All are written on two staves, a few having indication for pedals, though the music can be played without. Indeed, Viennese organs were minimally equipped with pedals useful for much more than drones. The editor has a nice footnote: "When organ works by J. S. Bach were published in Vienna from 1812 – and very successfully, too – there was not a single instrument in the city on which they could be performed pedaliter." An interesting collection: few will want to acquire the 240+ fugues by Albrechtsberger, but these at least give some idea of his skill.

#### MOZART & CLEMENTI FROM HENLE

One of my most-used editions is the Henle *Werke für Klavier zu vier Händen*, which I played frequently in the 1960s and reminds me of old friends – though I played duets much less often in more recent decades. I can't get at my copy without moving furniture, so am unable to make a direct comparison. A new edition, edited by Peter Jost with fingering by Andreas Groethuysen (HN 932; €27.00; hb HN 933; €45.50) has appeared this year. The volume no longer begins with K19d, which is probably not by the boy Mozart so is relegated to an appendix. The *Allegro & Andante* formerly K357 has survived (as K497a and 500a) with the completion by André in 1853. The fragments are now believed to be separated by about 4 years. The contents are the same in both editions, but the new one is updated – MSS not available in the 1950s have emerged, and studies on the dating of the paper Mozart used has moved pieces like K357 around in the chronological sequence – though K500a needs a new number in the 600s. The fingerings are still there. One happened to strike me as particularly weird: the Andante of K521, bar 87 (p. 99), with a right-hand octave leap upwards played by the fingers 1 & 4 (I'd do the obvious and use the little finger). The reason for wanting the top B flat to be played by the third finger is because the fingerer has spotted a pattern of threes. I'm not opposed to finding such cross rhythms – indeed, having been going to courses on much earlier music directed by Philip Thorby for some 20 years, I'm well attuned to spotting such rhythmic patterns; but it doesn't seem particularly plausible here, and the same is imposed on an even simpler passage at bar 91. The fingerer here is encouraging an interpretation that counters the function of an Urtext. A few bars previously, what's the point in specifying fingering for a series of quavers each

separated by quaver rests? But I confess that I don't understand modern piano fingering! A good edition, and not just for sentimental reasons.

We've also received separate editions of two solo sonatas in F, K 280 (HN 1040; €5.50) and K 533/494 (HN 1041; €8.50)

Clementi's Six Sonatinas op. 36 (HN 848; €14.00) is also nostalgic in a way, though I was not enamoured of my old Augener edition. They were published in 1797, and revised to some extent over the next two decades. But it was the original edition that was used for the Breitkopf's *Oeuvres Complètes* and has been generally used as the basis of reprints, as it is here, but the later version of No. 1 is included for comparison. This was the first in Clementi's educational programme, followed by his *Introduction to the Art of playing the Piano forte* and *Gradus ad Parnassum*. The original title was *Six Progressive Sonatinas*: one wonders why the publisher omits the middle word from the title. The music itself is pleasant, but not outstanding. I remember playing them a lot since they were within my limited technique. What is interesting is the original fingering, which I doubt if the Augener edition preserved. They often look slightly odd, but they seem to make much more sense than the editorial ones in the Mozart duets. Worth studying for that if nothing else.

#### To be reviewed in the next issue

Nicholas Yonge *Musica Transalpina* (1588) Transcribed and edited by David Greer (*The English Madrigalists*, 42), Stainer & Bell, 2011. xvii + 302pp, £69.00

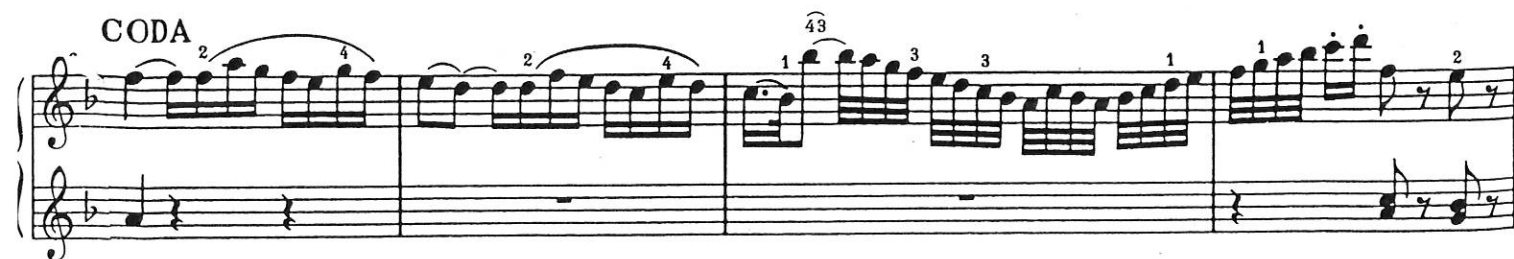
Weelkes *Madrigals of five parts* "apt for the Viols and voices" edited by Elizabeth V. Phillips PRB Productions (VCS 75), 2011. iv + 32pp + parts, \$35.00

Du Caurroy *Meslanges* édités par Marie-Alexis Colin (*Musica Gallica*) Brepols, 2010. cxxiv + 420pp, €50.00

Lübeck *Complete Organ Works* edited by Harald Vogel Breitkopf & Härtel (8824), 2011. 111pp, €28.00

Mozart Sinfonia Concertante K 320e (Anh. 104) for violin, viola, cello and orchestra... completed and edited by Eduard Melkus Doblinger (DM 1434), 2010. 76pp, £39.00

#### CODA





## NEW BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett

## SHORT &amp; MOSTLY WISE

Thomas Forrest Kelly *Early Music: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2011. 130pp, £7.99 (pb) ISBN 978 0 19 173076 6

According to the number on the spine (but not in the body of the book), this is the 265<sup>th</sup> *Very Short Introduction* joining such titles as *Drugs*, *Druids*, *The Earth*, *Economics* and *Egyptian Myth*. I have been very impressed by the editorials Kelly has written for *Early Music America*; perhaps, as an expert on Beneventan chant (his new book on the topic is due in the autumn), his distance from the normal early-music world is an asset. To quote Christopher Hogwood from the blurb, 'not only is [his] heart in the right place, but his ears and brain seem to be more correctly connected than usual in the polemical world of early music.' The first four chapters are concise, well written and balanced. Starting with "What does 'early music' mean" (this is not too philosophical) the following three are each devoted to repertoires – Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque (the term "Early Modern" is ignored). One could quibble with a few points, but in most respects it treads carefully round pitfalls, and pays due attention to improvisation. But the table devoted to *The da capo aria*, (p. 59) is oversimplified. He gives merely Ritornello – Section A – Ritornello – Section B – Ritornello, ignoring the structure within the A section. It was only when I started editing Handel that I realised that the A section usually had (apart from internal repetitions) two complete statements of the text.<sup>1</sup> The music follows this pattern, with a cadence when the first sentence closes and a brief instrumental interjection before the sentence is repeated (with a different treatment of the same material). He also implies (p. 58) that the closing ritornello is a repeat of the opening one, when it is usually truncated (as it is in Vivaldi concertos). I think I might also have added a sentence or two on ways the B section might contrast with the A.

Chapter 5 deals with performing issues, mostly sensibly, though temperament could have been made a bit clearer with a diagram. It includes interesting quotes by Beecham, complaining of "the continual refusal... to observe Handel's own wishes respecting the conditions of [*Messiah's*] performance" (p. 88) and Laurence Dreyfus: "producing novelty in familiar music is a means of avoiding the present while maintaining a semblance of something progressive". This is followed by his entertaining comparison of Early and Mainstream music in 10 points. Perhaps when NEMA did

its questionnaire on early music, it might have asked each of these to be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 10.

The final chapter, "The modern early-music revival", falls apart into a fairly uncritical survey of performers. Kelly looks at the scene from an American perspective, but the chapter degenerates into naming names rather than writing anything significant about them. The "outsider" at whom I assume the book is intended doesn't need such details.

What is missing is the anticipation of aspects of early-style performance in the 1950s and 1960s. The grammar of baroque performance was taken up by modern-instrument chamber orchestras. A significant name not mentioned is Charles Mackerras, a pioneer in 'authentic' Janáček (acting as his own editor), but also in Mozart: he was responsible for the first UK *Marriage of Figaro* with the appropriate appoggiaturas, and did some interesting Handel oratorio broadcasts (I remember *Saul* in particular). The pioneers in early instruments were on the continent, which I only encountered right at the end of the 1960s, when I met Peter Holman and listened to his LPs. Marriner, Leppard etc continued through the 1970s; they failed to keep up with the early-music times and moved on to later music.<sup>2</sup> At least, that's what happened in the UK.

The bibliography is peculiar, but points up the inadequacy of the literature. The "Works on instruments and performance" are mostly dated, there are three treatises on 18<sup>th</sup> century music listed, but no earlier ones, and "Works on the early-music movement" suffers from the inadequacy of historical accounts of what actually (or at least plausibly) happened.

A serious omission is the BBC which, while a bit slow to take on the baroque orchestra scene, broadcast a vast quantity of all sorts of early music. Medieval programmes existed, but were mostly dire until Music Reservata appeared in the late 1960s; continental recordings were ignored. The amount of early music I absorbed in the 1960s was enormous – even if from performances that I would not want to hear now. Kelly only mentions the BBC in connection with David Munrow and his children's programme *Pied Piper*, which wasn't specifically devoted to early music.<sup>3</sup> Period orchestras met with some suspicion for much of the 1970s, as was the archtypical early singer, Emma Kirkby. The BBC was, I think, far more influential than US broadcasting, as was WDR Cologne.

2. The most exciting *Enigma Variations* I've heard was at a lunch-time concert by the BBC Northern Orchestra conducted by Raymond Leppard.

3. David as performer was more prominent on television, as far as I can remember.

1. which I usually separate by a full stop while repeats within the sections have commas.

This is a pocket-sized book, so useful to read while travelling (I carried it with me and read most of it at Godmanchester Fête without tiring my arms), good for the first 93 pages, but then disappointing. There are hints that there has been a general change in the ethos and practice of early music, and the last chapter would have been better had it been devoted to that. And one idea behind much renaissance (and later) music – *Tactus* – is regrettably ignored.

#### PSALMS, HYMNS & SPIRITUAL SONGS

John Arthur Smith *Music in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* Ashgate, 2011. xxii + 271pp, £60.00 ISBN 978 1 4094 0907 6

Over the last quarter-century, I've read several impressive articles by John Smith on Jewish and early Christian music: it's good to see a study bringing the strands together. The history of musical practice (and more generally liturgy) is bedevilled with attempts to justify current or proposed practices from the Bible. The problem is in understanding what the words really mean. The headline to this review (Ephesians 5, 19) is familiar from childhood because it was on the title-page of the 1933 *Methodist Hymn Book*, which I knew extremely well, and later familiarity with *The English Hymnal* did not expunge my interest in it. The three words seem to represent the Greek from which they are translated. *Psalms* and *hymns* are anglicisations of the Greek words and *Spiritual Songs* are close enough to what an over-literal translation could give as *pneumatic odes*! But that doesn't give much clue to what the Greek words refer to. There is a cluster of cognate Greek words that appear in the Septuagint<sup>4</sup> that relate to the Hebrew root ZMR: "it may mean 'music, sound, make music' or 'play' as on a musical instrument. In musical contexts, words on this root may convey the picking, plucking or strumming of stringed instruments. The musical sense of the root may reflect onomatopoeia from the buzzing sound made by massed plucked-string instruments..." (p. 40). In an appendix, he lists 58 concordances for music terms in the Septuagint and Vulgate which in the Hebrew Bible are built on the root ZMR. The Latin equivalents relate to *laus*, *psalm*, *canto/canticum*, *carmen*, *musici* and their various cognates. It does, however, seem likely that by the AD period, psalms more and more referred to the *Book of Psalms* (though ascriptions to *David* are wishful thinking).

One of the problems of translating Latin rubrics and liturgical books is how to distinguish *dico* and *canto* (using *say* and *sing* doesn't work). You would probably sing a hymn, but does the evangelist sing the Passion narrative

or say it? In between, there are the various ways the psalms are chanted (to use a more neutral word). Any way of communal declamation of unmetrical prose needs a sophisticated system to work. Sadly, there seems to be no information on how it was done till after the period this book covers.

The value of Smith's book is his attempt to look at what the texts actually say. Essential is the need to concentrate on the chronology of the Bible and the credibility of back-projection of historical events. If an account was written several centuries after the period it describes, how do we tell whether it was a remembered recollection (with at least some element of truth), an assumption that practice hadn't changed, or an attempt to justify a new idea by asserting its (false) antiquity? Smith steps very cautiously through such problems. But any attempt to argue what church music should be like from the Old Testament (as used to happen) is impossible. Apart from detailed investigation, the idea of a religious practice that was designed for use in a single Temple hardly relates to modern Christianity.

There is more information about Christian practice in the fourth and fifth centuries, and Smith seems slightly less rigorous. It seems likely that, once Christianity was liberated by Constantine, a desire to imitate the Roman political structure quickly infiltrated the church, so liturgy, like theology, needed to be unified. Organising such a structure any earlier, under state suspicion or hostility, would surely have been less probable. Dissident organisations are likely to be comparatively isolated and concentrate on the essentials. Praise and prayer don't need regimentation, and I wonder if descriptions of such tendencies are isolated and, maybe, wishful thinking. Prayer three times a day and 'singing' a few psalms was probably enough for most Christians. I imagine that prayer was said aloud, if reading silently was so rare.<sup>5</sup>

This is a fascinating book. The moral is: hesitate to argue about what the Bible means if you don't know the languages... and even then, be suspicious! <sup>6</sup>

#### DANTE, PETRARCH, BOCCACCIO

Marco Cerocchi *Funzioni semantiche e metatestuali della musica in Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio* Biblioteca dell'«Archivum Romanicum», serie I, vol. 373. (Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2010) xii-160 pp, €19,00 [ISBN 978 88 222 5991 2]

The title is rather off-putting, which is too bad. The book is more apt to be grasped by Italian readers familiar with

4. The *Septuagint* is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, with a few additions, prepared according to tradition by 72 scholars (two got lost!) but in fact produced from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to the 1<sup>st</sup> AD. The *Vulgate* is the Latin translation of the Bible made mostly by Jerome in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century which became the common Catholic version.

5 cf Augustine *Confessions* vi, 3

6. One minor point. Even though my Greek is very rusty, I do find it difficult to read it in transliteration, and I imagine that those who can read Hebrew suffer even more. In a scholarly book like this, the original orthography should be given as well as the Roman version..

Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio, but still understandable by anyone concerned with the cultural relevance of music as revealed in medieval Italian literature of the 14th century. The three poets represent, in themselves, an evolution, one aspect of which is the relationship between words and music. Another is the evolving conception of profane love and the acceptance of its contemplation and presence in society and daily life. The conclusions and interpretations are more controversial than I anticipated.

In Dante even the souls in Purgatory are captivated by secular music, which presents the risk of perdition. It is clear that he is referring to the notes themselves, as sung by his friend Casella (first name unknown), a troubador, [Purg. II], and not just to the text by Lemmo di Pistoia. Later, in a dream, a grotesque siren has been transformed in order to deceive him by her beauty and singing; and it is sacred music which saves his soul [Purg. XX]. There is no music in Inferno, but Cerocchi argues that the mention of horrible sounds are also references to music (as if Dante had premonitions of *music concrète*). Sacred music is heard, as expected, in Paradise, as an indescribable, quasi divine experience, "la dolce sinfonia di paradiso" (*sinfonia* does not yet have connotations of ensemble playing, or even of counterpoint, but means the consonance of two sounds). *Paradiso* XXVIII describes a 3-part motet, in triple time (binary time was considered lascivious), but music does not accompany Dante all the way to the end of his journey: he encounters God in blinding light.

A mentality more favourable to secular art, literature and music developed between the 11th and 14th centuries, as the feudal system and the Holy Roman Empire weakened, with communes in Italy and states in northern Europe influencing matters previously controlled by the Church, including religious doctrines. The Church opposed *cantus planus binatim* (improvised counterpoint), although after the Schism the location of the Holy See at Avignon made *Ars Nova* contamination inevitable, undermining rules for liturgical music (e.g. every note-value having to be "perfect", or triple). The musical theories of Philippe de Vitry (1291-1361), a friend of Petrarch's (1304-74), were mainly applied to secular music (in Italy), and indeed fascinated the poet, who was also a singer and lute player, and personally experienced the conflict between the roles of sacred and profane in music. Book I chap. 23 of his *De Remediis utriusque fortunae* (1360) presents a dialogue about music between Reason (*Ragione*) and Enjoyment (*Gaudio*), and the history of music ever since owes much to this conflict never being resolved.

It is outside the purpose of this book to discuss the musical settings of Petrarch's works and their influence on lyrical poets after him. The concern is rather the musical nature of the madrigal texts and explicit references within them to the nature of music. Cerocchi does, however, devote a section to Monteverdi's 5-voice madrigal *Zefiro torna*, demonstrating that he succeeded in realizing

Petrarch's aspirations, though his musical analysis leaves a lot to be desired. He claims there is a distinct contrast of modes, major in the two opening 4-verse stanzas, describing the rebirth of nature in the Spring, and minor in the two concluding 3-verse stanzas, lamenting the poet's solitude after the death of his beloved. Actually the madrigal begins in minor and ends in major (including the significant final words *Sono un deserto, e fere aspre e selvagge*); it alternates in the first stanzas, and is minor only in the penultimate one! My pointing this out begs the question, since "our" major-minor associations were totally lacking until considerably after Monteverdi, and major thirds were quite suitable for the atrocious pains of love or abandonment.

The third part of the book gives all the references to music in the descriptions of the events narrated by Boccaccio in the *Decameron*. Canzoni, scherzetti, ballate and dancing were among the daily activities of the refugees from plague-stricken Florence and Cerocchi apologizes for not leaving out a single mention of playing, singing or dancing. He quotes the introductory narrations and the poetic texts sung. Again, this cannot be really analytical, as we don't have the music or the steps, just the accounts. Nor would I have discussed "birdsong", part of the restorative experience of the countryside, as examples of "music".

But the unifying point of the book is to show how in very few decades, in the works of three contemporaries, the function of secular music in society changed: from the earliest affirmations of its psychological impact (in sacred versus profane music), alluded to by Dante, to the aesthetics inspired by the *Ars Nova*, symbolized in references to music in Petrarch, and finally achieving importance as therapeutic entertainment for Boccaccio's fugitives of 1338.

Barbara Sachs

#### FALLOWS' FESTSCHRIFT

*Essays on Renaissance Music in Honour of David Fallows: Bon jour, bon mois et bonne estrenne* Edited by Fabrice Fitch and Jacobijn Kiel The Boydell Press, 2011. xix + 422pp, £55.00. ISBN 978 1 84383 619 3

I first met David in the early 1970s playing viol consorts in the distinguished company of Michael Morrow<sup>7</sup> and Cat Mackintosh – I must have been somewhat out of my depth! We haven't met often, but I have since then been aware of him as a distinguished scholar, who could communicate beyond the academic world (e.g. his Master Musicians *Dufay*) and always had something interesting and plausible to say.

There are 40 contributions, including two compositions (by Jaap van Bentham and Fabrice Fitch), with papers/essays

7. Those too young to know his importance should read Christopher Page's *Preludio*, p. 3; regrettably, Morrow's name doesn't appear in Thomas Forrest Kelly's index (see p. 9)



concentrating on Dufay, Josquin and other music of the period. The editors have succeeded in keeping each contribution down to an average of 10 pages. Most are on very specific subjects: scholars worrying at a point, sometimes coming up with a solution, sometimes not: one of more than specialist interest is Fitch's "Who really knows who composed *Mille regretz*?" (p. 272). It is noticeable, returning to an area of scholarship that I've been less in touch with, how much more seems to be known, partly from detailed study of MSS, partly from analysing how the composers thought about music. Warwick Edwards, (p. 198) and Keith Polk (p. 249), for instance, can get much more a chronology of Isaac's secular music than I expected, in part through greater knowledge of biography and the MSS, but also from closer study of the music itself. And indirectly, such study can draw attention to manners of performance. Another article on a work that is well-known is Margaret Bent's on *Vergene bella* (p. 86) with speculation that it may have been composed to honour the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Petrarch's death. Jesse Rodin's contribution on the Dufay songs that have melismatic openings (p. 114) might not tell you how to relate voices and instruments, but it does characterise the types of pieces that use them. These are just a few samples that caught my fancy.

This is primarily a book for scholars of the period: only Dufay and Josquin freaks are likely feel the need to buy a copy. But those who enjoy music of the period as listeners or players may like to borrow a copy and dip into it. Although nothing to do with music, how the Papacy tried to operate a legal system throughout Western Europe is fascinating, even if you don't care whether Caron won or not (Rob C. Wegman, p. 10). What I like about the scholarship here is that lots of information is brought forward; it may subsequently be supplemented and corrected, but nearly all the contributions are likely to have a greater survival rate than most writings that are more overtly aware of current ideologies.

I noticed one glaring misprint on p. 334 which dates Kuhnau's *Biblischer Historien* as 1770 rather than 1700.

#### STYLUS PHANTASTICUS AND THE STYLUS HYPORCHEMATICUS

Charles E. Brewer *The Instrumental Music of Schmeltzer, Biber, Muffat and their Contemporaries* Ashgate, 2011. xxvi + 411pp, £65.00 ISBN 978 1 85928 396 7

The first forty-odd pages of this volume are devoted to a study of the *Stylus Phantasticus* and the *Stylus Hyporchematicus* and the author's attempts to explain the way the terms are differently understood, depending on the time and place in which they are used. Most performers of the repertoire alluded to in the book's title should read it. The remaining four chapters are devoted to Schmeltzer

[sic] and Music at the Viennese Court, The Chapel of Prince-Bishop Carl Liechtenstein-Castelcorn (whose vast music collection at Kromeriz provides much of Brewer's primary source material), Biber and Muffat at Salzburg, and finally The Dissemination and Dissolution of the *Stylus Phantasticus*. There are three fact-filled appendices. Generally I found the book very accessible; the balance between historical information and musical analysis is well handled. There is a lot of information, and much that will broaden non-specialist knowledge – Brewer's translations of many Latin and German forewords to publications (as well as other contemporary documents and letters) are extremely helpful. Among some of his more challenging statements is his re-attribution of the *Sonata Rappresentativa* from Biber to Schmelzer – I know this is not a new suggestion, but I was not persuaded by his interpretation of the passages from Schmelzer's correspondence which might support it.

I had other problems, too. Not least of all the explanation of orthography in *Notes to the Reader*. I see little virtue in changing the spelling of Schmelzer's name, when it is an established norm – the argument that it is a Latinization is odd, since there are many 18th-century cantata textbooks that use *Schmertz* instead of *Schmerz*; the whole thing falls down in any case when, on p. 315 Brewer refers to the Minoriten source of Partita X (having dismissed the term Rosary Sonatas) as being ascribed to "Schmeltzer" when the manuscript actually clearly reads "Schmëlzer". The decision to use place names in the native language unless they have a standard English equivalent leads to some other strange formulations: to avoid the plague in Vienna, we are told that Schmelzer went to Praha. Why not Prague? Did English ever use Praha? A whole new level of ridiculousness is reached by a footnote that refers to the Düben Collection in "Svecia". The difficulty is that, when orthographic conventions are vague, it becomes difficult to distinguish between *olde worlde* language and good old-fashioned typos. I chose p. 225 at random and found a reference to Ucellini's [sic] op. 4 sonatas; according to the body text, it was printed at Venezia by Alessandro Vinceti, while the footnote tells us it was published at Venice by Allessandro Vincenti [sic.] It is a great pity that a better copy editor did not take this volume by the scruff of the neck and turn what is still a valuable contribution to our knowledge and understanding of 17th-century Austro-German music into an outstanding volume. BC

#### VIVALDI COMPENDIUM

Michael Talbot *The Vivaldi Compendium* Boydell Press, 2011 xioi + 258pp, £50.00 ISBN 978 1 84383 670 4

This compact reference work comprises four sections: a concise, up-to-date biography (15pp), a dictionary with (mostly) single paragraphs on a wide range of Vivaldian topics, including many individual works (184 pp), a list of works (32 pages) and a bibliography (26 pp).



There is little to say about the biography apart from admiring Talbot's characteristic ability to master all the background musicology and fluently present a slightly revised image of the composer. The core of the book is the dictionary. The range of topics is wide, and I must confess that I haven't read it through systematically from *Abate* (a secular priest not attached to a church, a title sometimes given to Vivaldi) to *Ziani* (c.1653-1715, a Venetian musician who became Vize-Hofkapellmeister at the Viennese court in 1700; on the strength of stylistic similarities, he may have been one of Vivaldi's composition teachers.) Dallapiccola appears as the originator of the remark that Vivaldi was "the composer not of six hundred concertos but of one concerto written six hundred times over". The remark is usually circulated under Stravinsky's name, but the dictionary entry for Stravinsky gives a vaguer quote: "Vivaldi is greatly over-rated – a dull fellow who could compose the same form so many times over." *Da capo* aria form, though brief, does acknowledge the sectional nature of the A section ignored by Kelly (see p. 9). Under *Currency* we are told: "The most important thing to remember... is the relative value of the ducat current (6.2 lire) and the sequin (22 lire or, before 1716, slightly less) since these are the denominations in which salary payments, fees and rents are usually quoted." It's a pity that Flauto and Flute are given separate entries: I was puzzled that the latter (which I saw first) said nothing about the recorder, and anyone not experienced in the terminology (perhaps a secretary booking players for a gig) looking up the latter might not think of turning the page back to look for Flauto. The problem of any alphabetic arrangement is that if you don't know the right word, you might not find it. I remembered a surprisingly long section on unison passages, but had forgotten that it was under *Orchestral unison* (but fortunately it had a cross reference, though that is rare). The previous entry, *Orchestra*, states (I suspect surprisingly to most modern orchestras) that "one-to-a-part performance... was the default situation". I was puzzled where to read about female basses at the *Pietà*: you have to be quite knowledgeable to look for *Figlie di coro*: female basses (as advocated by Richard Vendome – see p. 24) are not mentioned. I won't go on, but have picked out a few entries to show the variety of topics. There are also 16 facsimiles.

I'm less enthusiastic about the catalogue of works. There are several other sources for this information (the various New Groves, Talbot's Master Musicians Vivaldi, etc), and all that was really needed was a supplement to cover the last 30 years. However, what would have been really useful (and would have increased sales by making it an essential purchase for organisations who perform Vivaldi's music) would have been a list of Urtext editions and facsimiles whose parts are available for purchase. Vivaldi performances are restricted by so much of the music only being available for hire, almost invariably from Ricordi. Most performing ensembles, however, want to

buy the music. I reckon that some charity should pay for the autographs to be scanned, with a generous fee to the library, then let any publisher get on with it! There's no such limitation on the circulation of Bach and Handel. And now that Vivaldi's operas are gaining ground, there's a need for easy access to performance material of individual arias. I'm often asked, and can't help, whereas over the years BC and I have produced virtually any Handel aria that has been requested.

But to return to the final section of the book, the bibliography is extensive, and is particularly useful for the items by Talbot himself – 61 entries! He is, at least as far as the Anglophone world is concerned, THE expert. Academics at least can get hold of the journal articles on line (though non-academics don't get their free access). I am sure that I will consult the *Compendium* frequently, though the enthusiastic buyer of Vivaldian CDs may not pay £50 for a book that ignores recordings – that's another world.

