Early Music REVIEW

Number 144 October 2011

ISSN 1355-3437 Price £2.50

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

tel +44 (0)1480 452076 fax +44(0)1480 450821
clifford.bartlett@btopenworld.com
elaine.bartlett2@btopenworld.com
Contact for CD reviews brian@primalamusica.com

Annual subscription UK: £22.50 Europe: £27.50
Rest of World: £40.00 (air) £27.50 (surface)
(foreign rates £5 cheaper without Diary)
Sterling cheques payable to
The Early Music Company Ltd
Subscribers from abroad:
Payment information on renewal invoices

Sometimes one encounters completely out of the blue an amazingly powerful musical experience. I generally go to part of the Cambridge Early Music Summer School end-of-course concert: I'm not insulting the performers to say the events are usually interesting rather than fully-polished performances. What I heard this year was better than usual, but one item was absolutely amazing. I knew that Willaert's *Inviolata* a7 was an outstanding work – I've Alan Lumsden to thank for this, since he edited it for a Beauchamp House summer school a few years ago, and I was involved in the somewhat anachronistic role of organ accompanist. As always, Philip Thorby inspired us, and he had the same effect at Cambridge. There were seven fine singers, admittedly not all summer-school students, since they included Selene Mills, Linda Gower and Nick Webb, who are organisers (and were members of the *Messiah* choir photographed in our last issue).

The motet is for SSAATTB (in terms of clef, at least, though the top two parts sing no higher than an octave above middle C). Three of the voices form a canon. It isn't an unrhythmic cantus firmus and the perfomers made no didactic attempt to make this structure particularly audible, though one could sense the difference between the slower and more active parts. The music held the audience spellbound. I was sufficiently aware of the singers to sense that this was one of those performances that got everything right but with nothing forced; even Philip's direction was restrained. I can imagine all sorts of Philipisms being called into play at the rehearsals, but nothing sounded exaggerated or imposed. It seemed a perfect performance of a marvellous work. The music was at the centre: the voices emitted it, without the listener being aware that it was representing any particular vocal style. The phrases were shaped but not overtly; the tactus was observed but barely noticeable. The voices were distinctive enough for the listeners to follow the lines but well blended. I don't know how much this was a one off, the effect of the occasion that could not be repeated – and if it had been recorded, I'm not sure that I would want to have heard it again in case it disappointed. The surprise was part of the effect. So often I find that the most memorable experiences are those one was not expecting or seeking. *CB*

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

POLYPHONY IN CYPRUS

Le Codex de Chypre (Torino, Biblioteca Universitaria J.II.9) Vol.1. Rondeaux et Virelais I. Edition par Cécile Beaupain et Germana Schiassi sous la direction de Raphaël Picazos, English translations by Terence Waterhouse Ut Orpheus (*Opus Artis Novae* 1), 2011. xxiii + 127pp, €54.95

This music has been available for 50 years now, edited by Richard Hoppin in *Corpus Mensurabilis Musicus* 21 under the title *The Cypriot-French Repertoire...* and LMI published a facsimile in 1999. There are regrettably few CDs of this fascinating repertoire – perhaps prospective performers have been caught between the difficulties of the facsimile and the complexity of CMM's standard over-reduced note values amd mensurstrich. This edition certainly addresses the problems of transcription but has its own agenda, which is too idealistic and only a partial solution, failing to find a compromise between pseudo-facsimile and over-modernisation. This, like recent *Musica Britannica* and *Early Enlgish Church Music* volumes, seems to be aimed too far towards performers coming from specialist medieval courses.

The chief compromise is in producing a score, not parts. Singers have, until the 19th century, generally performed from parts[1], and players almost always do – even for short pieces for which page-turns or size of print are no problem. One could make a case that parts with modern clefs, bar-lines and note values bring one nearer to the way the music was sung than the most unmodernised notation put into score. Except for simple, chordal music, the use of score imposes a visual shape that interferes with the shape of the musical line. The fundamental means of relating the parts is the tactus. Once the performer is sophisticated enough to understand that most music of the period fits a regular pattern which underlies the measurement of the rhythm but does not impose a regular stress in the manner that more recent music does; their presence is merely visualising what the musician feels behind the surface patterns and has been articulated in scores going back to the late 16th century. The practical reasons for using parts are for economy of paper and avoidance of page-turns; the musical reason is that the notes are not measured out according to the activity in other parts.

So I would suggest that this edition presents more problems to the modern user than is necessary. A score is necessary for study if there are no waiting musicians to sing or play on demand. Are clefs important? The ability to read the original ones might be useful for transposition by clef-substitution, though that works better for thirds and fifths than a tone or fourth unless you add the modern octave-treble. Knowledge of what the original clefs were is useful – irrespective of any ideas of automatic transposition, they are an indication of range. But is there really any strong reason for users who have no desire to read facsimiles to have the unnecessary hurdle of reading editions with original clefs? There is a positive advantage for retaining the original note symbols in score, in that you can pick up their lengths using comparisons within the score; the edition also contains seven helpful pages of rules and advice.[2] Each part has a tiny slash across the top line of the stave every five breves – perhaps too small, since they can easily be misread as semibreve rests. Rests are not standardised in the conventional modern positions on the stave, and when hanging from the top line can be confused with the dash showing the new "bar".

Orthography of the text is covered in some detail, but matching syllables to notes is passed over in five lines on p. xix and there is an assumption, perhaps naive, that most problems are solved by following the original placing. This needs a little more explanation, since spacing of words and notes is rarely unambiguous, and the idea of joining stems of short notes hadn't been invented then. The printed score gives a misleading impression of accuracy. It is, however, excellent that the poems are set out properly, with an English translation in the opposite column.

The editors' opening page of justification of their approach is right as far as it goes in presenting the problem, but ignores the alternatives. My ideal edition would be more modernised, with parts as well as score (for those who need to see the music as a whole, whether for serious study or just to follow the notes while listening to a recording) but with access to facsimiles – ideally on-line. As it stands, this will be useful as a half-way stage to reading facsimiles, and comparison with CMM will provide useful disussions when teaching editorial practices. It's an interesting specimen, and I hope some enthusiasts try to use it. But I would recommend that any future volumes might be a little more user-friendly.

I may be a grumpy oldie, but I worry that so much effort has produced a volume of more limited use than it could have been. One does need to see the original to understand some of the complexity of the notation (and the reason for it). But I assume that if it was intended just as eye music, it would have been copied in score!

1. I have a couple of single voice parts of *Messiah* published by Novello around the time they introduced cheap vocal scores...

2. But the font size is too small in relationship to the length of line for easy reading

VIRGINE SOLA

Anonymous (end of 15th Century) ***Virgine sola al mundo for 4 voices*** **Edited by Giorgio Bussolin and Stefano Zanus Fortes Ut Orpheus (MS41), 2011. ii + 6pp, €10.95.**

This is one piece taken from the forthcoming edition by the same editors and publisher of Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, cod. DCCLVIII (or more simply, I-VEcap 758) of a stanze from Petrarch's *Vergine bella* in a slightly different, apparently local orthography; it is the only non-liturgical piece from it. It is almost entirely homophonic and doesn't look like a particularly exciting example to encourage sales of the complete volume, if that is its intention. For use by singers, it's in too large a format, though it is at least big enough for two singers to use one copy – possibly even four if it was placed on a music stand. But as a model of transcription, it looks odd having note-values halved when the Cypriot edition is so aggressively unmodernised, and who would want to pay for several copies at nearly £10 each for four pages of simple music? It's difficult to judge simple music without performance, so it could be worth it!

ETON PASSION

Richard Davey ***St. Matthew Passion*** **Reconstructed from the Eton Choirbook with Lyrics in Latin and English. Edited by Ross W. Duffin** (*Collegium Musicum Yale University, Second Series* 13). A-R Editions, 2011, xxiv + 93pp, $100.00.

An edition of this first non-anonymous Passion has been around since it appeared in *Musica Britannica* XII in 1961. It is a difficult work to edit, in that the opening 11 sections (out of 42) are missing and two of the four parts are missing from nos. 12-23. Furthermore, the narrative has to be edited from separate chant sources. Duffin has thought hard for some 30 years on this work, and has made some distinct improvements on Harrison's MB version. There, the missing sections are adapted from later sections of the work, whereas Duffin has written them freely but with the constraint of a modal grouping that Harrison did not notice. He also writes more idiomatic missing parts. He claims that one of the two reasons for his edition is that (now Stainer & Bell's offprint is out of print) the MB edition is "available only as part of a large, scholarly volume in a collected edition".

This invites one to consider the practical advantages of the edition. It is certainly more user-friendly, in that the edition in Latin is followed by a separate one with English text,[3] based on Tyndale, which is not enormously different from the Authorised Version. But Tyndale and the AV are not separated by any notable linguistic change, and if the latter is essentially improved Tyndale, why not prefer it? What annoys me in the edition (whichever language) is the representing of each note by a blob rather than the customary breve for the reciting note, as in MB XII. Hyphenating each syllable is an additional handicap to reading the words and making sense of them. I haven't noticed where, if anywhere, the original clefs are shown. They are G2 C2 C4 F4, which fit modern SATB rather better than the usual late-renaissance C1 C3 C4 F4.

The editor evidently has experience of performing the work, though I wonder how effective it is in concert. One can accept masses and motets or the Bach passions as musical experiences. Curiously, when I first encountered Schütz, it was the passions, with a balance of chant and polyphony comparable to the Davy, that were revived in preference to his more accessible music – perhaps that explains his lack of popularity! The balance between *turba*-type passions being religious or musical experiences is very much tilted to the former. I suspect that very few churches here would accept it in its liturgical position – is it any more likely in the States? Or can chant mesmerise the listener in the right atmosphere?

Reverting to the end of the first paragraph, I don't understand the argument. Admittedly MB XII is heavier, but in terms of buying copies for singers, £75.50 is not significantly more expensive than Duffin's $100.00 (around £60.00), especially considering that MB contains 17 other pieces, all probably more performable than the Passion. To achieve his aim of performance, Duffin needs two cheap editions (in Latin and in English) in church-music format. Presuming there's little money in it for the editor and that it's a labour of love, it's an obvious candidate for putting online, perhaps with an article in one of the more widely-circulated journals that would draw attention to it and cover the musicological issues of his introduction. The guide to pronunciation of Latin belongs with the score, though why no comparable guide to English pronunciation of c.1500? As it stands, however good the edition, it's not going to circulate to choirs and places where they sing – at least, not in the UK.

TOLEDO HYMNS

Bruno Turner ***Toledo Hymns: The Melodies of the Office Hymns of the*** **Intonarium Toletanum** ***of 1515: A Commentary and Edition*** (*Hispaniæ Cantica Sacra*, 4). 2011. 56pp, £12.50. *Distributed by Mapa Mundi*

I've been aware of Bruno's interest in Hispanic hymns for at several decades, and his covering note reminded me that I'd photocopied several volumes of *Analecta hymnica* for him in the 1990s. The amount of information packed into these 56 A4 pages is enormous. The core is a transcription of 91 hymns from the main source, plus six from related sources. They are presented very precisely in modern, rhythmical notation, with neums for the

3. I avoid the word Lyrics, which looks out of place in the title. It has gained currency thanks to music-setting manuals: is it the normal term for all underlay in the USA now?

preliminary stave and commentary, including complete alternative versions. Only first verses are given. The print is quite small, but it isn't intended for singing and presents no problems of legibility.

The amount of information in the introduction is extensive. Apart from explaining "why Toledo", Bruno describes the sources and notation, and explains clearly his editorial procedure. There are two colour facsimiles (I wondered whether I needed a hyphen to link *colour* with *two* or *facsimiles*, but it doesn't matter; although the two pictures are fully coloured, the original uses only black and red). There is a table listing the hymns alphabetically with exact references to concordances in related MSS, the liturgical function, and abbreviated locations to texts (early sources and *Analecta hymnica*); other tables list the items in order of the source and give a liturgical calendar of the use of Toledo. Bruno's covering letter pointed out one curiosity: a somewhat corrupt *Resonet in laudibus* as no. 064. This would be an excellent model for other collections of liturgical material. An enormous amount of work is compressed into this thoroughly researched and accessibly arranged publication.

The Festschrift for Bruno edited by Tess Knighton and Bernadette Nelson published by Edition Reichenberger will be reviewed in the next issue.

MUSICA TRANSALPINA

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

Musica Transalpina is well-known as a title, and has been available in facsimile since 1972. From 1588 a spate of English madrigals flowed over the next quarter-century, and it was among the first genre of early music to be revived. I wonder if the title was intentionally ambiguous: if you are treating Latin as a language deriving from Italy, then *transalpina* means "music from north of the Alps", whereas if you consider its literal meaning from an English location, it refers to music coming from Italy. This is a large anthology of 57 mostly Italian madrigals (part IIs are numbered separately), with Ferrabosco I (who had lived in England in the 1560s and '70s), Marenzio and Palestrina as the main contributors. There are also four Lassus chansons and a two-section madrigal by Byrd (under whose music-printing monopoly the work was published). Some of the items may have arrived from Italy indirectly, via anthologies by Phalèse in Antwerp.

It is good to have a well-edited modern edition. The English Madrigalists format is a far more comfortable one for singers compared with the larger Musica Britannica format of the edition of Watson's *Italian Madrigalls Englished* (1590). I've no serious compaints with the editorial practice, though as an editor/publisher I'd retain a cut C signature whether the barlines come every two or (as here) every four beats: it's the mensuration sign that matters, not the number of beats in bar. "Redundant" accidentals remain; cautionary accidentals to cancel modern expectations are sensible, but the superfluous ones that I have noticed where, for instance, a C is sharpened in one bar but is natural in the next is unnecessary with such clear notation. The preface makes no mention of transposing madrigals in high clefs, so singers should be aware that there are two types of compass here, which would be more obvious to non-specialists if part-ranges were given as well. There are awkward bits of translation which need some care from singers. The good, concise introduction is accompanied by several facsimiles and a surprisingly extensive table of the surviving partbooks of the two editions. The critical commentary gives the first edition of each madrigal and includes the Italian texts.

A most welcome volume.[4] It's a pleasure to read, and I hope singers will add a few examples to their repertoire to experience the antecedents to the fashion. How italianate you make your performance style is a matter for experiment.

WEELKES 1600

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

PRB's series of madrigals "apt for the Viols and Voices" continues to expand. This contains ten pieces for five voices. There's a score that is more spacious than EM42 (see above) with a set of underlaid string parts, with alternative alto and octave-treble partbooks for the convenience of singers or recorder players. I quote above the price for score with seven parts, which is good value; you can save $5.00 but having only one of the alternatives for parts 3 & 4; the score alone is $17.00. As with the above volume, there are four minims per bar – though the original mensuration signs are not shown. More important is the absence of mention of chiavette or noting of original clefs. I don't have an alternative at hand, but nos. 1-3 must be in low clefs (C1 C1 C3 C4 F4), 6-10 in high clefs (G2 G2 C2 C3 C4), while 4-5 (two parts of one piece) may be a mixture. But at least the ranges are given here (unlike EM42), so it is easy to see which madrigals will work best for the forces available – this matters more to voices than viols, but I suspect that the opening three pieces will sound better on them than those with lots of top As in the treble and not much as low as even the G string for the bass. In fact, a tenor viol could play the bass part of nos. 6-10.

4. I was intrigued that Google provides facsimiles of four of the part-books and lists a book with the same title by the author, viol player and occasional *EMR* contributor Michelene Wandor.

DU CAURROY

Du Caurroy *Meslanges* édités par Marie-Alexis Colin (*Musica Gallica*) Brepols, 2010. cxxiv + 420pp, €75.00

This is a massive and most welcome publication. Born in 1549, Eustache Du Caurroy spent most of his life at the royal court, dying in 1609. His main publications were posthumous: *Preces ecclesiasticae* (1609) containing 44 motets, 4 psalms and 3 Te Deus; 42 instrumental *Fantasies* (1610) and a *Missa pro defunctis* (1636). The *Meslanges* is a compilation of his life's vernacular output, with 58 French works and four in Latin. (Unlike the two English madrigal volumes reviewed above, works in two or three sections are counted as one). Nos. 1-25 are contrapuntal chansons, of which four are psalm paraphrases, followed by a spiritual chanson *Susanne un jour*,[5] and the rest are secular chansons. Then come 15 Noels (nos. 26-40), which are also contrapuntal, not folky. Most begin and end with many repetitions of *Noël*. The third section comprises 23 settings of "vers mesurés à l'antique" (Nos. 63—66 are chansons not reprinted in the *Meslanges*.)

The impressive table of contents is not in the most accessible place – pages li-liv: it would be more useful just before the alphabetical index on the back page. It gives number, title, number of voices, author and type of text, presence or absence of a flat in the signature, final note and clef of top parts,[6] number of syllables per line, rhyme, and various other comments. Equivalent summaries are to be recommended to other editors.

Other aspects of the commentary are equally helpful. The words are particularly well handled, with literary sources traced when possible, and the full texts added – though probably not intended to be sung. The opening psalm (By the waters of Babylon) is exceptional in having all 12 six-line stanzas set, running to 293 bars. It is for six parts (G2 C1 C2 C3 FC4 F3), with the C3 part in canon with the C1. No. 2 (God is our hope and strength) for seven parts (C1 C3 C4 [C3] C4 F3 F4) has a double canon; the edition does not place the second resolution in the score order that the clef implies. But such formal procedures are not typical. The only other seven-part piece (symmetrically, the penultimate one) is no. 61, a *vers mesurés* setting of Horace's *Donec gratus eram tibi* (III, 9); the poem is set for G2 C1 C2 C3 C3 C4 F3 in an amorous dialogue between four and three voices, coming together at the end. The concluding piece (no. 62) is another psalm, in a Latin verse paraphrase and set *mesuré*. It gets through the whole of Psalm 1 for G2 C2 C3C4 F3 with its substantial text considerably more rapidly than no. 1. Most of the contents are for four or five parts, covering the usual two clef configurations,

5. There are two settings based on this theme in *Musica Transaplina*, reviewed above.

6. Enough to guess whether the other clefs are C2C3C4 or C3C4F4, though it would be more useful to list the clef for each part.

It's too early to come to any strong opinion on the quality of the music. It is a frustrating volume for singers, with so much of the music high – the top part of the *vers mesurés* in paerticularly often hovering uncomfortably around top G. I've enjoyed browsing through it. In comparison with the best-known publication of 1610, this is rather conservative; it is an anthology that includes items from way back, but the contrast in style within it is tiny compared with Monteverdi's variety. The printing isn't as easy to read as it could be: in artificial light, it's a bit faint, and the notes could have a little more body. I suppose that having the text a point larger would have made the volume even fatter. It certainly needs a substantial music stand if one tries to play it through at a keyboard. But congratulations to all involved in the edition and its publication – and also to the publisher for keeping the price within reach. I look forward to hearing more Du Caurroy.

GRAZIANI MOTETS

Bonifazio Graziani *Motets for Two to Six Voices Opus 1* Edited by Lars Berglund A-R Editions (RRMBE 173), 2011. xvii + 179pp, $160.00

Graziani (1604/5-1664) spent his youth in Marino, about 20 miles south of Rome, and presumably interacted with the coeval Carissimi. He worked in Rome from 1646 at Il Gesù, He was famous chiefly for his motets; this volume presents his op. 1, *Motetti a due, tre, quattro, cinque, e sei voci*, published in Rome in the Year of Jubilee 1650. They were probably originally written for his church, which served the Jesuit seminary. It employed four singers, with additional singers from the Sistine Chapel available if required. The organist at the time of publication was the young Vincenzo Albrici, who may have made Graziani's music better known in northern Europe.

It is an interesting collection, well worth reviving. Sadly, it arrived a few days after I got back from the Summer School at which I could have tried out some of the motets. Most pieces involve one or two sopranos[7] and there are a couple (nos. 8 & 11) for SSS & independent organ. The organ usually, of course, follows the lowest part, but in the SST setting of no. 6 it is independent when the tenor is solo. *Justus ut palma... Alleluia... Beatus vir qui suffert* (no. 18) has the largest scoring – SSSATB. The editor regrettably does not identify the liturgical function.

A-R editions often set out texts and translations one after the other, but here they are more conveniently side by side. A fair quantity of them are biblical. I'm puzzled why *Alleluia* is translated as *Hallelujah*: there's no need to protestantise the translation of a catholic text! In *Surge veni* (no. 12: SST), it would save bother for singers if a saint's name which matched the text and had suitable syllables were included as an expansion of N for non-

7. Although originally in C1 clef, the parts go up to G and sometimes A.

ecclesiastical use, e.g. *Joannes*. In *O Jesu fili Mariae* (no. 8: SSS), the text should have been set out in such a way that it represented the musical form and distinguished verse (related to *Jesu dulcis memoria*) and prose, as is done in other pieces.

Aperi mi (no. 9: ATB) is notated with one flat, but in modern terminology is in C minor, which definitely needs an A flat in tune, but *Salve, o dulce amoris* (no 10, for CAT) has a G sharp in the alto part (and figured in the organ part), which perhaps implies an expectation of split keys to diminish temperament problems.

In *Salve o dux amoris* (no. 10: SAT) the organ part, in tenor clef, has the rubric *Come stà*. The editor assumes that it is a warning to the player not to play it an octave lower, but it may rather be telling him not to treat the tenor clef as a cue for transposing down a fourth or fifth -- in fact, the piece would work well thus for low alto/high tenor, baritone and bass.

This is a useful volume: fine music for a variety of solo ensembles, which presents challenges that are well worth overcoming and should delight audiences.

MEDICI HARPSICHORD BOOK ... AGAIN

The Medici Harpsichord Book: 15 Anonymous Keyboard Pieces (late 17th century) Edited by Aapo Häkkinen Ut Orpheus, (ES66) 2011. 24pp, €`4.95

We reviewed this in *EMR* 129 (Feb 2009) as published by Edition Escobar. My copy of that is in transit or waiting to be sorted out, so I can't compare the two versions. The easiest way to decide if you like the music is to hear the editor's own recording: Deux-Elles DXL 1083.

LÜBECK the ORGANIST

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

I'm not sure if it would be more or less confusing if Vincent Lübeck (1654-1740) had or had not been an organist at Lübeck. In fact, he finished up not far away in Hamburg, where he was organist at St. Nicolai from 1702; since 1674, he had been organist of St Cosmae et Damiani at nearby Stade, having married the daughter of his predecessor. Considering his longevity, his output is quite small, with nine works for organ. This edition adds the Prelude & Fugue in A minor from his *Clavier Uebung* (why doesn't the editor add the key to the title: all the other pieces have a key) and a chaconne in A. The Bärenreiter edition is more lavish in its contents, splitting the basic organists' repertoire into two volumes (BA 8449 £34.50 & 8450 £39.00), each of which are more expensive than this new edition. If you don't want the ancillary material, this is a more economical choice.

Like other current editions of tablature-based organ music, Vogel is concerned about the principles of choosing two or three staves for his transcriptions. I'm not entirely convinced that preservation of the original notation matters unless it elucidates the counterpoint or how the piece would have been played. Tablature prefers the former, but staff-notation is more flexible. In particular, unless it seems that the composer has a strong preference, does it matter whether a middle part that ranges either side of middle C should wander between staves following the principle of division between hands or of visual clarity?

Lübeck played Schnitzger organs for over 60 years, so the section on "The Organs and Their Tunings" is valuable -- though the only instrument whose specification is given in full is a Tobias Brunner organ of 1653 at St-Marien, Flensburg, where his father played. The Nikolai church was the largest in a town of large organs – each of the four main churches in Hamburg had four manuals and 32' pedals. Vogel quotes an organ builder of the time, Christoph Gloger: "I believe there is no organ builder or organist in the world who fully understands the temperament of a keyboard instrument". What chance for any theory invented several centuries later!

If you are an organist without a copy of Lübeck's music, I would recommend this, and even if you have the Bärenreiter one, it's worth looking at the verbal material.

SUNDAY MORNING AT ST JAMES'S

Handel *Let God Arise Chapel Royal Version (HWV 256b)* Edited by Donald Burrows Vocal score. Novello (NOV060126), 2011. ix + 30pp, £8.95

Handel *Te Deum in A Major (HWV 282)* Edited by Donald Burrows Vocal score. Novello (NOV060115), 2011. ix + 32pp, £8.95

These two pieces were probably composed for Matins on one of two Sundays in the mid-1720s (Jan 1724 or 1726) to celebrate the King's return from Hanover -- not perhaps the easiest month for the journey. That they were both performed together is suggested by the similarity of the autograph scores (now bound together), which name the same singers, paper and scoring. They might make a sensible pairing in a concert: that they are both in the same key may be an attraction or too much of the same. The anthem has two movements revised from Chandos Anthem 11;[8] the *Te Deum* calls on previous settings. Both run to around a quarter of an hour, and could make half a concert, perhaps with a short, contrasting piece between them in a more remote key. Both works have AT soli and SATB choir with flute, oboe, bassoon and strings.

8. I'm unrepentant at keeping the old title; I'm playing a CD while writing this of music by "Sir Peter Maxwell Davies", though all of the music on it was written before he was thus honoured. On the other hand, 'Lord' is rarely prefixed to Britten's name. I wonder why Handel scholars are so pedantic about Chandos as a title.

There is a choice of editions for the Anthem. Bärenreiter includes it in HHA III 9, with an offprint score, vocal score and parts for sale. The Novello vocal score gives far more editorial information than Bärenreiter's introduction, identical in the full and vocal score. Curiously, its editor, Gerald Hendrie, quotes Burrows on why the anthem is so short: "it may have been the custom for the monarch to have remained standing during the Chapel Royal Services in which case Handel may well have been making allowance for the King's advancing years",[9] whereas Burrows does not mention the idea in his introduction but suggests that "the time-span was defined by the court timetable that required the Sunday morning service to be over in time for the King to dine 'in public'." Differences between the editions seem to be minimal. Each runs to 30 pages. Bärenreiter has rather bolder type and larger print, and fits in an additional German text without looking cluttered. The Novello score looks more spacious, and the piano part is easier to negotiate, since it doesn't try to include everything in the score. There are very few editorial differences, the most obvious being that Bärenreiter takes the opening tempo mark from the Chandos Anthem version *(Allegro ma non troppo)*, without any indication that Handel wrote no heading; instead, Novello gives an editorial *A tempo giusto*, but at least notes that of the earlier version, though doesn't explain why an invented one is better (or is it from the secondary sources?)[10] I suspect conductors will choose according to price (the Bärenreiter *Let God arise* costs £1.55 more at £11.50) and the house-style they prefer. I think on the evidence of the vocal scores that I'd favour Novello, but it's easy to fall into the trap of going for the cheapest vocal score then finding that the full score and parts are more expensive or less satisfactory.

BOCCHERINI Op. 1

Boccherini *6 Trii op. 1 G 77-82 per 2 Violini e Violoncello...* edited by Rudolf Rasch. Vol. 1 Ut Orpheus (PEB25a), 2011,. xii + 45 pp + parts, €17.95

This is a practical edition based on XXVII, I of the *Opera Omnia* of Boccherini. There is a biographical introduction by the general editor, Christian Speck, and a Foreword by the editor, fine as far as it goes but with no detail on the editorial work which lies behind it, apart from the closing paragraph: "The present edition is the first modern edition making use of the dissemination of the works in manuscript. Given the sources that are accessible, this brings us as close as possible to Boccherini's original text." One can trust this particular editor to have done his homework properly, but some brief comment on the sort of differences between sources and whether a stemma might lead back to a single autograph or not would be useful to players who may be puzzled about any oddities that they may come across. The size of print of the score looks ridiculously large for one not needed for performance. The music (dated 1760) is definitely for three string players, and not in trio-sonata format. There are no bass figures, and the cello part is frequently in tenor clef relating more to the violins, alternating bass-clef passages that function as a bass.

DIPLOMATIC FACSIMILE

Bach *The Well-Tempered Clavier I Urtext Edition in original Clefs from the autograph Manuscript* edited by David Aijón Bruno Ut Orpheus (SET 16), 2011. vi + 123pp, €44.95

This is what editors of historical documents used to call a diplomatic transcription: every feature of the original source preserved to the extent it could be within the typographical limitations -- no need for any reproduction process or skill in mastering ancient handwriting. However, I'm puzzled about the logic of this version. Bach's handwriting isn't an insurmountable hurdle: in fact, for most players the main problem is the use of C clefs, modernising which does no serious dis-service to the notation. If the layout of staves and stems is retained, one can put up with stems in the wrong direction if it is thought important. But Bach isn't consistent. In Fugue 9, for instance, the second part on the upper stave changes between bars 22 and 23 from having stems down to having them up, in the same direction as the top part. Even odder, in bar 21, the second part has three semiquavers stem-up, squashed very uncomfortably below an upper part a sixth higher. I can't see any reason why these shouldn't be notated consistently -- that's what copy editors would have done had they existed then. The Prelude in B flat minor is particularly awkward, with three or four stems on a stave and often passages moving in thirds with both stems facing the same way. It looks odd but characteristic on the facsimile, and the MS spacing works well enough, but the typeset version is much too four-square and inflexible, and just seems perverse. There may sometimes be logic in Bach's beaming, but that can be studied in facsimile (now easily accessible online). Checking my favourite Prelude (E flat minor), I was disappointed that the trill in bar three of the edition was a short up-down-up-down-up mark over the note whereas the autograph has a long squiggle running to virtually the end of the bar, which suggests that the sign wasn't intended as an isolated ornament on the main note but continued seamlessly through to the end of the bar, and perhaps beyond to the indistinct squiggle that begins the next bar (though there is a line-end at the bar-line, so that is just my imagination). This edition can be misleading. It strikes me as an interesting idea that should have been rethought. My guess is that it is more likely to be owned by pianists than early keyboard players, who are more open to taking early orthography as a whole.

9. Hendrie's paraphrase based on Donald Burrows *Handel and the English Chapel Royal*, Oxford UP 2005, p. 242.
10. Both Chrysander and HWV have *Allegro* for HWV 256b and *Allegro ma non troppo* for HWV 256a..

I'm sorry not to have been full of enthusiasm for some of this batch of Ut Orpheus items, whose output generally is impressive. But this and the Cypriot volumes both seem to me to be aimed too specifically at goals which are not helpful to most potential users.

GIROLAMO POLANI

Polani *Six Chamber Cantatas for Solo Voice* Edited by Michael Talbot A-R Editions (MBE 172), 2011. xxi + 50pp, $54.00.

There are still virtually unknown composers waiting to be discovered. Google may have 21,600 entries for him, but if you've never heard of him, you might not come across any of them. Girolamo Polani was probably born around 1680 and is first heard of when he became a treble at San Marco, Venice. 11 operas are credited to him between 1703 and 1717. The work that brought him to the musicologists' eyes is his second opera *Creso* (Venice, 1705) in which Vivaldi collaborated, eight years before he was previously known to have written operatic music. He seems to have reached London in 1720, but little is known about him; he was a violinist for the Musical Society of Edinburgh between 1744 and 1755 (information that Grove Online hasn't picked up). Talbot has followed up his Vivaldi interests with this (I hope successful) attempt to make his music better known.

His introduction offers a list of ten Italian cantatas published in London between 1721 and 1735 – a surprisingly large number. Polani's weren't published, but survive in an accurate MS copy; though obscure, they are far from mere curiosities. They are all for soprano and continuo, though there's no reason why they shouldn't be sung by a tenor. Talbot reminds us that self-accompanied performances were not unknown -- perhaps I should have sent a copy to Ian Honeyman as a change of repertoire for his charity Lizard to Dinnet Head fund-raising walk (see p. 51). I'm afraid that I have merely played the notes and not sung the texts, but the music does seem to be of high quality, and deserves performance. It was probably intended for private drawing-rooms. All are in the pattern aria – recit – aria, an interesting feature being the length of the B section, in one case with a double-statement of the text. Talbot points out various other features which show a certain individuality in the composer: the music deserves to be sung.