#### MARSH REVISED

Brian Robins' *The John Marsh Journals* are finally back in print... and in a newly revised and corrected edition with a much expanded index. Pending the publication of a second volume by Pendragon Press, scheduled for 2012, the volume now carries the legend 'Vol. 1'. Full details of the new edition can be found on Brian's website at:

[www.earlymusicworld.com/id11.html](http://www.earlymusicworld.com/id11.html)

It is a cornucopia about mostly amateur music in southern England in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century fascinating to dip into but worth reading in full.



The Triumphs of Oriana

## INTRODUCING EARLY MUSIC ONLINE

Stephen Rose

In the last decade, huge amounts of sheet music have become available online. One pioneering website is the Choral Music Public Domain Library ([www.choralwiki.org](http://www.choralwiki.org)), containing mainly desktop-produced editions of choral music out of copyright. Since 2006 the IMSLP/Petrucchi Music Library (<http://imslp.org>) has become the portal for thousands of digitised items, including the 19th-century complete editions of Bach and Handel. Both sites operate on the Wiki principle and are evolving fast as their contributors add new material, but they often contain editions of dubious or outdated scholarship.

Continental libraries have led the way in digitising the original printed and manuscript sources of early music. The Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, has digitised much 16th- and 19th-century printed music ([www.digitale-sammlungen.de](http://www.digitale-sammlungen.de)). The Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Dresden, has digitised over 2000 musical items, often by Dresden composers such as Schütz (<http://digital.slub-dresden.de>). Also notable are the digitised collections from the Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen ([www.kb.dk/en/nb/samling/ma/digmus](http://www.kb.dk/en/nb/samling/ma/digmus)), specialising in Danish sources such as Magnus Thomsen's 1598 trumpet-book, but also including much German music.

Until recently, few UK libraries have digitised sheet music. The main exception is that almost all 17th-century English printed music (including the collections of Blow, Locke and Purcell published by Playford) is on Early English Books Online (<http://eebo.chadwyck.com>), but this is a subscription service largely restricted to university members.

Since March 2011 the Music Department of Royal Holloway, University of London, has led Early Music Online ([www.earlymusiconline.org](http://www.earlymusiconline.org)), a pilot project to digitise early printed music in the British Library. The project is funded by the Rapid Digitisation Programme of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). We have now digitised over 300 anthologies of 16th-century music (those listed in RISM B/1).<sup>1</sup> The digitised music is freely available to all on <http://digirep.rhul.ac.uk>. We hope our project will transform access to the primary sources of 16th-century music, particularly for those musicians unable to use a research library.

Early Music Online contains polyphonic music from across the 16th century, including sacred works by Agricola, Andrea Gabrieli, Josquin des Prez, Orlando de Lassus, Clemens

non Papa, Palestrina, Rore, Senfl and Willaert; and secular vocal music by Arcadelt, Crecquillon, Gombert, Jannequin, Josquin, Palestrina and Susato. There are also lute tablatures from Germany, Italy and the Low Countries, and keyboard tablatures by Ammerbach and Paix.

We have digitised music from the main printing-centres of 16th-century Europe, including Venice, Rome, Lyons, Paris, Munich, Nuremberg, Antwerp and Leuven. Early Music Online also contains monuments of English music-printing, such as Tallis and Byrd's *Cantiones sacrae* (1575).

### Searching Early Music Online

Until now it could be hard to find pieces within printed anthologies of 16th-century music. The British Library catalogue records were minimal, rarely giving more than the book's title and the date and place of publication. Inventories of some anthologies can be found in bibliographies such as Howard Mayer Brown's *Instrumental music printed before 1600*, but these reference books are available only in major libraries.

We have upgraded the British Library catalogue records to create detailed inventories of the printed anthologies, listing each individual piece. You can now search the British Library catalogue (<http://catalogue.bl.uk>; shortly to be upgraded to <http://search.bl.uk>) by:

- Name of composer
- Title of composition
- Name of printer/publisher
- Place of printing/publication

It will therefore become much easier to trace individual pieces, as well as to find groups of pieces issued by a particular printer or within a specific anthology. The upgraded catalogue records also include transcribed title-pages, information about the provenance of the British Library copy, and details of any scribal annotations.

From August 2011 the catalogue records via <http://search.bl.uk> will be linked directly to the digitised images.

### Using Early Music Online

Early Music Online allows anyone to experience 16th-century music in its original notation. This can give many insights into performance styles, as seen in the following two examples.

Fig. 1 shows the Superius part of Josquin's *Nymphes des bois* as printed in Susato's *Septiesme livre...chansons* (1545). Immediately noticeable is the symbolic black notation used in this elegy for Ockeghem. As there are no mensuration signs, the rhythmic interpretation of this

<sup>1</sup> *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales. Series B/1: Recueils imprimés. XVIe-XVIIe Siècles* (Munich, 1960).

piece is not straightforward. But if you have some basic knowledge of early notation, it is an enlightening experience to try to sing from this part. At the least, seeing the vocal part without bar-lines can help you perform your line with a greater sense of flow.

Like most of the digitised anthologies in Early Music Online, *Nymphes des bois* is in partbook format. Using a partbook makes you focus on your individual line and its melodic shape – only when the other parts are performed do you realise how your part fits into the whole. Partbooks may also encourage a more collaborative, democratic atmosphere in rehearsal. The musical information is distributed among the performers and nobody has the controlling overview given by a score. Hence everyone holding a partbook may have a say in interpretive decisions.

Fig. 2 shows Palestrina's canzonetta 'Pose un gran foco' as printed in Simone Verovio's *Canzonette a quattro voce* (1591). The piece is printed in choirbook format, which implies that the performers would cluster around a single copy; it also allows each performer to see all the other parts. The vocal parts are in chiavette clefs (G<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>4</sub>) and are easily readable, with none of the ambiguities of rhythmic interpretation in Fig. 1.

Verovio supplies an accompaniment for keyboard or lute, showing the rise of continuo-playing as early as the 1590s. The keyboard part is a short score that doubles the voices; it also has bar-lines, and therefore centralises all the musical information on the keyboard player in a way that allows him or her to direct the ensemble. The keyboard part is pitched a fourth below the voices, demonstrating the downward transposition of vocal parts in chiavette clefs.

Early Music Online also gives access to hundreds of pieces not available in modern editions. We hope this will encourage keen editors to transcribe and explore the music of little-known figures such as Franz Joachim Brechtel and Petit Jean de Latre. In future it may be possible for such transcriptions to be done electronically. We are collaborating with Aruspix ([www.aruspix.net](http://www.aruspix.net)), which is developing tools for optical music recognition to convert early printed notation into modern scores.

If you have comments on Early Music Online or would like to receive updates about the project, please contact me ([stephen.rose@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:stephen.rose@rhul.ac.uk)) or the Project Manager, Sandra Tuppen ([sandra.tuppen@bl.uk](mailto:sandra.tuppen@bl.uk)).

Fig. 1: Josquin, 'Nymphes des bois', from *Le septiesme livre...chansons* (Antwerp: Susato, 1545), RISM 1545/15, British Library K.3.a.7. Reproduced by permission of the British Library Board.

La deploration de Iohan. O Keghem Composee par Iosquin de prez. A Cinq parties. Fo. xiii.

Nymphes des bois deesses des fontaines Chantres experts de toutes nations Chagez vous de voix fort cle-

res & haultaines En cris trachāz & lamentatiōs Car dattropos les molestations Vostre OK e-

ghē par sa rigueur attrapp. Le uray tresoir de musique et chief doeuure Qui de tropos de formais plus ne schappe Dōt

grāt doumage' est que la terre cocure n que la terre cocure A contre vous d'a- Et plorez grosses

bis de dueil Iosquin brunel pichō cōpere larmes de oeil perdu auec voltre bon pere Requiescat in pace amen







## INTERNATIONALE HÄNDEL-FESTPIELE GÖTTINGEN 2011

Brian Robins

These are transitional times for the Göttingen Handel Festival. Last year it bade farewell to its general director Benedikt Poensgen, only to find that his successor had to be replaced after less than a year in office. This year it was the turn of Nicholas McGegan to steer the festival for the final time before handing over to Laurence Cummings after a 20-year tenure as music director. Over that period Nic, as he is universally known in Göttingen, became not only immensely respected but also a much-loved figure in the compact university city; I have little doubt that the gala concert with which he signed off was a tear-stained, albeit celebratory occasion. The Stadthalle would certainly have been no place for the critical pen on 14 June, especially given the customary warm hospitality we enjoyed at the festival's invitation.

We had in fact left Göttingen the previous day, having for the first time made the long journey from Burgundy by road rather than a succession of trains or planes. It proved to work well, if one excepts an unsuccessful attempt by a German autobahn driver to impede our progress by shedding one of the bikes he was carrying in our path. During the previous three days we had taken in six concerts and this year's new opera production *Teseo* (1713) in a festival that chose as its theme the links between Handel and French musical culture.

Within that context *Teseo*, Handel's third London opera, was an obvious choice, since it is the composer's only opera to adopt the 5-act French form, having been adapted by Nicola Haym from the libretto Quinault provided for Lully's *Thésée* of 1675. Notwithstanding, musical links between *Teseo* and French opera are tenuous and once past the obvious and extensive use of the French overture and dances (common currency during the Baroque, of course) the concept of French influence on Handel seems to me an elusive one, despite the best efforts of the festival literature and lecturers Graham Cummings and David Vickers to persuade us otherwise. Had he remained in Hamburg – Handel's first opera *Almira* (1705) certainly contains French influences – it might have been a different story, but as it is the trip to Italy surely scotched any likelihood of Handel assimilating French style to any significant degree. Curiously the festival did not programme one dramatic work of Handel's that does display undeniable French influence: the masque *Alceste*, composed in 1749/50 but never performed. It includes a Symphony (No. 16) that might easily be taken for Rameau by an innocent ear.

What was fascinating among the programmes we heard was the cross-fertilization that became so prevalent during

the period. A superbly played concert by the New York-based ensemble Rebel included not only fully-fledged Italianate flute concertos in ritornello style by the Frenchmen Michel Blavet and the little known Pierre Gabriel Buffardin (1690-1768), but one of the Sonate Corellisante by Telemann, works that pay tribute to the great Italian violinist while fully maintaining the personality of the musical chameleon from Hamburg. This concert, which also included the obligatory contributions by the festival's host composer, was one of the highlights of the festival, a celebration of the joyousness of virtuosos music making.

Also found donned in uncouth Italian garb was the man who is arguably the greatest of French secular cantata composers, Michel Pignolet de Montéclair, whose fine *Morte di Lucrezia* is not only one of his few chamber cantatas set to an Italian text, but also appears to owe much to the style of Alessandro Scarlatti. Unfortunately it was not heard to best advantage at Göttingen, being part of a disappointingly pallid concert given by Les Talens Lyriques under Christophe Rousset in the inappropriately barn-like surroundings of the Stadthalle. Soprano Eugénie Warnier sounded ill at ease with the Italian text both here and in a pair of Handel cantatas, entering her comfort zone only in encores by Michel Lambert and Rameau. The festival earns a black mark for continuing to present this kind of chamber programme in such an unsuitable venue, having obviously not yet learned the lesson from a similar flop by Emma Kirkby and London Baroque three years ago.

Rousset was heard to considerably better advantage in his solo recital of François Couperin ('La Raphaële' from the 2nd Book), Handel and Daphny in the Aula of the university the following morning. Playing a splendid copy of an early 18th century French instrument, he demonstrated once again that he has few equals when it comes to revealing the subtle counterpoint and realising the elegance, languorous beauty and wit of Couperin. Rousset's Handel, too, was immensely satisfying, the G minor Suite (No. 7) concluding with a commandingly magisterial account of the great Passacaille. More excellent playing by French artists was to be heard in the recital given by violinist Hélène Schmitt and harpsichordist Yves Rechsteiner including works by Handel, Couperin, Rameau, Leclair and another unfamiliar figure, Louis Gabriel Guillemain (1705-1770), whose Violin Sonata in B minor was happy to incorporate a mixture of French and Italian *goût*: Italian in its allegros, French in the flowing sentimental Andante and Gratoso. Schmitt quickly won over a large Aula audience with her natural manner and strongly delineated playing that could be criticised only for

little more than odd lapses of intonation. No account of the festival's smaller-scale events would be complete without mention of an unforgettable late evening recital in St Albani-Kirche of lute music by Ennemond Gaultier (le vieux), Mouton, Handel (contemporary arrangements of three pieces from *Almira*) and Weiss. It was given by Joachim Held, whose technically outstanding, fluent and musical playing held a large audience spellbound. His playing of a magnificent G-minor Suite by Weiss was for me one of the highlights of our visit, a quiet, intensely profound voice to counterbalance more public utterances.

Those took the form of the two major works we caught, *Teseo* and Handel's third English oratorio *Athalia*. At first glance the two works – one embedded in Greek mythology, the other drawn from Jewish history – might appear to have little in common. But *Athalia* shares with *Teseo* a French source for its libretto, in the case of the oratorio Racine's last play *Athalie* (1691). Both also feature ruthless and powerful women of the kind it is wise to avoid, the sorceress Medea in the opera, the tyrannical Queen Athalia, daughter of Jezebel in the oratorio. They are roles demanding a formidable vocal technique and strong dramatic projection. In *Teseo* Dominique Labelle provided both, though she was arguably even more threatening when quietly menacing than when in full flood, whereas the Athalia of Canadian soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian was more impressive for her quite stunning appearance than some occasionally hard-edged singing, although she found considerable delicacy in 'Softest sounds' and produced some impressive chest notes at the end of the B section of 'My vengeance awakes me'. These formidable ladies have their antithesis in both opera and oratorio, with young British soprano Amy Freston's gentle, but courageous Agilea a fine foil for Labelle in *Teseo*. Apologies for indisposition were made before the performance for Meredith Hall's Josabeth, Agilea's tender counterpart in *Athalia*, but they were hardly necessary and in any event her singing improved as the evening progressed.

Since I've written of *Teseo* in more detail elsewhere, I'll restrict further comment here to noting that the period production of Catherine Turocy was in most ways satisfying, although not without irritating features. Magnificently dressed by Bonnie Kruger, there were mercifully few anachronistic distractions from a performance that with the exception of Susanne Rydén's woefully inadequate *Teseo* (she had apparently been ill before the run) was well enough sung and splendidly played by the Festival Orchestra under McGegan's well-paced and sympathetic direction. If marginally less satisfying, his conducting of *Athalia* displayed long familiar strengths alongside such equally well-established weaknesses as an occasional want of breadth, as for example in Joad's 'Gloomy tyrants', which like the rest of the role was sensitively if not always commandingly sung by Swiss alto Terry Wey. The great choruses that Winton Dean has

identified as standing at the heart of the work came off well in the hands of the NDR Choir, which wanted only a little more precision to equal the best specialist choirs.

Göttingen may be about to undergo change, but it won't in a hurry forget Nic McGegan, the man who for twenty years has so skilfully and benignly guided this most affable and generous-spirited of music festivals. Now the baton passes to Laurence Cummings, to whom one wishes all good fortune. He will need it.

#### LETTER

Dear Clifford,

I read with great interest, some sympathy and yet also a tinge of dismay Andrew Clark's eloquent defence of compromise in historical performance.

As one who has campaigned passionately for the effective application of historical knowledge (organological or otherwise) in our performances, I certainly recognise the importance of doing so with sensitivity to established practices. Such practices usually combine pragmatism with respect for the music in an efficient and convincing manner, and are a credit to the skill and inventiveness of musicians.

However, there must surely be some space for the kind of open-minded experimentation which brought the historical performance movement into existence in the first place. Where would we all be today if no-one had ever dared to experiment with gut strings and early bows, or valveless brass (holes or no holes), because they were afraid of compromising their modern technique, or of having trouble playing in tune? And more importantly, where will we and our successors be in a generation's time if no-one is prepared to take the next steps in this fascinating journey?

One of Andrew's justifications for compromise is that similar alterations sometimes took place during the 18th century – but the crucial point is that such alterations were made, not in a static environment where "improving" instruments was the only aim, but as changes in musical taste and composition demanded them: one of the aims of historical organology is to establish when, why and how alterations were made and therefore for which music they are best suited today.

That's not to say there can't be any leeway: surely any orchestra would have had its share of old fogies who (for instance) were quite happy with their short bows and gut G strings thank you very much, as well as its thrusting "early adopters" who bought wound strings and Tourte bows as soon as they "came out".

There will always be compromise in historical performance, partly because we will never have all the answers, and partly because it is impossible to have the "correct" instrument for every decade and every city! But my sincere hope is that there remain always a place for enthusiastic historical rigour: if this is allowed to flourish, what the current generation finds one step too far may become standard practice to our successors, and we will all be the richer for it.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Webber

## Saul in Buxton

(10 June 2011)

Amanda Babington

Attending operas at Buxton always feels rather like a step backwards in time. By evening, most of the daytime walkers have retired and the area around the opera house is gradually filled with promenading concert-goers. Aided by the setting of the Royal Devonshire Hospital Dome, pre-concert talks (each time I have attended) are equally unrushed. Consisting of an informal but informative discussion between the Artistic Director (Andrew Greenwood) and either the Director or Conductor of the production, the audience is encouraged to participate and most do so politely, as if in accordance with the general atmosphere. In discussion with Andrew Greenwood on the first night of *Saul* was the Director, Olivia Fuchs, who unfortunately didn't seem to have been briefed on the protocol and was therefore left standing (while Greenwood sat) to deliver a monologue to the expectant ranks of (closely) assembled audience. No wonder that she dried up (after a courageous twelve minutes) and had to turn to Greenwood. This minor embarrassment aside, Fuchs had much to say about the issues of staging an oratorio, with particularly interesting observations on how best to portray the role of the chorus as commentators and participants, while incorporating practicalities which include getting them on and off the stage. Another interesting discussion arose from her comments on the setting of *Saul* in 1950s America, although it was perhaps a mistake to tell the (admittedly older) audience that they could probably remember the events of the time. Perhaps it was this that inspired a heated (for Buxton) comment from one of the audience regarding the updating of Biblical stories, or perhaps it was Fuchs's earlier comment (delivered without apparent irony) that 'beards and sandals' did not appeal to audiences...

In the end, however, Fuchs was entirely justified in her view, as the production was one of the most convincing I have ever seen. Although the depiction of David's (Goliath-killing) stone as the atom bomb was perhaps a little hard to swallow at first (and the image on stage of the mushroom cloud frankly shocking), the portrayal of David's reception as a war hero and the ability of public figures (Saul/McCarthy) to sway public opinion was an ingenious stroke, linking the potentially abstract commentary of the chorus (the public) with the main characters and events. In the same way, the sequence of mimes showing various show trials (another reference to McCarthyism) reflected Saul's instability of mind perfectly, while also engaging the audience to a degree not often achieved by the usual depiction of a character's descent into madness or despotism. On a larger scale, as Fuchs explained, the setting also reflected perfectly the cycle of war and death. Saul's downfall began when he failed to kill

all of the Amalekites (as instructed by God) and helped himself to their riches, while America's use of the atom bomb changed the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the hunt for communists led them to Vietnam and beyond.

The staging was helped throughout by what can only be described as the best designed and executed opera set that I have seen for many years. Designed by Yannis Thavoris (trained in architecture and scenography), it provided the perfect transition from ancient to modern, with a classical plinth in Acts I and III and an 'oval office' for Act II. More subtly, the physical scene changes were achieved without interruption of the dramatic pace and even incorporated into the action, adding to the ability of the production as a whole to sustain the 'story' throughout.

Costumes and choreography further added to the efficiency and cohesion of the production, with the former characterised by supreme attention to detail despite several costume changes for both main characters and chorus. Costume also played a part in the choreography, most of which concerned the chorus, and although I was not convinced by the persistent presence of synchronised hand movements throughout (which looked a little childish at times), I was won over by the addition of green gloves for the 'envy' chorus that begins Act II. By this point in the production it had become clear that the synchronised movements were an artistic statement, rather than a visual gimmick, and their merit grew as the number of choruses increased, culminating in a clever use of black umbrellas to articulate the stages of grief (as Fuchs described them) in the last scene. Whether intended as such, this use of synchronised movement as a recurrent feature proved to be the perfect vehicle by which to address two of the difficulties outlined by Fuchs, giving the chorus a recognisable participatory role (commenting in gesture as much as word), while also avoiding a static stage presence which would have impeded the pacing.

Further attention to detail was apparent from the high standard of acting, so often overlooked in opera (and more so in staged oratorio), and the temptation to slide into pantomime reactions was resisted by soloists and chorus. Robert Murray's bumbling Jonathan provided an excellent foil to Jonathan Best's upright Saul and Elizabeth Atherton (Merab) and Ruby Hughes (Michal) both managed to avoid the clichés of their respective roles. Overall, the production bore the hallmarks of a very high quality staged production.

The story of Saul and David was a popular subject for



settings in the 18th-century and the libretto (by Charles Jennens) arrived at a good time for Handel, when Italian operas were failing and theatres in general were being encouraged to favour moral tales. The appearance of the autograph score of *Saul* suggests that Handel experienced some struggle in its composition, with unusually extensive deletions and rewritings. While working on *Saul*, Handel also wrote several (unpublished) instrumental works and perhaps his interest lay more in instrumental than vocal music at the time, for *Saul* contains several unusual musical features. There are no fewer than five orchestral interludes in the work, each positioned carefully as if to represent the passing of time in the drama. The instrumentation is equally striking, requiring enormous forces for the time. In addition to strings, the autograph score lists two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two trumpets, three trombones, drums, harp, two organs, harpsichord, theorbo and carillon. The last prompted Jennens to comment that 'Mr Handel's head is more full of maggots than ever' (in a letter to his cousin Lord Guernsey) and the combination of opulent instrumentation and extravagantly dramatic music whose chromaticism stretches the limits of tonality for the time has led some scholars to suggest that Handel was perhaps still suffering from his palsy of the year before, or that he was able to respond to Saul's madness with some understanding, given his own experience. Perhaps the orchestration was intended to match the extravagance of the music, for one of the two organs required was purchased especially for the event (at a sum of £500) and the kettle drums (used at the Duke of Marlborough's funeral) were borrowed from the Tower. Furthermore, the trombone players were probably German, as the instrument was obsolete at the time in England.<sup>1</sup> The music itself further challenges convention by its use of form. Three of the arias are in simple strophic form, only four of the total thirty are *da capo* and much of the action is conveyed in the arias rather than in recitative.

Doing such incredible music justice in the Buxton Opera House was not without its challenges, for the acoustic there is incredibly dry, to the extent that one can hear from the back of the audience the end of every note. This can be particularly daunting for a small band, especially during the orchestral numbers, and players could be forgiven for failing to sustain chords as long as they should in the overture for fear of being exposed. However, the band showed great trust and discipline from the very first chord, playing as one and aided by clear direction from Harry Christophers. Enjoyable moments from the band are too numerous to single out but it was a treat to hear such variety in the bass line, with the usual congratulations due particularly to Alistair Ross (harpsichord and carillon) and Joseph Crouch ('cello) for the sheer amount of playing required by each, although in this case they perhaps had more time off than usual. With a choice of harp, theorbo, carillon, harpsichord, organ, cello and

violone, variety was perhaps to be expected but the imaginative interpretation by each player added to the experience. Furthermore, a lovely rapport with the singers was created from the first aria by leader Walter Reiter's neat imitation of what were at times unusual ornaments from the soloists.

The singing from the chorus was excellent, although vibrato from the sopranos was rather too large in the opening chorus, where the combined timbre of the lower voices could have done with a lighter top line for optimum blend. However, this was the only such example and the chorus's ability to maintain ensemble in the midst of sometimes challenging staging was commendable. Elizabeth Atherton had the challenge of opening the work and took a little time to warm up but won the audience over with a melting rendition of 'Author of peace' (aided by sensitive playing from Joseph Crouch on 'cello), showing her bold side to equal advantage in 'Capricious man'. Ruby Hughes's warm tones were particularly suited to the intimacy of the venue and both women used vibrato to great effect, counteracting the venue's lack of natural resonance. Hughes and Anne Marie Gibbons (David) were particularly enjoyable in the sequence beginning with 'At persecution I can laugh', climaxing with 'No, no let the guilty tremble' and Gibbons excelled throughout, her impressive command of runs coming to the fore particularly in 'Thou words, O King' and 'Impious wretch'. Robert Murray's sinuous voice made light work of Jonathan's varied repertoire, Andrew Mackenzie-Wicks entered into the comic moment delightfully as the Witch of Endor and Jonathan Best need not have apologised for having a cold, the traces of which were only faintly apparent even in the lower registers.

*Saul* underwent many cuts even in Handel's own lifetime, and its length and complexity (together with the expense of hired players) may have contributed to the rarity of performances. However, the recent appearance of two sets of purchasable parts appears to have prompted something of a renaissance of the work and as this production shows, it is possible to make sizeable judicious cuts without losing any of the quality of the work.

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1. The players were also available for Israel in Egypt later in the season.



## LUFTHANSA FESTIVAL OF BAROQUE MUSIC

Nahoko Gotoh, Outi Jokiharju, Barnaby Rayfield

Andrew Benson-Wilson was out of the country for the whole of this year's Lufthansa Festival, so he invited three young guest reviewers to cover as many of the concerts as they could.

## Mass in B Minor (Nahoko Gotoh)

This year's Lufthansa Festival was entitled "Hanseatic to Adriatic – Journey through the Heart of Europe" which gave musicians an opportunity to explore lesser known repertoire of the Baroque period, especially music by church and court composers of various German and Italian cities. The Festival opened (13 May, St John's Smith Square) with the welcome return of Philippe Herreweghe and his group Collegium Vocale Gent performing Bach's great Mass in B minor, BWV 232. Since this work was compiled from music Bach composed over many decades, some performances can sound stylistically disparate. However, under Herreweghe's holistic and humanistic approach, I was left with little doubt that Bach had intended this work as a *missa tota* – regardless of whether it was actually performed as a whole during Bach's lifetime.

Herreweghe's B minor mass is neither grand, austere nor pious – rather it is unassuming, mellifluous yet eloquent. Although taken at a swift tempo, it never sounds hurried and has a natural flow because he shapes the music with a remarkable sense of phrasing and articulation, based on his deep understanding of baroque musical rhetoric. In the choral movements, his rhythmic sense of the *alla breve* movements such as the *Kyrie eleison* reprise and *Credo in unum Deum* gave the music a wonderful lilt. Even in *Et incarnatus est* and *Crucifixus*, the core movements of the whole work, the triple time was taken with almost one-to-a-bar lightness, and the emphasis was on the overall harmonic picture rather than individual chromatic dissonances. In this performance, the five vocal soloists also took part in the chorus, resulting in a total of 18 singers in all.

The soloists were excellent, both technically and stylistically. The two sopranos blended well in the duet *Christe eleison*: Dorothee Miels' light and clear voice floated above the warm and focused tone of Hana Blažiková, the rising Czech soprano who also sings regularly with Bach Collegium Japan. Damien Guillon, a French countertenor brought up in the church music tradition, gave a beautifully controlled and moving account of the *Agnus Dei*. The tenor Thomas Hobbs has a pleasing lyric voice, but seemed a little restrained in his solos. The veteran bass Peter Kooij was in wonderfully sonorous voice and both his arias also showcased outstanding instrumental playing. *Quoniam tu solus sanctus*, with the technically demanding horn obligato, proved one of the highlights of the first half. The Dutch baroque horn player, Teunis van der Zwart, also member of the Eighteenth Century Orchestra, performed his solo with breathtaking technical mastery and

was note-perfect. Interestingly, he played the semiquaver runs with a sharp staccato which I found quite unusual but effective. Kooij also brought out the lyricism in *Et in Spiritum Sanctum* accompanied by the warm and elegant oboe d'amore.

Throughout the work, the chorus and the orchestra were at one with the conductor, totally flexible and responsive at every turn to his phrasing and articulation. I noticed that a couple of the singers in the choir did not use a score, which demonstrates their expertise in this repertoire. Indeed, Herreweghe has recorded Bach's mass in B minor with Collegium Vocale Gent twice already (in 1989 and 1998), and I have been informed that after this London performance they recorded it for the third time for his recently launched own label. So those who missed this concert should be able to listen to Herreweghe's latest interpretation in the not too distant future.

## Life and Soul (Nahoko Gotoh)

Countertenor Robin Blaze and the group Theatre of the Ayre, led by the lute player Elizabeth Kenny, devised an imaginative programme of music for alto voice and ensemble from mainly 17th-century Germany, including works by Buxtehude, Schütz, and Johann Philipp Krieger, and interspersed with instrumental items (15 May, St John's). They began with Buxtehude's *Jubilate Domino* for alto, viola da gamba (Alison McGillivray) and continuo (theorbo and organ). Robin Blaze sang with sentiment and a beautifully-controlled high register. The ensemble playing, on the other hand, was at times a little untidy – in this setting, perhaps it was not easy for the theorbo player to direct and I felt lack of leadership. This was also felt in Telemann's cantata *Ach Herr, strafe mich nicht* for two violins and continuo. The work is full of colourful word-painting and the influence of Italian style is evident especially in the instrumental writing. The revelation for me in this concert was the music of Johann Philipp Krieger (1649-1725), a highly-regarded Kapellmeister at the Weissenfels court. His cantata *O Jesu, du mein Leben* is a sunny and joyful work, and Krieger skilfully integrates the solo voice with the solo violin (Rachel Podger). In contrast, the concluding work of the evening, *An die Einsamkeit* (To Solitude) was an intimate monologue of timeless beauty in the form of a chaconne. Blaze sang stylishly above Kenny's inventive ground bass accompaniment, although his voice sounded a little strained at times.

## Cantus Cölln (Nahoko Gotoh)

I had high expectations for the all-Buxtehude concert by the German early music ensemble Cantus Cölln, directed by Konrad Junghänel, making a rare visit to London (17 May, St John's). Their programme featured Buxtehude's

major work *Membra Jesu nostri* preceded by his chorale cantata *Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich, o Herr*. Sadly, I was very disappointed with the performance. Both works were sung one to a part (SSATB) with a small group of players, but especially in the first piece, there were obvious intonation problems between the singers as well as between the singers and instrumentalists. In particular, the two sopranos (Gudrun Sidonie Otto and Mechthild Bach) who both had a quite distinct vibratos, didn't blend. Furthermore, I was also disappointed that such a renowned early music group didn't perform the sixth cantata 'Ad cor' (To his heart) with the consort of *viole da gamba* as specified but with violins and violas. It may well have been for financial reasons, but I missed the special timbre and effect the composer achieved in this piece. On the positive side, the vocal ensemble improved as it progressed. Junghänel's tempo was brisk but well articulated with attention to nuances of the text, for example in the opening chorus "Surge, amica mea" in the fourth cantata 'Ad latus'. Of the vocal solos, the bass Wolf Matthias Friedrich succeeded in bringing out Buxtehude's vivid word-painting, albeit in an operatic way. The alto Elisabeth Popien and tenor Hans Jörg Mammel sang their solos with stylistic sensitivity. As an encore, the group performed "Jesu bleibet meine Freude" from Bach's cantata BWV147. Was I the only one that felt the intensity of Buxtehude's music was broken with this choice? Surely in a festival dedicated to baroque music such as the Lufthansa Festival, we can enjoy Buxtehude on its own merit without resorting to a popular Bach encore.

#### Ensemble Inégal (*Outi Jokiharju*)

Ensemble Inégal's "From Bohemia's Courts and Chapels" (18 May at St John's), under the direction of Adam Viktora, showcased music by the two Bohemian composers Jan Dismas Zelenka and Johann Joseph Ignaz Brentner, contemporaries of each other as well as of the biggest names today of the High Baroque, of whom J. S. Bach was also present on the programme. Zelenka's work was represented by two Marian antiphons, *Alma Redemptoris Mater* (ZWV 123) and *Salve Regina* (ZWV 135). Both pieces are rather uneven, containing sharp contrasts between their sections, and for this reason are undoubtedly challenging to perform. Ensemble Inégal, with soprano Gabriela Eibenová, created some wonderful moments, such as the hypnotic final movement of the first piece, or the elegant intertwining of particularly the vocal and flute (played by Jana Semerádová) parts in the second, but I failed to be convinced by the pieces as a whole. The Prague-based Brentner, on the other hand, was represented by two pieces from his collection of concertos, *Horae pomeridianae*, Op. 4. The first of these, No. 4 in G major, was a short piece which contrasted the courtly elegance of the opening *Largo* and the closing *Menuet* with the strong rustic elements and concertante violins of the intervening *Allegro* (descriptively titled *Vigil nocturnus*) which made comparisons to Vivaldi very easy to draw. The second piece, No. 1 in G minor, stayed more easily within the courtly ambit, though still including a few quirks especially in the last two

movements. The inclusion of the Bach's cantata *Ich habe genug* (BWV 82a) in such a geographically defined programme was somewhat disorientating, and the programme notes, too, showed an awareness of the need to justify its appearance. This was done on thematic grounds, but the choice probably owed something also to the pairing, in this E minor version from Anna Magdalena Bach's 'Notebook', of a soprano vocal part with flute obbligato – well suited to the soloists of the evening. Strengthening a programme of lesser-known repertoire with established pieces is a tried-and-tested trick, but in this programme I do not think it ultimately worked. As the most substantial piece on the programme, the assured style of Bach rather overshadowed the arguably more eccentric compositional antics of his Bohemian colleagues. The programming of Ensemble Inégal's concert also highlighted the difficulty in defining 'Bohemian' music in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, owing to the exceptional size of the diaspora in this period: whilst Brentner stayed in Prague, Zelenka spent most of his decades-long career in Dresden. It would have been interesting to have heard, for comparison, the Retrospect Ensemble's all-Polish programme on the final day of the Festival, but unfortunately I was unable to attend. Gabriela Eibenová had a warm and clear, if slightly one-sided, voice which blended very pleasingly with the rich wooden timbre of Jana Semerádová's flute; the interaction between the two was one of the highlights of the concert. Adam Viktora's direction was hindered by his playing the organ continuo from the far side of the ensemble, surrounded by four other continuo players. Apparently lacking sightlines to many of the performers, much of the direction seemed to be carried out 'by proxy' through the leader, and this lack of immediacy at times resulted in some noticeable problems. Ultimately, though, what irked me most was the lack of physical participation on the part of the performers. With the exception of the two soloists, the ensemble showed little visible conviction in the pieces. This improved in the course of the Bach cantata, and some of that involvement carried on into the second Brentner concerto which followed, but on the whole, its uneven presence did no favours to the Bohemian pieces on the programme: whilst established repertoire arguably does some of the work for the performer, conversely one has to work doubly hard to make a case for composers and pieces which are new to the audience.

#### Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca (*Outi Jokiharju*)

In contrast, this physical participation was admirably present (though not overdone) at the Festival's final performance (From Brescia to Venice, 21 May), given by the. Opting to stand, instruments permitting, the group displayed excellent connection with both the music and each other, presenting works by lesser-known composers with equal energy and conviction compared to those by Vivaldi and Albinoni. The first half of the concert was dedicated to works by a range of composers, starting with

a C major concerto by the Venetian Albinoni, then moving west, first to Bergamo – in the form of a *Sonata a 5* by Carlo Antonio Marino – and then stopping at Brescia for one concerto by each of the two brothers Luigi and Giulio Taglietti, before returning to Venice in the second half of the concert, which focused on three concertos by Vivaldi. Albinoni's concerto Op. 5 No. 12 (1707), a relatively short piece, brought out some fine exposed part-playing from the ensemble, the fugal final movement also drawing the first brief soloistic passages from the cello, the showcase instrument of the evening. Both the cello, played by Walter Vestidello, and the higher strings were stretched further by the figurations in the sonata in E minor by Marino (from his Op. 3, 1693), which built up virtuosic fervour especially in the second movement and in the imitative part-writing of the final *Allegro*. Luigi Taglietti's F major *Concerto a 4 'con violoncello obbligato'* (1708) featured not only fine playing from Vestidello, but also testified again to the high level of ensemble playing of the Sonatori, which came to the fore even more strongly in Giulio Taglietti's *Concerto a 5* in B flat major, Op. 8 No. 8 (1710), featuring four separate violin parts. The first two of the concertos by Vivaldi, Op. 3 No. 11 (RV 565) from the 1711 collection *L'estro armonico*, and the *Concerto 'con violoncello obbligato'* (RV 405), both in D minor, continued to showcase the cello, which was at its most lyrical in the central *Adagio* of the second piece. The first concerto also featured demanding solo writing for the two violins which finally regained centre stage in the ultra-heights of the third concerto, Op. 3 No. 5 in A major (RV 519). Mature as an ensemble, led by Giorgio Fava, the Sonatori's performance was highly assured, and maintained an excellent standard of ensemble playing, also in the fine detail. Walter Vestidello, cello, was a sympathetic soloist who drew keen appreciation from the audience. The group's decision to use Vivaldi's sprightly Concerto in G major "Alla rustica" (RV 151) for their encore ensured that the evening concluded on a high.

#### Gustav Leonhardt (Barnaby Rayfield)

Amongst the bright young things of Lufthansa's Baroque Festival, like Rachel Podger and Mahan Esfahani, was a discreetly programmed keyboard recital (15 May, St Gabriel's, Warwick Square) of a legend. Gustav Leonhardt, now 83, is a name as epic and uncontemporary as Sir John Gielgud. Youth and frequent overhauls of interpretative fashion are the hallmarks of the recent baroque movement, so with the solemn entrance of this elder statesman and the concise, academically minded programme, *The German Touch* (an overview of the young Bach and his native predecessors), one could have been forgiven for expecting the ultimate cold shower. It started very formally with Christian Ritter's *Allemanda in discessum Caroli XI Regis Sveciae*, a static, sparse piece, in keeping with its French courtly influences. After then, though, everything freed up with the Buxtehude selection bringing out of Leonhardt a light, dancing touch with the *Preludium in G minor* and *Rofillis Variations*. A *Toccata* by Johann Reincken, three *Fugues* and the *Fantasia in E Flat major* by Pachelbel, as well

as Georg Böhm's *Chaconne* sat well along side each other, neatly showing the array of ideas and invention in this late 17<sup>th</sup> century survey. A lot of the repertoire was not known to me, indeed one composer (Matthias Weckmann) was an entirely new name but what came across in this German keyboard overview was not just a culture of form and tradition, but of improvisatory freedom and external influences, namely French. These contrasts of form and exuberance had a powerful advocate in Leonhardt. Shamefully, despite owning several of his recordings, this was the first time I had seen him in the flesh. He may be a name from 'back then', yet he yields nothing to the new generation of players. His style is clean, free and utterly without fuss or flounciness exaggerations of dynamics. True, some of his tempi are more stately than we often hear now but not once did the inner pulse fade or the structure sag. In fact what was most remarkable was the freedom, even passion, coming out of the instrument, in direct contrast to Leonhardt's severe and impenetrable demeanour. Considering that most young pianists now are only too happy to augment their playing with their sexy faces (Yes, you, Lang Lang!) and other gurning, Leonhardt's selfless focus was a wake up call to many a show off. Then suddenly, he stood up and was all smiles and undimmed enthusiasm, as he introduced the Bach items, all the works of a young master. There was a delicate but snappily delivered selection of four *Little Preludes* (the bane of many a struggling, amateur pianist), then a lithe, flexible account of the *Aria variata alla maniera italiana*. A delectable lesson in both passion and dignity.

#### Music for Salzburg Cathedral (Barnaby Rayfield)

A bit of passion would not have gone amiss in Westminster Abbey (19 May), with their choir joining up with the St. James's Baroque under its chief conductor James O'Donnell. The main work was Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber's *Requiem in A major*, performed neither as a Requiem service nor together in one go. Instead the mass movements were broken up with other works by Biber, Schütz and the short *Sonata sublationis* by Antonio Bertali, creating a sensible compromise and a nod to how it would have probably been originally played. With its six part choir and busy orchestration Biber's *Requiem in A major* is a grand work and it suited the airy Westminster acoustic well. Yet for all the beauties of this performance, (some exquisite instrumental playing, the even handed sharing of solo duties among Westminster's capable trebles, and the sound balance in general), I did feel O'Donnell's conducting was tepid and safe. This is all personal taste; it was a fine, polished performance, yet O'Donnell seemed to relish the static elements of Biber's writing, allowing those multi-layered blocks of sound to hang around somewhat. In short, it needed a pulse: despite its seriousness, this work needs a forward momentum. All in all it made the interludes more refreshing. A superbly resonant bass from the choir delivered a lovely account of Schütz's Venice inspired *Fili*



mi, Absalon and in fact Schütz's works were the most exciting pieces of the evening, with the concert ending with his mature, Lutheran setting, *Nicht uns, Herr, sondern deinem Namen*. With excellent German diction, especially from the choir boys, the piece's jubilant energy made a lively finale to a sometimes bloodless evening, something the Biber alone might not have done.

Beautiful throughout was the playing of the St. James Baroque. In fact the highlight of the concert was Biber's *Sonata no.1* for brass and strings, where the selected players, freed from O'Donnell's safety net, suddenly shone, demonstrating how expressive and vibrant Biber can be. Otherwise, the feeling I had was of a neutral, noncommitted performance of a Requiem that demands a strong, opinionated hand. Still, that's just my carping. It was all rapturously received by the audience who had packed out the nave. Strange turnout it was too, and I felt way out of my depth in my usual early music attire of crumpled shirt and cycling clobber. The auditorium was awash with corporate suits, sampling what they've sponsored. Every Lufthansa Mensch and his mistress was there. But where were the sandal wearers and baroque pitch brigade hidden? Odd choice for a corporate bash but maybe that explained the safe, solid engineering of the performance.

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#### VICTORIA AT SPANISH PLACE

How apt that the choir of St James's Church, Spanish Place should be offering a comprehensive survey of Victoria's music in this quatercentenary year. All the masses (and much other music) are being sung during the course of the regular liturgy and on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July the choir stepped out of the choir stalls to give a recital. The eleven singers sang unaccompanied and used the standard transpositions for modern SATB – my desire to hear small-choir ATBarB live in this repertoire lives on. Solo voices were used for passages in reduced textures, though with only eleven singers altogether the difference in sound was not always so distinct from the tutti sections. Each half of the programme included a mass and two motets, including intrusions by Guerrero and, from the New World, Padilla. Though there was perhaps too much very loud singing when a more restrained approach combined with careful listening might have paid dividends, there was no denying the collective commitment to and enthusiasm for the repertoire. The opportunity to hear the *Missa de Beata Virgine* was especially welcome. In this performance cadences were regularly shaped in such a way that the new text of the following section could clearly emerge, an obvious interpretational ploy that nonetheless too rarely actually happens. The other mass was the wonderful *Missa Salve Regina* for double choir in which the antiphonal exchanges between the two choirs were executed with great sensitivity – handovers rather than challenges. At the time of writing there are ten masses to come in the liturgical cycle, including both settings of the *Requiem*. Details of the services are on the church's website.

David Hansell

#### VIVALDI'S FEMALE CHOIR

*Vivaldi's Women Schola Pietatis* Antonio Vivaldi, Nadja Zwiener leader, Richard Vendome artistic director  
Colonial Pictures 658952 025620

from [www.spav.org](http://www.spav.org) or [richard.vendome@spav.org.uk](mailto:richard.vendome@spav.org.uk)

There are two elements to this DVD. There are three musical performances by Richard Vendome's "Schola Pietatis Antonio Vivaldi", an all-female ensemble modelled on the latest research into the musical activities of the Ospedale della Pietà, where Vivaldi was maestro di concerto. Then comes a television documentary (part of the "Peter Ackroyd's Venice" series), in which parts of the afore-mentioned performances are used as illustrations. Any programme about Venetian music that opens with one of the livelier passages of Mozart's Requiem as the soundtrack is already on a sticky wicket, and such comments as "Just as in a sonata or concerto, no one instrument is allowed to dominate the others" (isn't that exactly what a baroque solo concerto, as exemplified by the works of Vivaldi, is all about?) and the choice of a Bach concerto for a snippet of live performance (preceded by the words "so Vivaldi's reputation will rise even higher...") really suggests that something got lost or confused along the way. To be honest, the less said about that part of the package the better, although there are some nice shots of the interiors of Venetian buildings.

As for the performances, they are actually very good. Whether you accept the concept of female tenors and basses, or whether you prefer Andrew Parrott's solution of raising those voices by an octave, or indeed you like your Vivaldi in good old-fashioned SATB, these are very convincing. There's an exhilarating aria from *Juditha Triumphans*, a brevis setting of *In exitu Egypto* from the choir, and that setting of the Gloria. I was a little puzzled, given the rather harrowing experience that Psalm 114 relates, that everyone was smiling as they declaimed the text. The solos were taken by members of the group, who gave very good accounts of themselves. I was somewhat surprised that some of the footage was used – one of the cameras was clearly out of synch with the audio track, and there were many disconcerting cuts from one view to another with fiddlers' bows moving out of time and singers' lips anticipating the words. Even more ridiculously, some of the out of synch material made its way on to the documentary. The out-of-focus fade technique was also over-used – a bit like someone who has just discovered what a previously unnoticed button on their mobile does. So high marks for Richard Vendome and SPAV, not so high for the film director. BC

## York Early Music International Young Artists Competition

Andrew Benson-Wilson

The York Early Music International Young Artists Competition was founded by the Early Music Network in 1985; it takes place in alternate years and is now organised by the York Early Music Festival. The 14<sup>th</sup> competition took place between 14-16 July in St Margaret's Church, Walmgate. It is open to ensembles aged between 17 and 35 who perform repertory ranging from the middle ages to the 19th century "using appropriate historically informed playing techniques, instruments and stylistic conventions". Competitors are assessed on the following criteria: choice of a sustainable, interesting repertory for future performances; musicianship; interpretation; creativity of programme planning; technical ability; presentation, stage presence, rapport with audience, professionalism; quality of programme notes; overall contribution to the early music scene; eventual professional viability; and the professionalism of their dealings with the Festival office. The winner receives a cheque for £1,000 together with opportunities to work with BBC Radio 3, a concert as part of the 2012 York Early Music Festival, and a professionally produced CD by Linn Records. Each group presents an informal 20 minute concert in the two days before the final. In the past, these more relaxed concerts have had no judges present and are compered by an experienced musician who usually introduces the music and the groups to the audience, chats with the musicians, inviting them to talk more about themselves or the music, asking questions about their performance and the music, and offering constructive comments that might help the group – all with the aim of increasing their confidence and performance skills for the final. The final itself took place on Saturday 16 July, and was recorded by BBC Radio 3. This year ten finalists were selected from the recordings sent in by around 70 applicants. They appeared in the final in the following order.

Le Petit Concert Baroque are a two-harpsichord duet from France (sisters Chani and Nadja Lesaulnier). They studied in Barcelona and Basel and have already won a number of competitions. Their first CD, transcriptions of orchestral and vocal music by Handel (*Al piacere del Signore G. F. Haendel* – ORF SACD3056), was awarded a Diapason d'Or. They opened their first programme with the *Allegro Moderato* from WF Bach's Sonata in F for two harpsichords, showing an affinity and understanding of the sensibilities of the *Empfindsamer Stil*, and sensibly allowing the gentler moments their own space. They also played transcriptions of works by Muffat, Telemann and Vivaldi. They opened their final concert with the *Allegro* from Bach's Concerto in C minor, another genuine two-harpsichord work, demonstrating a lovely sense of rhetoric and the ebb and flow of the musical line. I wasn't

too sure if their version of "Der Ewigkeit saphirnes Haus" from Bach's *Trauerode* added much to the original version, and had similar feelings about their version of Handel's "Venti turbini" from *Rinaldo*, spectacular as it was. Unfortunately, the competition organisers supplied two very mismatched harpsichords, neither in particularly good condition and one being only single manual, leading to some tricky registration changes. Their colourful programme notes and spoken introductions had more than a sprinkling of fairy dust about them – dare I say that they were very French?

Quadro Melante are four musicians from Australia, Croatia, Iran and Malaysia who met in the UK (Georgia Browne *flute*, Bojan Čičić *violin*, Ibrahim Aziz *viola da gamba*, and Mahan Esfahani *harpsichord*). The group made its debut in Oxford last November. Both their concerts were based around Telemann's visit to Paris in the 1730s. In the concert they played the *Troisième quatuor* from his 'Paris' quartets and a Sonata from the 1743 *Conversation Galante* by Guillemain, one of the younger composers that were influenced by Telemann. In the final they contrasted another Paris Quartet with works by Leclair and Blavet. Georgia Browne was very effective in balancing the expected refined good taste with the clearly seductive nature of the Leclair piece, as suggested by its subtitle of 'insinuante'. Bojan Čičić demonstrated a commendably wide range of volume in Leclair's *Chaconne*, being particularly effective in the very quiet registers normally avoided by violinists. Ibrahim Aziz had a chance to show his virtuosic technique in the same piece, although I did wonder if he was rather too forthright when slipping back to continuo role. Mahan Esfahani's harpsichord continuo realisations were surprisingly restrained, with an emphasis on simple block chords rather than the more usual broken chords and flourishes. The latter are frequently overdone by continuo harpsichord players, so this emphasis on the opposite approach was refreshing. There were several moments in Telemann's *Deuxième quatuor* when the harpsichord dropped out altogether, very effectively focussing attention on the three solo instruments. Continued experience of playing together in this small-scale format will help these four experienced players realise the group's potential.

Sebastian Chamber Players was formed ten years ago. Its four members (Daniel S. Lee and Alexander Woods *violins*, Ezra Seltzer *cello* and Jeffrey Grossman *harpsichord*) studied historical performance at the Juilliard School and went on to become postgraduate fellows in early music at Yale. Their two concerts were *Venetian Variations*, with works by Castello, Merula and Vivaldi, and *Roman City*,

*Roman Empire* – Corelli contrasted with Couperin who, having managed to combine the French and Italian styles, then used both to depict the Hapsburg Holy Roman Empire in his *L'Impériale* from *Les Nations*. Their experience of working together was self evident, and they gave professionally polished performances. In their first concert, they could have done with a bit more stylistic differentiation between Castello and Merula and the much later Vivaldi, not least in their choice of instruments and bows, both of which were closer to Vivaldi than Castello. This was not an issue in the final where they demonstrated well-thought-out articulation and phrasing, notably in the Couperin. I liked the way they played the echo passages in the Castello, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin turning away and playing quieter – many violinists just turn away, not realising that this alone rarely makes much difference to the volume.

**Borromini String Quartet** (James Toll and Naomi Burrell violins, Sam Kennedy viola, Peggy Nolan cello) are a UK-based group formed in 2008. They gave their debut performance at the Haydn Chamber Music Festival at the Royal Northern College of Music in 2009 and have recently recorded the Boccherini quartets. They play instruments from the Becket Collection, set up in classical style. Their first concert reflected their love of Boccherini, with two of his attractive quartets (Op24/6 and 53/4). They gave the impression of being thoroughly at ease with each other and with the music, playing with a commendable sense of expressive style, personal involvement and balance, producing an impressive range of tone colours. Their second concert was *Fugues Great and Small*, starting with Mozart's arrangement of a Fugue from Bach's '48' before changing bows and moving on to Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge*. This is a work that many established quartets spend half their life trying to perfect, so it was an extraordinary achievement for these young players to even attempt it, let alone at 11.30 on a rainy Saturday morning, the oppressive humidity inside the church wreaking havoc on their instruments. It is not just technically very scary, but is musically very difficult to project. Beethoven seems to have taken all four movements of a large scale symphony, jumbled them all up, and then reassembled the resulting pieces almost at random. I was impressed by their willingness, and ability, to play very quietly, notably in the response to the opening statement, and in the rather ghostly central section.

**Profeti della Quinta** was founded in 2002 in the Galilee region of Israel. The five singers (Doron Schleifer and David Feldman countertenors, Dino Lüthy and Dan Dunkelblum tenors, Elam Rotem bass) went on to study at the Schola Cantorum in Basel and are all now based in Switzerland. I heaped praise on their CD *Salomone Rossi: The Song of Solomon and instrumental music* (Pan Classics NEWP 10214) in the June 2010 issue of *EMR*. Their first programme, *Mia benigna fortuna* explored the development of the madrigal and secular song in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with works by Josquin, Arcadelt, Rore and Rossi. Their

programme for the final was *Hashirim Ashér Lish'lomó – Songs of love and praise* with two contrasting madrigals by Cipriano de Rore and madrigals and Hebrew prayers by Salomone Rossi, the first composer to introduce polyphony into the Mantua synagogue, over the road from the Gonzaga court where he also worked. They finished with Rossi's "Hashkivénu 'adonái 'elohéinu leshalóm", a delightful example of a Jewish composer working in a Catholic Court writing homophony that Luther would have been proud of! They exhibited an outstanding consort blend, with beautifully pure vocal tone and intonation and with none of the interference with pitch, pulse and tuning that vibrato brings. They sang from part-books, requiring far more concentration on their fellow singers than with normal scores – I have a feeling this helped to give the group such a sense of vocal cohesion. They made excellent use of diminutions, weaving them into the overall fabric. Although all the singers were excellent, the two outer voices of countertenor Doron Schleifer and bass Elam Rotem made particularly significant contributions to the stunning sound of the group.

**Den Haag Piano Quintet** are five Japanese musicians (Kae Ogawa *fortepiano*, Miki Takahashi *violin*, Sonoko Asabuki *viola*, Toru Yamamoto *cello*, Tomoki Sumiya *double bass*) who met at Royal Conservatory of The Hague. They made their debut at the Festival Oude Muziek Utrecht in August 2009. They focus on the relatively little-known repertoire of the piano quintet, playing examples by Jan Ladislav Dussek and Jan Nepomuk Hummel in their two concerts. Both works were written by virtuoso pianists who naturally kept the focus on the piano, here played with a superb combination of sensitivity and virtuosity by Kae Ogawa. In her entertaining introductory talk, Kae told us that Dussek was the first to position the piano sideways on, perhaps because he wanted the audience to see his apparently handsome face! His Quintet in F minor was the first to use this combination of instruments, later to be taken up by Schubert for his 'Trout' quintet. The work opens in fantasy style, with rapid changes of mood and a chorale-like section for the strings showered with piano figurations. The string players showed due deference to the key role of the piano, maintaining an excellent balance throughout, all recognising the moments when the piano figuration could fade into the background. They had a fine sense of rhetoric, without venturing into the romantic style which was yet to fully develop. The compere suggested that the violin and viola were too quiet, but I disagree – I thought they recognised the nature of the work well. She also criticised the fact that they tuned up on stage, suggesting that "you all have machines to tune to the temperament of the piano" in the green room. Again, I disagree: my notes recorded a compliment to them for their careful tuning on stage. The vastly different environments between the green room and (for the final) the unpleasantly humid church meant that it is essential for any musicians to check tuning before they start. Hummel's Quintet in E flat



minor was an equally impressive work. Alongside snatches of gypsy music, there were moments when he seemed to be the love-child of Mozart and Chopin. There are apparently more than 35 works for this combination of instruments, most completely unknown, and this group is making an important contribution to awakening interest in an important corner of the repertoire of that fascinating period on the cusp of the classical and romantic eras.