One editorial quirk: the da capos are written out in full. This isn't a feature of the MS but an editorial decision. I'm not sure that omitting the written da capos would have made lay-out much easier, but I think I would be happier with the usual convention of repeated material looking the same on the page. (There is, however, early precedent: to name an example I've got at hand, the Santini MS of Handel's *La Resurrezione* has the da capos written out.)

MOZART K 320e

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

As if his amazingly prolific production of music in every genre were not enough, Mozart left a considerable number of unfinished works, ranging in length from short sketches to substantial drafts covering a third or even a half of a complete movement. In some cases it is clear he was trying out ideas that were then discarded in favour of something better, but more often these drafts represent a first stage of composition, abandoned due to pressure of time, or because there was no immediate chance of performance. Many musicians – I'm one of them myself – are tempted to imagine how the music might have turned out, and some of the fragments are full of such promise as to make a strong argument that they should be heard in performance, in some sort of conjectural completion.

The A major Sinfonia Concertante for violin, viola, cello, and orchestra is one of the most substantial and intriguing fragments. Like the well-known Sinfonia for violin and viola (K 364) it was written in Salzburg after his 1778 visit to Paris, where Sinfonie Concertanti were in vogue. The torso consists of 134 bars, many of them fully scored, and is Mozart's only concertante work to include the cello. It is not known why he failed to complete it; Eduard Melkus suggests that there may not have been in Salzburg a cellist capable of managing such an elaborate, high-lying solo part.

Even at this comparatively early stage in his career, Mozart sets a dauntingly high standard for anyone attempting to join him as co-composer. Melkus succeeds admirably in one respect; as a highly skilful violinist he has no trouble in writing idiomatic and convincing music for the three soloists (including an impressive cadenza). In those places where Mozart has only indicated the solo parts, he has some happy ideas in filling in the accompaniment; the backing to the first solo entry, for example. Other aspects of his completion are, I find, less satisfactory. In matters of harmonisation and part writing, Mozart was both meticulous and supremely elegant. It's not always possible, perhaps, to match the elegance, but there are several places here where a dissonance does not resolve correctly, or where there's an ugly doubling of the bass in an upper part, or where, as at the second solo entry, the added parts simply fail to support the subtle harmonic implications of the melody line.

More serious, I feel, are some shortcomings in matters of form. To complete this movement it is necessary to devise a modulatory section, leading to a recapitulation and a final tutti interrupted by a cadenza. Melkus starts well, with some stylish passagework shared between the soloists, but very quickly returns to the home key – not to the recapitulation, however, which is delayed by another

dozen bars. When the moment of return finally arrives, it fails to make much impression, since A major has already been firmly re-established. Quite often, Mozart's recapitulations include excursions away from the tonic key. There's nothing like this here, however, which means that the last 120 bars of a 270-bar movement stay monotonously anchored to the one key.

Some listeners may not be as bothered by these things as I am; it's certainly a worthwhile project to have a new performing version of this tantalising fragment; Diletto Musicale have produced a handsome score – not entirely free from errors, however.

Melkus has completed a three-movement Sinfonia by adding to this first movement arrangements of two replacement pieces Mozart wrote for violin concertos, the alternative Adagio for K 219 (K261), and the Rondo (K269) intended to replace the original finale of the B flat Concerto, K 207, here transposed down to A. Both arrangements are cleverly done, but they can hardly be considered to improve on the original versions; my preference, in programming K 320e, would be to leave it as a single movement, with the soloists returning on stage to play the violin/viola Sinfonia and an eighteenth-century cello concerto – or even the Tippett Triple Concerto.

Duncan Druce

EXPRESSION MARKS

I was intrigued to come across in a pile of unsorted music a vocal piece by H. Walford Davies, who is almost completely unknown now except for his setting of a 16th-century prayer "God be in my head". What intrigued me about *The Cloud*, a setting of part of a poem by Shelley for SSA choir and piano* is the absence of any dynamics or much in the way of suggestions of expression. There are few vocal slurs except to show underlay (though there are more in the piano accompaniment), very much in accordance with best current practice in the editing of early music, where such matters are the business of the performers, not to be engraved (nowadays metaphorically) on the page. In 1914, was the composer being old-fashioned or progressive? The 16-pages score with cover, incidentally, cost 'fourpence net cash'. Did this sort of music sell for half the stated price like popular vocal solos?

I was reminded that Handel (to mention the composer whose autographs I know best) tended to give minimal performing information in the vocal parts but was more precise for the instruments, with dynamics, slurs and showing when two quavers should be sung as dotted-quaver and semiquaver. The usual phrase "singers and musicians" is reversed here: the singers know what to do, it is the players need it spelt out!

* Curwen, 1914, with four pages of adverts for his music.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Clifford Bartlett & Andrew Benson-Wilson

FRENCH ORGAN MUSIC

David Ponsford *French Organ Music in the Reign of Louis XIV* Cambridge University Press, 2011. xii+328pp, £65. ISBN 978-0-521-88770-0

There is more contemporary information available on performance practice for the French organ music of the 17th and 18th centuries than for any other similar repertoire, principally because of the prefaces that Parisian organists added to their books of organ music, published to help provincial organists replicate their improvised performances during services in Paris's churches. Despite this, it remains a fascinating research area, often raising more questions than answers. To add to the invaluable contributions from Fenner Douglass (*The Language of the French Classical Organ*) and Barbara Owen (*The Registration of Baroque Organ Music*), we now have David Ponsford's scholarly tome, based on his PhD dissertation on *notes inégales* in the *Livres d'orgue* of Couperin and de Grigny. Whereas Douglass and Owen provide the essential reference information on registrations, Ponsford goes beyond this factual detail to seek out the musical development of the genres of the liturgical organ repertoire by the composers of the French baroque era. His thesis is that each composer responded, positively or negatively, to previous models within each of the specific genres found in this repertoire, with each having its own independent line of historical development.

Ponsford recognises that, particularly in French baroque music, a purely analytical approach is only part of the story, so he includes chapters on *notes inégales*, ornaments and fingering (including its effect on articulation) before working his way (via an intervening chapter on the influence of Italian music) through the different genres of the repertoire from the *plein jeu, fugue, duo, récits, trio, fond d'orgue* to *grand jeu* – the first and last of these being the full choruses of the French organ, the former without the manual reed stops, the latter with the combined reeds more-or-less alone. Each of these chapters is dealt with chronologically, by composer. Only a couple of pages are given to the organs themselves, which is fair enough given that their specifications were remarkably consistent throughout the period. Ponsford does not go very far into detailed practical performance issues of this repertoire, despite there being some such aspects that could have been made more of in relation to his analysis. One of these is organ touch, particularly in relation to the difference between the organ manuals (there were a minimum of two, and usually four) and the implications of that, for example, on ornamentation of a melodic line when playing on the very delicate touch of the short-compass *Récit* division as opposed to the heavier *Positif* or pulse and momentum of a *grand jeu* or *plein jeu* when swapping between the *Positif* and the *Grande Orgue*.

A single bar in De Grigny's famous *Réit de tierce en taille* raises one of the most interesting debating points in this entire literature. One of the most exquisitely intense moments in the whole of baroque music is possibly a misprint involving an A sharp, a unique occurrence of a note that, in theory, did not exist within the temperament of the time (that key would have produced a B flat, aurally nowhere near an A sharp). However Bach, who would have been familiar with the same temperament, accepted the passage as published when he copied the piece out. Ponsford argues very logically and persuasively in favour of Walther's amendment of the passage by shifting the whole phrase down a semitone. But I confess that my musical emotions will continue to overcome the most rigorous of logical arguments when it comes to my own future performances of the piece.

There are a number of practical editorial issues, one being that the index should have been far more comprehensive. For example, although there is a lengthy chapter on *notes inégales*, the topic of *inégalite* also recurs frequently in other chapters – but there is no entry in the index for *inégalité* (and all but one of only nine index references to *notes inégales* are within its specific chapter). So anyone wanting to seek out Ponsford's impressive arguments will have to plough through the whole book. Another curious index omission is a link to the many references to Fenner Douglass's seminal work, particularly when a number of writers with no more than a single footnote are accorded an index entry. The text of many of the musical examples is too small, making fingering indications, in particular, tricky to read. As in so many books, page numbers are not given for references to illustrations elsewhere in the book: for example, on page 111 there is a reference to an illustration which I eventually found on page 58!

This is certainly not a music-desk reference book, and can be a rather intense (and expensive) read. Its roots in an analytical doctoral dissertation are evident. But David Ponsford's insights are valid, valuable and thought-provoking, even when (by his own admission) they veer towards the "fanciful", as in his suggestion that a Couperin *Duo* is a combination of French, Italian and Lombardic musical styles. My copy is already full of as many pencilled exclamation and question marks as there are ticks – which is just as it should be. It is a book I will return to again and again.

It is essential to know the basic rules of registration and style in order to even begin to play this fascinating repertoire. But, of all international baroque repertoires, I suggest that it is the one where the mind needs to be as far away as possible from any sense of 'rules' when actually performing. So despite the extraordinarily detailed analytical explorations in David Ponsford's impressive book, I would still have to say that the best approach, once you know all the rules, is a stiff brandy. *AB-W*

BOSTON'S CONCERT ORGAN

Barbara Owen *The Great Organ at Methuen* Organ Historical Society Press, 2011. xiii+397pp, $39.99. ISBN 978-0-913499-40-5

The substantial organ now in the concert hall in the town of Methuen, north of Boston, started life in the workshop of the German organ building firm Walcker before being shopped across the Atlantic (a hazardous journey in the midst of the Civil War in a Dutch ship called *Presto!*) to the new Boston Music Hall in 1863, one of the first large-scale concert hall organs in America. This book tells that story, including the early involvement of the still extant Handel and Haydn Society and the complex subsequent history of the instrument together with many of the people who have been involved with it up to the present day. It is available through the OHS website, www.ohscatalog.org.

AB-W

TENDUCCI & MAUNSELL

Helen Berry *The Castrato and His Wife* Oxford UP, 2011, xiv + 312pp, £16.99 ISBN 978 0 19 956981 6

When I unpacked this, I got the immediate impression from its size, the jacket and the note at the bottom of the accompanying information sheet that it was to be "Radio 4's Book of the Week for the week beginning October 3rd 2011" that it was a novel. But finding that the notes, bibliography and index occupied nearly a third of the book, I realised that it was a serious academic study. It is, however, significant that the name Tenducci does not appear in the title. The author's main interest is not so much Tenducci the musician (that is what he is remembered for) but for the information available about his castration and his marriage (let alone his (?) children!) He was not particularly successful in his native Italy, but made a considerable impression on the British musical world, being linked especially with *Artaxerxes*, Arne's *opera seria* in English, and with barely-recognisable rehashes of Gluck's *Orfeo*, popularising in particular *Che faró*.

Berry does, of course, cover his musical career, but does not offer any detailed insights. She seems more interested in social matters, and most absorbed by the relationship between the castrato and a teenage girl, Dorothea Maunsell, who fell for him in 1766, disgracing her family. Seven years later, she married a more respectable, Irish partner. As a biography or a book about a singer, this is poorly-balanced, but a more general public will find it intriguing. Like another book by a Novacastrian academic (see *EMR* 121), I reckon that it would actually be more successful as a well-researched historical novel.

The main weakness is the lack of a proper evaluation of Dorothea's *A True and Genuine Narrative of Mr. And Mrs. Tenducci in a Letter to a Friend at Bath...* (London, 1768). Berry leads up to this with a discussion of the sort of literature young ladies like her might have read and the suggestion that it might have influenced the way they behaved. But there isn't enough suspicion of whether her *Letter* was an attempt to imitate Richardson and other epistolary novel writers, or to bend the truth and perhaps make her memoirs seem fashionable. It can be collated with other evidence, especially legal, but it would have been interesting to have reprinted the 68-page book and either accompanied it by a series of critical footnotes or made the rest of the book a critique of it – i.e. using some imagination in how to present alternative views of the material in a creative way.

That aside, my main criticism isn't specifically literary, musicological or historical: it's just that, reading it in bed sent me to sleep so quickly that it took a very long time to get through it. (The small format made it suitable, whereas the following book was literally far too heavy to read thus.) Presented as a story, there was plenty of cultural background, but the remarks on ideas and fashions of the time were not developed extensively enough to make their points. CB

MUSIC PRINTING AND PUBLISHING

The Music Trade in Georgian England Edited by Michael Kassler Ashgate, 2011 xviii + 560pp, £54.00 ISBN 978 0 7546 6065 1

This is a book that I suspect many of our readers wouldn't bother to open but which will regularly be pulled off their reference shelves by those who need to know about publishers, copyright and printing. There are four sections.

The first, occupying 192 pages, is devoted to a study of the major music-publishing firm in London begun by James Longman in 1768 and continuing through Broderip to Clementi. After his death in 1831, it became Collard and Collard, but three years later the Collards abandoned publication and concentrated on instrument making. The firm was taken over by Chappell in 1929, but pianos bearing the old name were produced until 1971. There are four chapters by three authors, with a vast amount of biographical and business detail: I suspect that far more users will access it via the index, though I was interested in reading through it and the prose was in fact not at all indigestible

The second section takes the series of publications produced by John Bland, whose music business ran from 1776-1795. He specialised in "periodical" publications in series targeted at customers who would buy each instalment. Section III (pp. 231-386) surveys the extension of copyright from books to music, which developed in the 1770s.

Th final section (pp. 387-505) is headed "New Technologies". I happened to watch an item in BBC TV's "The One Show" the evening before I read about the first balloon flight in England on 8 September 1785 over Chester by Rev. Thomas Baldwin. The programme showed a drawing that he made from above the city. In 1798, he invented a way of notating music by letter, which was improved by the inventor Earl Stanhope, who realised that Baldwin didn't know enough about music. However, it never caught on. It is of interest that a similar idea was adopted by Philip Hazel for his PMS music setting system, which I took up in 1988, and was used by BC and at least two subscribers to *EMR*. I've about 900 works transcribed into the alphabetic coding (mostly by BC), including score and parts of complete operas and Biber's 53-part Salzburg Mass. By 2003, we were changing to Sibelius. The Earl of Stanhope dabbled in invention in a wide range of areas. One seems to have anticipated the piano roll by a century. The final chapter concerns the introduction of lithography

There is a very thorough index of names, though sadly not one of subjects. There is also a summary of legal cases mentioned. The paper is rather weighty: it is definitely a book that needs a desk! *CB*

All Fur Coat and No Knickers – *Did countertenors ever sing lute songs before 1953? Part I*

David Hill

(Or, to phrase it slightly more academically: 'Did the modern falsetto male alto singer exist outside of the chapel or courtly masque of the 16th and 17th centuries?')

In the early 1990s I was contacted by a well-meaning friend who suggested that I might be interested in a job in an advertisement that she had read, which was for a singer to become one of the staff at a (then still-under-construction) theme park near Paris. Curious, I rang the number and received an official application form, which revealed that the job was for a 'costumed Medieval singer'[1], ideally a self-accompanied lute player, who would pop out from a timber-framed Tudor cottage whenever a group of punters came around, serenade them with 'Greensleeves', and interact and pose for photographs with the tourists, similar to way they behave to this day when they encounter the celebrated 7-foot yellow Teddy Bear. I particularly recall the phrase 'whilst maintaining a fixed smile at all times' in the job description, which probably tells readers of Early Music Review everything they need to know about 'The Perception of the Past According to Theme Park Executives'. However, my point in mentioning this unspeakable proposal (which, to be fair to the yellow Teddy and all his friends and relations, I did seriously consider for several hours – the money sounded good), is that a ***countertenor*** was specified for the singer. Apparently, the falsetto alto voice was deemed to be the sole vehicle appropriate to the world of singing men-in-tights in 'Ye Olden Dayes",[2]

This job opportunity was over 20 years ago, yet in some respects, little seems to have has changed in terms of how songs sung to the lute are often perceived, particularly since we now live in an era where there seem to be even more countertenors around than ever before. Indeed, the more short-memoried of the listening public and media frequently seem to marvel at this apparently newly-sprung variety of singers, unaware that falsettists have been happily singing Tudor songs to the lute since at least, er... 1953. Why 1953? Some mistake surely? The male alto is the quintessential 'early music voice', er... isn't it? A misprint for 1593? Allow me to explain.

How did this apparent hegemony of the countertenor in lute songs come about? A glance at the CD catalogue will quickly confirm that almost every countertenor of note (and quite a few without) has made at least one disc of lute songs[3], sometimes even whole books of 21 of them in their published sequence. This dominance of the lute song genre by male altos has had the effect of leading the listening public to imagine that countertenors were right at the top of the musical food chain in Tudor times, when the reality is that their very existence at this period needs to be called into question.

Many performances by modern countertenors are undoubtedly very fine, and some beautiful, well-crafted and even quite moving singing may be found in many of these recitals, I concede. I am certainly not anti-countertenor. However, although it would be hypocritical for me, as a recovering ex-countertenor to criticise or condemn performers or their audiences for such a scheme of performance, I do intend to be (possibly) the first male alto to publicly air what I feel is the much bigger, and more important unasked question – the 'Elephant in the Room' as it were:

"Did this particular variety of performance, a falsettist and a lutenist performing Dowland, Campian et al. *transposed downwards from the printed pitch*, really ever happen in Tudor and Stuart times?"

And if it didn't really happen, are we not, therefore, just as guilty as those theme park executives of attempting to present a skewed 're-invention' of our musical past; one that we have become seduced into accepting because it suits our post-modern view of the past; one that is as baseless as that very same well-loved yellow Teddy Bear who, bizarrely, *wears a little red vest when it snows, but no trousers?*[4]

1. I do not know whether this particular theme park ever pursued the concept of Greensleeves Guy beyond the drawing-board – perhaps readers who were brave enough to explore the problem-fraught, chilly venue in the early 90s can confirm whether the exhibit ever became a reality. [One of our readers – a bass – was engaged as a professional carol singer at the same establishment, where he met and married a girl from Godmanchester whose parents we know in various capacities,. CB]
2. [Countertenors, falsettists and male altos are synonyms here CB]
3. I define lute song as specifically the published volumes of English solo songs with lute accompaniment beginning with John Dowland's *'First Booke of Songes or Ayres'* in 1597, until the last of these, John Attey's *'First Booke of Ayres* 'of 1622, as well as the many related contemporary songs in manuscript such as the Turpyn Book. These continue to be the most popular songs to the lute regularly sung by countertenors.
4. British readers will need no reminder that we sometimes employ the useful, if robust, expression: 'All fur coat and no knickers' to describe someone or thing whose substance does not necessarily live up to their appearance. Like the Yellow Bear of little brain with his tiny red vest, I have noticed (in one cartoon) a famous duck wrap a bath towel around his lower regions after taking a shower, then promptly discard this to wear only his naval jacket when he leaves the house.

THE ARGUMENT

I am now convinced that during the Tudor and Stuart period, the falsettist alto voice was not deployed as a solo voice outside of a cathedral, collegiate or courtly chapel[5] context, unless as a performer within the staging of masques and other entertainments, where they would likely have been drawn from one of the above mentioned groups. There are very good technical reasons why falsetto performance is difficult to achieve with a 'standard' lute.

As we all know, central to our ideas of period performance practice is the notion that attempting to re-create many of the conditions of a historical style by the use of faithful editions, instruments and even pitch appropriate to the period, which will often lead to a more satisfying musical outcome. We musicians inevitably rely upon the much-derided yet somehow unavoidable term 'authenticity' to describe our quest for The Truth (or perhaps the phrase 'The Current Truth' is more appropriate). We even like to imagine that there are Early Music fundamentalists, whom we caricature as the puritanical forces of *'The Authenticity Police'*[6], granted powers to 'tut-tut' at musical excess, and whom, like their counterparts in real law-enforcement, we generally affect to despise, but whom we are usually relieved to see appear on the scene whenever a crime has been committed.

I would certainly not wish to be accused of being in the ranks of the Authenticity Constabulary, but if it can be shown that falsettists did not/could not perform lute songs in the past, does this mean that those who do so now and those who enjoy such a performance style are promoting and encouraging a lie? Does it imply that they are promoting an anachronistic or hypothetical version of the past with scant foundation and even less research, purely because it suits us now in the early 21st century? This is a big, uncomfortable, and perhaps even dangerous question to ask, for I suspect that fatwas may already be being drawn up against me across the falsetto and lute community for daring to voice such 'heresy'. But I sincerely believe this to be too important an issue to simply brush under the carpet, just because countertenors can often make such a lovely noise and give us much musical pleasure. It comes down to this: which 'Truth' do we really want to see/hear? The one that I believe we may have (unwittingly) constructed, which has been allowed to continue for sixty years unquestioned, or the one that may actually have taken place? Does not that fur coat always look better when worn by the original animal?

It would be foolish of me to assert that no Elizabethan falsettist ever tackled a lute song, of course, but the wider musical world should be aware of the special resources that today's lutenists usually employ to enable themselves to accompany their falsetto countertenor partners, and learn a few background details which may enable them to evaluate whether this was likely to have been generally available in the 17th century[7]. We don't ask for all the detail of all the plumbing with the different interchangeable crooks and things that natural horn players employ in the pursuit of their craft, nor do we need to – we just let them get on with it. We don't feel the need for a broader insight into how their 'mystery' happens. This is different however. Countertenors can only perform lute songs if an element of 'deception' is practised upon the audience. I must be careful not to offend the army of lutenists, who are a splendid group of patient, delicious folk – National Treasures, in fact. Recitals of lute songs by countertenors are lucrative[8], after all, such is the appeal of the voice, and no-one would wish to diminish the earning power of either – certainly not lutenists, I'm sure!

Once again, the root of the argument goes back to that ol' devil, Pitch. Both the published and manuscript lute songs are invariably written in keys and voice ranges which a music publisher today would refer to as 'high' or 'medium high'. That is to say, they seldom go alarmingly high – rarely above f', and hardly ever below middle c. In the case of Dowland's innovative *First Book of Songs* of 1597, which established the basic 'table layout' format that would be adopted for most of the songbooks that would follow, the songs are printed with the melody of the song, and the text of the first stanza set directly above the lute tablature. The fact that most of these printed versions also feature parts for other voices labelled as Altus, Tenor and Bassus, suggests that he conceived the melodies as to be sung primarily by sopranos who would accompany themselves on the lute. (The texts to the later verses can usually only be read by the soprano, since she is the only person facing the correct way to be able to read them when sat at table!) It has been noted[9] that the additional voice parts were probably created to widen the appeal (and sales) of the songbooks by allowing for alternative,

5. In the published editions of madrigals, only Byrd (perhaps significantly, a church composer) seems to employ the term 'Countertenor' (in 'Lullaby my Sweet little Baby') for a range of g-bflat', but in the same piece, also gives a more typical modern falsettist range (g – d") described as 'Medius'. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to establish whether 'countertenor' always meant falsetto alto. Pace Peter Giles, 'countertenor' in Stuart times does seem to be nothing more than a vague term employed for convenience, applied to voices 'over the tenor' (and sometimes tenors!), rather than a specific variety of voice production. Thanks to Tippett, we are now saddled with the term for falsettists, unfortunately. If only he had stuck to 'Alto', when helping to launch Deller's career! [In terms of parts on a page, the main considerations are clefs and – if there are enough parts – whether the clefs are *naturali* or *chiavette* But lute songs often don't fit the system! CB]

6. though no-one has ever met an Authenticity Copper. The expression often encountered in reviews: 'purists may disapprove' etc. always puzzles me. Who are these 'purists'? They cannot be working musicians, most of whom are extremely practical about performance issues.

7. This aspect of alto performance was first aired by Lynda Sayce in *EMR* 38 in 1998. She describes how transposition of a lute song is a far from straightforward matter, and can only occur if the lutenist is particularly accommodating – or skilful!

8. and much cheaper than ensemble concerts to stage, of course.

9. Ian Spink: *English Song Dowland to Purcell* 1974 rev.1986, page 18.

'madrigalian' performance combinations. The lower part writing in Dowland's First Booke is often little more than a straightforward adaptation of the lute part, leading to several quite clumsy examples of almost unsingable textual underlay, especially in the Altus and Tenor parts..

Of course, the *cantus* or soprano part of many of these songs can easily be sung, down the octave, by tenors or baritones, and the singer and lutenist need not even be the same person (although I believe that Dowland expected them to be), since experiment tells us that it is possible, albeit cosy, for two to read from the same copy, provided the singer sits at the lutenist's left[10].

Lute songs themselves tend to have a relatively narrow range; most of Dowland's ayres are confined within an octave, and one (*Time stands still* from the Third Book), remarkably, has a compass of only a fifth. Only one song ranges across a tenth (*In darkness let me dwell*), but, as an extensive trawl through the Dowland facsimiles reveals, the use of ledger lines in these songs is very rare indeed – most vocal lines fit squarely within their stave.[11] Perhaps this is a limitation imposed, in part, by the nature of moveable type in the early 17th century, but more likely, Dowland and co. are deliberately writing within the comfortable vocal ranges of performers. They knew their trade, and they knew the clientele to whom they were intending to sell their song books – these publications were first and foremost commercial ventures, and composers, true craftsmen all, would have ensured that their songs fitted the customers and their likely 'performance resources'.

Thus we may imagine the lute-playing daughter or wife of the house, a self-accompanied soprano or mezzo, singing these songs, but whose vocal line could also be joined by 3 other voices, alto (of either gender), tenor and bass, whenever available, or viols, or whatever – Dowland's musically practical 'mix and match' performance options are very flexible. (I intend to discuss the probable 'consumers' of the songbooks in greater depth in part 2).

Alternatively, as already mentioned, a male singer (tenor or baritone) could play from the same lute tablature, but his singing voice would necessarily sound at the lower octave. A tenor could not act as the upper voice in a 4 part version, however – male performance of the line marked 'Cantus' at the lower octave would be an exclusively solo affair. I think it is very unlikely that any falsettist ever played the lute and sang the cantus part at pitch whilst three other voices joined him. They are simply too high, and transposition (by tuning the lute to a lower pitch) would make the bass part, especially at the likely lower pitch of those times, unsingably low.[12]

THE IMPACT OF ALFRED DELLER

Although most lute songs were printed within a relatively limited range, usually inside the lines of the treble clef, they are pitched around a centre which we would nowadays call 'high' or 'medium high', which suggests soprano, mezzo or tenor (sounding at the lower octave) performance. This is far from an ideal pitch centre for a falsettist, since performance of the 'canto' line of most lute songs at written pitch requires the 'head' voice to be operating at the less comfortable, 'squealy' upper end of its range. This can lead to some awful straining, as we can all relate[13]. When Edmund Fellowes published his transcriptions of the English Lute Songs in 1920 and 1921, he also produced a popular selection of 50 Dowland songs in 1925 which were published in 'high voice' or 'low voice' keys. The versions in the Fellowes low voice Stainer and Bell editions were generally only a tone or sometimes a third lower than the original keys, but it is unlikely to be a coincidence that these are the very same keys that the great pioneer of the male falsetto voice, Alfred Deller, sang them in for his first 78 rpm lute song recordings in 1949 (to the guitar) and 1953 (to the lute)[14]. These downward transpositions bring the 'centre' of each song into a much more comfortable range for falsetto singing. The extraordinary quality of the younger (37-year-old) Deller's voice often had the peculiar effect of sounding much higher than it actually was, sometimes giving the false impression that he was singing in almost mezzo or soprano ranges. Deller's accompanist for these pioneering recordings was Desmond Dupré, and it seems likely that at this stage in his career he played the accompaniments directly from the piano transcription in the printed 'lower voice' keys, rather than using the lute tablature which was only available pitched in the original higher keys[15]. Dupré may

10. By the singer sitting at the lutenist's left, the player can look up the fretboard towards the singer, making eye contact, whether seated or standing. Sitting is preferable for singers of lute songs, if reading from the lutenist's copy, since leaning forwards and downwards to see the music better is not good posture. Most singers will confirm that sitting too close to the lutenist's left can, however, result in 'singer's right earhole/lute pegbox trauma' in moments of intense music-making or page turning. I speak from experience.

11. Writing within the stave is standard for late-renaissance polyphony anyway. [CB]

12. though it might help the tenor, which lies higher than is the norm in four-part madrigals. [CB]

13. I recently heard a 1960s Radio 3 recording of part of one of the very first broadcasts of David Munrow's Early Music Consort of London, performing Dowland's *Can she excuse my wrong* at the notated pitch (and probably/ at A440), with plenty of top Ds. Even the youthful James Bowman (one of the world's greatest singers, we can all agree) was not at his sparkling best at such a screechingly high pitch.

14. In preparing this article I have noted the performing keys used by many countertenors in Dowland lute songs, including: Alfred Deller, throughout his career from 1949 to 1978, James Bowman from 1972 to 1990, Andrew Dalton (1985), Paul Esswood (198?), and for completeness, and because I have an extensive paper-trail of record, me.

15. Further evidence that Deller may have learnt the songs from the S&B '50 songs' edition can be discovered in his use of Edmund Fellowes 'compromise' to the underlay problem in Dowland's second stanza to *Come heavy Sleep*. Dowland's second verse begins: '*Come shadow of my end and shape of rest*' which does not appear to fit the available notes. Fellowes suggested inverting the two phrases to: '*Come shape of rest, and shadow of my end*' for singing, which, whilst fitting the number of notes, means that Dowland's rhyming scheme no longer

have progressed to using a 'low lute', to accompany Alfred in later performances, but these 1949/1953 recordings were the among the earliest attempts to record Dowland accompanied by a plucked instrument[16].

It is difficult now, over sixty years later, to evaluate what an enormous impact Alfred Deller had on the entire musical world, nor imagine what it meant for our concept of the term 'authenticity' – even though no-one at that time would have thought of such a notion, nor applied such a silly term. Nevertheless, the idea that Deller represented some sort of 'authentic' voice from the past, a singing 'missing link', especially when fitted out with the descriptive, archaic (though misleading – the argument continues to this day) description that Michael Tippett chose to apply when presenting him to the wider musical world, the very term 'countertenor' had the effect of making the musical world sit up and take notice.

Pre-Deller, the perception of what we now call 'early music' in Britain was focused not upon the emerging printed editions of the music itself, but rather on the efforts of such pioneers as Arnold Dolmetsch with his lutes, viols and recorders, Wanda Landowska with her mighty Pleyel Harpsichord, and the activities of the members of the Galpin Society, who had dusted off surviving old instruments from museum collections, as well as the number of enthusiasts for the singing of madrigals. Enthusiasts for early music (although nobody called it that, back then) tended to be regarded, if it was acknowledged as even happening at all by the wider classical musical community, as the direct successors of 19th century antiquarianism: harmless eccentrics, seldom to be seen outside of vicarage tea parties on the lawn.

Madrigal singing, and the now largely forgotten unison singing, however, continued to be popular, thanks in no small part to the tireless work of editors such as Edmund Fellowes, who produced, as well as his work with Tudor church music, the first readily-available and reliable editions of the madrigals. Such singing, we should remember, cut across all classes of society, and amateur choirs throughout the country regularly performed these, largely because, like the popular oratorios, they were also published in editions that featured Tonic Solfa above the musical stave[17]. Selections from Fellowes' Lute songs appeared in Tonic Solfa 1925, and were sung as unison songs in schoolrooms, so some of the music itself was far from being hidden away in dusty archives, but actually being performed across the Empire. Fellowes and his fellow editors deserve as much credit for providing the background and framework to the early music revival's dramatic shift of gear in the 1960s and 1970s as Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams et al do for folk music's survival.

But then came Deller. We had heard the harpsichord, serpents, sackbuts and even a few lutes on the radio, but suddenly, here was a 'living fossil'. A human musical coelacanth, as it were. The musical public across the world were stunned, and listened to his music-making with ears that were newly opened. Of course, it happened that Deller was an amazing, natural musician – that was the real secret. That and the timing of his arrival on the post-war musical scene. If the first 'new' countertenor had been a lesser musician, he would have disappeared without a trace. Because of his extraordinary 'singularity of voice', and especially his innate musicianship, this man seemed to be able to do things that other singers could not do, and most especially, he could 'sell' a song to his audience, and hold them rapt like no other. Deller related that he had worked on the lute song repertoire in private before he began to work with Dupré, to the extent that he already knew what he wanted to do with them, and featured lute songs in a recital at the Wigmore Hall in 1949 shortly before the release of the first 78, in an early example of what we would now call pre-emptive marketing[18].

Fortunately, Deller's lutenist came up with a solution to the problem of how to accompany a 'low voice' (as the falsetto alto is) – the 'low' lute. This is a lute with its strings tuned a third or a fourth below normal pitch. This acts as a transposing instrument, and the lute tablature can be played exactly as printed, but the lute will sound a third (or even a fourth) lower. Thus the happy modern countertenor has a convenient device which automatically brings the 'centre' of the vocal line down into his most comfortable and expressive range, and the lutenist does not have to transpose at sight (which is hard, working from tablature) or write out a new part in a lower key (time consuming and more difficult than it sounds). In concerts, lutenists usually swap between their 'normally-

works. Deller sang this version in each of his recordings of this song. I once asked Robert Spencer whether he had mentioned this obvious swapping round of the phrases to Deller when they re-recorded the song in 1978, to which Bob replied: 'Well, I did – but, you know, Alfred was very much the boss - he'd always sung it that way around, and he wasn't going to change now!'

16. although the Danish Tenor Aksel Schiøtz had issued 78s of several Dowland songs to the guitar in 1941, using the Fellowes editions. Dowland was not re-discovered by Deller by any means.

17. I inherited my father's collection of Tonic Solfa Handel and Mendelssohn oratorio vocal scores that he had used when a (soprano!) soloist in much demand for performances in the North of England during the 1930s. Due to his thorough vocal education at his small mill-town church school he could read Tonic Solfa fluently, though not regular notation. He was far from unique in this respect, I am sure. More relevantly, I also own his bound set of Tonic Solfa versions of (Fellowes again) lute songs which were published in 1925 for unison singing in schools, sold at threepence each. It includes 6 Dowland, 10 Campian, 11 Jones and 4 Bartlet songs, amongst others. Clearly Fellowes' work had ensured that some lute songs were in the public consciousness well before Deller began to champion them. My Dad's musical education, entirely reliant upon Solfa, ensured that he was once the only last-minute soprano ably capable to replace an indisposed Isobel Baillie in a Manchester Trade Hall performance of Messiah.

18 In the *Gramophone* review of Deller's first 78 *of Fine knacks for ladies* and *In darkness let me dwell*, we learn: "At a recent Wigmore Hall recital Alfred Deller's singing of some of Dowland's exquisite songs, including these two, was the outstanding artistic success and it is enterprising of H.M.V. to have them recorded so quickly". The disc cost 5 shillings and ninepence.

tuned' lutes for solos, and their 'low' lute to accompany the countertenor.

The first such low lute of modern times appears to have been employed by Desmond Dupré when accompanying the Alfred Deller on his earliest recordings of lute songs in April of 1953[19]. Dupré continued to use similar instruments for Alfred for the remainder of his life. In 1975, following the tragic death of Dupré,[20] Robert Spencer took over the role of regular lute accompanist to Alfred and the Deller Consort, and frequently employed two lutes, similar in appearance, one 'high' (tuned normally) for solos, the other 'low' to accompany Alfred's songs.[21]. The use of a transposing lute to enable countertenors to sing songs at 'low' pitch, therefore, is a tradition that can be dated, with extraordinary precision to 1953, when Desmond Dupré began to employ his 'low' lute specifically to accompany Alfred Deller, the better to exploit the most expressive parts of Deller's vocal range. Let there be no doubt about it – this is the 'compromise' that Deller and specifically, Desmond Dupré arrived at. They created, from scratch, an entire performing tradition which they, and later Bob Spencer, continued and promulgated, employing a special transposing instrument to accompany the falsetto countertenor voice.

Once use of these instruments began to spread, a whole tradition began, and because of the increase in the popularity of the voice, lute songs became inextricably associated with countertenors. Few ever queried whether such a performance style took place in Elizabethan times because they simply did not know any different. The lute world was, and continues to be, a relatively small one whose members share knowledge, music and ideas freely, but few outsiders ever get to know the intimate technical details of how the pluckers achieve their 'mystery'. Because the countertenor voice often appears to sound much higher than it actually is, most listeners have assumed that they are singing at the pitch the songs were written, but this is seldom, if ever, the case.

Those lutenists wishing to accompany countertenors, who had by the 1970s already become the 'acceptable face of lutesong' largely thanks to the image created by Deller and Bowman, suddenly needed to avail themselves of a low lute, otherwise they simply couldn't do the gig! Of course, this led to lutenists needing to carry at least two lutes to every concert and rehearsal, and a countertenor recital involving lute songs plus any later music with archlute and/or theorbo automatically involved the purchase of an estate car as well! The more obliging lutenists have even been known to resort to reluctantly transposing (re-writing) the tablature of songs beforehand, or (even more reluctantly) employing a *capo* to ensure that certain songs work in the optimum keys/range for a particular singer.

Deller thus created a market for lutesong-singing countertenors. A particularly influential figure in the spread of the use of transposing lutes was the great Bob Spencer[22]. Bob accompanied James Bowman in a widely-known and very influential EMI LP of lute songs in 1972 (which every young aspiring countertenor owned), followed by two other discs for Saga later in the decade, and other duos continued to issue recitals over the next years, such as Andrew Dalton, René Jacobs and Paul Esswood, as well as many radio broadcasts (which I invariably recorded) of recitals. All of these employ low lutes, the songs usually sounding a third or fourth below written pitch. But the 'myth' was only beginning to grow. By the 1990s, more and more countertenors were issuing lute song discs, culminating in the current record holder, Andreas Scholl, who has at least 6 to his credit. All of these employ low lutes – none of the songs are ever performed at notated pitch.

Over the closing titles of the six episodes of the comedy series *Blackadder II* in 1986, a countertenor (Jeremy Jackman) sang a parody lute song to Howard Goodall's theme tune. A countertenor was, clearly, still the only voice to consider for evoking a minstrel of Elizabethan England. This image alone is probably what prompted the theme park's quest for Captain Greensleeves.

However, despite popular modern practice, there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that falsettists ever sang downward-transposed lute songs to a lower-tuned lute before the year 1953, or even that falsettists even *existed* as solo voices outside of court and chapel choirs before the time of Purcell... if then. Despite being widely accepted by the musical listening public as the defining authentic 'early music voice', and the often beautiful and sometimes moving results, the countertenor in lute song really is a completely modern invention.

Does it matter? If it sounds good, what's the harm? Well, often it simply *doesn't* sound good, and there is a lot of evidence to support the fact that a projected voice (of whatever kind) is certainly not what the composers intended, but I will try to cover that issue in part 2. I personally believe that the countertenor singing lute song myth is yet another case of 'bad-history-driving-out-the-good', as a historian friend of mine puts it.

19. Deller's very first recordings of Dowland (*Fine Knacks for Ladies* and *In Darkness let me Dwell*) made in October 1949 were accompanied by Dupré on guitar; he switched to the lute for the 1953 recordings onwards.

20. Desmond Dupré collapsed and died on a train whilst travelling to accompany Alfred Deller in 1974.

21. One of Bob's favourite anecdotes concerned a concert in Spain where at the beginning he accidentally picked up the wrong lute, and was only aware of his mistake after, as he put it, 'a slightly ashen-faced Alfred' casually leant over and enquired whether all of that night's songs were going to be at the high pitch'

22. No-one has more respect for Robert Spencer than I do. He was a generous and patient teacher, accompanist, inspiration and friend to me, and to many thousands of musicians, and his name will continue to be spoken with a special reverence wherever the lute is played for many years to come.

It reminds me of the general, but mistaken belief that the childrens' dance song *Ring around o' Roses* dates back to, and refers to the Great Plague of 1665. In fact, there is no *written* record of this association any earlier than 1951, and the song itself was only printed in its present form in 1881. Taking it back to the 17th century needs a great leap of faith! (The Wikipedia article is well informed.)

And when the angry letters start coming in (and I'm pretty certain that they will!), I'm sure that some readers will assume that I am writing from an aggressive prejudice against countertenors in general, and miffed lutenists may even accuse me of attempting to deprive them of an may be proved to be completely wrong, but I will be the first to congratulate anyone who can conclusively prove that solo falsettists were popping out of half-timbered doorways all the time in Merry England.

It may prove to be a can of worms, rather than an elephant, nevertheless. The whole transposition business is only one aspect of my argument against falsettists, however, and I shall discuss those, including the sole recorded sighting of a brace of 17th century 'voices called countertenors' singing Campian in the next gripping instalment. *Part II will follow in the next issue*

MESSING ABOUT

Mike Diprose

....and it is to such players, undismayed by the fear of treading upon unfamiliar ground, and unbound by the tradition that says, 'It can't be done', that I dedicate this work. [1]

Rather than sniping from an Ivory Tower, *Holier than Thou* (*EMR* Oct 2010) was intended to provoke discussion – aiming to narrow the oft-encountered chasm in HIP between "Historically Informed" and "Performance". One or two from another playground chose to vent more than their Fs and As. One referred to it as *EM fundamentalist claptrap.*

The majority of those who expressed an opinion, particularly younger players eager to fill the gap in the market, reacted more positively. One wrote:

...to value players that opened the doors for the new generation wanting to go a step further. ***What we [strainers] should not do is to call it natural trumpet...*** *I am looking forward to the moment when people in general, and conductors in particular, will appreciate the beauty of the natural trumpet the way it is. It shall take whatever it takes, the truth will always be the truth, and natural will always be natural. Quoting Arthur Schopenhauer, "All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.*

Barokensemble De Swaen was wound up in June in order to make time available for something new, applying what was learned from the 10-year project in which we combined natural brass, all-unwound gut strings in equal tension (with the odd thick-gut-core wound string on bass instruments), a large, hand-pumped chamber organ – or the real organ installed in one church, and inner-scraped double reeds attached to oboes with single staples played with the historic "short" fingerings (more about which later). There is yet further to go. The interconnectedness of these elements naturally revealed many new beauties and a unique ensemble sound. We commissioned new pieces in order to cross-reference the wishes of living composers with the legacies of dead ones, keeping us fresh and open-minded – it's never "just a note". The large, loyal audience was included. We kept them informed and entertained; they kept us going and relished the "authentic" experience. Our "crazy" ideas were funded solely by voluntary donations from a captivated audience and so it was, if you will, an *EM fund-a-mentalist clap trap.*

Unsurprisingly, the De Swaen project showed that pre- and early-18th century music can be performed convincingly with uncompromised instruments – and audiences can enjoy it, especially when they know what's going on. To my knowledge, there are very few, if any, other ensembles and no commercial recordings (yet!) that feature this particular approach. Record producers, promoters and conductors could take note of this opportunity. Personally, I feel that it patronises audiences and demeans ourselves knowingly to compromise our instruments, which in turn, implies that either musicians now lack the ability or composers were unable to write adequately for the instruments at their disposal, *but remember: if you try to paint a Vermeer with a spray gun, you may end up with something rather different.*[2]

Jeremy Montagu wrote:
With reproduction instruments, if you use a modern mouthpiece or drawn tubing rather than rolled and soldered tubing, you're not going to be able to bend the sound as it needs to be bent, therefore you start drilling holes in the thing, and therefore, you're playing a colander rather than a trumpet. You open a hole and the sound flies out the window...
When you're playing an ensemble work, like the Bach B minor Mass, you can feel the trumpets standing on your drum if you're doing it properly. It makes a unified sound, and that sound is in the drum with the trumpets on it. When they were playing those things by Finke that looked like what Gottfried Reich was playing in the painting by Haussmann, you could literally feel it as they opened the fingerhole – Whoops! – all the sonic weight comes off the drum. You can still feel that even when they are using the modern ones that look like trumpets if you're not close enough to see the holes.[3]

It would be convenient for players of the modern trumpet if a similar mouthpiece could work on the natural trumpet, but to date all of the convincing *clarinists* that I have heard use one with a cup diameter between 19 and 21mm, similar to most originals. This is still relatively small given the length of the instrument, which, typically in D (nearly 8ft), is the same length as an alto trombone in third position, albeit playing an octave or so higher.

The large cup not only favours a strong, focussed *principale* (third octave) register but also allows space to "place" (bend) notes on an instrument of fixed length. Opening nodal vent holes instantaneously changes the acoustic length of the tubing in much the same way as valves do, making different demands on the mouthpiece and the player's technique. Using an appropriate, usually differently-sized mouthpiece for each instrument, and to practise changing between them can make things easier for the "muscle memory".

1. Walter M Smith, *Top Tones for the trumpeter - 30 modern études.* (1934), roughly 20 years before the invention of the first multi-nodal-vent-hole system for "historic" trumpets.
{Apologies for the erratic footnote layout: it has a mind of its own! CB}

2. Hans Reiners http://www.bows-viols.de/cms/index.php?id=120.

3 Jeremy Montagu: interview with E. Bradley Strauchen, HBS Newsletter 2002. http://www.historicbrass.org/portals/0/documents/newsletter/HBSN_2ns2_NL15_9231.pdf (In *EMR* 138 p. 15 I misattributed the word *strainer* instead of *colander* to Jeremy.)

Andrew Clark is an admirable horn player but *In Defence of Performers' compromises* (*EMR* June 2011) seems to lament becoming a victim of his own versatility. The following paragraphs are not intended to offend Andrew personally but to question the environment that could lead to such preconceptions. Answers to his rhetorical questions can be found in original sources, such as this one from Petri, 1781:

If instruments really should show the bass line, it would be much better for my hypothesis if I take the origin of music from the brass instruments – horns and trumpets... So if violins and pipes make horns and trumpets the source of the melody, we would tune the bass instruments from the horns, which are diatonic in their main tonality, and have only one possibility of a fifth, to give a home (rest) for the melody. That's why they have the big double forth (11th partial), *as a major semitone (semitonium modi) to enter the dominant (quintam toni)* (12th partial).[4]

Original Baroque horns are of fixed length and can be warmed to pitch with air before playing; getting yet sharper is an indication of throat tension. The difference in sound between a cello with a spike and one without is very obvious on any stage with a resonant cavity beneath its boards. The difference between playing pre-19th century music on a violin with or without a chin rest is a big difference,[5] since it is technically no more necessary than valves would be on a horn. In my experience, the majority of violinists and violists that have developed a chin-off technique with an all-unwound gut, equal tension set up have two open ears, are stylistically-aware and consequently "easy to work with".. [6]

Andrew referred to Handel's Water Music. Several temperaments can accommodate three keys (in this case, D, F & G) comfortably.[7] Temperament need not necessarily be "fixed", either: JS Bach could reportedly retune a harpsichord in less than a minute; there are other reports of harpsichords being tuned every six months, *whether they needed it or not*. The harpsichord's role in ensemble is more percussive than harmonic. Those who have performed on balconies with real church organs will have noticed a significant difference when returning to a stage with a small, portable chamber organ, mainly because of its artificially-central position, leading to a poorly-supported assumption that unrestricted "voice" instruments should try to play in a temperament that compromises a desirable 31 notes per octave into a manageable 12 (or 14, with two split keys).[8] When a chamber organ is placed outside the ensemble, emulating its normal distance in an organ loft (if not its height) and played with tonality-aware voicing, it allows space for the temperament to "breathe" with an undisturbed, purely-tuned ensemble. If composers wanted their music to sound like an organ, they would write it for solo organ.

Coincidentally, the B played with "short" fingering on a correctly-replicated historical oboe lies relatively low, and not without reason -- it meets a slightly-raised 13th partial (or *la*) on a trumpet in D and a slightly-raised 11th partial of a horn in F (not to mention the 15th partial of a trumpet in C) and in G major, a nice, pure *mi* - the 10th partial of a horn in G.

I was puzzled by Andrew Clark's conclusion:
...we risk becoming curators in a musical museum where ***the prospect of progress is discouraged.*** *As musicians, we have a duty to the art form and the audience to give musical performances that sound the best they possibly can and have those audiences wanting to come back for more.*
Since we seem unaffected by the Trade Descriptions Act, and some apparently consider the word "historic" to be a technical inconvenience, the logical conclusion of progress through compromise – to eliminate human error – would have the score programmed into a computer (in a nice wooden cabinet) and played through veneered speakers – both of which pre-date the introduction of three and four-hole systems on trumpets, double staples on oboes, outer-scraped reeds and thin-gut-or-synthetic-cored strings. Electricity is needed for the lights anyway, so everything would be just "perfect" and could be uniformly manipulated into any temperament. The musicians would only need to mime, avoiding the horrific possibility of mistakes. It would then be cheaper to hire better-looking actors, or even robots, leaving more money for conductors; until even they are replaced by more reliable, wood-effect metronomes.

Instead, we can progress by uniting musicological research and performance practice. The best musicians are those best-suited to meeting any perceived challenges of uncompromised instruments. You all know who you are, so get on with it yourselves and teach it! Let's hope that in the coming decades, our successors and inquisitive listeners will look back on conscious, avoidable compromise as old-fashioned.[9]

4. J. S. Petri, *Anleitung zur praktischen Musik (1782), p 17.* (Much of which is recycled from Praetorius through Mersenne, Matheson, Quantz, L. Mozart etc). *Sollten Instrumente wirklich den Bass vorstellen, so waere dis desto besser fuer meine Hypothese, wenn ich von den Messingsinstrumenten, oder Horns und Trompeten den ursprung der Musik herleite... Wenn daher Geigen und Pfeiffen, und ihr Urquell die Horns und Trompete Melodie dazu machen, so waeren sie so gennante Bassinstrumente ja auch nach den Horns eingerichtet, welche im Haubttone diatonissch fortgehen, und nur den einzigen Einfall in die Quinte des Tons haben, um Ruhepunkte der Melodie zu machen. Denn dazu haben sie die doppelte Quarte, die grosse nämlich, als das* semitonium modi *zum Einfalle in* quintam toni.

5. According to Sigiswald Kuijken, the chin rest was first proposed by Spohr in 1832 www.earlymusicworld.com/id19.html

6 cf Elizabeth Wallfisch *Chin-off* Version 2, King's Music, 2005

7. See: Claudio di Verroli: *Unequal temperaments: theory and practice* (2008-9) (e-book)_ http://temper.braybaroque.ie/

8. Many sources cite pure intervals as ideal and I have not yet found one insisting that violinists tune *all* of their open strings to a keyboard, although Quantz suggests a slight narrowing of fifths as a possibility, complaining of a fashion for tuning *e* strings too high. The dogmatic use of open strings by default is another issue, For remarks on the "perfect keyboard" see Praetorius, Mersenne, Huygens.

9. Thanks to: Oliver Webber, Margreet ven der Heyden, Christopher Suckling, J-F Madeuf, G Nicholson, E H Tarr, Julian Zimmermann, Bruno Fernandez, Gilbert Ratchett, Piet Dhont, Lucas van Helsdingen, Johanne Maitre, Jeffrey Nussbaum and E. Bradley Strauchen.

Monteverdi Jubilet tota civitas

S1 *Jubilet tota Civitas. Psallat nunc organis Mater Ecclesia Deo aeterno quae Salvatori nostro gloriae melos laetabunda canat.*

S2 Qu[a]e occasio cor tuum, dilectissima Virgo, gaudio replet tanta hilaris et laeta nuntia mihi?

S1 Festum est hodie Santi gloriosi qui coram Deo et hominibus operatus est.

S2 Quis est iste Sanctus qui pro lege Dei tam illustri vita et insignis operationibus usque ad mortem operatus est?

S1 Est Sanctus N.

S2 O Sancte benedicte!

S1 Dignus est certe ut in ejus laudibus semper versentur fidelium lingu[a]e.
Jubilet ergo. *jubilet tota Civitas...*
Alleluia
S2 Alleluia.

Source. *Selva morale e spirituale di Claudio Monteverde... Venetia 1640/41.* The printing of this large publication (10 part-books containing 37 items) must have taken some time, hence the presence of title pages with different dates. The printing was not carefully supervised: some items have missing parts and superfluous parts may be included instead; indeed, these are useful clues for adding ad lib parts that would not normally have been present.

Jubilet tota civitas: Motetto à voce Sola in Dialogo (the title amalgamates those of the indices and the headings in each part) is problematic. The Basso Continuo part looks normal, but the voice part (in the Soprano Secondo partbook) seems at first as if it is one of two parts, since periodically the stave is interrupted with the word *Tacet*, The stave resumes with what must be the part for the other voice. The next gap is followed by *Canta*. Presumably there was once a parallel copy with the two rubrics interchanged. It is, however, odd that nowhere do the two voices come together. I puzzled whether the extant part was a sketch, and that Monteverdi intended to write out a separate part to make a duet at least in bars 1-39 & 109-150. But in fact the text makes very good sense as a dialogue, with the enquiring voice having the last word. Their numbering as 1 & 2 is editorial.

S1 *Let the whole city rejoice. Let Mother Church now sing with instruments to eternal God, she who sings joyfully a song to our Saviour.*

S2 What occasion, most favoured Virgin, fills your heart with joy, such happy and joyful news to me?

S1 Today is the feast of the glorious Saint who worked among God and men.

S2 Who is this Saint who, for the law of God, with such a distinguished life and outstanding works laboured until his death?

S1 It is Saint N

S2 O holy and blessed man!

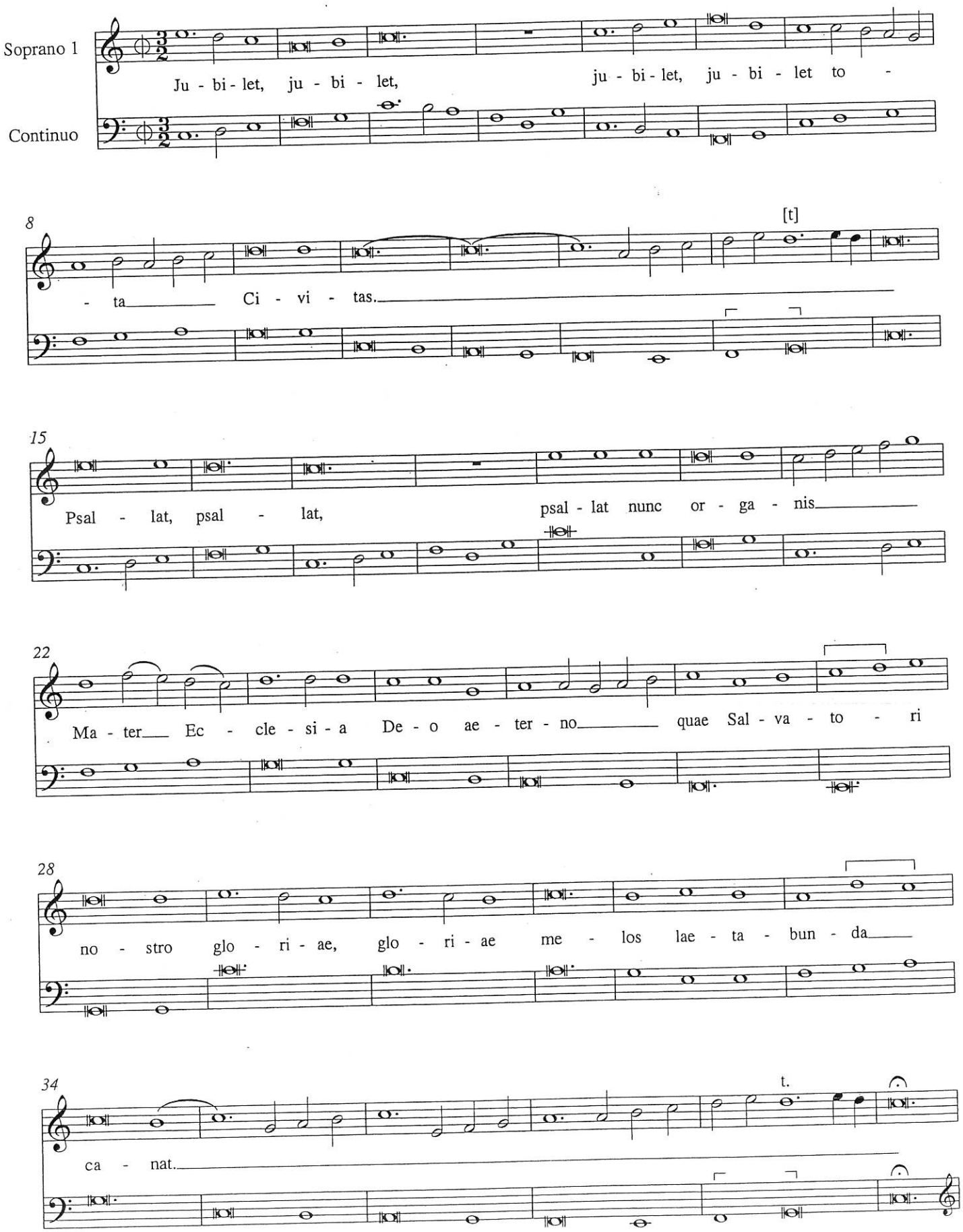
S1 He is worthy and sure that the tongues of the faithful will always be used in his praises.
So let's rejoice. *Let the whole city rejoice...*
Alleluia
S2 Alleluia.

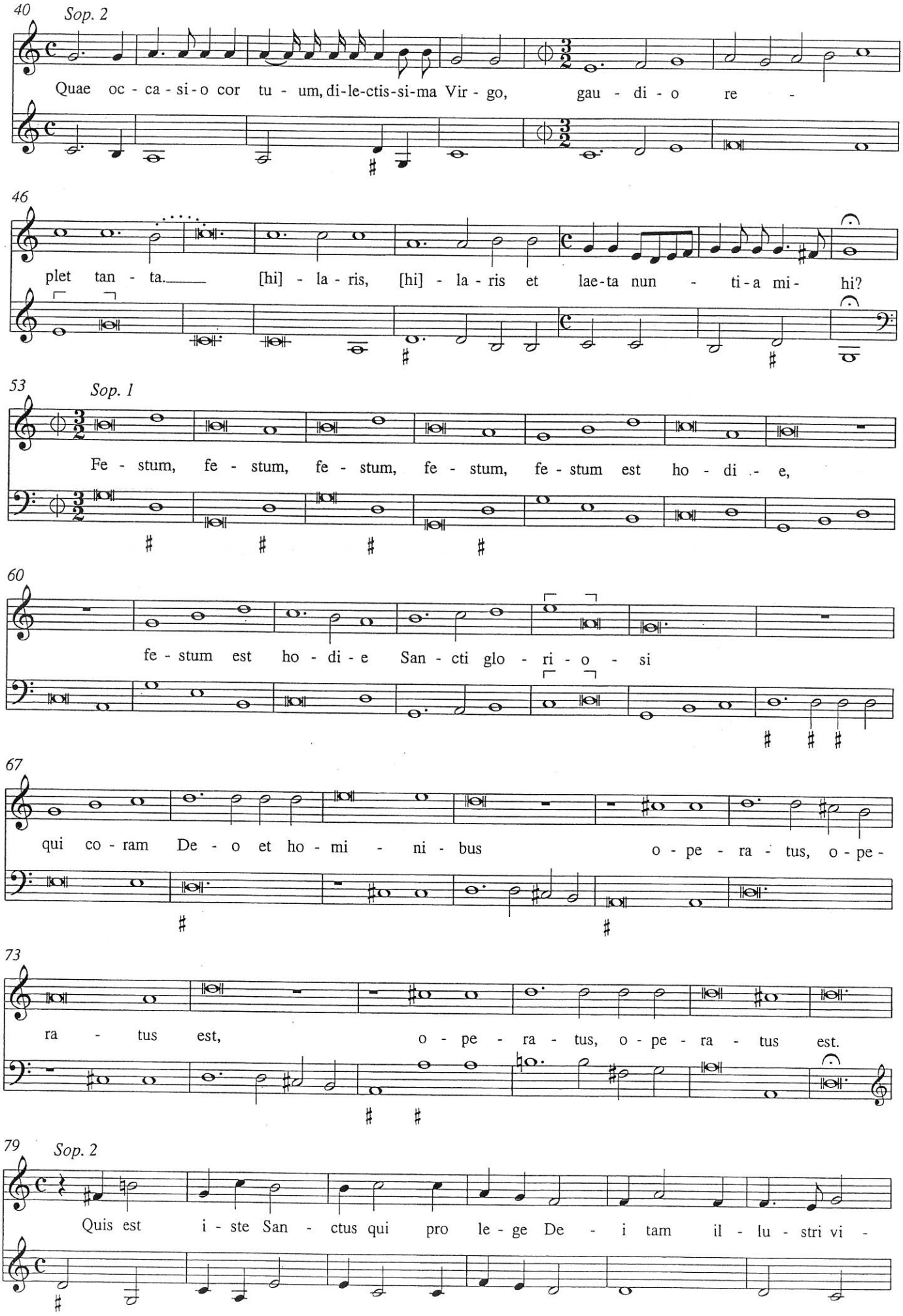
Text The spelling i/j and u/v and punctuation are modernised; capitals are preserved and added when necessary at the beginning of a sentence. The Latin is sufficiently classical for the meaning to be determined by declension and conjugation rather than word order and punctuation.
The rubrics *Canta* and *Tacet* are replaced by *Sop.1 & Sop. 2.*.
Occasionally the cedilla under ***e***, the letter used as an abbreviation for ***ae***, is missing.
& is expanded as ***et***.
46 & 47 *illaris*
59 & 62 (*hodie*) ę printed for *e*.
92-3 *N* (meaning 'any name') is replaced by one thathas the notated rhythm.
126-127 *psalat psa[-] lat*

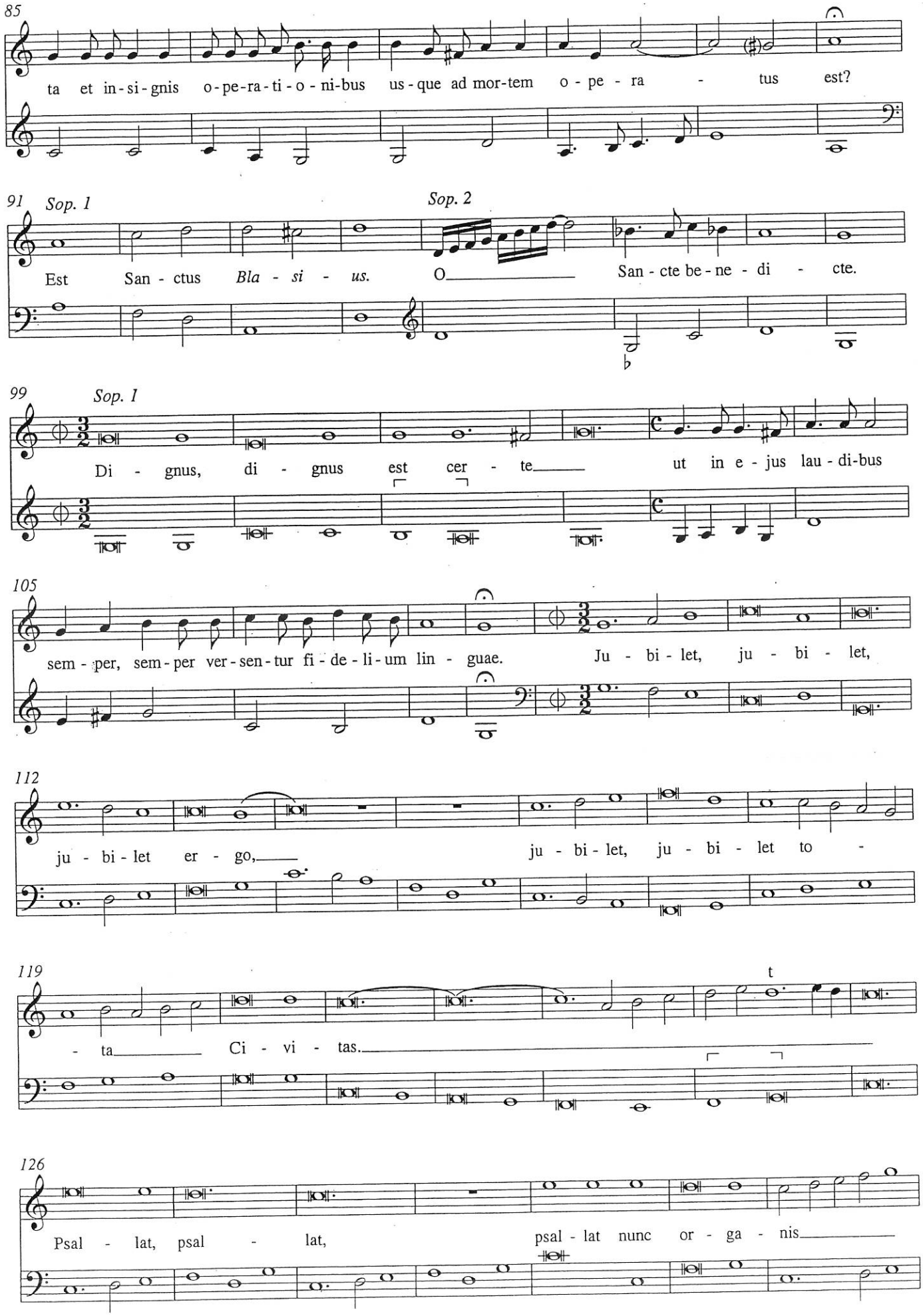
Music. Time signatures are consistently **C** and **Ø3/2**
The voice part has bar lines generally after every six minims or (less systematically) four crotchets. The Bc has a few bar lines at the end of sections.
Bc tenor clef is replaced by octave-treble.
34-35 Slur as in 145-6.
42 Bc Sharp printed before the note but presumably intended to be a bass figure.
79 Bc No time signature.
91 Bc Bass clef squashed in across the barline.
149 Slur by analogy with bar 38.