**Habsburger Camerata** (Matthew Lonson *violin*, Helen Roberts *cornett*, Nathaniel Wood *sackbut*, Caroline Ritchie *gamba*, John McKean *organ*), all sometime students in Basel, were originally established to explore the musical legacy of the Habsburg Empire, but have expanded into a more diverse repertoire, often preparing new editions and interpretations of unknown or rarely performed works. The first concert was *Con ogni sorte d'istromenti*, with early 17th-century Italian chamber music from Picchi, Cima, Rore and Rossi during the period when the violin was on its way to overtaking the cornett as the key solo instrument. One notable moment came with the group's own diminutions on Rore's *Anchor che col partire*, based on the published examples of the likes of Rognoni and Dalla Casa. For the final, they showed the influence of these Italian composers on later musicians working under Habsburg patronage in the 17th century with the programme *The Legacy of the Habsburgs*. They played sonatas by Antonio Bertali and David Pohle and an anonymous work from the Düben Collection. Both concerts gave all the players a chance to show their musicianship and reflected the wide range of tonal colour available with this unusual mix of instruments. As well as solo moments, the instruments combined in a wide variety of duos and trios, notably between the unlikely pairing of sackbut and viola da gamba.

**Encantar** are a group of four female singers from Belgium (Sarah Abrams, Wannah Organe, Kerlijne van Nevel, Soethin Baptist) who specialise in the polyphonic repertoire from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They were founded in 2006 and have since won the Klara Tandemtrofee along with the public prize and the Radio Klara prize. Since September 2010 they have been ensemble-in-residence at KU Leuven. They have already made two recordings, of Christmas music and music from the songbook of Marguerite of Austria *La déclinaison de la femme* (Phaedra 92069). Their first concert was *Voces silentio* with sacred music from 16th-century Italy, Flanders, Wallonia and Slovenia by Festa, Pisano, Gallus, Vento, Compère and Agricola. This was followed by *Dolci lagrime* with works by Palestrina, Festa, Bivi, Arcadelt, Sayve, Victoria and Guerrero. In both concerts they demonstrated a superb consistency and blend of tone over a wide range of volume and pitch, with excellent enunciation and an instinctive togetherness, their pure and unaffected voices having a delightful natural resonance but not a trace of vibrato. They made very effective use of different positions including, at the end of their first concert, facing away

from the audience towards an imaginary cross as they sang *O crux ave* by Agricola. This would have been better visually if they had been at the sharp end of a Catholic church, rather than facing the side wall of a stripped ex-Anglican one gazing at a window blind and a collection of keyboard instruments, but it was acoustically very effective. One of the attractive features of this group is the choice of voices, with one soprano, two mezzos and an alto. It might be invidious to single out any one singer, but the vocal and intonational stability of Soethin Baptist's alto, forming the bass line, made a particularly strong contribution.

**Les Ombres** (Sylvain Sartre *flute*, Varoujan Doneyan *violin*, Margaux Blanchard *viola da gamba*, Jonatan Pesek *cello*, and Nadja Lesaulnier *harpsichord*) are from France. The group was founded in 2006 by musicians trained at the Schola Cantorum in Basel and aims to link musicological research with historically informed interpretation. They won second prize at the À Tre International Early Music Competition in Trossingen and will be in residence at the Opera Theatre in Saint-Etienne, France for the next 3 years. They have made a CD, *François Couperin – Colin de Blamont: Concert chez la Reine*, published by Ambronay Editions. Their two linked concerts were both based on Telemann at the Concert Spirituel, and contrasted him first with Couperin (*La Française* from *Les nations*) and then with Jean-Marie Leclair (*Deuxième concert*). They took time to tune carefully before both concerts, something that should no longer be a surprise to 'early music' audiences and is to be commended. Their chosen repertoire of French music seems to be in their blood, and they played with a natural flair and the expected *bon goût*. They had regard for period conventions of ornamentation and articulation, and produced some excellent cadences. As well as the overall consort of the group, I was also particularly impressed with the sensitive viola da gamba playing of Margaux Blanchard (who also contributed friendly introductions to the music) and Sylvain Sartre's delicate tone on the flute.

**L'Istante** is the group name of two Swiss musicians (Anais Chen *violin* and Johannes Keller *harpsichord*) who met in 2008 at the Schola Cantorum in Basel. In 2010 the duo was selected as an "International Young Artists Presentation Selected Promising Ensemble" at the Flanders Festival, Antwerp. Their first concert was *Il Violino Amoro e Guerriero* where they both relished the technical and musical complexities of a Suite in E minor from Matteis' *Ayres for the Violin* and Biber's 1681 Sonata 3 in F. I particularly liked Johannes Keller's harpsichord continuo in the large scale chaconne that ends the Biber, his solid chords emphasising the slow build up of tension – unfortunately the harpsichord he was provided with was badly out of tune. They played with admirable attention to detail, producing a beautifully blended and coherent sound. Their final concert, *Vocalità e Fioriture del Violino*, reflected the link between the sound of the violin and the voice and featured works with vocal origins by Luzzaschi

and Rognoni, and a trio sonata by Corelli. Again the continuo was excellent, although it must have been embarrassing for the competition organisers that Johannes Keller had to spend so much time tuning the harpsichord himself before they started. But the star of the duo was undoubtedly the extraordinary playing of violinist Anaïs Chen. She played with exquisite ease and grace, her finger-work remaining deliciously delicate despite some breakneck speeds. She also displayed an outstanding sense of melodic line, notably in the opening Largo of Corelli's Op. 5/9. In the diminutions in the works by Luzzaschi and Rognoni she weaved the elaborations and ornaments into the texture of the underlying vocal work, creating a unified thread.

In my regular reviews of this competition, I normally add a concluding paragraph pointing out some of the issues that crop up with most young groups but that could not fairly be pinned on any one group. However, this year, the standard of performance and professionalism from the performers was so high that there is really very little to say. The only point I would mention (and it applies to many experienced professional groups as well) is that more thought needs to be given as to how to respond to the audience when arriving, leaving and acknowledging applause. Some players seemed too eager to sort out their music for the next piece, or were in a rush to escape from the stage at the end. And however well groups might play together, some of their collective bowing (as in bending over, not playing stringed instruments) could be tidied up. These aspects need to be agreed and rehearsed beforehand.

Having little to add about the professionalism of the impressive young performers, I do have something to say about the professionalism of the competition organisation. Considering the inclusion this year of the criteria that performers will be judged on the "professionalism of their dealings with the Festival office", it is only fair to mention a number of aspects where the competition organisers failed to show professionalism towards the young performers. For example, two of the groups were introduced to the audience by incorrect names. One group was announced when they were clearly not ready to go on, only for them to arrive to find their chairs and music desks (and the BBC microphones) in the wrong place. This incorrect placement of chairs, desks and microphones happened to a number of groups. As would be expected in any professional gig, players should be given the chance to check their chairs and music desks and to lay out their music before they enter to play. Players are expected to walk to the performing area through a narrow gap between a central pillar and audience seats, to be then confronted by a mass of BBC microphone stands and loose floor cables. This could be avoided if competitors were asked to approach the performing area from one of the side aisles. I have mentioned this in previous reviews, but clearly to no effect. Players should also be encouraged to leave their music (and, perhaps, instruments) where they are for somebody else to collect,

allowing them to leave the stage and return for a curtain call without having the awkwardness of having to gather up all their belongings – one unfortunate player ended up dropping his music on the floor as he left. The quality of the harpsichords and their tuning was also particularly poor in comparison to earlier years.

I thought that all the groups have real potential, and all deserved to be in the final. Sadly, a few groups performed better in the preliminary concerts than in the finals, but I thought that at least half of the ten groups had the potential to win. The choice was down to the seven judges: Philip Hobbs, Elizabeth Kenny, Vivien Ellis, Neal Peres Da Costa, Xavier Vandamme and Christophe Mangé. There is only one prize, which they awarded to Profeti della Quinta. The Friends of the York Festival were clearly enchanted by Encantar, and awarded them their own prize. Further information on the groups, and links to their own websites, can be found at

<http://www.ncem.co.uk/?idno=904>.

Extracts from the final should be broadcast on Radio 3's Early Music Show on 25 September.

#### EARLY MUSIC PRIZE at the RAM

The final of the Royal Academy of Music's annual Early Music Prize (for "historically-informed performances of pre-1800 chamber music") took place in the Duke's Hall (6 May). This year, the four groups had been discouraged from having individual names, so just the names of their members was given in the programme. The first group played music by Couperin and Rameau, both with prominent roles for the harpsichord, showing considerable style and panache by Nathaniel Mander. Davina Clarke also impressed me with her graceful ornaments in the languid solo in the first section of Couperin's *Premier Concert*, as did Emily Smith, gamba, notably for the sureness of her intonation in the danger zone above the frets. The second group explored the *stylus phantasticus* with pieces by Becker and Buxtehude. Violinist Claudia Norz demonstrated a fine feel for the musical line, although the other violin suffered some intonation problems and the cello was rather too forceful. The third group played the Sonata from *The Musical Offering*. Although they were very competent players, notably cellist Kate Conway with her fine use of articulation, they sounded rather detached from the music, resulting in a performance that was rather more methodical than musical. Judging from their walk-on, stage nerves might have played a part. The final group played Handel and Telemann with a very professional stage presence and a spirited and involved performing style, with excellent performances by Leo Duarte and Naomi Burrell on oboe and violin. They were not afraid to take risks in their playing, and came up with some particularly effective cadences. The adjudicators were Catherine Mackintosh and James Johnstone and they awarded the prize to the group that played *The Musical Offering*.

## LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

## LES MÉLOMANES

Les Mélomanes won an early Royal Academy of Music Early Music Prize and the Audience Prize at the 2010 Fenton House Early Keyboard Competition. They were invited back to Fenton House for a lunchtime concert (2 June) where they played music by Uccellini, Marini, Purcell, d'Anglebert, Marais, Rossi and Merula under the title of 'An Ear to the Ground'. There is something almost hypnotic about ground bass pieces, but Les Mélomanes managed to bring freshness and variety to the music, notably in Rossi's catchy *Sonata decimal sopra l'aria di Romanesca* which they played with a slow swing and an excellent command of the inevitable build up of momentum. There was nothing the group could have done about this, but the massive 1770 Shudi & Broadwood dates from between 42 and 142 years after the death of any of the composers and, apart from issues of authenticity, its dampers were clearly suffering from humidity, making it even more resonant than usual.

## NORTH'S DOWLAND

The South Bank's London Guitar Festival managed to contrast Jack Bruce with a recital of John Dowland's lute music from Nigel North (Purcell Room, 3 June), who also gave a masterclass the following day. Grouping the 25 individual pieces into well balanced seven groups, North played with his characteristic restraint and modesty showing just how effectively beautiful music, playing quietly and without fuss, can draw an audience in – apart from the woman several rows behind me who noisily slurped an ice cream during most of the opening group in the second half.

## OAE

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment continue to provide well thought out and excellently presented programmes with two at the Queen Elizabeth Hall before closing their season with a celebrity bash in the Royal Festival Hall. The first of the QEH concerts came under the daft title of 'May the fours be with you', reflecting the date (4 May), the choice of Beethoven's 4<sup>th</sup> piano concerto and Schubert's 4<sup>th</sup> symphony and the 40<sup>th</sup> symphony of Mozart. The concert was planned, and was to have been conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, and was dedicated to his memory, with a pre-concert talk reflecting his relationship with the OAE. Roy Goodman was an inspiring replacement conductor, his exuberant and lively direction being one of the highlights of the evening. His de-construction of Mozart's 40<sup>th</sup> gave it a light, chamber quality with some neat interpretational moments, not least in his articulation

of the slur at the end of the exposition. Artur Pizarro gave a strong performance of the Beethoven, giving the opening chord an arpeggio, as suggested by Czerny. Despite the moments of obvious virtuosity, this was an interpretation full of musical insight. Goodman judged the balance to perfection, and obviously enjoyed what he was hearing from Pizarro. Schubert was only 19 when he wrote his 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony, and used it to move into new symphonic territory. Again Goodman lifted the OAE to ever more exhilarating heights as he jiggled about on the podium. And I'm sure that Sir Charles raised a jovial eyebrow from beyond the grave at the encore, a jolly few bars of Figaro before a morph into 'If I knew Susie'. This concert was followed by one of the OAE's enterprising Night Shift events aimed at, and attracting, a much younger audience with Classic FM style extracts from the main concert. Roy Goodman was the ideal person to direct such an occasion, his easy style in sharp contrast to the irritating 'presenter off the telly' who introduced everyone, and everything, as 'fantastic'.

A month later (QEH 4 June), the OAE were back in baroque format with a Saturday evening of Handelian soprano pops from Elin Manahan Thomas, contrasted with three Concerti Grossi and the inevitable 'Largo' encore. This concert was high-jacked by a leggy Radio 3 announcer, murmuring away at a desk just behind the orchestra and occasionally stepping forward to introduce a piece or two, all to save a bit of studio time for some future broadcast. The highlights were the instrumental pieces, played with a degree of automatic pilot by the OAE but with excellent contributions from Alison Bury and Matthew Trustcott, violins, the cellists Jonathan Manson and Susan Sheppard and David Miller, theorbo. I fear that excessive and persistent vibrato clouded my appreciation of Ms Thomas's singing, but there were some lovely moments when she showed that she could control the vibrato, notably with some clean high notes in *Tornami a vagheggiar* and *Silete venti*, which merely made the lack of control during the rest of the time the more frustrating.

The OAE concert season ended with a bang in their Royal Festival Hall concert (21 June) where they wheeled in Sir Simon Rattle and Katia & Marielle Labèque, no doubt adding to their ticket sales in the process. The relationship between Rattle and the OAE goes back to their early days, and is a fascinating one. He is one conductor who can be guaranteed to raise the OAE's always excellent game to even greater heights, as he demonstrated from the start in a splendid performance of Haydn's Symphony 64, the *Tempora mutantur*. He seems to delve into those hidden areas of the music that other conductor's just don't spot,



notably in his attention to the detail of phrasing, articulation and volume. He ended the concert with an equally powerful reading of Symphony 95. The double filling in the Haydn sandwich was Mozart, with his Symphony 33 and the E flat concerto for two pianos, the latter played with the vivacity and the natural bond that typifies the Labèque sisters. Again, it was attention to detail that shone. I had not heard them playing fortepianos live before, and wasn't sure what to expect. But they proved to be outstanding performers on two delightful instruments. Rattle was an extremely attentive supporter, beautifully aligning the OAE's textures to the sisters. As ever on such occasions, the corporate sector were out in force, notable a smartly dressed young lady sitting in front of me amongst the suits clicking away on her mobile phone during most of the concert. I just hope her company are huge sponsors of the OAE, but they should think carefully about which staff they persuade to take up their sponsor's ticket allocation in the future.

#### SCHOLL at the WIGMORE

The Wigmore Hall could have sold out their 7 June concert with Andreas Scholl and Tamar Halperin several times over, such was the scramble for tickets. In a concert that was very much of two halves, Scholl's programme ranged from Dowland to Brahms, with a first half devoted to the earlier repertoire with harpsichord accompaniment from Tamar Halperin. It seemed to take a while for Scholl's voice to relax, but when it did, the results were superb, with interpretations of well-known pieces taking on a new depth, notably in Purcell's *Sweeter than Roses*, Dowland's *Sorrow, stay* and Campion's *I care not for these ladies*. Tamar Halperin provided sensitive and musical accompaniments and improvised introductions to the pieces, and also played a Purcell's 'Round O' and the first two movements of a Handel Suite in F, spinning out the lilting melodic line of the opening Adagio and making sense of Handel's awkward following Allegro, a tricky piece to play and interpret. The first half ended, rather bizarrely, with a communal sing-song as Scholl (who dropped into a high baritone register) encouraged the audience to join in with the chorus of *Man is for the woman made*. By this stage, his adoring fans would have done anything he asked. Beautiful as the first half was, I felt that Scholl came into his own in the later Brahms folksong arrangements, accompanied on a Steinway grand rather than a period instrument, but played with a fine sense of period style, as was a Haydn Sonata in A. Three traditional folksongs completed the concert, with some imaginative semi-improvised accompaniments from Halperin. By now, Scholl was walking on water and could have sung nursery rhymes to wild applause. Instead, his encore was Brahms's delicate 'In stiller Nacht'. It was interesting to observe how Scholl's stage presence and confidence has grown over the years – gone is the rather stiff, grounded-foot stance of his earlier years, and he has developed a natural and relaxed style, engaging well with his audience. A memorable concert.

#### ACI @ SPITALFIELDS

I was only able to get to one of this year's Spitalfield Summer Festival events, that being the performance of Handel's dramatic cantata *Aci, Galatea, e Polifemo* from The English Concert, this year's festival's Associate Artists (Christ Church Spitalfields, 23 June). Often overlooked in favour of Handel's English version, I do have a soft spot for Handel's 1708 Neapolitan take on the story, told with the panache and youthful vivacity that is the hallmark of Handel's Italian works. *Acis* was sung by Sophie Bevan, one of the most promising young sopranos around. As well as admiring her rich and colourful voice (with impressive vocal power shown in *Che non può la gelosia*), I loved the way that she reflected the inner turmoil of the simple peasant lad in *Dell'aquila l'artigli* (helped by the agitated cello line under the relatively calm surface) as well as her death scene, *Verso già l'alma col sangue*. She has the great gift, for a soprano, of being able to sing very high notes without screeching. She was well matched by the mezzo voice of Marina de Liso as Galatea. João Fernandes portrayed Polifemo as an unfortunate example of somebody in a care in the community scheme who hadn't quite kept up with his medication, rather than the bumbling oaf of some portrayals. Harry Bicket directed with sensitivity and musical insight. By the by, I could do without the Festival's 'enjoy-the-show' style introductions boomed into a microphone by a jovial Redcoat-like chappy. This concert was followed by the 'Baroque Boot Camp', an innovation of the Festival and members of the English Concert, where six young professional musicians (playing instruments ranging from the tuba to the sarangi) created their own music using Purcell's *King Arthur* as the basis.

#### LA FINTA GIARDINIERA

The Barbican continues with its tradition of concert performances of operas with the Academy of Ancient Music's take on Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* (24 June). It was in this opera that the 19-year-old Mozart began to challenge the supremacy of *opera buffa* by introducing the search into the human emotions that *opera seria* allowed, treating this *buffa* plot with *seria* intensity. It was this aspect that Richard Egarr and his fine cast of soloists managed to bring to the fore more than any other. Shorn of staging, props and the general silliness that a staged performance would bring, we were able to concentrate on the development of the individual characters, at one extreme with the bluff and rather sleazy bluster of Andrew Kennedy's Podestà to James Gilchrist's wimperingly pompous Count Belfiore. The other roles were played with slightly less prominent characterisation, notably from Elizabeth Watts as Serpetta, Klara Ek as the wilful and headstrong Arminda and Daniela Lehner as Don Ramira – Lehner proving to be one of the individual vocal highlights of the evening. Rosemary Joshua disguised herself as the gardener by dressing in some sort of butterfly net, while Andrew Foster-Williams played Nardo as the type of chap

you would happily chat to in the pub. Another feature of this work is Mozart's early development of the Act finale, one magnificent example coming at the end of the first act when the entire cast stood in a line to declaim their own particular take on events. Richard Egarr arranges his harpsichord seat side-on, rather like a saddle, which he leaps on and off when he feels a bit of accompaniment coming on. His jaunty little accompanimental touches were kept within reasonable rein, his major contribution being the attention he paid to the singers. The players were on excellent form, notably Joseph Crouch on continuo cello, and flute and oboe soloists Rachel Brown and Alfredo Bernardini.

### HARMONY & ELEMENTS

The Barbican featured what I think might have been the first UK appearance of the French orchestra Le Cercle de l'Harmonie and the choir Les Éléments with conductor Jérémie Rhorer and their programme of Mozart's Solemn Vespers and his Mass in C Minor (28 June). Unfortunately their performance was rarely lifted above the ordinary, with Rhorer failing to really grasp the mettle and impose any real performing focus or zeal, although the choir did improve slightly during Mozart's *Missa interruptus*. Rhorer never gave the impression of listening to his soloists – indeed, he frequently seemed to be trying to direct them against their wishes. And I really did not like the fact that he waltzed off stage at the interval without acknowledging either the choir or orchestra. As far as the soloists were concerned, Rainer Trost and Nahuel Di Pierro might as well have been singing from off-stage, both keeping their heads buried deep in their scores and failing to attempt to connect with the audience. Mezzo Ann Hallenberg was rather more engaging, but the undoubted star of the evening has to be soprano Sally Matthews, a singer who I been reviewing since she was a student. Her extraordinary stage presence and emotionally charged singing was magnificent but it was spoilt for me by her persistent operatic vibrato. There are roles where this does not matter, but in the earlier repertoire it really does need to be more controlled.

### POSH FROCKS & PICNICS

This year's posh frocks and picnics season started with a visit to Garsington Opera's new home at Wormsley, the vast country estate of the latest scion of the Getty family. Helped by the vast amounts of private money that seems to be attracted to the rather curious English country house opera scene, they have managed to raise some £3.5 million and build a demountable opera house, cleverly set within the ha-ha out of sight of the Wormsley mansion – all within a few months. After their short season, the whole shebang is trundled off into store and the ground reinstated so that the Gettys can concentrate on their Lord's-sized cricket pitch. The site is leased on a commercial basis, rather than donated. If donors thought that was the

end of their expected largesse, every ticket bought includes a "suggested donation" of £60. I saw Vivaldi's *La Verità in Cimento* (Truth put to the test), directed by David Freeman with Laurence Cummings conducting a largely modern-instrument orchestra supported by a few continuo specialists, including Joseph McHardy, harpsichord, Francis Kelly, harp, and Paula Chateauneuf, theorbo (25 June). The plot, although initially appearing straightforward, is about as convoluted as they come. The back-story is that the Sultan of somewhere-or-other manages to impregnate his wife and favourite mistress at the same time and then, to curry favour with the latter, swaps the two baby boys at birth so that the mistress's son will eventually inherit. The opera starts some 20 or so years later when the two sons (an odd looking pair) both fall for the owner of a spectacular pair of legs. For some reason, this inspires the Sultan to come clean and tell everybody about his earlier deception. I managed to follow the plot up to this point (about 5 minutes into the opera), but then realised that I just didn't care any more. Somehow or other, the six characters bumbled their way towards a solution. Unlike Handel operas, where an understanding of the plot helps to follow the emotional insights that he would provide into each character, Vivaldi just writes music, and glorious music at that. His arias bounce along in rapid succession, not always memorably, but with a few absolute stunners, for example, the delicious *Fragil fior, ch'appena nasce* with its recorder and harp accompaniment<sup>1</sup>, and Mamud's *Vinta a piè d'un dolce affetto*, where the syncopations indicate the extent to which his constancy is crumbling. Zelim was portrayed by James Laing as a rather soppy and foppish version of Harry Enfield's Kevin while his half-brother Melindo (Yaniv d'Or) was all shades and black leather, the difference reinforced by their contrasting countertenor voices, with James Laing having by far the most attractive tone. The owner of the legs was the impressive soprano Ida Falk Winland, playing Rozana, her half black, half white costume reflecting her prevarication between her two potential hubbies. The older love triangle featured Rustena (Jean Rigby) as a Hyacinth Bucket version of the Sultana and Damira (Diana Montague) as the glam mistress of the Sultan Mamud, splendidly sung by Paul Nilon. David Freeman set the work in the sort of 1980s greenhouse party that Wormsley might have witnessed in the days when Mike Jagger was a regular visitor. Laurence Cummings conducted in his usual ebullient style, keeping the pace going but gave the recits time to be followed. Whatever ones views on this sort of event, Garsington is to be congratulated on helping to bring Vivaldi opera to the fore, at least for those that can afford it. Last year they gave us *L'Incoronazione di Dario* and next year we get the timely *L'Olimpiade*.

1. The Vivaldi thematic catalogue lists recorders, vln 1 & 2, bassi & no harpsichord (which is hardly a cue for adding a harp).

## CLOSE-UP POPPEA

I am always on the look out for different ways of presenting early music and imaginative venues, so was pleased to be invited to hear Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppea* in the back room of an Islington pub in a production by OperaUpClose (Kings Head, aka 'London's Little Opera House', 29 June). The intimacy of the space (with just a white carpet, a full length mirror and a sunken bath that you just knew would end up bright red) gave the feeling of being invited round to the neighbours for one of those embarrassing 'Abigail's Party' evenings. Rather than a barrage of theorbos, lirones and other plucky things, the music was arranged jazz-style for grand piano, double bass and a soprano sax. The opening line was "What the fuck?". Major cuts reduced the characters to eight with seven singers with a variety of vocal styles, the finest of which

came from countertenor David Sheppard (Ottone), Zoe Bonner as the seductive and scantily clad Poppea, Rebecca Caine as Ottavia and Jessica Walker as Nero. Monteverdi's music does lend itself to jazz interpretations (I reviewed some fine example in the *Nox Illuminata* Festival in St Pölten), but it was a shame that they didn't make far more of those opportunities. It was only in Michael Nyman's specially commissioned insertion aria (with Ottavia explaining what will eventually happen to the lovestruck pair) that the jazz combo really came into their own.

*The next issue of EMR will include reviews of the Regensburg TAGE Alter Musik festival and the Leipzig BachFest as well as some reflections on the first of this year's incarnations of the European Union Baroque Orchestra's during their residency in Echternach, Luxembourg.*

## RULE, BRITANNIA?

Jaakko Tuohiniemi

Quite recently I was happy to write a short review on British baroque music recordings to a certain Finnish music journal. The idea of the review was to promote something worthy specifically in music libraries as stated in its title, *Naturally British*, which naturally was and is supposed to mean "British" compositions created by more or less canonised masters excluding De Fesch, Geminiani, Handel, Kusser, Pepusch and other immigrants. So with great pleasure I listened to and wrote about symphonies by William Boyce and John Marsh, concertos by John Garth and Richard Mudge, a superb ode by William Hayes, harpsichord suites by Richard Jones, trio sonatas by several composers &c. But, alas, browsing Owain Tudor Edwards's *English Eighteenth-Century Concertos: An Inventory and Thematic Catalogue* (Pendragon Press, 2004) and Paul F. Rice's *The Solo Cantata in Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Thematic Catalog* (Harmonie Park Press, 2003) made me think and doubt: Britons do have so many so perfectly good early music ensembles, but why are they not recording music of their geographically closest cultural heritage?

Is it the lure of "the ([in]famous) other" – closest equivalents being French, German and Italian masterpieces, the ones catching imagination of musicians, rather than works written in London, Oxford, or any other place in the British Isles – that dictates the current situation? One surely would like to mention that at least French taste was enjoyed already in 17th-century London as eagerly as in German-speaking Europe where Lullists created several

beautiful works still enjoyed (also in present-day London), but that fact alone is no reason enough for present-day neglect. Perhaps early music ensembles only play what is demanded from them by record companies, concert organisers and listeners? Should we then blame the markets and point our fingers to Hyperion (ah, the magnificent *The English Orpheus* series) and other dear labels or BBC or some other institutional "guilty" parties? Or are we the customers to be blamed? I doubt that the public really expects to hear Top 100-type music only: the entire early music movement is a clear indicator to prove that.