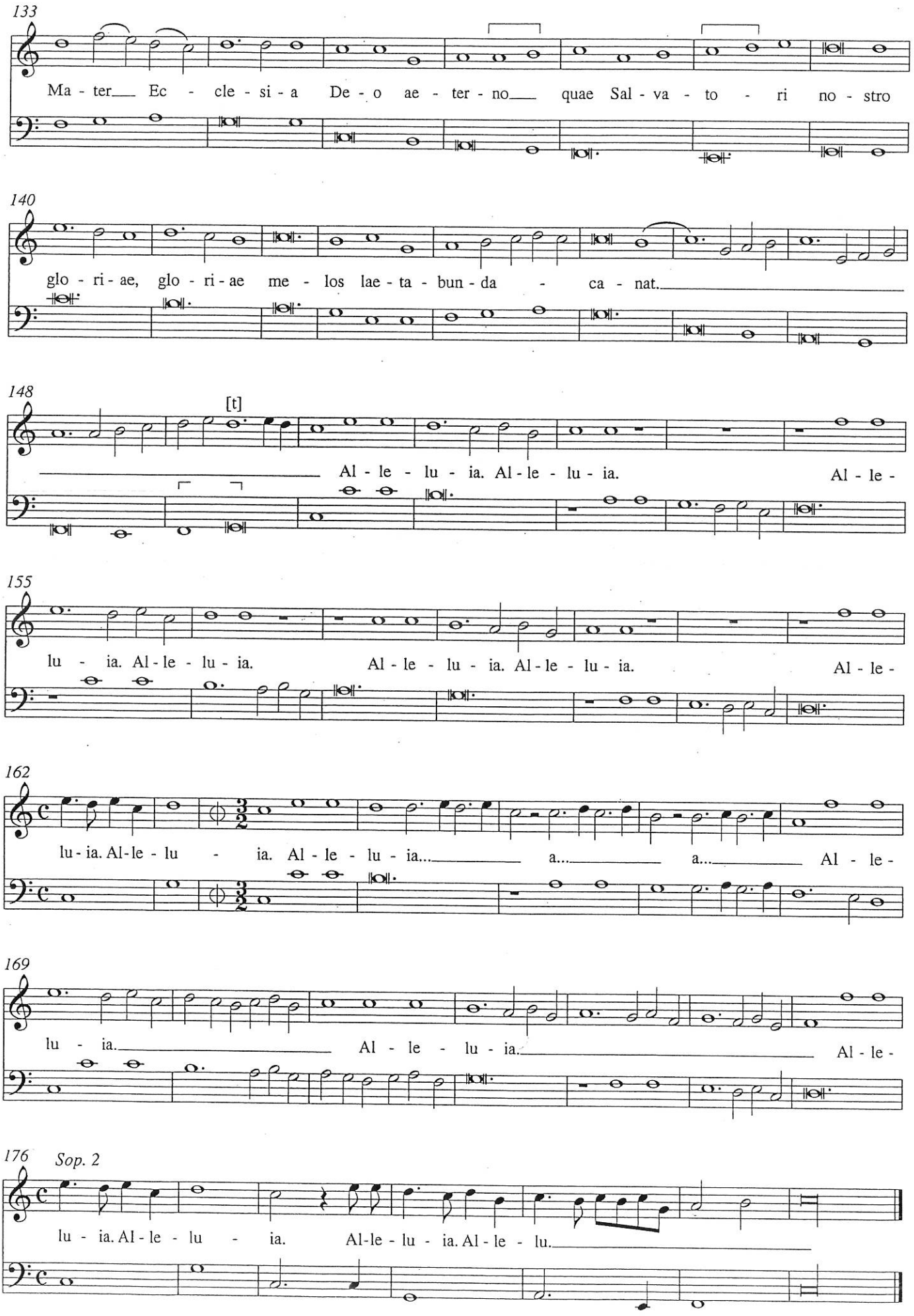
Clifford Bartlett 15 Aug. 2011 die natale LXXII

Monteverdi: Jubilet tota Civitas




40
Sop. 2
Quae oc - ca - si - o cor tu - um, di-le-ctis-si-ma Vir - go, gau - di - o re -
46
plet tan - ta. [hi] - la - ris, [hi] - la - ris et lae-ta nun - ti-a mi- hi?
53
Sop. 1
Fe - stum, fe - stum, fe - stum, fe - stum, fe - stum est ho - di - e,
60
fe - stum est ho - di - e San - cti glo - ri - o - si
67
qui co - ram De - o et ho - mi - ni - bus o - pe - ra - tus, o - pe -
73
ra - tus est, o - pe - ra - tus, o - pe - ra - tus est.
79
Sop. 2
Quis est i - ste San - ctus qui pro le - ge De - i tam il - lu - stri vi -


85
ta et in-si-gnis o-pe-ra-ti-o-ni-bus us-que ad mor-tem o-pe-ra - tus est?
91 Sop. 1
Est San-ctus Bla-si-us.
Sop. 2
O San-cte be-ne-di-cte.
99 Sop. 1
Di-gnus, di-gnus est cer-te ut in e-jus lau-di-bus
105
sem-per, sem-per ver-sen-tur fi-de-li-um lin-guae. Ju-bi-let, ju-bi-let,
112
ju-bi-let er-go, ju-bi-let, ju-bi-let to-
119
-ta Ci-vi-tas.
126
Psal-lat, psal-lat, psal-lat nunc or-ga-nis


133
Ma - ter Ec - cle - si - a De - o ae - ter - no quae Sal - va - to - ri no - stro
140
glo - ri - ae, glo - ri - ae me - los lae - ta - bun - da - ca - nat.
148
[t]
Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le -
155
lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le -
162
lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia... a... a... Al - le -
169
lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le -
176
Sop. 2
lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu.

HOME AND AWAY

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Tage alte Musik Regensburg

10-13 June 2011

Planning music festivals is a complicated business. Do you spread the concerts out over a month or so, thereby attracting local supporters at the possible expense of limiting extra-territorial visitors (Innsbruck, Brighton), or run the whole thing together in one go (Leipzig, York), thereby making it easier for out-of-town visitors but perhaps proving too much of a good thing for locals. The Regensburg early music festival (*Tage Alter Musik*) goes to one extreme of the latter option, with no fewer than 14 concerts given in just 4 days, with concert starting times from 11am to 10.45pm, making for an intense musical weekend in a delightful historic German town (a World Heritage Site) on the Danube. A refreshing change from the many rather incestuous early music festivals is that, apart from the Regensburger Domspatzen, the groups were not local or connected directly with the organisers. For example, this year they gathered together groups from Germany, Britain (x2), Belgium, France, Croatia, Italy (x2), Ireland, Canada, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden and the whole of the European Union combined, the latter with the Harmony of Nations orchestra, formed out of participants in the 2004 European Union Baroque Orchestra.

The opening (Friday evening) concert featured the Regensburger Domspatzen (dating back to 975) and Concerto Köln held in the ancient Basilika St Emmeram, with its later drizzling of baroquery. A choir of 75 young men and boys (with nearly 50 of the latter, all pre-pubescent, but with none of the tiny young things found in English Cathedral choirs) is perhaps not the most authentic way of presenting Bach, but they produced an impressive sound in the Ascension cantata/oratorio *Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen* (BWV 10) the motet *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf* and the concluding Magnificat. Of the soloists, I was most impressed with Franz Vitzthum, notably in the alto aria *Ach, bleibe doch* from the Ascension cantata. The concert opened with Bach's Concerto for Oboe d'Amore, given an attractive reading by Benoît Laurent.

The late night concert moved from a choir of 75 to one of 10, in the sparse Romanesque surroundings of the Schottenkirche, with its intriguingly sculpted portal. The Brabant Ensemble (UK) is perhaps better known for their recordings than concerts. Their programme looked at the music of the time of the alliance between Henry VIII and Ferdinand of Aragon, with works by Taverner, Whytbroke and Henry VIII himself contrasted with Penalosa, Morales and Guerrero. One of the joys of the outstanding concert was the clarity of the soprano voices, both collectively and, notably, in the stunning florid solo line from Kate Ashby in 'The time of youth'.

Saturday started with an 11 o'clock burst from the six recorders of Mezzaluna (Belgium), and their mixed programme of music from around 1515 to c.1600 (much of it with links to the Bassano family), played in chronological groups in the Reichssaal. They had a smooth and lyrical manner, saving audible articulation for the ends of long phrases, both in dances and in vocal works. Concentrating on the more aurally-friendly members of the recorder family, they avoided the absolute purity of tuning that can produce disturbing sub-harmonics. The French group, Les Musiciens de Saint-Julien gave Saturday's afternoon concert with songs and dances from the 17th and 18th century France, with the occasional English composer getting a look in. One delightful feature of this concert was the hurdy gurdy playing of Anne-Lise Foy and the evocative sound of the musette.

When I reviewed the 2004 incarnation of the European Union Baroque Orchestra I wrote that they had the ability to form themselves into a more permanent orchestra – something they did, as the Harmony of Nations Baroque Orchestra. They gave the Saturday evening concert with a programme of Purcell, Corelli, Rebel, Albinoni and Telemann (all music with a twinkle in its eye), under the inspiring direction by Alfredo Bernardini, who also performed Albinoni's Oboe Concerto (Op 9/2). Over the years I have seen a number of established music directors using young groups like this (and EUBO itself) to promote themselves, taking the limelight at every opportunity, so it was a delight to see the way that Alfredo Bernardini just became one of the band. As well as boasting an excellent consort sound, there were notable individual contributions from the leader, Fani Vovoni with her imaginative elaborations, fellow violinist Huw Daniel and cellist Lucy Scothmer in the Corelli Concerto Grosso. Katrin Lazar's recorder playing also impressed in a Purcell suite.

France and Croatia combined in the late night concert from Dialodos and Kantaduri, exploring Glagolitic and Latin music from medieval Croatia, a repertoire that is largely unknown, even in its homeland. The attractive music ranged from chant to almost choral music, the chanting mostly syllabic and step by step with only occasional melismas. Making very effective use of the vast space of the Dominikanerkirche, including processions, the male and female voices blended superbly, avoiding the rustic oddities than music like this can attract.

Sunday started with Ensemble Lucidarium (Italy) and a programme based on the *Commedia dell'Arte* tradition. Alongside the quasi-mediaeval dress and funny hats, we had two overactive *commediantes* dashing around the audience and, at one stage, writhing around on the floor in pyjamas after a bout of hair-swinging – and an odd-shaped drum that was rather too loud in this acoustic.

Sunday afternoon introduced an unusual bit of controversy into the weekend with a performance that led to some loud boos and walk-outs. The Irish Ensemble eX is a collaboration between soprano Caitriona O'Leary and the opera/theatre director Eric Fraad. Their concert was built around an experimental staging of Bach's Easter cantata *Christ lag in Todensbanden*, preceded in the first half by earlier works similarly based on the *Victimae paschali laudes* sequence. The first part was performed beneath a large wooden cross. As the evocative solo chant of *Christus resurgens ex mortuis* commenced, a slow procession of individuals laid various items at the foot of the cross. Then followed chorale-based works by Schein, Schütz and Praetorius and the Passacaglia that concludes Biber's Rosenkranz Sonatas. The Bach cantata was fully staged in a very contemporary updating of a medieval passion play, with the cross now rather grotesquely transformed, the four singers taking on the roles of Mary, Mary Magdelene, Joseph and Luther, three actors representing Death, Jesus and Judas, and two burlesque dancers. With portrayals of Jesus as a cult leader, leaping onto a table to bless everyone, slinky dancing, and the 'Body of Christ' quite literally portrayed with the dead Jesus laid out on the table while pepper and salt were sprinkled over him, this was not a performance for the religiously sensitive or devout – a description that could apply to many in Germany's Catholic south. You can judge for yourselves from extracts, with a completely different cast and players, on YouTube. But, with slight concerns about some practical issues of performance, I thought this was a valid and imaginative interpretation of a work that, although it certainly does not need such added layers, nonetheless lends itself to theatrical interpretation.

The early evening concert from Ensemble Caprice (Canada) was only slightly less controversial, not least because they had not worked out whether to make their performance (of Polish and Hungarian music and its influence on Telemann) an out-and-out comedy act, or just play the music with appropriate sensitivity and musicality. Rather too much of it reminded me of those irritating street entertainers who hassle pavement diners in Budapest or Krakow. They also seemed to go out of their way to make Telemann's music sound Hungarian/Polish, rather than demonstrated how Telemann adapted that genre to his own style. By far the best, and most sensible, playing came from flautist Sophie Larivière. One of their more flamboyant members displayed some of the most outrageous examples of attempted upstaging I have ever seen in a concert, delaying the start of several pieces by waiting until everybody else had finished tuning before even starting to tune his own violin – and, on one occasion, dramatically mopping his brow after a particularly strenuous bit of inter-movement tuning. Frustratingly, in between all this ostentatious nonsense, he managed to play rather well.

My faith in music and performance was restored with the late night Sunday concert from one of my favourite young groups, Stile Antico (UK), and their celebration of the 400th anniversary of Victoria, with some Morales, Janequin, Palestrina and Guerrero thrown in. As with the Brabant Ensemble (with whom they shared three singers), this was an exemplary demonstration of how to sing into a large acoustic. But despite the beauty of the singing, notably the tour de force concluding Victoria's *Laetatus sum*, it was a bit of a vocal departure for Stile Antico that will stick in my memory – a stunning performance of Janequin *La Guerre* by four of their number (Rebecca Hickey, Emma Ashby, Jim Clements and James Arthur). Merciful shorn of silly voices or other antics, they sang it straight – the words did it all.

I am not sure what the collective noun for mandolins is, but it could apply to the Monday morning concert by the Artemandoline (Luxembourg), fielding three mandolins (and two mandolas) plus continuo – and, on one occasion, the three mandolins acting as continuo themselves. Their programme, mostly of arrangements (by Cocchi, Abigoni, Castello, Weiss, Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Matteis and dall'Abaco), was entertaining, not least for the unusual sound world.

The early afternoon concert featured Ensemble Perlaro (Switzerland) – four singers, with fiddle and lute accompaniment) in a programme of music by Landini and his contemporaries together with improvisations in the Faenza Codex idiom, suiting the setting (the Minoritenkirche) perfectly. I did miss the sound of a portative organ, particularly bearing in mind Landini's fame on that instrument. The first part was a multi-composer mass setting, with Ciconia's Gloria and Credo and Mediolano's Sanctus and an Agnus by Da Firenze. The Ciconia Credo was particularly interesting with its snatches of homophony and imitative writing amongst free-flowing lines for three equal voices, a wonderfully scrunchy bit of writing at *adoratur et conglorificatur* and a bell-like repetition of little phrases during the Amen. Mediolano's Sanctus was a delightfully complex bit of musical embroidery.

The late-afternoon concert was a wide-ranging programme of instrumental music (from Morley to Boccherini) given by REBaroque (Sweden). Sadly, practically all the pieces were played in the same rather rambling and erratic style, with frequent intonation problems, unsteady timing and more than a nod towards jazz-style improvisation. There was little sense of articulation, with the instrumental version of portamento predominating.

The festival finished with Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* given by La Venexiana, directed by Claudio Cavina and with a striking but simple staging directed by Chiara H Savoia centred around three large curtain hangings. This was a musically very satisfying performance and production with some fine singing, although the lirone could have done with being in a more audible position. The key roles were taken by Mirko Guadagnini *Ulisse*, Oksana Lazareva *Penelope*, Makoto Sakurada *Telemaco* with Marco Bussi, Alessio Tosi and Alberto Allegrezza as Penelope's three suitors.

Next year's festival is from 25-29 May 2012.

LONDON in JULY

RINALDO (Blackheath & Glyndebourne)

I had the interesting experience of being able to listen to two versions of Handel's Rinaldo on successive evenings. The first was a student production from the Trinity Laben Opera Ensemble at the Blackheath Halls (1 July). It was a relief that the director Harry Fehr didn't set it in Afghanistan or Iraq, but offered a well-conceived modern-dress setting in the military headquarters of the two opposing camps, the 'Christian' forces in a drab prefab field command centre, the 'Saracens' in a smart contemporary office setting. The student period orchestra, conducted by Nicholas Kraemer, was in between these two sets, on a diagonal to the hall (as were the audience), with a further set on the hall's stage where Armida held sway. Both camps used laptops and mobile phones, not least in the various negotiations between themselves and in controlling the final battle. I thought all the ten young singers were excellent, both vocally and in their acting skills, with special mention on the night going to Zarah Hible in the title role, Dalma Krajnyak as Eustazio, Rebecca Ramsey as Almirena and Katherine Williamson and the vampish Armida. One of the joys of young voices is that they normally haven't yet developed the vibrato that upsets so many early music performances – but, if they have, they haven't yet managed to control it. Only one singer on the evening I was there (four of the ten roles were double cast) demonstrated the sort of vibrato that gets in the way. Otherwise their voices were clear, attractive and focused and their acting skill impressive. There were notable instrumental contributions from cellists Kristina Chalmovska, bassoonist Wai Yee Lee and Oboist Joanne Houghton.

Glyndebourne beckoned the following day, with Robert Carson's staging, later semi-staged at the Proms. Building on the premise that the original text was a "wildly fantastical fictionalization" of the Christian's taking of Jerusalem during the First Crusade, Carson added his own additional layers of fantasy, setting the whole work inside a school, and more particularly, inside the head of a schoolboy Rinaldo. The opening scene was in a school classroom where a history lesson is about to start – on the First Crusade. The boy Rinaldo (Sonia Prina, in excellent voice, but not always keeping in time) is bullied when he is caught drooling over a picture of his rather gawky girlfriend Almirena (the lyrical Anett Tritsch standing in for the injured Sandrine Piau, and excelling in her *Lascia ch'io pianga*) inside his school desk but ends up getting a caning (one of many scenes that may have excited the elderly public school types in the audience). In a plot twist that I gather many in the audience missed, the rest of the opera is entirely a fantasy in Rinaldo's head, with Armida (Brenda Rae) as a sleazy and slinky dominatrix teacher heading up a St Trinian's-style gang of leggy dominatrix harpies who, along with the headmaster, transformed into Argante, the Saracen commander (an excellent Luca Pisaroni), do their best to disrupt the Harry Potterish Rinaldo and his pigtailed Almirena. Tim Mead produced some of the finest singing of the evening as Eustazio. Some wonderfully inventive moments included an entire scene done in the bike shed, with the bikes transforming into horses, and the final battle re-cast as a slow motion football match. There were one or two opening-night lapses of timing twixt pit and stage and an unfortunate power cut in the middle of *Cara sposa* but the production was otherwise extremely well done. Ottavio Dantone conducted the stylish Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, making most of a work where Handel seems to have been more concerned with entertaining his new public than in delving the emotional depths that his later operas were to achieve.

DON GIOVANNI (West Green House)

Although it might lack the glitz, glamour and audience size (and, indeed, the class) of Glyndebourne, The Grange or Garsington, the little annual opera evenings at West Green House (near Hartney Witney, a few miles east of Basingstoke in Hampshire) can be a delight. Dismay after a rather surly and unhelpful welcome from the women manning the entrance was soon dispersed by the fascinating gardens of West Green – on these occasions dotted with picnic tents and spectacularly lit after the show. The opera itself (*Don Giovanni*) takes place in a marquee set on the helpfully stepped grass slopes behind the house. The scaled-down production is provided by Opera Project, who tour such things around similar venues, with one of Amanda Holden's user-friendly English translations (curiously, leaving one aria sung in the original Italian) and a small group of players, unfortunately with modern instruments. One of the strongest arguments for such wealthy (but not always cultured) middle-class occasions is that they provide excellent experience and, hopefully, income for young professional musicians. On this occasion, the honours went to Marc Callahan in the title role, Jonathan Gunthorpe as Leporello, Rhys Meirion as Don Ottavio, Pippa Goss as Zerlina and Helena Dix and Claire Surman as the (possibly miscast) Donnas.

RODELINDA (Iford)

If you like your opera up close and personal, then Iford is the place to go – in this case for a performance of Handel's 1725 *Rodelinda*. I caught the last night of its run (9 Aug). Set in the curious architectural jumble of a little Italianate cloister (in the magnificent Peto Garden that surrounds the mellow-stoned Iford Manor, near Bath), the audience of about 90 sit around a central performing area, with the orchestra taking up part of one side. You can find yourself a few feet away from a singer. That, of course, means that singers who have spent their careers being encouraged to sing to the back row of Covent Garden over the heads of an invisible audience, suddenly find themselves back to singing in the shower with the neighbours listening – a severe test that all passed with honour. Martin Constantine's modern-dress setting (sung in English) was updated from the 6th century Lombardic Court to an indeterminate late 20th century date during the era of massive tape machines and battleship-grey office furniture and anglepoise lamps. That, and lots of paper, were the major aspects of the scenery. The happy-families breakfast scene that greeted us as we entered was shattered during the overture, as Dad (Bertarido) is bundled off by Grimoaldo's ashen thugs (who rip down all the paper curtains in the process) leaving Rodelinda and her young son Flavio, the subject of Handel's opera of two years earlier, who was acted rather well by a local lad, Yves Morris whose almost continuous stage presence was a telling addition to the cast, though Handel provided no music for him. The tussle between Grimoaldo and Rodelinda takes on an added edge when Bertarido returns, in disguise. In that all the action takes place within the Lombardic palace, the intimate single setting was entirely appropriate for the toings and froings of the various protagonists, all, as is Handel's wont, portraying complex characters. There were strong vocal contributions from the talented cast of Doreen Curran, Nathan Vale, Gillian Ramm, James Laing, Owen Willetts and Jonathan Brown, all managing to get beneath the skins of their complicated roles. But the stars of the evening were the members of the Early Opera Company, led by the excellent Catherine Martin and directed with his usual sensitivity by Christian Curnyn.

CELTS AND GAULS

The Wigmore Hall hosted a delightful bit of late-night fun from the London Handel Players (22 July, 10pm) with fiddle player Alasdair Fraser and his cellist partner, Natalie Haas in *Les Sauvages!*, a programme of folk-inspired baroque music from the Celts and the Gauls. Vivaldi got a look in as well, albeit in Gallic form, courtesy of Chédeville's arrangement of Spring from the Four Seasons (featuring Clare Salaman on hurdy gurdy). Lully's *Marche pour la cérémonie des Turcs* was followed by Corrette's *Les Sauvages*, a movement from one of his *Concertos Comique* before the Gauls started to alternate with the Celts, the latter represented by James Oswald, Robert Mackintosh and, with arrangements of Scottish Airs, Nathaniel Gow and Haydn. An entertaining end to an evening.

BROADWOOD HARPSICHORD COMPETITION

The bi-annual Broadwood Harpsichord Competition is held at The National Trust's Fenton House, London, using instruments from the historic Benton Fletcher Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments. The competition is not open to the public, but the winner is invited to give a recital at Fenton House. The 2011 winner was Nathaniel Mander, a talented young student at the Royal Academy of Music. He gave his winner's concert on 11 August, playing a programme ranging from Frescobaldi to Mozart on the c.1600 Vincentius virginals and the massive 1770 Shudi & Broadwood harpsichord. On the smaller instrument he was particularly effective in the two Toccatas by Froberger, contrasting the exploratory *stylus phantasticus* passages with more strictly imitative sections. These two works sandwiched a Suite and Toccata by Frescobaldi. The move to the larger harpsichord was acoustically like moving out of a changing room into a vast swimming bath. A Suite and Toccata from Böhm and Bach made a fascinating comparison with the earlier Italian works that might have influenced them. The Shudi & Broadwood came into its own with CPE Bach's Sonata in A minor, the fantasy-style Moderato contrasting with a touching Andante and a virtuosic Allegro assai. Nathaniel Mander concluded with an excellent performance of Mozart's variation on *Twinkle twinkle, little star*, expertly projecting the changing moods. Fenton House is a challenging venue to perform in, but Mander showed himself well up to the task. A talented young musician to watch out for in the future.

ACCORDING TO THE ITALIAN TASTE

BACHFEST LEIPZIG 14-19 JULY

This year's Leipzig Bachfest (an enormous enterprise with some 110 events in 10 days, attracting around 65,000 visitors) explored the influence of Italian music on Bach, alongside acknowledgments of the anniversaries of Liszt and Mahler, both Bach enthusiasts; according to Mahler, "All the vital seeds of music are united in Bach". I missed the first few days because of a clash with the Regensburg *Tage Alter Musik* and the first concert I was down to review (an organ recital by Lorenzo Ghielmi of Frescobaldi, Pasquini and Bach in the Thomaskirche) was cancelled. But that gave me the chance to get to the first of a number of large-scale chorale concerts, this one in the Nikolaikirche (14 July) with the Dresden Kammerchor and Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, directed by Hans-Christoph Rademann. Their programme interspersed three Bach cantatas with works by two composers at the Catholic Dresden Court, the *Lamentatio I (ZWV 53/1)* by Zelenka and Hasse's *Laudate peuri*. Hasse's work (for bass

solo) was more Rococo in style, nodding towards the Classical era, with its jagged opening bass line and insistent treble motif. The highlight was the gentle triple-time *Gloria Patri* with the fine alto Ingeborg Danz and two flutes weaving around an attractive melody. The soprano soloist, in this and other works, was far too operatic for this period of music, both in singing style and in her expansive cadenzas, and had the rather distracting habit of bouncing up and down as she sang. The three Bach cantatas were *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern* (BWV 1), *Bleib bei uns* (BWV 6) and *Ich elender Mensch* (BWV 48) for the Annunciation, Easter Monday and the 19th Sunday after Trinity.

The choir of St Thomas Leipzig combined with the Dresden Kreuzchor (the former with wide white collars, the latter in sailor suits) and the Staatskapelle Weimar (on modern instruments) for an interesting programme reflecting the life of Christ (17 Aug) This included three contrasting works, Bach's *Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben* (BWV 147), suffering from a bit of neo-baroque articulation, Mendelssohn's incomplete 1843 oratorio *'Christus'* and *Passio et Resurrectio,* the third part of Liszt's 1872 oratorio *Christus*, the latter two given particularly powerful performances with real aural power. The choir and orchestra were on the spacious gallery at the liturgical (and literal) west end of St Thomas's, beneath the Schuke organ. In the Liszt *Christus* the Easter Hymn *O Filii et Fillae* was sung from the opposite end of the church, close to Bach's grave, by a small boys choir and harmonium just before the spectacular conclusion with its added bells and a full organ chord held on just before the Amen. A fascinating insight into changing musical tastes over the centuries.

The major Italian music event of the week was a memorable performance of a compilation 'Venetian Vesper' as Monteverdi might have directed at Whitsuntide in St Mark's Venice, given in the Thomaskirche (18 Aug) by Vox Hvmana (8 soloists and 8 ripieni), the plainchant choir Cappella Gregoriana di Venezia, and the Venice Baroque Orchestra, directed by Andrea Marcon. The Magnificat and four of the five psalms were from Monteverdi's *Selva morale e spirituale* with each psalm introduced by Gregorian antiphons and organ intonations by Giovanni Gabrieli, well played by Luca Scandali. The repeat of the antiphons were replaced by motets by Monteverdi, Merula and Grandi or instrumental works by Gabrieli and Usper. The singing by Vox Hvmana was excellent, with clear articulation and a well-coordinated consort sound, and with notable contributions from the two solo sopranos, Lorenza Donadini and Alice Borciani, particularly in *Gaudamus omnes* and the duet *Venite sitientes ad aquas*. The more rustic voices of the Cappella Gregoriana di Venezia, singing close to the Bach organ in the south gallery, made a nice contrast to the vocal professionalism of the choir.

The last of the large-scale choral concerts came at the very end of the festival (19 Aug) with Bach's Mass in B minor given in his own Thomaskirche, with the 30-strong Balthasar-Neumann Choir and the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, directed by René Jacobs. Again, all the musicians were in the west gallery. Regular readers will not be surprised that I found the vibrato of the soprano and mezzo soloists excessive – I really do not understand how leading period specialist directors can pay so much attention to details of instrumental period style but let their singers perform in such an unstylistic manner. Not surprisingly, the highlight was the singing of Andreas Scholl, the clear projection of his voice being the ideal medium to express Bach's musical line. René Jacobs, a regular performer in the Leipzig Bachfest was characteristically brisk in his direction, particularly so in the *Gratias agimus* and the *Sanctus*. It was salutary to think that Bach never heard this work performed in his own church – or, indeed, anywhere in the form that we know it.

A smaller scale vocal concert was given earlier on the same day by Calmus Ensemble Leipzig, four ex members of the St Thomas Church choir together with a female soprano, in the Evangelisch-reformierte church, an imposing neo-Renaissance building whose interior looks as though it has been hewn out of solid rock. Their programme explored the "Music of Love" with works from the Klavierbüchlein für Anna Magdalena Bach, several arranged for these vocal forces, together with madrigals by Gesualdo and Schütz and Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna*. Calmus Ensemble Leipzig are a very impressive and professional young group who, although they perform a very wide repertoire, also have the sort of clear and unaffected voices that is so essential to bring out the harmonic clashes of Gesualdo and Monteverdi. Amongst several highlights was Bach's paean of praise to tobacco (*So oft ich meine Tobackspfeife*), the aria *Schlummert ein,* beautifully sung by soprano Anja Lipfert, and *Bist du bei mir* from the opera *Diomedes* by Stölzel. The only let-down was the curiously disjointed harpsichord playing from (I think) a guest player.

The vocal element was reduced to just one for an attractive concert given by the four members of Hofkapelle Schloss Seehaus and their soprano Julla von Landsberg in the baroque fairy cake gem that is the Alte Handelsbörse (19 Aug). Under the beguiling title, "Thou art beautiful, O my love" they explored sacred and secular music from Germany and Italy in the 17th century, the influence of the latter on the former being self-evident. Harpsichord and organ works by Fischer and Weckmann (nicely played by Torsten Übelhör) were neatly segued with vocal pieces by Buxtehude, Ziani, Mayr and Weckmann with Bertali's extended *Ciaccona in C minor* for violin and continuo as a central pivot, with Claudia Mende as the violinist.

Lautten Compagney Berlin gave a late-night concert of instrumental works by Vivaldi, Bach and Pisendel in the

Altes Rathaus, now a museum and home of the famous Bach portrait (18 Aug). Most of their players had their solo opportunities during the evening, with oboist Eduard Wesly being the most prominent. Another late-night concert was given in the Thomaskirche (16 Aug) by violinist Christian Tetzlaff playing Bach Sonatas and Partita BWV 1003/5. The sound of a solo violin in a large church acoustic can be magical, although it is clearly not the acoustic that Bach envisaged for these works. Tetzlaff made no concessions to the acoustic, either in his articulation or in the speeds of some of the movements, making the whole thing something of an acoustic muddle. There also seemed to be few concessions to period style. Considering the nature of the surroundings and the festival, I was rather surprised that a performer more in line with baroque style was not invited to give this concert. A similar argument could be used for both performers in the violin and organ concert in the Nikolaikirche (18 June) with Tamama Ange Saito's very romantic playing of the Bach D minor Partita and the Sonata in G for violin and continuo, accompanied by the massive Ladegast organ, one of the most important German romantic organs, being as far from period style as you can get. The Nikolaikantor, Jürgen Wolf, gave a frankly bizarre performance of Bach's *Partite diverse sopra: Sie gegrüßet, Jesu gütig* and the Toccata and Fugue, both being rhythmically unsettling and the former with some very strange registrations that did justice neither to the organ or the music.

A far more appropriate organ concert was given on the tiny Gottfried Silbermann organ, originally built for Hilbersdorf bei Freiberg in 1724 and now in the Zimeliensaal of the Leipzig Musical Instrument Museum (17 Aug). This was given by the young Hungarian organist Márton Borsányi, a former student in Leipzig and now in Basel, displaying nimble finger-work, clean articulation and a good sense of rhetoric in works by Buxtehude, Bach, Kuhnau and Pachelbel, together with three of Weckmann's fascinating Italianate Toccatas.

Leipzig also has its own prestigious competition, and two of the prize winners in the harpsichord category of the 2010 International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition shared a concert in the Leipzig Musical Instrument Museum (18 Aug). The first prize winner, Maria Uspenskaya, opened with Bach's arrangement of Vivaldi's G minor concerto (BWV 975) which segued into his Toccata in G minor, with its curiously unpromising fugue subject, rather like a German country dance. She followed this by three shorter Italian works by Fogliano, Picchi and Lambardi. Her playing was outstanding, with a fine sense of articulation, an understanding of the different styles and an attractively lyrical approach to Bach's *cantabile* moments. The second prize winner, Magdalena Malec, started with a work by Scarlatti which she changed from that printed in the programme. She followed this with the rather empty (but, clearly, audience-pleasing) pyrotechnics of Gesualdo's *Canzon francese del Principe* and Bach's Vivaldi concerto in D minor (BWV 972), which she started with a big appoggiatura on the opening phrase. On this occasion, and in sharp contrast to Maria Uspenskaya, she showed a limited range of articulation and musical subtlety. After each of their solo sets, the pair played an arrangement for two harpsichords of Corelli's Concerto Grosso in D (Op6/4) and Bach's Concerto in C (BWV 1061a). One this showing, I think the judges got it right.

The flagship event of the festival was the first performance since 1763 of JC Bach's opera *Zanaida*, presented in the historically important little 1802 Goethe Theatre in Bad Lauchstädt, west of Leipzig (16 Aug). The score of *Zanaida* was assumed to have been lost until it reappeared recently in a private collection in America. The autograph score has now been made available to the Bach-Archiv Leipzig for a period of 10 years. This production was prepared by conductor David Stern and Opera Fuoco, together with stage-director Sigrid T'Hooft (a trained dancer with a musicological degree). The work reflects the usual daft opera seria complexities, this time set in the tussles between Turkey and Persia in the time of Suleyman. The style is gallant, with no da capo arias, several dramatic accompanied recitatives and a predominance of upper voices (5 sopranos, 2 mezzos and 2 tenors) and with a rich adventurous orchestration, advanced for its time with clarinet and tenor oboes. The extraordinarily sumptuous period costumes and staging contrasted with simple direction. Most of the arias were sung relatively statically from the front sides of the stage, with simple hand gestures and limited background distractions. The young cast and period instrumentalists were excellent, with Sara Herhkowitz in the title role having some tricky passage-work to deal with. An excellent production – I hope it has been filmed.

Major features of the Bachfest are the regular excursions, many of them to visit well-known historic organs. This year they included trips to Merseburg (where the 1855 Ladegast organ strongly influenced Liszt's organ compositions) and several organs from Bach's time – the Silbermann organs in the churches St. George and St. Maria in Rötha, the Hildebrandt organs in Sotterhausen and Sangerhausen, the Schramm organ in the Hubertusburg castle at Wermsdorf and the Hildebrandt organ in the church of the Holy cross in Störmthal. Although these historically important organs were very well explained in the trip notes and the introductory talks on the coach, the recitals given in the venues, usually by the incumbent organist, were not always up to the expected standard with several (the Merseburg recital in particular) given by an assistant cathedral organist seemingly focussed more on demonstrating the organist than the organ.

Next year's Bachfest is from 7-17 June and celebrates the 800th anniversary of St Thomas's. The programme is already available on-line and booking is open.

Andrew's review of the Innsbruck Early Music Festival *is deferred to the December issue.*

Echter'Barock 2011 –

The European Union Baroque Orchestra in Echtnernach, Luxembourg

One of the highlights of my concert reviewing is the annual visit of the European Union Baroque Orchestra to the UK. For those not familiar with this orchestra, it was founded in 1985 during European Music Year and is currently funded as an official Cultural Ambassador for the European Union, still under its founding director, Paul James. Every year around Easter time, about 100 young musicians aged up to 30 from EU countries are invited to an audition – a few days of intensive teaching and playing with instrumental specialists. Around 20 are then selected to join the orchestra. This involves rehearsing and touring four different programmes throughout Europe, usually in blocks of two to three weeks, under the direction of some of the world's leading baroque specialists. As well as their role in the full orchestra, each participant also plays in a couple of smaller chamber groups, where they explore a wider repertoire. Many groups have formed out of friendships and contacts made through EUBO, and there are very few established professional period orchestras that do not contain some past members. Each of the programmes includes an experienced leader, often a previous member of EUBO who has gone on to make a mark in baroque violin performing. Unfortunately, given the current size of the EU, they usually only manage to give one concert in the UK, recently years as part of the Spitalfields Christmas Festival, when the concert season is very full. So it was lovely to be invited to join them for a few days during their first rehearsal period and concert in Luxembourg.

For the past few years EUBO have been Orchestra in Residence in Echternach, close to the German border north east of Luxembourg City. Echternach is the oldest town in Luxembourg, with roots in a vast Roman country estate and one of the largest excavated Roman palaces north of the Alps. Much of the land eventually passed to the Northumbrian monk Willibrord in the late 7th century, and the resulting Abbey later became renowned for its library. Given the role of Luxembourg in the creation of the EU, this Echternach residency is particularly appropriate and greatly benefits the town. EUBO rehearses in the impressive new Trifolion Cultural Centre and show their appreciation by giving performances of all four of their touring programmes in the town.

The first programme of the 2011 series of four tours is 'Bach & Sons', with music by JS Bach, three of his sons (WF, JC and CPE) and a second cousin, and exact contemporary, Johann Bernard. The director for this programme is Lars Ulrik Mortensen and the concertmaster is Huw Daniels, a member of the 2004 incarnation of EUBO. When I arrived, they had already spent about a week working together, and were clearly gelling well as a group, musically and socially. They were also getting used to the very different post-baroque style of the generation after Bach, with its distinctive articulation and phrasing. I was very impressed with the technical and musical ability of all the young players, some of whom I was surprised to learn were new to period instrument playing. I have commented in past reviews about Lars Ulrik Mortensen's extravagantly flamboyant conducting style with its sinewy contortions and giggle-inducing gesticulations, but he is clearly an inspiring communicator of musical ideas and personal encouragement to the young musicians.

Their opening concert was given on 28 July in St Peter & St Paul, a church dating back to Merovingian times and built within the remains of a Roman fort. The evening started (appropriately, as it was the anniversary of his death) with a punchy and vigorous performance of Father Bach's third Brandenburg Concerto, immediately exposing both the excellent consort playing ability and the individual talent of members of the group, all of whom had their moments of glory. The second piece moved us into a very different musical world with JC Bach's prettily rococo, if rather predictable, harpsichord concerto in F minor, soloist Lars Ulrik Mortensen adding a whimsical element in his dreamingly exploratory cadenza to the song without words *Andante*. WF Bach's Sinfonia in F brought a darker hue to the evening, the mercurial side of his nature coming to the fore in the sharp contrast between *Sturm und Drang* and delicacy and charm before the lush courtly dance of the concluding minuets. Concertmaster Huw Daniels showed absolute mastery of his instrument and musical line in an outstanding performance of Johann Bernhard Bach's fascinating Ouverture in G minor for violin and strings (a return to the baroque idiom), displaying, amongst other things, the ability to play confidently and responsively at the very edge of audibility. The plucked accompaniment and elegiac melody of the *Air* was an absolute delight, with some inspired ornamentation from Huw Daniels in the repeats. Hearing a member of a EUBO incarnation of just seven years ago playing so beautifully must have been an inspiration to the current EUBO members. The concert ended with the *empfindsamer stil* of CPE Bach, the scurrying passagework of the opening his B flat Sinfonia leading into the sensuous *Adagio* before the concluding *Presto* with its playful passing of passages from one section to another. It might be invidious to mention individual players (the section leader and desk position change with each programme) but there were particularly noticeable contributions from Liv Heym, violin, Femke Huizinga, viola, Gulrim Choi, cello, Pippa Macmillan, bass, and Tom Foster, harpsichord, (and, one of only three males in the 16-strong orchestra.

They perform in London on Saturday 17th December at Shoreditch Church (7.00 pm) and in Oxford Sunday 18th at St John the Evangelist (6.00 pm). European concerts are listed in our Concert Diary. Information about EUBO and these concerts can be found at http://www.eubo.org.uk/index.html.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Epos: Music of the Carolingian Era Ensemble Cantilena Antiqua, Stefano Albarello *voice* 70' 01"
Passacaille 974
texts by Boethius, Horace, Virgil & anon (*Planctus Caroli & Hug dulce nomen*)

This is a bit more plausible than the alleged discovery of original music for the Odes of Horace a few years ago (though Stuart Lyons' second book retreated to an expectation that the music was a thousand years later than the poems). This disc is a celebration of Carolingian culture, based on Paris MS Lat 1154, which contains some poems with heightened neums, so a rough guess at the notes is possible. New Grove is cautious: "these all concern a very small number of neums applied to a mere two or three lines within a larger poetry collection. The poetry is in most cases substantially earlier than the source; it is not easy to tell whether the music was newly composed or traditional for the song, particularly since the unheightened neumes are rudimentary and effectively untranscribable."[1] The fragments of the *Aeneid* (from a source somewhere in Florence – hardly an exact reference! – must be even less informative, since they have unheightened neums, which only show whether a note is the same, higher or lower than the previous one.

Albarello is open about the hypothetical nature of his performances, which have much less basis than the reconstruction of a 28-part Magnificat by Giovanni Gabrieli from 8 surviving parts that a friend is currently producing – at least we know what sort of music cornetts and sackbuts played! The project flounders on the emphasis on instruments – tibia, fibula, tintinnabula, psalterium and cimbala. They may be authentic in terms of illustrations and mentions in writings of the period, but we haven't a clue how they sounded and what they played. There is a general consensus that monophonic solo-vocal music needs instrumental backing (as plainsong used to require an organ!) But in an age when understanding of Latin is a rarity, it is often encouraged to dominate – like the excessive guitar and drums in so-called "modern" hymns. And surely the Carolingian scholars wouldn't have sung a Horace ode to a stress rhythm that ignores the metric pattern? Finally, did the culture of the time accept the "feigned" alto voice as natural? Albarello's singing, however, is clear and articulate.

I'd welcome an on-line supplement, with the texts set out with the option of a choice of translation aligned with them, notes on the sources (preferably with facsimiles) and arguments to justify the performance. As it is, individual items have a certain interest, but not the impact of an hour of Beowulf as sung, with a much more restrained backing provided by the speaker/singer himself, Benjamin Bagley, that was powerful and moving even with only a Dutch translation as guide in a dark crypt! *CB*

1. *Grove Music Online*, Sources , §MS, III: Secular Monophony by David Fallows (with Thomas B. Payne)

14th CENTURY

Codex Chantilly II Tetraktys, *dir* Kees Boeke 76' 40"
Et'cetera KTC 1905
Music by Grimace, Guido, Machaut, Mr Franciscus, Senleches, Solage, Vaillant

This is a beautiful performance of some of the most refined music ever written. When I first encountered the repertoire, it used to sound awkward and complex, but here it is poised and relaxed (or at least apparently so, though the singer must be using immense control). But there is a problem. Perhaps the most striking track is the last, Solage's *Tres gentil cuer*, 14' 37" sung at a highish soprano pitch with two quiet instruments. Did ladies sing professionally then and was any music sung that high anyway? It could be a way of surmounting one of the arguments Christopher Page made for his 'voices only' theory: there were no instruments that could play the lower parts at the time if anything approaching the apparent notated pitch was adopted. (The original is notated in C2 C4 C4 clefs, for what that's worth). The transposition solves the lower instrumental range problem, if it still exists, but at the expense of producing a strained sound that undermines what seems to be the ethos of the earlier tracks (which are not as extreme as this). Any individual track here sounds marvellous, but ration yourself: heard straight through, despite sections performed instrumentally, the performance diminishes the individuality of the songs. *CB*

15th CENTURY

Du Fay *Nell' autunno di bisanzio* Theodora Baka, Ex Silentio, Dimitris Kountouras, Ensemble Arkys 50' 06"
Talanton Records TAL9000
Music by Chrysafes, Du Fay, Feragut, Legrant & Pesaro

The Waning of Byzantium (the CD graphics suggesting more of a slashing than a waning) reflects the music that came out of a combination of two migrations. First, the influx into Italy of Greek scholars fleeing from the weakening Byzantine empire in the period leading up to the sack of Constantinople in 1453, bringing with them important Byzantine MSS which led to the rise of the Neo-Platonists and humanist thinking. To this was added the Franco-Flemish musicians who also flooded into Italy during the same period, a combination of influences that resulted in the sensuous music of the early *quattrocento*, notably from Du Fay and his contemporaries, Legrant, Feragut, Pesaro and Chrysafes. One of Du Fay's earliest motets was *Vasilissa Ergo gaude*, composed in 1420 for the wedding of the son of the Byzantine Emperor to the Princess of Rimeni. He also wrote a lament for the Eastern Orthodox Church which, on this CD, is followed by the mournful *Threnos*, written by Chrysafes, a Greek composer and singer in Hagia Sophia and the Imperial Court at the time of the fall of Constantinople. The attractive accompaniments come from recorder, two fiddles and organ, but it is the evocative and sensuous voice of the Greek singer Theodora Baka (also mentioned in the review of the *Lamentarium* CD below) that is the main draw. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

La Rue *Missae De Feria and Sancta Dei genetrix and motets* 65' 35" Gothic Voices Christopher Page
Helios CDH 55296 (rec 1997)

The bargain-price re-release of the Gothic Voices' definitive accounts of the music of Pierre de la Rue reminds one of their many virtues – stunning intonation, fresh authentic pronunciation, perfectly judged pacing – and their one shortcoming – a slightly too dry acoustic, which makes them sound just a little unrelenting on extended listening. The delightful intabulations for a pair of lutes of three of the motets, played by Christopher Wilson and

Shirley Rumsey, provide a charming contrast to the unaccompanied voices, and overall these recordings retain the authority they exuded when they were first issued in 1997. *CB*

Frottole: Songs from the courts of Renaissance Italy The Modena Consort 65' 52"
Pan Classics PC 10246
Music by Bossinensis, Brumel, Capirola, Cara, Compère, Hesdimois, Isaac, Josquin, Obrecht, Tromboncino, Urrede

I'm never sure whether to put the turn-of-the-century repertoire which emerged in the prints of Petrucci as 15th- or 16th-century. On the grounds that Petrucci found it rather than created it, I've placed it here, where it stands just before the 16th-century. The previous CD I listened to was the Codex Chantilly one reviewed above. That shows the chanson at its most complex. It subsequently became more mellifluous, and by 1500 the Venetian printer issued lively secular polyphonic pieces (mostly instrumental) from north of the Alps and simple, often extremely beautiful Italian songs. These are pleasantly sung by Ulrike Hofbauer, with a group of flutes, lute and mercifully tactful percussion. I expected to be annoyed by a lack of instrumental variety, but the flutes are effective with the voice as well as by themselves. It's a well-varied programme. *CB*

Music for Henry V and the House of Lancaster The Binchois Consort, Andrew Kirkman 72' 47"
Hyperion CDA67868
anon *Missa Quem malignus spiritus*; Damett *Salvatoris mater/O Georgi Deo*; Frye *Ave regina caelorum*; Roy Henry [V] *Gloria*; Power *Ave regina caelorum, Gloriosae virginis*; Sturgeon *Salve mater/Salve templum*; chant from the Wollaton Antiphonal

This is a magnificent example of scholarship joined with performance – and a fine performance at that. The booklet has masses of information in the notes by Philip Weller. The small font makes them very tiring to read, so google the record number and you can choose the size you want on screen. (You can, of course, also pay and download the music.) Apart from being a fine anthology of music from the time of Henry V & VI, this draws attention to an amazingly well-preserved antiphonal of the period which belonged to St Leonard's parish church, Wollaton from 1460, but was kept safe in Wollaton House, returned to the Parish in 1924 and is now under the care of Nottingham University. The Mass on this recording is an anonymous one based on a rare chant *Quem malignus spiritus*, which comes from the office of St John of Bridlington that survives uniquely in this MS. Read the booklet or web-site for the links that make the connections. The mass is published in *Early English Church Music* 22, pp. 35-77.

There's no space to go through the 18 tracks. The performances (by 2 altos and 4 tenors) are superb, except perhaps sounding just a bit too smooth. Old pronunciation is commendably used, but it still sounds a bit Oxbridge. Did posh 15th-century English singers pronounce Latin with a French accent? This is an interesting and well-sung programme, brilliantly documented, and commendably bringing to public awareness the existence of a rare and beautiful MS. Highly recommended! *CB*
The mass is also recorded under the title Long Joy, Brief Langour *by the Schola Antiqua of Chicago.*

16th CENTURY

Brudieu *Requiem* Exaudi nos, Joan Grimault Columna Musica 1CM0251 45' 10"

The four-part Requiem by the Catalan composer Joan Brudieu (1520-91) is a rather beautiful work, simple and direct in style and yet refined in expression: it is probably the composer's finest music. The performance here employs the mix of voices and instruments known to have been available at the cathedral in Urgel during his period of employment there, and is generally pretty convincing, although the generous acoustic (of what appears to be an enormous gymnasium!) occasionally swallows up the endings of vocal phrases. The idea of filling the disc with three of the composer's madrigals on the nature of love is an inspiration, and while the choice of a more intimate acoustic is a wise one, some of the singing here is a little wobbly. This is not a generously filled CD, and we could clearly have done with more of this interesting composer's music. *D. James Ross*

Lassus *Prophetiae Sibyllarum* The Brabant Ensemble, Stephen Rice 74'14"
Hyperion CDA 67887
Deficiat in dolore, Justorum animae, Magnificat Quant' in mille anni, Missa Amor ecco colei, Tristis anima mea

The *Prophetiae Sybyllarum* represent some of the most harmonically daring music Lassus ever wrote and constitute one of the great encyclopaedic sets which the composer continued to produce throughout his career. Modern listeners may be reminded of the music of Gesualdo, but the Duke's tortured harmonies lay almost forty years in the future. In 1555 Lassus was responding to a debate on harmony taking place in Rome, and one can almost feel the sense of liberation in the young composer. Where Gesualdo would break the rules governing harmonic progressions, Lassus would bend and stretch them almost to breaking point – the result is a refreshing musical language which always retains its inner logic .The ever-excellent Brabant Ensemble perform the set with full choral forces, providing a different slant from the pioneering 1970s Teldec recording by the Munchener Vokalsolisten (3984-21710-2), sung with complete rhythmical freedom and one to a part, although with a superfluous harpsichord accompaniment. With the Brabant Ensemble we get the fullness of sound, but lose the ultimate freedom of tempo. As usual with these forces we get a packed CD with the six-part Magnificat *Quant'in mille anni il ciel*, three motets and the lovely six-part Mass *Amor ecco colei*. Yet again, Stephen Rice has found unfamiliar repertoire to bring to our attention in performances of superlative quality. *D. James Ross*

Peñalosa *Missa Nunc fue pena mayor* Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Les Sacqueboutiers, Dominique Vellard 58' 43"
Glossa GCD 922305
Ave vera cara Christi, In passione positus Jesus, Memorare Piisima, O bone Jesu, Sacris solemniis, Transeunte Domine, Tribularer + Julius de Modena *Tiento XIX* & anon. *Tres II*

This collaboration between two of the foremost French early music ensembles focuses on the music of the Castilian master Francisco de Peñalosa, and primarily the Mass setting he based on the song *Nunc fue pena mayor* by the Flemish composer Juan de Urrede. The singing from the Ensemble Gilles Binchois is beautifully balanced and blended and smoothly supported by the shawm, cornett, sackbut and dulcian of Les Sacquboutiers (no longer de Toulouse). The instrumental ensemble also performs a couple of consort pieces as well as motets, while the voices also present a number of motets on their own. If I have one slight criticism of the CD, it is that there is little distinctively Spanish about the performance, which while very polished is a little bland. I can't help feeling that Iberian performers might have incorporated a little more fire into their interpretation. Notwithstanding this reservation, the CD supplies an extremely instructive cross-section of Peñalosa's sacred music, while a very informative note by

Tess Knighton places the music soundly in its cultural context. *D. James Ross*

Phinot *Messe Quam pulchra es & motets* Ensemble Scandicus Jérémie Couleau, A Sei Voci, Jean-Louis Comoretto 58' 52"
Disques Pierre Verany PV 711031
Missa Quam pulchra es + Ceme meos, Ecce tu pulcher, Emitte domine, Osculetur me, Pater manifestavi, Si bona suscepimus & chant

This collaborative project designed to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of the French or Italian master in or around 1510 seems doomed to rely on approximations, and indeed the same may be said of the singing which lacks the focus necessary for full enjoyment of his music. Whether due to the combination of the two ensembles or the shortcomings of individual singers, the intonation never sounds entirely comfortable. However the performance of another of Dominique Phinot's masses and several motets confirms the fame that he enjoyed in his own lifetime, a reputation which never quite recovered from his death at the stake at the hands of the Inquisition on charges of gross indecency. There is nothing fancy about Phinot's writing, but the muscular polyphony is never less than imaginative and assembled with considerable artistry.
D. James Ross

Victoria *Missa Vidi speciosam* The Choir of Westminster Cathedral, David Hill
Hyperion Helios CDH55358 45' 07"
+ Ave Maria a4, Ave maris stella, Ne timeas Maria, Sancta Maria succurre miseris, Vidi speciosam

In its time (recorded 1984) this was a revelatory disc and it still sounds very beautiful, even if the pitch adopted occasionally means that relatively high bass and tenor parts dominate the texture. Essentially, the Cathedral choir, like their mixed voice secular counterparts, found a way of performing polyphony that did not so much reflect its age as find resonances in ours. To me in 2011, the tempi feel a little stodgy and the phrasing is dictated as much by the modern barlines as by the text, but there is no denying the glories of the music. It is a short programme though. Hyperion might consider more imaginative ways of re-cycling their back catalogue.
David Hansell

16th *Century Music for Viols* Fretwork, Rose Consort of Viols 66' 43"
Regis RRC1333
Tallis Complete Consort Music; Dowland *Lachrimae* +Bull, Byrd, Cornysh, Ferrabosco, Parsons, Taverner, Tye

This is a pleasing anthology of the pre-Fantasia English viol repertoire, often passed over by players. I enjoyed it as background music while trying to locate its origins, but full attention is rewarded. *Lachrimae* (played by the Roses) omits the seven suitably solemn songs by Dowland sung by Caroline Trevor with Jacob Heringman that alternated with the pavans on the source CD, Amon Ra CDSAR 055 of 1993. The Fretwork selection of Tallis and other Elizabethans also comes from Amon Ra (CDSAR 29 of 1988: the Gramophone Archive lists an intriguing Bull *In Nomine A 5*8!) I'd guessed the Fretwork vintage before checking – they play a bit more freely nowadays (which is a descriptive, not a qualitative comment). Why are the original recordings, or at least the dates, not noted on the disc or booklet? *CB*

Nuria Rial: The Spanish Album with José Miguel Moreno, Orphénica Lyra, & El Concierto Español 135' 27" (2 CDs)
Glossa Portrait GCD P10001
CD1: *Music from the Renaissance* CD2: *Music from the Renaissance and the early Baroque, Music from the late Baroque [Three different ensembles]*

The artiste of this profile project from Glossa is new to me, but after listening to the first CD which features a selection of Spanish music for solo voice with vihuela or guitar I was easily persuaded that this was a singer I definitely wanted to hear more of. The second CD opens with music for solo voice supported by a larger Renaissance consort and concludes with music for string ensemble and solo voice by Francisco Corselli. Nuria Rial proved entirely at home in all these repertoires, and her CV reveals a remarkably versatile voice, also suited to later more mainstream repertoire in the concert hall and opera house. Slightly reminiscent of the legendary Montserrat Figueras, but with none of her sometimes irritating mannerisms, Rial ornaments her vocal lines with passion and finesse bringing out their Spanishness without ever compromising the integrity of the music. Her stunning accompanist is José Miguel Moreno, who also directs both the later ensembles, and whose solo performances on vihuela and guitar are also superb. These are beautiful performances showcasing two absolutely first-class musicians whom I shall certainly be on the lookout for in the future.
D. James Ross

Sound out my voice! Italian madrigals and bastarda music for viol consort Orlando Viols 55' 59"
Lunaris (from www.orlandoviols.de)
Arcadelt, F. M. Bassani, Bovicelli, Dalla Casa, A. Ferrabosco II, Jarzebski, Ortiz, Palestrina, Rognoni, de Rore, Ruffo & Sandrin

The five violists play treble, tenor, two bass viols, lirone and violone, which makes for some gorgeous dark sonorities. All the usual suspects are represented – Ortiz (*O felici occhi miei* and *Douce memoire*) Dalla Casa (*Alla dolc' ombra, Ancor che col partire*) Bassani, Rognoni, and Ferrabosco's *Sound out my voice*. Their approach to this is typical. The bass viol plays the divisions beautifully, accompanied by the consort (occasionally plucking) including lirone and a violone which sometimes drops down the octave, as it were orchestrating the madrigal. This gives a wonderful performance, expressive, lyrical and beautifully poised. They bring fresh ideas to this repertoire including, for example in the Dalla Casa *Ancor...*, sharing the bastarda divisions between members of the consort, Ortiz's divisions on treble of *Douce memoire* played on the tenor – a lovely boxy sound, and a wonderful piece by Bassani with divisions for the Violone, a great boomy bass, but clear as a bell. The playing is mellifluous, beautifully tuned, agile and deft, and always full of passion and light. Highly recommended. *Robert Oliver*

17th CENTURY

[Biber] *Sonatas by J. S. Bach and H. I. F. Biber* Evgeny Sviridov *vln*, Zita Mikijanska *hpscd* 65' 46" *see under* Bach

Buxtehude *The Complete Organ Works, Vol. 4* Christopher Herrick (org of Trinity College, Cambridge) 71' 06"
Hyperion CDA67876
BuxWV 142, 148, 156, 158, 161, 164, 167, 173, 176, 180, 182, 190, 196, 197, 211, 214, 223 & 225

Having recorded Buxtehude in Denmark, Norway and France, Christopher Herrick turns to England for the fourth in his series, playing a rare example of an English organ suitable for German baroque music – the 1976 Trinity College Metzler organ, mostly new, but containing several ranks from Buxtehude's era. As I have written many times before, I find Herrick's articulation a little mannered at times; it seems to have echoes of the neo-baroque style that became prevalent in the 1970s, but that could be just a matter of personal taste rather than interpretational insight. I would also debate a few of his registration choices. But if you can live with that, and are happy not hearing an organ more directly in line with

Buxtehude's sound world, then this might be worth a listen. One curiosity is that the thump of the fingers on the keybed can be heard, suggesting either a very close microphone position (which the acoustic doesn't support) or a heavy touch – or that the thump sound comes from somewhere else in the action. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Falconieri *Canzone, Sinfonie & Fantasie* Ensemble Isabella d'Este, Ariane Maurette
Pan Classics PC10248 61' 01"

The best way to give you an indication of the variety of the thirty-one tracks on this CD is to give you the full title of Falconieri's collection, which was published in Naples in 1650: *Il primo libro di Canzone, Sinfonie, Fantasie, Capricci, Brandi, Correnti, Gagliarde Alemane, Volte per Violini, e Viole, overo altro Stromento à uno, due, e trè con il Basso Continuo.* Ensemble Isabella d'Este has taken full advantage of the licence to use a variety of other instruments, with cornett and recorders as well as violin and viols and a selection of plucked and keyboard continuo. It's hard to tell from this colourful and elegant music with a strong Spanish flavour that Falconieri (or Falconiero as he called himself on his title page) was living in extremely troubled times, with a revolution just having taken place in Naples where he was maestro of the Royal Chapel, though there are some intriguing titles in the collection which refer to political events and personalities of the time. Judging by the dates on the cover, this CD first appeared in 1995: it certainly merits a reissue. *Victoria Helby*

Tonos Humanos songs by José Marin Felix Rieth *T*, Manuel Vilas *arpa de dos ordenes* la mà de guido LMG 2101 54' 50"

Rieth is an excellent tenor, and with his Spanish/Swiss background, more than qualified to perform these splendid songs with clear diction and pronunciation. One can hear every perfectly-lisped syllable of his closely-recorded Spanish, coloured with a Castilian accent. Sadly, unless you have very good Spanish, you will not have a clue what any of these songs, so clearly enunciated, are about, because there is no English translation of the texts to the 18 songs in the booklet or on the website. There are, however, notes in English, German, Spanish and Catalan and the texts are printed in Spanish.