From my very childhood I remember wondering why there were no native composers in British Isles between Purcell and Britten. This rather straightforward claim was offered in some general-interest music book, stating that Handel and other foreigners filled the gap! Now I know better that history is not quite that simple (even if all English oratorios sound more or less like Handel and that beautiful clarinet concerto by Hook is actually composed by Lefèvre), though knowing that a huge amount of forgotten British music exists does not help too much if one is unable to enjoy it also aurally. Which brings me to suggest: Mind the gap! You have the music, you have the performers, so fill this British gap with good new sound recordings!



## SOFRONITSKY'S MOZART

Richard Maunder

Mozart *Complete Fortepiano Concertos*. Viviana Sofronitsky (fortepiano & harpsichord), Musica Antiqua Collegium Varsoviense, cond. Tadeusz Karolak (11 CDs) Et'Cetera KTC 1424

Concertos K.37, 39, 40, 41, 107/1-3, 175, 238, 242 (with Linda Nicholson and Mario Aschauer), 246, 271, 365 (with Linda Nicholson), 413, 414, 415, 449, 450, 451, 453, 456, 459, 466, 467, 482, 488, 491, 503, 537 and 595, Rondos K.382 and 386

The first thing to say about this complete recording is that it is a very fine achievement. The band plays with exemplary precision and impeccable intonation, the solo instrument is a beautiful Walter copy by Paul McNulty, and the excellent Sofronitsky is one of the best fortepiano players I've heard. She has a faultless sense of period style, and plays – as Mozart himself surely did – as if she'd been brought up on the harpsichord and clavichord, with no concessions to the modern piano. Her articulation is always scrupulously clear, and the “moderator” stop is, very properly, reserved for occasional special effect. It was a pleasure to hear all eleven CDs, and there are countless little details to delight the listener.

I do, however, have some reservations. There is a tendency now and again to “play safe” in matters of tempi and ornamentation, when a bit more risk-taking could have added to the excitement. The second movement of K. 482, for example, is far too slow for a 3/8 Andante: it sounds more like a 3/4 Adagio. Again, the 2/4 Andante of K. 456 is taken so slowly that Mozart's groups of eight slurred demisemiquavers in bars 90-91 (6'40" on track 2 of disc 9) have to be bowed out. Nevertheless, many tempi are beautifully judged. In particular the finale of K. 451 is splendidly rollicking, the first movements of K. 482, 503 and 537 are grandly majestic, and in K. 595 the moderate speed suits the opening movement's mood of wistful melancholy very well.

As for ornamentation, these concertos raise two separate but related problems: to what extent should the soloist improvise additional decorations, especially in slow movements? And what should be done about those places where Mozart notated only the sketchiest of outlines, to be filled in extempore at his own performances? There are no easy answers, although there are some hints from near-contemporary sources suggesting what the composer himself might have done. Indeed, in one case – the Andante of K. 451 – Mozart provided his sister with a decorated version of one rather bare passage. Sofronitsky plays these decorations, of course, but on the whole her approach is pretty conservative, leaving many analogous places unadorned. The Andante of K. 503, however, is a notable exception, with some beautiful and tasteful ornamentation that would certainly bear repeated hearing.

A word of praise, too, for the stylish and fairly short cadenzas in those movements where Mozart's own (if they were ever written down) are no longer extant. Sometimes it is reasonably clear how to fill in sketchy passages: for example in bars 164-172 of the finale of K. 482 (3'07" on track 3 of disc 6) all one has to do is to fit a pattern of semiquaver arpeggios to Mozart's indicated top and bottom notes. The editors of the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* complete edition (the NMA) often suggest solutions to such problems, most of which are adopted by Sofronitsky. She also plays the standard realization in K. 537, where the left-hand stave is blank for long stretches of Mozart's autograph. Although it's reproduced in the NMA, it's often pretty clumsy and plainly has nothing to do with Mozart: there is, for instance, a horrible false relation in the middle of bar 239 of the first movement (7'11" on track 4 of disc 3). It's a pity that no-one rose to the challenge of devising a better version.

It's also a pity that the NMA text was used throughout. That edition is by no means the last word in scholarship, and its most glaring fault is that it was published before the autograph scores of no fewer than eleven of the concertos were rediscovered in the Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Kraków – not a million miles from Warsaw, where the recordings were made. It's disappointing that no-one took the trouble to look at the Kraków autographs and compare them with the NMA edition. As a result, many details of articulation and dynamics are incorrect, and occasionally there are wrong or missing notes. Most of these errors will probably not trouble anyone but a specialist, although even a casual listener might raise an eyebrow at the absurdly missing G for bassoon and viola in bar 223 of the finale of K. 415 (6'40" on track 6 of disc 4). The note is in Mozart's autograph, of course, but the NMA editor just printed rests and the recording unthinkingly follows the NMA.

Perhaps my most serious reservation concerns the choice of solo instrument. Although a harpsichord is used for Mozart's youthful arrangements of keyboard pieces by other composers, is a single model of Walter fortepiano, with a compass of five and a half octaves and hence dating from at least ten years after Mozart's death, appropriate for all his original concertos from K. 175 of 1773 to K. 595 of 1791? McNulty's copy is a very nice instrument, to be sure, but it's disappointing in a complete recording of this kind not to hear better approximations to what the composer himself would have played at various stages of his career. This was a period when the harpsichord was by no means obsolete and the fortepiano was evolving as rapidly as the computer has in recent decades. Salzburg was a little behind the times in the 1770s, for no-one there possessed a fortepiano until about 1780 (except for a small square piano dated 1775, owned by Archbishop Colloredo), but

various harpsichords are known to have existed, including the Mozart family's two-manual Friederici and what may have been an English instrument with Venetian swell and/or machine pedal belonging to Countess Lodron (who commissioned K. 242 for herself and her two daughters). Even in Vienna, harpsichords, usually of a distinct local design, were much more common than fortepianos before the mid 1780s. Mozart was therefore something of a pioneer in using any sort of fortepiano – at first a borrowed Stein and later his own Walter – for his performances in the Imperial capital. It was Stein of Augsburg who invented what has come to be known, misleadingly, as 'Viennese action' – but probably not until after Mozart's visit to his workshop in 1777. Stein's action was later adopted by Anton Walter of Vienna, although it is not clear when. The present action of Mozart's own Walter appears to have been installed in about 1810 and may be very different from what the composer knew – it may not have been 'Viennese action' at all.

A problem with keyboard instruments of the late 18th century is that they are less powerful than their modern counterparts, and so are hard to balance against a full orchestra. Composers of the time were, of course, aware of the difficulty, and adopted various stratagems to overcome it. The simplest method was to score their concertos for single strings, as for example J. C. Bach did in his Op. 7 (1770), where the soloist is accompanied by just two violins and a cello. Mozart almost certainly had the same scoring in mind for his K. 107 arrangements of three of Bach's solo sonatas. Numbers were beginning to creep up a bit in the later 1770s, and Mozart apparently expected two-to-a-part strings in his Salzburg concertos with, surprisingly, no cello but a pair of Austrian-style "violones", the local variety of double bass. The earlier Viennese works (K. 413-415 and K. 449) seem to have been aimed at the domestic market, the composer himself explicitly allowing the option of just a string quartet accompaniment, but in the larger-scale concertos from K. 450 onwards he was certainly thinking in terms of a bigger band with up to thirteen or fourteen strings. There is good evidence, however, that with an orchestra of this size it was normal to resolve balance problems by reducing string numbers during the solo sections. A set of parts for K. 466 prepared for Leopold Mozart shortly after a visit to Vienna at which he had heard the work's premiere shows exactly how this was done: second copies of the violin 1 and 2 parts have all the music for the tutti but usually have rests elsewhere – though there are some interesting exceptions to this rule.

On these CDs, however, the full band is used throughout all the concertos. Unfortunately, the programme booklet gives no details, but I'd guess that the string section numbers something like 4/4/2/2/1, which is about right for the later Viennese concertos but is too big for those written in Salzburg. The effect in the K. 107 arrangements, in particular, is distinctly overblown, the orchestral string sound lacking the subtlety one would expect from a good string trio. In concertos such as K. 466

there is no discernable reduction in forces during solo accompaniments; instead, the balance between soloist and orchestra is fixed electronically, by recording the forte-piano at a higher level than the other instruments. Didn't it occur to anyone to question the necessity for this, or to wonder how Mozart himself had dealt with the problem?

I'm afraid the programme booklet leaves much to be desired. Its brief history of the fortepiano is perfunctory and inaccurate, for Jean Marius and Christoph Gottlieb Schröter never actually made any pianos with the actions they claimed to have designed, and to describe Gottfried Silbermann as "apparently the best German maker", while totally ignoring Mozart's revered Stein, is to adopt a remarkably partial stance. The booklet also gives a short account of the piano (*sic*) concerto before Mozart. Various composers such as Haydn, Wagenseil and C. P. E. Bach are mentioned, whose works no doubt had some influence on the younger composer, but it is extraordinary to omit the most influential of all, the concertos of J. C. Bach. Astonishingly, the "London" Bach is acknowledged in this context only as having played Johann Samuel Schroeter's Op. 3 No. 3 on the piano in 1767 – a remarkable feat when Op. 3 wasn't published until 1774 and the first documented performance of a piano concerto in London was by James Hook on 7 April 1768. Some of the remarks about individual concertos are equally questionable. Given that K. 459 is dated 11 December 1784 in Mozart's own catalogue of his works, it is extremely unlikely that 'it was first performed in the flurry of celebrations following the coronation [of Leopold II]... on Oct 9, 1790'. The fact that the trumpet and timpani parts for K. 482 are written on a separate sheet of paper has nothing to do with "a tradition of using these instruments *ad libitum*": it was necessary simply because Mozart had already used all twelve staves on his manuscript paper for the other instruments. And the description of K. 271 on the record sleeve as the 'Jeunehomme' concerto perpetuates a myth without foundation in fact. It's true that the booklet mentions (though without acknowledgement) Michael Lorenz's identification of "die jenomy" as Louise-Victoire Jenamy, daughter of the ballet-master Jean-Georges Noverre, but it remains unclear whether her concerto was K. 271 or K. 175. Since Mozart wrote K. 175 a few months after meeting the Noverre family in Vienna, it's a plausible guess that Jean-Georges commissioned this concerto for his daughter – but I know that Lorenz disagrees. The booklet says of K. 271 that "this concerto's technical demands and unusual and dramatic opening confirm the outstanding musical and virtuosic capabilities of the pianist (*sic*) for whom it was written": could that person have been Mozart himself?

I don't want to leave too negative an impression, for Sofronitsky and the members of Musica Antiqua of Warsaw are all masters of their instruments and give enjoyable and polished performances in the current 'mainstream' period-Mozart manner. And it's very good to have the whole set, including the two extra rondos, in one boxed collection. Pity about the scholarship!

## CD REVIEWS

## CHANT

*Historia Sancti Martini* Diabolus in Musica Antoine Guerber 66'02"  
Æon 1103

St Martin, Bishop of Tours, was buried on 11 November 397. His liturgy is well documented, and this disc contains a version of Matins for the commemoration of his burial, following the instructions described/prescribed by Péan Gatineau around 1230. The booklet notes are very informative, and the direct style of singing, whether in chant or various types of polyphony, is utterly convincing. Don't assume from the name of the group that there will be lots of augmented fourths! It's an impressive recording. CB

*Ludovicus Rex: Extraits des Offices de l'Adoration de Saint Louis* Chœur Grégorien de Paris, Joël Normand-Haddad dir  
Pierre Verany PV711061 (rec 1996)

This is a worthwhile reissue, though I would have appreciated a little about the music in the single-page introduction, which concentrates on ecclesiastical history. Louis IX died in 1270 and was canonised in 1297, and his feast was celebrated in the Sainte Chapelle until the Revolution. The chant singing is provided by "strong male voices" (the only musical comment) which is fine when they sing together, though some solo sections are a bit weak for a recording, as are a few intrusions of fauxbourdon. Texts are given in Latin, English and French, though in a type of variable density. Well worth hearing for the vigorous presentation of an Office that only the French are likely to know well. CB

15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Hildebrandston: Fifteenth-century German songbooks* Ferrara Ensemble, Crawford Young 59'20"  
Arcana A 348 (1995/2011)

If you like tunes, you'll enjoy this. The core of this is a series of narrative songs (not unlike English ballads) which require to be sung at length to establish their effect, even if one isn't necessarily following the story – which I wasn't when I first put the disc into the player. *Bruder*

*Konrad* is a familiar tune, but playing it again with the text revealed the Brother's sexual frustration. Translating "Ich fahr dahin" as "I'm departing this life" rather than "I'm leaving here" (i.e. the monastery) hints he's off to heaven or hell: there's no such implication in the poem, but has it acquired sanctity from the use of Isaac's "Innsbruck..." setting as a chorale? These ballads look very long on the page (four languages are given), but pass far more quickly than one expects. This is a well researched programme, performed with absolute clarity, if perhaps a bit formally, and very pleasing to hear. CB

16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Byrd Complete Consort Music* Phantasm  
Linn Classics CKD372 79'59"

I had just finished reading the lead review in the BBC Music Magazine of this recording when our copy arrived, so I was very eager to listen. There is much in its favour, one point being the way the repertoire has been neatly sequenced, so the short pieces that may once have had liturgical functions (or were just exercises) are fitted in neatly. An alternative would be the hypothetical chronological one tabulated in the booklet, which might have told a story, but I felt no urge to play it again in that order. I'm slightly less enthusiastic than the BBC review. Readers will know that I expect music of this period to observe the tactus, but it doesn't have to sound so relentless, and it has a sort of chugging feeling. A slightly slower beat would allow a bit more space for shaping. One particular example: the transition from the galliard to the close in the "Greensleeves" Fantasia a6 (II), which is the piece I know best so feel most strongly about. When well done, this can be magical: here, it isn't significant; nor does the earlier transition into Greensleeves work. I don't think that Byrd was writing a series of discrete movements. More consideration needs to be paid to music with a low tessitura. Tempi that make sense for recorders at 4' pitch don't work with viol consorts, especially with two basses, and pieces like this need more time to register. But try it. The music is marvellous: my disquiet is perhaps because of listening to 80 minutes in one session – and I might be a bit old-fashioned. CB

*Cabezón Suavidad y Extraeza* Andrés Cea (1750 Francisco Ortigueza organ, Santiago de Castaño del Robledo, Huelva, Spain) 70'14"  
Lindoro MPC-0120

The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Cabezón in 2010 seemed to pass more-or-less unnoticed in the UK, despite his spending more than a year in London (1554/5) after journeying from Southampton in the company of the future King Philip II of Spain. Cabezón was born near Burgos in northern Spain and soon after became blind. His musical life was linked to the Court of the Charles V and Isabella of Portugal and their children. He is almost certainly the organist in Titian's delightful painting of the Organist and Venus, whose head is turned from the keyboard and pipes to gaze on the naked Venus draped behind him.

This CD is a timely reminder of the remarkable variety of works from this Spanish master. "Sweetness and Oddity" (a quote from a listener to his organ playing during a pontifical mass in Genoa Cathedral in 1548) is an apt title for this collection, drawn from his two major collections and a manuscript from Coimbra. The programme contrasts his Tientos (similar in structure to the *ricercar*) and works based on chant or church polyphony, omitting his well-known variation sets.

Castaño del Robledo is about 60 miles north west of Seville and, although the organ was built a couple of centuries after Cabezón's time, it is possible that the pipework may have come from an organ in Seville Cathedral dating from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, putting them amongst the oldest surviving examples of organ pipes in the world. Spain has not always treated organs with the respect that they deserve so this organ, after its recent restoration, is of major importance in our understanding of the Renaissance organ. The beautifully breathy sound of the Flautado (the 8' "open diapason" of the Spanish organ) is worth the price of the CD alone. And if that is not enough, the playing by Andrés Cea is outstanding. As well as his detailed knowledge of the Iberian organ and its repertoire, he brings a vitality and freshness to the works. Incidentally, an enterprising internet collection of Cabezón's music can be heard at the "C@bezon 500" project website,



<http://www.fimte.org/Tabl%20Cabezon%20eng.htm> There is also the new Bärenreiter edition, reviewed in *EMR* 142, p. 3.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Gery de Ghersem *Ave Virgo Sanctissima*  
Currende, Erik Van Nevel TT  
Accent ACC 24235

Missa *Ave Virgo Sanctissima* + Cornet *Regina coeli*; Guerrero: *Ave Virgo Sanctissima*, *Regina coeli*, *Salve regina*; Philips *Regina coeli*, *Salve regina*; Rogier: *Regina coeli* + chant

At first glance this CD looks like an exploration of one of the least known composers of the 16th century, but of course, barring a miracle, this is impossible. The sad fact is that although Ghersem was widely admired in his own day, a curious failure to get published and the wholesale loss of 280 MSS of his music in the possession of the Portuguese royal family, presumably in the 1755 Lisbon earthquake and fire. So in recording the seven-part *Missa Ave Virgo Sanctissima* Erik van Nevel is presenting his only completely surviving work. Its superlative quality almost makes you weep at the tragic loss of all the rest of his output. The CD is filled by Marian works by his contemporaries, including the six-part *Ave virgo* by Guerrero on which Ghersem's Mass is based and the magnificent eight-part *Regina coeli* and a four-part *Salve regina* by the same composer. More unusual is a slightly rambling alternatim setting, chant and organ, of *Regina coeli* by Pieter Cornet, while two eight-part double-choir settings of *Regina coeli* by Rogier and Peter Philips and the latter's magnificent eight-part double-choir setting of *Salve regina* rounds the programme off. Currende use organ accompaniment throughout and in the Ghersem's Mass this occasionally gives the polyphony an unnecessary plodding quality. Elsewhere, however, the radiant singing of this fine ensemble is overwhelmingly persuasive. D. James Ross

Lassus *Cantiones duarum vocum* Paolo Tognon, Claudio Verh *dulcians* 40' 59"  
Tactus TC 530301

Lassus' set of 24 bicinia is an equivalent of Bach's Two-part Inventions: music to play, but also music from which to learn two-part counterpoint and make it real music, not just exercises. A dozen have texts, a dozen not. The difference between them isn't quite as clear-cut: those with words can be played without (as here), and those without can be sung

to solmisation syllables (or perhaps in private to rude ditties about the teacher!) A pair of dulcians doesn't seem the obvious choice of instruments: the booklet claims that they have "an exact, warm sound to evoke the human voice" – surely the nearest instrument to the human voice then was the cornetto? But the playing is musical and sensitive. As the recipient of a free copy, I'm not worried about the short duration, but it might discourage those who have to pay. CB

Le Jeune *Dix Pseaumes de David* Ludus Modalis, Bruno Boterf 75' 28"

Ramée RAM 1005

Psalms 57, 81, 88, 95-98, 102, 135 & 149

A through-composed polyphonic psalm setting is no mean undertaking for a composer, especially if he chooses neither to stick to the shorter texts nor to use any sort of chant *cantus firmus*. My first reaction to this disc was to feel that in this collection Le Jeune did a good job, though continuous close listening is not recommended for those not under the pressure of a deadline. *Ludus modalis* take an uncomplicated approach, singing at the most two to a part with gentle organ or gut-strung harpsichord for support. Some passages are assigned to solo voices, which in the context provide welcome contrast. Given that the likely original performances were given in the homes of wealthy Huguenots this would not have been inappropriate throughout. This is well-crafted music, sung with care, commitment and understanding. The note would benefit from a more idiomatic translation and the translations of the texts have to be downloaded or looked up in a handy Bible or prayer book. David Hansell

A *cleare day: Pieces from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* Kenneth Weiss 63' 35"

Satarino SR111

This recording presents a series of mostly well-known pieces from the FVB played on three instruments: a copy of the Russell Collection Bertolotti virginals by Jean-Luc Wolfs-Dachy, and harpsichords after Johannes Ruckers and Grimaldi, both by Marc Ducornet. All are beautifully recorded and Weiss's playing is exemplary, using the different instruments to bring out the characters of the genres involved, from song intabulations and decorated dances to big variation sets. All of the major composers are represented (including John Munday whose weather Fantasia provides the CD's title), as well as the

minor composer Ferdinando Richardson whose Pavana-Variation and Galliard-Variation were something of a revelation to me. The major piece here is Bull's monumental set of 30 variations on Walsingham which is very well paced through all of its 16 minutes, with the virtuosity not unduly foregrounded. All in all this is an excellent introduction to the music in the FVB. Noel O'Regan

Along uncharted routes Serikon, Daniel Stighäll 61' 18"

Footprint Records FRCD 056

Improvisation over standards from the Renaissance: music by Azzaiolo, Hidman, di Lasso, Palestrina, Rore, Striggio + trad & anon

This new Swedish-based group has assembled a set of division and improvisatory pieces which have some level of connection with Sweden via library collections. Some are sung (*Suzanne un jour*, *La Monica* etc) sometimes simultaneously with the trademark divisions of William Dongois on cornett and those of Daniel Stighäll on sackbut. The turn-taking is elegant, and the full ensemble smooth and lush. The playing is very fluent and musical. There are some dance standards, a very full instrumental group of string and wind swinging into action for *passamezzo antico*. Whichever hypothetical character commanded such extravagant resources would have been very pleased. The divisions are occasionally more rhythmically adventurous than the usual, and the tactus sometimes is forced to adjust, which reduces the effect. The harpsichord divisions in this track are, on the other hand, inspired, and combine a rigour and sinister spookiness which seems oddly fitting. A simply rendered but perfectly judged slow melody (belying its title of *Tarantella*) on low mute cornett and lute has a wonderful folky aura. The recording finishes, rather startlingly, with a modern piece for solo sackbut. Those two sudden differences (modern, solo) would probably be digestible, had not the piece more than a passing resemblance to the Star Trek theme; I'm guessing an unconscious resonance for a Swedish composer – but hey! Stephen Cassidy

*The Ambassadors, Being an album of choyce musicke* The Night Watch (Andrew Casserley & Ian Pittaway) TT  
The Night Watch TNW0111

I've been sent several CDs this month that relate more to folk than early music. This is notable by a distortion of Holbein,

and my feeling of the performances is that they are more likely to succeed in the folk than the early music market. CB

*The Queen: Music for Elizabeth I* The Toronto Consort, David Fallis 64' 10"

Marquis 774718138726

Music by Allison, Bennet, Byrd, Campion, Corkine, Dowland, van Eyck, Johnson, Morley, Pilkington, Tomkins & anontr. 18

This gives a wider feel for secular Elizabethan music than most anthologies, with madrigals, lute songs, popular songs and a mixed CONSOIT. Performances are excellent, without the preciousness that sometimes infects the madrigal genre. As usual, the emphasis is on music from the end of Elizabeth's reign, but wandering off into the Jacobean period is less than most such anthologies. It is refreshing to have a booklet in a font size large enough not to strain the eyes. It mentions that Sir Henry Lee's moving retirement song, His golden locks, was sung by Robert Hales, Since his salary had been £40 a year since 1583, he was unlikely to have been a treble, so why have it sung at the notated octave? It suggests to me that the top part of lute songs could be sung by tenors, irrespective of crossing the lute part. That's a trivial criticism of the disc, which I recommend strongly. CB

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

*Blow Venus and Adonis* Amanda Forsythe Venus, Tyler Duncan Adonis, Mireille Lebel Cupid, Boston Early Music Festival vocal & chamber ensembles, Paul O'Dette, Stephen Stubbs 65' 21"

cpo 777 614-2

Welcome ev'ry Guest (Amanda Forsythe), Ground in G minor 2 vlns & Bc Chloe found Amyntas (Jason McStoots, Zachary Wilder & Douglas Williams TTB-Bar)

This interpretation was originally semi-staged at the 2008 Boston Early Music Festival and recorded in Autumn 2009. After the thrills of earlier releases in this series I feel almost guilty at not having really enjoyed this one. Apart from one or two rather billowy top notes from Amanda Forsythe, the singing is all very good and stylish, but aspects of the instrumental performance practice left me rather irritated. It cannot be right that added parts be so allowed to dominate the texture. To my ears the pluckers are regularly too forward in the aural landscape and the frequent added percussion parts rapidly moved from

'hmm' to annoying and implausible. They might well have been fun in the theatre, where there was the visual distraction of the usual sumptuous Boston costumes. They did nothing for me with only the sound for diversion. The supporting booklet is excellent. David Hansell

*Caldara La Conversione di Clodoveo, Rè di Francia* Allyson McHardy Clodoveo, Nathalie Paulin Clotilde, Susie LeBlanc San Remigio, Matthew White Uberto, Le nouvel opéra, Alexander Weimann (TT, 2 CDs)

Atma Classique ACD2 2505

It is re-assuring to discover that the recent Philippe Jaroussky recital disc of Caldara arias was not to be a flash in the pan. The Canadian company Atma Classique has built up quite a catalogue of obscure repertoire, and they are to be commended for continuing to add to it. The artistic director of Le nouvel opéra is soprano Suzie LeBlanc, and the choice of Clodoveo makes a lot of sense – there are only four characters and Caldara's scoring is typically modest – strings without violas, with the option to add woodwind colour occasionally. The story boils down to the title character converting to Christianity in the belief that God brought him victory in a great battle. Two of the women sing trouser roles (well, one royal garments the other in archbishop's robes) so the tessitura is constantly high. In some works I have found that rather monotonous, but Caldara handles the voices so well, and provides such a wide variety of harmonies and textures that my ears never tired. The singing is first rate, and the instrumental playing (with some really sparkingly virtuosic lines!) also very good. The good news is that there's another Caldara piece advertised for next issue, too! BC

*Charpentier Vêpres aux Jésuites* Charles Daniels, Mark Tucker, Hans-Jürg Rickenbacher, Peter Harvey, Stephan Imboden cTTTB, Ensemble Vocal de Lausanne, Ensemble baroque L'Arpa Festante, Munich 100' 37" (2 CDs)

Cascavelle VEL3088 (1993, re-mastered 2005)

I reviewed a previous re-issue of this anthology in *EMR* 75 (Nov 2001). 'Liturgically chaotic and incomplete' but 'imaginatively programmed and fascinating...' 'extraordinary Sancte Dei for unaccompanied bass...' 'the performances never let Charpentier down'. I still agree with my younger self. David Hansell

*Du Mont Pour les dames religieuses* Les Solistes, Chœur de Chambre de Namur, Bruno Boterf 68' 30"

Ricercar RIC 305

Messe Royale du sixième ton + Bernardus doctor, Laudibus cives, Litaniae Beatae Mariae Virginis, Magnificat, Veni creator spiritus, Vidi homo, Vulnerasti cor meum & instrumental music

It would be going over the top to describe this as 'great' music but it's certainly very well sung and played, the repertoire and performance practice have been carefully considered and the programme order works well. The instrumental pieces are for the most part played on the organ, a splendid beast from 1742 that is also used for the continuo parts. *Domine salvum* is actually played on the *cromorne* – unlikely but worth doing once. The mass is one of Du Mont's *Messes en Plain-chant* for unison voices with improvised organ accompaniment and interludes. This composer seems to be experiencing a major revival at present (the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth was last year). This is one of a series of recordings by this ensemble (three so far) and then there is the disc from *Musica Favola* reviewed adjacently. If this continues I will not be complaining. The music is available from [www.cmbv.fr](http://www.cmbv.fr). David Hansell

*Du Mont Loüez par ces chansons nouvelles...* Musica Favola, Stephan Van Dyck 63' 13"

Musique en Wallonie MEW1056

This is a very enjoyable recital of psalm settings (some in French, some in Latin) for varying combinations of voices and instruments. They span thirty years, the earliest having been published in 1652 as Du Mont was approaching the zenith of his fame as both composer and organist. Presentation and the supporting materials are all very good and the performances show great attention to detail. If you like Carissimi and Charpentier you'll like this too. David Hansell

*Frescobaldi Vol. 3* Richard Lester hpscd & virginals 77' 29"

Nimbus Records NI5870

This is the third in a four-CD Frescobaldi set which spreads the various genres between the four, mixing toccatas, canzonas, capriccios, variation sets and dance music. This allows for good variety between tracks. Lester is a sympathetic player, taking great care with this music, perhaps a bit too careful and unyielding

in the more formal capriccios but with good fluency in the rhetorical toccatas. He plays on four original instruments: Alexander Mackenzie of Ord's split-keyed Doni, and a harpsichord and two virginals from Fenton House. There is inevitably quite a bit of action noise, especially from the virginals and the sound is generally a bit thin, but all four instruments allow for a very good balance between the different layers and voices in the music. This is Frescobaldi as it was written, presented in a straightforward manner by a player who clearly understands the music very well.