Vilas, in his booklet notes, justifies his use of the cross-strung harp saying 'the accompaniment [of the harp] is... the most effective way of making the text... more understandable' – not if you don't know the language! I would like to know what the poems set by a defrocked priest, singer, cat-burglar and alleged murderer, etc are about! These songs by Marin (c.1619-99) are so good that they deserve to be much better known. Vilas' crisply played harp accompaniment allows the singer a support greatly superior to the usual guitar, although Rienth's 'clean' Lieder performance style could benefit from an injection of the kind of sun-ripened Iberian joy and exuberance that Montserrat Figueras brings to her disc of many of these same songs (although I don't care much for Savall's distracting castanets and percussion). A 'Library' disc this then, rather than a recital to return to repeatedly. Buy the Savall selection instead, and allow Mrs. Savall to clasp you by the hands and whirl you around the room. *David Hill*

Monteverdi/Orff *Orpheus, Klage der Ariadne (1940 versions)* Soloists, Münchner Rundfunkorchester, Ulf Schirmer 72' 31"
cpo 777656-2

My first meaningful encounter with Monteverdi was through a 1954 Archiv LP which included the *Sonata sopra Santa Maria* and *Lamento d'Arianna*. I don't think I realised it, but that must have been the first time I heard cornetti. The original *Gramophone* reviewer was remarkably perceptive: "This performance is particularly fascinating because the instrumental group includes two cornetti ([z]inke), whose curious kazoo-like quality helps us to understand why they were once used so extensively alongside the human voice – for they sound at times as if they were actually uttering words. The lusty boys' voices which repeat the plainsong fragment over and over again are at the other extreme from Miss Ritchie's dulcet coo in the Oiseau-Lyre recording, but to my ears much more authentic." I'm afraid that I don't have a copy of the record, but without being too rude to Margaret/Mabel Ritchie (I was once one of the three backing singers for a very private run-through of the *Lamento della Ninfa* with her as soloist), I can understand the reviewer's preference. What I remember of Orff's accompaniment of Ariadne's Lament was the percussive harpsichord sound (the reviewer interpreted it as two players on one harpsichord, with a double bass) which was far more effective than his fuller instrumentation on this CD (as far as I can remember – it was over 50 years ago when I heard it!)

It is Orfeo that impresses here. I suspect that most readers will hate it, but for me it engages with the work in a way that the polite and fussy Stevens and Leppard versions of the 1960s couldn't match. Much of Monteverdi's subtlety goes, but the concision of the story and the power of the music is impressive. The scoring may not be authentic, but the imagination of an unconventional composer and his insight into the music makes it an intriguing and, in its way, convincing arrangement. Much of the recitative is cut – but what remains is mostly excellently sung, backed by elaborate but in context expressive instrumentation – I love the way some dramatic passages are introduced by a trombone playing the bass – and the end is changed; but I think that it is well worth hearing.

I suspect that the conductor has experience of a more HIPish style of singing than Orff knew in 1920 (when he first worked on the music) or 1940 (the date of the versions recorded), and the shaping of the phrases is often quite Italianate, even though the text is in German. Don't be put off by the short bit of German speech in track 2. Despite (or perhaps because of) the cuts and orchestration, I found it very moving. *CB*

Purcell *Twelve Sonatas in Three Parts* Retrospect Trio (Sophie Gent, Matthew Truscott *vlns*, Jonathan Manson *b.viol*, and Matthew Halls *kbd* 74' 45"
Linn CKD 374

These twelve sonatas were among the set works I had to study in my first year at St Andrews. Although I had played a reconstructed "violin sonata in G minor" at school, I found the dense counterpoint all a little bamboozling, and it was only after looking at what had gone before (not only music by the "fam'd Italian masters" so often quoted in this context, but Purcell's native predecessors) that I began to make any sense of it. I do not recollect which recordings we were advised to listen to, and I certainly recall no attempt actually to play the things. On the few occasions when I have played them, there has always been some unease, especially when playing from facsimile, because Purcell's imitative points so often strike us as harmonically daring and have an unexpectedness about them. All this is by way of a preamble to what I can only describe as the best recording of these works I have ever heard; four musicians so at the top of their game that they have the luxury of being able to play *with* the music. Things that have previously

sounded slightly awkward now make perfect sense – thirty years on from St Andrews, I now find that I'm listening to the music, rather than hearing the structure, and what marvellous music it is! I have a feeling this recording might bring Linn another award to put on their mantlepiece. It certainly ought to. *BC*

A. Scarlatti *Venere, Amore e Ragione* Veronica Lima *Venere,* Gabriella Costa *Amore*, Elena Biscuola *Ragione,* Orchestra Barocca Les Elements, Piero Cartosio
La Bottega Discantia **BDI 209** 54' 49"

By a remarkable coincidence, *EMR142* carried my reviews of two of the few truly great Alessandro Scarlatti recordings, one of them La Risonanza's Glossa CD of the serenatas *Serenata a Filli* and *Le muse Urania*. Like that pair, *Venere, Amore e Ragione*, which has a text by Silvio Stampiglia, is another serenata composed in Rome in 1706. Closer in spirit to the lighter *Urania* than *Serenata a Filli*, it is a charming pastoral piece based on the moral conceit of Venus's concern that Amore will become weakened by the influence of Reason. Many of the short *da capo* arias are in triple time and dances are in fact introduced near the end of the work.

There any comparison ends. The new disc is but a pallid reflection in the mirror of the glory of La Risonanza's achievement. For this at least part of the blame must go to the "seat of the recording" – to quote the booklet – what sounds like a large empty chapel or salon at the abbey of San Martino delle Scale in Sicily. The three singer's voices are surrounded by a resonant halo, making meaningful projection of words difficult, though Veronica Lima's Venere tries hard to convey at least a semblance of character. Gabriella Costa brings to the role of Amore little more than a pert, soubrette-ish soprano and some questionable intonation, while mezzo Elena Biscuola sounds thoroughly ill at ease with the register of Ragione's part. The orchestra plays with a stylish alertness in ripienos, but the many concertino passages expose too many examples of poor intonation. As with other La Bottega Discantica CD I've reviewed in this issue, there is no English translation, which for me places the final nail in the coffin of an undistinguished issue. *Brian Robins*

Schein *Fontana d'Israel* Rheinische Kantorei, Hermann Max (2 CDs)
Capriccio C5069

This is a re-release of a 1989 recording, and has survived the intervening years rather well. Schein's 1623 *Israelis Brünnlein* brought together new works with earlier compositions dating back to his appointment as Leipzig's Thomaskantor. He published it at a time when the Thirty Years War (one of the most devastating examples of the Christian habit of periodically slaughtering each other) was beginning to affect life and music. Schein saw it as something of a stopgap of religious quotations dedicated to "serious music experts and lovers" before he could return to his motets and concerti "when better times came". These attractive miniatures include several delightful little moments of vocal interplay – in *O Herr Jesu Christ*, for example, where a little arpeggio-like figure is passed back and forth between the voices. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

I haven't heard this performance, but I was incredibly impressed when I sang some of them a few years ago. CB

Schelle *Sacred Music* The King's Consort, Robert King 78' 54"
Hyperion Helios CDH55373

Aus der Tiefen, Christus der ist mein Leben, Christus ist des Gesetzes Ende, Gott sende dein Licht, Komm Jesu komm, Lobe den Herrn meine Seele, Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar & Wohl dem der den Herrn fürchtet

Given that I typeset some of the music for this recording, it might surprise some people to learn that this is the first time I have heard these performances. I wholeheartedly agreed with Robert King's belief that the music of Bach's predecessors at Leipzig was surely worthy of exploration and performance, and the final selection he made for the Schelle disc confirms it. From the despair of *Aus der Tiefen* to the outburst of joy at the announcement of Christ's birth in *Vom Himmel hoch*, Schelle uses many techniques that owe a lot to Rosenmüller and Knüpfer, but his setting of *Komm, Jesu, komm* would not pale into insignificance alongside another well-known setting. Indeed, a concert combining pieces by Schelle and the great Bach would be an enlightening one, I'm sure. *BC*

Schütz *Italienische Madrigale* Dresdner Kammerchor, Hans-Christoph Rademann
Carus 83.237 57' 21"

The remarkable fruits of the young Schütz's study visit to Venice in 1609, his opus 1 madrigals (1611) remind one unsurprisingly of the work of his teacher Giovanni Gabrieli, from whom he was also to learn so much about the composition of spectacular church music. This appears to be part of an extended project to record the entire works of Schütz, and it is unfortunate that of all of Schütz's compositions these seem to me to be the least suited to chamber-choir performance. This is one-voice-to-a-part repertoire, and although the 18 Dresden singers sing expressively and with great precision, there are simply too many of them for my taste. But if you don't mind your madrigals 'beefy' then this is probably for you.

D. James Ross

With a fairly short duration, it might have been interesting to have added a selection of Gabrieli's other northern pupils who published such 'passing-out' collections. CB

Around Van Eyck Ardalus Ensemble, Karen Ketels 71' 21"
Phaedra DDD92068

Music by Dowland, Gastoldi, Sweelinck, Uccellini, anon & Van Eyck (comp. & arr.)

This CD takes some of the most well-known sets of variations from Van Eyck's *Der Fluyten Lust-hof* and links them with the originals upon which they were based and with other contemporary arrangements. To give you a couple of examples, *Amarilli mia bella* comes in the Van Eyck version, Caccini's original song, and as an arrangement from *'T Uitnement Kabinet* -- two volumes of settings for two or three violins or other instruments published by Paulus Matthysz in Amsterdam in 1646 and 1649, the same years in which he also published *Der Fluyten Lust-hof.* The verses of Dowland's *Come again* are introduced by the Van Eyck version and separated by an anonymous instrumental setting from *De Goodenfluyt Hemel* published, also by Matthysz, in 1644. A few of the tracks are arrangements of two or three pieces combined by Jan Devlieger, a member of the Ardalus Ensemble. The songs are charmingly sung by soprano Sarah Abrams and the booklet provides the original words and translations. Altogether this is a very well-thought out and enjoyable CD performed on a variety of appropriate instruments (recorder, violin, gamba, lute, etc) and it is to be recommended both for its performance and the interesting concept behind it. *Victoria Helby*

Zieleński *Opera Omnia Vol. 4* Emma Kirkby, Zygmunt Magiera, Łukasz Motkowicz, Joel Frederiksen *STBarB*, Collegium Zieleński, Stanisław Gałonski 74' 21"
DUX 0819

This leading figure of the early Polish baroque is represented by only one

surviving work, his major cycle *Offertoria et Communiones totius anni* published in Venice in 1611. This is the fourth volume of a complete recording of the entire publication, and as such vindicates the admiration in which he was held in his own lifetime, and goes some way to explaining why the Primate Wojciech Baranowski deemed his music worthy of publication in Venice. While international soloists such as Emma Kirkby and Joel Frederiksen cope extremely well with the virtuosic demands of Zieleński's music, not all of the singing and instrumental playing of the Collegium Zieleński's is of this high standard; but as the former sing the vast majority of the solo and duet motets, this isn't too much of a disappointment. The inevitable comparison with the music of Monteverdi leaves Zielenski unsurprisingly in the shade, but while his music sounds a little pedestrian by comparison with his great contemporary, it is not without its charm and clearly deserves to be heard. It would have been interesting to have heard some of Zieleński's choral and indeed polychoral music interspersed amongst the solo and duet repertoire – presumably this will be featuring in a later volume. *D. James Ross*

Alas poore Men: Songs of Melancholy.
Unidas (Theresa Dlouhy, *S*, Eva Reiter *vdg*)
Gramola 98911 68'09"
Songs by, Campian, Dowland, Hume, Morley, etc

This is a lovely disc, and I'll return to praising the performances anon, but of particular interest to me was the usage of the cover photo of the artists themselves, and what it tells us about how we 'sell' early music today, in both senses of the word. Bear with me. The CD liner cover features the two stunning young Austrian ladies of Unidas on a black leather couch, wearing, nay, flouncing diaphanous gauze 'fairy' skirts – and lovely they look too. I have no problem with such a cover – it's fun, and early music needs fun. It could certainly cause anyone, male or female, to pause and investigate further if seen in a CD shop display, or online, and if employed as a large roadside billboard might even cause traffic accidents. So, a cunning marketing ploy of 2 serious and talented musicians deliberately adopting a post-modern, ironic, 'music totty' pose, which appears to relate to the 'Alas poore Men' of the title, as if to say 'poor blokes – they just don't get us' (which is not what Hume's text means, of course, but who cares?). Sorry for the expression 'totty' back there, but they posed like that, and they're not daft – we are clearly invited by Unidas to think 'Pfwoar'. Lain on the floor in front of the couch, carefully completing the composition of the photo is a full-frontal shot of Ms. Reiter's almost equally sexy gamba. The CD comes with a pointless cardboard slip case – pointless because it repeats all of the info that is on the CD box, but with one notable exception – the gamba itself is almost cropped out of the slip case version. Thus the prospective buyer may be initially drawn to the disc by the two stunners on the cover, yet not be put off by the scary 'classical baggage' of that big red wooden thingy with strings! Here's my point: their record company has replaced the original sleeve with the cropped, gamba-light version, presumably to tone down the 'heavy' classical perception. I find this fascinating – aren't marketing folks a hoot?

Yet the disc itself is a serious presentation of English songs to the lute and particularly the gamba. This programme needs no such gimmicks – it is an excellent recording of rarely-recorded repertoire that gives us a fresh perspective on alternative 17th century performance practices other than the ubiquitous lute and voice. Theresa Dlouhy's pronunciation of English, and more important, her diction, is exemplary, with a voice that more than once made me think I was listening to Emily van Evera. The viol playing of Eva Reiter is far more than a mere underscoring bass line to the songs, and her solos are emotionally charged and expressive gems. For a disc subtitled 'Songs of Melancholy' this is a delight and joy. This disc has made more return visits to the CD tray than any other over the past few weeks – always a good sign. Want more! *David Hill*

You can see the cover by googling the record number; not all sellers include the picture, and the couple I have looked at give the viol-less version. CB

Baroque Duets Fiona Campbell, David Walker, Ironwood, Neal Peres Da Costa
Vexations 840 Pty Ltd 840-1101 57' 35"
Music by Cavalli, Handel, Monteverdi, Steffani

This CD has got to take the prize as the least appetizingly presented of my batch this issue. The monochrome cover in shades of flesh with the two featured artists standing with their arms folded does little to entice potential listeners, but essentially the recording 'does what it says on the tin'. The two baroque opera specialists, Australian mezzo Fiona Campbell and American countertenor David Walker, perform a sequence of operatic duets with due drama and passion and with enviable technical assurance. In a world where we have got used to clever thematic links between repertoire and generally superb visual presentation, this CD seems oddly mundane, but the singing is accomplished enough and never less than emotionally charged. They even manage a premiere recording of a Handel duet cantata 'Caro auto di mia doglia', an interesting early piece reworked later in the composer's life. This is the first project by Vexations 840 a Sydney-based enterprise with the declared aim of making recordings of music which would 'otherwise not happen' – no excuse however for such a dull production.

D. James Ross

Byrd to Blow: The English Baroque Organ
Robin Walker (St-Giles-in-the-Fields)
Herald HAVPCD 363 73' 39"
Blow, Bull, Byrd, Gibbons, Purcell & Tomkins

The St Giles-in-the-Fields organ is one of the most interesting of the recent reconstructions of important English historic organs and an instrument that I know well. Some of the pipework dates back to the mid-17th century but it grew Topsy-like, as organs tend to, over the intervening centuries. Following research by the late Stephen Bicknell and Nicholas Thistlethwaite, the organ builder William Drake reconstructed the organ to its specification in the middle of the 19th century, retaining all the older pipework. Although it is now in essence a mid-19th century organ, the earlier pipework is of major importance, and it is that that is featured on this CD, played by the organist of the church at the time the project was conceived. Robin Walker's playing is meticulous and careful, with well-defined articulation and with none of the mannerisms that could irritate with repeated listening. Many of the pieces played date from before the oldest pipework in the organ, but the lack of earlier surviving instruments in England makes that inevitable. Walker does not stick strictly to the pipework that the composers might have been familiar with, using for example a (not very authentic) oboe for a piece by Tomkins and a chorus of 19th century pipework for Bull. But what matter – the organ sounds splendid and works as a unity, whatever the age of the pipes. This a valuable survey of the internationally important English organ school from Byrd to Blow. The audible ticking of the church clock is an attractive addition to the silences after pieces. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Chamber Vespers: Miniature Masterpieces of the Italian Baroque The Gonzaga Band
Chandos *Chaconne* CHAN 0782 62' 16"
Music by Banchieri, Cazzati, Cima, Crotti, Finetti, Frescobalid, Monferrato, Petrobelli, Piccinini, Sances, Tarditi,

The ensemble has Faye Newton as the main singer, with contributions from Clare Wilkinson, Jamie Savan and Gawain Glenton *cornetti*, Richard Sweeney *theorbo*, and Steven Devine *kbd*. The only Vespers programme with small forces like this I can remember is a concert in Birmingham by Maria Cristina Kiehr. But there is evidently plenty of suitable music. This is a Marian cycle, with motets and instrumental pieces after each psalm, concluding with *Ave maris stella*, the Magnificat and *Regina caeli*: 6 of the 14 items are claimed to be first recordings. While the music is a little more predictable than Monteverdi, it is attractive, and pleasingly performed; if I wanted an antidote to a big, choral 1610 Vespers, this would be the ideal ear-cleanser! Singers and instruments work brilliantly together, and the music feels just right. *CB*

Early Dreams Constantinople, Françoise Atlan, etc 58:35
Analekta AN 2 9989
Music by Murcia, Ribayaz, Sanz & M. Oesterle

I admit to a degree of puzzlement about this CD. To quote CD's own description: "The virtuoso dialogues between the baroque guitar, the Persian setar, the viola da gamba and the percussion instruments recreate a unique sound, one that is characteristic of our group. It's a sound that is both ancient and modern, tinged with Mediterranean and mid-eastern sonorities, this time with a daring gaze towards the New World, nourished with respect and admiration for one of the most celebrated women scholars of New Spain, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz." So everything, and nothing. At its worst, this is a self-indulgent jam session on a bunch of unrelated instruments, occasionally with poetry unsympathetically shouted over it. And yet there is some fine playing and singing here too. Traditional music alternates with tracks 'based on' 17th-century compositions, and the most convincing passages are a funky Canarios by Gaspar Sanz and a Fandango by Santiago de Murcia. My feeling is that somebody needs to get a grip on all the undoubted musical talent coursing around this group and focus it on some worthwhile repertoire. *D. James Ross*

Il più misero amante: La Cantata italiana Camerata Hermans 55' 10"
Discantica 140
Music by Ercole Bernabei, Carissimi, Locatelli, Nardini, Stradella & Vivaldi

Don't be fooled by the "English text" or legend on the box. The only English you'll get here is in the rather good notes, La Bottega Discantica being another of those Italian labels that treats its non-native speaking customers with disdain when it comes to the translation of vocal texts. The sin of omission is here compounded by a (presumably Italian) soprano whose diction is so poor that she might be singing a recipe for spaghetti Bolognese for all one knows. Indeed, before they dropped off into an agreeable food and wine-induced doze, one can well imagine the well-heeled Roman cognoscenti for whom the 17th-century chamber cantatas by Stradella, Carissimi and Ercole Bernabei (1622-1687) were written making a mental note not to issue an invitation to these performers to come to their place. Not because they are bad: Christina Paolucci's soprano is pleasant enough in an anonymous sort of way and Fabio Ceccarelli proves himself a more than half-decent flautist in sonatas by Locatelli and Carissimi. But continuo lines plod and I fear that overall the whole enterprise proclaims dull mediocrity. *Brian Robins*

Jauchzet dem Herren alle Welt amarcord, cappella sagittariana dresden
Raumklang Rkap10110
G. Gabrieli *Canzon, In Ecclesiis*, Monteverdi *Gloria a7*, Pallavicino *Confitebor tibi Domine*, Peranda *Fasciculus myrrhae*, M. Praetorius *Hallelujah Christ ist erstanden*, Schütz *Es steh Gott auf, Ich will dem Herrn von ganzen Herrzen, Jauchzet dem Herren alle Welt, Vasto mar*

This CD opens with the most ear-catching sound I have heard in a long time: the tenor's "Va-" at the beginning of Schütz's madrigal, *Vasto mar*. It might seem an odd thing to say, but it sounds "so Italian" – as if Concerto Italiano had taken to singing the northern European madrigal repertoire, shaping individual notes and broader phrases, taking liberties with the tactus here and there to stress the words. Indeed, if I heard the CD without any reference to the booklet, I doubt very much if Schütz's name would have suggested itself at all. There may seem little to bind the programme together – I suppose "the influence of Italy on German music" might be the theme; but the items are so disparate. That said, one thing that is true of all of them: they are of the highest quality. Most impressive of all is the opening to Peranda's marvellous *Fasciculus myrhae*; initially, it seems a *stile antico* a cappella piece, so when the instruments enter and the texture gets ever more expansive, there is an utter sense of awe. The performances are beautiful – that opening note was truly a sign of things to come; the singers and players get under the skin of this (mostly) little-known music. The voices of Amarcord blend beautifully, yet each has a distinctive solo voice. I cannot recommend this CD highly enough. *BC*

Lamentarium Tears of Artemisia, Helen of Troy, Mary Magdalene, The Blessed Virgin Atalante, Erin Headley 67' 17"
Destino Classics NI6152
Music by Luigi Marazolli, Mazzocchi, Pasqualini & Rossi

At first sight this might seem to be just the CD to shake you out of a good mood with its series of lamentations from the likes of the aged Helen of Troy, Artemisia, Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary. It will also bring back memories for those who heard Atalante's debut concert in the Purcell Room in October 2009, where this programme was given in an attractively staged version. This is another example of the increasing hold on the academic side of early music at Southampton University, where Erin Headley is a research fellow, and where "generous funding" from the Arts and Humanities Research Council of Great Britain enabled this group (with personnel from Jordan, Greece, the USA, Sweden, Holland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, South Africa – and Great Britain) to research and perform the lirone repertoire in 17th century Rome, notably during the time of the Barberini Pope and Cardinals. But, however luxuriant the accompaniment (with 3 viols, lirone/viol, harpsichord, arpa doppia and two chittarrone), it is the exquisite singing of Nadine Balbeisi and Theodora Baka that most impressed me, as they did in 2009. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Nobil Donna Suzie LeBlanc, La Nef, Alexander Weimann
ATMA Classique ACD2 2605
Music by Ferrari, Frescobaldi, Kapsberger, Landi, Marazzoli, Palestrina, Rognoni, Luigi Rossi, Sances, Storace & Vitali

The Barberini family included Urban VIII, Pope in the early 17th century and a great patron of the arts with – judging from the selection recorded here – excellent taste, including a marked penchant for chaconnes.

Suzie LeBlanc's voice is phenomenal;

even when still and unvibrated, it has a warmth like the glow of a candle flame. Every note she sings is inflected to colour the word or the melody; when this is imitated by the violin and cornetto, as in Landi's *Mentre cantiam*, the effect is astonishing. Sometimes clear diction is sacrificed in favour of affect, when her singing takes on an ecstatic, translucent quality. She combines a thorough understanding and compatibility with the styles with agile and tireless singing: marvel at her galloping runs of semiquavers in the Ferrari chaconne, contrasted with beautifully-paced recitative

The interpretation of Landi's *Amarillide, deh vieni* is derivative of L'Arpeggiata's 2002 recording, with its pizzicato-and-percussion orchestration, but nothing about the imitation is slavish. These players are not only top-notch technically, but they are bursting with the fun of the music. Alexander Weimann's riotous playing of Storace's Ciaconna made me smile again and again as he turned the corners into ever more exotic keys, emphasized by the harpsichord's unequal tuning. With violin, cello, cornett, recorder, theorbo, baroque guitar, triple harp, harpsichord and organ many combinations are exploited for all their potential. I particularly enjoyed the Vitali Ciaccona with its brilliant arpeggios by violin and cornett.

This is a hugely enjoyable recording which I have listened to repeatedly, each time wishing more that I had lived at the Barberini Palace. *Selene Mills*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***Trauer-Music: Music to mourn Prince Leopold*** Emily Van Evera, Clare Wilkinson, Charles Daniels, Thomas Megioranza *SATB*, Taverner Consort & Players, Andrew Parrott 78' 40"

No – not another name for the *Trauer-Ode* (BWV 198): that was composed as a mourning Ode for the wife of Augustus the Strong on 17 October 1727. A year later, Bach's former employer, Prince Leopold of Cöthen, died and Bach was commissioned to prepare music for his belated f(Curwen, 1914, with four pages of adverts for his music)uneral and memorial service on 23-24 March 1729. The libretto is extant, but not the score. However, Picander's text is clearly written to match existing music, so can be underlaid to various movements in the *Trauer-Ode* and the *St Matthew Passion*. What cannot be sourced thus – the recits – are adapted or composed by the editor/conductor. The time for close examination of the reconstruction is best left till the score is available.*

It is somewhat disconcerting listening to a mixture of music one knows from two separate works and it is difficult to feel the cohesion and shape of the four sections of the music. I'm coming to accept it, but it has taken several hearings. A more positive approach is to enjoy an anthology of some of Bach greatest music. The performance is excellent, the outstanding movement being, as it does so often in the St Matthew Passion original, 'Erhalte mich' (alias 'Erbarme dich'), beautifully sung by Clare Wilkinson – as impressive as she was in our charity *Messiah* in June. With Andrew Parrott as conductor, we expect one-to-a-part choruses, which is what we get, and very good they sound. There's a good booklet note from Robert Mealy written for the 2004 New York performance and another by Andrew, on the reconstruction. Interesting though this project is, we do need him to be recording much more than he has been this millennium! *CB*

I think I'm meant to have some involvement, but I haven't seen it yet

Bach ***The Organ Works Vol VI*** Margaret Phillips (1738 Müller organ, St Bavo, Haarlem, 2004 Aubertin organ, St Louis-en-l'Île, Paris) 151' 42" (2 CDs)
Regent REGCD307
CD 1: BWV 548, 530, 695, 718, 595, 744, 694, 735, 586, 747, 736, 727& 544. CD 2: BWV 550, 596, 712, 720, 542, 740, 574, 525, 577, 691, 690 & 566.

These CDs allow the listener to compare what is arguably the most famous historic organ in the world with one of the most notable modern instruments, built under the influence of historic style. The first CD is recorded on the 1738 Haarlam organ, the second on Aubertin's recent organ in Paris, based on the 1746 Hildebrandt organ in Naumberg but with added stops from the North German school. The former was originally built with equal temperament, the second is in Young's temperament – and both organs speak into friendly acoustics. The two CDs each make well-balanced recital programmes in their own right, each including major free works, chorale-based works and Italianate concertos or trios, with a mixture of the popular and less-well known. They also cover the whole range of Bach's musical style – although works such as *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (BWV 718), *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* (BWV 720), the Toccata in E (BWV 566) and the rarely heard *Christus, der uns selig macht* (which may not be by Bach) are in a style that Buxtehude would have recognised, the massive E minor Prelude and Fugue is one of the most powerful of Bach's later works. It is good to hear the rarely-performed *Wir glauben all' an einen Gott* (BWV 740) with its unusual double pedal part and *Tierce en taille* chorale line. Margaret Philips plays with her usual meticulous sense of rhythm, pulse and articulation, bringing a grandeur to the large-scale works like the B minor Prelude and Fugue as well as a delightful sensitivity to a small-scale piece played on a single stop. And for organists who live to hear 32' reeds, these appear on both CDs, but only in last few bars of the last pieces. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach ***Suites & Partitas*** Dom André Laberge *hpscd*
Analekta AN 2 9767
BWV 996, 997, 1003 & 1004

Dom André Laberge must be unique in being both a Benedictine Abbot and a recording keyboard player. He was elected to his office at the Abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac in Québec, where he is also organist, in 2006. He is a very accomplished musician who plays with authority on a William Dowd harpsichord after Mietke. He is particularly strong in movements such as fugues where his steadily-held tempi and strong sense of forward drive are an advantage. His playing in the slower movements is a bit literal and sometimes a bit heavy-handed: I would have liked more flexibility at times. He does, however, give a particularly effective account of the D-minor solo violin Chaconne, which has been successfully arranged for harpsichord by Pierre Gouin. Here virtuosity comes easily but not at the expense of a strong musical sensibility. *Noel O'Regan*

Bach ***Famous works on pedal harpsichord***
Luc Beauséjour
Analekta AN 2 9770
BWV 529, 535, 541, 545, 565, 582, 605, 638, 639, 642, 643, 645, 690 & 731

Despite the 'famous works' label which initially put me off, this is a very successful recording, showing what can be done in playing Bach organ works on a specially-constructed pedal harpsichord, with separate strings and soundboard for the pedal, made by Yves Beaupré and based on both Hemsch and Blanchet. The Canadian Beauséjour's playing is uniformly strong

to build up quite a head of steam at climactic passages so that one hardly misses the wider choice of registrations available on the organ. The headline pieces – the Toccata and Fugue in D minor and the C minor Passacaille – come over very well, but so too do a number of chorale preludes. Recommended as providing very viable alternative versions of some well-known pieces. *Noel O'Regan*

J. S. Bach *The Well-Tempered Clavichord* Jaroslav Tůma 301' 29" (4 CDs)
ARTA F10165

This boxed set combines an earlier recording of Book I (originally issued by Supraphon in 2002) with a more recently-recorded Book II. They are played on a couple of clavichords made in the 1990s by Martin Kather which have been well recorded so as to provide a good dynamic range, while preserving their smaller sounds. Inevitably I enjoyed some of these performances more than others and I generally preferred the mellower sound of the instrument used for Book I to that for Book II: the latter is brighter and seems to have encouraged a somewhat more percussive playing style. The playing is always very clear, with the voices well articulated. The wide variety of styles found in the 48 is well characterised throughout, exploiting the clavichord's particular advantages. This is a rewarding and very useful undertaking. *Noel O'Regan*

[Bach & Biber] *Sonatas by J. S. Bach and H. I. F. Biber* Evgeny Sviridov *vln*, Zita Mikijanska *hpscd* 65' 46"
Genuin Classics GEN11207

I had rather expected to be disappointed by this recording, since all the publicity surrounding the violinist is of winning mainstream violin competitions, including the Menuhin in Cardiff and Paganini in Genoa (2008) and then the Heifetz in Vilnius (2009). Apparently he came under the spell of a recording of the Brandenburgs by Reinhard Goebel and was inspired (without informing his teachers in St Petersburg) to try his hand at baroque violin. Again without the knowledge of his mentors, he entered the 2010 Bach Competition in Leipzig and won. Listening to this CD, it is easy to understand why. The heading of the booklet note is: "Imaginative power and virtuoso brilliance". This can apply equally to the two composers represented, and the performer. He plays two sonatas by Biber (including the A major piece notated as if for two violins) accompanied by a single manual Giusti copy, and two sonatas by Bach (BWV1016 and 1021) where the harpsichord is a copy of the 1763 Taskin in Edinburgh, but you'll have to wait until p. 10 of the booklet to find out who is sitting at the keyboard – the Latvian Zita Mikijanska works in Leipzig, and is very much more than mere sidekick to the great violinist. Frankly, the presentation of this CD does her a great wrong. The admittedly wonderful Sviridov ends his recital with a glittering account of the E major Partita. *BC*

Bach *The Complete Flute Sonatas* Lisa Beznosiuk *fl*, Richard Tunnicliffe *vlc*, Paul Nicholson *hpscd*, with Rachel Brown *fl*, and Elizabeth Kenny *archlute*
Hyperion CDD22077 (2002) 121' 38" (2 CDs)
BWV 1013, 1020, 1030-35, 1039

This is a welcome reissue of a pair of CDs which originally appeared in 2002. They include not just the sonatas for flute and obbligato harpsichord which are undoubtedly by JS Bach but also three sonatas which may have been composed, at least partly, by one of his sons, probably CPE. Also included are the Partita in A minor for solo flute and the trio sonata in G major for two flutes and continuo. Lisa Beznosiuk has a lovely warm tone and excellent intonation. She gives us some beautifully controlled slow movements and plays with apparently effortless fluency in the technically challenging fast movements. The supporting players are equally admirable and Nicholas Anderson has provided informative notes. *Victoria Helby*

Bach *French & English Suites* Stefan Temmingh *rec*, Domen Marinčič *gamba*, Axel Wolf *lute* 73' 53"
OEHMS Classics OC 795
BWV 598, 645, 807, 814, 816, 1000, 1006a, 1017

According to the notes, this CD emphasises the lyrical qualities of Bach's harpsichord works. For me the faster movements are the most enjoyable, but there is plenty here for those who like their classics to be smooth. The programme opens with a *siciliano* from the violin suite in C minor, but the greater part of the CD is devoted to transcriptions for accompanied recorder of the second English and the third and fifth French suites. I particularly enjoyed the two transcriptions for solo lute, one by Bach himself. *Victoria Helby*

Campra *Le Carnaval de Venise* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 129' 1"
Glossa GCD921622 (2 CDs)

You have to love an opera that begins in St Mark's Square, Venice and in which Act III requires 'A square with magnificent palaces on every side; canals, on which can be seen many gondolas, converge on the square'. Oh for a DVD, preferably filmed on location. As the note explains, Campra bridged the chronological gap between Lully and Rameau as well as the cultural gap between France and Italy and in this excellent piece Act III is actually an opera within an opera when the cast sit down to watch an Italian and Italianate scene from the story of Orpheus. Hervé Niquet excels at holding together such pieces as this and the flow of the drama is excellent. Orchestrally, I do feel that the added percussion and high-pitched recorders are surplus to requirements though the crisp singing of the chorus is to be admired. Most of the time the solo singing is also very good, though there are passages in which vibrato intrudes too much upon the musical lines of almost everyone. This isn't so much a matter of wrongness or rightness, more a case of the instruments and the voices inhabiting strangely different worlds within the same work. But I did enjoy it overall and the excellent booklet (note, synopsis and libretto translation) is a model of what these things should be. (For how not to do it, see my Desmazures, Mir i Llussà and Rameau reviews below.) *David Hansell*

Croft *Violin Sonatas and Harpsichord Suites* Duo Dorado: Hazel Brooks *vln*, David Pollock *hpscd* 67'14"
CRD 3529

David Pollock is, I know, an enthusiast for William Croft's music, and it is therefore good to have this recording by Duo Dorado of some interesting and unusual English music written in the very last years of the 17th century. The four violin sonatas offered here (some of the earliest English compositions in this genre) are have anything from three to seven movements. They contain a varied selection of movements from formal adagios, fugato movements, dances and ground basses, most notable of which is a nine-beat ground bass in the opening sonata. The three suites for harpsichord are again varied – some with conventional dance movements, another with a Scotch Tune, Air and Jig, and one with just a five-minute ground bass ending with a short

minuet. The concluding sonata is in effect a suite and seems to have been written somewhat later that the other works on the disc. All are fine pieces – if at times a little quirky – in the Purcellian tradition. The performance from Hazel Brooks is assured and stylish, complemented by some fine continuo accompanying as well as spirited solo playing from David Pollock. To accompany the disc is a useful booklet note from Peter Holman.