Noel O'Regan

**Gesualdo *The Complete Madrigals*** The Kassiopeia Quintet with Joseph W. Schlesinger (Books 1-3), Luisa Tavares (Books 4-6) & Marco van de Klundert (Books 4-5) 272' 47" (6 CDs in a slip case) Globe GLO 5241

The project to record all of Gesualdo's published madrigals is an ambitious one in several respects. The famously challenging harmonic progressions and mercurial tempi would keep any group thoroughly on its toes. Fortunately the Kassiopeia Quintet and their guests have the measure of Gesualdo's idiom and perform with consistent confidence and competence. Each of the six books, published over a period of 17 years, obligingly presents between twenty and twenty-three madrigals, although the lengths of the individual madrigals lead to more or less generously full CDs, recorded between 2003 and 2008. The personnel of the quintet is consistent throughout, as is the pool of guest singers, although they progress through three different recording venues, the first two of which have a slightly more friendly acoustic than the third, all three tending towards the domestically intimate. The interpretations are never without interest, but avoid the extremes of expression which might lead one to tire of them.

In reviewing them, I have listened to the complete set a couple of times, but clearly most listeners would use them as a reference work or to enjoy at most one book at a sitting. The privileged overview which ingesting the entire collection provided me with allows me to observe that Gesualdo's compositional style does develop in the sense that the harmonic progressions become even more irrational and disturbing as the years go by – where would he have gone had death not claimed him at the age of forty-seven?

D. James Ross

**Grandi *Vespro della Beata Vergine*** Deborah York, Daniel Taylor, Ed Lyon, Peter Harvey SATB, Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Matthew Halls 57' 50" Carus 83.367

If I have any criticism of this CD, it is simply that it does not last long enough. Of course, restricting the programme to a Vespers service means that there are limitations, but surely no-one would have objected to having a few more motets tagged on? In a life tragically shortened by the Plague, Grandi published copious amounts of music, ranging from solo songs and motets through works with instruments to larger collections, including eight-voice settings of Vespers psalms. An exceptionally talented writer of memorable melodies, Grandi was more than one of Monteverdi's lieutenants at San Marco, and the music on this disk clearly establishes that he has a voice of his own that deserves to be heard more often. Matthew Halls draws fine performances from all concerned, with cornettist Gawain Glenton deserving a special mention. HIP choirs (although some might find that a contradiction in terms) looking for unusual programme ideas should consider Grandi – the settings here of *Dixit Dominus* and the Magnificat on this disk will certainly stand comparison with Monteverdi.

BC

**Lully *Bellérophon*** Cyril Auvity *Bellérophon & Un berger*, Ingrid Perruche *Sténobée & Amazone*, Jean Teitgen *Amisodar*, Apollon, *Dieu des bois & Sacrificateur*, Céline Scheen *Muse*, Philinoë & *Napée*, Evgueniy Alexiev *Jobate & Pan*, Robert Getchell *La Pythie & Bacchus*, Jennifer Borghi *Argie*, *Muse*, Pallas, *ze Amazone & Dryade*, Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset 133' 46" (2 CDs) Aparté AP015 (Limited edition)

This release has already enjoyed considerable publicity (featured on Radio 3's *Early Music Show*) and contrasting reviews of the first live performance (lukewarm, in the Daily Telegraph) and the discs (enthusiastic, in the Guardian). It may or may not be relevant that the discs, though recorded live, are not from the performance at Versailles that the Telegraph reviewer attended. The whole production has been made possible by the fortuitous discovery by Rousset of a significant amount of performance material in a Paris bookshop. Notwithstanding occasional patches of sour intonation from one of the principals I thought it one of the best

Lully pieces and performances I have heard. The strongly contrasting elements of the plot are well balanced (there was lively disputation between Lully and Corneille about this) and the inevitable *divertissements* are more satisfactorily integrated into the story than is sometimes the case. Dramatic continuity is excellent and the presentation package positively luxurious – synopsis, essay, libretto/translations and a few facsimiles. Indulge yourself.

David Hansell

**Jean-Baptiste Lully & la France baroque** Orchestre de Chambre de Toulouse, Gilles Colliard 52' 08"

Integral Classic REF201012/1

Leclair: Concerto 1; Lully: *Le triomphe de l'amour*; Rebel: *Caractères de la danse*; Saint-Georges: Concerto in D, op. 4

Orderly though the playing of the dances is, the real interest here is in the concertos. They are relatively little known and unlikely to attract a modern virtuoso, though there is plenty in the music to both challenge and fascinate. Saint-Georges (1745-99), of exotic origin and skilled in fencing and swimming as well as music, was sometimes referred to as the 'Black Mozart' and his music does have much of the melodic grace and inevitability that we associate with the Salzburg genius. Both he and Leclair write technically demanding solo lines to which Gilles Colliard is equal and his orchestra offer strong support. The booklet note needed a more careful proof-read.

David Hansell

**Michael Maier *Atalanta Fugiens: Music, alchemy and Rosicrucianism in the early 17th century*** Ensemble Plus Ultra, Michael Noone 71' 33" Glossa Platinum GCD P31407

Suggestions on a postcard, please: after a solid evening's thought on the subject of the most unconventional protagonists of musical history (we freelancers lead very limited social lives!) I have come up only with Giorgio Mainerio and Erik Satie to give Michael Maier (1569-1622) a run for his money in the eccentricity stakes.

Maier was an alchemist, theosophist and mystic, and champion of the mysterious secret Rosicrucian Brotherhood. He held doctorates in philosophy and medicine in addition to the position of Poet Laureate of the city of Padua and various imperial titles in Prague at the court of Rudolf II, that great patron of alchemists and astrologers. He was immensely well-travelled (almost ten thousand miles in modern



roads) and was domiciled variously in Holstein, Rostock, Frankfurt, Ivangorod, Lübeck, Padua, Bologna, Florence, Siena, Rome, Basle, Königsberg, Kiel, Prague, Kassel, Bückeburg, Rotterdam, England, Stockhausen and Magdeburg, to name but a few. Maier was particularly unusual in the aesthetic context of the early 17th century for his interest in the music and thought of the Middle Ages and his desire to re-create the grammar and form of the period in his own composition.

*Atalanta Fugiens*, his only extant work, takes as its starting point 50 epigrams narrating the story of the fleeing Atalanta and the apples dropped by Hippomenes to slow down her flight. The 50 epigrams are illustrated by 50 engravings, in turn illustrated by 50 fugues, so termed as a metaphor for the girl's flight – *fugiens* – but more accurately two-part canons. The two vocal parts manipulated through imitation represent the protagonists Hippomenes and Atalanta, with a *cantus firmus* underneath derived from the Gregorian Kyrie *Cunctipotens genitor* representing the apples. The musical grammar is utterly alien to modern ears, neither flesh nor fowl, and one suspects that it was no less bewildering to early 17th century ears.

This disc is both intellectually fascinating and utterly, utterly beguiling. The 50 one-and-a-half-minute exemplars of Maier's being relatively monochromatic (in the Greek sense) and structurally repetitive, the listener enters a kind of introverted trance (a bottle of wine helps) and the bizarre language starts to make a strange kind of sense. The four singers are perfectly chosen and balanced, and the instrumental accompaniment (Renaissance harp, sackbut and the Chinese two-stringed *erhu*) weirdly brilliant. Catherine Groom

**Mielczewski** *Virgo Prudentissima*, Les Traversees Baroques 67' 37"  
K617 K617226

+music by G. Gabrieli, Merula, Pekiel & Usper

This disc, devoted chiefly to Marcin Mielczewski (d.1651) is one of the fruits of an enterprising project which is bringing together the once connected but now rather separated musical worlds of eastern and western Europe. Les Traversees Baroques is working at educational, professional and musicological levels to reintegrate the cultures and repertoires of these regions. The result is an extremely sumptuous recording of Polish and Italian devotional music of the early and mid 17th century. One welcome and

striking feature is the vocal colour: Each voice is singing in the middle of its natural tessitura – from soprano to bass – resulting in a flexible and fluent delivery of the text and sound in natural waves. We are immediately free of the common sound of singers reaching for pedestals, and can hear more of the core of the music. The repertoire stands comparison with the best of the more familiar Italian and German repertoire of mutichoral pieces and solo motets. One is tempted to wonder whether Schütz, who was born before and died after Mielczewski, might have developed in these slightly more voluptuous directions had he not had other constraints and edicts placed on him later in his career. The signs were perhaps there. The instrumental contributions are neat and playful and integrate very smoothly. There is one idiosyncrasy in the generation of separate acoustics for the different instrumental groups (for some reason this seems quite common amongst recordings). Either the strings are in the choir stalls, the chorus and strings amongst the altar trappings, and the winds are floating in the altarpiece with the cherubs, slightly obscured by clouds, or some technical tricks have striven for the same effect. I exaggerate a bit, but the ear cannot help being distracted by the involuntary task of equalising the "edge definition" between the groupings. The balance is fine, though, and I shouldn't make too much of it. The changes of pace and mood between the frequent changes of dramatic tension are delivered with a naturalness and ease. One track alone should sell this recording: *Victime Pascale* by Mielczewski starts as a small concerto of soloists and develops in episodes with choruses which well up from somewhere deep and seem to betray a genuine longing to join the cherubs in the clouds on the altarpiece. A wonderful record: I look forward to more to come. Stephen Cassidy

**A. Scarlatti** *Concerto Grossi* (London, 1740); *Cello Sonatas* Mauro Valli vlc, Accademia Bizantina, Ottavio Dantone Arts 47758-8 64' 11"

Some twenty years ago we tried all six of this set of concerti grossi from the King's Music facsimile edition ('compos'd by Sig<sup>r</sup> Alexander Scarlatti') and I see that I made some notes at the time and gave them a rating for future reference of:

1. good
2. dull, but good minuet
3. good, though awkward
4. strange last movement

5. dull

6. bell-like fugue, otherwise fair.

To date we have performed only nos. 1 and 3, each twice. It was therefore an interesting exercise to compare my original assessment of the set with this recording and to see whether any of the others might be worthy of an airing in concerts. They are only 'attributed to Scarlatti' in the London publication – the earlier quartet works were rehashed for the standard English format of seven parts 15 years after Alessandro died. They are somewhat uneven musically, and the assessment made by a somewhat younger and perhaps less cynical reviewer on just one play-through seems to accord with my thoughts on the works on this hearing. Having said that, the performance is excellent, with some stylish ornamentation and much dynamic and rhythmic contrast. Most are short works – shorter than the normal eight minutes for a three-movement Vivaldi concerto, for example, and make for easy listening. An organ is used for continuo in the concerti.

The cello sonatas, however, are a different matter – stunning works in the four-movement *da chiesa* style, immaculately and stylishly executed. Two of them reach above the neck position and are therefore probably written for, and performed on, the five-string cello. There is varied use of continuo instruments, with harpsichord and archlute. This is an interesting disc, well worth investigating.

Ian Graham-Jones

**Sweelinck** *Cantiones Sacrae* Gesualdo Consort Amsterdam, Harry van der Kamp 146' 48" (2 CDs)

Glossa GCD922406

9 psalm motets, 9 Gospel motets, 9 Nativity motets, 11 other motets, Te Deum & 4 canons

This is third volume of "The Sweelinck Monument", recordings of all his vocal works, and contains the 1619 five-voice *Cantiones Sacrae*, here arranged in groups of nine motets representing the Psalm, Nativity, Gospel and the four Passion and other miscellaneous motets. The large scale Te Deum completes the programme. Also included are four vocal canons. Of these, particularly interesting is the three-part canon on *Ave maris stella*, written by Sweelinck in 1614 in honour of his pupil, Heinrich Scheidemann – the original MS survived until the Second World War. Here it is played in its original solo organ version, and then sung with the text added. Each work is sung with one singer

to a part, with some regard paid to the *chiavette* convention. They produce a clean, consistent and very attractive sound and sing into a pleasant acoustic. Incidentally, this double CD comes in a rather unusual package with two slim CD containers, with no covers, inside a card box with a separate booklet, meaning that the whole thing will need to be kept inside the card box. It is not easy to get the CDs out of the card box! *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

*Baroque Vespers at Stift Heiligenkreuz* dolce risonanza, Florian Wieninger, The Cistercian Monks of Stift Heiligenkreuz Oehms Classics OC826 72' 20"

*Mazak Vespera in exaltatione Sanctae Crucis* + Buonamente, Ebner, Ferro & G. Sances

This project is built around Alberich Mazak's 1649 publication *Cultus Harmonicus*, which includes music for Vespers for the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross. Interspersed with plainchant, motets, organ pieces and instrumental works, Mazak's music is better than "workaday Baroque" without ever hitting the true heights of his contemporaries. The liturgical framework is provided by the male voices of the Stift Heiligenkreuz ("The Abbey of the Holy Cross"), where Mazak was organist and director of the choir, while the concerted music is performed one to a part by *dolce risonanza*. Although I understand the logic of such a strategy, it did slightly jar, as the resonant male voices gave way to the lighter professional singers – the sound each ensemble strove to produce was different; the monks concentrated more on the spiritual meaning of the words, the "artists" on the beauty of the music, perhaps? For all that, I enjoyed listening to this recording several times, not least of all for the extraordinary sliding semitones of Sances' *O crux benedicta*. *BC*

*Mistress Elizabeth Davenant, her Songs* Lute songs from an Oxford Manuscript of 1624 Rebecca Ockenden voice, Sofie Vanden Eynde lute 68' 36"

Ramée RAM 1101

Music by Campion, Johnson, H. Lawes, Wilson, Wroth & anon

This is a lovely disc. Rebecca Ockenden is described merely as 'voice' on the cover, (probably for reasons described at the end of this review), but she is a soprano, and a very fine one. The songs are all drawn from the volume known as *Christ Church library, MS.Mus.87*, and although some of them, particularly those attributed to

Robert Johnson, have become famous from their inclusion in anthologies, it is good to hear these more familiar songs performed alongside the less well-known ones, "in context" as it were – a Jacobean assemblage of favourite, often quite elaborately ornamented songs. As Anthony Rooley (who had a guiding hand in the preparation of the disc) comments in his sleeve note, "it is an eclectic collection, representing an excellent overview of changing tastes in the 1620s". This booklet note is very informative, and highlights the several unusual features of the songbook. The CD box itself and booklet are beautifully produced, by the way.

The singing is excellent (as is the luting), but these are demanding songs, pitched quite high, many of them requiring a strong, projected voice, and given here with just the right amount of expressive word-painting. Anyone with an interest in this repertoire needs this disc. However, the highlights for me include three sonnets by Mary Wroth, which are performed almost as if they had musical settings, in other words, they are declaimed expressively, with each word being given appropriate note values, and with each line of text almost being given its own 'bar lines', in a long arc of a phrase. The text breathes, in other words. The effect is stunning, and an exemplary lesson in how to project a poem to an audience. (Poets reading their own work on the radio please take note – it really is not acceptable to merely go 'dee-daah dee-daah' etc. in a drab, disinterested monotone!). More please. Can we have the Turpyn Book now, Rebecca? *David Hill*

*Die Orgeln in St Jakobi Lübeck* Arvid Gast (1637 Stellwagen, 1984 Schuke and 2003 Kjersgaard organs) 75' 23"

Audiomax 706 1530-2

Music by Buxtehude, Tunder, Sweelinck, Froberger, Bach & Danksagmüller

This CD uses all three of the organs in the delightful Jakobikirche (one of the very few Lübeck churches that survived the war), although it is the 1637 Stellwagen organ (one of his earliest) that is the musical joy of this church, on its gallery on the north aisle of the church. The large west-end organ has an important late Gothic case, and the 1984 organ inside contains a large amount of historic pipework. Then there is a small positive organ reconstructed within a case from 1673.

Arvid Gast is organist of the church, and head of organ and church music studies at the Lübeck Academy of Music.

He plays with the conviction that his detailed knowledge of the three instruments brings, notably in making the two Bach works sound well on the west end organ, an instrument I have never really rated, perhaps because of the unfair competition from the important Stellwagen organ. The two Buxtehude Toccatas in particular, are played with the freedom and panache that the *stylus phantasticus* style demands while the Tunder demonstrates the wide range of colour stops, including the characteristic reeds, on the Stellwagen organ as well as the extraordinary chorale fantasia style that Tunder developed. The recording seems to be rather close, giving an acoustic separation that is not apparent to listeners in the body of the church, and making the Brustwerk rather brusque. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

*Phantasia* Aarón Zapico *hpscd* 54' 20"

Winter & Winter 910 176-2

Frescobaldi, Froberger, Picchi & anon.

The attractive packaging of this short CD has something of the concept album about it – though the concept itself isn't clear. There are photographs of what seems to be modernist furniture whose connection with the music is not spelled out – maybe I'm missing something! There are no booklet notes and, although one is directed to a web-site, there is no further information there about the music or the rationale. The music is mainly by Frescobaldi, focussing on his *Cento Partite* and some of its satellite pieces, the *Balletti* and *Ciaccone*. Zapico's playing, on a nicely-recorded William Dowd Mietke copy, is always effective and shows a good connection with the dance music and the *cento partite*, which get convincing performances. The one Frescobaldi toccata is a bit rushed and unsubtle for my taste though technically it is very fluent; Zapico seems more in tune with the rhetorical language of Froberger, giving good solid performances of a toccata, a suite, a tombeau and a particularly fine reading of his hexachord Fantasia which, despite the CD's title, is the only Fantasia here. At his best, as in this extended piece, he combines a fluent technique with plenty of drive, together with sufficient 'give' to keep the listener's interest right to the end. *Noel O'Regan*

*Salzburg Barock* Emma Kirkby S, Bell' Arte Salzburg, Annegriet Siedel 63' 06"

Berlin Classics 0300120BC

Music by Bernardi, Biechteler, H. I. F. & C. H. Biber, Hofer, Megerle, Muffat & anon

Eight of the ten tracks on this CD are world premiere recordings. While some of those may be by obscure composers, I don't think we can include Biber, and I am pretty sure that most of our readers have heard of Hofer and Bernardi. The former published a set of Vespers psalms for solo voice, two violins and continuo, and Emma Kirkby gives a typically stylish performance of his *Nisi Dominus*. She also performs the alternatim Magnificat by the latter, with continuo accompaniment only. The ensemble Bell'Arte Salzburg gives very fine accounts of sonatas by Biber and Muffat, and they accompany Dame Emma beautifully in the other, more obscure repertoire. The 17th century was clearly a purple patch for music in that part of the world – most people think of the richness and opulence of the masses for large forces, so this disc is a fine introduction to the more modest side of the city. BC

*The Seventeenth-Century Violin* Jaap Schröder 66' 52"

Smekkleysa SMC5

Music by Baltzar, J. S. Bach, Biber, Matteis (the younger and elder) & Westhoff

There is a beautiful picture of an Icelandic landscape with a rainbow piercing the grey blue skies on the reverse of this CD. "Pretty random," you might think but, in fact, I found it entirely appropriate, at least for the first few tracks of Jaap Schröder's interesting selection of music for solo violin. I had always thought of the two Nicola Matteis as peddlers of dance tunes – Schröder found a darker side to them, and followed two pieces by dad and one by the son with four movements by the wonderful Thomas Baltzer (as he is called here). Following fine accounts of the *Passacaglia* appended to the MS of Biber's *Mystery Sonatas* and a suite in A by Westhoff, Schröder plays two pieces by Bach that only survive in non-violin versions – the A minor solo flute Partita (transposed to D minor) and that Toccata (with the transposition working in the opposite direction this time!) This is a welcome addition to catalogue – rarely heard music performed by one of the grand old men of the baroque violin scene. BC

*Songs without words* Adam Woolf sackbut,

Siobhan Armstrong harp, Kathryn Cok kbd, Nicholas Milen gamba, Eligio Luis Quinteiro theorbo 60' 30"

sfz Music SFZ0501

Music by Castello, Fontana, Frescobaldi, Marenzio, Monteverdi, Ortiz, Rore, Sandrin, Schütz, Van Eyck

The divers writers of the renaissance claim for their instrument of choice the "unique" accolade of sounding most like the human voice. The instrument is largely irrelevant of course; what matters is the player. And if you want to hear what is really meant by sounding like a human voice, then obtain a copy of this CD. Much of it sounds more like a human voice than... a singer. There is a mix of instrumental divisions, some possibly conceived for voice, and songs. The remarkable opening track is Monteverdi's *Laudate Dominum*,\* where the word painting (of words you know are there) is unmistakable, and the passage work delivered with utter fluency. The variety of articulation and intensity allows the sometimes dense array of notes to flow by without cluttering the field, and there is the jazzers' ability to "lose" notes and passages in a way which makes you realise they were there only after the event. These features are expressed or implied in the treatises, but underdone by players and singers who maybe rely on the claims made for their instrument. Lots of notes beyond the opening track one comes across a second oasis: Schütz's *O Jesu, nomen dulci*. This is such a sweet, tender and simple delivery, much of it innocently unadorned. This disc is carefully programmed and born of a deeply thought out concept of what this music meant. The final track is a song by Frescobaldi, leaving in the mouth just the taste which Mr Woolf must have hoped for.

Stephen Cassidy

\* A piece I associate particularly with Stephen's wife Jennie; I accompanied her for half a dozen performances, the last being at my mother's funeral, so I know it well, I was puzzled when I saw the opening title, but it works wonderfully (and Jennie agrees). CB

*Stellwagen-Orgel zu St. Marien, Stralsund* Die Norddeutsche Orgelkunst Vol. 2 – Danzig Martin Rost 72' 15"

Dabringhaus und Grimm MDG 320 1697-2

Music by de Drusina, Gronau, Hintz, Markull, Mohrheim, Neunhaber, Schmiedtlein, Siefert & Volckmar

A far more substantial, and later, Stellwagen organ than the one in Lübeck reviewed above is to be found in Stralsund, about 130 miles east on the Baltic. It was completed in 1659, a few months before Stellwagen's death. After a complicated history, it's recent restoration is a major contribution to our under-

standing of the North German 17th century organ. It seems appropriate that the CD starts with the *Calcantglocke*, the little bell that alerts the bellows blowers to start their work (no fewer than six Calcants are acknowledged). I would be very surprised if many readers had heard of any of the composers, but they all hailed from Danzig (now Gdansk), a major Hanseatic port in the 17th century and twice the size of Lübeck. The most interesting works are from the period leading up to the construction of the organ, notably the lovely little *Resonat in laudibus* by de Drusina and the early example of a chorale fantasia by Neunhaber, and the variations on *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* by Siefert – but the programme ventures briefly into the 19th century. Recommended, for the organ, the music and the exemplary playing.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

## LATE BAROQUE

*Organ Masterworks Vol. II* Kei Koito (Gottfried Silbermann organ, Hofkirche, Dresden) 73' 13"

Claves Records 50-1008

BWV 106/1, 542, 562, 564, 565, 615, 645, 655, 659-661

I am not convinced that the ever-popular Toccata and Fugue in d minor is the best way of opening this CD, or whether it should be on this CD at all. The organ dates from the very end of Bach's (and Silbermann's) life and is very much in the Central German tradition rather than the very different North German sound that Bach might have envisaged for this piece which (if, indeed, he wrote it) is probably a very early work. It is one of my concerns about this CD that there are other pieces too that really do not do this extraordinary instrument justice. Other worries relate to the playing style, touch, articulation and choice of registrations, all of which suggest a wish to appear individual that merely results in a succession of mannerisms that make for uncomfortable listening. Koito's own transcription of the Overture in the French Style really is better suited to the harpsichord that it was intended for. Andrew Benson-Wilson

*Bach Goldberg Variations* Colin Booth 74' Soundboard Records SBCD210

This has clearly been a labour of love and is beautifully recorded on Booth's own Mietke copy and issued on his own Soundboard label. There is both clarity and warmth in the recording and it would



be excellent medicine for an insomniac, as suggested by the sleeping patriarch – presumably Noah – taken from a Tree of Jesse stained-glass window on the cover. Booth characterises each variation very carefully, adds some subtle ornaments on repeats and gives the music a subtle French lilt in places as well as shortening the appoggiaturas in the aria. He uses a good variety of tempi and registration and generally displays a highly intelligent approach to the music which translates into a sense of security and rightness. For me this recording stands out in a crowded field.

Noel O'Regan  
I wouldn't have written a review in the last issue if I'd realised that Noel was going to contribute one; fortunately, we concur on the quality of the performance. CB

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Steven Devine  
79' 21"  
Chandos Chan 0780

This recording makes an interesting contrast to that recently made by Colin Booth. Devine plays on an instrument by Booth, a double-manual harpsichord copied after a Fleischer single-manual. It lacks the mellowness of the Mietke used on Booth's own recording but its slightly more aggressive character and closer miking suits Steven Devine's approach which puts a stronger emphasis on forward drive. After a beautifully relaxed Aria, Devine seems like a man in a hurry in the early variations; this allows him to relax more towards the final ones and the overall performance has a strong sense of unity in diversity. He articulates very clearly, bringing out the different character of each variation, and adds some tasteful ornamentation on repeats. This is exciting playing, without ever losing control, and can be well recommended.

Noel O'Regan

Bach *Six Cello Suites on Viola* Helen Callus (TT)  
Analekta AN 2 9968-9

I had not expected to have very much to say about this recording – just goes to reaffirm the old “never judge a book by its cover” adage. Having even played some of Bach's cello suites on viola (they are quite often trawled for Associated Board examinations), I had imagined that I would enjoy the performances but miss the darker, deeper tone of the cello. As it happens, though, Helen Callus's outstandingly virtuosic readings go far beyond being a pale imitation of the cello original. With deft bow strokes and string

crossings that at one point were literally breathtaking, she takes a new path through music which has perhaps been overlaid with an unnecessary coating of gravitas on account of our association of the instrument with low sounds, and those in turn with solemn occasions. The dances truly dance, and the arias sing. As for the aural re-adjustment, I would say I settled into listening to Helen Callus's version rather more easily than I did to Sigiswald Kuijken's ground-breaking performances on violoncello da spalla. BC

Bach *Six suites for solo cello* Winona Zelenka vlc (TT)  
Marquis 81509

The cover illustration of this CD filled me with apprehension: Winona Zelenka is pictured in a big flowing dress and equally wind-swept hair, with her modern cello and bow clearly in mid phrase – Kate Bush singing *Wuthering Heights* immediately came to mind. Another classic case of my continued failure to judge books by their cover. The odd numbered suites are on Disc 1, a ploy several previous sets have opted for. Zelenka's interpretations are entirely worthy of her booklet note description as “one of Canada's finest cellists” – she has taken her time in laying down the recordings, having started with No. 6 in 2007 and only concluded No. 5 last year. When I listened to the opening of the suite in E flat (one of my benchmarks), I was reminded of that booklet cover – for me, initially at least, there was a little too much attack in the bow strokes, but as the movement progressed and I began to “get” her take on what Bach intended, I was more persuaded. Certainly, the liveliness of the ensuing Allemande confirmed that this is not just someone playing the notes; rather, there is one artist's interpretation of Bach's music, mercifully not pushed to the limits by vibrato and over-done shifts of dynamic. All in all, a thoroughly commendable modern performance. BC

Bach *Sonatas for viola da gamba and harpsichord* Paolo Pandolfo, Markus Hünninger 59' 44"  
GLOSSA GCD920411

Also features Michael Chance cT, Harry van der Kamp B, François Joubert-Caillet violone  
BWV1027-9 + two Passion arias & improvised prelude.

A few issues ago I remarked that there has to be a special reason for recording these sonatas, as there are so many good

recordings available. This one undoubtedly provides that special reason. The playing is simply superb throughout, illuminated by a shared love of these works. The ensemble is often breathtaking, particularly as their joint approach is so flexible with both dynamics and tempo. All three sonatas are played with the freedom that comes with familiarity, that which breeds an increase in respect. Slow movements already embellished are embellished yet more, with liberty, but not taking liberties. The fast movements are played with tremendous virtuosity, again adding embellishments and even chords here and there. The addition of the obbligato arias is an excellent idea, and the singers, Harry van der Kamp and Michael Chance sing beautifully. The organ adds the flutes to the recitative before *Komm süßer Kreuz* and the viol provides the string accompaniment to the central section of *Es ist vollbracht* together with organ embellishments to add to the drama and contrast. The notes say that he plays a 6-string Bertrand, and how he manages to get the bottom AA in the recitative, (perhaps the violone supplied it) and the BB in Sonata 2 (he plucks the octaves – a very neat idea) I don't know and I don't really care. His technical command is such that he seems whimsical, almost playful, were it not for the deep understanding he and the harpsichordist demonstrate in every bar. The sound is always beautiful, articulation together a constant delight, and these great works are constantly deeply moving. Buy it, no matter how many copies you already have.

Robert Oliver

J. S. Bach *Concertos pour clavecin* Béatrice Martin, Les folies françaises, Patrick Cohén-Akenine 62' 09"  
Cypres CYP1661  
BWV 1052, 1053, 1055 & 1056

In any live performance of the Bach concertos for harpsichord and strings there will inevitably be problems of balance, whether performed with a string ensemble or single strings, as on this recording. In the recording studio the engineers can, of course, cheat, and it is to the credit of this recording that the harpsichord is not ‘miked up’, even though the strings (however quietly they play) are too prominent. The period instrument string quartet with double bass play stylishly and Martin's harpsichord playing is always assured, with just a few touches of discreet rubato to avoid it becoming a mechanical performance.

Martin uses a copy of a Zell instrument of 1737 – exactly the right period for these concertos. The balance was slightly improved in the movements where the harpsichord registration was doubled, and one wonders whether Bach might have used an even fuller sonority in the confined space of his Collegium Musicum performances? This is a recording that can be thoroughly recommended.

Ian Graham-Jones

**Bach Konzerte und Sinfonien für Oboe** Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis Heinz Holliger ob, Camerata Bern, Eric Höbart  
ECM New Series 476 4386  
BWV 12, 21, 249, 1055, 1059 & 1060 + Marcello: Concerto in d

This recording reminded me (on some levels) of my (mercifully brief) experience, playing professional gigs with a "baroque" orchestra in Edinburgh and Glasgow in the mid-1990s. There were about three years when decent period woodwinds and a positive army of excellent natural trumpeters and a mixed band of string players taken from Scotland's three big orchestras played for a series of choral society performances of music by Handel, Bach, Mozart and even Beethoven (I remember sight-reading my pants off through a marvellously exciting C major mass). Kitting out the professionals with gut-strung instruments and a variety of bows was somehow seen as enough to re-mould their approach to the music and those of us who actually had some experience of HIP playing were asked for our ideas but generally over-ruled, most memorably, "because surely the bowing of the 1sts and 2nds should match"! Although the playing on the present recording is far better than any I ever remember from my own performances, there remains an underlying nagging feeling that they would have done better to have stuck to their modern instruments. Holliger remains a most eloquent and powerful oboist, but I'd rather listen to Ponseele or Dombrecht (to name but two) in this repertoire any day. BC

**Brossard Oratorios / Leandro** La Rêveuse Mirare MIR125 64'  
SdB. 55, 56, 77 & 22

Brossard was a prolific and gifted composer, but the fame he achieved as the author of the first dictionary of music all but eclipsed those achievements. His posthumous profile shifted again as a result of his bequeathing to the Biblio-

thèque Nationale his vast collection of scores and theoretical writings, the possession of which enabled the writing of the dictionary in the first place. But here it is the composer in the spotlight. His musical language is naturally comparable to that of Charpentier and Lalande, though the works recorded here, for small ensembles, most naturally recall the former. The strongest work in the programme is the final dialogue between God and a penitent soul in which the various emotions are delicately characterised. The other works do not lack either musical or historical interest, however, since they include early French essays in those most Italianate genres of the sonata and cantata. La Rêveuse sing and play with great skill and taste and are supported by an authoritative note and exemplary general presentation.

David Hansell

**Bach Music for recorder ensemble** Flautando Köln 56' 11"  
Carus 83.360  
Music by JS, WF & JCBach

Most of the music on this CD played by the German recorder quartet Flautando Köln is arranged from keyboard works by J. S. Bach. In the Fantasy and Fugue in C minor BWV 537 which opens the programme on low recorders, the ensemble and intonation are so good that it is hard to believe that one is not listening to a real organ. When the performers use higher instruments and more varied articulation, in the Prelude and Fugue in G BWV 550 for example, the fact that they are playing recorders is more obvious. Two pieces by Bach's sons are inserted into the programme. The Quartet in G op. 19 no. 3 by J. C. Bach, originally for two flutes, viola and cello, works surprisingly well on recorders and adds a welcome change of style, but W. F. Bach's Duo in E minor, originally for two traversi, seemed less comfortable with occasional strained high notes and a tendency to play slightly too fast. In general the pieces without high instruments are the most enjoyable to listen to, but there is an interesting variety of music here.

Victoria Helby

**Geistliche Musik der Bach Familie** Various artists and ensembles (5 CDs)  
Capriccio 7100  
Disc 1: JSB Motets and chorales;  
Disc 2: CPEB Wq. 222, 243, 244;  
Disc 3: JEB Meine Seele erhebt den Herrn, Das Vertrauen der Christen; JCFB Wachet auf, Die

Kindheit Jesu;

Disc 4: WFB Erzittert und fallet; JCB Tantum ergo T209/7; JLB Gedenke meiner mein Gott, Trauermusik (final chorus);

Disc 5: JMB, GCB, JLB cantatas from the Alt-Bachisches Archiv

This set of five discs contains a taster of the sacred music composed by members of the Bach family. Capriccio, in collaboration with the Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Köln, have drawn on a number of recordings – some at least 20 years old – by different groups: disc 1 is all Johann Sebastian and has vigorous German Choral Society style performances by the Rostocker Motettenchor of 5 of the 6 motets interspersed with rarely heard shorter pieces like the interpolations for the Eb version of the Magnificat (BWV 243a). Discs 2 to 4 are largely cantatas by C.P.E., Johann Ernst, Johann Christoph Friederich, mostly semi-operatic in style and performed by the Rheinische Kantorei and Das Kleine Konzert with Hermann Max directing; the orchestra sounded rather like an undifferentiated mass of orchestral sound. The booklet is astonishingly slender, and gives no details of the players, the instruments, the pitch or the tuning, let alone the texts or translations, or where and when the recordings were made. The music gets more interesting with disc 4: an Easter Cantata by Wilhelm Friedemann, with a charming oboe d'amore obligato to a pastoral love duet among other, rather gallant, arias; two Latin numbers by Johann Christian, who became a Roman Catholic and was organist of Milan Cathedral; and a splendid polychoral motet and the final chorus of some Trauermusik by Johann Ludwig (1677-1731). Best of all is disc 5, with cantatas from the Alt-Bachischen Archiv – two by Johann Michael (1648-1694), a fine setting of Ps 133 for 3 male voices, violin, 3 gambas and continuo in a post-Schutz style by Georg Christoph (1642-1697), and best of all, the wedding cantata *Meine Freundin du bist schön* – including an astonishing movement on a ground bass for soprano and virtuoso violin – by the Capella Fidicina, Leipzig under Hans Gruss. This latter disc has some stylish playing and singing, though again it betrays its age: we wouldn't do it quite like that now. Nevertheless, these are useful 'archive' recordings of little known music, and help to place J.S.B. in context as well as to remind us of how extraordinarily different almost all his music is, and how very typical of the changing fashions the various contribu-

tions by his extensive family are. C.P.E. leaves me pretty cold, but some of the early stuff is intriguing and illuminating.

David Stancliffe

*I feel as if I've teased the new boy by not telling him that the long heading could have been shortened considerably, especially for a reissue! (Normally BC or I do the headings before sending the discs out.) David reviews a companion WFB set below. He has been a subscriber since EMR1. He also contributes an article (or rather sermon) below* CB

**Handel *Jephtha*** James Gilchrist *Jephtha*, Mona Julsrud *Iphis*, Elisabeth Jansson *Storgé*, Havard Stensvold *Zebul*, Marianne B. Kielland *Hamor*, Elisabeth Rapp *Angel*, Collegium Vocale Gent, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Fabio Biondi 157' 46" BIS-CD-1864 (2 CDs for the price of 1)

This *Jephtha* is highly enjoyable. The Stavanger SO show great baroque sensitivity (it's a shame that one just can't do anything about the metal flute, however well it's played), the choir is all it needs to be, the soloists are good (especially Gilchrist and Jansson), and Biondi's direction is elegant, dramatic and deep. Occasionally he can be a little brisk, but, even then, he is stylish. 'Hide thou' is too fast for my taste, for example, but it still works – and is followed by a touchingly heartfelt 'Waft her'. I don't think that Gilchrist quite ousts Nigel Robson for me, but this is a recording that I shall certainly be listening to again.

Katie Hawks

**Great Handel arias** Ann Murray S, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Sir Charles Mackerras 75' Forlane UCD16738 from Alcina, Ariodante, Giulio Cesare, Serse

This kind of CD will appeal more to music-lovers unfamiliar with the pages of *EMR*, I suspect. Recorded in 1994, Sir Charles Mackerras directs an absolutely top-rate Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment in a programme of Handel favourites, in which one of the star singers of the day displays the many remarkable aspects of her voice that brought her fame at the time – fine coloratura, a richness (and accuracy!) at depth, and a range of colours to the voice, which is important when the composer in question needs you to be as much of an actor as a singer. There are times where occasionally there is a little too much warble on individual notes for my taste, and some of the ornamentation in repeats is none too HIP. The release,

however, is very let down by the presentation – not only are there slips in the booklet notes (the obbligato in *Va tacito* is described as basset horn, for example), but worst of all, the company have opted to retain the "Happy 70th birthday" greeting to Mackerras inside the cover, rather than devote the recording to his memory. BC

**Handel, Suites for Harpsichord vol. 1** Gilbert Rowland *hpsc* 146' 31" (2 CDs) Divine Art dda21219

The indefatigable Rowland has moved from Scarlatti and Soler to Handel. This first volume of suites features eight taken across the board, from both printed collections and manuscripts. It includes the big D minor HWV 428 and the E major HWV 430. These are reliable and authoritative readings, predictable in their interpretation but showing an extensive knowledge of the music, reflected in the useful sleeve notes on each suite. Those notes give no information about the harpsichord used, which suits the music well and allows Rowland to move comfortably between more intimate Allemandes and Sarabandes to more demonstrative Giges and variations. I particularly enjoyed the little-performed C major suite HWV 443 but all of the music on these two CDs is well played and I look forward to the next instalment. Noel O'Regan

**Hasse *Requiem in C*** Johanna Winkel, Marie Luise Werneburg, Wiebke Lehmkuhl, Marlen Herzog, Colin Balzer, Cornelius Uhle SSAATB, Dresdner Kammerchor, Dresdner Barockorchester, Hans-Christoph Rademann 70' 15" Carus 83.349 + *Miserere* in C minor

One of my favourite CDs ever was on the Opus 111 label. In 1993, Paul Dombrecht directed Il Fondamento in this very Requiem and a different setting of the *Miserere*. I remember mostly being taken aback by the frankly rather cheerful sounding Requiem, and was intrigued by the notes that suggested that the Saxon Prince had more or less demanded such a thing be performed at his funeral. This new recording takes a different approach; Rademann's reading is far more pointed and gives greater weight to accented readings of the lines. Where Dombrecht produced broad brush strokes of beautiful colour, Rademann's eye is on the detail. Fine as all the performers are, I must confess that I found comfort in re-

listening to the Belgian recording – from the slightly faster opening, it is somehow more convincing. That is not to say that those unfamiliar with the older version will not love this one. There is one overall winner, however – Hasse! If anyone out there still thinks of him as the composer of vacuous opera arias, this is the disk to correct that fallacy! BC

**Jacquet de la Guerre *Sonates pour violon*** Les Dominos, Florence Malgoire 78' 82" Ricercar RIC 310

Is Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre the most recorded 'early' female composer? If she is out-tracked by Hildegard or Barbara Strozzi she's probably still the most recorded lady of her time. These sonatas, much praised by Louis XIV, certainly keep the listener guessing as to what might come next – they neither alternate slow and fast movements nor necessarily end with the quickest movement. Number 3 actually ends with an *adagio*. Although I'm often not attracted by such speculation, I quite enjoyed the programmatic scenarios projected on to each piece by the booklet note, not least because the fervent playing of the ensemble tells the same stories. It's easy to view a recital like this a yet another collection of unknown sonatas but in these hands the music makes a strong case for a place alongside Leclair on the French baroque violinist's music stand. David Hansell

**Leclair *Premier Livre de Sonates*** Fabio Biondi, Rinaldo Alessandrini, Maurizio Nadeo, Pascal Monteilhet 64' 10" Arcana A361 (1992/2011)

Sonatas 3, 7, 8 & 11

This is a re-release of one of these now stellar performers' first recordings. They already had much to say and find a commanding path through Leclair's fierce demands that nevertheless leaves space for the music's charm. By modern standards, the violin is recorded very much as the soloist rather than as a member of the ensemble, and it says much for Biondi that his playing withstands the close scrutiny. Leclair died in 1764. Is anyone planning an *intégrale* for the 2014 anniversary? David Hansell

**Levens *Te Deum & Deus noster refugium*** Sagittarius, Michel Laplénie 67' 18" Editions Hortus HORTUS 960

Charles Levens (1689-1764) has dipped under the collective radar, not least



because he was a French provincial musician (Vannes, Toulouse and Bordeaux) at a time when to be a member of the Paris/Versailles axis was everything. These two works are nonetheless in the *grand motet* tradition, though both eschew the big choral opening that such works often embrace, and the more reflective moments are the most impressive music. But there are plenty of good tunes and lively counterpoint as well and the large team assembled for the performances do it more than justice. Being picky, the orchestra sounds a little under-powered in the tutti sections though the balance against the soloists is fine. An English choir would probably have a more disciplined top line but I did enjoy the robust approach of the lower parts. All the soloists sing with a sense of style and the conductor's pedigree and experience ensure that there is a strong feeling of overall control and purpose. Even if your French Baroque shelf is groaning under the weight of Charpentier, Lalande *et al*, make room for this. David Hansell

Roland Marais *Pièces de Viole Livre II*  
Petr Wagner *gamba*, bass viol, Ensemble  
Tourbillon  
Accent ACC24249

I was pleasantly surprised by this recording. Years ago I played through Roland Marais' 2<sup>nd</sup> book, and found the music enjoyable, interesting, but unsympathetic. The phrases seemed unbalanced and the music seemed to lack his father's melodic and harmonic gifts. Petr Wagner finds no such problems, and his playing has sent me back to the music chastened and humble. There is great drama and an independent spirit here, quite different from that of his father, the differences to be relished. Wagner plays with great virtuosity and the almost reckless flair essential for this music, and reflecting the composer's abilities as a player. The Zurfluh facsimile of the 2<sup>nd</sup> book has been long available. There are four suites: the standard dance movements and plenty of character pieces, with a variety of expression and opportunities for dramatic playing, fully exploited here. Wagner is accompanied by harpsichord, lute/guitar and 2<sup>nd</sup> bass viol. He plays a modern copy of a Bertrand, beautifully clear and even-toned throughout all the registers, with a lovely touching astringency. His playing, and that of the accompanying ensemble, is brilliant. Highly recommended of course for viol players, but also for a wider audience. Robert Oliver

Martín y Coll Ignasi Jordá (1744 Martin de Usarraide organ, Iglesia de l'Assumpció de Montesa, Valencia) *La Dispersione enchiriadis* EN 2031 75' 01"

Antonio Martín y Coll was a friar and organist who, in the early years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, gathered a vast collection of mostly anonymous music together in the four volumes of *Flores de Música*, adding a fifth volume of his own works. Many of the anonymous works have been credited to composers such as Cabanilles and Cabezón. Although the works were intended for keyboard, there was a tradition of performance on a variety of instruments which the 12-strong La Dispersione have taken as their point of departure in their lively compilation. These are interspersed with organ pieces of which the two *Obras de medio registro* are the most interesting – one *de mano derecha*, the other *de mano izquierda*, implying treble and bass solos. The *Batalla de quinto tono* is also great fun, aided by some percussion. The organ playing is stylish, although there is a tendency to overemphasise pairs of notes which took me a while to get used to. This is an enjoyable CD (despite some rather abrupt key changes) and, dare I admit, a lot more interesting than hearing all the works on the organ! Andrew Benson-Wilson

Johann Pfeiffer *Overtures and Concertos*  
Batzdorfer Hofkapelle 69' 28"  
Accent ACC 24218

Almost an exact contemporary of Telemann, Pfeiffer's late baroque style has much in common with the master, though veering a little more towards the pre-classical. He was appointed to the court orchestra at Weimar and later settled in Bayreuth. Hardly any of his vocal music survives, but his instrumental works have fared better. This disc is a representative sample of his output: two overture-suites, a trio-sonata, and two solo concertos – one for lute, the other for violin. Although I found that his music lacked the inspiration and the harmonic originality that is often found in Telemann, these are nevertheless interesting works worth dipping into, and the performances by the period instrument ensemble are always stylish and spirited. The overtures, one with flutes, the other with oboes, are more conventionally baroque. The lute concerto (Stefan Rath seemingly on archlute) veers towards the pre-classical in style, while the virtuoso violin concerto (Daniel Deuter) even more anticipates the

classical concerto. I suspect that this must be one of the ones for violin piccolo, judging by the range, though it is not mentioned in the booklet notes.

Ian Graham-Jones

Porpora *Passio Stile Galante*, Stefano Aresi 72' 08"

Pan Classics PC10243

*Sei duetti latini sulla passione di nostro signore Gesù Cristo* + 2 fugues (arr. Clementi); + Anon: *Miserere*

The welcome revival of the music of Nicola Porpora grows apace. Just days before writing this review, I heard a splendid Beaune Festival performance of his *Semiramide riconosciuta* (1728) and it is good news indeed that this was just the first of three Porpora operas to be revived at Beaune. Meanwhile, the present CD presents more intimate fare in the form of these 'Six Latin duets for the Passion of Jesus Christ', composed in 1754 for the private Lenten devotions of Porpora's former employers at the Saxon court in Dresden. Scored for varied couplings drawn from two sopranos, alto and bass, the duets are essentially Italian cantatas with continuo accompaniment (here organ and cello) cast in *da capo* form.

As one might expect from a composer noted for elegantly turned melodies, there is some ravishingly lovely music. On a superficial level anyone who rejoices in hearing intertwining female voices singing long, flowing lines (most of us, I suspect) is therefore likely to relish this. Nonetheless, I remain unconvinced that the performances truly capture the spirit of the music. As director Stefano Aresi correctly notes, this is *musica reservata*, so it seems a pity (not to say perverse) that the recording was made in a largish church with a resonant acoustic that obscures textural clarity. This is especially unfortunate as four of the six duets invite personal emotional involvement from the listener ('Watch the holy mothering suffering' and so on). It may also be the size of the venue that encouraged singing that for me is too extrovert for this music. So, yes, worth hearing, but this was intended as refined devotional chamber music; it could have been more idiomatically approached. Brian Robins

Rameau *L'orchestre de Louis XV – Suites d'Orchestre* Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall 107' 51" (2 CDs)

AliaVox AVSA9882A+B

Suites from *Les Boréades*, *Les Indes galantes*, *Naïs & Zoroastre*

As Savall concedes in his note, it's pushing things a bit to link Rameau too closely with Louis XV: but so what, with this composer and conductor in combination life is never going to be dull. In addition, this release makes an impact as recordings of Rameau's operatic dances have been relatively thin on the ground recently – there was a time when they felt monthly. Brilliant though this orchestra is, they do sometimes lack charm and grace in places where these are called for though the big set piece *chaconnes* come across with the magnificence that is their due, and of course the ever-changing colours of the orchestration always catch the ear. As usual, Savall cannot resist adding percussion here and there, sometimes with the effect of making the music sound a bit lumpy, but just about staying on the right side of my tolerance line. The discs are presented with thorough supporting material and are competitively priced, so don't look too askance at the modest playing time. *David Hansell*

Ristori *Divoti affetti alla Passione di Nostro Signore; Esercizi per l'Accompagnamento* Dorothee Miels S, Franz Vitzthum cT, Echo du Danube 63' 57"  
Accent ACC 24209

On Good Friday I was part of an ensemble that performed Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* three times in three different churches. Inevitably the question was asked – what to do next year? This disc may well have provided the answer. These duets (with continuo only) have exactly the melodic grace, tense suspensions and occasionally spicy harmony that make Pergolesi's masterpiece so attractive. They are sung with an excellent blend of taste and fervour and make a very strong impression. The *esercizi* are rather more enigmatic. These are from a collection of figured basses that clearly had a pedagogic function and which have here been realised in various ways for the psaltery, harp, lute, keyboard and gamba of Echo du Danube. Interesting and attractive though these are they do not strike me as the best foil for the duets, amongst which they are dispersed. Listening to the disc in track order was rather like moving between two rather different recitals. Programming/playlist technology produced a better experience. *David Hansell*

Telemann *Quatuors Parisiens Vol. 2 & 3* John Holloway vln, Linda Brunmayr fl, Lorenz Duftschild gamba, Ulrike Becker

vcl, Lars-Ulrik Mortensen hpscd 134' 02"  
(2 CDs)  
cpo 777 376-2

It seems strange to have a two CD set labelled "Volumes 2 and 3". Perhaps cpo has lost patience with the way various series of Telemann recordings have been issued out of order – they seem to have so many releases in the pipeline that it must be difficult to keep track! Whatever the reasoning behind the packaging, this is yet another fine addition to their catalogue with no fewer than eight works (TWV 43:D3, e1, G1, G4, g1, A3, h1 and h2), four each from the *Quadri* and the *Nouveaux Quatuors*. They range from three movements to six, and really show off what a marvellous imagination Telemann had – even with the limited palate of flute, violin, gamba, cello and continuo, he manages to conjure up new sounds, catchy tunes, rich harmonies and captivating counterpoint. The performers need no recommendation from me – bringing music like this to life is all in a day's work for them! *BC*

Vivaldi's *Women* *see p. 24*

Vivaldi *The French Connection 2* *Concertos for flute, oboe, violin, bassoon & strings* Katy Bircher fl, Gail Hennessy ob, Peter Whelan bsn, La Serenissima, Adrian Chandler 79' 03"  
Avie AV2218  
RV104, 127, 133, 150, 431a, 440, 473, 543 & 565

Here is another good dose of Vivaldi concerti – nine in all – from Adrian Chandler's ensemble, which, like "The French Connection 1", focuses on three of the 'Paris' set of twelve, interspersed with a varied selection of the composer's concerto output. The soloists are on impeccable form in their virtuoso concerti. Who cannot admire the thoughtful, agile playing of Adrian Chandler in his solo concerto, the sensitive flute and oboe playing as well as the astounding virtuoso bassoon performance, especially bearing in mind the obstacles of the instrument in Vivaldi's time. The ensemble playing is always well shaped, imaginative and carefully devised, with plenty of Italianate *bon goût*. There are two world premiere recordings on this disc: the flute *Concerto Il Gran Mogul* RV 431a (the one that was recently found in Scotland) and the violin concerto RV 365. The evocative *La Notte* (RV 104) is here played in the chamber version for flute, bassoon, 2 violins and continuo, which adds a moment of

textural contrast in this interesting selection. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Vivaldi *Moteczuma* Vito Priante *Moteczuma*, Mary-Ellen Nesi *Mitrena*, Laura Cherici, Teutile Franziska Gottwald *Fernando Cortés*, Theodora Baka *Ramiro*, Gemma Bertagnoli *Asprano*, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis 153' (2 DVDs)  
Dynamic 33586

The perfect Vivaldian will doubtless wish to add this DVD set of a 2008 production staged in Teatro Comunale di Ferrara to Alan Curtis' 2005 studio recording (reviewed in *EMR112*). Others, however, may well be happy to rest content with that Archiv set, which with the exception of Priante's *Moteczuma* is differently cast. Not only is the opera severely cut (there's a full 40 minutes less music), but the sound is unsympathetic to the voices and the lighting so poor there are times when it is not easy to see what is going on. A loose adaptation of the historical story of the struggle for supremacy between the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortes and the Mexican warrior king Montezuma, *Moteczuma* has a convoluted background. Following its return to its home in Berlin from Kiev in 2002, the incomplete score was reconstructed by Alessandro Ciccolini and subsequently widely performed by Curtis in his own edition.

Much has been made of the exotic location – in fact not that unusual for the period – which is well conveyed here by the costumes. The simple set, too, works well enough, though there is no suggestion that the overt Christian connotations (the stage floor is dominated by a St Andrew's cross, elevated at the critical moment the Spanish achieve ascendancy) played a significant part in the original librettist's conception. But much of the direction appears either clichéd or clumsy, while some of the acting is amateurish. The opera is dominated vocally by Mary-Ellen Nesi's magisterial *Mitrena* (*Moteczuma's* queen), which is infinitely superior to that of Archiv's vibrato-afflicted Marijana Mijanović, although Theodora Baka's rich-voiced and sympathetic *Ramiro*, brother of the proudly arrogant *Fernando*, follows closely in the honours. But there are no significant musical weaknesses, though Curtis' direction had perhaps a little more fire in 2005.