Ian Graham-Jones

Desmazures *Pièces de Simphonie (1702) Suites I & III* Vespres d'Arnadí, Dani Espasa 59' 34"
musièpoca MEPCD-001

This is the month in which my simmering frustration with the writers, translators, editors and proofreaders (if any) of CD booklets has finally boiled over. 'It is known that the ascension of Philip d'Anjou to the Spanish throne lead [sic] to the introduction of French aesthetics and fashions in the antiquated Austrian court.' This (the first sentence of the note) was written by someone with an English name, but who clearly gave no thought to the logic of his words. What has happened, I think, is that a reference to the 'Spanish Hapsburgs' in the original Catalan note was slightly mis-translated for the Spanish note from which Mr Gladwin worked and he has then slightly mis-translated again without asking the obvious questions. The French note is a more faithful rendition of the original. Sadly, there is much similar nonsense available on all the English pages of the booklet. Among the many reasons why this matters is that these notes on more obscure repertoire may be the only information available anywhere on this music, and if we support the artists by buying the fruits of their labours we are entitled to be told clearly what they are doing and why. Having said all that, this is attractive music in the French style which is given lively performances. The booklet is unacceptable. *David Hansell*

Handel *Streams of pleasure* Karina Gauvin, Marie-Nicole Lemieux *SA*, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis 75'
Naïve v5261

Compilation CDs of arias from Handel's operas and oratorios are far from rare, but there are few overlaps in their content thanks to the enormous amount of repertoire from which to choose. Attempts to provide such compilations with an overarching 'narrative' are rarely convincing, but why make an excuse for wanting to record one's own Handel favourites? Surely every Handel fan has a (secret) list? My introduction to Handel was through a compilation (cassette) and I still have fond memories of "Ombra mai fù" and "Ev'ry valley" on long car journeys. This said, compilers can never compete with Handel for dramatic narrative and pacing, and I find my attention wandering halfway through many a compilation.

However, this was not the case with *Streams of pleasure*. The booklet notes give no reason behind their selection (beyond their restriction to Handel's later works) but arias and duets from *Belshazzar, Theodora, Alexander Balus, Susanna, Judas Maccabaeus, Joseph and his brethren, Joshua, Solomon* and *Hercules* present enough variation in tempo, *affekt* and nuance to form a programme that grabs one's attention whenever it begins to slip away. Lemieux's and Gauvin's voices are beautifully matched (particularly noticeable in the title-song, from *Theodora*), and the playing of *Il Complesso Barocco* has a freshness and flexibility that shines in such a varied programme. Unfortunately, the acoustic (reminiscent of carpeted theatre pits) is rather dead for the faster arias, and the violins' very fine ensemble in arias such as "Fury with red sparkling eyes" (*Alexander Balus*) is let down by the abrupt stopping of sound as their bows leave the strings. This is not so apparent in the slower tempi, however, and the listening experience is enhanced by the refreshingly straightforward, factually accurate, notes, which present a concise summary of each work and aria. I was initially skeptical of the title, but was won over by halfway through the disc. *Streams of pleasure* indeed. *Amanda Babington*

Loeillet de Gant *Recorder sonatas* Daniel Rothert *rec*, Ketil Haugsand *hpscd*, Vanessa Young *vlc* 73' 35"
Naxos 8.572023
Opp. 1/1, 3 & 6, 2/3, 3/5, 7 & 12, and 4/2

These are eight of the surviving 48 sonatas for recorder and continuo by Jean Baptiste Loeillet de Gant (Ghent), not to be confused with his cousin Jean-Baptiste, known as John Loeillet of London, who was also born in Ghent. The sonatas are quite varied, with up to six movements including some dance forms. Daniel Rothert has an easy flowing style, often quite strongly articulated and brisk in the fast movements. He has chosen to play one sonata, op 1/6 in C major, an octave higher on the sixth flute to cope with the range which goes too low for the standard alto recorder. This is a well balanced recording, and the continuo brings out well the often contrapuntal style of the music. *Victoria Helby*

Mir i Llussà *Missa en Re Major, Stabat Mater, Quomodo obscuratum est, Lauda Jerusalem* Lluís Vilamajó. La Xantria, Pere Lluís Biosca, Vespres d'Arnadí, Dani Espasa 58' 46"
musièpoca MEPC D-004

When I am sent a CD of repertoire on the fringe of my area of expertise, the first thing I do is read the note to get a sense of context for my listening. Here are two entirely typical sentences from this product. 'This work, composed in the general tonality of A minor, finishes according to the forth [sic] Gregorian tone, with a plagal picarda cadence in the E chord.' 'It is, exactly, about a remake for eight voices and continuous bass . . .' Why do recording companies think it acceptable to fob off their supporters (i.e. those of us who buy their products) with rubbish like this? At the very least this note needed editorial treatment from a native English speaker who knew something about the music. All of which is a real shame for the scholars and performers involved in this exploration of their Catalan heritage as the music is full of interest and the programme has been assembled with much care. Josep Mir i Llussà (c1700-1764) worked as a composer of sacred music in Segovia, Valladolid and Madrid and at his best offers music well beyond the *lingua franca* of his time. The *Credo* of this mass is certainly the equal of many equivalent Haydn and Mozart movements – good enough to make me want to seek out a score – and all the performances are full of spirit. Strongly recommended, though be prepared to read between the lines and in the margins. Again, this booklet is unacceptable.

David Hansell

Montéclair *Cantates à voix seule* Emma Kirkby, London Baroque 70' 11"
BIS-CD-1865
La Mort di Didon, La Morte di Lucretia, Pan et Syrinx, Le Retour de la Paix & Le Triomfe de la Constance

At the risk of being entirely predictable, I have to say that this is just brilliant and ought to win awards. Dame Emma's legendary way with words leaves no dramatic or emotional stone unturned (if always within the bounds of exquisite taste) though it also needs to be said that Montéclair offers plenty of help. And the

instrumental playing is even better – bass viol playing truly to die for, along with Dido and Lucretia. *David Hansell*

Nebra *Sacred Cantatas* Al Ayre Español, Eduardo Lopez Banzo *dir, hpscd*, Maria Espada *S* 65' 24"
Challenge Classics CC72509,
Four *Cantadas al Santísimo* + Sonata in e

José Melchor Baltasar Gaspar Nebra Blasco (1702 – 1768) has been just a name of a composer contemporary with D. Scarlatti, so it was good to explore something of his music, which I found revelatory. Here we have four secular cantatas for soprano, one or two violins and continuo (using harpsichord, archlute, cello and double bass), with an exciting three-movement harpsichord sonata as the sandwich filling that makes Scarlatti's sonatas look mere miniatures. The cantatas are cast in the standard four-movement recit-aria-recit-aria structure. The works were discovered by the director in, of all places, Guatemala, having travelled at some point across the Atlantic, and are worthy of the best of Handel's operatic arias. Nebra demands the utmost virtuoso technique from his singer, and Maria Espada rises to the occasion in employing all the necessary dramatic vigour contrasted with purity of tone and sensitivity demanded from the Spanish text. This disc cannot be recommended too highly. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Platti *Six Sonatas for Violoncello and Basso continuo* Sebastian Hess, Axel Wolf
Oehms Classics OC794 60' 26"

In my mind, Platti seems a later composer than his dates (1697-1763) suggest; the MS containing these sonatas is dated 1725, they are four-movement works in the well-established slow-fast-slow-fast *da chiesa* pattern, and they owe much to Corelli's influence – strong melodies and simple but effective harmonies. Although I had heard the lutenist (Axel Wolf) before, the cellist Sebastian Hess was a name unknown to me – presumably I've been unaware of hearing him in ensembles, but never as a soloist. The pairing is ideal; I had been a little concerned that a single lute or theorbo might not be able to provide both a bass line suitable to support a cello *and* fill out all the harmonies. Clearly, I underestimated both Platti and Wolf – the melody part is relatively high, and the continuo part really only requires hints of chords, except in the slower movements, where Wolf improvises some lovely counterpoint. The music-loving von Schönborn, for whom these pieces were written and in whose library the original MS remains, must have been quite a cellist, if he was half as impressive as Sebastian Hess, who seems to be able to do anything he likes with his bow – I did especially like the way he applied a soft vibrato towards the end of some of the longer notes, and his great skill in articulating individual notes within phrases without disrupting the flow of the music, and I have not even mentioned the rich, beautiful tone he draws from his instrument. I wonder if there might be a follow-up with some of their colleagues to record some of Platti's cello concertos? The recorded sound is crystal clear, without any of the breathing sounds that sometimes mar such intimate projects. *BC*

Rameau *Zaïs, Hippolyte et Aricie Orchestral suites* L'Orfeo Barockorchester, Michi Gaigg 62' 08"
Crystal Classics N 67 063

'Rhythmical, [comma *sic*] movements with full voices form a striking antipode to gracious dances with internal suspense.' And the previous sentence is worse. This 'translation' was made (from a German note) by a German. Strikingly, the French translation was made by a native French speaker and is rather better. Rameau may need less of an introduction than the Catalan composers reviewed above but that isn't really the point. His virtuosity as an orchestrator is on full view here, with bassoons and piccolos given their heads and violins audibly under pressure in a few places. One bar certainly needed another take but elsewhere the orchestra tackle the music head on to its advantage. This is a programme of colour and contrast – just don't bother with the note, which, for the third time this month, is unacceptable. *David Hansell*

Telemann *The Recorder Collection* Clas Pehrsson and Dan Laurin *rec*, Penelope Evison *fl*, Michael McCraw *bsn*, Olof Larsson *gamba*, Mayumi Kamata *hpscd*, Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble 411' 28" (6 CDs in box for the price of 3)
BIS BIS-CD-1488/90
12 Solo Fantasias, Complete Recorder Duets, Sonatas for Recorder and Continuo, Concertos and Double Concertos

This is a fine collection of reissues recorded originally between 1974 and 2008, mostly during the 1980s. On the whole they have stood the test of time well, though I imagine Pehrsson would perform the minuet in Concerto in F major TWV 51:F1, the earliest recording, somewhat differently now. I particularly like Laurin's performance of the 12 Fantasias,originally for solo flute, which he has successfully transferred to the voice flute (tenor recorder in D). There are two discs of recorder duets, which you might expect to be more fun to play than to listen to, but they are really varied and enjoyable. The disc of double concertos is another highlight of this splendid and well-priced boxed set, which deserves to be on every recorder-lover's Christmas list. *Victoria Helby*

Telemann *Sonatas and Sonatinas for Recorder and Basso Continuo* Heiko ter Schegget *rec*, Zvi Meniker *hpscd*, Mieneke van der Velden *gamba*, Benny Aghassi *bsn* 67' 31"
Dabringhaus und Grimm MDG 905 1693-6
TWV 41: C2, C5, c2, d2, F2, f1, a4 & B3

The music on this disc all dates from the end of the 1720s and early 1730s. There are two sonatas from Telemann's *Essercizii Musici* and four from *Der Getreue Music-Meister*, as well as two sonatinas from *Nouvelles Sonatines*. The recorder has a pleasant tone with fluid fast movements and some nice ornaments, but is not always well served by the continuo section, where the rather restrained harpsichord is sometimes almost drowned by the bassoon. The bassoon works well in some of the fast movements and helps to emphasise the canonic writing of the sonata in B flat, but on the whole the sonatas with gamba continuo are better balanced. Heiko ter Schegget makes his own instruments after 18th century originals. In two of the sonatas he plays the slow movements on an original instrument by Heytz (Berlin c. 1725) and the fast movements on his own copy. The booklet contains detailed instructions for multi-channel listening. *Victoria Helby*

A Week with Telemann: Scherzi Melodichi & Cantatas Agnes Scheibelreiter *S*, Ensemble Delirio 78' 44"
Capriccio C5057

I don't know that I could spend a whole week with Telemann, but I might conceivably listen to one or more of the charming pieces on this CD every day for a week, and I certainly wouldn't tire, either of the sound of Ensemble Delirio or the composer's endless capacity for invention. The *Scherzi Melodichi* are a set of trio sonata suites (each has an *Introduzzione*

and six movements with tempo markings rather than dance titles). Scored for the somewhat unusual combination of violin, viola and continuo, they are named after the days of the week and were apparently composed to entertain those "taking the waters" at the popular Lower Saxon spa, Bad Pyrmont. This is not the first time they have been recorded, but I can confidently say that Ensemble Delirio outclass any predecessors. Listen to the way they play about with Telemann's cross rhythms in the introduction to Monday without over-egging the pudding. I am puzzled by the fact that the sonata for Thursday has been omitted in favour of a cantata from the *Fortsetzung des Harmonischen Gottesdienstes*. There are three cantatas in total: one each for the Visitation of Mary, the 3rd day of Christmas and the (slightly less glamorous) 25th Sunday after Trinity. Soprano Agnes Scheibelreiter has quite a full voice, and I didn't especially like those passages where the composer has the voice shadowed by the violin – these are cut down versions of full-scale church pieces, and a full violin section would have been more support (as in "better able to cope with such a large voice") and the viola mostly only plays along in the ritornelli. Programming gaff notwithstanding, this is a fine disc. *BC*

Vivaldi *Concerti with Bassoon II* Frans Berkhout, La Suave Melodia, Pieter Dirksen
Et'cetera **KTC1428**
RV106, 480, 496, 498, 501, 522/2, 531 & 545

Like its predecessor, this CD includes works of varying shapes and sizes which may or may not have been intended for bassoon. There are four *bona fide* concerti (RV501 – the bassoon *La notte*, 480, 496 and 498), one of the chamber concerti (RV106), and two slight arrangements (RV533 for two cellos with the obvious substitution, and RV545 with a flute taking the oboe line). They finish with an encore (the Larghetto from RV522, in which the bassoon plays one of the solo violin lines!) Frans Berkhout is an outstanding virtuoso; as Pieter Dirksen's booklet says, Vivaldi must have been coached in the instrument's capabilities by a bassoonist of distinction (most likely in Prague, where Vivaldi worked for Count Morzin – a theory compounded, I would suggest, by the fact that works by two of Morzin's other composers, Fasch and Reichenauer, also require a high-calibre bassoonist); Dirksen surmounts any apparent difficulties, and is able to make the music sing without any of the antics of another well-known baroque bassoonist of the age. Flautist Georgia Browne is the perfect duetting partner – especially in the slow movement of RV545, which is for the soloists and continuo alone, the flute (I must confess) is sweeter in tone than Vivaldi's favoured oboe. A thoroughly enjoyable disc that I happily recommend. *BC*

Vivaldi *Farnace* Max Emanuel Cencic *Farnace*, Ruxandra Donose *Tamiri*, Mary Ellen Nesi *Berenice*, Ann Hallenberg *Selinda*, Karina Gauvin *Gilade*, David Behle *Pompeo*, Emiliano Gonzalez Toro *Aquilio*, Coro della Radiotelevisione Svizzera, I Barocchisti, Diego Fasolis 191' 35" (3 CDs)
Virgin Classics 070 9142

The first important point is that this is not the *Farnace* recorded by Jordi Savall in his fine 2001 set. That was a version given in Madrid in 1739 that differs substantially from the opera recorded here, which mostly represents Vivaldi's own final thoughts on a libretto by Antonio Maria Lucchini that he had already visited no fewer than five more times following its initial production in Venice in 1727. It was prepared for ultimately aborted performances in Ferrara during the Carnival of 1739, the fact that it never reached the stage probably accounting for the third act remaining unrevised. It has been reconstructed by Fasolis and Vivaldi scholar Frédéric Delaméa, sensibly using the Pavia version of 1731 as a blueprint.

That Vivaldi should have returned to Luccini's libretto so frequently is not surprising, the story of the bitter hostility between Farnace and Queen Berenice being unusually compelling. Indeed, for dramatic tautness and veracity the first act must be considered one of the finest in any Vivaldi opera. If the second is more loosely constructed, there is more than adequate compensation in the splendid sequence of arias Vivaldi provided, while the third suffers only from a *lieta fine* denouement that unavoidably comes as a disappointment after the red-blooded drama that precedes it.

The opera is dominated by its exceptionally strong female characters: Berenice is a fearsome monster, her exchanges with her ill-used daughter Tamiri, the wife of Farnace, chilling in their sheer hatred, while Selinda, Farnace's sister, is one of Vivaldi's most appealing characters, a woman who even in captivity shows wit, guile and ingenuity. All three roles are superbly sung here, as indeed are those of the male characters, who I'm afraid dramatically all cut a rather poor figure in comparison. Fasolis paces both arias and the extensive passages of recitative with exemplary skill, his belief in the opera evident from the sheer dramatic verve he brings to the score from the outset. My only small complaints concern some over-fussy continuo work and the occasional mannered treatment of fermatas, but these are tiny caveats in the face of so much that is truly outstanding. There is no doubt in my mind that were I to be restricted to one Vivaldi opera recording, this would be it. *Brian Robins*

Vivaldi *Prima Donna* Orfeo 55, Nathalie Stutzmann *A/dir.* 71' 74"
Deutsche Grammophon (France) 476 4390
Arias from Andromeda liberata, Arsilda Regina di Ponto, L'Atenaide, La Costanza trionfante, Il Giustino, Juditha Triumphans, L'Olimpiade, Orlando Furioso, Semiramide, Il Teuzzone, Tieteberga + Sinfonia to L'Olimpiade

I have to confess to being no great lover of operatic recitals, but this issue has several points of interest, among them first recordings of several arias and the fact that it marks the recording debut of French contralto Nathalie Stutzmann as the conductor of Orfeo 55, the Metz-based ensemble she founded in 2009. Her direction is very assured, as the control of the long chromatic violin lines of the great aria "Agitata infido flatu" (*Juditha triumphans*) soon establishes, but the major orchestral work on the disc, the Sinfonia to *L'Olimpiade*, reveals Stutzmann as a paid-up member of the post-HIP school of Vivaldi direction. The first fermata is greeted with a slamming on of breaks, and so it continues in a performance marked by a wide (and thoroughly modern) range of dynamics and tempos.

This tendency to exaggeration and self-indulgence is also present in her singing, especially in slower arias such as "Io sento in questo seno" (*Arsilda*), here spun out to over 6 minutes (the aria is comfortable at the 4' 25" taken on the complete Sardelli set on cpo). Elsewhere, as in the recently discovered and delicious "Lascia almen" (*La costanza trionfante*), Stutzmann cannot resist introducing an element of coyness. But it would be wrong to labour these points, for there is much in this very finished and accomplished singing to enjoy. Stutzmann is of course that rare bird, a genuine contralto, and her ability to avoid the plummy quality displayed by many examples of the breed makes her even more valuable, as indeed does the clarity of her articulation. She has recorded surprisingly few of Vivaldi's many contralto roles – he had a special

love of the voice – and enthusiasts of both composer and singer will certainly want to hear her in this repertoire. *Brian Robins*

An Italian rant! 18th-Century Italian Masters in Britain L'Avventura London, Zak Ozmo 64' 08"
Opella Nova Records ONCD015
Albinoni Op. 9 No. 2, Cervetto Sonata Op. 1 No. 3, Corelli Op. 5 No. 12, Geminiani Op. 4 No. 10 & Sonata on *Bush aboon Traquair*, Paradisi Sonata No. 7, Vivaldi RV156, anon *An Italian rant* (Trad./Playford/Ozmo)

The sub-title of this CD could more accurately be revised to 'Italian Masters played in London', as the programme includes works well-known in England by composers who never visited the country – and those that did tended to concentrate on the capital city. The opening Vivaldi work is an example of the first category. Right from the start of this CD it is the beautifully articulated playing of the admirable Croatian violinist Bojan Čičič that is to the fore. In my view, he is one of the most talented musicians of his generation: his eloquent and fluid playing delves behind the mere notes of the musical line. He is heard solo at the start of Geminiani's lovely little Scottish Sonata from his *Treatise of Good Taste*. Cervetto is not so well known as Geminiani, Albinoni and Corelli, but his Sonata in G is well worth a listen, the opening Adagio leading to a pulsating Allegro before a concluding pair of minuets (a structure used by Geminiani). David Gordon gives a lively reading of one of Paradisi's entertaining *Sonate di gravicembalo*, as well as providing some sensitive continuo harpsichord backing. Geoffrey Coates is an excellent soloist in Albinoni's Concerto for Oboe (Op 9/2), notably in the cantabile line of a (though not the) well-known Adagio. L'Avventura London let their collective hair down in the final piece, the "Italian Rant" of the CD title, Playford's original given an amusing updating by their director Zak Ozmo. This is the second CD from this talented young group issued, it appears, from their own record label (or, at least, a label that only has their two CDs on its list). I haven't heard the first one, but this is thoroughly recommended for a well balanced programme and outstanding playing. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Haagsche Hofmuzieck Telemann, Leclair, Bach 36'
HHMR002

When I received Marcin Świątkiewicz's harpsichord CD, I went a-googling and came upon this group's website. They kindly sent me what I assume is essentially a promo disc, featuring Telemann's Parisian Quartet TWV 43:e4, Leclair's Op. 13 No. 2 and BWV 1038, a trio sonata in G. The performers are Daja Leevke Hinrichs *flute*, Emily Dupere *violin*, Mark Dupere *cello* and (of course) Marcin. I really like the combination of sounds the group produces, although I *think* I would have preferred gamba to cello in both the Telemann and the Leclair – the two instruments might play in the same register but the sound they produce (by virtue of the different bow and hold, as well as the fact that strong beats on the gamba start at the light end of the bow) is distinctly different. This is not to criticise Mark Dupere – like his colleagues in HH, he is a most accomplished player. Though short, I enjoyed this immensely – reservation notwithstanding! For more information about the group and their recording, visit www.haagschehofmuzieck.com. *BC*

Lamentazione Les Arts Florissants, Paul Agnew 56' 20"
Virgin Classics 070 9072
Music by Caldara, Legrenzi, Leo, Lotti & D. Scarlatti

It is one of the misconceptions of musical history (though not, I'm sure, among readers of *EMR*) that the advent of the *seconda prattica* resulted in the great tradition of vocal polyphony being cast aside. It of course did no such thing, the study of polyphony remaining a vital component in the training of musicians. What did happen is that Baroque composers re-invented the technique in their own image, Italian composers in particular finding a new harmonic richness in the language. That, to a greater or lesser extent, is the theme of the present disc, which with the exception of "Quam amarum" the exquisite Legrenzi solo dialogue between the two Marys, is devoted to *stile antico* works scored for between eight and 16 voices. Most, like the Domenico Scarlatti *Stabat Mater* and the famous 8-part Lotti *Crucifixus*, are familiar; Leonardo Leo's marvellous double-choir *Miserere* may be less so.

Paul Agnew has a long association with Les Arts Florissants, but this is his first record as their director. It is also rather unfamiliar repertoire for the choral arm of LAF, perhaps reflected in some less than tidy ensemble, although that may also be accounted for the doubling of parts in these multi-voiced pieces. This is for me music that works better with single voices to a part. Notwithstanding, there is about these performances a sincerity and conviction that makes them both appealing and compelling. Agnew is always alive to the rhetoric of both music and text, as at the sudden turn to declamatory homophony at "Libera me" (*Miserere*). Nor is he afraid to make daring use of silence to make a point, as at the questioning verses of the *Stabat Mater* ("Quis et homo" etc), while the still beauty of "Quando corpus" at the end of the same work provides yet another moment to cherish. *Brian Robins*

Misión: Barroco Amazónico Sphera Antiqua, Javier Illan & Pablo Gutierrez
Columna Musica 1CM0269 60'11"

This ensemble gives us music from the Jesuit missions in Latin America which has survived in archives in Bolivia, performed on instruments of period, such as *jerures* and *bajones* (wind instruments with multiple pipes made of palm leaves) and various percussion instruments (vegetable rattles and snake rattles – the imagination runs riot!), besides the more recognisable baroque strings, guitar and transverse flute, with harpsichord and organ continuo in some items. There are four three-movements pieces and two for soprano voice, though their titles, apart from sonata and pastorella, may sound strange to a non native speaker. Indeed the sacred vocal pieces are sung in the language of Chiquito Indians, though two are in Latin. All are attractive pieces, which can only be described as "baroque crossover music". Enjoyable listening, worthy exploring, and performed with spirit and verve. The packaging spares no expense, with comprehensive notes, though I would have welcomed a translation of the vocal works. *Ian Graham-Jones*

CLASSICAL

Gluck *Ezio* Sonia Prina *Ezio*, Ann Hallenberg *Fulvia*, Max Emanuel Cencic *Valentiniano*, Topi Lehtipuu *Massimo*, Mayuko Karasawa *Onoria*, Julian Prégardien *Varo*, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis 146' 53" (2 CDs)
Virgin Classics 070 9292

Gluck's first version of Mestastasio's libretto for *Ezio* was composed for Prague in 1750, a period in his career when he was still an itinerant composer. *Orfeo ed Eurydice* lay more than a decade ahead of an opera that with its long, fully developed *da capo* arias and bountiful employment of

coloratura still sits firmly within the tradition of *opera seria*. Jommelli and Traetta and others were already starting to introduce elements of 'reform opera', a development often incorrectly credited wholly to Gluck. Loosely based on factual Roman history centred around the emperor Valentinian III, *Ezio* is a typically Metastasian plot concerning revenge, treachery and naked ambition and the ultimate triumph of loyalty and love over such base behaviour. It suffers dramatically from the woefully weak character of the cowardly emperor, a flaw later recognised even by the librettist. But the consul Massimo makes for a fine villain – he unexpectedly has two of the most beguiling arias in the opera (one a version of 'Che puro ciel', as it became known in *Orfeo*) – and Ezio and Fulvia make for an attractive pair of lovers, the more credible given that the vain and headstrong Ezio makes for a far from flawless hero.

Surprisingly, this is the third version of *Ezio* to appear on CD, one issued earlier in 2011 on the German label Coviello Classics also featuring Max Emanuel Cencic's excellent Valentiniano. The present version was made from live performances in Paris in 2008 and incorporates a number of cuts made to make the opera 'more attractive to modern audiences', to quote the bizarre statement in the booklet. By the standards of his finest accomplishments, I find Alan Curtis' direction low key, lacking the 'surprising fire' Metastasio noted in Gluck and too often substituting mere speed for true dramatic conviction. Much the most compelling reason for hearing the present set is the magnificent assumption of the roles of Ezio and Fulvia by Sonia Prina and Ann Hallenberg, the one all proud dignity, the other a vulnerable but brave heroine in glorious voice. When is Hallenberg going to be granted the real stardom she so richly deserves? *Brian Robins*

Gluck *Iphigénie en Tauride* Juliette Galstian *Iphigénie*, Rodney Gilfry *Oreste*, Deon van der Walt *Pylade*, Anton Scharinger *Thoas*, Martina Janková *Diane*, Anna Soranno *Femme grèque*, Lisa Lorenz *Pemière prêtresse*, Eleanor Paunovic *Seconde prêtresse*, Michael Mrosek *Scythe*, Thomas Pütz *Ministre*, Paul Lorenger *Oreste-Double*, Catherine Villiger *Iphigénie-Double*, Bernhard Rubin *Agamemnon-Double*, Eva Zmekova *Clytemnestre-Double*, Orchestra "La Scintilla" (Zürich Opera House), William Christie 108'
Arthaus Musik 100 377 DVD

Recorded in 2001 and apparently first released in 2003, this appears to be a reissue minus the documentary originally included. So it's rather late in the day, but I'm nonetheless pleased to catch up with it. The sets and production convey a strong and appropriate sense of a timeless classicism that to my mind works well. The Armenian mezzo Juliette Galstian's Iphigénie wears a long chaste cream (later black) dress, exactly mirrored by the chorus of Diana's priestesses, who in the opening scene also mimic her movements with studied symmetry, creating the classical feel of the production as a whole. The most original feature is the doubling of Iphigénie and Oreste by mute Döppelganger-like figures with huge heads, to whom are added similar figures of their parents Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who of course play no part in the drama. The effect is a contemporary take on the masks worn by Greek choruses, the figures having a dream-like balletic function of both reliving past events and predicting the future.

Musically, the set is also highly successful. Christie leads La Scintilla, the period instrument orchestra of the Zurich Opera House, in a surging, thrusting account of Gluck's marvellous score that is high on both dramatic incident and tender affection. Galstian looks and acts well, though vocally she's not always fully on top of the demands of the role and her fast vibrato will not be to all tastes. Gilfry is a superb Oreste, handsome looking, in noble voice and suitably impassioned or distraught as required. Van der Walt doesn't quite match this level, but Pylade's friendship for Oreste is expressed in ardently ringing singing, while Scharinger's King Thoas (looking akin to the traditional image of King Lear) is a thickly-voiced blusterer. The all-important choruses are done with spirit if not the ultimate in polish. Strongly recommended to collectors of opera DVDs who, like me, had not caught up with this fine issue. *Brian Robins*

Haydn *String Quartets, Op. 20* The London Haydn Quartet 160' 18" (2 CDs)
Hyperion CDA67877

The years between 1769 and 1772 were key in Haydn's musical output, notably for the three sets of quartets, Op 9, 17 and 20, the last of which proved to be the most influential, impressing Mozart, Beethoven and, later, Brahms. It was in this set that Haydn first created a true interplay of ideas between all four players, rather than with the first violin dominating. Having already released recordings of the first two sets, The London Haydn Quartet now move to this key Opus 20 set, producing insightful, sensitive and expressive readings with their classical bows and gut strings.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Haydn... out of Hainburg Anton Holzapfel [1982 Pirchner organ, Hainburg], Barbara Fink *S.* Dolce risonanca, Florian Wieninger
Gramola 98898 69' 54"
Music by Albrechtsberger, Fux, Joseph & Michael Haydn, Reutter

One of the premises behind this CD is that organ concertos were frequently played in Catholic churches in Southern Germany and the Austrian domains, but didn't survive outside the church environment, instead being published as harpsichord concertos. Ex-organ concertos can usually be spotted by their limited range, the organs of the day only extending to d^3. It is on that basis that Reutter's delightful *Concerto per il Cavicembalo* is performed here as an organ concerto. Reutter was the Hofkapellmeister in Vienna and plucked the 8-year old Haydn out of the church choir at Hainburg, the town of Haydn's birth, his father being one of the very few survivors of the 1683 slaughter and devastation of the Turkish armies as they made their way towards Vienna. The Haydn brothers are represented by Joseph's beautiful *Salve Regina* and Michael's *Ah! Jesu recipe,* both having prominent organ parts and with soprano Barbara Fink's focussed voice sounding wonderful in the latter. Michael Haydn's Magnificat versets are also heard in their correct context *alternatim* with chanted verses. Organ transcriptions from vocal or instrumental works were often used in church services, and Fux adapted his own multi-sectional *Sonata Sexta* (K366) for organ. Three of Haydn's little pieces for a flute clock complete this fascinating CD, an important insight into a little-understood early Classical church music of Central Europe. If you were weaned on big-band versions of Haydn *et al,* the delicate performances on this excellent recording will reset your aural radar.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Jadin *Quatuors à cordes (dédiés à Haydn)*
Quatuor Franz Joseph
Atma Classique ACD2 2610

The delightfully named Hyacinthe Jadin published these three Opus 1 quartets on 19 Fructidor in Year III, Revolutionary France's version of 5 September 1795, when he was just 19. He was a child

prodigy which, for the sake of his music, is just as well as he died aged 24. After premiering his piano concerto at the *Concert Spirituel* aged 13, he became the youngest professor at the Paris Conservatoire (also aged 19) and was a prolific composer in most genres. These quartets were dedicated to Haydn. Stylistically they are mercifully far from the jingoistic, naïve and often daft musical outpourings of Revolutionary France, Musically, they form a bridge between CPE Bach (his teacher's teacher) and Haydn (with some echoes of his *Sturm und Drang* period) and the early Romantics, notably Schubert. Written for professionals rather than amateurs, they are music of an impressively high standard. The Adagio of the 1st quartet, with its seemingly endless cantabile melodic line, is just one example of the quality of this young chap, the jaunty phrasing of the following Menuet and Trio demonstrate a bit of Gallic humour. The playing by this Canadian quartet is superb. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Mozart *Requiem* Elizabeth Watts, Phyllis Pancella, Andrew Kennedy, Eric Owens *SmSTB*, Handel and Haydn Society, Harry Christophers 53' 59"
Coro COR16093
+ Ave verum corpus, Per questa bella mano (Robert Nairn, obl double bass), commentary

There was a time when, in buying a new HIP recording of Mozart's *Requiem*, one could have reasonably expected to hear singing significantly different from the modern norm. Tastes change, and over the last thirty years or so there has been a perceptible shift towards a more robust approach to singing within what might loosely be termed 'early music'.

This new recording from Harry Christophers and the Handel and Haydn Society seems to exemplify that shift in taste. Each element – soloist, chorus and orchestra – is very fine in its own right. The choral singing is brilliantly clear and crisp, the soloists characterful, and the orchestral playing beautifully controlled. Indeed, there are many lovely moments in the Requiem where Christophers coaxes extraordinarily restrained singing from his chorus – the close of the 'Confutatis' being a prime example. On the other hand, there are times when the vocal production seems at odds with the subdued scoring of the work, simply for being too robust and vibrato-laden. The ensuing disparity between the orchestral colour and vocal tone is an issue, and whatever one thinks of attempts at 'historical' vocal production, there is surely an aesthetic level at which the blend suffers. This is particularly noticeable in the interplay between chorus and orchestra in the opening movement of the *Requiem*, and again comes to the fore in the 'Tuba Mirum' which unfortunately betrays bass-baritone Eric Owens' pedigree as Alberich at the Met.

Interpretatively, Christophers is at his best in the faster movements, which he drives along with great verve and commitment. The precision of the semiquavers in the Kyrie is excellent, and elsewhere he conveys the tension of text with admirable verve and panache, particularly in the 'Dies Irae' and the 'Confutatis'. The finest moment, however, is the wonderfully poised reading of the *Ave Verum* which opens the disc.

In sum, there is much to admire in this exploration of Mozart's very late vocal music and it is worth hearing for that. But it has to be said that those of a more 'purist' bent may struggle with some of the singing. *Warwick Cole*

Mozart *Complete Clavier Works Vol. 12* Siegbert Rampe 77' 54"
Dabringhaus und Grimm MDG 341 1312-2
K7,1&7, 3-4, 8,1, 15b,15e-g, 150, 15p, 15r, 15u, 15y, 15z, 15kk, 94, 352, 382, 400, 485 and two *deest* items

Readers who will have already collected the previous eleven volumes of Siegbert Rampe's complete Mozart clavier works will no doubt want to purchase this twelfth and final issue. For the rest of us, it may not be necessary. Of the 77 minutes of music on this disc, only about half is contained in pieces of any substance – the remainder consists of rather lightweight juvenilia in arrangements. Whether or not by the composer, they hardly rank as great music.

The most satisfying tracks, therefore, are the final two – the Variations on a theme by Grétry (K 352) and the Rondo in D (K 485). Here Rampe demonstrates his undoubted facility for keyboard player, eliciting some very charming sounds from a Schantz fortepiano copy. Though pleasant enough, the interpretations are unremarkable. As for the other pieces, the *Ariette avec Variations* (after K 382) is a contemporary arrangement of the substitute rondo for the D major concerto (K 175), which is decidedly inferior to the original in that it omits the final variation, cadenza and coda. Although it is interesting to hear it played on a Schudi harpsichord, the performance again is rather matter-of-fact. By far the most engaging track is the Allegro in B flat (K 400), a fragment completed by Maximilian Stadler, again played on the Schudi harpsichord; here Rampe responds convincingly to the quirkiness of the music.

A feature of this cycle has been the use of both harpsichord and clavichord in addition to the standard Viennese fortepiano as a vehicle for Mozart's music. In this respect, Rampe deserves credit; it is a pity therefore that on this particular disc, much of the music is hardly Mozart at his best. *Warwick Cole*

Triebensee *The Art of Arrangement* Amphion Wind Octet 65'36"
Accent ACC 24232
Cherubini: *Medea*; *Haydn* "Emperor" quartet, Symphony 92; Mozart *Don Giovanni*

I first heard the Amphion Wind Octet in the finals of the 1999 Early Music Network International Young Artists Competition when they were still students at Basel, and was impressed. Although they didn't win that competition, they had already won the 1998 Van Wassenaer Concours, a key stepping stone to their subsequent success. They have since gone to produce four CDs, although this is the first one I have heard. It is a delight! The wind octet repertoire is not as well known as it should be. Although this CD is made up of arrangements, they are in themselves important examples of the genre, representing music played at the thrice-weekly Harmoniemusik concerts at the Royal Summer Palace of the princely Liechtenstein family in Vienna from 1789. Joseph Triebensee was the head of the family's 12-strong orchestra and is responsible for the four transcriptions on this CD, all excellent examples of their type. The Harmonie craze was short lived, partly because of the Napoleonic disruption, and the Liechtenstein band was disbanded in 1809, just 20 years after it started Triebensee went on to succeed Weber at the Estates Theatre in Prague, where he died in 1846. The four works on this CD are given outstanding performances by the players, with an excellent control of articulation and timbre.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

19th CENTURY

Brahms *Late Piano Works Vol. 3: Piano Pieces Op. 116-119* Hardy Rittner 74' 32"
Dabringhaus und Grimm MDG 904 1680-6

Although described as "among of the world's top pianists" by one German critic, Rittner is no Rubenstein. His perfor-

mances are very competently delivered and he is at his best in the more turblulent, dramatic pieces. The Op. 118 Ballade rattles along at a terrific rate and his attention to details of articulation make this an engaging performance. Similarly, his reading of the Capriccios of Op. 116 capture the spirit of the music excellently; and the humour of Op. 119/3 comes across well. Where he is less successful is in the more reflective music. The Op 117 pieces, for instance, seem to lack that wistful expression that the finest modern pianists can achieve, particularly in the second Intermezzo in which the subtle reharmonisations of the melody are glossed over. And in the first of these pieces he exhibits a disconcerting tendency to delay chords – presumably for expressive effect – which rather disrupts the simplicity of the music.

That said, Rittner's Brahms is worth hearing as much for the instruments he uses. Two pianos feature here: an 1870 Streicher similar to Brahms's own piano, and a Schweighofer of the same period. Of the two, the latter is the more attractive, but neither have the clarity that one associates with earlier Viennese-action instruments. The voicing seems rather woolly, and the bass textures are not significantly clearer than one is used to hearing on a modern piano. However, Rittner is able to coax some attractive sounds from the pianos particularly in the more delicate moments.

Reviewing late Brahms for this journal might cause some eyebrows to be raised. But be warned: Rittner's next project is Schönberg on original instruments.

Warwick Cole

I reviewed an "authentic" recording of Second Viennese School piano music some decades ago, with music covering a span of at least 30 years on a single instrument, which rather undermined its pretension. CB

Pleyel *Piano Trios* Trio 1790 71' 38"
cpo 777 544-2
Benton 435, 441, 442 & 448

For some years the German ensemble Trio 1790 has been exploring the lesser-known works of the classical period as a counterpart to their more familiar repertoire (they have recently finished recording the complete Haydn trios). This latest offering is a selection from Haydn's pupil Ignaz Pleyel; and like Haydn's late works, these were composed initially for the London market in the early 1790s.* All are attractive pieces and worth hearing.

Indeed, this disc represents an excellent starting point for anyone wanting to get to know more of Pleyel's music. Though perhaps lacking the wit and lyricism of Haydn, they nonetheless reveal something of Pleyel's originality. Particularly striking is the string writing: the cello often contributes tenor lines, and occasionally is used as a melodic instrument in its own right. And in both the minor-key works, there are surprising textures and turns of phrase.

The performances are persuasive and thoughtfully planned. Many of the tempi are well judged – though the exception is the variations of the C major trio which seem rather ponderous, especially since the performers, as throughout, dutifully observe every repeat. Much of the string playing is sensitively done, with the violin moving effortlessly from accompaniment to solo material. Indeed, the balance and ensemble is very satisfactory. The piano playing, however, is somewhat driven and a little brash on occasions. Harald Hoeren uses a Viennese style instrument – presumably a Walter copy – which, like so many, is brightly voiced. Given that his playing seems to emphasise technical facility, one is often left wanting more delicacy of touch. Certainly, Pleyel's music offers plenty of opportunity without having to resort to the moderator with such regularity.

With that proviso, Pleyel is well served by this recording. The music has been chosen with care and reveals the composer to be far from the pale imitation of Haydn that is sometimes assumed. *Warwick Cole*

To take more specific information from Rita Benton's amazing thematic catalogue, nos 431-416 (op. 16) were first published with a dedication to the Queen of England in 1788, 437-442 (op. 36) and 443-448 (op. 41) were published by André in Offenbach in 1790 and 1793 and reprinted in London – Rita was unable to be specific about these London dates. CB

Schubert *Arpeggione sonate, Forellen quartet* Jan Vermeulen (1826 Nanette Streicher *fp*), Christine Busch, France Springuel, Paul De Clerck, Jan Buysschaert Et'cetera KTC1431

The coupling of the Arpeggione Sonata and Trout Quintet makes an attractive combination: Schubert's chamber music at its very best. The works are played by the fortepianist Jan Vermeulen together with a collection of very fine string players, and there is much to recommend in their interpretation of the Quintet.

The technical quality of the performance is perhaps best exemplified by Christine Busch's violin playing. This part presents many difficulties, but Busch here makes light of them and the tone that she achieves in Schubert's high string writing is admirable, as witness the Variations of the fourth movement. The other string players are equally adept, blending well, and generally the ensemble is very fine. Vermeulen, too, is no mean pianist, dashing round Schubert's demi-semiquavers with aplomb.

Where the recording falls short, however, is the fortepiano. The instrument in question is a Nanette Streicher of 1826 which does the fortepiano cause no favours. In fact, it sounds terrible. The very best Viennese instruments of the period can be a delight, but this particular example has no resonance in the upper treble. So where Schubert writes melodic material for both hands in octaves (first movement development, Variation 2) instead of the delicate streams of pearly sound to which one is accustomed from, say, Andras Schiff and his Bosendorfer, we hear dull thuds sounding for all the world like tuned woodblocks. The shortcomings of the instrument are not so obvious in the Arpeggione Sonata because the keyboard writing is generally lower in the compass and far less melodic than in the Quintet. In this respect, the Sonata is a more successful performance, although the balance could have been focused more in favour of the cello. But even here, the voicing of the piano hardly provides a subtle accompaniment to the beautiful cantilena of the second movement.

A curate's egg, in other words: this disc has many fine aspects, but the quality of piano is disappointing and mars what are otherwise very commendable performances.

Warwick Cole

Schumann *Works for Fortepiano* Jan Vermeulen 133' 29" (2 CDs)
Accent ACC 24238
Opp. 2, 13, 15, 18, 19, 68 (Anhang), 82, *Für Kleinere & Für Erwachsene*

The beguiling portrait of a young boy which adorns the CD cover gives a clue to the thinking behind this attractive collection of Schumann's piano music. The Belgian pianist Jan Vermeulen – whose repertoire ranges from classical to contemporary works – writes engagingly in his booklet notes of the composer as 'the child who never grew up'. This theme of childlike naivety, then, pervades this album; and if the intention was to touch on and illustrate this most enigmatic element of Schumann's piano music, it has been achieved well.

In listening to this recording, it is easy to become absorbed in Schumann's

thoughts and reveries and despite the large number of tracks – 37 on disc one – the pacing is always perfectly judged. Throughout, Vermeulen characterises the individual movements with great sensitivity. Indeed, his phrasing reveals an innate affinity with the music. It is all helped, of course, by the fecundity of Schumann's imagination.

Part of the atmosphere created by this recording is down to the excellent instrument Vermeulen uses. The fortepiano by Tröndlin of Leipzig dating from the 1830s perhaps unsurprisingly proves itself an effective medium for Schumann. At its best in the more virtuosic moments where the clarity of attack brings the music to life, it is excellently voiced. On the evidence of this recording it is mercifully free from some of the tonal problems that affect German and Austrian pianos of this period, particularly in the upper treble region. In Vermeulen's hands it creates a distinct sound-world, and if at times the pedalling seems a little ubiquitous – blurring the composer's often specific articulation markings – its damping allows a clarity that brings the music to life.

In short, the combination of instrument, music and performer work very well. This is a highly commendable recording.

Warwick Cole

20th CENTURY

Orff/Monteverdi *Orpheus; Klage der Ariadne* *see under* Monteverdi

The Hoffnung Music Festival Concert; Hoffnung at the Oxford Union 74' 27"
Forum FRC6142

I don't think I have ever had an LP or CD of this, but I used it as an excuse to request a review copy, since I wondered whether it might be a peg to link with the comedy Prom. The latter was often very funny, but far too often verbally rather than musically, with the orchestra definitely accompanying the comic rather than being centre stage. I did attend a couple of more musical comic concerts in the 1960s. One, in the Royal Festival Hall, must have been a sort of Hoffnung memorial; the second was in the Albert Hall, from which I remember a version of Mozart's Magic Flute overture. The orchestra began, then when the fugue started, an a cappella choir took over. The arrangement was from around 1800, though the words were new.

There is, of course, plenty of humour and wit in music. Most pieces written for specifically funny shows don't wear very well. But I was pleased that the Prom revived what I think is the best piece of the genre, Franz Reizenstein's *Concerto popolare*, alias *A Piano Concerto to End all Piano Concertos*, which goes back to Hoffnung's 1956 concert. One device is his skilful thematic manipulation – from the confusion between Grieg and Tchaikovsky, where the abrupt alternations are tonally very carefully chosen, to the subtle modulation of one tune to another (eg Beethoven to Gershwin) and the demonstration (with very familiar material) of how a development section works. I enjoyed hearing that again (twice in the same day: the CD arrived on the morning of the TV recording of the Prom). Comedy goes back much earlier. Obvious examples are Janequin's Battle and Birds, and I remember laughing out loud when I heard Brendal play the theme of the Diabelli variations, and some organists make Bach's D-major organ fugue BWV 532 a joke. *CB*

ANTHOLOGIES

Treasures of Christ Church The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Stephen Darlington 68' 45"
Music by Byrd, Gibbons, Handel, Parsons, Purcell. Tallis, Taverner, Weelkes, etc

This encapsulates the problem of mixed-period programmes (the other composers included are more recent). Christ Church is a fine cathedral choir, but everything is sucked into a fairly uniform style. One can imagine the scores of the earlier repertoire smothered with dynamics, and the music is weakened by them. Tallis's *Salvator mundi* lacks impetus, for instance. But some 20th-century pieces suffer as well. Britten's *Shepherds' Carol* ("O lift your little pinkie") requires a more demotic sound for the soloists, if not the chorus as well. The style does come to its own, however, in Howells' gem *Like as the hart*, and while Warlock's *Bethlehem Down* sounds a bit slow to me, I suspect that it would have been sung even slower by Daily Telegraph readers at Christmas 1927. It was a pity to open with an organ-accompanied *Zadok the Priest* – the orchestral sound is too familiar to accept a substitute on disc – and there was no need for the organist to push a combination stop for an ungainly dynamic jerk a couple of bars before the voices enter: there's noting in Handel's score to indicate a gradual crescendo. This will no doubt be a success with tourists attending evensong, and listeners who lack any concept of different styles of performance may not share my reservations. But the music here would sound more interesting if there was a far greater sense of difference of sounds and performing conventions. *CB*

SCOTTISH FOLK MUSIC

Music and Song from Scotland 2 CDs
Greentrax CDTRAX8611

This is an anthology of 25 years of Greentrax Records, which has over that period issued 468 albums. It comprises 25 tracks, plus a bonus track on each disc. With such an output, Ian Green deserves to congratulate himself. There's a wide variety of music here – a survey of how folk-music is performed now, but not related to our early-music ethos of trying to find out how music may have been performed in the past. That is, of course, an oversimplification, and there are early music performers who are beginning to use their understanding to move on to something more individual – cross-over with other cultures, for instance. Best wishes for Greentrax's next 25 years. *CB*

for review in December

A Christmas History presented by Simon Russell Beale with Harry Christophers & the Sixteen.
Coro CORDVD5 COR 1694 ,

****

There's a blatant misunderstanding in the opening reader's letter in 24 September's *Classical Music*. He compares John Wilson's thoroughly researched versions of the Hollywood film scores at the Proms with arrangements for the BBC Concert Orchestra by Gordon Langford, Peter Hope, Bob Docker, Stanley Black and Sidney Torch. He misses the difference between making an arrangement and attempting to find what the original scorings really were. Some survive, others have to be painstakingly restored by careful listening to the soundtracks. We've grown out of expecting *Messiah* to have rescorings by Mozart or Beecham. If I were a film-music buff, I'd expect to hear the original scoring. When I was at the BBC Music Library, I was surprised to see that virtually every Strauss waltz was arranged by someone. Have they been replaced by the new Viennese scholarly editions? I don't object to characterful arrangements (cf the Monteverdi/Orff *Orfeo* reviewed above), but it seems a pity not to hear to the sound of the music as originally arranged! *CB*

SALUT! BAROQUE

Brian Clark

Facebook may seem a strange place to begin a review of six discs from a well-established group from Australia, but that is indeed where the story began. "Oh dear," one of my more regular correspondents on the site wrote one day, "we need to get you some more friends!" It is true that there's not much point in social (or, in my case, more commercial) network, if there are only a handful of people actually seeing your "new titles" posts. So I started to work harder at reaching out to early musicians (by becoming "friends") and the ensembles (by "liking" them) and I've now built up a more respectable contacts list.

Among them is the Australian baroque violinist Rachael Beesley (she *was* the fb friend of a fb friend of a fb friend...) who, among many other ensembles around the world, plays with Salut! Baroque. She had Tim Blomfield, one of the group's artistic directors, send me a selection of their recordings, and I must say I am *very* impressed. The group's particular focus seems to have been music in London, at least in terms of their recordings. Visit their website (www.baroque.com.au) and you'll discover that their programmes are far more wide ranging.

Cosmopolitan London (SAL001, 2003, 56' 40") features trio sonatas by Handel, Finger, Keller and Paisible, four by a pair of recorders and continuo (bass violin and harpsichord), and four with violin and recorder. I knew both of the Handel pieces (having played both the violin and recorder parts), but the other works were all new to me and were thoroughly enjoyable. Recorders, when they are well played, do not deserve to be shunned the way they seem to be, even by fans of early music. Sally Melhuish (the group's other artistic director) and Hans-Dieter Michatz are well balanced in tone and playing style. Watch out, though – seven of the eight pieces are in minor keys!

Food of Love (SAL003, 2005, 62' 29") is subtitled "Music by Purcell & his contemporaries" and features counter-tenor Christopher Field. The programme includes vocal pieces by Purcell, Pelham Humfrey's *A Hymn to God the Father*, and instrumental pieces by Williams Corbett and Williams, Courteville, Croft, John Roberts and Robert Valentine. As a recital disc, it works well, with recorders supplying a varied selection of sonatas (including two without continuo), as well as playing in the final number, *Strike the Viol* (with the organist filling in the violin parts, which struck me as an odd choice to end such a fine disc.)

The next CD is Johann Christoph Pepusch: *Cantatas, Sonatas* (SAL004, 2006, 61' 58") which features the suitably light tenor voice of Paul McMahon. He reminded me on occasion of Ian Partridge, though without the slight edge that sometimes affected the latter's very top register and gruffness at the other extreme. McMahon sings beautifully, and somehow manages a remarkable uniformity of sound across his entire range. The cantatas are *Love frowns in beauteous Myra's eyes, Corydon, Sleora sat beneath a shade, The Island of Beauty, Menoloas* and *When Love's soft passion.* Once again, the foil is provide by sonatas for recorders; this time both are in F and both have four movements. On this evidence, Pepusch's music deserves to be much better known – or perhaps Salut! Baroque would rather keep it all to themselves, since they are so good at performing it.

Though labelled © 2007, *Italian Instrumental and Vocal music from the 17th century* (SAL005, 63' 12") is a re-issue of a 1999 recording. There is music by Cima, Frescobaldi, Leonarda, Biagio Marini, Monteverdi and Barbara Strozzi. It was *Classic FM Magazine's* early music "record of the month" at some point in 2000, and it's not difficult to hear why. Soprano Jane Edwards gives natural, stylish performances of the vocal music; Sally Melhuish is partnered by violinist Lucinda Moon in the instrumental works, all supported by cello, harp (yes, in 1999!) and harpsichord.

The latest CD (SAL006, 2009, 62' 53") is entitled *Italians abroad.* The programme includes instrumental works by Caldara (a very fine performance of his E minor *Sonata a tre*), Corelli, Matteis, Geminiani (three sonatas "inspired" by Scots folk songs), Giuseppe Sammartini and Vivaldi. Like others in the series, the tracks are taken from different recording sessions, but it is difficult to tell them apart, and there is certainly no variance in the quality of the performances. I love the idea that the company responsible for the finished project is called "Dodgy Sound" – there is *nothing* dodgy about any of these discs!

The final recording I listened to is *Salut! Baroque 1995-2005* (SAL002, 2005, 68' 41"). I had expected this to be a compilation of tracks from the discs I had already enjoyed, but it is more than that – there are tracks from another earlier disc devoted to the music of Telemann (WAL031), including the D major concerto for four violins and the A minor violin concerto, as well as two previously unreleased trio sonatas (both scored for recorder, violin and continuo). It will come as no surprise to learn that Salut! Baroque's Telemann is as polished as everything else they have recorded – I have never had the pleasure of hearing them live, but I expect their imaginative programmes must be very enjoyable.

We will be sure to look out for their future releases, and have requested that they send their concert schedules for inclusion in our monthly Diary.

CONCERTS FOR THE CB APPEAL

There have been three concerts in aid of the Clifford Bartlett Appeal since *Messiah* in June. Two were on consecutive days (15 & 16 August – my birthday and our wedding anniversary) at Abergavenny and Llangatock as part of Ian Honeyman's Lizard to Dunnet Head (from the southernmost point of England to the most northerly point of mainland Scotland) charity walk, stopping to sing in the evening after each day's journey. I suggested to him that, since I had contacts at Abergavenny (I'm president of a choir there and have played in a couple of concerts with it) and he was passing that way, we might be able to arrange for something more substantial than a handful of songs at the piano. So I emailed Gillian Stevens (daughter of my best University teacher John Stevens) and Stephen Marshall (conductor of the aforementioned choir) and asked if they could collaborate. I also suggested that Catherine King, who sang at one of Stephen Marshall's concerts that I had played in and who lives fairly near, might like to participate. Gillian has a studio seating about 50, so was host and bass-viol player. The two concerts raised £1000. We are very grateful for this support.

Ian sent the following email to Gillian:

Yes, the Britten was amazing - quite another experience from a 'prepared' version, which can be so dull. Rehearsal has a lot to answer for ...

But it was YOUR energy which amazed -- the way in which you pulled in such an enthusiastic group of people was astounding. That evening will long remain in my mind as an ideal, one of the greatest highlights of the trip so far.

As for my energy, I can only say that arriving after a long walk seems to be the best preparation for singing and playing and has produced results the like of which I have rarely known. On the other hand, I gave my first concert here last night in Myddfai, near Llandovery, after a two week break, and I was grim, voice down, energy down... Admittedly, there was no piano and I had to do what I could on organ and guitar, not my first strings by a long, long chalk - but it was a lesson...

Still, everyone enjoyed it, apart from me, so semper sursum !

Thank you so much for the opportunity of that evenng. Thank you so much.

And thank you, too, Stephen [Marshall], for another exciting evening of music-making in Llangatock. It was the best!

With thanks and love to Gillian & Dylan, Stephen, Catherine, and, of course, Clifford & family -

Ian Honeyman

For more information on the vagabond tenor/pianist walking the length of Britain see lizard2dunnet@gmail.com

On 10 September, Nick Fisher, the organiser of our appeal, arranged for James Bowman and lutenist Dorothy Linell to perform at his local church, Northleach, Glocestershire. As I got out of my car, I was surprised to see an old friend whom I hadn't expected, then as we walked to the church, another unexpected friend appeared – Anne Tennant, who wrote (when asked a week after the concert) the review of "our" Messiah in the August *EMR*. It was fortunate that she had arrived early, since Dorothy was allergic to pollen and the church was full of flowers left over from a wedding. (Sadly, the Sunday papers had pictures of the wedding from the afternoon rather than James and Dorothy.) The concert couldn't have happened without Anne, since she spent an hour or so disposing of the pollen. She was a very appropriate companion, since I'd got to know the lute-song repertoire by accompanying her (on piano) in her youth. James is an amazing performer: he seems so relaxed, communicates so well, and has particularly fine control in soft passages. It wasn't a big audience, but with a generous filling of buckets at the door, it raise another £1000.

LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

Readers of *Classical Music* may have noticed Andrew Green's two short articles in the issue of 27 August about the trial that was due to start on 5 September. Unfortunately, there have been more complications and delays. And instead of a trial, there were several days of conversations between lawyers. One of the defendants decided to plead guilty to "conspiracy to defraud", but the other didn't. Before sentence of the first and trial of the other, the prosecution are collecting further evidence and the trial has been postponed until 5 March 2012 – almost four years after the situation had been brought to the attention of the police. So more waiting...

GAIL HENNESSEY'S WRISTS

We were very sorry to hear that that Gail fell badly on holiday in Scotland and both her wrists were broken – inconvenient for a professional oboist! It will take some time before she is capable of playing again. An appeal has been set up: for details see...

http://www.facebook.com/pages/Help-Gail-Out/141875125905348

MEMORIAL CONCERT FOR RICHARD CAMPBELL

Richard Campbell's memorial service will take place at St Martin-in-the-Fields (Trafalgar Square) on Monday 28 November at 7.30. There are performances by Fretwork, Feinstein Ensemble, Unkle Bob, Tregye Orchestra, The Dufay Collective, Clare Wilkinson, Nicholas Hurndall Smith and Dai Miller. Box Office 020 7766 1100
www.smitf.org

IAN HARWOOD MBE

29 August 1931 – 27 July 2011

Obituaries and eulogies will be in the October issue of the Lute Society Newsletter. It is an organisation with which he was closely associated, being a founder member, editor of its journal (1965-70) and President from 1998. As a musician, he was a singer (treble at Winchester Cathedral, alto at St Albans, New College and Ely) and lute-player (he founded the Campian Consort in 1964). He also made instruments, having learnt at school how to make model aeroplanes and later took an engineering apprenticeship with the De Havilland Aircraft Company. He first encounter with viols was hearing the Dolmetsches on a home-made wireless. He bought his first lute (a theatrical prop) for five pounds from Diana Poulton and became a pupil then friend. He also had lessons from Alfred Deller and Desmond Dupré (pioneers, even if some of their practices can, in hindsight, be questioned, as in David Hill's article in this issue).

Ian developed a particular interest in what was, in his younger days, called the broken consort, later the mixed consort, possibly at the time just the consort; The Consort of Six was more specific, but Ian settled on "Six Seuerall Instruments" as the title of his study, which will almost certainly become the standard work on the subject for many years. It was essentially finished before he died, and will be published in due course. It begins with a fascinating autobiographical Preface, which has probably circulated widely enough to be accessible if you chase a lute expert! The funeral was on 2 August in York, where he died.

I've known Ian slightly since the 1960s, but we only had much contact in the last decade or so. We started sending him *EMR* and he responded with a series of letters and comments that kept us on our toes! Some were published, but others were matters of information of for discussion that I have, I hope, absorbed. I think my last live conversation with him was at Francesca McManus's funeral, at which we were both looking for someone who could fill the gaps in our knowledge of her life for an obituary. That was one indication that he had the ferreting nature of a good scholar. Earlier in life as a maker, his childhood manual skills must have been an enormous help when he started making instruments – initially for himself to replace his five-pound lute, and as a maker as well as player, I'm sure his book will have insights deriving from both skills.

CB