*Brian Robins*

## CLASSICAL

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach; *Kantaten*  
Barbara Schlick S, Claudia Schubert A,  
Wilfried Jochens T, Stephan Schrecken-  
berger B, Rheinische Kantorei & Das  
Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max  
Capriccio 5083 2CDs 111' 43"  
*Lasset uns ablegen, Es ist eine Stimme, Dies ist der  
Tag, Erzittert und fallet*

This second set of CDs (all Wilhelm Friedemann) has one duplicate with the first set, *Erzittert und fallet*, a cantata for Easter Sunday. A fuller booklet with details of the players, texts and translations and the date (1991) when the recordings were made, means that we can infer the age of at any rate some of the previous set. J.S.B.'s eldest son is to me a more interesting composer – more responsive to the texts he was setting, and more interested in instrumental colour. He could write vivid, imitative, fugal lines for a chorus, and these four cantatas from the 1750s are well – if conventionally – performed. An Advent cantata and one for John the Baptist, one for Whitsun with a three-movement sinfonia – and one for Easter Day reveal his dramatic sense, and suit the bold musical gesturing of his style. You may like these, but I would hope that there is a more recent version somewhere that sounds a bit sharper.

David Stancliffe

J. W. Hertel *Con Spirito Concerti & Sinfonie* Sergio Azzolini bsn, capriccio barock orchestra, Dominik Kiefer  
Tudor 7182  
Three bassoon concertos (in a, B flat and E flat), and three symphonies (in D, G and B flat)

Even before I put this CD in my machine, I knew I was in for an exciting listen – and I wasn't disappointed. Ever since I first encountered J. W. Hertel's music (needless to say via Fasch), I have enjoyed every recording that I've come across. This one has two additional recommendations – Sergio Azzolini as the soloist in the three bassoon concertos, and the outstanding (yet surprisingly little heard of) capriccio barock orchestra, who are based in the Swiss city of Basel. From the very Sturm und Drang first track to the final Minuet and Trio from a sinfonia for strings with two obbligato bassoons, the whole kaleidoscope of mid- to late-18th-century music is here. The music is also testament to the level of performance at Schwerin while Hertel worked there – truly it must have been a band of virtuosos!

BC

Janitsch *Sonate da camera II* Notturmo,  
Christopher Palameta  
Atma Classique ACD2 2638  
opp. 1/1, 3/3, 3/4, 7/4 & 7/6

This is the second installment of Notturmo's project to record all of the Janitsch surviving quartets with wind instruments, and what a beautiful recording it is. Readers who enjoyed Volume 1 will not hesitate to purchase its successor. Those who did not should definitely try this: there are four world premiere recordings (out of a total of five works). Having now inspected the holdings of the Sing-Akademie Library in Berlin, the group's artistic leader, Christopher Palameta, has identified works which were thought lost forever; of the hypothetical total of 42 such works, 40 are now accounted for. There is no constant scoring to these works, and indeed the composer was flexible in his approach to instrumentation – many of the sonatas survive in various guises (there is even one arrangement for three violas and continuo!) Here we have oboe with a pair of violins, flute with a pair of oboes, flute with oboe and viola, oboe, violin and viola, and a pair of oboes with viola. The music is beautifully balanced, with graceful melody which is sometimes deeper than the normal *rococo* frippery one associates with much of the Berlin School repertoire, and with such engaging and masterful performances as these, I recommend this disc very highly.

BC

Janitsch *Darmstadt Sinfoniae* antichi  
strumenti, Laura Toffetti, Tobias Bonz  
Cypres CYP1658 55' 27"  
Sinfonie in E flat, E, F, G (2) and B flat

It is only in the slow movements of these works that the Janitsch of the quartets reveals himself – and, once again, it is the quite unexpected profundity of expression that is most captivating. The outer movements are altogether different; listen, for example, to the bagpipes droning at the beginning of track 6 – perhaps Telemann was not the only composer to take inspiration from folk musicians from that part of the world (which, of course, is where Janitsch originated!) The performances are lively and spirited; the line-up of the orchestra is based upon court band at Darmstadt, where the surviving manuscripts survive in Christoph Graupner's hand, so flute and oboe are added (sometimes taking solos, or duetting with a solo violin). How accurate such practice is must remain

conjecture, although I know from experience that Graupner cantata scores that list only strings at the head of the manuscript suddenly have cues for alternations between violins and oboes in the last movement, so we must assume (rightly or wrongly) that the oboe played along throughout. Here, of course, it helps to vary the soundscape. These are interesting works, which definitely merit performance.

BC

Mozart *Complete Fortepiano Concertos*  
Viviana Sofronitsky, Musica Antiqua  
Collegium Varsoviense, Tadeusz Karolak  
(11 CDs – no TT)  
Er'cetera KTC1424

see p. 33

Vitzthumb *Il vous souvient de cette fête*  
Elise Gäbele, Thibaut Lenaerts, Benoit  
Giaux STB, Caroline Bayet & Marie Haag  
vln, Bernard Woltèche vlc, Guy Penson  
hpacd & piano 63' 58"  
Musique en Wallonie MEW1055  
Ariettes by Fridzeri, Gluck, Gossec, Grétry,  
Monsigny, Philidor & Vachon

This is one of three releases I have reviewed for this issue that come in the form of a hardback CD-sized book with the disc in the endpapers or in a plastic sleeve on the inside of the cover. Though elegant and lending itself to comparatively lavish presentation it is quite hard to get the disc in and out using the latter system: damage has to be a distinct possibility, however careful one is. Be warned. Vitzthumb was not so much composer as arranger of these arias and ensembles from operas by Grétry, Gluck and Gossec (among others) for a domestic ensemble of voices, two violins and continuo. Despite the considerable demands of both the vocal and instrumental parts, the publication was a great commercial success, a tribute to the judicious choice of pieces, which balances melodic attractiveness and dramatic content with some skill. Therefore they still reward the listener prepared to take a risk with unknown music. Of the soloists the soprano is definitely the star – pure-toned, agile and a purveyor of consistently musical phrasing. The tenor has the misfortune to be landed with one of the hardest arias I think I've ever heard and doesn't quite make it in one or two places, though he is very good elsewhere. Slightly to my surprise, I really enjoyed this.

David Hansell

Zumsteeg *Die Geisterinsel* Falka Hönisch  
Prospero, Christiane Karg Miranda, Benjamin



Hulett *Fernando*, Sophie Harmsen *Fabio*, Patrick Pobeschin *Oronzio*, Christian Immler *Stefano*, Andrea Lauren Brown *Ariel*, Christian Feichtmair *Caliban*, Kammerchor Stuttgart, Hofkapelle Stuttgart, Frieder Bernius 139' 26" (3 CDs)

Carus 83.229

Zumsteeg was a slightly younger contemporary of Mozart, and although he never enjoyed any of the latter's success, there are similarities in their approach to developing opera in German. *Die Geisterinsel* is based upon Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and the present recording was a by-product of an ongoing project to rediscover works from the Stuttgart Hofkapelle archives. Musically it may well be innovative in running numbers together into scenes, and the composer's use of the orchestra to portray events on stage, though using wind instruments only in accompanying a chorus of spirits has many a precedent (not least of all Monteverdi's *Orfeo*), and at the end of the day, pretty as some of the songs are, and convincing as some of the dialogue might be, there is nothing strikingly original about the whole – I've listened to the entire piece a few times now, and I cannot recall a single "tune". Perhaps I am more at fault than Zumsteeg, and I feel sure that it would be an entertaining evening in the theatre, but three CDs worth of aural entertainment I'm afraid it is not. I strongly commend Frieder Bernius for his dedication to a lost repertoire, and I enjoyed very much the sound of his orchestra and singers. The text (given in full in the booklet with omitted passages in grey type – one wonders if criteria other than length were applied in deciding which numbers were cut!) is given in German only. I suspect that only Germans or Germanophiles will buy such an obscurity anyway, so that may not be a problem. BC

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

Lefèvre *A revolutionary tutor – Clarinet Sonatas, volume 2* Colin Lawson *cl*, Sebastian Comberti *vlc* 74' 36"  
Clarinet Classics CC0058  
Sonatas 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 & 12

Somehow we managed to miss volume 1 of this enterprising issue. Lefèvre issued his *Méthode de Clarinette* in 1802. Unlike the other clarinet recording I have written about this month, Colin Lawson has chosen to play the music as printed, without any

improvised accompaniment. I am not sure which approach I prefer. Clearly this is not to criticise the present performers, who bring great musicality to what are essentially glorified studies, but there is inevitably something to be said for the keyboard player on the other recording to engage in musical dialogue to a far greater extent (and, indeed, it is to John Irving's considerable credit that I listened to that CD first and did not realise that he was playing from a simple bass line). I have argued before that there is much to be said for making study pieces sound like true art music – the technical challenge is only part of a musician's development, after all – and I hope Lawson and his colleagues will continue to explore similar repertoire. Perhaps there might even be a market for a CD without the clarinet part? BC

Moscheles *Complete Concert Studies* Piers Lane 78' 04"  
Hyperion CDH55387  
Op 95, 98, 105, 111 & 126

I was a little surprised to receive this, but am not complaining. I played it on my way home after a week of Schütz and it made a marvelous contrast. I can't judge the pieces on their success as studies, but they justify themselves as sheer music: these short pieces are interesting, show considerable imagination and contrast well with each other. They were written between 1836 and 1856. I'd rather have heard them on a piano of the period, but a modern Steinway doesn't trouble me too much. The most substantial set is op. 95 – a score is available online not an original edition, but the absence of systematic fingering (what is there is scattered and idiosyncratic) does suggest that it hasn't been tampered with. CB

#### ANTHOLOGIES

*Clarinets by Arrangement* Jane Booth *clarinets*, John Irving *fp*  
sfz music SFZM0310  
Beethoven: Op. 17; Lefèvre: Sonata IV;  
Mozart: K356, 397 & 581

As we don't have a specialist reviewer for this repertoire, it has fallen to me to write about this thoroughly enjoyable recital. I cannot comment on the instruments or the "correctness" of any particular technique on either, and shall instead treat it rather as if I had been at a concert. All in all, the performers would have been more than worth the value of

the tickets – my attention never waned for a second. Only Mozart's clarinet quintet was truly familiar to me, albeit in a previously unheard guise; any reservations I might have had beforehand about losing the richness of colour of the string quartet sound were soon forgotten – Jane Booth and John Irving give commanding performances, and the work could have been conceived for this line-up for all anyone hearing it for the very first time would ever realize. The other works are impressive, too, and I hope the disk will sell well and encourage the duo to explore the repertoire even further. Applications to review future recordings to the email address on the magazine's front cover. BC

*Per la Vergine Maria* Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 63' 00"  
Naïve OP 30505  
Monteverdi, Bencini, Melani, Soler, A. Scarlatti, Carissimi, Stravinsky

The Virgin Mary, relegated to relative subordination by Protestantism, was an ideal focal point for the counter-Reformation. The rich heritage of Marian texts was employed endlessly to provide sweetly sensual evocation of the Virgin in the cause of the spiritual seduction of the faithful (and sometimes, perhaps, the not-so-faithful). The most famous of those texts – *Magnificat* (settings by Pietro Paolo Bencini, Soler and Carissimi), *Salve Regina* (Melani and Alessandro Scarlatti) and *Ave Maria*, an unexpected but exquisite *bonne bouche* in the form of Stravinsky's tiny 4vv setting – are well represented on this splendid CD. Odd-man out is Monteverdi's 6vv *Litanie dell Beata Vergine*. The text of the Litany, almost a laundry list of invocations, is always a challenge to composers, but here the maestro gets round it with a largely homophonic setting given variety by contrasting texture and rhythm, while allowing the refrain "Ora pro nobis" to blossom out with expansive effectiveness.

All the music here is abundantly worth hearing, particularly in these excellent one-voice-per-part performances, but for me the major discovery is the *Magnificat a8* by the little-known Roman Pietro Paolo Bencini (c1670-1755). Bencini held a number of posts in Rome, most notably that of *maestro* of the Cappella Giulio at St Peter's, which he occupied from 1743 until his death. The present double-choir *Magnificat* unsurprisingly exploits antiphonal effects, but is especially notable for its expressive power, most

notably at "Quia fecit", and intoxicatingly spicy harmonies. There is apparently a fair amount of Bencini's music extant (there is a recording of a Vespers); on this evidence it deserves further exploration.

Brian Robins

**Tesori d'Italia – Palazzago** Robert Mucci (1797 Bossi organ, Burligo, and 1851 Serassi organ, Palazzago)

Syrus SYR 141440

Works by Frescobaldi, D'Andrieu, Gentili, Handel, Bossi, Bach/Marcello, Morandi, Davide da Bergamo & Tiraboschi

This CD (Treasures of Italy) explores two recently restored organs from Burligo and Palazzago in the organ-rich surroundings of Bergamo, north east of Milan. The pieces chosen are clearly intended to show how versatile the two organs are, rather than reflecting the music that was around at the time they were built – so we have Vierne and Bossi on the 1797 organ and Bach on the 1851 one. A number of registration choices struck me as rather odd as well – for example, Handel with the addition of little bells. Some of the speeds are painfully slow, notably the Handel and Bach *Adagio*, and the playing style, particularly in the early repertoire, sounds overly mannered. The final piece (*Din Din*) is a polka based on Strauss by a locally living priest and is really very silly. I assume this recording is geared towards locals and church visitors, but both organs deserve recordings of music better suited to their different styles, and played in a more appropriate manner.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Lunarcy** Lawrence Zazzo cT, Shizuko Noiri lute 60' 40"

Evil Penguin Records Classic EPRC 010

Campion *The cypress curtain of the night*; Dowland *Preludium, In darkness let me dwell, What poor astronomers are they*; Kapsberger *Toccata Prima*; Purcell *From rosy bowers, I'll sail upon the Dog Star*; + Boyle, Burgon, Howells, Mozart & Schumann

Pity the dilemma facing the modern falsetto countertenor with an outstanding voice and technique. He does not have any secular repertoire that he can claim for his own beyond that which was written, post-Deller, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and must usually harvest his crop of songs from material gleaned from those of other voice types for a recital programme. Full marks to Lawrence Zazzo, then, for fessing up to this little-known business in his sleeve-note: "countertenors are... 'trespassers' – very little of what I sing is actually

written for my voice type".

Zazzo sings a handful of lute songs by Dowland and Campion (beautifully), though it is unlikely that male altos ever did so at the time, Purcell (one of which is actually a seduction song specifically for a female character), Mozart (hmm, just about OK for Ct, if you accept them as the nearest available thing to castrati, which is stretching things a bit – sorry!), and Schumann and Howells.

The remaining two small groups are therefore the only works specifically written for countertenor and lute. There is, of course, nothing wrong with a performer such as Zazzo, whom I admire enormously, appropriating other voices' music, so long as it is performed, as here, with commitment, taste, and obvious respect. That's fine, and we need inventive and provocative performances to let some extra air into the sometimes claustrophobic world of Early Music performance.

Zazzo's recital proclaims itself as a programme of songs which is "a musical tour along the darkness and the light of the moon and the mind". I suppose whether or not a reader of Early Music Review is going to enjoy this selection depends on how well you think the whole thing works as such a "musical tour". The Burgon cycle to poems by Auden is the heart of the recital. These are certainly the best modern songs ever written for alto and lute, and are performed here to perfection. The two more "difficult" short lute songs by Rory Boyle are, sadly, the kind of pieces that still scare audiences, who often cannot wait for them to be over – they compulsively check their watches during performance (I know – I sang them once!) This is a shame, because they are good songs, and repay any initial discomfort.

I really don't know what to make of this disc – it won't be for everyone. Listening to it over twenty times in succession for this review I came to absolutely love it, and Zazzo's clever ordering of the items, but I admit that I began by hating it. Perhaps countertenors themselves are like Marmite.

Two typos spotted in the sleeve-notes: It's Philip Rosseter, not John, and James Bowman's recording of the Burgon cycle was on EMI, not Hyperion. Yes, I am an anorak.

A final word in praise of the lutenist, Shizuko Noiri. I was once told, in no uncertain terms, that it was abso'lute'ly impossible to transcribe Schumann's lovely 'Mondnacht' for the lute. Well,

clearly it is not only possible, it can work well, with most of the piano part played as written. How she copes with performing it in this transposed key is beyond most of us to imagine – I recently gave up any idea of plucking when I couldn't even change from C to G7 on the ukulele! (page 1 of the tutor). Lutenists really are a special folk, and we must cherish them.

David Hill

**Ships Ahoy! Songs of Wind, Water & Tide** Quadriga Consort 70' 21"

alpha *Les chants de la terre* ALPHA 529

This is an anthology of nautical songs from the British Isles, sung by Elisabeth Kaplan, a South African-born jazz and pop singer with an Austrian ensemble directed by Nikolas Newerkla. His booklet note describes how his first sight of the sea was when he crossed to England from Ostend – it must have been a very clear day to have seen the white cliffs of Dover from there! The range of music is intriguingly wide, but the performances tend towards a slow and over-refined manner. If that doesn't worry you, buy it: the programme is well-designed and beautifully performed – but I prefer something a bit more rugged, gutsy and unpretentious. Full texts are enclosed, but I'd rather read something about the performers than arty pictures of them.

CB

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# IN MEMORIAM

Bruce Haynes

(14 April 1942–17 May 2011)

Bruce began his career as an oboeist in San Francisco in 1960s, then from 1964–67 studied early music in Holland with Frans Brüggem and Gustav Leonhardt. For many years, he was a leading baroque oboe player, though gradually his research activities took over. He published *Music for the Oboe, 1650–1800: a Bibliography* in 1985 and *The Eloquent Oboe: a History of the Oboe from 1640–1760* (Oxford UP 2001). His 1995 Montreal thesis was published as *A History of Performing Pitch: The Story of A* (Scarecrow Press, 2002) – an essential work in any early-music library. *The End of Early Music* (Oxford UP 2007) makes stimulating reading. More information, available in the biography in Wikipedia.

Ian Harwood died at the end of July. I will write more on him in our next issue. CB

## The Funeral of Liza Caudle Bletchingley – June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011

David Stancliffe

*Rise heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise  
Without delays,  
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise  
With him mayst rise:  
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,  
His life may make thee gold, and much more, just.*

*Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part  
With all thy art.  
The crosse taught all wood to resound his name,  
Who bore the same.  
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key  
Is best to celebrate this most high day.*

*Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song  
Pleasant and long:  
Or, since all musick is but three parts vied  
And multiplied,  
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,  
And make up our defects with his sweet art.*

I begin with George Herbert's poem *Easter*, not only because it offers us a glimpse of hope through the present struggle, but also because in the central stanza of this first half, Herbert's central image is musical one: it's the stretched sinews of the body on the cross, like the tensioned gut stretched over the fragile belly of the lute or viol, that produce the soaring harmony of music. Too thick a string, too little tension, too solid a soundboard and the natural resonance is lost: too thin a belly or soundboard or too tight a string and collapse is inevitable: either way, there'll be no music. Herbert's conclusion is that life-giving harmony, for which the third part – the Spirit – is necessary, can only sing out at a cost; without tension, without the risk of suffering, there can be no passion, no music.

This congregation hardly needs me to explain that: many of you work with this fine judgment between tension and collapse day by day, as did Liza. Many of us are in the business of drawing harmony and resolution out of dissonance and suspension. What Herbert does is remind us that there's no music – no glimpse of heaven – without tension and risk, and this was true of Liza in death as in life. 'Man that is born of woman, hath but a short time to live', says the Funeral Sentence sung at the start of this service, and our very fragility is one of the things that make us conscious of valuing every moment. Life is precious, but it's a gift not a possession, and Liza enjoyed it to the full.

You could see Liza's passion for life in her commitment to make the most of every moment. This was true of her passion for her pupils as much as in her pride in the extraordinary achievements of her three talented children; it was visible in her ability to create a home, in the liberality of splendid food and original clothes, in the centrality of garden and table, and in a legendary liberal spirit that was ready to embrace all comers first and then engage with them seriously. But it was hard work, and that generosity of spirit, like all music-making worth its salt, is always close to the edge. There is no joy and freedom without cost, and so we sang at the start a Passion Chorale.

But the Passion is not where it begins or ends. Liza's forebears, the Hylton Stewarts, were a notable musical family. One moved from being an organist to ordination, and then became Precentor of Chester Cathedral; another ran the music at Marlborough College – and I cannot be the only person here who's sung Hylton Stewart in C. When Liza left the Royal College of Music in 1947, Herbert Howells wrote this commendation: 'Her whole family background has, of course, been an important contributory cause of her general musicianship: and is an advantage she has used to the full, but in the best possible sense. I confidently support her candidature for any teaching work.'

And that's what she did: plunging in to the Cheltenham Ladies College launched her career as a teacher of both piano and violin, where her ability to build confidence and to draw skill and commitment from her pupils lasted till the moment of her death. There was something about her total commitment that took even Mark by surprise when he overheard her working with some pupils just a few weeks ago: 'I was astonished and impressed at the perception and skill with which she coaxed her pupils along. I had never known that she had such a brilliant ability to spot the essence of what was needed to build the most fundamental aspects of musicianship: something that could stay with the students for the rest of their musical life,' he wrote to me.

When we heard the Purcell *Chacony* just now at the heart of this service, you heard in musical form a perfect illustration of this ability: the same material, but always different, like a phrase being worked over and over again in a lesson; the extraordinary invention, with the interplay of voices, the false relations, the temporary resolutions that never quite satisfy; the refusal to find an easy resting



place or take a conventional short-cut that characterize Purcell's writing are just like the good teacher's stretching of her pupil's imagination and musicianship: inducting them into the essential heart of the matter, but never being content with a short cut or less than the best.

I met Liza first in the early 1970s, when Mark, and then Theresa, began to come and play with us in Bristol. Proud of her children's gifts, she was never in your face: I remember her at the supper table, where the generous liberal virtues that underpinned both her attitude to the flourishing of her family and her social and political conscience, made her such an easy guest. She sensed she was one of us, and came more frequently after we moved to Salisbury where quite often all three of her offspring were taking part in our weekend music-making. It was then that I learnt to value the perceptive comments she would make – if asked – during our rehearsals. She must have sat through hours and hours on hard pews in draughty churches. After Peter's death in 2002, she seemed determined to take on a new lease of life, travelling to concerts all over the place as she did in the last, happy week of her life.

Proud of her musical children, she was particularly glad to see Jill engage actively in the social and political life of her locality; holding their own in the recent elections has by no means happened to all Jill's colleagues! And while music gives us the image of discord resolving into harmony, and making that happen musically was at the heart of Liza's professional life, the Biblical picture of heaven – of the great banquet where there is a place for all – was central to Liza's social and political philosophy, close to the heart of the way she did things. You heard Jesus say in John's gospel, 'In my father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?' but perhaps more strikingly you heard that vision of social and political inclusion (and the cost of it) in Byrd's *Ave verum corpus*. In the Eucharist – and *Ave verum corpus* is a Eucharistic motet, written for the Feast of Corpus Christi – we have a foretaste of the heavenly banquet to which we are all invited, and at which one day we hope we will be united with Liza and all those who have worked for peace and justice, for order and harmony, and for life and delight amidst the injustice, disorder and brutish noise of so much of this world.

I believe, as the Prophet Isaiah says, that God has called Liza by name and made her his own. Today as we celebrate her life and mourn her sudden death, we pray for her family and commend her and to the mercy of God; in sure confidence that discord will resolve into harmony, loss and separation will yield to warmth and engagement, and death give place to life; and may the King of Eternal Glory make us partakers of his heavenly banquet too.

Liza Caudle

16 June 1924 – 14 May 2011

This is the first sermon we have printed in *EMR*, and also the first obituary for someone whom I know primarily as a member of the audience – many audiences, in fact. I first met her at Dartington, I suppose in the early 1970s, where she was accompanied with her husband and a daughter Theresa, just about in her teens, who was learning violin and cornetto – two instruments that require completely different skills to play but which for a short time around 1600 were virtually interchangeable. Mark didn't take to Dartington, so I got to know him later – in fact, he and his second wife have become great family friends, and real favourites with Clare and John. (It was good to see Mark's first wife Jennie at the funeral as well.) I know Jill least; she is a fine choral singer and has been involved in a lot of musical administration, as well as local politics.

The Caudles are the only family that had (until last month) four subscriptions to *EMR*. They share the status of three subscriptions with the Holmans.

I was surprised on arrival at the funeral service to see that David Stancliffe was preaching the sermon. Not surprising in that I knew that his musical enthusiasm was expressed in the form of assembling choruses and orchestras and conducting them, and that even his busy life as Bishop of Salisbury (he retired last year) could not distract him from his musical activities. I hadn't realised previously that Theresa and Mark had played for him for many years, and that Theresa booked the players.

Coincidentally, the only other episcopal funeral sermon I have heard also focussed on George Herbert. That was by Simon Barrington Ward to a packed Magdalene College Chapel (I was squashed between Mary Berry and Ruth Padel) for the funeral of John Stevens. When I was a student, he used to lecture on George Herbert and Charles Wesley (though at 9.00 am on Saturday mornings – not a student-friendly hour!) and had over the years been working on a book on Herbert, sadly not completed. The following quotation from Izaak Walton's life of Herbert links the poet, music and Salisbury.

*His chiefest recreation was Music, in which heavenly art he was a most excellent master, and did himself compose many Divine Hymns and Anthems, which he set and sung to his lute or viol: and though he was a lover of retiredness, yet his love to Music was such, that he went usually twice every week, on certain appointed days, to the Cathedral Church in Salisbury; and at his return would say, "That his time spent in prayer, and Cathedral-music, elevated his soul, and was his Heaven upon earth." But before his return thence to Bemerton, he would usually sing and play his part at an appointed private Music-meeting; and, to justify this practice, he would often say, "Religion does not banish mirth, but only moderates and sets rules to it."*

## CLIFFORD BARTLETT APPEAL

The performance of Messiah announced in our last issue has taken place: we enclose a supplement with some material from the programme, a review and four pages of pictures. Francis Knights (editor of *Early Music*) was present with his camera for the rehearsal in Great St Mary's and we have included a selection of the results. There was also an event organised on 14 May by Wendy Hancock and her pupils which has generated more money for the fund.

The next event is taking place on 15 August in Gillian Stevens' new Mill House Studio at Abergavenny. Capacity is about 50, so please book in advance. (See Diary advert, p. 7). Ian Honeyman (tenor and piano), as part of his charity walk from The Lizard to Dunnet Head, will be joined by Catherine King. The programme is flexible. It will probably include Britten's *Abraham and Isaac* and other English music (with perhaps some Poulenc). Ian's stopping point next day is at Llangattock, and there may be another informal concert there.

On 10 September there is a concert by James Bowman and Dorothy Linell at Northleach Church, Gloucestershire. See details opposite.

Thank you to all who are performing and organising on our behalf. We're not sure how much benefit the trial of the alleged fraudsters will bring to us, but we have at last got a firm date for it, – 5 September: we hope justice will be done.

## APOLOGIES...

for this issue being so late. It regularly happens with the August issue, since I'm always away for the last week of July at the Beauchamp Summer School, where seated for six days at the organ, I get my annual fix of continuo playing (see editorial). Issue 143 turned out to be unusually long: I was relieved that David Hill hadn't revised the first instalment of his lengthy (for us) article on the incompatibility of the alto voice and Dowland's lute songs. *EMR* isn't itself time-dependent, but the Diary is, though most entries are sent early enough to have appeared in previous issue(s).

We had intended to include a report with photographs of the charity *Messiah*. The saddle-stitch facility on our photocopier only staples 13 sheets – 52 pages, so we have inserted a further unbound eight pages, which include some material from the programme and a selection of photographs. They are accessible in colour at [www.parley.org.uk](http://www.parley.org.uk)

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